Black student intellectuals and the complexity of entailment in the #RhodesMustFall movement

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Abstract

The University of Cape Town (UCT), a colonial university established for the education of elite white liberals during the colonial and apartheid periods in South Africa, became subject to increasing anti-racist critique as it hosted growing numbers of black students and staff after the end of apartheid. This anti-racist dissent slowly accrued and broke in 2015 with the #RhodesMustFall (RMF) student movement. The protest was initially directed towards the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the centre of the university's main campus but quickly became an important space for a broad critique of South African society and the university's place within it. This thesis tracks the emergence and the sustained work of the students in the movement over the course of 2015, paying particular attention to the ways in which a cadre of powerful student intellectuals was built in and through the movement.

Compelled by the movement's ideas and its confidence to disrupt post-apartheid's impotent nonracial consensus, the research took shape in solidarity with the movement and at the heart of the movements planning, coordination and conversation. Through a detailed account of the movement's occupations of university buildings, its Subcommittee work (in particular its Education Subcommittee) and the creative disruptions of campus space, the thesis makes the argument that fierce intellectual activity was elicited because of the collective anti-hegemonic entailment of black students in the disruption of the white university. Anti-hegemonic entailment is read as grounded radical praxis that critiques and shifts the normative ground of oppression and privilege. The emphasis on entailment is to recognise the complicity that is created at the level of subjective experience in reinforcing oppressive practices and structures. The capacity to refuse hegemonic entailment in systems of oppression, especially as a generational cohort, requires immense intellectual work and collective action. The thesis uses several concepts from the literature on intellectuals to understand the work of the student movement. Most importantly Wallerstein's notion of the "honest intellectual", Said's idea of the intellectual as oppositional and exiled, and a range of writers from the black radical tradition to argue that making explicit the political, moral and historical stakes of the white university allowed students in RMF to take over the intellectual project of the university. During 2015, black students became the new educators of a dishonest university institution, in so doing creating themselves as the more compelling intellectuals of the moment.

The negotiated settlement that ended formal apartheid focused on the priority of racial desegregation, which opened historically white institutions of all kinds to black people. In education, this strategy included black students in white schools and universities, staging black proximity to white institutions without any reworking of their institutional culture. This thesis traces how black students began to reflect on their experiences of racism and other forms of oppression and marginalisation at the university as an experience of painful alienation and assimilation, an experience they described as “black pain”. These alienating experiences fuelled anti-assimilationist impulses and they began the collective intellectual and activist work of painstakingly revealing the hidden curriculum of colonial education and white subjectivity at the heart of the project of UCT.

RMF took over the pedagogical space of UCT during the time of the movement. It also took on the responsibility for changing the nature of the institution, refusing the liberal form and politics of “transformation”, and asserting in its place a radical form and politics of decolonisation. The thesis makes careful account of the critical collective conversations and actions that the movement hosted, theorising that its critical confrontations across different politics and subjectivities within the condition of black struggle created a rich democratic and anti-hierarchical praxis. One of the most important expressions of this praxis was the experimental relationship established between plenary and caucus.

RMF, along with other black-led student formations at historically white universities, gave shape to the decolonisation agenda at South African universities and beyond, and informed many of the ideas of the more mass-based anti-privatisation-focused national student movement that emerged in October 2015 under the name #FeesMustFall (FMF).

Keywords:

Black students; Intellectuals; Student movement; Entailment; South Africa; RhodesMustFall

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.



Leigh-Ann Naidoo

26th day of November in the year 2020

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Dedication

For Lerato Gillespie-Naidoo

who has taught me so much

Table of Contents

Abstract ..... **ii**

Declaration ..... **iv**

Acknowledgements ..... **v**

Dedication ..... **vi**

List of Appendices ..... **x**

List of Abbreviations ..... **xi**

Introduction: Making sense **1**

1. Common sense abounds 4

2. Building good sense 6

3. RMF's Analysis 7

Chapter One: Black Intellectuals and the Force of Entailment **16**

1.1 Gramsci and the opening of the category of the intellectual 16

1.2 Edward Said's exiled intellectual 17

1.3 Wallerstein and the impossibility of value neutrality 19

1.4 Black intellectuals 21

Chapter 2: Entailment as Method **32**

2.1 Why I was entailed 33

2.2 Beginnings of my entailment and change of research focus 39

2.3 How I entailed myself in the field 43

2.4 Broadening the entailment 48

Chapter 3: A racist institution: historical reflections on white liberalism at the University of Cape Town **55**

3.1 The Mafeje Affair in Four Episodes 58

3.2 Affairs Post-Apartheid 66

3.3 Mamdani Affair 69

3.4 Outsourcing Affair 71

3.5 Black student struggles at UCT 73

3.6 Context for post-apartheid struggle 75

Chapter 4: Alienation as Pain: conditions for resistance to assimilation **82**

4.1 The idea of alienation 83

4.2 Black pain 86

4.3 Assimilation 89

Chapter 5: Disruption and the creation of alliance/solidarity **120**

5.1 Moment 1: The statue protest (Monday 9 March 2015) – taking on the failures of transformation and continuation of oppressions by naming alienation and developing a language for "black pain" towards incisive social critique 121

5.2 Moment 2: Mass meeting on Jammie Steps (12 March 2015) – the end of the rainbow conclusion, critiquing whiteness and the white liberal university institution 124

5.3 Moment 3: Heritage, Signage and Symbolism seminar disrupted (Monday 16 March 2015) -

disrupting the frame of academic dialogue space and challenging the exclusivity of specialised content and form towards a more complex way of knowing and being together, the beginnings of anti-hegemonic entailment 127
5.4 Conclusion 142
Chapter 6: Azania House Occupation: Creative Disruptions and Reflective Space 145
6.1 Moment 4: Azania One Occupation (20 March to 12 April 2015) – building collective power through radical praxis and meaningful engagement through consistent critical reflection 149
6.1.1 Organising the occupation – building black solidarity through a confrontation with difference 153
6.1.2 Caucus vs Plenary – building fertile grounds for collective work 155
6.1.3 Seminar Series – renewing the pedagogical arena, practicing anti-hegemonic entailment 161
6.2 Power relation – who is teaching who? 162
6.2.1 Plenary spaces - as important diverse pedagogical space 163
6.2.2 Critical practical reflexivity – reflection-in-action 164
6.2.3 Monday 23 March 2015 (8pm – midnight) - Screening and Discussion – Concerning Violence 166
6.2.4 Tuesday 24 March 2015 (8-10.15pm) Seminar Question: What is the Post-Colonial University, Curriculum, Canon? 168
6.2.5 Thursday 26 March 2015 (8pm) - Jay Pather – "Symbols and Identity" 172
6.2.6 Monday 30 March 2015 (6.30pm) - Suren Pillay – Decolonising the University 175
6.2.7 Tuesday 31 March 2015 (8pm) - Marikana Solidarity Committee – Screening and discussion of documentary "Miners Shot Down" – white people asked to leave. 182
Chapter 7: Creative Disruptions extending Azania House 188
7.1 Moment 5: Sarah Bartmann Performance – Wednesday 25 March 188
7.2 Moment 6: UCT General Assembly – Wednesday 25 March 192
7.3 A question of time 208
Chapter 8: Writing Dangerously: Evictions, Publication and Mediation 217
8.1 Rhodes statue falls, RMF evicted from Azania House 217
8.2 RMF Statements 220
8.3 Moment 7: Afrophobia Protest – 16 April 2015 222
8.4 Moment 8: Intellectual Work Continues 224
8.4.1 RMF Seminars 224
8.4.2 Writing SubCom 226
8.4.3 Writing Statements 227
8.4.4 The Johannesburg Salon 230
8.5 Moment 9: Mediation 231
8.5.1 Occupations and the politics of space 231
8.5.2 Mediation begins 238
Chapter 9: Building student-worker solidarity and the class question 244
9.1 Moment 10: Marikana Campaign – August 2015 246
9.1.1 Vanguard Online Magazine – Marikana Special Collection 254
9.2 Moment 11: Piketty Protest – 30 September 272
9.3 Moment 12: October 6 - Student-worker alliance and the fight for outsourcing to fall 280

9.4 Moment 13: FMF moment/movement 288
9.4.1 Securitisation 292
9.4.2 Solidarity 293
9.4.3 Parliament 294
9.5 Concluding remarks 298
Chapter 10: Discussion: A radical distributed intellectual project 299
Coda: The composition of anti-hegemonic entailment through epistemic redistribution 314
Epistemic redistribution 317
Reference List 322

List of Appendices

Appendix A: List of Interviews Conducted 351
Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet 353
Appendix C: Consent Form for Audio Recording Interviews 354
Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for 2015 interviews 355
Appendix E: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule 2015 357
Appendix F: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule 2016 358
Appendix G: Consent Form for Audio Recording Focus Group 359

List of Abbreviations

AGI	African Gender Institute
ANC	African National Congress
BAC	Black Academic Caucus
BC	Black Consciousness
BCM	Black Consciousness Movement
BLM	Black Lives Matter
CAS	Centre for African Studies
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
CSAAWU	Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union
EE	Equal Education
ETDP	Education, Training and Development
FMF	Fees Must Fall
HBU	Historically Black Universities
HWU	Historically White Universities
ILRIG	International Labour Research and Information Group
LSF	Left Student Forum
NEHAWU	National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union
NEUM	Non-European Unity Movement
NMU	Nelson Mandela University
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NUSAS	National Union of South African Students
NWU	North West University
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PASMA	Pan African Student Movement of Azania
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
PRAESA	Project for Alternate Education in South Africa
PSF	Palestinian Solidarity Forum
RMF	Rhodes Must Fall
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SACHED	South African Commission for Higher Education
SACP	South African Communist Party
SASO	South African Student Organisation
SAYFA	South African Young Feminist Activists
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SHAWCO	Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation
SJC	Social Justice Coalition
SMU	Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University
SRC	Student Representative Council
TAC	Treatment Action Campaign
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UCKAR	University Currently Known as Rhodes
UCT	University of Cape Town
UFS	University of the Free State
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of Kwazulu-Natal
UniLim	University of Limpopo

UNISA	University of South Africa
UniVen	University of Venda
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
USB	University of Stellenbosch
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WITS	University of the Witwatersrand
WSU	Walter Sisulu University

Introduction: Making sense

What follows is a thesis that, while adjudicated and referenced through the forms and processes of academic requirement as my own, is nonetheless an effort in collective sense-making. It is inevitably a failed attempt at the kind of intellectual work I learned from and with Rhodes Must Fall (RMF). But I will try anyway. RMF is not merely to be referenced in an acknowledgement section, or a methodology section, or simply as data to answer a question that I dreamed up. RMF, for me, was a process of becoming, against assimilation, and away from easily moving towards privilege, leaving so many behind and excluded.

What does one do with the knowledge of one's complicity and 'entailment' in an unequal and violent system and society?

I did not start with this question, but it is the one that revealed itself through my five-year engagement with RMF and the broader student movement it preceded. It is not my "research question" as much as the one I hope to ask myself every day in order to ensure that my "thinking" work is informed and coupled with "doing" work. Through the writing process of the PhD, I have felt myself pulled further and further away from doing thinking work that is collective and connected to society. The academic work of universities has not, in my estimation, helped us steer ourselves and the societies in which we exist significantly away from inequality, violence and destruction. It is with this in mind that I am grappling with the question of how to think together, rather than alone or separately, and to imagine the university as one space that can be remade for such entailed intellectual work. I hope to show through this thesis some experimentation with creating a different kind of collective work, in this instance black student led and oriented towards making the university a less oppressive and more critically engaged place.

I must admit upfront to have failed to comply with the word limit set by the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). This thesis is long in part because I am committed to archiving the massive amount that RMF did in their own words and have attempted to write this thesis with them. It is long because I refuse to choose merely the one sentence that speaks most directly to the point that interests me or that I think substantiates my argument. Instead, I bring the entire paragraph, or poem, or follow the discussion at a seminar or assembly in order to provide a reading or analysis of the conversation that those contributing to the discussion collectively produced. I am doing the latter, not because I am in a discipline whose preferred methodological orientation is discourse analysis, but because, in attending two important UCT hosted conversations, it was clear that part of

what was required was a more critical reading not only of the inputs made by select individuals but the flow of the conversation and what that showed about the way knowledge was being produced orally. I have been able to revisit those conversations through both transcribing them and also through watching video recordings of them. I have been sure to reference the public online repositories that make it possible for others to view and experience them through more than just the words produced in the transcript. I do not claim that this is the authoritative account or the truth of what took place as there have inevitably been choices made and much omitted. But even in so doing, I have a sense that, if whoever reads this has never heard of RMF, they will learn about it because the thesis, if nothing else, leaves an archive that will hopefully contribute to the next round of much needed rethinking of academic writing about radical social events such as RMF. In this I refer to a form of writing that is more collective, more critical, more (self)conscious and, if nothing else, better propelling students (and academics) towards critically entailed intellectual work.

I learned much through my Master's research that asked a question about the role of radical education in building resistance movements under apartheid.[1] The question that I did not answer through this research, but that I was left with afterwards, was why and how young black students produced the kind of intellectual work, knowledge and archives that they did, in spite of the dire conditions of segregated and racist universities (and society at large). How was it possible for them to be so young, not-yet-graduated, under so much violent repression and surveillance, and yet still bring brave, confident, visionary analyses and critiques to bear on their South Africa? The case I studied was the South African Student Organisation (SASO) that birthed the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) and, in particular, their engagement in building consciousness, as university students, through designing and running their own education programmes for themselves and black communities. Importantly, they were also concerned with understanding and archiving experiences of black life by black people, for black people, as one of the ways of confronting the racist narrative, policies and the production of subservient black people, head on through self-education. BC's history and ideas have been engaged by university students through the archive left behind as well as the increasing number of writings and discussions about it. This includes the insistence from black students that the curricula of South African universities remain dominated by white writers and writings, and that the BCM and the writings that emerged from it are more centrally noted.

[1] Naidoo, L-A. "The role that radical pedagogy plays in resistance movements: A case study of the Black Consciousness Movement's use of Paulo Freire's pedagogy." Master's Thesis, Wits University, Johannesburg, 2013. Accessed September 2015 at url: http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/17733.

Students started organising themselves and thinking about their orientation to the university and the project of education by drawing on the BC archive and learnings. Before RMF emerged, I was interested in this focus on BC and presented a paper based on my Master's thesis at a "Biko and SASO" symposium held at the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) in early 2014, which drew together a range of people who had been working on the BCM and confirmed my impression of this recalling of BC by older BC inspired activists but also by younger scholars and students alike.

In the same year, my approved PhD research proposal set out to think about the question of intellectuals and specifically to examine the relation between teachers' roles as professionals (experts in school knowledge) and their roles as intellectuals (agents of social change). I was in Cape Town conducting interviews with teachers from the end of 2014 when the shit-statue protest took place. Initially, I was drawn to the protest through media coverage, perplexed by the kind of critique of the form of the protest, with minimal engagement around the substance of the protest or the ways in which the form and content of the protest were related. It occurred to me that something important might be happening as it became the talking point of much progressive student and staff conversation, including at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Through my reading of the situation, conversation with my supervisor and further reading around questions of student activism, I realised that the question I was asking of teachers as intellectuals should indeed be one asked about students. This was because students were differentially "qualified" depending on where they were in their studies and less likely to be acknowledged as producing knowledge with powerful implications or, more dangerously, implications for the powerful. Fred Moten, an important writer from and of the black radical tradition/s, points to the consideration of knowledge production as it relates to slavery and therefore also racism, sexism and oppression, by retelling the story of the first black enslaved woman who wrote her own narrative:

> "Jacobs famously recites the moment at which she became aware that she was a slave. [Hers is also a sexual moment, poised between awakening, fitful awareness, and nightmare, when one becomes aware of one's placement within aestheticized, scientistic trajectories of predation and pursuit.] But the moment in which you enter into the knowledge of slavery, of yourself as a slave, is the moment you begin to think about freedom, the moment in which you know or begin to know or to produce knowledge of freedom, the moment at which you become a fugitive, the moment at which you begin to escape in ways that trouble the structures of subjection that – as [Saidiya] Hartman shows with such severe clarity – overdetermine freedom".[2]

[2] Moten, F. *Black and Blur: Consent not to be a single being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017), 76.

Moten is pointing to something that I believe to be common between the black students of SASO and, 50 years later, the black students in RMF. The desire and knowledge about and for freedom comes intensely with the realisation of one's oppression. In making sense of the process of intellectual production in RMF, which is always tied to the politics and power relations in which students as individuals and as collectives find themselves, I identify and discuss how black students studied their own consciousness and experiences of oppression and then worked collectively to produce a language which could contribute to others being able to come to a deeper understanding of their own position at UCT through critical conversation. They detailed, for themselves and for other black people, their painful experiences of oppression at UCT that complexified what blackness was and tried to build an empathetic solidarity with black people across UCT.

1. Common sense abounds

I begin by discussing "what" and "how" students in RMF constructed a more complex analysis about and critique of the university and society than what has become the "common sense" understanding. Importantly also, I discuss the ways this analysis and critique or thinking was informing/informed by action and resistance. Crehan discusses the ways in which the Anglophone understanding of common sense has a positive connotation while *senso comune* used by Antonio Gramsci in his Prison Notebooks,

> "… is a more neutral term … referring rather to the beliefs and opinions held in common, or thought to be held in common, by the mass of the population; all those heterogenous narratives and accepted 'facts' that structure so much of what we take to be no more than simple reality".[3]

When discussing common sense or what Gramsci calls "popular knowledge", he posits that it is inherently unsystematic and, importantly, not simply confined to the masses: "Every social class has its own 'common sense'". Adding that, even though there is a difference between philosophy and common sense, "… every philosophy has a tendency to become the common sense of a fairly limited environment (that of all the intellectuals)".[4]

The mass media has played a role in driving the process of building a particular (and narrow or

[3] Crehan, C. *Gramsci's Common Sense: Inequality and its narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 44.

[4] Gramsci, A. in Crehan, C. *Gramsci's Common Sense: Inequality and its narratives* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 46.

surface level) understanding of what the ideas, reasons, analyses and critiques by RMF were, and also how they were choosing to communicate, action and engage these ideas in the world. Often, the points of coverage by mainstream and social media have focused on the spectacle of the student and the community protests. These highlight the parts of protests that have large crowds, reminiscent of anti-apartheid marches; running battles with police and private security; the arrests of protestors; the burning of artworks or vehicles; and other such moments. These have often been done in somewhat of a vacuum devoid of trying to understand these as part of a complex scenario in which the student resistance took place. Some of the more "spectacular" moments could be understood as either peripheral to the student movement and possibly, in a number of cases, enacted by provocateurs and people outside the movement or as a refusal to see these moments as part of a dynamic struggle with many forces impacting students and the movement/s they were trying to build. Kros, when discussing her interest in what she calls the "RMF Campaign" and how it relates to archives and counter-archives, highlights that there could be a special case made for the attack on the Rhodes statue because it "goes to the heart of what is disabling about a certain kind of institutional culture, as well as providing the locus for a media event that may be nothing more than spectacle, but may also leave an indelible impression of the pain that is the legacy of exclusionary politics".[5] Maybe we should not expect that the media look for more than what sells papers or garners clicks online but, disappointingly, some academic writings on RMF have also focused on this spectacle to the detriment of the analysis and thinking that informed the creative disruptions and radical praxis that students were inventing for their context.

Creating or performing a scene or a kind of spectacle definitely formed part of the RMF arsenal of creative disruptions.[6] My problem with the surface-level engagement with these RMF actions by the media and also by academics is that they were understood to be unthoughtful, attention seeking, uncivil, narcissistic, anti-intellectual, even criminal acts without much engagement with the arguments that RMF students were making alongside the creative disruptions. The disruptions were also writing a new story or creating an archive of creative engagements of which disruption was only one part. Also, how the RMF disruptions were understood and spoken about, to me, also shed light on the people discussing the events, specifically, how their social position or standpoint influenced what they were willing to look at and possibly what they were able to see or read from

[5] Kross, C. "Rhodes Must Fall: archives and counter-archives." *Critical Arts* 29, no. 1-2 (2015), 151.

[6] I will discuss these across Chapters Five to Nine.

these moments. There has been much written on RMF, which does not take seriously the intellectual work students were doing but rather centres, even presents as the most important story, a tally of the personal and infrastructural damage done by the violence that took place across different university campuses over the extended period of student protests. Mpofu discusses the ways in which powerful government and university managers contained the student disruptions "… through officialised use of violence and suppression through the oppressive state apparatus and ideological state apparatus such as the media".[7]

The common sense understanding of the broader South African populace about RMF's analysis and critiques highlight the uncritical and superficial ways people can come to "know" about the emerging student movement. I am interested in investigating why and how students developed their own common sense as it related to their societal position and what the process of developing "good sense" was. To me, the relationship between the "what" and the "how", or the content and the form of their engagements, reveal RMF's intellectual production that was missed, ignored or misrepresented. This argument potentially points to how the societal position of people looking at the movement, whether university academics or management, influenced what they saw or read about. In this way, I will show the development of students into black intellectuals.

2. Building good sense

The moment of throwing human excrement at the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, what I have called the "shit-statue protest", is prioritised across media and academic writing, as the key moment or starting point of the resistance.[8] While it is true that this specific protest was a catalyst that brought a number of people who were dissatisfied with the racism and lack of transformation at UCT together, I will argue that there are multiple moments that form part of the building of the RMF movement,[9] both at collective and individual levels. In my view, it is important to pay attention to the *processes* in which students were engaged that were grounded in a radical praxis made up of thinking-in-action. These cycles placed value in the reflective or thinking part of students' action, but also related it to the protest action they organised and participated in. I will argue in this thesis that this was the process of intellectual production that RMF was engaged in that was largely

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[7] Mpofu, S. Disruption as a communicative strategy: The case of #FeesMustFall and #RhodesMustFall students' protests. In *Journal of African Media Studies, Volume 9, Number 2*, 2017.

[8] As example Nyamnjoh, F., *#RhodesMustFall. Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa* (2016).

[9] Especially in Chapter 3.

missed or ignored by mainstream media and by people trying to make sense of what was going on. Ru Slayan explains the work RMF was doing:

> "I think Rhodes Must Fall was a process of people – a whole bunch of people coming together and doing things together which they thought, which they would all find important and then reflecting on those things, individually and together, and dialoguing and interrogating and planning, and generating – I would say, you could think about it in terms of the creation and development and growth of ideas in the minds of all these people".[10]

Ru points to the importance of reflection as part of RMF's process of theorising their experiences, first as black students at UCT and then as black students in RMF working to critique and ultimately change the conditions they understood to be discriminatory and problematic. The intellectual work he describes provided an opportunity for reflection both at the level of the university and also at a broader societal level. Critical dialogue was central to the process of radical praxis described by Ru as involving interrogating, planning and generating ideas *and* actions. The process included the generation of ideas that were developed collectively and then grown and shared with others. I have introduced what the common sense understanding of RMF was and have started discussing the ways in which RMF was developing good sense that can be seen both in the content and analysis they were producing, and in the form of their collective engagements, which I will discuss as 13 key moments across Chapters Five to Ten. I have selected these moments because together they tell a more detailed (and entailed) version of the RMF story and archive some of the difficult and important actions that RMF took along with the concomitant thinking work. I do this as a commitment to tell as much of the story in the words of RMF participants including my own observations and engagements as a "participant-observer". I start with restating some of RMF's analysis in order to provide a frame and introduce the thesis and the key moments that will follow.

3. RMF's Analysis

What follows is an overall summary of RMF to provide contextual background knowledge of the movement. The reason for this is to configure the focus of the thesis, which is on the process of creating the conditions of possibility by the movement and how this was crafted (in different specific moments) for building black intellectuals.

RMF started questioning what change, transformation or liberation had taken place such that they,

[10] Slayan Interview Transcript, 15 May 2015, 10.

black university students, "born free", raised in democratic South Africa, with access to higher education at one of the most elite and highly ranked universities on the continent, still felt alienated and discriminated against. This position of being included and yet excluded was the starting point of their questioning. More broadly, the first two decades of democracy seemed to have created a political vacuum, at least as it related to the desire for and actioning of radical change imagined outside the confines of the ruling party. The African National Congress (ANC) liberation party, turned elected government, was no longer the dissenting voice against the power structures of apartheid and the anti-apartheid movement was no longer diverse and heterogeneous, with contested ideas about how to fight apartheid and what a better understanding of a transformed future South Africa would be. The ANC became "the powerful" by winning political power and had managed to outmanoeuvre almost all radical left formations and restrict the trade union movement (under the Congress of South African Trade Unions - COSATU) and South African Communist Party (SACP) through the Tri-Partite Alliance of the ANC-SACP-COSATU.[11] RMF was not simply critiquing the continuation of varying forms of neo-colonialism but was ultimately critiquing the South African transition that some would call liberation.

The societal position of black students, in particular, "coconuts"[12], who were given access to white privileged spaces under the condition that they would learn quickly and thoroughly how to assimilate into those "privileged" positions, became the standpoint from which students launched an analysis of the social conditions of UCT and post-apartheid South Africa.[13] "Born frees" are children born after 1994 and assumed to be post-apartheid, some bundled off to crèche, primary, high and university level schools that were previously reserved for white children only, others battling through township life and sub-standard educational institutions hoping to get into higher

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[11] While it is common on the left to note how the Tri-partite Alliance has hamstrung the organised left force of the SACP and the Union Movement, there is little written yet about how this paralysed alliance has contributed to creating the conditions for a political vacuum. Most critiques coming from the left focus on the process of transition, the negotiated settlement, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission failures, state capture, etc. I am making a claim about a period I read as contributing to the conditions that enables a new student movement to emerge. For a critique of the ANC as National Liberation Movement turned government see Mckinley, D. Behind the ANC's Corporatised 'Liberation'. In *Green Left, Issue 1133,* (10 April 2017).

[12] Panashe Chigumadzi explains that "… We all know what a coconut is, don't we? It's a person who is "black on the outside" but "white on the inside". This term came into popular South African usage in apartheid's dying days as black children entered formerly white schools. At best, coconuts can be seen as "non-white". At worst, they're "Uncle Toms" or "agents of whiteness"." Chigumadzi, P. "Why I call myself a coconut to claim my place in post-apartheid South Africa" *The Guardian*, 24 August 2015.

[13] This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Four.

education and particularly university. The position and experience of being black and so-called born free of apartheid at UCT played a significant part in the process of intellectual work that was collectively constructed. The idea of blackness was being complexified and theorised, and difference was grappled with. A number of these born frees were entering universities and the first cohorts were finishing their undergraduate studies around 2014/15. The born frees at UCT would ordinarily simply be considered to be the new emergent black elite class in the making, who had been given entry into privileged schooling and therefore the possibility of privileged jobs and lives, historically the terrain of white people only. In the late 1960s, the cohort of black students invited into bush colleges or universities built for black people under apartheid, refused to be given limited access into a privileged class, which they understood to be a buffer between the black oppressed majority and the white elite minority.[14] In the spirit of black South African university students of 1968/69, a 2015 cohort of students critiqued the status quo of the fairly new and "free" democratic South Africa by critically analysing the role of education, its implication in (re)making society and, pivotally, their role in all of it.[15]

The opening paragraph of the RMF mission statement attests to the untransformed nature of UCT and explains what RMF is and what it intends to do:

> "We are an independent collective of students, workers and staff who have come together to end institutionalised racism and patriarchy at UCT … This has brought to the surface the existing and justified rage of black students in the oppressive space cultivated and maintained by UCT, despite its rhetoric of 'transformation' … We want to be clear that this movement is not just concerned with the removal of a statue … The statue has great symbolic power; it glorifies a mass-murderer who exploited black labour and stole land from indigenous people … The statue was therefore the natural starting point of this movement. Its removal will not mark the end but the beginning of the long overdue process of decolonising this university. In our belief, the experiences seeking to be addressed by this movement are not unique to an elite institution such as UCT, but rather reflect broader dynamics of a racist and patriarchal society that has remained unchanged since the end of

[14] Naidoo, L-A. "The Role of Radical Pedagogy in the South African Students Organisation and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, 1968–1973". *Education as Change 19, no. 2* (2015).

[15] Naidoo, L-A.. "Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa: The Rise of the Black-led Student Movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in 2015." In *New Narratives of Youth Struggle* edited by N. Nieftagodien, Wits University Press: Johannesburg, 2016a. I argue in this book chapter that rather than the 2015 student movements being compared to the uprisings of 1976, they are better understood as the 1968/69 critical student moment when black students formed SASO and developed the philosophy and politics of Black Consciousness.

formal apartheid".[16]

While racism and sexism are explicitly named, the capitalist system and its links to the colonial project are highlighted through the criticism and campaign against arch colonialist and imperialist Cecil John Rhodes.[17] The statement also clearly indicates that this analysis applies not only to UCT but to the broader society as well, showing how early on RMF was linking its critique of UCT to a critique of broader society. Inequality and the way this manifested at UCT were being revealed and racism, both institutional and individual instances, were identified as one of the main issues or at least an issue that needed to be put back on the transformational agenda.

Asher Gamedze, writing about the sexist nature of the process of orientation at UCT, explains the intersectional nature of the analysis that was being done:

> "While a lot of criticism (particularly recently in the context of the #Rhodesmustfall movement) has rightly been aimed at the University and its racist institutional culture, a lot of that criticism has been silent on issues of sexism that are as widely prevalent and are, indeed, linked to issues of racism".[18]

He continues in a clarifying end note:

> "UCT is also blatantly classist and, while this essay does not speak explicitly to class as a unit of analysis, class and class oppression at the University are as important issues and are very much bound up with oppression based more overtly on race, sex and sexual orientation".[19]

The issues that were investigated by RMF centred on the continuation of varying forms of oppression, initially through analysing experiences of alienation and racism by black students at UCT. A central part of their analysis was that the reality or lived experience of black people, both at UCT and in the broader South African society, was not significantly transformed, even though 20-odd years had passed since the first democratic election and the end of formal apartheid. RMF understood this as a failure of the project of liberation or, as it was termed, transformation, led by the ANC, liberatory party turned government, and at UCT led by the university management. In so

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[16] RMF Mission Statement. *The Johannesburg Salon,* 9 (2015), 6.

[17] See *The Johannesburg Salon,* 9 (2015), 2 about reimagining blackness as avante-guard contribution

[18] Gamedze, "On UCT, its orientation programmes and the reproduction of white patriarchy", *The Johannesburg Salon* 9 (2015), 55.

[19] Ibid, 2015, 58.

doing, they were breaking the frame and concept that was meant to explain and commandeer efforts to change. They went further by suggesting that the best way to understand and explain this failure to transform would be to challenge the idea that South Africa was post-apartheid but, importantly, also to challenge the idea that it was in any significant way post-colonial. In so doing, they insisted that the failures and problems of current day South Africa were by no means limited to being, in any simple way, a hangover of half a century of apartheid. RMF insisted that, in its analysis, transformation as a process of change had been co-opted by a neo-liberal government and university leadership as well. Its insistence was that a new framing and concept was needed to move in a different direction from what the leaders of our state and university institutions were engaged in. This is partly where the idea that decolonisation could signal the need for a more directed, urgent process than transformation, arose. Even as this was not a new process on the continent and was not without its own challenges and shortcomings, RMF was willing to try and make anew a radical process of change that they were calling decolonisation for their time. South Africa, it was becoming clearer to all, partly through students' radical action and critique of the status quo, was a story of yet another transition to democracy that failed to fundamentally change either the institutions or systems of governance and therefore also the lives of the majority of black people.

Significantly, it was also a critique of what many, especially white people, understood as the most lauded transition into democracy on the African continent and of the 20th century. The South African transition has been hailed by the global community as the least violent transition out of colonialism.[20] The measure of this claim is the talk of how civil war was averted by Mandela who, along with FW De Klerk[21], the last Apartheid Prime Minister of South Africa, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. The award ceremony speech lays this out in the introductory paragraph:

> "The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 1993 to Nelson R. Mandela and Frederik Willem de Klerk for their work for the peaceful termination of the apartheid regime, and for laying the foundations for a new, democratic

[20] Oupa Lehulere challenges the idea that the transition averted violence by pointing out the more than eleven-thousand community activists who were killed during the 1990 to 1994 period. See Lehulere, O. "The long shadow of the De Klerk regime." *Pambazuka News*, 23 March 2017.

[21] De Klerk recently was in the news for stating on national television that he did not believe apartheid was a crime against humanity. For a link to the interview and reporting on the outrage it caused, including a call for his Nobel Peace Prize to be withdrawn see Young, N. A misguided attempt by FW de Klerk to reframe apartheid's impact damages his legacy. In *Quartz Africa*, 26 February 2020. Accessed on 7 March 2020 at url: https://qz.com/africa/1808502/south-africa-fw-de-klerk-tried-to-reframe-apartheids-impact/

South Africa".[22]

What was left out of this equation was how structural violence continued through growing inequality caused by the wholesale adoption of the neoliberal agenda in the late 1990s that was gripping the world. McKinley, who has written two books about the ANC National Liberation Movement turned government, argues that decolonisation needs to be more than simply deracialisation. He explained that it:

> "is just as much about the conceptualisation, conscientisation and practice of power that is realised through an array of means, whether they be economic, racial, ethnic, religious, coercive, institutional, political, sexual or gendered".[23]

While RMF was re-racing South Africa, Boersema argues that this refocusing on the race lens was a move by RMF to criticise and point out the failures of the liberal non-racial democratic transition that, as McKinley explained, needed to be more than deracialisation. Boersema understands the RMF re-racing as part of the growing international anti-racist movement championed by, for example, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement coming out of the United States of America (USA).[24]

At a university level, there was a growing consensus and articulation by students that the university remained a colonial institution that, in addition to reproducing society, was reproducing it in the colonial form through the Eurocentric knowledge project it continued to espouse.[25] Epistemic violence was understood as another layer of the violences, added to economic and political violence that was inflicted on black South Africans even after the fall of legal apartheid.[26] RMF's insistence on re-centring race as an important unit of analysis or lens to understand "post-apartheid" social life challenged the traditional radical or left proposition that class was the key unit of analysis in progressive circles. In doing so, RMF also tackled head on the "rainbow nation myth" or the liberal version of non-racialism, which was more of a post-race position that took a "race-doesn't-matter anymore" position, rather than a more explicit anti-racist one. It was also critiquing and showing the

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[22] Read the full award speech here https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1993/ceremony-speech/

[23] Read an extract from the book here https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2017-02-21-sas-corporatised-liberation-a-critical-analysis-of-the-anc-in-power-extract/

[24] See Chapter 8 in particular.

[25] Pillay, S. "Decolonising the university," *Africa is a Country*, 2015.

[26] Heleta, S. "Decolonisation of higher education: Dismantling epistemic violence and Eurocentrism in South Africa." *Transformation in Higher Education* 1, no. 1 (2016): 9.

failure of the project of assimilation or simple deracialisation of South Africa pointed out by McKinley.

This reiteration of the importance of race analysis in understanding social life or the re-racing[27] of struggle, was agreeable to the "black patriarchs" or cishet[28] male students in the RMF who insisted on race as the primary lens to understanding oppression. Women students, who formed a central part of RMF and who were engaging with black radical feminist literature while agreeing with the re-racing of the struggle, pushed back against centring only the race lens and pushed for recognition of the gender lens in understanding society. Patriarchy was therefore also recognised as part of the structural conditions, along with white supremacy, that shaped the black experiences of oppression and privilege at UCT. Queer and LGBTIAQ+[29] students in RMF pushed this further to include a critique of heteronormativity[30]. What emerged was an attempt at an intersectional understanding of the social and, in particular, multiple experiences of oppression and privilege of blackness itself. The class analysis returns strongly or is more explicitly centred in RMF's analysis through understanding racial-capitalism and the inter-related nature of class and race.[31]

The aim of my research was to explore the intense and significant intellectual production by RMF students during the student-led resistance at UCT in 2015. The question my thesis explored was what the process of intellectual production was in RMF, and how it emerged at UCT, such that student intellectuals produced the most critical questions and analyses of the social condition they inhabited. The thesis broadly has two parts. The first is an engagement with the idea of 'entailment' and how black intellectuals have responded to this idea in relation to intellectual work. Chapter One is titled "Black intellectuals and the force of entailment".

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[27] Boersema, J. *Re-racing South Africa: Rhodes Must Fall as Antiracist Movement*. Unpublished draft paper, 30 September 2017. Accessed July 1, 2019. https://politicsandprotest.ws.gc.cuny.edu/files/2017/10/Re-racing-South-Africa-Boersema.pdf

[28] "Cishet, used as both an adjective and a noun, describes a person who is both cisgender and heterosexual. A person is cishet if he or she is cisgender, meaning identifying with his or her assigned-at-birth gender, as well as heterosexual, or attracted exclusively to people of the opposite sex". Queer Dictionary, sv. "Cishet", accessed on March 12, 2020. http://queerdictionary.blogspot.com/2014/09/definition-of-cishet.html

[29] Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, intersex, a-sexual, queer + other identities.

[30] "Heternormativity is the belief or assumption that all people are heterosexual, or that heterosexuality is the default or 'normal' state of human being". Queer Dictionary, sv. "Heternormativity" accessed on March 12, 2020. http://queerdictionary.blogspot.com/2014/09/definition-of-heteronormativity.html

[31] Discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine.

Chapter Two: Entailment as method explores what an engagement and ethic of entailment looks like as it relates to method. Chapter Three titled "A racist institution: historical reflections on white liberalism at the University of Cape Town" includes a reflection on the history of UCT and in particular, its racism. Lastly, Chapter Four titled "Alienation as pain: conditions for resistance to assimilation" is an introduction through their brief education-focused biographies of a selection of the RMF student intellectuals who made this thesis possible by contributing to the making of RMF and by being generous enough to reflect with me through various interview processes and many conversions.

The second part of this thesis encompasses Chapters Five to Ten, which together tell one of the stories of RMF, also archiving in one document more detail on the events and experiments presented as thirteen key moments. These key moments, in my reading, were informed by and contributed to the development of black student intellectuals.

In Chapter Five: Disruption and the Creation of Alliance, I discuss the following moments:

(1) The shit-statue protest – Monday 9 March 2015
(2) The mass meeting on Jammie Steps – 12 March 2015
(3) The heritage, signage and symbolism disruption – 16 March 2015

In Chapter Six: Azania House occupation: creative disruption and reflective space, I discuss the following moment:

(4) Azania One Occupation –20 March to 12 April 2015

In Chapter Seven: Creative Disruptions extending Azania House, I discuss the following moments:

(5) Sarah Bartmann Performance –25 March 2015
(6) UCT General Assembly – 25 March 2015

In Chapter Eight: Writing dangerously: evictions, publication and mediation, I discuss the following moments:

(7) Afrophobia protest – 16 April 2015
(8) Intellectual work continues
(9) Mediation

In Chapter Nine: Building student-worker solidarity and the class question, I discuss the following moments:

(10) Marikana Campaign – August 2015
(11) Piketty Protest – 30 September 2015

(12) October 6 2015 – Student-worker alliance and the fight for outsourcing to fall
(13) Fees Must Fall – 13 October 2015

In Chapter Ten, titled "Discussion: A radical distributed project", I pull out nine claims that I put forward as my work on theorising the practice and process of black RMF student intellectuals, which encourage us to think more capaciously and creatively about the possible processes of intellectual work we need going forward. These nine claims are made throughout Part Two of the thesis but are embedded in the telling of the 13 moments to indicate my thinking work in my doing of the writing work. This is a skill and style of writing that I am committed to doing better at.

Chapter One: Black Intellectuals and the Force of Entailment

This thesis tracks the development of the RMF movement at UCT in 2015. While the thesis covers the ground of the movement, its central object is the creation of black student intellectuals in and through the movement. I have chosen this as the primary object for the thesis because in following the movement very closely I understand that the production of a rigorous critical intellectual life for the students at the heart of the movement was central to its expansive mobilisation against colonialism and multiple forms of oppression, the movement's major work.

The thesis follows the emergence of black student intellectuals in and through a selection of key moments during the 2015 student mobilisation. It argues that students' *collective critical reflective labour* along with the *creative disruptions* of the status quo of the university produced a historic cadre of young Black intellectuals, a production that was central to the building of the movement, but also one of the movement's most striking outcomes. In this chapter, I lay out some conceptual ground for understanding what a black student intellectual might be, tracking key texts and debates in theorising intellectuals and intellectual work. My aim is to describe a key component of black intellectual work as a reckoning with *entailment* in political and historical process, which is always – since at least the beginning of transatlantic slavery – a reckoning with a white supremacist oppressive condition. I hope to read the work of RMF students against several central ideas in the writing on intellectuals to show how they came to be intellectuals through the movement, in spite of and in antagonism with the university's standard curriculum and pedagogy. Their refusal of the university as a pedagogical and curriculated space provided a critical turning that was the condition for becoming intellectuals.

1.1 Gramsci and the opening of the category of the intellectual

Gramsci's often-cited *Prison Notebooks*, specifically his distinction between two types of intellectuals, "traditional" intellectuals and "organic" intellectuals, is critical as a starting point for this study.[32] In particular his distinction allows for an understanding of how a formal university academic life can resemble intellectual work, has the function of intellectual work, but certainly does not encompass it. Gramsci famously wrote in 1947 that "all men are intellectuals… but not all

[32] Gramsci, A. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci.* Edited and translated by Quentin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. London: ElecBook, 1999.

men have in society the function of intellectuals".[33] Whereas the specific and recognisable intellectual function was given repository in the university and other centres of explicit, experimental learning, Gramsci insisted that professional intellectual careers were only one site for the expression of intellectual liveliness. What he did in developing the idea of the "organic intellectual" was to throw open the possibilities for conceptualising where and by whom intellectual work takes place. The organic intellectual was not attributed the social role of intellectual – increasingly associated with the university as an institution – but nevertheless engages in the work of producing and directing ideas. The difference is that the organic intellectual works with ideas in, from and towards working class life.

Gramsci's recognition was crucial in opening an imagination about what counts as intellectual work, and in showing intellectual work as having specific (in this case class) interests that orient and situate the distribution of ideas in society. In the context of capitalist society, intellectual work is necessarily either allied to the reproduction of capitalist values or critical of them. This allowed for the distinction of the kind of intellectual work that is oriented towards the reproduction of class society or that which is oriented towards creating dissent to the status quo and the refusal of bourgeois capitalist values.

1.2 Edward Said's exiled intellectual

Edward Said, in his famous Reith Lectures, published as *Representations of Intellectuals*, takes Gramsci as the starting point for his definition of the intellectual.[34] He shows how Gramsci's distributed idea of the intellectual is helpful in recognising where intellectual work is being done, and helpful in understanding how this work gains a particular character because of the quality of the society in which s/he lives, its situatedness.

> "[T]he intellectual is an individual endowed with a faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public. And this role has an edge to it, and cannot be played without a sense of being someone whose place it is publicly to raise embarrassing questions, to confront orthodoxy and dogma (rather than to produce them), to be someone who cannot easily be co-opted by governments or corporations, and whose *rasion d'être* is to represent all those people and issues that are routinely forgotten or swept under the

[33] Ibid, 1990, 140.

[34] Said, E. *Representations of the Intellectual: the 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage Books, 1996.

rug".[35]

Said's definition of the intellectual is explicitly crafted as a condition of the outside, the oppositional, a reminder of the marginalised and forgotten. He finds Gramsci's traditional intellectuals to be less deserving of the title than the organic intellectuals because for Said at the heart of intellectual work is the capacity to question and irritate settled power, and the *amateur* is more able to do that than the professional intellectual. The condition of exile – his own condition as a Palestinian – is a useful context and metaphor for his description of intellectual work because it is a condition that "will not make the adjustment"[36] to the workings of power and its capacity to displace and exclude. Exile is the ideal condition for the intellectual because it is based in "restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled and unsettling others".[37] Interestingly, when Said has to typify who best fits his framing of the intellectual, even though he spends a lot of time with Adorno and Sartre in the lectures, he lands on black writers and agitators James Baldwin and Malcolm X:

> "[T]here can be little doubt that figures like Baldwin and Malcolm X define the kind of work that has most influenced my own representations of the intellectual's consciousness. It is a spirit in opposition, rather than in accommodation, that grips me because the romance, the interest, the challenge of intellectual life is to be found in dissent against the status quo at a time when the underrepresented and disadvantaged groups seem so unfairly weighted against them. My background in Palestinian politics has further intensified this sense".[38]

If for Said, black intellectuals are at the heart of his definition of intellectual work, they are underrepresented in much literature on intellectuals.[39] So much of the writing on intellectuals in publication do not seem to consider the black intellectual tradition, certainly not any African tradition, as worthy of inclusion. For example, in *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait*, a large edited collection defining a spectrum of ideas concerning 20th century intellectuals, it is writers from America, France, England and Russia who are showcased, and nothing about the

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[35] Ibid. p. 11.

[36] Ibid. p. 52.

[37] Ibid. p. 53.

[38] Ibid. p. xvii.

[39] For a notable exception, which focusses on a black intellectual specifically, and an important engagement with Edward Said's conceptualisation of the intellectual see Omar, Yunus. "In my stride": a life-history of Alie Fataar, teacher. PHD Thesis, University of Cape Town, 2015.

African continent is included.[40] Another volume edited by Paul Johnson, titled *Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky,* seems to simply avoid black and women intellectuals, with a token here or there for effect.[41]

Said's position and experience as a colonised person forced out of his homeland allows for him to acknowledge the depth of intellectual work that has accompanied the anti-colonial and anti-racist struggle that has followed the history of empire. He comments on how the public output of the intellectual is never separated from the broader socio-political context as well as personal context in which these ideas are produced. He explains his work as "… quite [a] complicated mix between the private and the public worlds, my own history, values, writings and positions as they derive from my experiences, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, how these enter into the social world where - people debate and make decisions about war and freedom and justice".[42]

Yet while Said's framing pushes the definition of the intellectual strongly into the territory of opposition, and towards a history of black and anticolonial struggle, it still draws heavily on the idea of the intellectual as a lone figure standing against the tide of dogma and power. Throughout his lectures, intellectual work takes on the quality of loneliness, sadness, and separateness. He retains a specialness, a romance even, when describing individual intellectuals and their particular struggle with the world in which they find themselves.

1.3 Wallerstein and the impossibility of value neutrality

A short but important essay on intellectuals has grounded a lot of my thinking in the writing of this thesis. Immanuel Wallerstein's "The sociologist and the public sphere" appeared in 2007 as part of a collection of essays on *Public Sociology*, oriented around Michael Burawoy's seminal "For public sociology".[43] Whereas Burawoy asserts that a specifically *public* sociology "brings sociology into conversation with publics"[44], Wallerstein argues that "all sociologists [and others with the function

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[40] De Huszar, George B (Ed.). *The Intellectuals: A Controversial Portrait*. Illinois: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.

[41] Johnson, Paul. *Intellectuals: From Marx and Tolstoy to Sartre and Chomsky.* London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Limited, 1988.

[42] Said, E. *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures*. New York: Vintage Books,1996, 12.

[43] Wallerstein, E. "The Sociologist and the Public Sphere." In *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics* edited by D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstel, R. Stokes, and D. Anderton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 169-175.

[44] Burawoy, M. "For Public Sociology." In *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics* edited by D.

of the intellectual] – living, dead, or yet to be born – are, and cannot be other than, public sociologists".[45] In this he means that all people who are trying to explicitly make sense of the world are always in conversation with an audience, always making claims and meaning that have consequences in the world, and always taking a stand on matters, even if they pretend that they are not doing so. The idea of ever being able to evade or escape the condition of being in the world and in relation to the world, is ludicrous to Wallerstein. Any claim that intellectual work can escape the world, or be value neutral, is simply false.

Wallerstein suggests that there are – always – three *functions* embedded in any instance of work by an intellectual/scholar/scientist. These functions are linked, they are sequential, and they can never be evaded. The first is the *intellectual* function of analysis described as "seeking the most plausible analysis of the issues being investigated, both in detail and in their context". The second is the *moral* function "… that of evaluating the moral implications of the realities being investigated". Thirdly, Wallerstein posits the *political* function to "… analyse the best way of effectuating a realization of the moral good as the intellectual has analysed it".[46] By suggesting that there are always intellectual, moral and political functions in every act of intellectual labour insists that no-one is ever exempt from them, and that value-laden, politically engaged and morally significant work is happening every time anyone makes knowledge about the world. For Wallerstein, the problem is that most knowledge-makers are not obliged to think and act on this fact because they are so close to the terms of the world that they don't have to explain themselves. They don't have to be honest about what they are in fact practicing in and on the world:

> "This is the trap of the false claim of value neutrality, which asserts that the scientist scholar is capable of isolating (and should perform only) the intellectual task and allow others (or oneself at other moments of time) to perform the moral and political tasks. In making this claim one is burying (and thereby denying) the implicit moral and political choices that are in fact being made. But hiding them (from others and from oneself) does not mean that they are not being made. It simply means that it becomes more difficult openly to discuss these choices and therefore to discuss the implications these choices have for the validity of the intellectual work being done or not being done".[47]

Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstel, R. Stokes, and D. Anderton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

[45] Wallerstein, "The Sociologist and the Public Sphere," 174.

[46] Ibid. 171.

[47] Ibid. 171.

The idea of intellectuals being more honest about what they are doing is important for this thesis. Firstly, it suggests a way of understanding the non-neutrality of intellectuals, which not only allows for the academic staff and the curricula of the University to be understood as serving a particular political and moral function, but also assists me in trying to understand how students were working towards exposing the University's knowledge practices, defining the "hidden curriculum"[48] built into the colonial university's project, and taking over the terms of that knowledge project, even for a short time, to craft a new set of terms for the knowledge project of the University of Cape Town. None of this was ever value-neutral, but the students tried to make the conversation honest. The exposure of the University's presentation of itself, in how it was itself entailed in the violence of the colonial library and society, in how it continued to entail students in that colonial project, was the making-honest of the university project by black students who were thought to be in need of tutelage. In fact, black students became the intellectuals and educators of a dishonest university institution, in so doing creating themselves as the more persuasive intellectuals. Wallerstein's honest intellectual gives me an image to work with in describing the work the RMF students took on in the belly of the white university.

Wallerstein's argument that we are all implicated in some way in the reproduction or refusal of the terms of the social order in which we find ourselves, that we are all implicated in the moral and political terms of the world when we make knowledge and meaning of the world, creates an awareness of the *entailment* of our thinking and our praxis at all times in the real complex terms of the world. This is a position and a sensibility that is well known in the black radical tradition, and I want to spend the rest of this chapter thinking through some of the propositions on intellectual work in that tradition because it has great bearing on the work that the students of RMF were doing.

1.4 Black intellectuals

Because of slavery, colonialism and then apartheid, South African and other Black intellectual history is underrepresented in the literature of intellectuals in Southern Africa. The function or work of traditional intellectuals (academics, writers, preachers, doctors) were reserved for the white settler population, and then increasingly the small number of educated black elite who were trained through settler schools and churches. There therefore needs to be an expansion of the category of

[48] The "hidden curriculum" forms part of what is being learned in a classroom or at an educational institution but is not explicitly named as something being taught or expected to be learned. Giroux, Henry A. Developing Educational Programs: Overcoming the Hidden Curriculum. In *The Clearing House, Vol. 52, No. 4* (Dec., 1978), 148-151.

intellectual as well as an understanding and appreciation for the pre-colonial Southern African context that in the main passed down knowledge and thinking orally rather than through traditional written texts. The Black intellectual in post-apartheid South Africa has come under fire in the last few years for a number of reasons - not taking the lead in writing the history of black intellectual traditions[49]; university-based intellectuals being understood as suffering subtle forms of censorship which has limited their role as public intellectuals, when they are challenging the state or ruling party; the lack of critique from public intellectuals when government make unbelievably bad and deadly decisions (like the Marikana Massacre of 2012 or sending troops to their death in the Central African Republic in 2013); to name a few examples.[50]

One of the chapters in a book titled *The Poverty of Ideas: South African Democracy and the Retreat of the Intellectuals*, focuses on what it calls the pseudo-intellectuals in South Africa by defining four kinds of intellectuals namely, the "celebrity intellectual", the "commercial intellectual", the "policy analyst" and the "new gender activist" separated out from the "real intellectuals.[51] The celebrity intellectual is understood to seek fame and fortune by providing the soundbites needed especially on social problems understood as scandals to mass media. It is also explained that "… it is ideology and theory that shapes their consciousness, not practice informed by social reality".[52] Commercial intellectuals are interested in making different kinds of profits by controlling different forms of thought and having a monopoly of ideas while conforming to "acceptable standards of conduct for television and radio talk shows and at public meetings" and are seen as establishing their authority to speak by "fuzzy" means like the name dropping of powerful scholars or politicians.[53] Importantly, the claim is that commercial intellectuals do not have what is described as a social consciousness.

The "policy analyst" is said to be found in the education, private and state sectors and is focused on quick fix project proposals, protective over their "policy-turf", not keen on conceptual and

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[49] Mangcu. X. "The Rhodes debate: My biggest fear is that we will find ourselves in a racial civil war." *News 24*, March 29, 2015. https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/The-Rhodes-debate-My-biggest-fear-is-that-we-will-find-ourselves-in-a-racial-civil-war-20150430

[50] Jansen, 2009; Dumisa, Bonke, "On the marginalisation of black intellectuals," *Politicsweb*, December 9, 2013, https://www.politicsweb.co.za/news-and-analysis/on-the-marginalisation-of-black-intellectuals; Munsamy, 2013.

[51] Dikeni, L. "South Africa and the Pseudo-Intellectuals." *Pambazuka News: Voices for Freedom and Justice*, December 23, 2009. https://www.pambazuka.org/governance/south-africa-and-pseudo-intellectuals

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid.

theoretical thinking because it takes up too much time and sitting concurrently on many boards. In this group there is also the pragmatist intellectual who is sincerely interested in transforming South Africa but is overly focused on policy analysis and construction without policy critique; their intellectual activity is confined to an elitist and pragmatic paradigm and their language is the same as that of the dominant class; they simplistically see the state as bad and the citizen as good; or the direct opposite when operating from inside state institutions where they oppose and dismiss any critique of the state. Lastly, the "new late-arriving gender activist" is distinguished from the women activists who are said to have struggled alongside other actors in the anti-apartheid movement in ways that these new gender activists do not. They are critiqued for using the equity laws for narrow private gain and for contradicting themselves by enjoying Western luxury while arguing publicly in favour of traditional practices to be maintained; they are said to subscribe to a narrow definition of women's rights and are not interested in working to transform social attitudes and behaviour.

Dikeni posits that:

> "…as an intellectual one possesses intellectual capital (a specific form of power) and invariably influences society. As an intellectual, one is ethically accountable to a set of values which favour the disadvantaged, the poor and the marginalised… being non-elitist, selfless, inclusive, ethical and accountable to the marginalised in society. (O)ur new democracy with its various economic constraints … requires rather a socially aware intellectual – people who will continually think with and for society without concern for the self".[54]

He details how the pseudo-intellectuals in South Africa all seem to lack in social consciousness and a commitment to intellectual work that is not self-serving, where the critical project may well entail that one is socially alienated because one's thinking, and ideas are not beholden to those in power.

The frustration at the role played by black intellectuals and the lack of the history of black intellectuals has been expressed by critiquing their lack of involvement recently described as much less than under apartheid. There has also been another kind of attack on black intellectuals at the end of 2012 when then President Zuma infamously said black people "…become too clever, … they become the most eloquent in criticising themselves about their own traditions and everything". This created a nationwide uproar such that everyone understood the term "clever black" and cemented the idea that the current government had become anti-intellectual. Shortly after this,

[54] Ibid

Intellectual Traditions in South Africa: Ideas, Individuals and Institutions[55] was published, which is a bold initial attempt at tracking thirteen intellectual traditions in South Africa through looking at the key ideas (Liberalism, Marxism, Afrikaner intellectual history, and South African Positivism), individuals (African Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness, Gandhian ways, Feminism) and institutions (Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Islamic intellectual traditions) that have shaped intellectual inquiry here.

In Southern Africa, as mentioned, it is difficult to track intellectual traditions before missionisation, as intellectual traditions in the region were oral, and missionisation brought the technology of writing to Southern Africa such that recorded evidence of black intellectual activity became available. In an essay considering "whether there was a branch of knowledge in black Africa which could legitimately be referred to as "philosophy"," Archie Mafeje posits that while the "… question might have been emotive or even racist… from a formalistic point of view, it is hard to conceive of philosophy in its systematized form in pre-literate societies". Substantively, it is equally hard to imagine peoples, without some conceptions of, or ideas about the meaning of existence, notions of being and its imperatives/logic, and the purpose of mankind in the universe.[56] Early newspapers were an important platform for the development of a written intellectual life for black South Africans. A history of black Southern African intellectual lives therefore only become available to us from the 19th century. There have been a number of writings by South African intellectuals from the 19th century on. An important edited book tracing an intellectual tradition that could be understood as Xhosa, titled *African Intellectuals in 19th and 20th century South Africa* highlights the contribution of five African intellectuals from the Eastern Cape, namely Tiyo Soga, John Tengo Jabavu, Walter Benson Rubusana, Samual Edward Krune Mqhayi and Nstikana. They wrote mostly in English, but there are a few exceptions such as Nstikana who was a Xhosa poet and the Zulu intellectual, Magema Fuze who according to Hlonipha Mokoena[57] was a printer, scribe and historian who formed part of the kholwa intellectual tradition. According to Ndletyana:

> "… early African intellectuals were a product of the missionary enterprise and the British

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[55] Vale, P., L. Hamilton, and E. Prinsloo (Eds.). *Intellectual Traditions in South Africa: Ideas, Individuals and Institutions.* Durban: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press, 2014.

[56] Mafeje, A. *The Theory and Ethnography of African Social Formations: The Case of the Interlacustrine Kingdoms.* London: Codesria, 1991, 1, sic.

[57] Mokoena, H. *Magema Fuze: The Making of a Kholwa Intellectual*. Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2011.

> civilising mission. They were part of a new middle class that the colonial agents wanted as a buffer between colonial society and the rest of the indigenous population. Members of this middle class were also intended to become agents of the civilising mission themselves. They were Christian converts (and later priests), and graduates of missionary schools. Many of them went on to play leading roles in the various aspects of the emerging modern society. Beneficiaries of the civilising mission they were, yet they refused to define themselves in the image of their colonial benefactors. Rather, they re-defined themselves, combining the best of the two worlds into what became a modern African identity and a unique contribution to South African modernity".[58]

If black men intellectuals are underrepresented in writings by and about intellectuals, then black women intellectuals are almost entirely absent. Although these black intellectuals have been mostly written out of the South African canon, there is currently a small but growing set of research projects on black women and men intellectuals that is very exciting. The new student movement has also escalated the concern about the lack of black authored texts in curricula and the continued dominance of the academic profession by white scholars' post-apartheid.

I am interested in how the definition of the intellectual has been expanded and critiqued to make space for a view of black and women intellectuals. There has been considerable writing on mostly black men intellectuals in the 20th century from the Negritude movement, which started in France and in the USA from the Black Power and civil rights movement, as well as black South African intellectuals through the nationalist movement spearheaded by the ANC and later by the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) and the Black Consciousness Movement (BCM). What we notice with these writings is that they almost always come out of a movement working to transform society for the oppressed, often black person (in this case also centering black men). This positions the black intellectual as always needing to write from a position of difference and anti-hegemony. This is interesting. It gives an indication of the work that black intellectuals do, and have done. They create from a position of being entailed in a system of power and oppression. Their creativity is explicitly tied to the project of social critique, is itself a mode of political engagement. This is an obligation that white and men thinkers do not feel in the same way. They are not obliged to feel in the same way.

It is important to recognise that there have been black intellectuals that try to refuse this positionality on grounds that it is unfair that blacks should be burdened with the responsibilities of

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[58] Ndletyana, M. *African Intellectuals in 19th and 20th century South Africa.* Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2008.

the social condition of knowledge in ways that whites are not. There has been some effort to free black thinkers from this burden in an effort to allow them to think as whites do and can. Sono, for example, in his book titled *Dilemmas of African Intellectuals in South Africa*, claims that there is only one type of true intellectual namely the secular intellectual that is neutral and not influenced by politics, and is also able to "transcend specific localism and particularism" and participate in a "universal culture".[59] He posits three basic reasons for the failure of any African culture to develop an intellectual tradition. Firstly, that any potential intellectual was enticed by the context to work against the oppressive system. Secondly, that political imperatives trumped philosophical speculation or analytical reasoning in intellectuals' thought, resulting in ideology trumping idealism. Thirdly, and the focus of his book, the "…deep-seated cognitive handicap and intellectual dearth in South Africa – as perhaps in much of Africa – is the tyrannical custom of African culture itself".[60] Sono problematically describes his study as being animated "… by a basic general condition: there is a singular lack of philosophical imagination and scientific curiosity among African intellectuals in South Africa", and that "… if it is true that reading maketh a person, then surely non-reading maketh nobody".[61] The claim of his book - that African culture stands in the way of developing African intellectuals, is a fundamentally conservative claim. It holds that blacks should be able to think like whites.

bell hooks writes a chapter in two books specifically engaging feminism and with black women intellectuals in the US who remain underrepresented in the academy.[62] She notes how she struggled to find scholarly work that dealt with her lived experience and that what she did find was "… that when "women" were talked about, the experience of white women was universalized to stand for all female experience and that when "black people" were talked about, the experience of black men was the point of reference".[63] The writing of many black women scholars (Cellestine Ware, Toni Cade Bambara, Michelle Wallace, Barbara Smith, Angela Davis) that emerged was therefore to rectify the exclusion of the "black female" presence, but it was also to highlight the intersecting

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[59] Sono, T. *Dilemmas of African intellectuals in South Africa: Political and cultural constraints*. Pretoria: University of South Africa, African Discourse Series, 1994.

[60] Ibid, xiii

[61] Ibid, xix

[62] See also the important feminist journal *Feminist Africa* at http://www.agi.ac.za/agi/feminist-africa, which is dedicated to the question of intellectual politics and critically engages with the challenges faced by women in the academy and more broadly in the world of ideas.

[63] hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge, 1994, 120-121.

forms of oppression that black women scholars experienced from the sexism experienced in the black community and white academy, to the racism experienced from feminist women scholars and the white academy. A key concern preventing black women scholars from discussing, thinking and writing from a feminist perspective was the hostile responses they found themselves on the receiving end of from the black community, the lack of institutional rewards for such work further complicated by the insitutionalised racism and sexism of the academy, and the likely alienation of black men allies in the academy.[64] Interestingly she highlights how black women writing fiction (for example Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, Ntozake Shange) created intense critical debates about feminism and gender in diverse black communities. As a result, one finds many black feminist writings in the field of literary criticism, garnering much more attention by scholars such as Hazel Carby, Hortense Spillers, Valerie Smith, Mae Hendersen and Beverly Guy-Sheftall.

In 2001, the journal *The Black Scholar* dedicated two volumes to discussing the roles and responsibilities of the black intellectual. The first article by Holloway entitled "The Black Intellectual and the 'Crisis Canon' in the Twentieth Century", which describes the writings about black intellectuals as always revolving "…around a crisis of the moment or the crisis of living in a world where many believe the words "black" and "intellectual" are mutually exclusive".[65] He goes on to say that even though the position of black intellectuals in the academy has improved such that some have been invited in to Harvard University, the writings are now focused on "the way they should perform and what their vision should encompass", at the expense of examining their ideas. [66]

But the work of the intellectual is not simply confined to written texts, although this is the most easily recognisable form of intellectual labour. Cornel West (1985) speaks of grand black intellectual achievements rather than traditions. He suggests that the two organic intellectual traditions in Afro-American life that do exist are The Black Christian Tradition of preaching happening in the sphere of religion and The Black Musical Tradition of performance taking place in the sphere of popular and/or sub-culture, which have produced great preachers and musicians whose work are linked to the life of the mind, but that are "…oral, improvisational, and histrionic".[67] This is interesting to compare to black South Africans as here too we have a history of education and

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[64] Ibid.

[65] Holloway, J.S. "The Black Intellectual and the 'Crisis Canon' in the Twentieth Century." *The Black Scholar* 31, No. 1 (Spring 2001), 3.

[66] Ibid, 2-13.

[67] West, C. "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual," *Cultural Critique*, No. 1 (Autumn, 1985), 114.

thinking passed down through oral tradition and have produced some amazing thinkers who come through similar traditions of music and preaching. West identifies the reason for a lack of a tradition of black intellectuals in the USA as being the result of the lack of literate forms of intellectual traditions in the black community. West sees, then, different routes into becoming an intellectual – through knowledge specialisation and through non-traditional or organic means of critical popular and/or subcultural creativity.

Vernacular intellectuals, according to Farred, start their analyses and conceptualisation by addressing "… issues of the day that directly affect their community".[68] They are working not just to translate the abstract and conceptual into the popular, but also the other way around by translating the "…interests of the populace into, and as, metaphors of the popular".[69] This idea suggests that a criterion for being intellectual relates to the voice the intellectual promotes. Giroux (1990) relates to the idea of voice in schooling when he discusses what he calls textual authority. The voices, which are amplified and and/or silenced through, for example, choices in curriculum and textbooks, form textual authority. He also identifies student voice in the classroom as a way of challenging the dominant hegemony of the curriculum. He argues that the teacher as professional would not necessarily be conscious of textual authority or even voice, whereas the teacher as intellectual would be able to draw the students' attention to issues of voice and therefore also concepts such as hegemony as example. Teachers who understand their role to include that of intellectual would be able to diversify and interrupt the textual authority by for example, adding to the examples suggested by a curriculum or a particular textbook, or by allowing for students' lived experiences through their voice, to form part of the texts of a given classroom. The views (Gramsci, Freire, Giroux, Farred) that call into relation theory and practice put lived experience (through voice) at the forefront of thinking about who intellectuals are, and why people become intellectuals.

West, in an essay titled *The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual*, described how black intellectuals tend to emerge:

> "The reasons some black people choose to become serious intellectuals are diverse. But in most cases these reasons can be traced back to a common root: a conversion-like experience with a highly influential teacher or peer that convinced one to dedicate one's life to the activities of reading, writing, and conversing for the purposes of individual pleasure, personal worth, and political enhancement of black

[68] Farred, G. *What's my name? Black Vernacular Intellectuals*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003, 22.

[69] Ibid, 22.

(and often other oppressed) people".[70]

West shows how the pleasure and fulfilment of intellectual labour for blacks is connected to the promise of freedom from racial and class oppression while hooks[71] similarly shows the connection to the promise of freedom from gender and sexual oppression. The two are intimately linked for the black intellectual, and are expressed through a range of creative endeavours, not only through writing. So even elite black intellectuals working in universities have in the origins of their intellectual life a concern with the social and political potentiality of knowledge and learning, not only in their own lives but also as a means of making the world right. hooks notes that "(b)lack intellectuals have emerged from all classes and conditions of life" and that "… the decision to consciously pursue an intellectual path has always been an exceptional and difficult choice", that "… we have been moved, pushed, even, in the direction of intellectual work by forces stronger than that of individual will".[72] She also points to how intellectual work is not considered activism in progressive circles because of the anti-intellectual society we live in, where marches and pickets and other acts of resistance are elevated.

Du Bois described this formation of black life and thought as "double consciousness", the capacity to hold the black experience and the white world in mind at the same time. West shows various ways in which the black intellectual has formulated this: he shows four models of black intellectual activity, namely the Bourgeois Model: Black Intellectual as Humanist; the Marxist Model: Black Intellectual as Revolutionary; the Foucaultian Model: Black Intellectual as Post Modern Skeptic; and lastly, the model he proposes as a way forward for black intellectuals, the Insurgency Model: Black Intellectual as Critical Organic Catalyst. The starting point he suggests for this new fourth model of being an intellectual (the Insurgency Model) is one of critical self-inventory that is not motivated by either self-pity or self-satisfaction. West suggests that this model is the preferred, because it builds on the first three in various ways, but he also suggests that by the black intellectual understanding the conditions and contexts in which they operate, s/he should engage in *both* critique and resistance. This is a step towards suggesting that black and indeed any intellectual is influenced by their personal history, position and classification in the world, but also that specifically for the black and women intellectual living in a racist, sexist, classist world, the ideals

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[70] West, C. "The Dilemma of the Black Intellectual," *Cultural Critique*, No. 1 (Autumn, 1985), 110.

[71] hooks, bell. *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge, 1994, 120-121.

[72] hooks, b. and West, C. *Breaking bread: insurgent Black intellectual life.* Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991.

of insurgency and resistance should be high up on their agenda alongside critique itself. It recognizes the non-neutrality of the intellectual, and that black (and women) intellectuals hold a particular relationship to the dilemma of non-neutrality. Black writers and intellectuals tend to be held to a consideration of the relationship between knowledge and context to a greater extent than their white counterparts because of their particular entailment in that context, because of their experience of oppression and their experience of the lack of adequate knowledge to address it.

Following from Said, however, most of these formulations of the black intellectual tend to valourise the individual intellectual as being the bearer of the mantle of intellectual work. The isolatable intellectual, separate from the group, becomes the basis for being able to claim intellectual stature. It is perhaps unsurprising then, that the ideal subjectivity of "the intellectual" is that of the white man. There is almost no literature that is able to give shape to a theory of intellectual work that comes from collective black practice, that situates intelligence or intellectual liveliness in the context of collective conversation and dialogue. Perhaps Freire's pedagogies of praxis come closest.[73] But there is also a recent text that makes a very interesting claim about the collective intelligence of the group, the black group. Saidiya Hartman's *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* ends with a commitment to what she calls the "Chorus" and the "minor figure".

> "You can find her in the group of beautiful thugs and too fast girls congregating on the corner and humming the latest rag, or lingering in front of Wanamaker's…. The reformers and sociologists come in search of the truly disadvantaged failing to see her and her friends as thinkers or planners, or to notice the beautiful experiments crafted by poor black girls".[74]

> "Muses, drudges, washerwomen, whores, houseworkers, factory girls, waitresses, and aspiring by never-to-be stars make up this company, gather in the circle and fall into the line where all particularity and distinction fade away. One girl can stand in for any of them… convey the knowledge of freedom disguised as jargon and nonsense. Few understand them, study them like they are worth something… If you listen closely you can hear the whole world in a bent note, a throwaway lyric, a singular thread of collective utterance… The chorus bears all of it for us. The Greek etymology of the word chorus refers to dance within an enclosure. What better articulates the long history of struggle, the ceaseless practice of black radicalism and refusal, the tumult and upheaval of open rebellion than the acts of

[73] Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. London: Penguin Books, 1970.

[74] Hartman, S. *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments: Intimate Histories of Social Upheaval*. New York: WW Norton, 2019, 3-4.

collaboration and improvisation that unfold within the space of enclosure?"[75]

I would like to read the work of RMF students as the work of the *black chorus* inside the white enclosure.[76] Their work was served by the *collective* process of radicalisation and refusal that gave them their best ideas and their best diagnoses. *Together* they invented a politics that brought together Black Consciousness, Pan Africanism and Black Radical Feminism as a strategic way to *be together*, to work together, against the white institution. Their strength was in their *collective refusal* of the post-apartheid (non-racial/post-racial) rainbow nation myth, and putting to work, or at their service, the black intellectual traditions of resistance to white-supremacist-capitalist-hetero-patriarchy that both the university and the African National Congress had not nearly undone. They did not in any straightforward way turn their back on old formulas, their inventive collective brilliance was to recast the Black radical traditions of Pan-Africanism, Black Consciousness and Black radical feminism in conversation and alliance with each other.

They were able to do this work, in all of their diversity, as a collective of black students in collective conversation with texts, black academics, and most importantly each other. They produced a critique of the university through critically reflecting on their shared and differentiated experiences of the failed South African democratic project. Their consciousness and refusal to be roped into that project of hegemonic entailment required a dangerous and difficult experiment with *anti-hegemonic entailment*, an explicit and purposive turning on the expectations of the institution, repurposing the university against itself, being fully engaged, fully exposed, and fully together in the work of producing a different vision of what the university and the world should look like. This collective turning was housed inside the plenary space and occupied spaces they built together. The critical practical reflexivity they engaged in meant that they became comfortable with difference and with disruption, of the status quo and at some points of themselves. This was the work of trying to (re)build collectivity and criticality through anti-hegemonic entailment, a radical praxis to think the world and also change it. The slippages of individuals between anti-hegemonic and hegemonic entailment, made possible profound work on the self and society, a most important form of learning and knowing.

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[75] Ibid. 345-348.

[76] I provide evidence from Southern Africa and Black America that black intellectuals have been sidelined from intellectual work. My focus however is on the rising black student intellectuals. I do not engage in detail the work of black South African intellectuals except as they have been engaged and influenced and become part of the RMF narrative.

Chapter 2: Entailment as Method

breaking a heart is a silent art
you pull the pieces apart
by putting who you are
in a jar
Msaki, (2016)[77]

When I heard the song *Dreams* in 2017, I was drawn to the music and the words, but this line struck me and I opened up a blank document, typed it out and saved it as methodology. Sometimes we look at the worlds we find ourselves in, able to see what is going on, and have people see us, and yet be unintelligible to them. This sentence doesn't convey aptly the experience and feeling of being (un)seen or (un)heard. After I had written these opening lines, I returned to read it a few times, and at this moment of my reading, I really could not hold back tears. Tears because it makes me mad that in 2020, this is true not only for me but for so many. Tears because it makes me sad that people think that me sharing this somehow shows that I am weak or shallow. Tears of joy because I am relieved to share this feeling and learning with students in class, my child and her friends when they confront any of the isms, my comrades working to build a more just world, and you. Tears of relief because I almost stayed in that jar and tightened the lid or maybe worse climbed out of that jar, leaving much of myself behind so that I could learn how to become more intelligible, readable, understandable, and all of the things that would have meant assimilating or changing towards the powerful. Tears of power because I am strengthened by this knowing and by feeling able to share it. Smiling tears.[78]

I searched trying to find the right English word to describe the smothering effect of power, in order to be more precise. The silent art of making some comfortable and welcome at the expense of others. I settled on the adjective unintelligible, meaning "unable to be understood or comprehended"[79] but found that a number of synonyms could partly speak to one piece of the experience but not all of it… "incomprehensible, indiscernible, unfathomable, indecipherable,

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[77] Msaki, Zanelisa. Lyrics from song 'Dreams' on album titled *Zaneliza: How Water Moves.* https://www.okayafrica.com/msaki-dreams-video/

[78] I wrote this in a footnote originally so as not to 'interrupt' my thinking and writing at that moment, but thankfully had a change of heart. I trust you will make sense of the flow.

[79] Merriam-Webster online Dictionary, sv. "unintelligible", accessed January 11, 2020. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/unintelligible#other-words

unreadable" or worse "meaningless, mumbled, unclear, slurred, inarticulate, incoherent, confused, garbled, scrambled, muddled, jumbled, senseless". I have always been interested in making sense of the world, like so many others. What follows is a brief autobiographical sketch that seeks to entail myself and situate especially my experiences of education and struggle. I do this to follow in practice the argument I am making about the importance of entailment in intellectual work as well as to make my role as "participant-observer" clearer. I did not become a "participant-observer", interested in education for freedom when I started my PHD or the collection of my "data".

2.1 Why I was entailed

Growing up in Retreat on the Cape Flats in the 1970s and 80s meant that I was surrounded in the neighbourhood and at school with what the apartheid state legislated as "coloured". Being in a working class neighbourhood and school meant that I grew up around Afrikaans (more often Afri-Kaaps), but spoke English at home because my dad was from Durban and could not speak Afrikaans and my mom grew up in Wynberg, which locally is understood as being a more "sturvy" upper working class neighbourhood – these neighbourhoods were often geographically closer to white Cape Town as well. The colonial hierarchy of English to Afrikaans filtered into the segregated "coloured" community with English immediately signalling a power over Afrikaans. I attended St. Anthony's Primary School, which was a public Roman Catholic school. I completed high school in 1994 at Heathfield High a dual-medium school with half the school being taught in English and the other half in Afrikaans, although there always seemed to be more English-speaking classes. My high school had a history of sport and music excellence and also had a number of critical teachers who were part of the anti-apartheid struggle.

My family home was a hub of activity, open to the needs of the anti-apartheid resistance, often having people sleep there, hide there, collect pamphlets, have political discussion and meals there. Being young and yet knowing that something interesting was happening at our house, I had my first experience with "dangerous" knowledge when I picked up a stack of pamphlets that high school students from the surrounding neighbourhoods were collecting from my father for distribution. As the story goes, the pamphlet was a critique of the Tri-Cameral Parliament, legislated in 1983, which gave people classified under apartheid as coloured and Indian limited political rights, while people classified as African continued to have none.[80] I was in Grade 3 and barely able to read but

[80] O'Malley, Padraig. "Tricameral Parliament Description 1." *O'Malley Online Archive.* Accessed January 3, 2020, at

studiously handed my classmates a pamphlet to take home. One of my classmates' father was a member of the Tri-Cameral parliament and on reading the pamphlet informed the security branch of the apartheid police. Shortly after that, I along with my father, was called into the principal's office to account to the security branch members present what I was doing with the illegal pamphlet. I have heard many stories of my father, Derrick Naidoo, talking himself and students out of trouble with the apartheid police and this was another such occasion. He was however not so lucky a few years earlier when in 1981 he was arrested and detained under the Suppression of Terrorism Act and proceeded to survive a 40-day hunger strike to draw attention to the mistreatment and torture of political prisoners including many of the students he was in detention with. His hunger strike garnered much media attention and he was eventually released and was placed under a banning order, which eventually contributed to him stopping teaching History and Mathematics at Harold Cressy High School. In spite of this he continued to teach outside of formal education until this day, moving between training shop stewards in unions, people interested in setting up co-operative forms of engagements, popular education programmes in social movements and communities, and adult education programmes, although seldom the ones at universities. Both my paternal grandparents qualified as teachers in 1940 with my grandmother's certificate using the pronoun his and him because she was in the first cohort of black women to qualify as teachers. My grandfather K.P. Naidoo went on to be a school principal and an inspector in Durban, also being a member of the Indian Congress.

My mother, Venetia Naidoo, worked in educational projects from the 1980's when she joined the South African Commission for Higher Education (SACHED) with Neville Alexander, who she worked with until his death in 2012. She spent some time at Buchu Books followed by Heinemann Publishers, before working at the Project for Alternate Education in South Africa (PRAESA) based at UCT. My own relationship with UCT, which was one of mostly oblivion then later avoidance, dates back to 1994 when I was in my final year of high school and needing to plan for what I was going to do next. UCT was not on my radar as a place to study as I understood it as an elite white institution. My family would definitely not be able to afford to send me to university but as I wanted to study to become a teacher, I could access some government bursary. I chose to do a BA majoring in Psychology and Human Movement Studies, and then did a year professionalisation called an HDE (Higher Diploma in Education) so that I could become a teacher. I had applied and

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url: https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv02005/06lv02006.htm

been granted a Tertiary Education Fund of South Africa (TEFSA) bursary loan, incorporated from 1999 into the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)[81], and started studying at the previously classified as "coloured", University of the Western Cape (UWC) in 1995.

After completing university, I spent the next decade focusing my life on competitive sport. I had grown up exposed to a tradition of sport and study that always understood itself as being a vehicle for transformation and radicalisation, especially through the non-politically aligned South African Council on Sport (SACOS), the anti-apartheid sports body in South Africa that played under the slogan "No normal sport in an abnormal society".[82] This contributed to my decision to train as a physical education and history teacher and I later worked in the Sports and Recreation Department at local government level for a number of years. After the sports boycott against apartheid was ended, I represented South Africa at various international competitions from 1995, finally competing in beach volleyball at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games, after which I retired from sport, seeing little in the international sports scene that represented the political aspirations of my early sporting career. In an attempt to bring some politics to my Olympic participation, I became the first out gay athlete to compete for South Africa at the Olympics, and subsequently the first African ambassador to the International Gay Games movement. I have always tried to bring my experience of injustice into public conversations with the various contexts I was engaged in.

It has been just over a decade since I became interested and immersed in academic and more formal kinds of intellectual work. In this time, I worked for the Sport Science Institute of South Africa (SSISA), transitioning from being an athlete to mentoring young talented athletes from black and poor backgrounds. I took on independent research internal to SSISA working with staff and management to verbalise and formalise the processes and procedures of the institute's building and operations, including medical programmes and sport programmes. I learned in this time, how to engage with people and get them to verbalise what the specifics of their work functions were, with the result of drafting from scratch the institute's Finance, Operations, and later educational policies. SSISA was already involved in formal education through a partnership with Prof Tim Noakes and

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[81] South African Government. National Student Financial Aid Scheme (Act 56 of 1999).

[82] I write about the critical practice of this anti-apartheid sport movement and my critical reflection on the consciousness work it did in Naidoo, L-A. "The 'Hidden' Curriculum of South African Sport." In *Living Together, Living Apart? The making of a future South Africa* edited by C. Ballantine, M. Chapman, K. Erwin, and G. Mare. Pietermaritzburg: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2017.

the UCT Exercise Science Department. I was tasked to oversee the accreditation of SSISA as a private education provider specialising in teaching life skills to various sports people and teams including elite level ones. I learned through this gruelling year long process the complicated language and bureaucracy of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Sector Education Training Authority (SETA) in my case the then Tourism, Hospitality and Sport (THETA) SETA and the Education, Training and Development (ETDP) SETA. Understanding first the policy and management side of private education provision through this process, I became interested to participate as a student, which I did by completing a range of qualifications for the various specialised roles in this section of the system of continuing or Adult Education. After completing courses in facilitation, assessment, moderating, mentoring, and designing of education programmes, I realised how inflexible and uncritical this sector of education was.

In the years working for SSISA, one of the projects I was involved in and part of proposing and leading, needed someone to set up and run an office in the North of country. This was to enable us to roll out a national 2010 Soccer World Cup Heritage SETA accredited life skills programme for all the professional and elite soccer teams in South African called Project Ithuseng.[83] It was fortuitous that we acquired an office space at the Wits Centre for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine in 2008. The Centre and my office were on the Wits School of Education Campus, which meant I had physically made my way back to the university and to the education space. The following year I was invited to organise the logistics of the first critical theory winter school programme "from the South" in the form of the Johannesburg Workshop in Theory and Criticism (JWTC) and the Mellon Sawyer Seminar Series, which were both housed in the Wits Faculty of Humanities.

I spent the following eight years learning as a "project manager" and later a "co-convener", how to imagine, plan and administer both a local and international "academic" project. The JWTC brought together PHD students and academics from around the world and in the main North America. It was a project that was interested in critical questions organised around annual themed workshops in the mid-year academic break. The conveners[84] grappled with how to host an intensive 10-day conversation with inputs and participation and engagements from academics, to students, artists,

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[83] Draper, Catherine, Jared, Forbes, and Gill Taylor. "Empowering Professional Soccer Players in South Africa: Evaluation of Project Ithuseng." *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching*, 7, no. 3(September 2012): 579-591.

[84] Kelly Gillespie, Zen Marie, Julia Hornberger and Achille Mbembe

musicians, activists, intellectuals and combinations of all of these.[85] We also attempted to trouble the position of the university and its relationship to society by always moving out of the university and linking decisions around content to form. As a result, we built a process or method of organising and planning that tried to take seriously linking the annual theme or question for each workshop to every facet of the engagement from the selection of a range of speakers, the food, the venue, to the form of engagement. I do not think however that we succeeded in troubling enough as organisers, if at all, the ways in which hierarchies persisted inside of especially the seminar and lecture spaces we convened. The JWTC did however create connections between a range of people interested in a radical project of critical theory. It also managed to experiment with the form and process of intellectual work. In 2014, for example, we moved the sixty workshop participants and speakers across South Africa and Swaziland in a bus, curating a conversation that was so much more than simply an academic exercise.[86]

I was privy to many lecture, seminar, and panel discussion spaces on and off the university campus, where in spite of our intentions of unsettling the North-South academic hierarchies firstly by hosting discussions in the "Global South" and then being very conscious of the balance of who was in the room through a critical selection process, people based in the "Global South" and black people in particular, were dissatisfied and on a number of occasions felt silenced by the environment. Without necessarily knowing exactly what was going on or why the conversations unfolded this way, I noticed how graduate students who were based and trained in North America in particular, took up much more space and talk time, almost drowning out other voices. I would only learn later, through South African academics who had been through elite North American Institutions, the competitive and almost cutthroat nature of academic life replicated in the training of graduate students. There were a number of moments reflected on in personal conversation with black, queer, women PHD students and young academics, when the status quo of the Northern University overwhelmed the attempt at creating something differently critical. These kinds of rumblings became louder as more especially black participants who were studying or had studied through a Northern University and were either committed to their countries of origin or had

[85] The JWTC winter school or workshop was the major face-to-face part of the project, which had other parts to it including an online magazine. See Allan, L., and Mbembe, A. "Arguing for a Southern Salon." *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 1.* Accessed on January 15, 2020. https://jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/Salon-1-pdfs/The_Salon_Vol_1.pdf

[86] For reflections on that workshop see *The Johannesburg Salon Volume 8*, accessed May, 17, 2016, at url: https://jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/salon-volume-8/JWTC-Vol8FINAL.pdf

returned to work and live in them, disrupted the comfortable replication of Northern University forms and engagements. There were also many participants who were very happy to replicate the elite "Northern University" in the "South". These disruptions, also sometimes coming from those who had chosen not to be based at a university, were not seriously addressed or nurtured, such that when the 2015 student movement exploded into the national Fees Must Fall (FMF) movement, the project could not hold the divergent responses to the Wits part of the FMF movement that emerged between the co-conveners.[87]

While the project was still alive, I decided to re-enter formal post-graduate studies and applied through Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and with a staff rebate, to go into a part-time Master's programme at the Wits School of Education in 2011. Here I focused on the role of Paulo Freire and radical pedagogy in the SASO and the BCM.[88] Through this process and in particular immersing myself in the SASO ALUKA Online Archive[89], I became inspired by the critical and world making intellectual work that young black students were doing in the belly of the racially segregated university apartheid system, which ultimately created the ideology and politics of BC. I was challenged in my masters to highlight and hold close, the tension that I learned about through that piece of research, particularly the relationship between a critical education project and a political education one. I argued that:

> "While there are a number of tensions … the central tension seems to be that the BCM really understood that it wanted to rebuild identity, subjectivity, consciousness, and deal with false consciousness, which is only possible through a sustained educational project. But as I have tried to show, the political project of inspiring quick community action to solve problems and ignite the masses to resist the racial oppressions that were prevalent, trumped the educational project".[90]

While the political education project of SASO was of course also educational, it became more focused on teaching a fixed or designed programme for new members whereas the earlier educational space was less programmed and more inquiry-based, allowing co-design of the topics

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[87] This resulted in the project being unceremoniously closed by the person who was committed to a replication of the Northern University form in the 'South'.

[88] Naidoo, L-A. "The role that radical pedagogy plays in resistance movements: A case study of the Black Consciousness Movement's use of Paulo Freire's pedagogy." Master's Thesis, Wits University, Johannesburg, 2013. http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/17733

[89] https://www.aluka.org/struggles/collection/PSAPRC

[90] Naidoo, L-A. "The role of Radical Education in the SASO and BCM." *Education as Change* 19, no. 2 (2015), 128.

and programme of learning. I also note that the time and space for a broader education project became more limited because of repression and killing of SASO leaders by the apartheid state. Following Freire, I understood that education was not neutral, and it was explicitly not so under the colonial and later apartheid segregated education systems.

While I was finishing my Master's thesis at the end of 2012, I applied for and was awarded a PHD scholarship through the Centre for Critical Research on Race and Identity (CCRRI) based at the UKZN to complete a PHD at a South African university of my choice. I decided at that stage to continue my studies at Wits and developed questions following the critical education theorist Henry Giroux, about teachers as intellectuals[91]. I planned to interview teachers who had taught under apartheid and after, in post-apartheid to understand their educational biographies and engagement with critical ideas about education for emancipation. This led me to Cape Town from July 2014 until May 2015 where I planned to look closely and learn by theorising the practice of a select group of radical and critically engaged teachers in the Western Cape (from the Unity Movement tradition) and in the Eastern Cape (from the BC tradition).

2.2 Beginnings of my entailment and change of research focus

I was doing life history interviews with Cape Town based teachers and had also been watching with interest and disgust, the incidents of racism and violence perpetrated by UCT students over a period of a few weeks in 2014.[92] I then followed the Facebook storm around the shit-statue protest at UCT. I, at that stage did not know any of the UCT students or staff but had a sense that something important was taking place between those at UCT who remained privileged and interested in retaining the colonial project of white supremacy and those who were let into the elite training ground of UCT and encouraged to assimilate and be careful not to rock the boat. The shit-statue protest and what followed was also being reported in the broader print and television news. I was drawn to what was emerging as I was thinking about the ways in which radical anti-hegemonic and critical teaching had happened in South Africa, through thinking with and about the figure of the teacher as intellectual, not merely as technician or facilitator of a curriculum. It was then that the concern about whether the students raising critical questions about colonial symbols and

[91] Giroux, H. *Teachers as Intellectuals: Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*. South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey, 1988.

[92] Discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

untransformed institutions, were intellectuals. And whether they could be considered intellectuals rather than mere consumers of a curriculum. I took this discussion to my supervisor and I started to make an argument for why I thought an enquiry into students, especially black students from across various disciplines and at different stages in their studies, could be considered as intellectuals. From this the proposition, that what they were doing was changing their own and others consciousness, and in so doing producing knowledge, emerged.

I spent just over a week reading the reportage on what was happening at UCT and scanning the literature on students as intellectuals. I returned to the literature and my own writing in my PHD proposal about the figure of the intellectual, and in particular the black radical intellectual tradition. I reworked my proposal, clarifying and re-imagining what and how I would need to engage what was now an unfolding event, including the possibility of doing interviews with participants co-creating the event. I clarified for myself, and my supervisor, that the central question I was concerned with around the figure of the intellectual and process of intellectual work, remained. I returned to the framing of educational research through Critical Education, which I had started engaging in my Masters project.

Critical education provides a touchstone for education research, which accompanied me on my research journey. Critical education, according to Apple et al. suggests that in "… order to understand and act on education in its complicated connections to the larger society, we must engage in the process of *repositioning"*.[93] They go on to propose a taxonomy of tasks to guide this repositioning of education research and pedagogy, consisting of "eight tasks in which critical analysis (and the critical analyst) in education must engage".[94] Below is a summarised excerpt of these eight tasks, which continues to provide some guidance to me through the process of my research and write-up of my thesis. My project is one that seeks to contribute in a small way to this call to reposition the educational research agenda in South Africa including to take seriously the role of education, research and teaching as playing a part in remaking the world.

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[93] Apple, M.W., Wayne Au and Luis Armando Gandin. *The Routledge International Handbook of Critical Education*. New York: Routledge, 2009. p. 3 – original emphasis.

[94] Ibid, p. 4-5.

1. **"Bearing witness to negativity** – one of its primary functions is to illuminate the ways in which educational policy and practice are connected to the relations of exploitation and domination – and to struggles against such relations – in the larger society".
2. "In engaging in such critical analysis, it also must point to contradictions and to spaces of possible action. Thus, its aim is to critically examine current realities with a conceptual/political framework that emphasises the **spaces in which counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, carry on"**.
3. "At times, this also requires a **redefinition of what counts as "research".** Here we mean acting as "secretaries" to those groups of people and social movements who are now engaged in challenging existing relations of unequal power or in what elsewhere has been called 'non-reformist reforms'" through as example "… thick descriptions and … critically supportive descriptions" of these processes.
4. "There are serious intellectual (and pedagogic) skills in dealing with the histories and debates surrounding the epistemological, political, and educational issues involved in justifying what counts as important knowledge. These are not simple and inconsequential issues and the practical and intellectual/political skills of dealing with them have been well developed. However, they can atrophy if they are not used. We can give back these skills by employing them to assist communities in thinking about this, learning from them, and **engaging in the mutually pedagogic dialogues that enable** decisions to be made in terms of both short-term and long-term interests of oppressed peoples".
5. "In the process, critical work has the task of **keeping traditions of radical work alive**. In the face of organised attacks on the "collective memories" of difference and struggle, attacks that make it increasingly difficult to retain academic and social legitimacy for multiple critical approaches that have proven so valuable in countering dominant narratives and relations, it is absolutely crucial that these traditions be kept alive, renewed, and when necessary criticised for their conceptual, empirical, historical, and political silences or limitations. This entails being cautious of reductionism and essentialism. It also involves keeping alive the dreams, utopian visions, and "non-reformist reforms" that are so much a part of these radical traditions".
6. "Keeping traditions alive and also **supportively criticising them** when they are not adequate to deal with current realities. This cannot be done unless we ask, "For whom are we keeping them alive?" and "How and in what form are they to be made available?" All of the things mentioned above require the relearning or development and use of varied or new skills of working at many levels with multiple groups (for example journalistic and media skills, academic and popular skills, and the ability to speak to very different audiences are increasingly crucial)".
7. "Critical educators must also ***act*** **in concert with the progressive social movements** their work supports. One must participate in and give one's expertise to movements surrounding struggles over a politics of redistribution and a politics of recognition. It also implies learning from these social movements".
8. "Participation also means **using the privilege one has as a scholar/activist by opening spaces** at universities and elsewhere for those who are not there, for those who do not now have a voice in that space and in the "professional" sites to which, being in a privileged position, you have access".

Part of the reason why the above taxonomy and critical education more broadly is important for my research is that it asks me to take seriously the ways in which educational research and policy often do not change things for the better for marginalised and oppressed but rather reproduce society. I

will now briefly discuss my engagement with some of the tasks as well as what I read as the RMF student intellectual's engagement with them. Task #1 asks me to identify and highlight the ways in which education practice and policy is entailed in relations of domination and exploitation, but to do this in my research work and in broader society. As I have described earlier in this chapter, I grew up in a home where the relationship between education, politics and society were understood as influencing each other, which meant that I was already in some ways engaged in task #1. I had also worked with this taxonomy when undertaking my Master's research. In working with black student intellectuals, I recognised that they too were involved in this "bearing witness to negativity" at UCT.

In accordance with task #2, RMF student intellectuals had through their solidaristic attempts at bringing together black formations on campus, identified through their three-pillar conceptual/political framework that would collectivise and emphasise the counter-hegemonic actions that had been occurring, but bringing them under one roof at RMF. I highlighted to a number of the RMF student intellectuals I followed, and during conversations with colleagues and activists who were interested in RMF, that the collectivising or putting into conversation the three political and conceptual traditions of BC, pan-Africanism and Black radical feminism, meant they were centering the contestations and contradictions that had at least at some historical moments contributed to the pulling apart of black resistance. Through their education programme and their occupations, they were actively creating anti-hegemonic praxis.

RMF was, as suggested by task #3, an important movement that challenged relations of power at UCT and at some points were leading the transformational agenda at the university pushing for progressive change or reforms that are not simply themselves reformist. I contributed to the movement and in particular the Education Subcommittee, bringing the skills and lessons I had learned from my previous research, my work in running experimental educational spaces at university, and my broader commitment to critical education outside of formal education. Task #4 is probably the hardest of all as it requires especially "organic intellectuals" to "… not throw out 'elite knowledge' but to reconstruct its form and content so that it served genuinely progressive social needs" according to Gramsci.[95] I am drawn to the call even as I am aware that I still need to develop the intellectual skill, which will allow me to put epistemological, political, economic and educational issues in relation to one another, in order to critique what is regarded as "important

[95] Ibid, 2009, p. 4

knowledge" and the repurposing of "elite knowledge" towards anti-hegemonic praxis.

Task #5 was best amplified by RMF student intellectuals who were doing the serious work of bringing back to relevance traditions of resistance work through their three pillars, and importantly creating space for these different traditions in order to raise some critiques of their limitations, for example, the feminist critique of BC and pan Africanism and the Trans and queer critique of the cishet feminism. They were not only keeping dreams and visions of a more just future alive, they were dreaming new versions of one. Task #6 directs us to questioning who we imagine we are doing the work for or with, and the proposition of "putting the last first" propelled this question into the minds and plans of RMF. All of the student intellectuals I engaged with through my interviews, learned and performed very quickly an impressive array of skills in order to do the work they set out to including running a well populated social media and mainstream media presence, addressing large crowds of people, taking up space to criticise academics and problematic positions in public fora, and so on.

I am moving between talking about the ways I engaged with the tasks and RMF student intellectuals I interviewed seemed to. Task #7 is the one that speaks directly to the idea of praxis. I committed myself to participant-observation that ensured that I was acting with the movement not because I wanted to be present for my research but because I wanted to support and contribute to the important work they were doing in my estimation and also because I learned a huge amount from and with them, and the educational spaces they created. When I started this research, I was transitioning between being an administrator at university through being a student into an academic role. I have been fortunate enough to continue to work with a number of the RMF intellectuals and where I have been able to open spaces that I have access to for them too. Using one's privilege and power in service of others and a more collective and just world is something I hope to always strive for. Without trying to, or knowing about this taxonomy, RMF student intellectuals were inadvertently performing some of the tasks it suggests important for counter-hegemonic educational analyses.

2.3 How I entailed myself in the field

After watching RMF from a distance, through the social media videos, newspaper reports, opinion pieces, and photographs, I physically went to UCT for the first time on Sunday 22 March 2015. The students had occupied the Bremner Building two days earlier and my partner and I decided to take some food around to contribute to the occupation, as a call had gone out for people who could to

assist with supplies. “Take food around to the occupation and chat briefly to a few students. Second meeting of Education Subcommittee. See minutes with date 22 March”.[96] I went with a simple offering of food and realised that I peripherally knew three people who were participating in the occupation. Alex Hotz was the child of well-known Cape Town socialists who were comrades of my father since the 1980’s. While I was a decade or so older than her, I grew up with and knew her older siblings. I had a few weeks earlier met Ru Slayan, when I was approached to help organise and source a venue for a benefit concert of live music to raise funds for a farmworkers union Commercial, Stevedoring, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (CSAAWU) who had lost a court process and was hit with a cost order, which would force them into bankruptcy.[97] Ru was involved through the Left Student Forum (LSF) and it was good to see a familiar face. I had also briefly met Asher Gamedze who also attended the fundraiser concert.[98]

My first physical visit to the RMF occupation lasted for around an hour and I took a few “field” notes or “participant observation” notes when I returned home. I returned many times especially to the first occupation called Azania One and spoke to Ru and Alex about my planned PHD research and the fact that I was interested in the question of students as intellectuals and the education programme that RMF was running. I joined the Education Subcommittee as all the Subcoms were open for people to participate in and I attended most of the meetings. Besides these face-to-face meetings there was also a private Facebook group with thirty-one group members called #RhodesMustFallEducationSubCommittee. Here further discussions and engagement took place online, which allowed for more discussion and planning than simply the scheduled Education Subcom meetings. I attended almost all the nightly seminars over the Azania One occupation and the range of other educational events that RMF organised or co-hosted after being evicted from Azania One. I visited the Azania Two occupation less frequently, but spent quite a bit of time there until I left Cape Town to return back home to Johannesburg in mid-May of 2015. My presence in the RMF space was as a “participant-observer”, with only the persons I approached to interview explicitly knowing that I was a “participant-researcher” doing “action-research”.

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[96] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 22 March 2015.

[97] Knoetze, Daniel. “Farm Workers Union CSAAWU should be saved,” *GroundUp*, November 17, 2014, https://www.groundup.org.za/article/farm-workers-union-csaawu-should-be-saved_2452/

[98] The Shane Cooper and Reza Khota Fundraiser Concert with Vinyl sets by Ben V and Jumbo Exclusive Concert in Solidarity with CSAAWU took place on 31 January at Joule City in Longmarket Street Cape Town. See http://48hours.co.za/2015/01/29/cape-town-music-guide-30-jan-5feb/

I spent six weeks from the time I first went to the occupation, attending the Education and Writing Subcom meetings, the Mafeje Plenary meetings, the lectures, readings groups, panels, performances and other interventions, and the occupation in general including the social spaces. I spent the time building relationships with especially the people on the Education and Writing Subcoms, as we spent more time in meetings and doing organising work together. I shared some of the connections I had built through my work as an organiser of critical theory events and conversations, as part of my minimal contribution to the Education Subcom, specifically negotiating the visit by Achille Mbembe[99] to participate in a reading group session and deliver a public lecture. Where I could add or connect the RMF Subcom work with networks I had, I did along with others tasked to organise educational events.

When the question came up of sharing the knowledge and experience people and the movement were grappling with, I suggested the possibility of using an online journal I, with colleagues at the JWTC project had imagined and implemented. I was the managing editor of the *Johannesburg Salon*, which was an online space for publishing critical essays, reflective pieces, poems, photo essays, video installations, etc. It was also envisaged as a space to bridge between the exclusivity of the Social Sciences and people more broadly, who were interested in critical debates and reflections. It was also an attempt to increase the publication and curation of these kinds of works from the "Global South". This online space was developed to allow for readers to engage with the content online or to download each of the ten volumes it ended up producing between 2009 and 2015, for later reading, either in the volume's entirety or an individual piece. I made this suggestion in a Writing Subcom meeting that took place in March 2015 in one of the occupied boardrooms in Azania One. A number of calls were put out for people internal to RMF for reflective and critical pieces in a variety of forms to be submitted by April/May 2015.[100] I attended the first of two workshops where a core group of those who wrote and were also part of the Education and Writing Subcoms worked through a collective editing process, although what that word conjures in most peoples' minds is not what I witnessed taking place during the five hour workshop I attended. Everyone who attended the workshop contributed to the collective process of mapping how the

[99] Achille Mbembe is a Cameroonian born philosopher who lives part of the year in South Africa working at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) and then teaches at Northern universities and does public lectures across the world. He is a famous post-colonial theorist who RMF invited and engaged but critiqued and questioned in the 2015 reading group seminar they had with him as well as the public lecture they hosted.

[100] See Chapter 8 for a discussion of *The Salon* publication process

volume would take shape based on the pieces that had been submitted. Nothing that was submitted was excluded and everyone was tasked with reading a selection of other people's pieces. Everyone presented their interpretation of what the piece was about and out of these presentations a conversation developed that eventually formulated the themes for the volume. The opening poem was made up of a number of individuals writing a few lines and then they worked these together into a collective poem that served as an introduction to the volume. The introductory poem was then also read out by different people and recorded as an audio piece. The result of this collective process, that included individual and co-developed pieces, can be found in *Volume 9* of *The Johannesburg Salon*.[101] In an attempt to encourage the broader sharing of questions and ideas, the volume includes all the RMF statements written up until that point, which also stands as an archive of the movement, which many people have read and referenced in their work related to RMF.

I continued to read what the writers of RMF made and shared prior to the movement forming and up until the day that I wrote this including articles, blog posts, book reviews, music videos, documentary films, plays, music, Honours, Masters and PHD work, lectures, panel discussions, speeches, workshop inputs amongst others. My sense from spending time with them and their ideas, is that many of them will for some time, if not always, continue to be critically involved in different ways trying to make sense of the world and trying to change it towards something more just. Before I selected who I would approach to do semi-structured interviews with, I watched and listened to who was consistently present and also who was doing the work of writing, participating actively across multiple SubComs including the StratCom, engaging in the Mafeje plenary and Education plenary spaces, and continuing this work even after the end of the first occupation. Only after this, did I approach fifteen students[102] to ask them if they would be prepared to be interviewed by me for my PHD research. I ensured that each interviewee was given a participant information sheet[103] before the start of the interview and that they read and signed a consent form for audio recording.[104] This consent form also included a section where they would explicitly indicate that they gave permission for their names to be used in my thesis and any subsequent publications, to which they agreed.

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[101] The full volume can be downloaded here http://www.jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/salon-volume-9/FINAL_FINAL_Vol9_Book.pdf

[102] See See Appendix A: List of interviewees

[103] See See Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

[104] See Appendix C: Consent form for audio recording interviews

I tried to stay close to what students were thinking and doing because there was such a diverse group of students in general and internal to the ones I chose to interview. I designed the interview questions and organised the semi-structured interview schedule[105], to have an introduction ("Introducing yourself and your relation to education"), followed by three parts and a concluding section. I met people in different spaces across campus on one or two interviews at their homes. The opening three questions asks them to speak about themselves, their family, their schooling and then why they decided to come to UCT and what they were studying. Part One of the interview focused on how power relations enabled and constrained the unfolding of the RMF event from their perspective asking them to reflect on their initial experiences of UCT in general and in the classroom. I asked them to describe the social relations on campus before and since RMF as well as what they found to be most significant and most difficult about their undergraduate and post-graduate experiences, and what it meant to be black at UCT over time. The second section discussed what in their view the event was about and how they made meaning of it by exploring challenges they faced in class, the kind of staff that taught them and how they interacted with them. I also spent time asking them what their relationship was to their (best and worst) curriculum or class and then some engagement on the question of the role and relation between education and society and the classroom and society, ending with what social action they were involved in off campus and what they thought the main problem in SA was after 1994.

The third section asked whether we could count what RMF was doing as knowledge production and how learning in RMF was different to their formal learning. I asked them what decolonising universities meant and what the Africanisation the UCT and RMF curriculum was. This was followed by a concluding section that considered the question of reading, teaching and thinking" by asking them whether they described themselves as intellectuals and saw themselves or other students in RMF playing a leading intellectual role in RMF's formation and agenda and why. I asked them to reflect on whether they thought it was important for people to become academics and what qualities they should have, and whether there was a difference between academics and intellectuals. I ended the interviews asking what the most influential book was that they had read and what kinds of things they liked reading and what they were reading at that moment. This first round of 15 interviews took place at the beginning of May 2015, under two months from the shit hitting the statue. Each interview was over an hour long with a number continuing for between two

[105] See Appendix D: Semi-structured interview schedule for 2015

to three hours.

2.4 Broadening the entailment

I returned to Johannesburg and to Wits University where I joined students, workers and academics who were talking about what had just taken place at UCT, and how inspired and challenged they were by what RMF were doing and calling on others to do. This formation would go on to meet consistently throughout the year and come to be known as October 6[106], the date on which the first national protest and day of action to end outsourcing took place. I remained in contact with RMF students I interviewed, not merely around my research but also because there were a number of similar initiatives that were already ongoing prior to RMF's emergence that were inspired to refocus the work and possibly even connect the people. From the #TransformWits critique of the Wits Political Studies Department Euro(white)-centric curriculum, to the more than decade old struggle against outsourcing, and critique of ever-increasing tuition fees, there was much to continue talking about with other left oriented students, workers and academics. I then became much more of an active participant in the student resistance at Wits and participated fully in the 2015 #WitsFeesMustFall moment.[107]

The relationships I had built with RMF allowed me to make connections between some of what was being done in Johannesburg, specifically Wits and University of Johannesburg (UJ) with what was taking place in and between Cape Town university students and other parts of the city. At the end of 2015 there was a call to create a space for FMF students to meet and discuss the movement. I organised two regional and one national reflective space. The two regional reflective spaces took place in the Eastern Cape[108] and Gauteng. The Gauteng gathering was attended by ten students from ten universities in the North of the country[109]. It took place over three days with a structured

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[106] Discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine

[107] For one interpretation of the initial #WitsFeesMustFall struggle, including some reflections and analysis from me see the documentary: "Everything Must Fall," Film. Directed by Rehad Desai. Johannesburg: Uhuru Productions, 2018, accessed January 23, 2016, https://uhuruproductions.co.za/

[108] Organised by Thenjiwe Mswane and including universities from across the province namely Nelson Mandela University (NMU), University Currently Known as Rhodes (UCKAR), Walter Sisulu University (WSU)

[109] Wits, UJ, University of Pretoria (UP), North West University (NWU), University of the Free State (UFS), University of South Africa (UNISA), University of Venda (UniVen), Tswane University of Technology (TUT) Shoshanguve, University of Limpopo (UniLim) and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU)

workshop-style meeting.[110] It was then decided that a similar meeting be held for a smaller number of representatives from as many universities across the country as possible. This three-day meeting took place in Johannesburg in December 2015 and was attended by four representatives from each university including from the Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape provinces. Alex Hotz and Mohammed Jameel Abdulla, who were the only RMF students present represented UCT RMF/FMF. How the national student movement of the end of 2015 unfolds is a number of PHD's on its own. I raise briefly what was happening during the first round of FMF because it falls inside the 2015 timeframe of the RMF movement I am engaging and gives a sense of how I was spending my time thinking about students, universities, struggle, education and the university. Also, it was at meeting moments like these that it became clear that the complexity of collective work and the possibility of caucus/plenary type engagements became even more complex at a national level than they were at the regional and institutional levels. I experienced some of this frustration and was able to discuss this with various student comrades that I had built relationships with across the various universities.

I returned to Cape Town as often as I could and continued to follow RMF through and extensive engagement with the social media accounts of RMF, so much so that I was informed via a Facebook message in January 2020 that I was the "top fan" of the UCT: Rhodes Must Fall Facebook page having visited it the most. I did a PDF export of the UCT Rhodes Must Fall Facebook page[111], which totals 597 pages of each of the home page status updates. I am not a consistent Twitter user, but I did a PDF export of the #RhodesMustFall Twitter account[112], which totalled 155 pages and 3669 tweets since the account was opened in March 2015 and the last tweet on 7 February 2017. Both the RMF Twitter and Facebook PDF documents formed part of the data I engaged.

I visited Cape Town on a few more occasions in 2015 most notably in September 2015 when on the 10th I conducted a three-hour long focus group interview[113] with five[114] of the fifteen people I had interviewed four months prior. It was the one and only time I had a group of my interviewees in the

[110] 27 to 29 November 2015

[111] See the Facebook page here https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/

[112] See the Twitter account here https://twitter.com/rhodesmustfall?lang=en

[113] See Appendix F: Focus group semi-structured interview schedule

[114] Mase Ramaru, Brian Kamanzi, Mbali Matandela, Alex Hotz, Masixole Mlandu

same room asking them to reflect together. They were more comfortable with me as I had by this time interviewed them all individually and been in contact with them even when I was back in Johannesburg. Importantly, these five were the core group that was representing RMF in a court ordered mediation process with UCT Management. The interview consisted of three parts. Firstly, the mediation process with UCT management. Secondly, the Marikana Campaign that they had organised in mid-August. Thirdly, a reflection on what was going on for them at home and with their families as they have continued to build on the movement. I had planned to end with a section on the politics of the movement and the relationship to other movements, but because Mase and Alex had to attend a meeting in one of the residences at 10pm, we had to cut the interview short thereby not engaging in the last section of the interview schedule. The focus group was interesting because there were diverging views in the room on some issues and it was clear that they were not afraid to raise their differing opinions. They also expressed appreciation for the third section questioning them about how their families were responding to their activism and especially the way they were publicly critiquing the university and by this point the State. They mentioned that they had not heard each other's personal stories to the degree that they were able to reflect on in the focus group. It highlighted that home and family life were a stress for some of them because of their histories and their family's relationship to the ANC, and because the questions they were asking in public were raising difficult conversations within their families.

I returned again in April 2016 to participate in the whole-day event planned to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the shit-statue protest that ended in the #TransCapture. I was there participating, taking still and video footage and fieldnotes, showing support for the #TransCollective action and witnessing the transition of the movement. I had scheduled follow up interviews with eleven of the original fifteen people I interviewed.[115] I designed the semi-structured interview schedule to have some of the same questions asked them in the first interview and some new questions. The interview[116] focused in the first section on changes in RMF through asking them to identify what they believed the key moments of RMF were and what had changed for better or worse since I last interviewed them just over a year ago. I probed whether they thought these changes were as a result of the university's influence or more macro societal forces. The second part focussed on work in the movement including asking them about the different roles and work students were doing; whether

[115] Ntokozo Dladla, Ru Slayan, Dudu Ndlovu, Thato Pule, Mase Ramaru, Brian Kamanzi, Mbali Matandela, Alex Hotz, Masixole Mlandu, Mohammed Jameel Abdulla and Asher Gamedze

[116] See Appendix E: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule 2015

they thought they were doing intellectual work and how their thinking had changed. I asked them to explain how they were thinking differently, detailing thinking on their own and with other when reflecting on action. And then asked if they thought they were teaching and whether they were recruiting new RMF members and what relationship they had to the broader UCT student body. The third part of the interview gives them an opportunity to reflect on any of a number of difficult moments from the Shackville protest[117] to the TransCollective disruption[118] or the rape at Azania and then a question on the challenges of intersectional thinking. I concluded with half a dozen questions repeated from the first interview that had been done a year before. It must be noted however that I ended up shifting the third part of the interview focus away from dictating that people speak specifically about Shackville and rather asked them to choose one or two events that they felt was significant to their own learning in the movement. They confirmed, through their choices of the key moments of their consciousness or learning, that a radical praxis consisting of both thinking and action, and reflection on that action, was indeed one of the ways that they were

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[117] The Shackville protest took place on 16 and 17 February 2016. It was another creative disruption that raised the question of homelessness at UCT and landlessness in the broader South African context. I have engaged with Shackville elsewhere in Gillespie, K and L-A. Naidoo. "Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no.1(January 2019b). For more on the Shackville creative protest see Ahmed, A.Kayum, 2019, 40-45. The Rise of Fallism: #RhodesMustFall and the Movement to Decolonize the University. PHD Thesis, Columbia University.

[118] The TransCollective was allied to RMF and acted as a caucus group of black queer trans students some of whom formed part of RMF from the outset. Thato Pule, along with Sandy Ndelu, co-founded the TransCollective, which creatively disrupted the one year anniversary exhibition organised by RMF titled Echoing Voice from Within hosted at the Centre for African Studies Gallery at UCT. This creative disruption was another important moment in the critical reflexive dialogue that had taken place in different ways in RMF. The TransCollective issued a statement when they disrupted the exhibition by tagging the mostly photographic exhibition with red paint. The statement they made was both in their action of walking naked covered in red paint through the exhibition opening welcome speech, entering the exhibition space and physically blocking entry for anyone else. As well as in the written statement they read out and published. For more on the TransCollective and the TransCollective disruption see Ahmed, A.Kayum, 2019, 45-49. The Rise of Fallism: #RhodesMustFall and the Movement to Decolonize the University. PHD Thesis, Columbia University. Also, Ghost Writer, 2015. *Giving Content to Decolonisation; The Trans Collective in South Africa*. https://bubblegumclub.co.za/art-and-culture/giving-content-decolonisation-trans-collective-south-africa/ and Disrupting the Silencing of Voices in The Journalist, 29 March 2016 accessed at https://www.thejournalist.org.za/art/disrupting-the-silencing-of-voices/. The TransCollective statement is published as UCT TransCollective. Trans Capture Statement. Self-published broadsheet, 2016, 26-27.

making and sharing knowledge of the dangerous or transformative kind.

In the years that have followed on from the timeframe that this thesis focusses on, I have built deep friendship with some and respectful comradeship with most others. While I don't agree with everything that they have said or done, I continue to be inspired and engaged by what they did, and what some continue to do. I have continued to connect them and speak about them and propose them for things. I am thankful for the engagement thus far, and the many things I continue to learn about myself and other, and as I try to make sense of the university and the world. I have with Asher Gamedze from RMF and Thato Magano from Wits FMF formed the Publica[c]tion Collective, which made a beautiful and complicated national student publication together.[119] This process was an opportunity to meet, talk and think with over fifty black students from twenty-two universities, to challenge myself and each other to take time to reflect critically and across difference on our experiences of oppression at universities, and to leave a trace-able archive of the vitality of "incoherence" in the revered written form. It was through this process that I viscerally experienced the differences between academic reading, writing and distributing knowledge, and a more generous and capacious one.[120] But that has been discussed and analysed in other places[121] and to return to another time.

As I have tried to show above, the complexity of experience, engagement and learning over the time of this PHD process has meant that I will have failed to isolate, select, pinpoint or define what I did and how I did it through one particular discipline and its associated methodologies. What I have followed is broadly identified as a qualitative research approach, which according to McMillan and Schumacher is "… inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their settings".[122] There are a number of possible qualitative research designs that are meant to contribute to theory, educational practice, policy-making, and social consciousness. As I have detailed above, I was broadly guided by the framework of Critical Education as explained through the Critical Education Taxonomy. More specifically I could be

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[119] Download the *Publica[c]tion* broadsheet for free at https://gorahtah.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/publicaction_pdf-for-web_pages1.pdf

[120] Naidoo, L-A. *Publica[c]tion: Reflection in Publica[c]tion*. Self-published broadsheet, 2016, 37.

[121] I reflect with Asher Gamedze on this process in Gamedze, A., and L-A. Naidoo. "Publica[c]tion: Publishing, an alternative and the creative process of critique." In *Lessons in Resistance, Studies in Struggle: Movements for Education and Social Justice* edited by S. Vally, and A. Choudry. London: Pluto Press, 2020.

[122] McMillan, J.H. & S. Schumacher. R*esearch in Education Evidence-Based Inquiry* Sixth edition. Boston: Pearson Education, 2006.

identified as Freirean, having read and learned much about his ideas and concepts through my Masters project and then investigating how these were recontextualised by the SASO and BCM in South Africa.

As I have not been trained into a particular academic discipline of the social sciences like Sociology, Anthropology, Philosophy or History, I have found making choices concerning methodology both freeing and yet challenging. I have a strand of psychology in my academic training having majored in it during my undergraduate studies and did a Master's course in Educational Psychology. My other Masters courses in Education were Pedagogical Studies, and a research methods course that did a little bit of everything but not much of one thing. I also did a course in the Sociology Department on the making of the South African social order. My Master's thesis in the end entailed me doing much archival research and writing about a process that took place forty years before, which in the end placed me somewhere at the intersection of History, Sociology, and Psychology. I found a trans-disciplinary approach to be most appropriate, understood as "… producing knowledge that is not defined or confined to the academy and its disciplines, but that crosses academic/non-academic, disciplinary, geographic, political, social and other artificial boundaries".[123]

It was challenging to settle easily on especially the way to write my thesis because of the differences between myself and my supervisor's orientations. The thesis therefore went through many different structures before I settled on what you are reading now. I realised that part of my process of analysing the "data" was also creating an archive of some of what I call creative disruptions (see Chapter Five to Nine). Returning to each of the key moments I have outlined in the thesis, involved in many cases me going to the moment as a participant observer, returning to the moment through my fieldnotes, reflections on the moments from the interviews, media reporting on them, and because of the internet video and audio archives that allowed me in many cases to go back to the moment. I read and re-read over 250 pages of interview transcripts I produced and then had to contend with many, many interview requests to discuss RMF and FMF by reporters, post graduate students from South Africa and abroad. Up until the point where I was working on finalising the thesis at the end of 2019, I made time and space for every one of the dozens of requests, as a commitment to sharing my experience and ideas about South African student

[123] Malotane Henkeman, Sarah. *Disrupting Denial: Analysing Narratives of Invisible/Visible Violence and Trauma*." Cape Town: New Adventure Publishing, 2018.

movements. A number of theses across Honours, Master's and PHD, including books have been completed on one or other topic related to this historic moment. I have read all of the ones I believed to be pertinent to RMF. I am opposed to the idea that anything including an idea is developed or owned by one person in isolation, I have referenced the work that others have done and have tried to have much of the words in my thesis be in their own words. This is to try and acknowledge throughout the thesis that what I have learned has been deeply influenced and troubled by their writing. Also, I am uncomfortable with the easy abstractions and appropriation of small parts of what the RMF movement did in service of peoples' own projects. The thesis is therefore longer than is preferred. Power and privilege are present also in who gets to study, and write, and get awarded certificates, and interviews, and jobs based on the ideas and entanglements produced in this very generative movement that was bursting with radical possibility. I hope that I have entailed myself enough to represent something that those I struggled with will at least be able to recognise as something they were part of.

Chapter 3: A racist institution: historical reflections on white liberalism at the University of Cape Town

There were some important engagements prior to the 9 March 2015 shit-statue protest that explain why it was that on that day, a critical mass of people, were ready to take the struggle against racism and the remnants of colonialism and apartheid forward more vigorously at UCT. Noluvuyo Mjoli writing in the *Johannesburg Salon* about her vision of a decolonized UCT explains the long struggle that has existed to try and change UCT:

> "I am told that the struggle for a black space in UCT did not only start a few weeks ago by Maxwele. That it also did not start with *Vernac News* questioning UCT in 2014. That it also did not start with 'Imbizo' the same year. People tell me as well that the movement 'Concerned Centre for African Studies' in 2010 were not the first people to want curriculum transformation in UCT. People tell me also that the Mamdani Affair of 1998 whereby Mahmood Mamdani was refused implementing an Afrocentric curriculum was also not the first time a black scholar stressed about Afrocentric studies pre-colonialism at UCT. People have also told me that the Archie Mafeje Affair where an African Scholar was refused promotion to professorship because of the colour of his skin in 1967/8. I am also told that UCT was built in 1829, but that it was only in 1980 where they started admitting black students in relatively large numbers. The Black Alumni of the 1990s also related it to me that they were the ones carrying non-violent protests fighting against racism. As far as the movement is concerned, the struggle continues. This will not be the last movement that seeks to challenge the legacy of colonialism in this space".[124]

Noluvuyo suggests that resistance at UCT by black students, alumni, academics and workers is not new and that #RMF have joined the movements of resistance against racism and inequality that have persisted at UCT. What follows is an unearthing of the multiple small and big moments of resistance and critical engagement with the racist conditions of the white liberal university across parts of its history. I start at an important moment in the heart of the 2015 student struggle and occupation at UCT, where black academics were invited to confide in, support, challenge and complexify what intellectual work, involved in remaking the institution and by so doing the world, could look like. And then go on to take you on a different kind of UCT journey focusing on black student intellectual engagement.

It was Tuesday the 24th of March 2015 and the Mafeje Seminar Room on the second floor of the

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[124] Mjoli, N. "How I envision a decolonized UCT to be like." In *The Johannesburg Salon*, Volume 9. Accessed on January 5, 2019. https://jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/Salon-1-pdfs/The_Salon_Vol_1.pdf

Bremner Building that houses UCT's management was packed over capacity. Students and academic staff jammed into the Mafeje Room getting ready for another contribution to the nightly public seminar[125] run by RMF. The management building was occupied by protesting students for four days already as part of the students' struggle to ensure that the statue of arch colonialist Cecil John Rhodes was removed from the prime spot it still occupied at the university campus. Much protest and activism had taken place over the last decade to debate, critique and ultimately try to remove this very statue. But never before had students in post-apartheid taken over the space where the UCT management sits, and also the time they spend overseeing the daily workings of the university including the transformation agenda on campus. The occupation and renaming of the building to Azania House, invoking the name Azania[126], which was used during the anti-apartheid struggle by anti-apartheid political formations outside of the ANC to talk about the new envisioned South Africa once apartheid fell, lasted for over three weeks and created the space and time for students to take control over, or at the very least influence more directly, the transformation agenda at UCT.

Select academic staff (lecturers to professors) were invited by the RMF Education SubCom to give input to a "teach-in" seminar around the question: "What is the Post-Colonial University, Curriculum, Canon?" From 8pm to 10.15pm academics took turns to speak to the question in whatever way they preferred. These were black academics sitting with and in conversation with black students, speaking about their experiences as black staff and relating these experiences to the challenges with transformation at UCT. Kopano Ratele from UNISA/USB spoke to the issues being raised around masculinity. Two black male students asked what was meant by intersectionality and

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[125] The nightly seminar is discussed in more detail in Chapter Six

[126] "Azania is the name first adopted by the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania and later endorsed by the Black Consciousness Movement and leftist Socialist formations like the African Peoples Democratic Union of South Africa (APDUSA), New Unity Movement (NEUM) and Workers Organization for Socialist Action (WOSA) as the name of a liberated South Africa. The literal translation of Azania is the land of the Black people. Citing Runoko Rashidi and Ivan van Sertima (editors), African Presence in Early Asia, Tenth Anniversary Edition, Transaction Press: New Brunswick: 1995, Black Consciousness stalwart and Maoist theorist, advocate Imran Moosa asserts that the etymology of Azania to the Zanj Rebellion(869 – 883 A.D.). The Zanj rebellion constituted of a series of small revolts that eventually culminated into a large rebellion that saw the 500 000 slaves sacking Basrah and setting up their own state, advancing to within seventy (70) miles of Baghdad itself. The Zanj built a city in the marshes known as al-Moktara (the Elect City) that was almost impregnable due to its watery location, and they also built a fortified town, al-Mani'a. They even minted their own currency. The Zanj thus took over the Caliphate and maintained a marooned state for some fifteen (15) years". From (https://www.pambazuka.org/democracy-governance/fallism-and-dialectics-spontaneity-and-organization-disrupting-tradition)

what it would mean to "drop their patriarchy", as they had heard people suggest they must do? There were genuine questions of clarity where people were risking and saying I don't understand what you mean. Some in the group seemed exasperated by the male students' questions. A black women student responded to say that "… we must take the time to engage men who are wanting to ask these questions and learn". Both feelings existed in the room, impatience and respect for this kind of questioning and "not knowing". There seemed to be an air of vulnerability and sharing in the room that is seldom experienced in a university classroom. Many people who attended the nightly RMF seminar in the Mafeje Room attest to the electrifying energy in the conversation. What was being discussed was intimately connected to the experiences of black staff and students and the stakes for holding these emotions and anger were high. How the emotions and the experiences they relate to are transformed into a critical programme for a different kind of change – decolonisation as opposed to transformation, remained to be experimented with.

There were many such moments of learning and struggle that took place in the Mafeje Room. Students through the RMF Education SubCom were deciding who they wanted to engage (mostly black academics were invited to speak), what they wanted to hear about, and how they wanted to engage. What happened on that particular Tuesday night was that the history of struggle against colonialism, apartheid and racism bent time and allowed for black students and academic staff, to again raise questions about what the role of the university was, who it was meant to serve, who got to teach and learn, but this time from inside the university and at a time when South Africa was already meant to be or understood as non-racial and post-apartheid. This very Mafeje Room was occupied by white students in 1968, when it was the UCT Senate Chambers, to protest against the university's treatment of an alumnus and prospective black academic staff member, Archie Mafeje. I will now explore in more detail how this Senate Chamber in the UCT management building became named the Mafeje Room, which will highlight the significance of the occupation and this particular venue housing the nightly public seminar space, as well as the space where the occupation was run from through the daily open Mafeje plenary meetings.

I have had to choose from the various sources that tell the story of UCT from different angles. The key focus of my work is on the figure of the black (student) intellectual, which encouraged me to look into the more recent UCT history to find these figures. Two such black figures and their engagement and critique of the institution and its (lack of) transformation provides a less celebratory view of the institution's history. Firstly, in the 1960's, Archie Mafeje exposed UCT's complicity with apartheid, and later in the 1990's made visible the continuation of racist

employment practices at UCT even during a transitioning South Africa. Secondly, in the 1990's Mahmood Mamdani[127] proposed a different kind of curriculum challenging the enduring Eurocentricity of UCT's curriculum. UCT's treatment of these two intellectual figures reveal the ongoing challenges faced by black academics at UCT across time and importantly comments on the continuation of racism and epistemic violence that can be found at UCT post-apartheid. Both Archie Mafeje and Mahmood Mamdani are world-renowned academics whose works have been important and influential across the African continent and the world, both having spent much of their careers spanning the Northern academy as well as the African one. The selection of these two cases at UCT comes in part through my engagement with a Master's thesis on the concept of academic freedom[128] in particular post-1994, which uses three affairs (Makgoba affair at Wits in 1995; Mamdani affair at UCT in 1997; and Shell affair at UCKAR in 2001) at previously "open universities"[129] to speak about continued racial injustice at South African universities post-apartheid, and the limits of liberal formulations of academic freedom.[130] Ramoupi discusses the Mafeje and Mamdani affairs at UCT along with the Makgoba affair at Wits, termed the "Triple M-cases", to discuss key moments in history, where universities resisted change post-apartheid, in terms of both who teaches as well as what is taught.[131]

3.1 The Mafeje Affair in Four Episodes

The affair between Archie Mafeje and UCT can be understood as having four episodes (1) 1968 non-appointment (2) 1990 measly offer (3) not shortlisted for AC Jordan chair in 1993 (4) failed apologies in 2003 and a more sincere one in 2008 with a problematic proviso. The first episode was in 1968 when Mafeje, a graduate of UCT, was appointed on 1 May to the position of senior lecturer in Social Anthropology. Before this decision could be communicated to him the apartheid State intervened by threatening UCT through the then Minister of National Education Jan De Klerk and

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[127] What became known as the Mamdani affair is discussed later on page 69 and 70

[128] Radebe, Y. "The Meaning of Academic Freedom in the Former 'Open Universities' in Post-Apartheid South Africa." Master's Thesis. Master's Thesis, Wits University, Johannesburg, 2009 http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/handle/10539/7339

[129] The 'open universities' were the four universities under apartheid who kept an open-door policy with regards to which staff and students could form part of the university. These were UCT, Wits, Rhodes and then Natal.

[130] Taylor, Y. and R. Taylor. "Academic freedom and racial injustice: South Africa's former 'open universities'." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 24, no. 6 (2010): 897–913.

[131] Ramoupi, N.L.L. "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa." *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 38, no.1 (2014): 279-299.

advising them against appointing a black academic. UCT council and later senate, without being compelled by apartheid law to do so,[132] decided not to offer the position to Mafeje and instead appointed Dr M.C. Whisson. It is understood as a primary case in the apartheid period that proved the complicity of the university system, and in this case specifically the white liberal "open" university with the racist apartheid state. The most detailed account of this shameful event in UCT's history is written by Fred Hendricks who points out that the apartheid state had interfered in UCT business prior to the Mafeje affair by banning academics Jack Simons (1964) and Raymond Hoffenberg (1967) under the Suppression of Communism Act, but highlights the fact that this interference and exclusion was because of their political involvement and actions rather than in the Mafeje case, purely because he was black.[133] Monica Wilson, the then Head of Department of Social Anthropology, supervisor and mentor to Mafeje, who had championed his application for the post, agreed with the Principal of UCT that she would not lead any protest against the council for their decision taken at a meeting in the Bremner Building on 5 June 1968. Students at the annual national conference of National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), which took place just after the council meeting that voted to rescind Mafeje's appointment and during the mid-year university break at Wits, resolved the following:

> "This student assembly regrets that the UCT Council has, in capitulating to the Minister's threats, been guilty of a betrayal of the university's principles of academic freedom and university autonomy.[134] That this student assembly urges the UCT SRC to do the utmost in its power to organise effective and significant protest against the treatment meted out to Mr. Mafeje and furthermore urges all university and training college staff and students at other centres to give such protests their fullest support".[135]

At the start of the second semester on 7 August 1968, UCT students organised by the SRC, held a mass meeting in Jameson Hall, which was attended by Vice Chancellor Richard Luyt and had prepared speeches by student leaders and academic staff most notably Monica Wilson who was a past SRC president herself.[136] It was clear from this mass meeting that many students disagreed

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[132] Ntsebeza, Lungisile. "The Mafeje and the UCT saga; Unfinished business?" *Social Dynamics* 40, no.2 (2014), 276.

[133] Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid," African Studies, 67, no.3 (2008): 423-451, accessed November 1, 2017, at url: https://doi.org/10.1080/00020180802505061

[134] Resolution 80, NUSAS Congress, 1968, 25.

[135] Resolution 83, NUSAS Congress, 1968, 25.

[136] Ntsebeza, Lungisile. "The Mafeje and the UCT saga; Unfinished business?" *Social Dynamics* 40, no.2 (2014), 276-277.

with the Council decision and were willing to continue to protest against the decision. The next mass meeting took place on 14 August with around 1000 students in attendance to discuss and agree on a student response and set of demands. There was agreement to march to the Bremner Building and sit-in until Council responded favourably to the demands compiled. The following resolution was passed detailing the demands:[137]

> "Noting that the University Council has withdrawn its appointment of Mr. Mafeje to the post of Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Anthropology. Regrets that the University Council did not allow the Government to enforce its policy of apartheid itself therefore instructs the student delegation to call upon the University Council: 1) to consider the re-appointment of Mr. Mafeje; (2) to allow all members of the University – students, staff and Council to protest together against this further infringement of our Academic Freedom by a symbolic closure of the University for a twenty four hour period; (3) to institute a Mafeje Visiting Lectureship and call on the mass meeting to accompany the student delegation to the administration building as a sign of solidarity and sit-in until student demands are met".[138]

This was the first sit in or occupation at a university in South Africa, which lasted nine days. In addition to this student action at UCT, students sent letters of support from two other "open university" Rhodes and Natal Universities, while Wits students showed solidarity by driving to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to hand over a memorandum to Prime Minister Vorster as well as driving down to Cape Town to hand deliver a petition signed by over 2000 students and staff.[139] In the end, the student occupation of the Bremner Building and the Senate Chambers, concluded without succeeding in attaining any of the above demands except for agreement to institute an academic freedom visiting lectureship award, which was never actualized.[140] It was also clear that the role of the institutional structures of the Senate, representing academic staff, and the SRC representing the student body, in the end were instrumental in containing student dissent and power,

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[137] UCT Council Agenda and Documents for the Special Meeting of Council held on 26 August 1968.

[138] Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid." There was opposition to the calls being made by students and some academics across the country to prevent the state intervening in the appointment of academic staff. Most notably, the Wits convoy to the Union Buildings were welcomed by Afrikaner students from the University of Pretoria and AWB, who abducted them and beat them up and cut off their hair, which was reported in *Die Burger* Newspaper.

[139] Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid" reports in Note 22, that there was support for the UCT student demands and protest action through petitions signed by hundreds of students and academics from as far as Durham, Amsterdam and Leiden amongst other places.

[140] The failure to actualize this award stemmed from the Senate voting against the student proposal that the award be funded via a levy, and instead favoured it being funded on a voluntary basis.

realigning themselves to the hierarchical institutional power structures represented by the university council, at the expense of the principle of academic freedom and also at the expense of a black academic who remained excluded. Again, the pressure from the State to quell the student protest was evident through the public statement by Prime Minister Vorster that they would end the student occupation if the university did not succeed in doing so.[141] The university did maintain some independence by insisting that they would manage their internal business themselves and try to avoid physical confrontation of police with their white students. But they went on to align themselves with public opinion, which in the beginning was supportive of the student occupation but then quickly shifted to a critique of the prolonged protest. The first episode of the Mafeje affair garnered different initial responses from the various stakeholders at UCT. The student body drove the criticism of, and resistance to, the university council's decision not to appoint Mafeje, but ultimately ended up having "ritualised ceremonies of protest" that did nothing significant in changing the situation.[142] Lungisile Ntsebeza notes:

> "… that almost all the students of 1968 that I interviewed in 2008 not only claimed that they never met Mafeje, they never made attempts to find out what happened to him, a clear suggestion that the Mafeje affair was, in the eyes of the students, not about Mafeje, the person, but about themselves and at best, the principle, in this case, academic freedom and the autonomy of universities".[143]

The university went on in various ways to argue that they were heavily coerced into the decisions they had made, implying that the fault for this loss in academic freedom and university autonomy lie with the apartheid State rather than the university's internal processes. This could lead some to believe that the major cause for these unprincipled and racist actions were institutional cowardice by a liberal institution in the face of a racist, authoritarian state but as Hendricks concludes, looking in more detail at the behind the scenes shenanigans with the state, proves that this was rather more accurately a case of institutional complicity with a racist state.[144] The Mafeje matter had lay successfully buried for more than 25 years at UCT, partly hidden by the twenty-year embargo on administrative files enforced by the South African Higher Education Act. The segregation and racism of the apartheid education system continued although differently to the apartheid years,

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[141] Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid."

[142] Ibid, 428.

[143] Ntsebeza, Lungisile. "The Mafeje and the UCT saga; Unfinished business?" *Social Dynamics* 40, no.2 (2014), 278.

[144] Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid."

resulting in an intensification of student resistance culminating in the RMF exposure of the racism of the white liberal university celebrated as the "best university in Africa".

Ramoupi argues that there are five glaring reasons why higher education was not radically transformed in the direction of emancipatory and African centred education in South Africa post-apartheid.[145] Firstly, drawing on the decolonial or transition processes in education at the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and the University of Legon in Ghana, he points out how at liberation, the presidents spearheading the new governments – Mwalimu Nyerere and Kwame Nkrumah – were clear that the colonial universities needed to radically change. They understood the need for a "… radical shift away from the courses and degree structure already established"; for an African-centred education provided by an African university[146]; and the need for "… changes in curricula and content of their education systems and in their universities in a shift away from the colonial paradigms and toward reflecting their Africanness, as people, countries, and continent".[147] Ramoupi compares this to South Africa, where he argues, there was not an explicit critique and commitment to radically transforming higher education for Africa from Nelson Mandela and the ANC.

The second way was how apartheid education was omitted from serious critique in the transitional period, being one of the only sectors to be excluded from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) process. Even as these reconciliation processes were flawed and are coming under heavy critique now, the point stands that the:

> "… deafening silence at the TRC made the universities think there was nothing wrong with the manner in which they ran their business; so they continued to operate their mission of teaching, learning, and researching in the same institutional environment. Whilst in the past twenty years since 1994 most of the country's institutions of higher education have changed leadership from white to black (African, Coloured, and Indian) vice-chancellors, at the centre of what these universities do - teaching, learning and researching - there have been no substantial paradigm shifts meant to bring about meaningful decolonisation of the

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[145] Ramoupi, N.L.L. "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa."

[146] Ramoupi, N.L.L. "Deconstructing Eurocentric Education: A Comparative Study of Teaching Africa-centred Curriculum at the University of Cape Town and the University of Ghana, Legon." *Multidisciplinary Journal of African Studies* 7, no.2 (2012): 1-40.

[147] Ramoupi, N.L.L. African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa."

curriculum and content". [148]

It is Ramoupi's contention that if higher education institutions were called before the TRC there would have been an opportunity to interrogate how these institutions assisted in supporting and keeping apartheid alive. Importantly also, because "… [e]ducation was probably the most brutal aspect of apartheid ideology" with institutions preventing black people from studying and where they were allowed to study, limiting their options according to racist ideas about what work they could do.[149] The third, fourth and fifth reasons discussed by Ramoupi are in the missed opportunities and resistance to change found in the "Triple-M cases" of Mafeje, Mamdani and Makgoba. While I will not look at the famous Makgoba case, which took place at Wits in the 1990's, I will now discuss the remaining three of the four incidents I highlighted earlier related to Mafeje but that took place post-apartheid. After this, I will discuss the Mamdani affair of the 1990's. But before I do that, I will reflect on the some of the history of UCT as an institution.

The story that UCT tells about itself appears on the institution's website under sections titled "The birth of the institution; "Moscow on the Hill"; Transformation; and Aspiring to academic excellence".[150] Woven through this brief history is a tale of birth, growth and change. From the founding as a boys' high school in 1829; officially admitting women in 1887; its development into a university initially with departments of minerology and geology, expanding with the establishment of a Medical School, some Engineering courses and a Department of Education from 1902; to formally being recognised as a university in 1918, and its apparent "sustained opposition to apartheid, particularly in higher education" from 1960 to the 1990's. It currently understands itself as having "… one of the most diverse campuses in South Africa", which "continues to work towards its goal of being Africa's leading research university". Perez and London explain that:

> "While no legal statutes existed before 1948 to restrict the admission of blacks into 'white' universities, many universities adopted policies that effectively barred blacks from study. For example, in 1923, UCT's Council stated that 'it would not be in the interests of the university to admit natives or coloured students in any numbers, if at all'".[151]

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[148] Ibid, 270-271.

[149] Ramoupi, N.L.L. "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa.", 270.

[150] See https://www.uct.ac.za/about/intro/history/, which also has a short reference list for more detailed early histories of the university.

151 Perez, G. and London, L. "Forty-five years apart — confronting the legacy of racial discrimination at the

This indicates that UCT was already keeping out students who were not white before the apartheid regime formalized segregated universities when in:

> "… 1959, the Extension of Universities Act was passed barring admission of black students in English-speaking, 'non-racial' universities and allowing for the establishment of racially segregated universities under the apartheid racial categories of Indian, Coloured and Black (further segregated ethnically). These institutions were called the 'bush' colleges and were originally planned by the apartheid state to incubate a new level of compliant and slightly more privileged class of black people".[152]

UCT has the oldest History Department in the country, founded in 1903. The detail of how the department was founded, funded, and flourished can be found in an article by Christopher Saunders titled *History at the University of Cape Town: the first half century*.[153] It tells a story of white men, war, frontier, conquest, from the Eurocentric perspective. It also highlights how problematic the discipline of history is, pointing in great detail to who was employed at the department, how they were connected to others, where in the colonial metropole they had been educated, and what they chose to research.

The UCT website points to three further sources[154] for the early history of the university between 1829 up until 1948, one of which is the historian Eric Walker, who features prominently in Saunder's reflections on the History Department. One of the listed publishing achievements by Walker was the South African volume of *The Cambridge history of the British Empire*, which he talks about in communication with a colleague that "… 'the zealots for Natives' wanted more about them, but he did not see how more could have been included".[155] Saunder's concludes that the "… Department's greatest failure was in not attempting to recover the history of the black majority, few black students were trained in history, and none prepared for an active role in the profession".[156] Footnote 47 highlights one achievement though:

University of Cape Town." *South African Medical Journal* 94, No. 9 (September 2004): 765.

[152] Naidoo, L-A. "The Role of Radical Pedagogy in the South African Students Organisation and the Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa, 1968–1973." *Education as Change* 19, no. 2(2015): 115.

[153] Saunders, C. "History at the University of Cape Town: The First Half-Century." *Quart Bul NLSA* 57 (3), 2003.

[154] The History of the SA College: 1829-1918 (2 volumes), by William Ritchie (Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1918). The SA College and the University of Cape Town: 1829-1929, by Eric A Walker (Centenary Volume published for the Council of the University of Cape Town by the Cape Times, 1929). The History of the University of Cape Town 1928-1948: The Formative Years, by Howard Phillips.

[155] Saunders, 2003, 132.

[156] Ibid, 134.

> "E. Mamkeli, 'African public opinion and the unification of South Africa' (unpublished Hons. Essay, 1954). This drew heavily upon the African newspapers *Imvo* and *Izwe*. Thompson used it for *The Unification of South Africa* (Oxford, 1960). [Ephes] Mamkeli was probably the first black African to complete an Honours degree in history at a South African university".[157]

This story of racism is reinforced in the writings on the (lack of) training of black medical students, when Perez and London detail the experiences of two doctors who were trained at UCT Medical School forty-five years apart. They explain that even as very small numbers of black students were admitted for medical training, this was frowned upon because the clinical part of the training would mean that white patients, would need to be "exposed" to black medical students, which UCT declared it could not condone.[158] This resulted in these few black students completing their clinical training abroad if at all. According to Perez and London "… increasing militancy on the part of black students under the Non-European Medical Students Vigilance Committee, led by B M Kies, resulted in so-called coloured and Indian students from 1943 being "… allowed into the "non-European" hospital wards in the new Groote Schuur Hospital, on condition that they had no contact in any way with white patients, even post mortem".[159] Black medical student enrolment only gradually increased with the first black "… African student admitted in 1985. The number of black graduates from UCT only began to exceed 20 after 1990".[160] In addition to the limited inclusion of black students at UCT, there are harrowing accounts of the terrible conditions and experiences of black students and staff through the practices of segregation.[161]

Teresa Barnes's book *Uprooting University Apartheid in South Africa: from liberalism to decolonization*, engages the story of UCT's Philosophy Professor A.H. Murray (from 1938 to 1970), to "explore the roots of university apartheid" and to provide "… a new framework for understanding South African liberalism and liberals".[162] Taylor and Taylor posit that the aforementioned "… cases (Makgoba, Mamdani, Shell) bring out a sense of the bad faith of white

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[157] Ibid, 137.

[158] Perez, G. and L. London, "Forty-five years apart — confronting the legacy of racial discrimination at the University of Cape Town." *South African Medical Journal* 94, No. 9 (September 2004), 765.

[159] Ibid, 765.

[160] Ibid, 765.

[161] Hendricks, 2008; Perez and London, 2004; Ramphele, M. 1999. The Responsibility Side of the Academic Freedom Coin. DCS Oosthuizen Academic Freedom Memorial Lecture, Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

[162] Barnes, T. *Uprooting University Apartheid in South Africa: From liberalism to decolonization.* London: Routledge, 2019.

liberals and their investments in white supremacy as well as their rather paternalistic approach to Black inclusion".[163] Also, as suggested by Mangcu:

> "This separation of academic from social commitment is what ultimately constituted the crisis of liberalism in South Africa. It was a form of evasion, a literal academic/paying lip service to the social conditions that exist outside university environs. White liberals continued to mouth their opposition to racism while continuing of course to enjoy the privileges it bestowed on them. This is the kind of compromised liberalism that came under attack from the black consciousness movement in the late 1960s".[164]

The liberal university's complicity with apartheid, revealing its racism has come under scrutiny over the last few years and RMF contributed to this critique from the post-apartheid perspective, drawing out the continuities between the periods.

3.2 Affairs Post-Apartheid

The second episode in the Mafeje affair was when Prof Mafeje, who had been teaching and building a substantial body of work in exile, sought to return home and therefore enquired about the possibility of a position at UCT in 1990/1991. In summary, Mafeje through a friend attempted to negotiate a position at UCT and was eventually offered a position as a senior visiting researcher in a one-year contract position.[165] This formed part of what clearly showed, according to Ntsebeza who studied the archival correspondence in detail, the disinterest of UCT leadership to rectify the 1968 injustice at a time when some at the university were claiming that they were also struggling to find suitably qualified Black academics.[166] Mafeje responded to this offer by pointing out that he could not uproot his entire family to move country on the back of such a short contract. Despite his negative initial response, UCT went on to offer him a salary for the unappealing one-year contract offered, pegged at a senior lecturer level. He responded with rightful disdain at this offer, which would have him accept a short-term contract position at the same level he was denied a job at over twenty years before. Lungisile Ntsebeza, was commissioned to do research into the relationship between UCT and Prof. Mafeje, to understand why he in 2003 refused the awarding of an honorary

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[163] Taylor, Y. and R. Taylor. "Academic freedom and racial injustice: South Africa's former 'open universities'." *South African Journal of Higher Education* 24, no. 6 (2010), 902.

[164] Mangcu X. 2006, 7, cited in Hendricks, Fred, "The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid," 426.

[165] Ntsebeza, L. "The Mafeje and the UCT Saga: Unfinished Business?," 280.

[166] Ibid, 280.

doctorate from UCT, and to better prepare for a posthumous apology and commemoration. He was given access to the UCT administrative archive, which was under the twenty-year embargo, and here he found more evidence of the mistreatment of Mafeje and the racist hiring practices of UCT. He noted that while UCT claimed that it didn't have sufficient funding to offer more than a one-year contract at senior lecturer level, he found in internal communication by the senior staff member who drafted this embarrassing offer to Mafeje, that the said UCT staff member had written that he was "… not convinced that Prof Mafeje is a suitable candidate for a senior permanent position at this university, given his poor publication and research record for the past 10 years".[167] Ntsebeza notes that this same person wrote glowingly about the enthusiasm of colleagues who endorsed UCT's invitation to Mafeje, but in private stated that he does not think him good enough. And when, during his re-engagement with the Mafeje archive, he interviewed this person in 2008 to ask him why he would have written such a thing, he was told that he did not remember and that he would get back in touch if he remembered, which he never did.[168]

The third episode in the Mafeje affair was when he was encouraged by a close friend to apply to UCT for the position of AC Jordan Chair of African Studies in 1993. This episode to me is the most damning because it shows the unethical behaviour of senior white male academics that are able to influence and corrupt the hiring processes of the university with their racist ideas and attitudes. Mafeje applied and was shortlisted as one of the top candidates but despite this the chair of the selection committee "… argued that Mafeje's application be turned down".[169] The chair had also proven himself as highly prejudiced against Mafeje having written a letter to UCT management declaring that the "… department that he was associated with would not house Mafeje if he accepted the one-year contract discussed above".[170] It was the chair that put forward multiple reasons that Mafeje should not be shortlisted or appointed all of which were based on hearsay and related to his personality rather than his academic credentials. Some of these included a claim that he was an alcoholic, a difficult character to work with, and that he had bad things to say about UCT. In the end the selection committee agreed to interview him but then ultimately did not do so because the chair found a technicality to exclude him on – he had moved from the University of

[167] Ibid, 281.

[168] Ibid, 281.

[169] Ibid, 281.

[170] Ibid, 281.

Namibia to the University of Cairo and had not sent the university a new address.[171]

The fourth episode is the apology offered to Prof Mafeje by UCT in 2003 (that he never responded to) and again in 2008 where there was also a colloquium held on his work and a more detailed apology, which his family agreed to accept posthumously including an honorary doctorate. There is an issue I would like to amplify, made by Ntsebeza when he ends his article, asking whether there is "unfinished business" regarding Mafeje and UCT. While there were five actions agreed upon to make right by Mafeje including the renaming of the UCT Senate Room, all of which have been fulfilled, there was a problematic proviso to one of the actions. UCT would allow anyone who wanted access to the UCT administrative files on Mafeje unrestricted access even though it is still inside the twenty-year embargo. The proviso is that anyone wishing to do this has to seek permission from the UCT Vice-Chancellor before they can publish anything based on those files, which amounts to a form of censorship that is worrying. To my knowledge, no-one has tried to do anything like this as yet, and we will therefore have to wait and see how the proviso unfolds.

When drawing lessons from this protracted and infuriating affair Ramoupi posits and I agree, that "… [r]econciliation aside, the treatment of Mafeje by UCT continues to shed light on this institution's—and by extension, other South African universities'—attitude towards higher education transformation today, particularly with the employment of South African black scholars—both eminent and emerging".[172] The last affair that I will now look at is the much publicised case where an eminent black scholar was, unlike Mafeje, appointed at UCT, paid a commensurate salary, but then had his work and ability questioned along with his ideas about the ways in which a post-colonial university should teach about Africa. Ntsebeza, when asked about the Mamdani affair, explained "… that had UCT addressed the Mafeje affair humanely in 1968 and in the early 1990s when Mafeje returned from exile, the Mamdani affair would not have happened. Simply put, the "Mamdani affair" occurred because UCT swept the Mafeje case under the carpet, as if he did not exist".[173]

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[171] Ibid, 282.

[172] Ramoupi, N.L.L. "African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa.", 275.

[173] Ibid, 277.

3.3 Mamdani Affair

In 1996, Prof Mahmood Mamdani[174] was appointed as the AC Jordan Chair based in the UCT Centre for African Studies (CAS), which he became the Director of in 1997. Towards the end of 1997 he was approached by the then Deputy-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences to design the core of a foundation semester that all social science students would go through, and central to this would be a course on Africa. He took up the task enlisting the help of a History Professor at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), which was the HBU in the Western Cape, and often seen as a second-class university by the white liberals "on the hill".[175] They worked diligently to get the said curriculum together and presented it before the end of the year to the relevant faculty committee. What followed is detailed in many writings including a scholarly article penned by Mamdani himself, and a range of responses from academics involved in the debacle and notable others. To summarise, the draft course was shared with the faculty and academics across departments were asked to vote on the various proposed sections. Based on the responses of the poll, communicated through a three-person working group made up of an archaeologist, historian and anthropologist, all white men professors, Mamdani was asked to modify the curriculum, which he did. He however received a letter from the Deputy Dean on the day he was meant to submit his updated course, suspending him from the course for the following year and offering him a sabbatical citing that this was to give him more time to complete the course design. He was also informed that a course would take place in 1998 but would be (re)designed by the working group.[176] Fortunately Mamdani did not take the unfolding events lightly and protested in a number of ways. Importantly, according to Kamola:

> "The Mamdani affair is also instructive in offering an example of what an engaged politics of knowledge production looks like. Rather than disaggregating his academic writing from questions of administration, Mamdani insisted that conversations concerning what the university should teach, and how it measures 'excellence', are intellectual questions that should be aired in a public, intellectual debate. Bringing his disagreement into the public, however, would not have happened without a willingness to apply political force by

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[174] Mahmood Mamdani is a Ugandan academic who went to university in the United States of America. He participated in the civil rights movement and was arrested at a march organised by the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). He returned to Uganda after his studies but was expelled for his ethnicity by Idi Amin. To read more on his life and work see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahmood_Mamdani

[175] Mamdani, M. "Teaching Africa at the post-apartheid University of Cape Town: A critical view of the introduction to Africa." *Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies* 24:2(1998): 2. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02533959808458646

[176] Ibid, 1998.

> engaging in his 'one-person strike'. Scholars around the world can learn from Mamdani's provocation. His engagement reminds us that the production of academic knowledge has serious political stakes, themselves structured by the political and material institutions of the university".[177]

Mamdani himself structured his position in the intellectual debate that ensued through a critical reflection on his experience of the unfolding saga, using his specialized knowledge as a Professor of African Studies, his institutional knowledge ensuring that he engaged the academic fora available to raise his concerns and critique, and when this fell on deaf ears, his knowledge of politics and his right to strike. He was essentially fighting from the inside, the racism and mediocrity of the white liberal institution, something Mafeje could only try and do from a distance. It is not inconsequential that he was a world-renowned scholar and therefore had a readership and audience that would immediately make UCT leadership cautious about how it proceeded.

The question of "academic excellence" is something that has been a bone of contention across time at white institutions, especially as it has been used with racist intent, to keep black academics in junior positions.[178] Kamola rereads the Mamdani affair with a view to better understand the notions of academic excellence at the time at UCT, when South Africa was in transition and UCT specifically falling prey to the neoliberal shifts taking place and therefore was marketing itself as a "world-class African university".[179] Mamdani's closing remarks in the last line of his paper on the Mamdani affair is useful here: "It is time to question an intellectual culture which encourages the inmates of this institution to flourish as potted plants in green houses, expecting to be well watered at regular intervals, and yet anxious lest they be exposed to the open air and its elements by the winds of political change".[180] The next half of this chapter will look at select engagements by black students at UCT refusing the isolating and silencing experiences of UCT and the resultant slow transformation that ultimately lead to the shit-statue protest.

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[177] Kamola, I.A. "Pursuing Excellence in a 'World-Class African University': The Mamdani Affair and the Politics of Global Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education in Africa 9, No.1/2* (2011): 137.

[178] See more on this debate at "UCT and transformation part four: the academic staff", *GroundUp*, 5 May 2015, https://www.groundup.org.za/article/uct-and-transformation-part-four-academic-staff_2904/

[179] Kamola, I.A. "Pursuing Excellence in a 'World-Class African University': The Mamdani Affair and the Politics of Global Higher Education." *Journal of Higher Education in Africa 9, No.1/2* (2011): 121-142.

[180] Mahmood, M. "Teaching Africa at the post-apartheid University of Cape Town: A critical view of the introduction to Africa," 14.

3.4 Outsourcing Affair

One of the significant facets of the 2015 protests at UCT was the collaboration between black students, workers and staff. It was significant that black students were leading with critique and resistance not only over the experiences and conditions that they were faced with but also how some of these conditions and experiences overlapped with that of black workers and staff. Again, there was a link made between the ways in which certain Black workers are exploited and how this practice, which some have called modern day slavery, persists in the new democracy. Students make a distinction between workers and staff because of the very different working conditions between black workers set up at South African universities. In the 1990's and 2000's, as universities were opening their doors to black students and staff, government was at the same time decreasing the amount of state funds being committed to universities. Universities responded to this neoliberalising move from the state by using a three-pronged approach to funding, namely (decreasing) funds from the state, (increasing) funds from student fees and third-stream funding from various donors. Universities also engaged in other cost saving measures, one of the most devastating of which was outsourcing staff who were from that point onwards considered to be not part of the "core-business" or "essential services" of the university. UCT in particular, was "… the pioneer of outsourcing in South African Higher Education".[181] The first black woman Vice-Chancellor of UCT, BC stalwart Dr Mamphela Ramphele, ironically oversaw the implementation of this outsourcing practice.

This differentiation of employees meant that students used the term workers to talk about outsourced workers, which included people performing the function of cleaning, gardening, driving, cooking, security, maintenance, etc. These workers, previously university staff, were retrenched by universities in the outsourcing process, and a small number of them were hired back but through private for-profit companies. This cost saving decision meant that the poorest and lowest paid black workers at the university lost their permanent employment along with benefits. Their children would no longer be able to study for free at the university they worked for, they would no longer have medical aid and pension options. They also lost much more than this as the university allowed for a hierarchised, dehumanising system of exploitation to be normalised and cemented. "Universities became workplaces in which workers work alongside each other every day but fall

[181] Luckett, T., and D. Mzobe. "#OutsourcingMustFall: The Role of Workers in the 2015 Protest Wave at South African Universities." *Global Labour Journal* 7, no. 1 (2016). https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/globallabour/article/view/2839/2543

under different industrial sectors, have different employers, and different working conditions".[182] This also had implications for how workers could organise themselves. Their working conditions changed overnight where at some institutions workers were not allowed to use the same bathrooms as students and staff, they were not allowed to eat or sit in the public areas at the university, and in some cases had to use separate entrances into buildings, not to mention that their remuneration was significantly cut and stagnated, often for over a decade.

Staff was used as the term to describe academic, technical and administrative workers. As universities have become more corporatised and bureaucratised, there have been more administrative staff employed and the administrative functions of academics have also increased. Small groups of progressive academics and students across universities joined with outsourced workers to fight outsourcing from its inception. This took the form of the Workers Solidarity Committee at Wits, which was formed in 2008 and the Left Student Forum (LSF) at UCT, which can be traced back to a campaign under the banner of Take Action in 2002. There was a regrouping in 2006 through the UCT Student Worker Alliance, which then had a name-change around 2009 to Students of the Workers Forum, which became the Left Student Forum in 2012.[183] "There has been various … incarnations of it over the last maybe ten years, and it has been centred around anti-outsourcing basically and solidarity with workers. It used to be called UCT Student Workers Alliance and they actually did a whole bunch of activism around getting this code of conduct introduced".[184] The UCT Workers Code of Conduct was one of the mechanisms struggled for by students, workers and staff to ensure that there were at the very least decent minimum conditions of employment for outsourced workers, which UCT could insist that the companies awarded the tenders for various outsourced functions would comply to. The LSF changed their name because they started to organise around worker issues off campus as well. They organized talks and action around the Marikana Massacre, they raised funds to support a 2014 strike in the platinum mining sector, and they raised funds in 2015 to contribute to the legal fees of CASAWU, a farm workers union that was going to dissolve if it couldn't pay the costs that were assigned to it by the court

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[182] Luckett, T., and Pontarelli, F. "Special Report: South Africa: #OutsourcingMustFall: Unity in Action in South African Universities." *The Brooklyn Rail* March 4, 2016, 4. URL: https://brooklynrail.org/2016/03/field-notes/outsourcing-must-fall

[183] Conversation via Facebook messenger with the LSF Facebook group November 2017: Left Students' Forum, Facebook Page, accessed September 25, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/UCTLSF/

[184] Slayan Interview Transcript, 2015, 9.

after they lost a court battle.[185]

Outsourcing was fought at a range of universities for over a decade with some gains being won in relation to workers' rights to organise and protest, salary increases and improved working conditions, often through the development by workers in conversation with students and small groups of concerned academics, of Workers Charters. While these gains were important, the demand to end outsourcing in principle and then practice was resisted by university managements on practical grounds that it was financially impossible and unsustainable to insource workers. Despite this resistance from university managements, demands related to worker rights were fundamentally part of the student resistance of 2015.

3.5 Black student struggles at UCT

I was not surprised to learn that a number of the RMF students were already activists or actively engaged thinkers, prior to its formation. I will engage in more depth in the next chapter where I will discuss in a more focused way the educational histories of my key RMF interviewees. A number of them were interested in political questions but either not aligned to a political party or disillusioned with party politics after having been involved in one. Brian Kamanzi explains:

> "… there were a lot of other people at UCT going through similar kinds of processes and that really accelerated both my interests and my readings of some of the things – and I think prior there were already people meeting and – you go from event to event and there's the similar faces – saying similar things and getting frustrated… a lot of us are not in political parties, so it's also people who didn't really have a home and there was political conversations happening all the time – [but] not really a home to have them. So I think when it happened a lot of people responded to the call in that way – because they were saying this is what I've been thinking about. And I think that what I've noticed in the last couple of months is people have really been standing up so much straighter because before these were just friends' conversations that were had, maybe in Observatory or over coffee somewhere. Now people are not afraid to walk around and talk about it at any point, at any volume level".[186]

Brian describes what I imagine to be an impatience with the politics practiced in formal political parties and their student wings. Also, the social spaces at UCT being unable to open to the experiences of black students with regards to different forms of alienation and discrimination.

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[185] Slayan Interview Transcript, 2015, 9

[186] Kamanzi Interview Transcript, 2015.

Students were looking for alternate spaces to be in collective conversation and struggle together. What follows now is a snapshot of some of the experiments with creating and building critical alternative education spaces to what was available for students at UCT. When trying to figure out what caused the specific conversations and engagements that were increasing prior to RMF it became clear that experiences of alienation, discussed in more detail in the next chapter, was a driving force for students to create these alternate politicised or critical spaces. Some collective activities were planned around protesting a particular issue, such as the closing of the Centre for African Studies (CAS) discussed below. But in other instances like the creation of the Imbizo gatherings and Conscious Conversation spaces, were attempts to create different kinds of dialogues on campus. These two spaces differed in that Conscious Conversations there were to hold critical dialogue on the issue of race and racism with the UCT community, what I have termed "plenary conversation/space", while Imbizo was to critically question the state of South African society from a pan African perspective and to create a space for black people to dialogue and be together, what I call "caucus conversation/space".

At the beginning of 2011, students at the UCT CAS wrote a public statement about being "… baffled, appalled, angered, enraged and deeply disappointed by the university's administrative decision to disestablish the Centre for African Studies without our input or consultation".[187] In their view, the CAS provided:

> "a uniquely multi-disciplinary department that cultivates critical intellectual work, which interrogates the study of Africa, the African Diaspora and the global South; a department that centralises Africa and its varied, nuanced and many times disparate intellectual histories and ways of knowing in order to challenge disciplinary paradigms and the relations between power and knowledge production".[188]

If Mamdani didn't succeed in radically changing or decolonising the curriculum through the process the university asked him to form part of, then in the students' view, the centre he left a few years earlier was at least able to hold the space in the institution to talk about and do so, but now even this small department was under threat of closure. The students go on to describe what many would understand as decolonial work that the CAS was focusing on that "… encourage[s] us to reflect on

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[187] See the full statement written on 14 February 2011 and published one 30 November 2011 here: Africa South Art Initiative, "Does Post-Apartheid UCT Need a Centre for African Studies?," accessed February 24, 2016, http://asai.co.za/does-post-apartheid-uct-need-a-centre-for-african-studies/

[188] Ibid, 2011.

and question ourselves and our relationships with others". Echoes of #RMF students' questions around decolonisation can be heard in the CAS student statement when they explain that these "… are not merely academic questions. Rather, they inspire us to examine critically our own identities and how and why we are represented in particular ways. Through this lens, we are given the space to discuss openly what knowledges are accepted as equal, and how power, institutional and otherwise, operates".[189] The critique of Euro-centric epistemology and its place in a "post-apartheid" university was ongoing, even if only in small pockets across the university. The CAS according to some of its students, was providing a formal space in the university to critically understand the relation between power and the university. What knowledge is promoted, what role does identity play, how knowledge, power and identity intersect to create particular experiences of university life? RMF emerged in the UCT context where some of these questions had been asked. What was different was that RMF was both analysing and critiquing their context but importantly also actively working to change the conditions they experienced, and in so doing succeeded in inspiring many others to do the same.

3.6 Context for post-apartheid struggle

Historically (some would say currently) Black Universities (HBU's) have continued in the main to cater for poor black students while Historically White Universities (HWU) have been forced to slowly transform such that there are more black students at the University of Cape Town, Wits, Rhodes, Stellenbosch, North West, and the Free State. HWU's were divided between English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking universities and each individual institution differed depending on how they managed the transition in the 1990's. Some universities like NWU, UFS, TUT, and UKZN went through merger processes where they incorporated technical colleges and universities under one institutional umbrella. This meant that in the case of NWU and UFS, the main campus of each institution remains largely white Afrikaans-speaking students while the second and third campuses of each institution is largely black. This is not the case at UCT where there was no merger. UCT as a result took on more and more black students and staff, even if slowly, such that the classes were becoming more diverse. This meant that some university classroom spaces were the primary sites where diverse groups of young South Africans were by circumstance forced[190] to

[189] Ibid, 2011.

[190] I have been asked why I choose to see and describe students being "forced" into these diverse classroom spaces rather than for example seeing and therefore describing it as an opportunity for diverse engagement. This is one of

sit side-by-side with one another consistently.

Leaders at UCT, much like leaders in Cape Town, spend time and energy arguing that the institution and the city in which it finds itself is not racist. In 2011, Helen Zille the then premier of the Western Cape which is controlled by the main opposition party the Democratic Alliance, took to social media to defend Cape Town as a city that was not racist. In the twitter storm, Zille accused a prominent black women musician Simphiwe Dana of being a "professional Black", which she later explained meant … "People who base their life and purpose around their colour".[191] Osiama Molefe published an article on 5 January 2012 titled "Cape Town, World Racism Capital?" where he criticises Zille's tweets and recounts a number of media exposés of racist incidents in Cape Town including writing about his personal experience.[192] A NY Times article titled "In a Divided City, Many Blacks See Echoes of White Supremacy" was published on 22 March 2012 and reported on the twitter storm and also traced the history of segregation in Cape Town.[193] A few days later The Guardian published Justice Malala's article titled "Is Cape Town a Racist City?" where he detailed the history of segregation in the city back to Jan Van Riebeeck, discussed the twitter storm by Helen Zille and argued that Cape Town was/is disliked by black people, especially the black middle class because the city is largely economically controlled by white people and companies. He confirmed the largely accepted belief that the tourist part of Cape Town, which UCT forms a part of, feels and seems more like a city of Europe than of the African continent.[194] What this shows is that the leaders of the City of Cape Town, and I will discuss later the university, spend time defending their institutions as not racist instead of engaging and dealing with the experiences of racism of black people in those institutions.

Marius Fransman, the then ANC deputy minister of international relations and co-operation, put the

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many examples that clarify for me how standpoint does affect not only how we read and see the world, but also how we write and act in it. For many black students as you will read in the next chapter, these diverse classroom spaces, that were framed by most lecturers, including the content and pedagogy, as devoid of politics, were violent spaces that reinforced the unequal racist heterosexist status quo. This footnote is an attempt to engage minimally in white pedagogy, the orientation in my writing to explain and write for white learning.

[191] There is a twitter trail available on the engagement but also see https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/dec/29/south-africa-racism-row-twitter and https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/zille-sparks-new-twitter-war-with-professional-black-jibe-1205626

[192] See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2012-01-05-cape-town-world-racism-capital-2011/

[193] See https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/23/world/africa/in-cape-town-many-black-south-africans-feel-unwelcome.html?pagewanted=all

[194] See https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/26/is-cape-town-racist-city

lack of transformation at UCT under the spotlight in a speech delivered to the Post-School Education Summit hosted by the South African Youth Council-Western Cape on 12 April 2012 and picked up in the mainstream media.[195] He also asked the young people at the conference "… [w]ill you follow in the footsteps of the youth of 1912, the young heroes of 1946, the Kliptown generation of 1955, the young martyrs of 1976, the student rebels of 1981 and the young lions of 1985/6 who responded to the call to bring apartheid to its knees and usher in the dawn of democracy".[196] Even if Fransman was encouraging young people to take action in the city and region he was in, which remains the largest province of South Africa's nine provinces not controlled by the ruling ANC, he could surely not be oblivious to the fact that much of the national politics and progress of transforming South Africa was in the hands of the ANC led government he was representing. UCT responded to point out the technical inaccuracies with the statistics Fransman quoted but admitted that the pace of transformation at UCT was still too slow.[197] In spite of the admitted lack of transformation, UCT was in the same year ranked as the best university in South Africa and Africa.[198]

Mpumi Tshabalala, a UCT law student, started with other students, an open forum in 2010 called Conscious Conversations,[199] which hosted an annual conversation in collaboration with the UCT SRC and the Transformation Office, and selected topics that had racism as its focus. In 2012 the conversation was titled "Is UCT Racist?". Davies reported that students attending this conversation were very outspoken about their experiences of racism at UCT and that in the open discussion a student asked to loud applause "If UCT is not racist, why is Cecil John Rhodes's statue still there?"[200] The selected 2012 Conscious Conversation topic was engaging the twitter storm that emerged over the same period and also asked #IsCapeTownRacist? Student organisers felt it pertinent to ask this question of UCT specifically, especially because it was considered the premier

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[195] See the full transcript of the speech here https://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/uct-backsliding-on-racial-transformation--marius-f

[196] Fransman, Marius, "UCT backsliding on racial transformation - Marius Fransman," *politicsweb*, accessed November 23, 2017, https://www.politicsweb.co.za/party/uct-backsliding-on-racial-transformation--marius-f

[197] Full response from UCT available here https://www.politicsweb.co.za/comment/marius-fransmans-facts-wrong--uct

[198] See https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2012-09-12-uct-is-the-countrys-best-varsity-by-far/

[199] To see a video highlight of the 2011 open forum see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Uh4Dw5iIIo . Students like Wanelisa Xaba who were involved in RMF and part of the student organisers. Also present was Ziyana Lategan.

[200] Davies, R. "UCT students get stuck into race debate." *Daily Maverick*, April 20, 2012. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-04-20-uct-students-get-stuck-into-race-debate/

university in Cape Town and on the African continent. The broader politics of Cape Town was definitely influencing the questions that students were raising.

A year later [2013], Cape Town, the city that the university overlooks, was awarded three major titles according to Kelly Gillespie in an article titled "Murder and the whole city", which details the divided nature and experience of Cape Town.[201] It was awarded "The Design Capital of the World" and named "The Best Holiday Destination" by *The NY Times* and *The Guardian*. The city also had the highest murder rate in South Africa making it one of the deadliest cities in the world. More and more students attending UCT were personally aware of these very different sides of Cape Town still largely divided between black and white residents of the city. In thinking about the lead up to RMF Mase remembers that:

> "… it was last year [2014], … something happened. There was a complete shift where all of a sudden people started to say, well, we have to start speaking about race – we have to start speaking about race relations on campus and whether people actually do feel a sense of belonging in this space. And for me also I think that shift was so important because for me something happened in that space. I'm not sure what, but something definitely did happen. And so, yes, last year there was a lot of discussion... Masixole then came and started the Imbizos, which also brought a very different aspect too".[202]

Both UCT and Cape Town were in the news for being untransformed and racist. Even as the city and the university were simultaneously being awarded and applauded for being the best in South Africa, on the continent, in the world. Two of a dozen racist instances that made headlines in 2014 took place at the Tiger-Tiger night club in the area surrounding the university.[203] Both these incidents involved white UCT students perpetrating what was understood as racist actions. These incidents resulted in UCT, through a statement[204] by its VC Max Price, condemning racism in the city and committing itself to punishing any UCT person found guilty of racism. This position raised questions about whether UCT could in fact not be a racist institution when its white students were involved in racially charged incidents in the city. Also, whether UCT management was in denial about the experiences that its black students and workers felt on its campuses.

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[201] Gillespie, K.M. "Murder and the whole City." *Anthropology Southern Africa* 37, no. 3-4 (2015) , 206.

[202] Ramaru Interview Transcript, 2015

[203] https://www.iol.co.za/news/urinating-student-found-guilty-1962167 and an article reflecting on a number of racist incidents in Cape Town in 2014 https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2014-11-27-cape-town-racist-club-assault-the-tragedy-and-danger-of-an-ahistorical-upbringing/

[204] See the full letter here http://www.uct.ac.za/downloads/email/VCtoSRC.25Nov2014.pdf

Masixole describes another student driven initiative called Imbizo, that he helped start at one of the UCT residences:

> "Imbizo, … we started it last year around February/March [2014]. It was conversations around dinner tables in [Leo] Marquard, the residence… as I said when I came in no-one was talking about these issues, so I started conversating… big fights about race relations. I used to love speaking about land. I still love speaking about land, so we took the conversation to a bigger platform. We called it Imbizo… sitting down, conscientising ourselves on African issues".[205]

The Conscious Conversations that had been happening since 2010 and that centred the question of race and racism, took place before Masixole started at UCT. One of the challenges with student-driven initiatives at the university is the fact that most students are at university for three to five years and then they leave. Some students however overlapped the Conscious Conversations and Imbizo conversations. These two conversations were similar in the sense that black student intellectuals were exploring what it meant to be a black UCT student and were working to create spaces for extending that conversation and for connecting with others who have had similar experiences of UCT. A key difference between the two was that the one was based in the UCT residence system and ensured spaces for smaller caucus/conversations for mainly black students, while the other organised big annual plenary/conversations inviting all university students and staff to attend. The Imbizo conversations in all the forms they were organised were explicitly thinking and talking about race but were importantly also linking it to questions of land dispossession. They were also asking questions around what it meant to be in Africa and develop an African Consciousness. It was in the Imbizo space that the ideas and sentiments of pan Africanism were developing. A number of students who later formed part of RMF also attended these spaces of dialogue.

The Marquard Imbizo that took place at the UCT residence called Leo Marquard on Lower Campus, explained on the group's Facebook page as being "… a gathering of Marquardians as well as invited guests to have conscious discussions around African issues aimed at creating an African Consciousness to inspire action amongst the youth".[206] There were three kinds of spaces of engagement and discussion namely poetry and music sessions; smaller conversations called Black Coffee Conversations (BCC); and the big imbizo event. The Black Coffee Conversations described

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[205] Mlandu Interview Transcript, 2015, 6.

[206] Details about the Imbizo can be found on their Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/marquardimbizo/

as "… a series of dialogue[s] where we will be having coffee and discussing the black situation in South Africa". The first BCC took place on 2 October 2014 with invited guest Pastor Xola Nkhosana discussing "… where we as black people find ourselves in this world in this day and age where we are told that slavery and separation are over yet we still find ourselves enslaved and separated".[207] The poetry and music open sessions described as a "… night of storytelling, music and poetry". The big imbizo conversation invited a speaker to have a conversation around a theme. Some of the conversation themes were "Are Africans Really Free" with preparatory reading of chika onyeani capitalist nigga (27 April 2014); "From Sharpeville to Marikana" with guest speaker Dr Kenny Bafo (22 August 2014); "Imbizo on Land" (10 and 17 October 2014); and "Questioning the Legitimacy of South Africa's 'Democracy'" (27 April 2015).

The Imbizo discussion themes read with the aims of the gatherings of "creating an African Consciousness to inspire action amongst the youth", indicate that there was a choice being made around framing questions as they relate to Africanness. There was also an explicit focusing on the conditions and experience of black people in South Africa by explicitly questioning the ideas of freedom, democracy, and the question of land, to the way that black resistance was dealt with by the state both under apartheid (Sharpeville) and post-apartheid (Marikana).

The Imbizo held a discussion a year prior to the shit-statue protest that questioned the history and heritage that the Rhodes statue evoked. The event was to be held on 21 March 2014 a national public holiday called Human Rights Day. The following post from their Facebook page describes the questions that would be engaged at the event.

> "Human Rights Day also brings with it the remembrance of those who grossly violated the rights of others in the name of colonialism: We look at the Cecil Rhodes Memorial and Statue at UCT and ask ourselves, "Why are we commemorating or paying tribute to a colonialist - a gross violator of the human rights of the African people?" "Why have we normalized such thinking in Africa?" We aim to challenge this convention in order to inspire action amongst young people. "Our revolution will not be televised; it will be felt".[208]

Framing the conversation to be held on Human Rights Day as critically discussing how African peoples' rights were violated and linking this to Rhodes and specifically to his memorialisation

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[207] For more information on this event see https://www.facebook.com/events/1491191814467122/

[208] Marqid Imizo Facebook Page post (the Facebook account name has been changed to UCT Kilombo Village): UCT Kilombo Village, Facebook Page, accessed January 14, 2018, https://www.facebook.com/marquardimbizo/

through the symbol of his statue, was challenging the commonsense view that most at UCT were buying in to. The question was asking people to think about their ideas to try and critically understand why colonialists considered to be human rights violators were celebrated on university campuses, and specifically why young black people were not challenging this convention in dialogue but also in action. Masixole described the difference in social relations on campus before and after #RMF as "… a huge difference. A huge gap", where initially a small group of students were talking about issues on campus and in South African society, and then extending the conversation through for example the Marquard Imbizo, after RMF many more people were talking about the untransformed nature of UCT. I remember me and my friends use to fight about taking down that [Rhodes] statue" … during Imbizo gatherings.[209]

As I have shown above, students were creating their own spaces for critical conversation and questioning outside of their formal university classroom spaces. They were in some instances supported by the institution to hold such gatherings, but they determined the agenda or wrote their own curriculum in relation to the content and the form of what they wanted to do. These and other initiatives to create spaces for engagement and the development of critical consciousness and in some instances a more explicitly African consciousness, were taking place years before the shit hit the statue. This was part of what set the scene for the catalyst movement of #RMF to emerge.

[209] Mlandu Interview Transcript, 2015.

Chapter 4: Alienation as Pain: conditions for resistance to assimilation

> We need more autobiographical accounts of the first generation of black students to enter predominantly white schools, colleges, and universities.[210]

bell hooks' injunction to pay attention to the biographies of Black students in post-segregation United States can equally be understood as a necessity in the years after apartheid in South Africa, when institutions built for white people and for the reproduction of whiteness opened their doors to young black people. The "born frees" to quote Milisuthando Bongela, were sent into these white schools with the best of intentions "like lambs to slaughter".[211] I will in this chapter engage some of the autobiographical reflections in the interviews I did with RMF intellectuals specifically around their educational and family histories. The chapter centres on the experience and idea of alienation because this was the term and explanation that came up most readily and across the majority of the biographies. Also, because it is my contention that these student intellectuals engaged critically their experiences, entailing themselves in the very analytical, moral and political questions about politics and power at UCT.

Lwando Scott, originally from the Eastern Cape, shares his initial experiences of UCT:

> "I felt the horror and the alienation because I wanted to belong – you know you want to get into the spirit of being a UCT student. And you know UCT is the best in Africa, the best in the country – so you come, you bring yourself – because you are in this process of creating the best you can, and so you come into this institution and you are met with this alienation. And then you re-orientate – now you have to deal in this way that you didn't expect, and I think that white students don't get that. They are here to create their best selves and they go because the institution enables that – the institutional culture is already suited for them. They don't have to navigate it, it's just there for them for the taking".[212]

The stories of black RMF students are different depending on their lived experiences and position in relation to varying privileges. As you will read, a student from Khayelitsha's version is different to that of a St. Johns private school graduate, is different to the story of the person who spent most of their life growing up in exile, but the common disturbing thread was… "we are alien here, we are other". The norm at UCT revolved around what the movement had identified as white-supremacist,

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[210] hooks, bell. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. London: Routledge, 2010, 2-3.

[211] Bongela, Milisuthando used this expression at a discussion about her forthcoming film on her personal experience of attending a white Model-C school see https://cinereach.org/films/milisuthando/

[212] Scott Interview Transcript, 2015, 2.

capitalist, and hetero-patriarchal[213]. The shit hitting the statue on 9 March 2015 was a catalyst for the refusal by many black students to continue to hold and hide the alienation. Some of these initiatives were formalised and became regular opportunities to connect and recognise each other's painful experiences of alienation. RMF in its mission statement also indicated that there was more at stake than just the removal of the statue even as its presence:

> "… represents South Africa's history of dispossession and exploitation of black people, [which] is an act of violence against black students, workers and staff. The statue is therefore the perfect embodiment of black alienation and disempowerment at the hands of UCT's institutional culture and was the natural starting point of this movement".[214]

Individual student testimonies, in oral, performative and written form, as well as RMF's writings began to translate their experiences and feelings of alienation into what they called "black pain". They asserted that it was "… crucial that this movement flows from the black voices and black pain that have been continuously ignored and silenced [at UCT]".[215] One of the reasons why black pain was important was that it disturbed the process of assimilation at UCT and other HWU where students refused to suffer and experience their alienation and the black pain it contributed to in isolation, as they dragged themselves towards an institutional culture, language and practices that made them aware that they were invited to join but only under very stringent, even self-deprecating conditions. "As many of the first generations of young black South African students have attested, … the experience of assimilating into the educational institutions designed overtly to create elite white colonial subjectivities and professions has been one of epistemic and ontological violence.[216]

4.1 The idea of alienation

Before we delve into and read generously the biographies I have co-written, it is important to acknowledge the vast history of the concept of alienation, which has been widely debated over the last century. Marxian alienation is understood to have four manly aspects namely (1) man's alienation from nature; (2) man's alienation from himself; (3) man's alienation from his species-

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[213] bell hooks' work on this concept is key as she explains she "… wanted to have some language that would actually remind us continually of the interlocking systems of domination that define our reality".

[214] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 6.

[215] Ibid, 6

[216] Gillespie, K and L-A. Naidoo. "Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no.1 (January 2019b), 231-233.

being; and (4) man's alienation from man. What a cursory understanding of these four aspects of alienation reveal is that they speak to "alienated labour" and Buhan reminds us that "… according to Marx, the root causes of alienation reside in the substructure of society, in particular, the alienation of productive labor engendered by a capitalist mode of production".[217] He goes on to insist however that this formulation is dialectical, surfacing how "alienated labour" echoes throughout all of life be it psychological, social or political. While Karl Marx's prolonged thinking with the concept is notable, it appears that many of the writers that makes up the Western canon have reworked, critiqued and extended the concept in multiple directions. An interesting archive of this work is documented and engaged in-depth by Musto in order to revisit in particular Marx's concept of alienation.[218] More recently, David Harvey has returned to the concept to rethink it as universal alienation proposing that the "… contemporary conditions producing subjective states of alienation need to be investigated, chief among these is the rise of personal indebtedness that forecloses upon future possibilities and restricts freedoms.[219]

Student struggles followed, as I have argued elsewhere[220], two trajectories – the decolonial one accentuated during RMF and the anti-privatisation one stressed by FMF. These trajectories of course were interrelated and inseparable from each other as the important work on racial capitalism shows.[221] Similarly, Marx's basis for thinking about alienation as a concept moved from "a subjective humanist to an objective historical materialist basis. But the relations between the two forms of alienation cannot easily be severed".[222] Harvey and Marx are not the only ones to recognise the importance of returning to the question of the subjective and thinking it with the political. Frantz Fanon's work is weighty because he recognises the societal and subjective

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[217] Bulhan, Hussein Abdilahi. *Frantz Fanon and the psychology of oppression*. New York: Plenum Press, 1985, 187.

[218] Musto, Marcello. "Revisiting Marx's Concept of Alienation." *Socialism and Democracy* 24, 3 (2010)*:* 79-101. DOI: 10.1080/08854300.2010.544075

[219] Harvey, D. "Universal alienation." *Journal for Cultural Research* 22, no. 2 (2018), 137. DOI: 10.1080/14797585.2018.1461350

[220] Naidoo, L-A. "Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa: The Rise of the Black-led Student Movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in 2015." In *New Narratives of Youth Struggle*, edited by N. Nieftagodien. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2016a.

[221] Kelley, R. *What did Cedric Robinson mean by racial capitalism?* Cambridge, MA: Boston Review, 2017 http://bostonreview.net/race/robin-d-g-kelley-what-did-cedric-robinson-mean-racial-capitalism and Robinson, C. *Black Marxism*. New York, NY: Zed Books: 2000.

[222] Harvey, D. "Universal alienation," 137.

wreckage of colonialism and imperialism[223], and importantly tackles the question of oppression through tilling his own experiences, with the assistance of colonial ideas and scholarship in political economy and psychology. Tshepo Madlingozi explained this use of what would be considered colonial ideas and scholarship, as "non-occidental knowledge" or Western knowledge that does not dehumanise and oppress, and gives the example where Fanon takes Marx and Western Psychology and stretches it for the ultimate purpose of the liberation of the oppressed.[224] Many black radical feminists have also been doing the revolutionary work of understanding the personal as political for ages.

For the purposes of this chapter and thesis, I am particularly interested in Fanon's use of the concept of alienation. As Derek Hook, a critical psychologist whose research importantly puts the work of Fanon into conversation with Biko[225] suggests, the "… particular importance for us of this concept (and particularly Fanon's use of it) is that it provides a means *of relating experience to social conditions*, of linking *personal-subjective* and *sociohistorical domains*, and of doing so in a way that produces critique".[226] It is my contention that this was the critical relating and linking work that RMF were doing on their experiences and not simply what Mbembe labelled "self-indulgent petit bourgeois discourse".[227] He laments that in his reading "… [p]ersonal feelings now suffice. There is no need to mount a proper argument. Not only wounds and injuries can't they be shared, their interpretation cannot be challenged by any known rational discourse. Why? Because, it is alleged, black experience transcends human vocabulary to the point where it cannot be named".[228] In my view, this idea of a "proper argument", that is produced by the liberal Western intellectual form of academic work, is limiting and has been challenged by the work of especially

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[223] SASO and the BC philosophy it birthed understood this too. See especially Chapter 3: Consciousness and Conscientisation, in Naidoo, L-A. 2013. "The role that radical pedagogy plays in resistance movements: A case study of the Black Consciousness Movement's use of Paulo Freire's pedagogy."

[224] Naidoo notes on presentation by Tshepo Madlingozi at the Tshisimani Centre for Activist education, 10 January 2020.

[225] Hook, Derek. "A critical psychology of the postcolonial." *Theory and Psychology* 15, no. 4 (2005): 475-503. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/archive/00000950

[226] Hook, Derek. "Frantz Fanon, Steve Biko, 'psychopolitics' and critical psychology" [online]. In *Critical Psychology*, edited by Hook, Derek, Collins, Anthony, Burman, Erica, Parker, I., Kiguwa, Peace and Mkhize, Nhlanhla, 84-114. Lansdowne: UCT Press, 2004. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/961 (his emphasis)

[227] Mbembe, A. *The State of South African Political Life.* Accessed October 28, 2015, at url: https://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-african-politics

[228] Ibid, 2015.

those that engage and consider the affective dimension of human experience that complexifies entailment, as well as the relation between thinking and doing or praxis, in making meaning. To pay critical attention to and be relatively conscious of, and feel black experiences of white supremacy, is not only as James Baldwin reminds us "… to be in a rage almost all the time", but also to understand the importance of space and time to practice translating these experiences and concomitant feelings, for oneself and in struggle with others. This forms part of the requisite work of an intellectual who is interested in seeing more than just their specialisation, and also assisting others to do the same. Reading more than just words, writing more than just words, and sharing more than just words. Intellectual work then, is also about translation and teaching and feeling, that if approached from an academic and limited rational perspective, will seem unintelligible, even dangerous. This complexifying of intellectual work, places centrally the engagement with the subjective dimensions further than that of just "the mind" in ways that build a practice of recognising and reckoning with one's hegemonic entailment to create the conditions for people to develop an anti-hegemonic entailed praxis.

Alienation is possible because of the structure of what is considered "the normative". Through the violent and racist processes of colonialism and apartheid and the ways in which the normative has been and continues to be universalised, alienation in this context has specificities but is not completely "special" or "specific". Additionally, the context and history of UCT as a white liberal institution[229], also has its own specificity but there will be similarities with other HWU's. What is important to note is that this othering with its multiple layers has shifted through the different stages of colonialism and then apartheid into the neoliberal post-apartheid era, constantly and often slowly trying to include small numbers of "othered" people into the project of white-supremacist-capitalist-hetero-patriarchy[230].

4.2 Black pain

Unfortunately, the many young black children who were sent from the early 1990's into Model-C and private schools to get what their parents believed was a better education, a white education, were too young to make sense of let alone verbalise and resist the especially racist, but also classist

[229] Discussed in the previous chapter.

[230] To read more on the concept see "bell hooks: Cultural Criticism & Transformation." *Media Education Foundation Transcript*. Accessed on January 4, 2020. https://www.mediaed.org/transcripts/Bell-Hooks-Transcript.pdf

and sexist experiences they lived through.[231] Why the RMF insistence on centering black pain was so important and resonated with so many people, was because they needed to make real, make visible, make readable, their experiences of oppression, for themselves and each other. As they did this, they were speaking their "truth to power". But not the problematic powerful material forms of apartheid that lived in explicit artefacts like law books, restrictive racist signage, conservative white people, now consigned to the dustbin of apartheid archives and segregationist Afrikaner gated communities. But at the hidden ways power and the powerful were continuing to thrive and in so doing oppress - through fleeting micro-aggressions and racist institutional culture, attempts to recast racist exploiters as successful businessmen of their times, the continued masking of a "good" education or even the "best" education on the continent that remained embarrassingly limited and racist. By paying attention to the "hidden curriculum"[232] of their school lives and then as young adults, their university lives, RMF student intellectuals[233] started exposing the problematic status quo, and writing their alienation through engaging their alienated experiences, which they named black pain. Exposing their vulnerability, showed their willingness to break with the tyranny of assimilation that they unintentionally were complicit with, to work against their hegemonic entailment in order for an antihegemonic entailment to strengthen.

A number of critics including black academics made surface level knee-jerk reactions to this brave exposé.[234] While this response was deeply disappointing, even angering, we also have to have compassion for the many black people including leaders who were quickly assimilated into old colonial institutions and given the task of creating a South Africa that would fit in to the problematic world order. It must be noted that a small number of black academics some of whom

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[231] Again here my readers ask the question "was that their only experience?", which does the work of encouraging me to write towards the possibility of integration and non-racialism. But the whole point of what I am doing is not to write so that white or privileged people feel comfortable, but rather that the hidden experiences of black children that have been left largely untheorised and unspoken be focused on. This is not essentialising race or being a "professional black" trying to get ahead of white and privileged peers by pulling the "race card". This is a form of black pedagogy – writing with the chorus of those who have suffered under white supremacy for centuries. I am writing for those whose experiences were painful and difficult and racist, to ensure that we do not leave each other alone to work through the mess, but that we work through it together and with critical bravery, so that these experiences can be described differently by those to come, partly because we have done some of the work to make it so!

[232] Giroux, Henry A. Developing Educational Programs: Overcoming the Hidden Curriculum. In *The Clearing House, Vol. 52, No. 4* (Dec., 1978), 148-151.

[233] For a discussion on the 'hidden curriculum' formulated as 'hidden curation' see Gamedze and gamEdze. *Calling for Better Curated Spaces for Knowledge Production*. 24 March 2017. Centre for Curating the Archive. Accessed October 2018 at url: http://www.cca.uct.ac.za/news/calling-better-curated-spaces-knowledge-production

[234] Mbembe is one. So is Wahbie Long. See also the engagement between Pityana and Gqola.

had experienced as students and fledgling academics similar alienation and pain, did see the importance of what the students started doing. Particularly important is the edited volume of reflections by black academics titled *Black Academic Experiences: The South African Voices* [235], which details through autobiographical and personal reflections the problems of varying oppressions that remain in university institutions including for academic staff.

There has also been a strong current of criticism against the idea and term black pain. Interestingly this has come in large measure from older black academics who criticise this as "narcissism", tautology and identity politics.[236] Mbembe complains that "… [o]n the other hand, politicizing pain is not the same thing as advocating dolorism. In fact, it must be galling to put ourselves in a position such that those who look at us cannot but pity us victims".[237] One can't help but wonder if there isn't a kind of embarrassment in the vulnerabilities that opened a political space to imagine the horror of what has happened to black people. The point of putting a language to black pain was not directed at white people, asking for their pity, it was to ignite and build (black) consciousness and analysis towards (black) solidarity and action. "Student organisations must put aside differences and unite on this - the experience of black pain at UCT must be universally acknowledged".[238] The misrecognition that this was for whites and towards whiteness exposes the concerns of those alleging narcissism and dictating respectability and decorum. Listen to Mbembe again:

> "Whiteness", "white power", "white supremacy", "white monopoly capital" is firmly back on the political and cultural agenda and to be white in South Africa now is to face a new-old kind of trial although with new judges – the so-called "born-free".[239]

It is true that the question of racism is back on the agenda in South Africa, and that this is uncomfortable for people who have benefitted from an impotent non-racialism, and especially those of us who have intimate friends and family who are white. But the critique of unearned privilege including but not only racial privilege must be addressed as difficult as that work is. Black RMF

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[235] Khunou, G., E. Phaswana, K. Khoza-Shangase, and H. Canham (Eds.). *Black Academic Voices: The South African Experience Paperback*. Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2019.

[236] Mbembe, A (2015). The State of South African Political Life. In *Africa is a Country*. Accessed September 2016 at url: http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-africanpolitics/

[237] Mbembe, A. *The State of South African Political Life.* Accessed October 28, 2015. http://africasacountry.com/2015/09/achille-mbembe-on-the-state-of-south-africanpolitics/

[238] Maxwele, RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015

[239] Mbembe, A. *The State of South African Political Life.*

student intellectuals were experimenting with ways to do that especially through the educational spaces and conversation they built, which will be discussed in later chapters.

4.3 Assimilation

The experience of alienation was worked through and made sense of with and alongside a process of understanding and critiquing the assimilationist project of the university.[240] bell hooks' reflects how throughout her formal education she had "… to negotiate these two worlds – the one where we were free to study and learn like everyone else and the one where we were continually made aware that we were not like everyone else – made me a bit schizophrenic. I wanted to learn, and I enjoyed learning, but I feared most of my teachers".[241] The project of assimilation goes beyond just the university institution and it also goes beyond just the racial but Dudu Ndlovu's answer to a question explaining what she thought had changed since 1994 is telling:

> "I think the only thing, and it's probably the worst thing that could have happened is that I do submit that, not freedom, but a 'good life' is attainable for Blacks. You know, when it was very clear that people couldn't break into whiteness, at least we completely wanted to topple it. Now the fact that there's an idea that a black person can penetrate whiteness, now we've got this split between those who want to be white and those who want to just destroy it – and it's fucking us up".[242]

Some historical examples of this slow inclusion and attempted assimilation are the Cape Qualified Franchise or the "£25 vote" that allowed any man including indigenous ones who had property valued at £25 or more to vote in the British controlled Cape Colony from 1853[243]; the immigration of Portuguese, and other lower class whites sometimes referred to as "Blacks" from Europe to bolster the numbers of white settlers especially during apartheid[244]; the Tri-Cameral Parliament, which gave people from the Apartheid categories of coloured and Indian limited political rights in 1983[245]; and affording white women suffrage in 1930.[246]

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[240] Gillespie, K and L-A. Naidoo. "Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no.1(January 2019b).

[241] hooks, bell. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. London: Routledge, 2010, 2-3.

[242] Ndlovu Interview Transcript, 13, 2015

[243] Mbeki, Govan. The Struggle for Liberation in South Africa: A Short History. Cape Town: New Africa Books, 1991.

[244] Glaser, C. "Portuguese Immigrant History in Twentieth Century South Africa: A Preliminary Overview." African Historical Review 42, no. 2 (2010): 61-83.

[245] O'Malley, Padraig. "Tricameral Parliament Description 1." *O'Malley Online Archive.* Accessed January 3, 2020.

The post-apartheid moment is complex, but it has at a structural level been a civil rights endeavour thus far, the history of which can be traced through an engagement with the history of anti-colonial struggles. In South Africa, the last century has seen the emergence of an analysis of "colonialism of a special type" and the dominant theory of revolution or radical change espoused by the liberation movement led by the ANC in alliance with the SACP, of a National Democratic Revolution (NDR), popularly known as the two-stage theory of revolution.[247] The first stage of this theory is precisely the opening up of the economy, the state, education, rights, etc. for previously excluded and oppressed black people. Students have poignantly called this "adding blacks". This stage is meant to create the conditions for the emergence of socialism. The second stage is meant to tackle the economic question understood as bringing about some form of socialist order. What students have done is not only refuse the alienation they experience, having become conscious about, and forced into the open the alienation through naming it and disrupting it, but they have also refused the assimilationist project that follows on from the project of alienation. I have argued elsewhere with Kelly Gillespie, that the "… assimilation has become an end in itself. It is understood not as an unfolding of social contradiction explicitly mobilized toward a more just future but as a pervasive status quo, a stuckness".[248]

The project of higher education, specifically the university, can be understood as inducting students, black and white, rich and poor, men and women, and everything in between those problematic binaries, into liberal democratic subjects fashioned on a Western norm. "As the training ground for the next generation of the elite, it grants the professional, social, and intellectual capital to leverage young black people into association and competition with white peers".[249] Universities, in varying stages of corporatisation and privatisation, seem to be the institutions best placed as factories of assimilation. But they have also for some time been the place to challenge and refuse the alienation as well as the assimilation. Part of black student intellectual work was realising through a critical examination of feelings of black pain brought on through alienation, that they were participating in hegemonic entailment.

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https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv01538/04lv01828/05lv02005/06lv02006.htm

[246] Meintjes, S. "The Women's Struggle for Equality during South Africa's Transition to Democracy." *Transformation Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 75, no. 1 (2011): 107-115.

[247] Gillespie, K and L-A. Naidoo. "Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no.1 (January 2019b).

[248] Ibid, 233.

[249] Ibid, 233.

In building together reflections on the biographies of black students at UCT with the concept of alienation, I worry that I might short-change and reduce the complexity of the lives of and subjectivities represented. What follows must be read as necessarily truncated but important in its capacity to give some shape and texture to the lives and histories of those who involved themselves in the difficult struggle of RMF. But I take bell hooks' directive to heart, biographical detail is important to understanding this process because:

> "Going to school in this strange new climate of racial change was both exhilarating and frightening. In those days, almost everyone was proclaiming the rise of a new age of equality and democratic education, but in reality, the old hierarchies of race, class, and gender remained intact. And newly constructed rituals ensured that would be maintained".[250]

The black student intellectuals I chose to interview were conscious of the hegemonic entailment they had been participating in, either as ones constantly being invited to assimilate into the problematic status quo, or as completely outside of the status quo up until arriving at UCT. They were also the ones who were actively participating in critical conversations and building spaces for critique and reflection prior to RMF and involved in the creative disruptive actions and planning of such actions, present at the various occupations and in most meetings. They were also involved in the various RMF SubComs, particularly the education and writing ones, and the leading StratCom. I took a while to decide on a final list of who to interview in 2015 and then more carefully selected the eleven students I interviewed again in 2016. I introduce them to you now in no particular order.

Mbali Matandela lived in Durban where she attended a Model-C school until she was thirteen years old and won a scholarship to an all-girls private boarding school in Pietermaritzburg. She was the first one in her family to go to university. Her mother never finished high school and both her father, and her brother matriculated but did not study further. Her brother who is ten years older than her went straight into a job as an armed response security guard, after finishing school and growing up in the Transkei while Mbali was allowed to stay with her mother in Durban and was partly sponsored throughout her schooling by her mother's employer. Her mother worked as a domestic worker to a rich white family and lived in their servant's quarters with Mbali. She has an absent father who she hadn't heard from in three years:

> "I don't know if he is dead or alive, … and that is just part of the black condition. It is part of what black masculinities, … how the system has affected them in this very particular way

[250] hooks, bell. *Teaching Critical Thinking: Practical Wisdom*. London: Routledge, 2010, 2-3.

> and how it has affected how black family has come to be understood because of the migrant labour system. So I don't feel like my father had a sense of responsibility when him and my mom decided not to be together anymore. I think for him that was it".[251]

Her experience of life and education are very different from her brother's to the degree that they do not even speak the same language and she explains that "… I am getting all these privileges because I have had that close proximity to whiteness".[252] The proximity and the complexity it produces is best explained in her own words:

> "I walk into the one house, and it's a family of five but only three people live in the house and they have all moved out and doing their things. So it is a house of empty rooms, abundance. Abundance to the point where they don't know what to do with their money anymore. And then I walk ten meters, and I enter the servant's quarters and there's my mother, and myself in a two roomed house and that's the reality that I see. And it's this huge contrast… middle class white family, ten meters away from a working class black family".[253]

Mbali confessed that she hates the thought of going home because of the expectation her mother's employers have of her to finish studying and get a "normal" job. They see their investment in her education as a form of good white liberal wealth redistribution. She has the double burden of this expectation because her mother requires her as the last born and the one with access to privileged education, to provide for the family. Her mother is very supportive of her activism often sharing images of her protesting and encouraging her to keep doing what she is doing. Although Mbali tried to explain it to her she explains that there was:

> "… quite a critical moment in our relationship when we had to drive this car that I got as a gift down to Cape Town. And we were at the Kirstenbosch Garden where I was taking her. And we passed so many white families and my mom looks around and the first black person that she sees is someone who is cleaning the Kirstenbosch Gardens. And she stops and says "I understand. Keep doing what you doing". And she is like, these spaces are occupied by certain people... We have lost so much, and we still haven't gotten it back. And I think for her it really pains her to speak about it when it is close to home but Cape Town, she had to leave that space, and to see it somewhere else to understand why do these two different realities exist and why is she in the one and not the other".[254]

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[251] Matandela, Focus Group Interview Transcript, 31, 2016.

[252] Ibid, 30.

[253] Ibid, 30.

[254] Ibid, 30.

The choice to go to UCT was a hard one for Mbali, although she had applied to only the HWU's including UCKAR, Wits and UP, but in the end received her UCT acceptance letter first. She originally applied to study Politics, Philosophy and Economics on the advice of her mother's employers as part of a Social Science rather than Economics degree. At registration she decided to rather enrol for a general Bachelor of Social Science degree and took International Relations, Economics and French, dropping Economics after the first year in favour of Gender studies. After completing her degree she was studying for an Honours in Gender and Transformation in the year that RMF was started with a research question exploring the intersections between Black Consciousness and black feminist thought.

Mbali experienced UCT social spaces as very cliquey based on where you grew up and where you went to school. She however moved between these cliques because:

> "having experienced being at home and home being a very complex place where there is a very, very elite white experience and then there is my mom who is a working black experience, and having the mobility to move between both – both backgrounds, both lives, both social relations and power relations, I think it gave me more mobility when I got here. But I think that it was – people organise also racially and based on class as well".[255]

Coming to UCT from a small majority white schooling meant that Mbali was excited by the diversity of UCT where she met many different people with different and some similar experiences to hers, which was a welcome change from feeling like the one with the different story.

> "But then, I think in the middle of my first year I realised that it wasn't for me. The university wasn't constructed to have my body be in it. I have the experience of sitting in a lecture in the Political Science Department and how people received blackness in that space made me so angry. And then from that day the classroom became a very violent space".[256]

The racism experienced in the lecture Mbali was talking about was directed at both a black student and the black lecturer. As the lecturer who had a different accent to the white English norm "… was speaking you could just see the reaction of people in the lecture room, [they] started suddenly shifting, suddenly reckless, [and] people were talking over him and not listening to what he was saying" and then "… someone in the class puts up their hand and they don't have an accent that could pass off as white, so assimilating people's idea of whiteness, or elitist whiteness – so this boy

[255] Ibid, 4.

[256] Ibid, 3.

puts up his hand and he asks the question and people just started laughing at him. And I have never ever experienced that and that is so silencing".[257] Mbali realised that people were more likely to listen to her because of her "Model-C accent", which would be considered more privileged but found this very problematic because of course, as evidence by her experience, how everyone accesses education including the accent one has is very different and cannot easily be understood.

Part of what alienated Mbali in her undergraduate years was the large class sizes and the fact that she had felt very connected to her teachers at school, but tutors and lecturers were very aloof and distant at UCT, which made it difficult for her to connect to them and to the readings, which in turn also affected her writing. She described Gender Studies as changing her relationship to writing and reading partly because she had a teacher and mentor that inspired her but also because, unlike in Political Science, she could and had to write from a position of entailment.

> "How I wrote, it shifted how I empowered myself through writing, and also how I positioned myself within academia… I remember sitting in a first year [Political Science] class and the lecturer saying I don't want to know your point of view –you're not credible enough to even have a view because you haven't read enough. And then he said that … you'll only be credible enough to have an opinion when you finish your PHD and you have a name. And so getting into the gender department, firstly I learnt how to use 'I' in academia, and that was liberating because I had a voice all of a sudden. And then it also changed how I viewed writing as being empowering and also how I viewed the personal – who the person who seemed very disconnected from the political but then when I saw it together that really empowered me".[258]

She joined South African Young Feminist Activists (SAYFA) formation on campus in 2013, many of whose members were later part of RMF. She explained that SAYFA was a "… group of black feminists trying to bridge the gap or the disparity between political education in the townships and the university space – so we're trying to look at black feminism from how black feminism manifests itself in society and in different locations".[259] She explains how this work also played out on campus and inside the spaces she was choosing to occupy:

> "My biggest challenge is that there's almost a border between the African Studies Department and the Gender Department – although they're in the same building in terms of discourse and in terms of how the curriculum is structured, there isn't that much of an

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[257] Ibid, 3.

[258] Ibid, 5.

[259] Ibid, 9.

> incorporation of gender politics. So my biggest challenge of being someone who's located in feminist research is trying to incorporate this very hyper-masculine Africanist and Black Consciousness discourse within my own politics as a feminist".[260]

She like **Masixole Mlandu** enjoyed studying and the pursuit of knowledge and both felt pressured to explain how their degree and subject choices were going to translate into a job so that they could take more care of their extended families. Masixole's story however, even as there are similarities with Mbali's, is very different. Masixole introduces himself as "… born and bred in the dusty streets of Khayelitsha, raised by an independent woman. I'm the last born out of three back at home, also males. I'm the first one to pass my matric. I'm the first one to get into UCT, into university, [and] probably I will be the first one to get a PHD".[261] He went to public primary and high schools in Khayelitsha. He explained that his is "… a normal story in South Africa and the rest of the continent, and even the diaspora, of broken families, broken souls, who survived through pain [and] internalizing and normalising every part of their lives, even though it was violent being taught by the concentration camp".[262] He remembers that he couldn't read and write in primary school but always attained good marks because this was given to you if you attended school and wore a clean uniform. What he remembers most about his primary school years was that his mother, who he introduces as "still a kitchen girl", would go away to " … work at this madam's house. She used to stay the whole week and only come back on Fridays and leave on Sunday. So throughout those couple of two or three years I was sleeping from house to house, and that depicts the kind of, pain and anger and rage, that I have. I've got so much rage".[263]

Masixole showed up for school every day not because he was told to or because he was inspired to be there but because of his situation at home. He was clear that he needed to go to school because his mother worked so hard every day. He started to learn how to read around Grade Four because people would embarrass him by asking him to spell his name and he would write it incorrectly on the board and everyone would laugh at him. He remembers that "… there was this fruit and veg shop in my neighbourhood, and there was this guy. Always when I passed when I go to school, he's always reading a book and he's selling vegetables. So I will pass there each and every time, and I was always struck by the mere fact that he's having a book in the middle of the township and

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[260] Ibid, 6.

[261] Mlandu Interview Transcript, 1, 2015.

[262] Ibid, 1.

[263] Ibid, 1.

reading".[264] The first time he talked to the man he discussed and defended the figure of Mandela. He returned often to that vegetable stand to engage in discussion and debate but also, he recalls:

> "I read, I read, I read, you know. I was given speeches of [Robert] Sobukwe. I used to memorise them. I fell in love with this pan-Africanism – Africa for Africans, and Africans for humanity. And I saw myself as someone who … [is] always around people so might be led to influence, [and to] command spaces. So, all in all, people who have educated me motivated me as a daily interaction".[265]

All these interactions encouraged Masixole who thought that there may be some value in schooling and academia after, which encouraged him to finish his matric in 2011 and then took a gap year in 2012. He joined Equal Education (EE) and Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and started again by rewriting his matric exam and changing his subjects from Mathematics and Science to History and Drama. He applied to UCT because he "… always had this feeling why not the best!"[266] He enrolled for a Bachelor's degree majoring in Political Studies and Sociology and did an elective in Gender Studies. He remembers his initial experiences of UCT:

> "My first shock was whiteness. Phew! The experience was so white, and it's still white even today. I was shocked because I'd never been in close proximity with white people, sharing a space with white people for a long time, and it was kind of scary because I have been talking about white people as you know, people who have stolen our land and all of those things. Now I have to live with them, get educated with them. For someone who's coming from the township and has a certain anger about the political landscape and everything, the kind of society in which we were made to exist, you know or coexist. The same perpetrator of [all] this. And how unsettled or unclear the power of white supremacy was. So I was very confused, scared at the same time, and not confident in myself, to a point that I use to not take a Jammie [UCT shuttle bus] for a week because I didn't know how it operates. So I use to walk from lower to upper campus every week. And I was not alone, I was not alone. I always had a group of people who were coming from the township".[267]

Masixole remembers that he did not want to do a four-year degree programme but along with a number of other students, who would later become student leaders, had to complete an extended degree programme. It was in these spaces that students connected over their experiences of alienation at UCT. He remembers that "… the [university] culture in itself, sort of created this

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[264] Ibid, 2.

[265] Ibid, 2.

[266] Ibid, 3.

[267] Ibid, 4.

impression that I was stupid. It was way too sophisticated, and this kind of sophistication has no substance. This is what I later figured, [that] there's no substance – it's superficial. And it intimidated me".[268]

Masixole was part of starting the Marquard Imbizos[269], which created a space for black students to engage each other on various topics. He was also central in starting the Pan African Student Movement of Azania (PASMA) Philip Skhosana branch at UCT on the day of the first RMF occupation on 20 March 2015. He is also fondly referred to as Max by fellow RMF students and described as "a walking library"[270]. On more than one occasion I had to clarify with other RMF interviewees whether they were referencing Max Price or Masixole when talking about Max. When asked to reflect on what being black at UCT meant he responded without hesitation:

> "being a black student at UCT, it's a project gone wrong. We are not supposed to be here, and we're not supposed to be thinking likes this. So, knowing that UCT was not supposed to be admitting us, and even if it did admit us, we're not supposed to be thinking this way. So we must see ourselves as a project gone wrong and a problem to a system and how it wants to manufacture a student. And to ourselves how, as much as we want to be conscious, we still faced with the reality of eating. So, we are a problem – we're stuck in two worlds. You know, we're stuck in this world of consciousness and black liberation, but also in the world of circumstances where you need to get money".[271]

Masixole explains that he became politically conscious through hanging around with PAC veterans and ex-Robben Islanders because his family was not overtly political or aligned to any particular party. But he explained that:

> "my family is very political, but unlike other people, my mother has to face insults from coloureds being anti-black, scrubbing kitchens for white people. And my dad is a garden boy, who has to watch property for white people. So it gets political because every time I think about it, I am given motivation to continue to fight the struggle because it links up. And it is not easy for me to talk about it, about family, because unlike others, I don't enjoy the privilege of being called after a long day and asked, how are you"?[272]

He goes on to detail how everyone is focused on getting food on the table and he always sends half

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[268] Ibid, 4.

[269] Discussed in more detail in Chapter 3

[270] Pule Interview Transcript, 17, 2015

[271] Ibid, 10.

[272] Mlandu, Focus group Interview Transcript, 29, 2015

of his NSAFS Grant home to his mom. There are no concerns about his political activity as long as he is doing his work and passes and hopefully gets a job. The only politics is that now he doesn't want a job and "… the major critique from everyone in the house [is] that when are your politics paying out? Because to them politics is this understanding of the ANC's culture of which you are in politics you get tenders and you get money, your family has to live nice, so why those kinds of outcomes, are not coming out for you?[273] He also finds it difficult engaging with the friends he used to talk politics with because:

> "… people are always focusing on the land question and all of these things and taking the land back and all these things. But when I bring in issues like homophobia and issues of patriarchy and all of these things, and then suddenly there is a different reaction. Oh you've been co-opted by the educational liberal system. So there is this understanding of all of this politics of feminist and LGBT have been hijacked by Western narratives and Western companies to further disturb us or distract us".[274]

He has been forced to think about how to translate and engage these new ideas with people who are not based at the university. He acknowledges that the language he has learned is alienating and that he needed to think about how to relate the concepts like "heterosexual normativity and cisgender" to peoples' lives. **Kealeboga Mase Ramaru** is someone who has spent quite a bit of time thinking and practicing how to do precisely that. She was born and raised in Kimberley in the Northern Cape and went to Model-C primary and high schools. She is a first generation university graduate whose father left school in Grade 11 to support his family and her mother failed her matric because of school disruptions but then went back and completed it. Education for her family was always about having a better chance of succeeding in life and having better employment opportunities, which she recognised as a common understanding about education for black households. She however was interested in developing "… a deeper understanding of education and specifically academia".[275] Her parents were both State bureaucrats, with her father working for the ANC in the Premier's Office in the Northern Cape and her mother working for the National South African Police Service. She was originally going to study at Wits but then decided that she wanted to be in a more distant and unknown place and was supported by her mother to follow the UCT option.

Mase started her UCT education journey in 2012 encouraged by her mother to register for a Law

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[273] Ibid, 29.

[274] Ibid, 29.

[275] Ramaru Interview Transcript, 2, 2015

degree but she followed her desire to study Politics. She completed her Bachelor of Social Science degree majoring in Politics, Public Policy and Gender Studies. She really wanted to study and learn Isi-Xhosa, because it troubled her that she couldn't speak the language that her parents spoke, having grown up speaking Tswana but was prevented from doing so because of strange UCT policies around language. She was told that because she was culturally Nguni she could not enrol for the Isi-Xhosa course, which she eventually accepted after trying to fight the university. After finishing her undergraduate degree she wanted to enrol in an African Studies Honours degree but ended up going into Gender Studies because the Centre for African Studies (CAS) first lost her application, then accepted her provisionally, and finally for some reason unbeknownst to her denied her entry. She was registered for an Honours degree in Gender and Transformation when RMF happened.

While she was excited like any other first year, she landed herself in residence sharing a room with a white Afrikaans female student, which:

> "… was a very interesting thing because firstly I was just like, wow this is a little too much for me because I've never had to live, for a year of my life with this person and in my mind I was thinking, different cultural experiences, how am I going to navigate around these things? But it worked, it worked for the whole year. And it was very interesting because it was kind of bringing two worlds together, and during our time in the res, in living together we use to have very interesting conversations. She would tell me about her parent's friend's reaction about her living with a black person [saying] how can her parents allow her to live with a black person. And in that space, it didn't really mean anything because I guess it was out of making this arrangement work".[276]

Mase along with Mbali and Dudu were part of the SAYFA and Mase with Alex started ALUTA, which was a national student formation not aligned to a political party in 2014. Outside of these engagements Mase describes her undergraduate experience at UCT as:

> "feeling entirely out of place and feeling like I'm living two lives. On campus I have that one life, going back home it's a different life that's very different to this, and getting to understand it and almost. It was the closest thing to feeling like I'm having an out of body experience because now I had all of these dynamics to grapple with and I didn't know how it was going to happen. I didn't know what it even meant in that space. And it's actually probably been one of the most significant things about my undergrad career, but also one of the most difficult. Also getting myself to a point where I'm thinking that I'm enough as a

[276] Ibid, 5.

> black female – I'm enough, you know. And because you get into the space that bring those insecurities not just from an academic perspective, now you feel like you have to work ten times harder just to prove yourself in this space".[277]

Mase remembers an incident in one of her Gender Studies courses where white students reported a black women lecturer to tribunal because they believed that she was being racist to the white students discussing black and African feminism and problematizing white and western feminism. This experience was interesting to Mase because it showed the confidence and fragility of white students when they felt they were being short-changed by lecture content and unhappy, warranted or not, about the lecturer. This helped her find her voice in the classroom space as she started debating and critiquing the white position.

Brian Kamanzi was born in Mthatha to a Ugandan father and a South African Indian mother who met during their university studies at WSU. Brian understands his story as one generation on from what other RMF interviewees describe, being a second generation university goer with both his parent's university educated and as a result academics at WSU, his father as a Professor in the Science Department and his mother as a lecturer in Anatomy in the Medical School. Brian explains that his dad:

> "… is from a small village on the border of Uganda, Ruanda and Congo and it is like a farming agrarian area. There is nothing else happening there besides people growing subsistence. And that is his context and half of his family. The men went to study and they all studied outside the country during Idi Amin's time. They managed to escape that situation, so education for them was their way out. And then my dad and his brother moved to, they hopped from Kenya then to Lesotho and arrived in Transkei. My mom was a working class Indian, my grandmother and her husband relocated to Chatsworth during the Group Areas Act. None of them had finished high school and my mother's brothers, she was the third child, they had to work to support the family and she was the one that got to go to university. But then, the time she was in university was when a lot of the transition was taking place. But the Indian community where she was, was very closed minded and there came a certain point where she couldn't take it any longer and then she left to the Transkei".[278]

Brian explains how his mother falling in love and starting a family with a black man meant a different kind of displacement for him. "Malcolm X in some kind of unfortunate way talks about

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[277] Ibid, 9.

[278] Kamanzi, Focus Group Interview, 32, 2015

interracial children as being racial freaks. And that is kind of how it feels like. The family on both sides would look at you in very different ways".[279] While he was raised in a diverse household, moving between the different family environments of his parents, meant feeling like a problem but not knowing or understanding critically where that might come from. He attended public schools in Umtata finishing his matric year at Umtata High and going straight on to a 4-year Engineering degree and then a Masters in Engineering. He explains that his love for learning probably came from his parents' relationship to education and that "it's been central to how I conceptualise my life". Going on to university studies was a given and he chose UCT because a number of his friends from school were going to Cape Town. Also, he was clear that he didn't want to go to the University of Stellenbosch where his dad had completed his PHD, because of "the Afrikaansness of it".[280] And that even though Wits was an option, he couldn't see himself moving alone from small town Umtata to the big city of Johannesburg.

Brian described his first year at UCT in 2009 as terrible. Like Masixole and Mase, this was his first experience of being around white people, and he immediately noticed how the social spaces were divided into the problematic classic apartheid and the ANC's "four nations". He remembered that he "… knew one or two of the people in the residence and they were Indian and depending on how you'd look at me I can pass like that. So, I just slotted into that group for a while and for the first year or so it was like not making too much noise, it was doing what you need to do and spending a lot of time looking at the ground".[281] Being from outside of Cape Town, it was difficult to find a way into conversations with people who would reference certain places and things that he did not know. What was more intimidating was discovering and seeing some of the white elite spaces being referenced like Bishops Private School, and realising that his classmates' parents were CEO's, which at some point made him wonder whether he even had a right to speak. Brian got involved via UCT in community work on the Cape Flats through the organization Ubunya, which helped him grow in confidence.

An important moment for Brian was when in his third year he stopped going to classes and had figured out how the coursework and assessment was taking place such that he spent his class time reading and preparing for his exams on his own. Against the warnings from his parents, he kept

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[279] Ibid, 32.

[280] Kamanzi Interview Transcript. 1, 2015.

[281] Ibid, 2.

doing the volunteer community work, going to Khayelitsha weekly, trying to relate what he was learning in his courses to the world, attempting to answer the questions and problems he found there. None of this counted towards his assessment, which confirmed for him how disconnected the classroom was from society. None of his classmates were connecting what they were learning in the classroom to the context in which they lived or worked outside of campus, and in many ways the course structure left little time for this kind of engagement, which was not encouraged and understood as a distraction from the real work, which was confined to the university classroom or lab.

Alexandria Hotz grew up in Cape Town and is best known as, and prefers to be called Alex. She started her Model-C schooling at a co-ed primary school but moved to an all-girls primary and then high school. She grew up in a politicised home with a socialist background. Her mom came from a BC tradition classified as "coloured" under apartheid and her father is a white socialist. Similar to Brian, she is a second-generation university goer with her mother training and working as a teacher and then working as an adult educator through the radical education NGO SACHED and a number of other activist formations since then. Her father completed a BA Law degree but never worked in Law and then did a Master's degree in Economic History and works in an NGO that looks at economics, labour and climate change. Both her parents have influenced her greatly to study in order to have some kind of skill and therefore grounding. They suggested that she take a gap year between school and university, but she remembers having a sense of urgency and a plan to get into university and finish her studies within five years.

Coming out of a Model-C schooling system meant that UCT was always going to be what she describes as the "crème-de-la-crème of universities", although like Brian, Wits, Stellenbosch and UCKAR were possibilities but not attractive ones, because of the Afrikaans of Stellenbosch and for Alex because of how far Wits and UCKAR were from home. She started her undergraduate Bachelor degree majoring in Politics and Film in the same year as Brian [2009] and on completion wondered what she might do with the qualification she had. She recalls thinking "… I'm going to be exactly like my parents – being in an NGO. So I went through that crisis, and I always wanted to study Law because I had this idea that I wanted to be a human rights lawyer".[282] As a result she went on to start her LLB in 2012, pausing this to do a PGDip in International Law in 2013 and then returning to her LLB. Coming from a home where her parents remain "deeply involved in politics"

[282] Hotz Interview Transcript, 2, 2015.

she shared that she has:

> "… always been aware of power dynamics, power relations, challenging the man, I suppose, and so I think there was a period in time when I came to the university – like I know all this shit I don't want to have to deal with, can I just live my life, be a student and I think the more I did that the more I realised actually you cannot escape when you have this awareness of what is happening at the institution and there are things you deeply care about or believe in, you're then faced with these kinds of things. So when I got to the university, we founded the Palestinian Solidarity Forum (PSF) [in 2010]".

Much like other RMF interviewees have explained Alex experienced the raced and classed divisions in the classroom and social spaces. She described having to be with white middle class students en masse as overwhelming and in particular the way that they took up space so confidently in the classroom. She added that "if you were in the humanities, especially in politics - some Americans do politics and when they're in your tutorials they speak all the time – all the time, and you can't get a word in edge wise. And so most South Africans just sit there quietly while the Americans tell you about your history and your politics".[283] White students also displayed their wealth by taking notes on fancy Apple Mac laptops and eating in the expensive cafeterias on campus. Alex continued to be active outside of her regular studies and in 2014 was a teaching assistant with Mase for a course on poverty and inequality in the Politics Department. They also together started ALUTA a non-political party aligned student movement having become despondent with party politics, Mase with the ANC and Alex with the EFF. By the end of 2014, Alex was elected with Thato onto the SRC as head of day students.

She remembers clearly the day that Ramabina, the then SRC President, called her while she was in Molly Blackburn Hall supporting Thato's transformation event. He told her that there was apparently a naked man standing at the Rhodes statue. Alex explains:

> "I started running [because]… the statue had been something that I had really been bothered about and I was angry when I had come into the SRC because here people ran on a ticket that they want to take the statue down and nothing has been done about this fucking statue… I stood very close to Chumani and then Ramabena was standing a little bit further away with the security. I said to Ramabena, come stand here and tell security that if they move Chumani there's going to be a problem. And we stayed – we stayed for like a good two hours".[284]

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[283] Ibid, 4.

[284] Ibid, 7.

Alex was clear that her involvement in RMF was not as an SRC members. In fact she "…felt the way in which the SRC did things was opportunistic – they were running on the bandwagon. Sometimes I felt very used because the first statement written by the SRC I had written and then Ramabena had said: SRC president, Ramabena Mohapa – and the statement went out".[285] She remembers talking with Mase about how they needed to support Chumani and others who were at the statue protest because it seems like the university was going to charge them. She also understood the limitations of the SRC which in her analysis was "compromised because you're part of a governance structure and the overlord in management so you can never really step out of line too much because [of] the money that you get" and "you are compromised because you are representing 27 000 students which includes white students". And then she continues:

> "And then when you see the vitriol that you get from white students to our SRC account, like the other day some white student, he wasn't even ashamed to leave his name, student number and e-mail address in the e-mail. [He] sent a message to Ramabena saying I hope you blow your brains out and it splatters like all over the SRC office you idiot. And we've gotten things like I hope you all die you bunch of monkeys".[286]

Ruaard Slayen is from Cape Town, grew up in Observatory and is known to most people as Ru. He is an only child of a white Jewish father and an Indian mother both of whom went to university. His father studied Geography and Town Planning up to a Masters level at UCT, and worked in town planning in Zimbabwe, returning to work for the City Council (which was horrible) and now works for SANPARKS on land use. His mother has been involved in Education specifically Early Childhood Development, teaching differently-abled children in Zimbabwe, then returned to Cape Town and worked at St. George's Grammar, which is the co-ed private school that Ru attended for both primary and high school. Ru recounts how for him and middle-class Cape Town children, going to university or doing a gap year, was considered just what everyone did. He was keen to continue straight on to university and ended up choosing to apply to UCT because he had been exposed to it through Mathematics Competitions and he wanted to go somewhere close to home.

Ru did an unconventional four-year degree with three majors instead of a three-year degree with two majors. He was also open to doing either a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree. The subjects he took were Physics, Mathematics, Applied Mathematics, and Philosophy, which he

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[285] Ibid, 7.

[286] Hotz Interview Transcript, 8, 2015

dropped in his second year and replaced with Isi-Xhosa because he was frustrated at how limited the Philosophy courses were. He went back to Philosophy in his third year but ended up majoring in three hard science subjects of Physics, Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and continued to read up on topics that interested him outside of his formal studies like politics, feminism, race and identity. When reflecting on his initial experiences of UCT he remembers that his school was fairly diverse in terms of race and religion, but his upbringing was definitely in white middle-class Cape Town. And it "… was the same stuff again… UCT is like an exact microcosm of Cape Town as a whole, so it wasn't surprising or scary or kind of even alienating".[287] He remembers "… being quite surprised at how in first year, specifically in science, the classes were really diverse so to speak, and I remember, I guess my expectations were very low, I thought it wouldn't be [diverse]. And those expectations have since been confirmed because as the years go by it got more and more white and male dominated specifically in Maths and Physics".[288]

Ru recalls "… that there was always the couple "bright kids" who would always ask the questions, which always tends to have a silencing effect on others. An interesting experience for me was in school I was one of those people who was always asking questions and now suddenly I was like, shit there were people who knew way more than I did".[289] These in his memory were always white men and the lecturers, bar two men of colour, were also white men. He had similar experiences to other RMF students interviewed of the racial divisions in the classroom, "even in terms of where people sit in lecture theatres".[290] And as:

> "… years went by there just were fewer and fewer black women and people of colour who would make it through and then I started noticing more things… these kind of little alienating things that happen… in smaller classes lecturers will try and learn everyone's names and sort of making jokes. The atmosphere gets more friendly and just checking some really white things going on – lecturers like making jokes about you know students with African names they couldn't pronounce".[291]

Ru was busy with his Honours Degree in Mathematics when RMF happened and like Brian was not going to class anymore and was trying to balance his schoolwork with his political work. In his first

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[287] Slayan Interview Transcript, 2, 2015

[288] Ibid, 2.

[289] Ibid, 3.

[290] Ibid, 3.

[291] Ibid, 3.

year he became a tutor for Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO), a UCT student run NGO which ran educational programmes in communities on the Cape Flats. In his second year, he was on the SHAWCO committee, and in his third year he was running the committee, which gave him a critical insight into organizing and the shortcomings of NGO work and structures. While he was sceptical of the liberal organisational form and uncomfortable with the way in which, for example, students from the USA were taken into townships to "do good", he complicated this by admitting that it was "… hard to write off what they're doing, for instance, a student who I tutored who was in Grade 11 at Kensington High when I was in my second year, and he's now doing engineering at UCT and he's been involved in the Rhodes Must Fall movement and is like a super conscious guy".[292] He mostly managed to balance his coursework with his volunteer and political work except that in his second year he remembers being completely overwhelmed by the volume of class work, which led to a " … complete seclusion from a lot of spaces that I was moving in and then this was followed by a lot of reflection". He learned through this process a lot "… about the space I was occupying in Cape Town, and the World".[293] After acknowledging that his life mostly revolved around white spaces, he started hanging out in Observatory and going to live jazz performance and black spaces where he admits to "… just sitting and shutting up and listening to people and hearing like crazy things that you just don't hear in most of like white middle class Cape Town".[294]

As mentioned, Ru had done a lot of reading outside of what was required by his formal education including reading Biko's *I Write What I Like* in high school. He also remembers that at the end of his first year he:

> "… went on a trip to some backpackers in the Eastern Cape and I picked a copy of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which if I'm ever going to say that there was a physical thing that changed my life then it was finding that book. It was also my first exposure to Marxism. And I read that and that also was what made me first realise that education was an actual thing that I could go into. I was always involved in Shawco and tutoring and all these things, but I'd never taken it seriously to the extent that I could actually do this with my life".[295]

At UCT, Ru was "… getting an insight into blackness as a political identity, because I get by in

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[292] Ibid, 5.

[293] Ibid, 4.

[294] Ibid, 4.

[295] Ibid, 4.

white spaces. I didn't experience the same level of blatant alienation and exclusion and stuff as would characterise the experience of black students at this university in general". Interestingly he started to get insights into his own identity and how he was being understood realising that "… depending on who I'm with, I get treated completely differently. So I get read also as a result of the context of who's around me". He started to understand that his "… experience here, in a strange way was harder to work out, to decode because at the surface level it felt fine".[296] Ru was complexifying what it meant to be black at UCT differentiating between his "… identification as a politically black person", and admitting that "… maybe my experience is as a person of colour, rather than my kind of politically chosen identity of black" and that this "… had been very subtle and taken a lot of time for me to work out".[297]

Ru conceded that "… a large extent of my university education was almost two parallel things. On the one hand I was doing all this like crazy abstract Maths and Science, and on the other hand I was on my own kind of completely unrelated mission of educating myself and exposing myself to things, and that involved a lot of reading and thinking but also a little bit of political work".[298] He joined the Left Student Forum and organised around the Marikana memorial, and supported striking workers. He was also present from the shit-statue protest and was in fact working before and towards that catalytic moment to which he responded without hesitation.

Thato Pule grew up in the Northern Cape town of Mafikeng, the last born of three siblings. She detailed her family's educational journey starting with her "…mom [who] went as far as getting a BTech but I think it's the equivalent of a diploma. My dad is uneducated. He quit school below Grade 5. My eldest brother also went to a technical university [and] … did civil engineering. My second brother actually has a university degree. He went to Medunsa and he did medicine".[299] She explains that for her extended family the story is similar, as time passes the younger people have more opportunities to study and they all have qualifications and "… all those below me will, of course, have access to this. So it's more like a, a continuous development".[300] Thato decided to come to university because of a desire to live in the:

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[296] Ibid, 6.

[297] Ibid, 6.

[298] Ibid, 3.

[299] Pule Interview Transcript, 1, 2015.

[300] Ibid, 1.

> "... liberating city of Cape Town, me wanting to get away from my family, and me wanting to get a brighter future for myself, which I knew, I came to about, in Grade 11 [when] we took a field trip to UCT and that's when I saw the Jammie steps and I was like no man I have to be sitting there. I have the intellectual capacity to. I knew that I had to secure funding. The moment I decided to come to university, it was more of an investment decision, me going to all of that high school struggle, and seeing that there is life at the end of the tunnel, that there is an opportunity - there is a way out, not only in terms of how I choose to express myself but economically, socially – so education was something that I wanted. It was non-negotiable".[301]

Thato along with a number of the RMF students I interviewed, were excellent school learners, all of whom had heard in one way or another that UCT was one of the best universities in Africa. This was definitely one of the reasons Thato came to UCT but as she explained she also understood it as an opportunity to express herself, a place of self-creation. She chose to study Actuarial Science, because it was something in economics that engaged human life and "… you are encouraged to think, and you are encouraged to use your own judgement".[302] She describes her initial experience of UCT as a gendered one and asked "… why was I so oblivious to the racial dynamics on campus due to my transness?".[303] She answered that question by explaining that:

> "I went into a male residence as a transwoman, and then that was a huge shock. And I think something that I was mentally preparing myself for quite a while in high school because of course you get your residence acceptance. You fill out the form … psychologically it was more of a – I was prepared for it, but I didn't know the extent of it. But as soon as I came in, I was placed in a male residence and it was like so hetero[sexual], and immediately I ejected myself out of it – immediately [or] I'm sure [it was in] the first week, and then started the path of self-determination – finding ways to negotiate that male residence space, finding ways to negotiate on campus life, finding ways to negotiate my body expression – how I express myself. A lot of that was done, it was done in isolation – it was done. There were barriers put up. It was survival 101. So I say that my experience was gendered, and then from my gendered experience I didn't feel anything because of those barriers, and I had knee-jerk reactions to the violence that I experienced. I think it's because of that that I didn't get the time to interrogate – that there's actually more than one problem here".[304]

Thato describes the experience of the university classroom as not something she battled with, other

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[301] Ibid, 1-2.

[302] Ibid, 2.

[303] Ibid, 2.

[304] Ibid, 3-4.

than having "… problems with raising my hand and speaking"[305] and adjusting to the difference between high school teachers and their teaching style as opposed to university lecturers. She reflected on how her academic work went from being on the Dean's merit list in her first year, marks falling a bit in the second year, to failing a subject for the first time ever by the third year. She was

> "… repeating a course this year [2015] because the substance abuse was just reaching phenomenal levels and I was distracted. I had lost that connection with my education. It didn't make any sense anymore. I didn't want it as – I didn't want to – in high school I use to dream them calling out my name and saying gold for everything. I use to love being an academic achiever, but in third year it wasn't there and after I failed my first course in varsity – you can imagine from Dean's merit list to failing – that's when I sort of like stepped back and I was like – phew I might lose my funding, what's actually going on? What's going on here"?[306]

She realised that she had "… to confront my demons, to sit them down one by one and negotiate with them my future. And one of the biggest ones was the trans demon, at that time". Thato consciously put a plan in place to approach and deal with it and as that process unfolded, she explains that "without that moment I wouldn't be here now… I realized how my existence is political. Not as a black person, but as a trans person. It's important to make that distinction at that stage because I was still colour-blind".[307] The plan involved her running for the SRC in particular the chair of transformation and social responsibility at the end of 2014 and in 2015 redoing the course she had failed. She describes the campaigning as being "so hard, oh my god, it was so hard" because "literally the first two lines on my manifesto says that as a transgender student, I have experienced varsity life as a minority – and that line on its own felt like hanging me out to dry".[308] She was being honest about her experience of alienation and what she intended to do to change that experience, which landed her in the SRC office at which time she is "still a liberal. I'm still like saying, ok let's all live peacefully together, let's see the humanity in each other without actually recognizing that this is a generation [at] war".[309] She also "ran on the idea that race has been a

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[305] Ibid, 4.

[306] Ibid, 5.

[307] Ibid, 5.

[308] Ibid, 6.

[309] Ibid, 6.

dominant conversation within transformation, and I didn't want it to just be race".[310] She had big plans for transformation month, which happened to be March, and had a number of events planned focusing on gender, sexuality and disability.

On the day she was launching her transformation programme in Molly Blackburn Hall, the poo protest took place at the bottom of the Jammie Steps. She explains:

> "I don't go because I already have a relationship with race. I will not give my energy to race because – at that moment I didn't know – I didn't think I had a role to play in the racial struggle because to my knowledge it was something that was being taken care of, and I was going to focus – that's why I ran, that's why people voted for me. They didn't vote for me to come and then be at this statue with Chumani and Ramabena. They voted for me to be up there, and talking about gender, talking about sexuality, talking about disability".[311]

Questions of gender, sexuality and disability, while still marginal to the hegemonic order, and in Thato's personal experience in need of centring at UCT, white liberals are seen to be accommodating with regards to these lenses through which to see discrimination, at least more so than the question of race and class. After an initial reluctance to joining RMF, and with a recognition that even prior to the occupation what would become RMF was dominating conversations on campus and also on transformation, Thato came to the position that this transformation discussion was "as legitimate as gender, sexuality and disability". Thato remembers:

> "I went there at first to keep quiet and observe, then I don't know, slowly but surely, I fell in love… There was a bit of tension between me and RMF members like Mase… they tried to invite me to come co-chair, and I said no, I'm not going to co-chair because I don't know what this thing is… I felt very strongly, from the beginning, that RMF shouldn't even say institutional racism – it should say institutional oppression, because as much as this institution is racially oppressive it's also heteronormative. It subscribes to the gender binary - it's sexist".[312]

Duduzile Unathi Ndlovu was born in South Africa but spent the first six years of her life in Zimbabwe where she completed Grade One and then redid it when she moved back to South Africa. Dudu attended all-girls Model-C schools in Cape Town and went on to be the first university graduate in her family. She was raised by her mother and her grandmother and had never met her

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[310] Ibid, 6.

[311] Ibid, 6.

[312] Ibid, 6.

father who she was told lived somewhere in Johannesburg. Her mother was educated in missionary schools and as a result was a practicing Catholic, while her grandmother was a traditional healer. Dudu describes her mom as seeing education as closely linked to the church and also in service of getting a job, and that this was why she was sent to middle class Anglican type Schools. Her mom was not radically political whereas her fictive uncles who travelled from Zimbabwe when they all moved were radical and politically conscious and she always engaged them about literature and ideas. The little that she knows about her father includes the fact that he is spoken about as being radical too.

She had a series of difficult life altering events happen during her last years of high school when her grandmother fell ill and passed away and her mother adopted her brother, which significantly changed her home dynamics. In Grade 11 she moved into the school boarding house where she was one of four black learners with twenty-six white learners and the only one there who was working class while everyone else was wealthy. The broader school numbers were even more skewed with ninety-eight white learners in her grade and only five black learners. Dudu remembers in her final year of high school coming out as lesbian and how that added to the stress of school, when she became more vividly aware of oppression. As if things were not already hard, she was sexually assaulted by a taxi driver on the night of her valedictory and had to go directly into studying for her final exams while trying to recover from the assault. She explains that "… you have to be really, really, really blind or ignorant not to pick up on that, but my positionality as a lesbian and as a woman in the community, and the violence I experienced around that really pushed me into, I don't know, rage I suppose".[313]

Being a "black star child" who was an exceptional student she "… managed to really deliver - like answer questions – deliver what my teachers wanted and sort of silenced my own voice in a way that made me feel like shit for a long time, even at high school".[314] But she also remembers clearly how from primary school she would challenge her teachers especially around how they taught apartheid history, and she ended up in the principal's office for "hijacking the lessons". She ended up having psychotherapy support sponsored by the school and found selecting her school subjects and then later her university subjects liberating. She remembers that going to UCT in 2013, which she describes as the natural progression from her school, she was "… pissed off and quite fragile"

[313] Ndlovu Interview Transcript, 3, 2015.

[314] Ibid, 3.

and nothing felt okay. But then she encountered many more black people than at school and could have conversations about all the shit she had experienced. There were also more queer people, but she remembers that "… pride was probably the worst thing for me to have ever thought would have provided me with any sort of [safe] space, because it was horrible. And you know the lesbians I had been talking to, the girl I was dating all white conservative and white feminists"[315]

She originally thought she would study towards an economics or law degree, but then registered for a BA and continued with her French and took a course on Ancient Egypt in the Classics Department but was bitterly disappointed when the white lecturer framed the entire course through a Greek writer writing about Egypt. She majored in International Relations and then Gender studies and completed her Bachelor of Social Sciences and continued on to also complete her LLB. She describes not being shocked by the racism, because of growing up in middle-class white Cape Town schooling circles. She recalls two racist incidents that stuck with her. The more overt one was when some white students were giving her and a friend Thando a lift and one of them said "… shit I smell like a kaffir!". The more subtle racism Dudu has experienced through " … always being [framed as] one of those exceptional blacks – like pretty for a black, smart for a black, you know – welcome into my house" was when she was:

> in the kitchen [at a friend's house] at the same time [that the daughter of the domestic worker] was in the kitchen, and then I asked her where the cups are … and then she showed me to a cupboard and then I was like do you want something to drink? And she was like, ja, sure, pour me something and I pulled out from the same cupboard a glass and then I poured for her and poured for me. Then Katie walks in and she's like you shouldn't give her our glasses because they have their own stuff that they drink from. ... I must look at someone who looks like me and be like, no you go drink from over there, I'm going to drink from over here.

Besides being outspoken and critical in classrooms, Dudu was also involved in Equal Education during high school and helped with the starting of the Cape Town Alternate Pride March. When she was involved in the church, she worked in the soup kitchen and later tutored matrics for the South African Education Development Project.

Ntokozo Dladla was born in a township on the East Rand of Johannesburg. When he was ten years old his family moved to a working-class white suburb and he started going to the local conservative

[315] Ibid, 3.

primary school there. He recalls that engagements with white people were "sharp contacts" and that "… it's made clear that you're a 'kaffir' in the world". He also attended an all-boys Afrikaner high school. Both his parents and his older brother went to university. His father is an academic who taught Economics first at Vista University, then at the old Rand Afrikaans Universiteit (RAU), which is now University of Johannesburg. His mom trained and worked as a teacher in a primary school in the township he used to live in. His brother is also an academic at UNISA lecturing in African Philosophy and Philosophy of Liberation. He explains that there is definitely a culture of Higher Education in his immediate family and that deciding to attend UCT was "… a misinformed decision and also just buying into the rhetoric – best African university, that kind of thing, not really knowing what that actually means".[316]

Ntokozo is studying towards a Law degree, which in his case will take five-years because he is part of an academic development programme, which he describes as:

> "an affirmative action programme of some kind. It's for black students who, what they say, came from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Their criteria for determining who is disadvantaged and what that means is why I'm not quite sure, there are very affluent black kids who are there, so I think it's also just bullshit. They just, if you're black you get placed there. And also just the programme itself is really bad – just the way it's curated, it's really bad".[317]

The programme basically splits your first-year subjects over two years, which means that your workload is reduced but you end up wasting a lot of time. He recounted what he found a funny story:

> "When I was in first year, a lot of us complained about the programme and feelings of alienation within the faculty, and we spoke to the person who was facilitating this programme – Dr Leslie Greenbaum. She took note of it and then the next day we went to class and there's a psychologist there in her place - she didn't come to school. And this psychologist was there to evaluate us and described it as though Leslie said we were suffering some kind of collective existential crisis and she was there to solve this problem. But you know, there was a feeling of being treated like an animal. At no point did this Dr Leslie Greenbaum actually sit with us and enquire what the actual problem is. She just got someone, a medical professional to come look at us and fix us because what we're

[316] Dladla Interview Transcript, 1, 2015.

[317] Ibid, 2.

experiencing must be an anomaly".[318]

Mohammed Jameel Abdulla's parents were from a small township outside of Johannesburg and South of Soweto called Lenasia, which was built to house Indians under apartheid. His father was a history teacher who was interested in politics. His family moved around South Africa but settled shortly after he was born in the affluent suburb of Houghton Estate. His mom was a radiographer but stopped working after his sister fell ill. This also motivated his dad to focus on providing for his family by getting more involved in business and less in politics. Mohammed went to a majority white, elite, all boys private school called St. John's College, which he describes as "a very colonial institution" explaining that he "got thrown into a very white environment from age four".[319] He remembers how at "… school I actually abandoned my name 'Mohammed' because it was an Indian name and there was some sort of internal stigma that I placed on it. It probably was because of what I was feeling externally. But internally I hated the fact that I was like that".[320] He also changed his accent because "your accent was mocked quite often and at some point … you needed to change these things so that you could survive".[321] When he joined UCT he saw that it was much like his high school, which worked to prepare them for further study at HWU's, a natural progression. He also noticed that both these educational institutions had developed in him a 'white consciousness' and in his first year at UCT he was partying at Tiger-Tiger night club and harboring racist attitudes including "hating places like UWC".

Mohammed studied Economics and Philosophy and took courses in Sociology, Industrial Psychology, and Social Anthropology. He was one of the founding members of the anarchist student formation #TheCollective, which made space for critical dialogue and was "dedicated to social upliftment, ecological principles and anarchist/socialist politics: the growth of a new society built through cooperation and mutual aid, social ecology and the collective strength in the freed individualities of a society without false binaries and domination".[322] As an anarchist, he found the rote learning and top down pedagogy at UCT frustrating and problematic. But when reflecting on his learning he explains how it was a combination of what was happening in the classroom and

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[318] Ibid, 2.

[319] Abdulla Interview Transcript, 1 , 2015.

[320] Ibid, 2.

[321] Ibid, 2.

[322] See https://www.facebook.com/connectingcollectives/about/?ref=page_internal

outside, sometimes not related to the content of his courses. He started noticing how students would talk about the black lecturers who were not English first language speakers as being bad lecturers and avoid their classes. He remembers how these experiences "… became a conscientising process for me – reading more books, reading Biko … and then seeing how it works, … that's when I saw UCT as being the exact paradigm – I was at a typical model school of capitalism – we are actually this elite capitalist white supremacist institution".[323] He started considering what it meant to be living in the most unequal country in the world and realising that he and others were living in a violent society but that he had "… never ever seen that violence because I've been kept in this bubble. And this bubble is such a – it's such a lie, and that's what I came to UCT for [which] is part of a problem – it's part of a very big problem that we're not dealing with".[324] When asking Mohammed what in his analysis was the main challenge in South African society after the end of apartheid, he was clear that it was "… the issue of violence and trauma and how this is affecting things".[325] He suggests that part of engaging and resolving this is when:

> "us as academics who have been in education, we can start to develop words to describe the trauma we've experienced and are experiencing, and how that's affecting us, and we can create a narrative of how it's working with us. Through that we can find some sort of way through this pain, or direct it towards rage that can contribute towards changing something. But that violence is something that's not being communicated somehow. It's being brushed off, it's been silenced, morally policed by rainbow nation tactics and non-racialism because you can't then speak about being black cause black is a dirty word. And all this violence that's been experienced – it can't go anywhere. It's destroying the person – they're feeling the pressure … or it's being rerouted towards further violence … And for me the challenge is how do we navigate this violence because this violence is there, and people are still traumatized. I don't think you can expect, even if the economy changes tomorrow and we're equal, that violence is still going to be printed in people's psyche. It might take a generation to get out of it. Navigating how we can transition this structure of things towards a space where it's less violent and channeling that violence in a way that doesn't or can be the least destructive – it's going to be destructive – it has to be destructive because it needs to destroy the bad things, but navigating that violence – the nuance where we can direct it towards destroying what is bad but still allowing the things that might be good to, to still have root and grow. So for me that violence is, is something that's the biggest problem in South Africa. The longer it's suppressed, the longer it's policed, the longer it's charged with disciplinary measures for trying to exist, the more angry it's going to get. And the more

[323] Ibid, 2.

[324] Ibid, 3.

[325] Ibid, 10.

> angry it's going to get, the bigger the problem is going to get. And then when it does eventually reach breaking point, it's going to be hectic. And I think that's how all these mass horrific events happen. It's not because people are evil, and they then decide they're going to – something was happening, and something was created (that) was not being challenged in the right ways. It's like this building up – it happened in such a way these people are now going to act out – that's where radicalism comes from. Radicalism is a response – things not changing, people not hearing themselves, and that's the biggest problem in South Africa".[326]

Asher Gamedze, much like Mohammed, found UCT to be an extension of high school. Asher grew up in Johannesburg although was born in England, to a white British mother and a black South African father. His mother spent much time raising her five children, of which Asher was the only boy, but was also always busy volunteering. Once her kids were older, she returned to university and completed an undergrad degree in IsiZulu and African Literature at Wits and then lectured Zulu at the Wits School of Education. Asher's dad was the first black South African actuary qualifying in 2000. His family returned to South Africa in 1995 and he attended Model C primary and high schools in Johannesburg. He took a gap year to travel after school and when coming to UCT completed a BA majoring in Geography and South African History, with some Gender Studies and Politics courses as well. He went on to complete an Honours in Human Geography at the end of 2012. When enquiring about why he went to university and UCT in particular Asher explained that:

> "coming from a strata of society that is socialised to see that as some sort of realisable opportunity firstly, it is almost a given that you will go to university. In terms of coming to Cape Town, my eldest sister Londi came to UCT and from when she first went, she would say that I have to go because I would dig it. Thandi my second eldest sister also came and now all my siblings have been to UCT".[327]

One of his early memories of UCT was "walking into the dining hall at res(idence) and realising that race was a thing, but never really unravelling that or making sense of it until a few years later".[328] When unpacking this experience more he explains that:

> "coming into a place where you don't really know anyone and being like, okay, who am I going to sit with… coming from a so-called mixed race family where my dad is black African, my mom is white and me and my sisters are black mixed race or whatever you want to call it, and the household being a somewhat non-racial or post-racial space wherein

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[326] Ibid, 11.

[327] Gamedze Interview Transcript, 1, 2015.

[328] Ibid, 2.

> the concept of race in our family felt like, ja my mom looks like that and my dad looks like that and my sisters look like that, but they are all just my family… And while many people are raised in racially conscious households, we weren't really. There are positives and negatives to both but that impacted and stunted my racial consciousness from developing, which I only started to develop more acutely in university".[329]

Asher remembers fitting into UCT fairly easily because "he grew up in white society and had all the social capital and cultural capital to navigate that with ease", ending up on the Dean's merit list for his undergrad and really just "getting on with things… working hard at both undergrad and postgrad level attending 85-95% of classes".[330] For Asher the realisation of what he calls "the fucked-up-ness of UCT came later", when he:

> "worked in a few research positions [including] for 15 months at Bremner for one of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors as an assistant (from October 2013 to end of 2014). That was when a whole bunch of things became a lot clearer about the university. From walking down the corridor and walking past all these dead white males in these portraits, to sitting in meetings with members of the executive staff, maybe there are 12 people – 9 white males, 2 white females and me. That was not uncommon at all".

Both Mohammed and Asher's relationship to blackness changed as they were:

> "Reading more and more around black identity, … for a long time I probably read Biko in second or third year and my relationship with blackness up until that point, especially while I was growing up was an ambivalent one. I understand it a lot better now. It was understanding that my lived experience was quite dissonant with what the majority of black people grow up with. I grew up very materially privileged and I knew that that was not the reality for most black people. I now understand that that was the goal of the late apartheid reform strategy of dividing black people and stratifying black society. It wasn't until reading Biko, and not immediately when I read him because there was a deep internal reflective process to get there, but it wasn't until reading Biko that I started to think of myself as black. He puts forward a different formulation to what is prevalent or dominant in society. I think that this murky notion of myself as black, I think dominated my consciousness for most of my time at university. As a student, because I was doing fine, my race in those spaces never made me feel like I was inferior in those spaces because I knew that I was capable, as capable as anyone in the class. In terms of notions of inferiority in that way, blackness as being something less, I wasn't really aware of and my personal experience hadn't spoken to that at all really. I think that being in Bremner and seeing how white the power structure is, how well buttressed it is, a lot of things about being black in

[329] Ibid, 3.

[330] Ibid, 4

the institution became a lot clearer to me. [331]

The alienation experienced by RMF interviewees were not things they experienced only at UCT as I have shown above. There were many differing forms of alienation and pain experienced by them prior to their UCT ones. The difference was that the university was the place where they had space and time to look deeply at their formal classes, the informal spaces, the collectives of resistance they set up and were part of, and inside of themselves, their own internal lives and histories, to complexify their analysis of their existence and injustice. The university was the space where they also came to understand that there was a project of induction going on further than the formal curriculum, disciplines or career paths they had chosen. The HWU's were the spaces that had become melting pots of South African society, with the most diverse daily sustained gatherings of young people. Part of the problem with these spaces was and remains the project of assimilating them into the national democratic revolution that remains a liberal democracy for the few, merely including a few people with more melanin.

RMF undertook to revive or renew the struggle against the systems and institutions of colonialism, which they diagnosed as left largely untouched by the transition and still very much with us, especially at universities. They initiated this revival by critiquing the transformational agenda at UCT. They suggested that any meaningful change, that would significantly improve the lives of the most disadvantaged, would need to look seriously at the devastating and enduring effects of colonisation. Through the process of relooking at the present, with a critical eye on the past, RMF instigated demands that suggested what the beginnings of a more radical process of decolonisation could look like. They were realising more and more that in Mbali's words:

> "… being a black student and also being first generation, my presence is actually a form of protest because there are a lot of people who can't occupy this space, who have the same positionality – it's quite ironic that I say that, and I'm using the language of academia, but you have the same sort of background as I do, and having those politics and being in a space that isn't that accessible to them is a form of protest because I – my presence is saying I may not be what you want me to be but I'm here, and I'm getting this education. So, that's how I feel as a black body in the university space".[332]

They were reading literature on Black Consciousness and decolonisation and the decolonial struggles of the past, but they were committed to working out a process that was cognisant of some

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[331] Ibid, 5

[332] Matandela Interview Transcript, 6, 2015.

of the failings of previous liberatory struggles. They did this in a number of ways, which I will unpack in more detail across Chapters Six to Nine. The first month of RMF's existence was key to experimenting with and mapping out what, why and how to proceed with radically changing the institution that they found themselves in. But they did this while entailing themselves in the experience of that institution, working the uncomfortable and painful experiences as the content that allowed them to work towards understanding themselves better such that they could understand their experience of the university better. Asher reflects on how they were changing as black students:

> "Amongst a lot of people who have been involved in the movement there is some sort of newfound confidence. I speak my mind a lot more especially in the presence of whiteness. I always have to a certain extent, but I'm a lot straighter about things now and I think that comes largely from that. The movement has opened up and in a lot of ways changed the language of the transformation debate. The insertion of radical black politics into a space that has repressed them for a long time".[333]

I will discuss in the next chapter how they continued this process by making the oppressions on campuses visible and discussable, starting with the various statue protests, followed by the creative disruption of the Heritage Seminar, and importantly moving into a three-week occupation where a process of change or decolonisation was developed through a radical praxis of discussion, planning, action and reflection. They were in this occupation, (re)creating themselves as key actors in the process of decolonising the university.

[333] Gamedze Interview Transcript, 2015, 10.

Chapter 5: Disruption and the creation of alliance/solidarity

In this chapter and the five that follow, is a thick description of thirteen key moments of critique I selected that detail the collective action as well as the intellectual production wrapped up in these moments of protest and resistance. It must however be noted now and throughout this dissertation, that there were a number of additional moments that are excluded from my reflection, either because of space, or because I am not wanting to try and present a complete history of RMF. The thirteen key moments I will discuss are further organised across Chapters Five to Nine that follow. To better explore and understand RMF's analyses of the social life of the university and society I will now present these thirteen key moments of radical praxis that were informed by, and contributed to the development of black student intellectuals.

In this Chapter Five: Disruption and the Creation of Alliance, I discuss the following moments:

(1) The shit-statue protest – Monday 9 March 2015
(2) The mass meeting on Jammie Steps – 12 March 2015
(3) The heritage, signage and symbolism disruption – 16 March 2015

In Chapter Six: Azania House occupation: creative disruption and reflective space, I discuss the:

(4) Azania One Occupation –20 March to 12 April 2015

In Chapter Seven: Creative Disruptions extending Azania House, I discuss the following moments:

(5) Saartje Baartman Performance –25 March 2015
(6) UCT General Assembly – 25 March 2015

In Chapter Eight: Writing dangerously: evictions, publication and mediation, I discuss the following moments:

(7) Afrophobia protest – 16 April 2015
(8) Intellectual work continues
(9) Mediation

In Chapter Nine: Building student-worker solidarity and the class question, I discuss the following moments:

(10) Marikana Campaign – August 2015

(11) Piketty Protest – 30 September

(12) October 6 2015 – Student-worker alliance and the fight for outsourcing to fall

(13) Fees Must Fall – 13 October 2015

5.1 Moment 1: The statue protest (Monday 9 March 2015) – taking on the failures of transformation and continuation of oppressions by naming alienation and developing a language for "black pain" towards incisive social critique

Njabulo Ndebele[334] (2012), former Vice Chancellor of UCT and Emeritus Professor describes Cecil John Rhodes and the statue at UCT: [335]

> "There is a nineteenth-century figure who significantly shaped the southern African sub-continent. His compulsive and daring ambitions for the entire continent of Africa evoke strong emotions. He is either praised or denounced, admired or mocked. Enduring controversy around him has assured him an indelible place in history. Whichever way you turn, you will encounter him, whether on campus, or elsewhere in South Africa; or beyond, in Zimbabwe. His name, Cecil John Rhodes, echoes from Cape to Cairo, the span of continental distance by which he expressed the extent of his vision. You may not see him clearly in the iconic wide-angle view of UCT. Yet he is decidedly there. Perhaps it is just as well that his visual presence is not more prominent. He is part of campus history, not the whole of it. Rhodes is memorialised on campus by a bronze statue of him, now weathered green by time. On a closer look you will make him out, the hippo on the surface of UCT's river of time, defying casual embarrassment and willed inclinations to have it submerge, perhaps forever. Its broad back defiantly in view, it is never to be recalled without thoughts and feelings that take away peace of mind".[336]

Ndebele lyrically tells us about the complexity of the statue that was the site of the shit-statue protest at UCT. The shit thrown on this statue in 2015, seemed to perform the function of denouncing and devaluing the statue, while simultaneously enabling a literal release and exposing of the shit that black students continued to carry around with them mostly in silence on campus.

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[334] Njabulo Ndebele is most well know as a writer of fiction and an academic. He was part of SASO and influenced by the BCM. He has been in university management since the 1970's beginning at the National University of Lesotho, and moved back to South Africa from exile in the 1990's. He has been in leadership positions at Wits, UWC, Univerity of the North, UCT and UJ. For more detail on his life and work see https://www.njabulondebele.co.za/biography/

[335] For a video of the "poo protest" that took place on 9 March 2015 go to "UCT Campus Protection Services Manhandle Photographer," YouTube video, 0:2:28, "Cape Argus," March, 9, 2015, at url: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWr9YNLF67w.

[336] Ndebele, Njabulo, "A story of time," in *Viewpoints: The University of Cape Town and its treasures*, ed. Paul Weinberg (Cape Town: UCT Press, 2013).

The shit used during the protest was real, collected by the student from the *pota-pota* toilet system still used by poor black people in the townships of Cape Town, emblematic of the failure to provide even the most basic of infrastructure to the marginalized majority.[337] But the shit was also illustrative of the heavy weight of crap that black students still needed to navigate at an institution they considered and experienced as racist, sexist and elitist. The performance of dumping the shit of poor black people onto the statue, was possibly cathartic for the thrower, but it was also demanding that the statue account for its role in creating the historic conditions that resulted in hundreds of thousands of black people being dispossessed, exploited, and dumped in the townships that remain the reality of the majority of people in South Africa. "The issue of poo is very metaphoric for us", Al-Jazeera quoted student Chumani Maxwele as saying. "We're using metaphor for us to explain our collective black pain. We show our collective disgust".[338] Bringing the shit that is black life in the highly unequal city of Cape Town, into full view of the elite university, initiated the kinds of protests that seek to have the two opposite ends of the city meet. The failure of democracy to afford even the most basic rights to the black majority, pierces through the democratic bubble that surrounds Table Mountain, and in the main white, privileged neighbourhoods and central business district, including UCT, that surround it. The shit is no longer confined to township spaces but rather, following the shit-protests of the Social Justice Coalition (SJC)[339], the real shit was used to force the shit of poor black life into view in the privileged, elite, middle class, predominantly white spaces of Cape Town.

The shit that black people were carrying around at UCT was explained as black pain. Listen to Masixole explain what attracted people to RMF:

> "It's, … that longing, that desire to be free and break away from certain normative ways of thinking. I knew that there was pain – everyone knows there's something wrong with us. We know, but we cannot touch that pain, we cannot navigate that pain which is in us. So that stance when Chumani threw shit on the statue… I was there when he threw shit … immediately when I saw people's reaction I was like shit,

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[337] See "Chumani Maxwele ignites the #RhodesMustFall Movement at UCT," accessed April 22, 2017, at url: http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/chumani-maxwele-ignites-rhodesmustfall-movement-uct

[338] See Serino, Kenichi, "Anti-racism protesters in South Africa use poop to make a point," accessed August 26, 2017, at url: http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/4/6/anti-racism-protesters-in-south-africa-take-aim-at-a-statue-with-poop.html for the full article.

[339] The Social Justice Coalition brought shit from the bucket or pota-pota toilet system into the city centre and to the seat of municipal power when they were demanding flush toilets. See Robins, S. "How poo became a political issue." *IOL online*, 3 July 2013, at url: https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/opinion/how-poo-became-a-political-issue-1541126

> something is going down… He was there alone, took the drum – I was like, no let me join you, and that moment of being there … it felt like a life changing moment. And to me, this is what the resistance – it comes from a deeper feeling of wanting and longing to break away, to break those chains… It was planting another seed - it has never happened in UCT in a liberal institution where black people were able to finally put it clear what's the problem – what I was suffering [from, is] black pain. What is black pain? Suddenly there's a language, that we can all rally behind, you know? It had different expressions, this black pain, different experiences. After 21 years into democracy in South Africa, we finally, as black people didn't rally around political badges, but behind our pain and our blackness. And that was power – coming from the ivory towers where we think we are so protected from whiteness. So, it was very interesting, it was very historical at the same time, it was like a beginning of the rise of a new generation, new breed, new thoughts, new ways of navigating ourselves. Let us explore it, so even the conversation, even life – we have reopened the wound – the interactions have never been the same".[340]

Masixole was describing the new processes that were being created that encouraged students to interrogate the emotions they brought with them to university spaces but that they never externalised. This interrogation began with developing a language to be able to name the subjective feelings of alienation and to place this in relation to the context or structures of UCT and society. I will discuss later (under occupation) how students created an educational space that welcomed the experiential and affective into the conversations being held at Azania House, including in the creative production that flourished. From songs, to poems, to plays, to published critical reflections. Students were producing a rich and diverse archive that brought their whole selves into the picture and disrupted the university spaces that regarded them as visitors and engaged only parts of who they were.

The exposing of the "real shit" or "truth" as students understood it, would extend way beyond the demand for the statue to be removed from the university campus, and would expose a number of myths that the students themselves were birthed into and weaned on. One of the central analysis was that the transition or revolution undertaken through the process and institution of a negotiated settlement and a democratic government, had failed to address in any meaningful way the very systemic but also individual and subjective, destruction and devastation that colonialism had exacted on the indigenous people. If apartheid was understood as the most recent iteration of colonial rule, or at least an extension of it, then it is reasonable to claim, after exposing the myths of

[340] Mlandu Interview Transcript, 2015, 5.

change and progress, that the process of transformation had failed precisely because it had not dealt sufficiently with some of the root causes of oppression for indigenous and black people – experienced as the pain of poor landless black life in South Africa. The "rainbow nation" became the rallying call to unite Mandela's South Africa, initially coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu. This was the notion that South Africa had dealt with its racist and exploitative past and everyone remaining in South Africa during and after the transition formed the "new" nation, the rainbow nation. Rekgotsofetse Chikane, a student activist involved in some of RMF and FMF discusses the ways in which RMF exposed the myth of the rainbow nation in his book on FMF *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation*.[341] The founding myth of the "new" or "post-apartheid" period's time was up. RMF was highlighting that the "post-apartheid", "post-colonial" South Africa they saw and felt was built on and extended colonial structures and subjectivities rather than transforming them.

5.2 Moment 2: Mass meeting on Jammie Steps (12 March 2015) – the end of the rainbow conclusion, critiquing whiteness and the white liberal university institution

Various protests and gatherings took place daily from the 9th of March.[342] A mass meeting or open dialogue[343] was called for Thursday 12 March by Chikane, a student activist who started the student organisation Echulu Vryheid and was previously an SRC member. The SRC who had planned to call a mass meeting to respond to the protest decided to instead support the call[344] for the mass meeting made by Chikane. The SRC put out a statement the day before clarifying their position on the statue and declaring that "… [t]ransformation should be felt in all aspects of the university, from the curriculum, to the diversity of students and staff and to the symbolism it reflects. The SRC at its meeting held on Tuesday 10th of March endorsed the call to have the Cecil Rhodes removed. The

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[341] Chikane, R. *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation.* Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2018.

[342] See a video recap of some of these events leading up to the occupation of Bremner Building here "UCT Rhodes Must Fall Protest #RMF," YouTube video, 0:3:04, "Kim Harrisberg," March 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Utzni_Bo5Ek

[343] For video highlights of the "Open air dialogue/Plan of action for transformation" event go to "Open air dialogue/Plan of action for transformation," YouTube video, 0:9:20, "UniVision Channel," May, 12, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zNv-02S8L0c&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2HhKVcmdf2y_cCIjjYywEb2SwvaKkHQVoQxay_MKy7eQRmp8GOFso0KHM

[344] To listen to the SRC President Ramabina Mahapa talk about the events of the first week of the protests see "Exclusive: SRC President, Ramabina Mahapa, on why he and others covered up the Rhodes Statue," *UCT Radio Podcast*, accessed May 14, 2017, https://www.mixcloud.com/UCTRadio/exclusive-src-president-ramabina-mahapa-on-why-he-and-others-covered-up-the-rhodes-statue/?fbclid=IwAR0QmwkkgRyz8CnaRMqUbNowuIo0hLKfFX3_eJQnWjw2SRxFpARCFWnM3Fw

decision to remove the statue was unanimous".[345] The SRC in their written statement and in their action showed support for the black student organising that was taking place from the ground up and gaining momentum. There was a delicate solidarity being built between the independent and non-partisan student formation that would become RMF, and the formal SRC. This was made possible by the kind of SRC that was in power in 2015, which consisted of a number of independent candidates including Alex Hotz and Thato Pule.

A range of student voices were heard during the well-attended mass meeting that took place on the steps leading up to the university's Jameson (now Sarah Bartmann) Hall. Chikane, who chaired the meeting discusses in some detail, this meeting and one held on the Jammie Plaza a few weeks earlier organised by the anarchist student formation *The Collective* on the topic titled "FreeTalk - Nelson Mandela: Saviour or Sellout?"[346] He points to five steps identified through being involved in many UCT conversations about race and transformation that "goes nowhere". The main point for him is that most of these conversations end in what he calls a "rainbow conclusion", where black students who have shared their experience at UCT, get put in their place usually by a white student who speaks with authority about non-racialism as espoused by the rainbow nation. And that this move stopped the conversation from moving anywhere other than back to the rainbow nation myth, that race does not matter. In addition to the content of rainbownationism, he points out that the form or how the comment gets made, is often with a kind of authority that makes "… it seems to many of us [black people] that *we* were the real enemies of progress. That somehow, we stood on the wrong side of history and that we should be put back on track because we refused to accept the idea that colour didn't matter.[347]

Chikane as chair of the mass meeting and reflecting on the conversation suggests that something happens in this particular conversation that was the spark of change at UCT. Step one to step four of the conversation proceeded as usual, but in step five, which is usually about failing to reach a resolution other than "race doesn't matter", something different happens. A white woman student speaks about racial unity, which gets everyone listening. She then goes on to propose that black

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[345] The full statement is here Mahapa, Ramabina, "SRC Statement on UCT Student protest," Students Representative Council, accessed September 10, 2016, at url: https://www.news.uct.ac.za/images/archive/dailynews/2015/SRC%20Statement%20on%20UCT%20Student%20protest.pdf

[346] Chikane, R. *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation.* Johannesburg: Pan Macmillan, 2018.

[347] Ibid, 91, his emphasis.

students need to be listened to and their experiences taken seriously, which is now agreeable to other white students. Her input is disrupted by a shout from the crowd asking, "[w]ho are you to talk about the lived experience of black bodies on campus?"[348] While I disagree with Chikane that this is the moment when RMF was born, as I have indicated before, where RMF began is multiple and complex, it seems important to recognise this moment in dialogue as a moment where white authority was questioned and the idea of someone's identity and standpoint mattering as part of the content of what they were putting forward, was publicly announced or enacted. For those who disagree that one's positionality matters and influences the power or privilege one has and on the other end the oppression and powerlessness one experiences, I want to ask these readers to suspend their immediate defence of the white women. Whether based on the belief of rainbow nation non-racialism, or on the idea that it is dangerous to claim that only black people can speak about black experience. In the context of UCT where many black students have felt alienated and have experienced the university including its social and classroom spaces as unwelcoming of their black experiences, this white woman student's olive branch could be read by some as extending a welcoming hand of inclusion. But for those black students who had been reading and engaging writings of pan Afrikanism and especially BC critique of the white liberal, there would be a caution about being led by such a student because of her entailment and privilege through white supremacist hegemony.

The statue protest of a week earlier had disrupted the status quo and had forced open the space to feel, think and act differently for black students. If nothing else, black students were bringing more of themselves to the university and were also gaining a confidence to critique their white counterparts who they ordinarily would not feel confident enough to critique. Biko succinctly explained the dilemma of the black student in a white supremacist world when he explained that BC promoted all-black spaces as necessary because of the internalised oppression and inferiority that an unequal education and social system harboured in all of us. SASO and BC's solution to this, which many people affirm as one of its important legacies, was that in addition to creating blacks-only spaces for students and others to unlearn the daily-oppressive pedagogies, both formal and informal, and in addition to critically engaging the formal and informal or hidden curriculum of educational spaces, one had to be critical of white allies or people who present as allies to black peoples' struggles. Looked at from this vantage point, this disruption of the normative dialogue space at

[348] Ibid, 102-103.

university, both in form and content, was a necessary even agentic move and moment. There would be more of these in the weeks that followed.

Mase later in the mass meeting conversation proposed that there needed to be "… a united movement of students and staff members … [who] are going to be meeting at 3pm today to establish a way forward… because it is not just the Cecil John Rhodes statue, its racism all around". It was at this smaller meeting that RMF was formed and their Facebook page was started.[349] The critiquing of both rainbownationists and white liberals presenting themselves as allies, followed those students who had been present and listening carefully to the form and content of the mass meeting dialogue. The SRC later walked to the statue and covered it with a white cloth to indicate that it could no longer exist on its plinth in the same way anymore or until it was removed.

In an attempt to continue the protest for the removal of the statue and to bring it to a broader audience, a group of students marched singing to the statue, which on this Sunday 15 March, was overlooking the finish of the *Cape Epic Prologue Race*, a televised mountain bike race. The #UCT:RhodesMustFall Facebook page was started and in just a day had over three-thousand followers. RMF posted on its Facebook page that there would be a sit-in at the statue every day going forward at 1pm and also appealed for people to wear black to campus on Black Monday in support of the movement.

5.3 Moment 3: Heritage, Signage and Symbolism seminar disrupted[350] (Monday 16 March 2015) - disrupting the frame of academic dialogue space and challenging the exclusivity of specialised content and form towards a more complex way of knowing and being together, the beginnings of anti-hegemonic entailment

The invitation to "… a new series of discussions, under the banner of transformation" was published on the UCT website on 12 March 2015. It encouraged students and other members of the UCT community to join in the dialogue engaging the question "What UCT's signs, symbols and signatures say".[351] The university in the best way it knows how, wanted to have a dialogue

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[349] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015

[350] *UCT News* reported on the event and also hosts a video recording of the full event "Climate of trust needed for transformation," *University of Cape Town News*, accessed May 11, 2016, https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-03-17-climate-of-trust-needed-for-transformation

[351] See the full invitation here "What UCT's signs, symbols and signatures say – join the discussion," *University of Cape Town News*, accessed February 15, 2016, https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-03-12-what-ucts-signs-

structured in the traditional way the Eurocentric and liberal university has framed engagement. It was apparent that what was led by and with students at the mass meeting a few days earlier, would fall short of what is understood to be a reasoned, well-structured engagement that forms part of intellectual production. Earlier that same day, and as part of the Black Monday March to the statue,[352] Maxwele addressed a group of students including Alex, Muhammed, and Ru. He mentioned that the SRC would participate later in the day at a UCT organised *Heritage, Signage and Symbolism* seminar[353], and asked students to attend.

The seminar was chaired by Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Transformation, Professor Crain Soudien who after introducing himself noted that "… debate is vital to how UCT is managing the challenge of transformation". Soudien had chaired the commission that was set up by Minister Naledi Pandor to investigate questions of race, racism and transformation at universities. This body was established to respond to a racist incident at UFS in 2008, which became known as the Reis Affair.[354] The report was clear that racism was one of the major problems faced at all universities, with sexism named as a secondary concern. The report does deal with the issues of symbols and the kinds of heritage glorified at universities. Prof Soudien seemed the perfect person to facilitate the panel discussion having spent time chairing a commission that would have heard evidence about racism and other oppressions on university campuses across South Africa. It seems though that he was torn between recognising that universities were problematic racist, sexist, elitist spaces, on the one hand. And on the other, having been forged through these very institutions, and inducted into and have come to master the form of liberal academic engagement required to do the kind of intellectual work deemed acceptable at universities. The tension between the content and form of the seminar, highlighted through the creative disruption that would unfold, was laid bare and made discussable and is worthy of close engagement.

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symbols-and-signatures-say-ndash-join-the-discussion

[352] See a video clip "Black Monday UCT - March to Rhodes Statue 2," YouTube video, 0:2:22, "UniVision Channel," March 17, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65UIN1J3IDA&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR0rhgMWSYzAznpDHO5RFYqu8FVROvDC_1jgAFhm4lbUAaho3MEJHvY7Oyk

[353] This was a public event and the entire event was video recorded and published by UCT and is available to the public. The video recording can be accessed on UCT's official YouTube channel under the title "UCT Talks: Heritage, Signage and Symbolism", accessed June 16, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NgpJ00M5Ho

[354] Soudien Report compiled for the Department of Education, see South African Government. Report of the ministerial committee on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions. June 10, 2009. https://www.gov.za/report-ministerial-committee-transformation-and-social-cohesion-and-elimination-discrimination

Soudien started by thanking everyone for attending what he called "… a really important discussion about the future of signage and symbolism at the university". He expressed his appreciation for "… all of the troubles that individuals have taken in bringing us to this particular point, and for the willingness that people are showing and will be showing in this meeting… for participating in a dialogue about what it is we do with the signs and symbolisms on the campus". This was a warm welcome to the now packed lecture hall that to anyone watching the video recording as I was doing would think was a regular seminar. Most people who were paying attention during the last week at UCT would have known that there was a sense of impatience with the ways in which dialogue had been used to stifle radical change, and in the case of the statue, have ongoing discussions that never resulted in a significant shift of the status quo. The welcome remarks by the DVC were perceived by the students as yet another talk shop to try to appease people who wanted change at UCT.

The chair laid out the plan for the event, which reaffirmed the traditional seminar form and included giving the panellists a chance to speak, starting first with the specialist Sally Titlestad, who he pointed out will talk about "how difficult things such as these can be dealt with" from her personal experience with this in other institutions and organisations. She was introduced as a "heritage impact specialist" who has had "… a lot to do with some of the most difficult issues, we have encountered in the city around this question". He then places UCT in a broader context stating that it is not alone in trying to deal with these kinds of issues and is therefore not "… a case that is exceptional or by itself so distinct, that we shouldn't be learning from the experience of how other people have been addressing this question". Here were two people in Soudien and Titlestad, who knew about the complications of transformation and the far reaching effects of the lack of it, at universities but indeed across South African society. Would they be able to engage in the dialogue, even if in traditional seminar form, in ways that would open to change, which inevitably would include giving up or redistributing some of the knowledge and power they would have amassed through the university, in a city and a system that would have to different degrees privileged them?[355] Critical intellectual work requires a different positioning to knowledge, in content and in form, to what the university has preferred. In thinking through why the statue had to go, there was also thinking through why the content in the Eurocentric curriculum (or the what), and the form or pedagogy (or the how) at the centre of the university project needed to change as part of a changed knowledge project.

[355] I make a proposition in the Coda about 'epistemic redistribution' that is related to the question here

Soudien mentioned that "… Sally will largely lead us into this discussion and *what we should be understanding* with respect to that". The panel was set up so that Sally Titlestad gave the "keynote" and was followed by responses from four people who "… have invested a great deal of attention, scholarly attention, scholarly interest, political engagement with questions such as these". Students had already started questioning, in the context of what they experience as a racist institution, the problematic role that white students and academics could play in leading on the transformation agenda. As mentioned earlier in discussing the mass meeting, the question of white authority to speak on issues of black experience was not only being questioned but was also being challenged. The mass meeting (or plenary space) held a few days earlier, was organised by students and supported by the SRC, which meant that broad and diverse student voices were centred. This seminar was smaller in number but could also be considered a plenary space as it had a mix of students, academics, and PASS staff, and university management in the form of the DVC and also the Vice Chancellor. It was exactly a week after the shit-statue protest, and there were a number of gatherings that had since taken place across the campus but also in the mainstream and social media.

This event could be understood as performing for the university, the function of trying to re-centre the academic project in content and form, by holding an academic dialogue about symbols of which the statue was at the forefront of everyone's mind, in the form or frame of a seminar with a panel of speakers. Besides the fact that more than half of the panel was white and all but one was a woman, the keynote speaker was given primacy as a "heritage impact specialist". For the students invested and showing up for the protest events, that were also about creating spaces for further engaging the issue of the statue, this seminar would be a moment to engage the university. This first week saw the movement between what I have called "plenary" space or the diverse collective spaces of engagement like the mass meeting and this seminar, and "caucus" space or smaller groups organised around a particular task or skill or part of their identity (to be discussed in more detail in Chapter Six).

Some of the reasons this seminar could be understood as returning to the university form and process was (1) the academic form of the panel, which while including a student representative consisted largely of academics; (2) the centring of specialised knowledge on the topic by having everyone present spending most of the time listening to a panel and little time hearing people from the audience and including or centring peoples' experiences, (3) the delivery of this knowledge by an academic with the positionality of a white woman, (4) led by the DVC Transformation and

attended by the Vice Chancellor, who up until this point had not responded decisively to students' demands for the statue to be removed. The chair suggested that the order after Titlestad's input will be "… Owen from the City of Cape Town and an historian by trade; then followed by Nick Shephard who teaches on these questions of what to do with such issues and then finally Ramabina Mohape who is our SRC president who has also been writing about these issues and has been deeply involved over the last few weeks. He began agitating around this question last year". It may have not been intended this way, but the seniority or hierarchising of who speaks first, from the keynote and then only having the SRC representative speak last, would have agitated the student activists in attendance and provided the perfect opportunity for them to make an important point about whose knowledge and therefore also who was valued in the debate and at universities.

It is at this point that a student raised her hand to say something and another creative disruption had begun. The chair, in an attempt to keep control of the seminar, did not allow the student to speak even though he acknowledged that he had seen her hand. He continued to explain the rules of engagement that would afford the student panellist a chance to explain the SRC position after which the discussion would be opened for those in the audience to "express your opinions around all of this". He then raised his voice and earnestly said, "… I need to make the point to you that this meeting is fully and must be fully conscious and aware of the events over the last week. And so it is not as if the events of the last week are not of interest and consequence in how this panel will play itself out". The message here could be read as, whatever has happened will be taken into account as is usually the case, where everyone is given a chance to say their say. He goes on to acknowledge that everyone wants to know what will come out of this process or where the process will lead to. He then makes space in his formal programme for university management by informing everyone that he, "… will give the VC time towards the end to give some sense of what management in particular is wanting to do in relation to all of this". Here again the chair is holding the seminar and all who are attending to the formal proceedings of a university seminar and is also trying to ensure that the traditional power structures continue to keep control or have their input in how the process will go forward. The student tried again to get his attention.

The chair responds this time in a sterner voice "… I see your hand. Just hang on. Put it down please". And continues, "… but it's important for me to emphasise colleagues, how we manage a meeting such as this. And so I am by no means wanting to be laying down for you just what it is that you can and cannot do…". More hands go up and students with placards also hold these up as they become impatient with the chair, hogging the mike. "But I would like to indicate to you what

the process for the meeting should be". There are now more than a dozen hands up in the air. "And so I am going to make this point, noting all these hands that are going up... I'm wanting to emphasise the point that the purpose of this meeting here, and it's going to be absolutely crucial on the part of all of you to help make this possible". At this moment more people in the room are starting now to take cell phone videos of what they are seeing, recognising that something is about to happen. The chair continued to belabour the point:

> "and I am going to put it in a sentence, I would like us to leave this meeting with absolute confidence in the sense of what a university is all about. And to think that what we are able to do here this evening and what we will do, is to give each of us an opportunity to express ourselves, and to hear the point of view of the other. This is the fundamental objective that I would like to think, that all of us will walk away here, with a deep sense of a university operating at its absolute best, as a space, which is fundamentally about position, counter-position, argument, counter-argument. And for that, to be, what I am now appealing to all of you to assist in making possible. This is a discussion space. This is a seminar. And that is how we had anticipated how to begin this process. Last point that I want to make to all of you is that we had planned this meeting a long time ago. This meeting comes in the wake of a looooong (his emphasis) discussion of how the university ought to be dealing with the question of representing itself to the public. [more hands are now going up] How does a university, which has got a history, engage with its history"?

The chair's mini-lecture eventually ends when a comment is made from someone in the audience asking him to stop. He returns to the original hand that went up and calls her a "petitioner", and asks her to put her position forward. Mase Ramaru stands up to address the gathering to loud applause: "… I speak on behalf of students here when I say that we are appealing to the chairperson to change the programme and put the president of the SRC first in line to address students because we want to hear from him first. Thank you". The chair responds, "… it is my job to try and preserve the terms of engagement with this question as we had framed them," in this moment refusing to hear what students were saying and wanting as a process. But trying to stick to a rigid form of the university seminar, which also because of the content of the seminar, meant trying to keep control of the overall process, which would frame the dialogue in which the difficult question of what to do with a colonial past represented by the Rhodes statue, would be tackled. "Instead of seeing it as a platform… if you going to want that to happen, I am going to say to you that that kind of opportunity will arise. You will have lots of opportunity to do that and we not going to stop you at all [confirming the ad nauseum talking and debates about this issue]. Management might want to take a similar position. But I hope everyone here understands that the format for this particular meeting, … is really important for us to carry through".

This moment lays bare the limitations to engagement at the liberal university, which is about foregrounding the input of the specialist, and then having other academics from different contexts or disciplines speak to their ideas about the topic. Excluded from this way of knowing, is the social and experiential knowledge of black students in relation to the topic. Ordinarily, I imagine that a student voice would not be present on such a panel, or on most university panels, because their knowledge is less valued, and seen in relation to the specialised knowledge as weak and not worthy of a place on the panel. The seminar or panel is a university form that does admittedly allow for more diverse views on a topic, than the traditional lecture form. My claim, to be clearer, is not that the lecture or seminar form be done away with or understood as wholly inappropriate, but that a complexification of knowledges and universals, be understood as deepening and strengthening the intellectual engagement rather than weakening it.

The chair then turns to the panel who are looking a bit perplexed and says, "… I'm going to ask [turning to Sally Titlestad the keynote specialist, who now has her hand up]". Another women student has her hand up and says, "I would like to second her motion please". The chair responds that this "is not a formal meeting colleagues, this is a seminar". More hands now shoot up including Ru Slayan. Another intervention is made from the floor and the chair turns to the keynote speaker and asks if she is comfortable with letting the SRC president go first. She then shares that they had agreed that she speak first and then Ramabina go next but that she is fine with him going first and her going after. The other two panellists concur. At this point the chair turns to the audience and makes a physical and literal about turn and says "… I'm quite happy to be led by you in relation to all of that". In a last ditch attempt to keep the original form of the seminar he exclaims, "… I wouldn't want us however to lose the value of having a – let me put it to you like this – the best thinking that we can have on these kinds of questions, as a way to lead it in – and that is how this was framed, and then to have Ramabina respond. What's happening now [he makes big arm gestures] [is] that you are asking that Ramabina put the response before you hear the position". The audience responds with a loud "yes!". Ramabina takes the microphone and starts his input with a song called *Thina Sizwe*, a famous ANC mournful struggle song translated as follows:

> *"Thina sizwe, thina sizwe esinsundu*, (We the nation, we the black nation)
> *Sikhalela izwe lethu* (We cry for our land)
> *Elathathwa ngabamhlophe* (That was taken by the white people)
> *Mabayeke kumhlaba wethu*. (May they leave our land alone)
> *Abantwana be-Afrika* (The children of Africa)
> *Bakhalela i-Afrika* (They cry for Africa)"

Half of the audience stands up and sings along. A powerful statement and questioning through the repurposing of a struggle song for the moment. The text Ramabina was bringing through this song was raising questions about racial capitalism or race and class, through questioning the way white colonialists like Rhodes stole black peoples' land and the intergenerational trauma and damage this has done such that the children of Africa are crying.

There is much that can be said and engaged in what Ramabina posited in his input. He complexified who it was that felt excluded from UCT by quoting a Ghanaian student and then proceeded to explain using a black radical feminist framing, who personifies the powerful position in UCT's institutional culture. It was no coincidence that he was describing the Vice Chancellor's positionality as it related to societal power structures that were seamlessly replicated at UCT. He spoke about the relations between culture, symbolic forms and knowledge. Using Steve Biko he unpacked the notion of integration and rejected the assimilationist project of adding black people as appendages to white society. He reminded people of the SRC's 2015 vision of "Striving for a sustainable and progressively transformative Afrocentric university." Then went on to ask three questions of himself and the audience. Firstly, whose heritage are we preserving? The answer in part was reminding us of the genocidal killing of the Khoi and the San in the areas around the university. Secondly, who created the symbolism? For who, and for what? Again he reminded us that for "… too long the narrative at this university has silenced the voices of black students and black history. This university continues to celebrate, in its institutional symbolism, figures in South African history, who are undisputedly white supremacists".

Thirdly, who are the keepers of our memories and the guardians of our souls? To answer this he quoted Marcus Garvey who famously said, "[a] people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots". He went on to bring into the discussion some of the black (unfortunately only) men. Here I quote him at length:

> "Will our children ever hear of the great black men and women who contributed to UCT's development? Will they know of Archie Mafeje (who was a political activist and professor of anthropology and sociology of development), AC Jordan (who was a novelist, literary historian and intellectual pioneer of African studies in South Africa), Hamilton Naki (a laboratory assistant to Christiaan Barnard), Harold Cressy (who graduated in 1910 with a Bachelor of Arts degree at the South African College, now known as UCT), Richard Rive (who graduated with a BA degree and was an outstanding writer), Professor Mahmood Mamdani and Fikile Charles Bam (who studied law at UCT in the 1960s). All these have done incredibly in their respective fields, yet they and many more have received either no recognition or insignificant [recognition] from UCT".

He suggested a simple transformation of the Latin song played as people enter the hall during graduation, to something that everyone could more easily identify with. He called on all universities to remember that they "… exist within a changing society – this implies that [we] should not remain rigid in [our] traditions. Institutions are not carved in stone and innovation occurs by instituting new practices and meanings". Quoting Frantz Fanon, he connected the struggle of young black people in South Africa to young black people in the USA … "When we revolt, it's not for a particular culture. We revolt simply because, for many reasons, we can no longer breathe". He concludes by delivering a scathing critique of UCT and its DVC of Transformation, which I will quote in full:

> "Our institution should cease saying, 'We have done much for transformation'. Undeniably, it is our very own black brothers and sisters who we advocated to occupy these positions of leadership, thinking that they will change the system from within and raise issues of transformation from within, but I stand before you today in the midst of disappointment. We have reached an impasse with the management and are fatigued at asking for meaningful transformation. We have begged, grovelled, and pleaded with management. NO MORE!! This university cannot continue with its business as normal. It is in that spirit I cannot participate in this discussion. Amandla!"

He followed by more than half of the audience started singing the struggle song *Azania* (which was also sung at the first mass meeting earlier in the week), as they walk out of the seminar.

The VC remains sitting in the audience. One of the panellists (the city official) leaves in solidarity with the students. The chair at this point takes the remaining people "into his confidence" and admits that they "anticipated this might happen" and they were not clear whether to carry on and wanted to hear from those who remained whether they should. An older white man suggests that the conversation should continue. The chair gives the keynote speaker a chance to input and says she is an important voice. Titlestad explains:

> "… my position right now is that I was invited to come and address this panel as an open panel. I have been at the student protests on Thursday last week. And have been incredibly touched by what was said by the students, by the way in which it was said, by the value which I heard in what they were saying. That should be taken forward, taken seriously, and taken on by the university in all of its facets… I feel like it would be incredibly disrespectful to a major body of people to attempt to continue right now [supportive applause] and I think that we should ask if the university wishes to, for another chance at engagement… I changed my mind about my position, when I went to that student protest last week, and I heard what people were saying. I think that there is a real place for engagement but I don't think that it is with the pain outside the room."

The person who was understood and invited as the expert or specialist, had put forward a position

that took more than just her archival and academic work into account, but also considered the conjuncture or context within which she was being asked to speak. She had also taken to heart the arguments and expressions of pain by the student protestors and was willing to publicly admit to having had her mind changed. This position, in addition to the idea that one cannot trust people who are privileged by a system to willingly change it, asked people to listen and engage students with their heads or rationally but also with their bodies and hearts. This was what students were arguing. That knowing for them was about more than what they know rationally but also how they know and that part of this knowing was about their feelings. The traditional academic project that has been put forward and revered historically, and came with colonialism to Africa, put knowing rationally only above all kinds of knowing, which was another way in which the settler colonialists destroyed the indigenous systems of knowledge.

The chair responded to Titlestad's suggestion and motivation by admitting that "… one of the issues in coming to this meeting was thinking about how we would preserve, if you like, the integrity of the meeting. And to avoid the meeting becoming an opportunity for a rally. But what's very clear to me now colleagues and it's I think a pivotal moment for the university, is how we keep this process open as a dialogue. How we preserve the capacity of people to talk and hear each other. It is around that, that I would like to ask all of you to assist now in bringing us, so we are not going to have agreement in the room here at all, to a fair degree of consensus about how we might take this forward. So it really is about thinking about the process". Where the chair lands up is what the students have been insisting should be understood. From their perspective it was not a question of how to continue with "dialogue" in the traditional sense that the university form protects, and those with power (in this context specialised knowledge) have. Also, not a rainbow nation "dialogue", that a number of black students had recognised as always ending in a "rainbow conclusion". But a critical dialogue that tried to take into consideration in its form that for some people, based on their positionality or standpoint, a lot was at stake in terms of justice. And that the time had come that the critical dialogue takes an emancipatory or radical framing that did two things. Firstly, that understood all education as not neutral or as political. And secondly, that centred the people in the conversation that had been marginalised and oppressed through colonialism and the various forms of oppressions.

Preserving the "capacity to talk to each" would only be possible, if in the diverse space that the university had become, the forms of engagement or pedagogies, along with the content or curriculum, be seriously reimagined. Simply preserving the capacity to hear each other in the form

that conversations (because they were not critical dialogues) were had, would quite simply reinforce the status quo, as the debates around the symbol of the statue had for decades. Recognising that, even though the university forms of engagement "included" more people, the conversations were strongly framed by Eurocentric knowledge systems, which meant they privileged a particular (white) world view and "inclusion" into these forms of engagement meant excluding black people (and women and queers, etc.) from bringing themselves fully and being heard. What black students realised was that they were being heard but not truly listened to, seen or understood. It was partly for this reason that students no longer wanted to talk about the statue, they wanted it removed. The question of process that the chair was finally responding to, although still wanting to preserve the traditional liberal conversational form, *where everyone has an equal say*, would be disrupted and experimented with in the weeks that followed. I discuss in more detail in the next chapter on occupation, how RMF honed the processes of creative disruption, as a form of dialogue and engagement, agreed with or not, their analyses, critique and creation was part of the genius of their intellectual production. Another key critique of the process of transformation that had become formulaic was exposed in the last section of the seminar as those who remained tried to figure out how to proceed differently.

A few more students spoke with differing opinions about whether to continue or not but all now referring to management, either to critique the way they have handled the protests so far or to ask that they put their position on the table. It seemed that after the person with the most power in terms of specialised knowledge (the keynote speaker) made a strong move to rethink how to engage, [both by what she said but more importantly and less obviously how she was understanding differently, more expansively, the attention and appeal of the remaining students], would go towards those in the room with a different kind of power, the university management. A black women professor from the Law Faculty, Loretta Ferris, who would later become the DVC for Transformation, suggests to her predecessor that there is a gorilla in the room, which I assume is the Rhodes statue. She proposed that even though the students had left the room the gorilla remained and that she wanted to hear management's position on how to proceed.

The chair agreed and indicated that he was "… inclined to ask Max [Price] if he wants to say something." Judy Favish a senior white women who has worked in the Bremner Management Building as part of the university leadership interrupts and says no. She has been waiting for a while for her turn to speak. The chair responds "… no, no I won't let him say something yet, Judy. But it really is about how we get to that point". Again, the powerful in the room and in the university are

centred as needing to know how to proceed in a moment where black students have started to realise that management would not know how to proceed differently. Powerful people in the university system, whether academic or administrative or worse both, have not been taught by the university system and the knowledge it promotes, to be open, unknowing or unclear, and especially not to redistribute the power that they hold to others in the service of collectively figuring a new way forward and working against the university hierarchies. Instead, most academics and almost all high powered administrators and managers, have gained their power through competition, often in the service of the status quo, and in few cases against it, until they get to the top and then take on the position that "I have made it and now must do as the powerful do".

Judy Favish opposes recentring management and makes an appeal, which tries to respond to the new context:

> "… it seems to me that when this event was originally scheduled, it was prior to the events of the last two weeks … and at the time, I fully accept that the intention was to use the debate to deepen the discussions and the thinking and the engagement around these issues and to build an understanding, within the university community of different perspectives, in order to facilitate a process of decision making. But to my mind, the context started changing at the time of the first protest and that was followed up by the student gathering. And I think the context is so radically different that we are now in situation where even if, … and the reason why I said I didn't feel comfortable about the vice chancellor responding as management in this situation, … this event was set up as a seminar [and] not as an event for people to provide advice to management. And certainly not I would imagine for management to respond to what the students have put on the table, given that they have walked out of the room. So to my mind, in this context, we cannot proceed because the very people whom we [are] wanting to engage with have left. And so I think it would be highly problematic, it would be sending a signal to the students that it is almost as if they didn't do what they did here. We are not hearing them. And we are not engaging with the stand that they have made [Loud applause]."

Favish's position is supported by a white man who doesn't look like a student. He "… think[s] the UCT management lack huge credibility with the manner in which they handled the response to the first protest, it was really inappropriate. And even with respect, how you started this, to respond to what is going on. I agree strongly with the last speaker, that you can't continue in this format". [applause]. David, a black male [it seems staff member]:

> "I would just like to echo the sentiment that we can't continue with this meeting precisely because some of us are claiming that we have heard the student voice. We haven't really been listening to what they have been saying. And what you have seen now and the protests

> that happened earlier, is the fact that students are so frustrated. They are not been given the platforms and for that they need to enunciate what they need to. Meetings like this are not going to work. We have missed the boat on that. What we need to do now is actually go into where students' voices can be heard and management can sit and listen for a change. We have heard managements' position on things over and over again. I think many people are just tired of listening to management and we really need to tap into other voices on this campus. And we need to provide those kinds of spaces. Use our residence system. You have students living on this campus that you can start this dialogue with. But don't come there and speak to them. Come there and listen to them. Things are being debated at the moment [loud applause]."

Sadiq Toffa a black male lecturer from architecture provides a critique of the university and the forms it is willing to engage. He makes a bold suggestion:

> "… I just think the question of black alienation in a white institutional framework cannot be resolved in the white institutional framework. The protest has happened outside of this room and I think as a space of an encounter, the discussion has to move outside the institutional normative environment. So I think it needs to move to the street where the protests happen. So I think that is where this discussion needs to take place. It needs a *different kind of imagination*, I think, about *where* and *how* this dialogue happens (my emphasis) [applause]".

It is clear from this input from a young black academic that it isn't just the students who are experiencing the limitations of the forms of dialogue the white liberal university framework can hold. The chair shouts back "… tell us what that is, what is that imagination? Tell us…". Here the suggestion from the chair who is also a professor and a part of the senior executive team, is that the imagination of how to proceed or figure out a new process, is still possible inside the frame of the seminar and the dialogue space it provides. Toffa responds even though he has been put on the spot by one of his bosses: "This is not for one person to decide but I think this is a radical kind of politics and we need to think about it differently". He makes one suggestion on the spot about "… blocking a period where every student is able to hear this, such like what happened on Jammie Plaza. It needs to be outside this space, which for many is oppressive in certain ways, which prevents this dialogue from happening in a way that people feel free to express themselves".

The gathering is now discussing not only the departure of the protesting students and the way they have been frustrated and not heard by management, but also the question of process is being discussed. It is possible that the chair is trying to fold the process back into the frame he is familiar with and trapped by his position in management as DVC Transformation but also by his traditional idea and experience of how a university should deliberate. The seminar space with the specialist

leading the proposition making, is understood from his point of view to be the best way to continue. What he is unable to incorporate into his thinking about pedagogical process is the fact that students supported by some academic staff have agreed, that the regular procedures have failed to change some fundamental issues, in this instance, about the symbols on campus. Also the rigidity of the space understood to best be able to hold the deliberations, has been exposed as insufficient for this *new time and mode of critique*. Some in the discussion are willing to move against the institutional and academic frame and hierarchy to be more accommodating of student opinions, affirming their voices and their experiences as important parts of the process.

PASS staff members who are in administrative positions are often not easily included or taken seriously in dialogues or academic conversations. A black PASS staff member contributes from his perspective:

> "I just want to point out that these issues are not only affecting the students. The staff especially the PASS staff and academic staff are just as affected. And although we have forums, we also believe that from time to time we do not get heard. We have tried various things to address these issues but then it doesn't get addressed. So we must not lose focus about the staff because they stay here even after some of the students have left. They stay here and they continue with what is happening. And this issue is not about the Rhodes statue, it is about transformation in general. And it affects all kinds.

This valuable input reminds all that while students have raised this important issue about the statue, symbols and signage, and more broadly transformation, (black) PASS and academic staff have had similar experiences across university forums and processes set up for engagement. There is a frustration enunciated here with the way in which black people across the stakeholders of the university are pulled into ineffectual dialogue spaces and processes where they feel they are not heard. Outsourced workers who are also part of the university fabric but have been made the most precarious of workers, all of whom are black and poor, are not even welcomed into the spaces that the university deems important, even where issues of social justice are debated. They are the most invisibilised people at UCT and other universities, who will find solidarity in the coming months from RMF and student formations with the support of very few academics. I will discuss this alliance and solidarity in more detail in Chapter Nine.

The student disruption and flipping of the power dynamic in the seminar space by insisting that the SRC president be heard first and immediately after walk out of the seminar, had cracked the traditional frame of dialogue in the form of academic seminars and forced open a space for those who remain to deliberate and challenge the process. The very foundation of academic engagement

through a seminar with a public panel and a specialist and responses from other interested parties, was open for discussion in ways that it had seldom been before.

Jacques [a white male academic I think] agrees with the chair and proposes that the best of the university process is the slowness of its deliberation "… this gathering is meant to be a seminar. I don't think it's meant to be a holding management to account session. What the university does best is slow and careful deliberation on issues. I think that's what this meeting was gathered for. [laughing from the remaining audience]. "Okay so the word slow is a bit ambiguous…" the chair interjects "… I am going to ask you please sorry I think the last comment that Jacques made, I want to say to all of you, we really have to try to make happen. So even if you think it's outrageous, we have got to try and institute that. What else have we got?! What else!?... yes but how are we going to do that? So that's what I think we asking all of you to help with". The chair is clearly perplexed and unable or unwilling to agree with the critique emerging of the age old university form. The inputs have again shifted back in the direction of continuing with the planned process of engagement.

It seems that some protesting students have not walked out of the seminar but stayed to engage with the remaining people. Next Lindokuhle Patiwe an RMF student activist speaks:

> "… there are two things that I would like to raise. First of all, the chair says that this was a platform to engage with the students. But earlier today he was in a meeting, he was engaging with the students. He failed to listen to their demands. We went down to Bremner, and we were locked out, we were treated like criminals in our own university where we pay school fees. If you look, at 4pm when we came here, there were security guards all over this place. How can we engage when we are being intimidated? Look now when students are gone, do you see any security guards here? How can you expect us to engage and fully show our views when there is a security guard on top of me? We cannot engage when the university is intimidating us and treating us like criminals. Until such a time the university is willing to listen to us on our terms, we will be able to talk freely, because this isn't a student issue the workers have been talking here. Throughout this process we have never beaten anyone and I cannot understand why if we have never used violence why must we then be looked after by security guards. And until such a time that that stops, then we will be able to engage with the whole of university freely. So that we are not afraid of what we going to say because the next thing the security guard is going to beat me up when I get out".

Patiwe has raised a number of issues in this input. He pointed out how black activist students have been criminalised. While at this early stage there were no arrests or interdicts, Maxwele still had disciplinary charges against him for the shit-statue protest. Black students were clearly calling out the way they were being responded to by management. The response mimics the response to young

black township activists, where raising issues about the lack of transformation is met with securitisation both private and public. The lack of trust in management's ability to lead the process of transformation more actively was also apparent. While some student activists were still engaging in dialogue in the university process, they were making very clear arguments about what they saw as having happened, and not happened at UCT. The chair seemed to disagree "… but colleagues, that I think is a really provocative thing to say, that the university is standing by ready to be doing that kind of thing to you. It's not true". This sentiment will turn out to be untrue as will be seen in the next chapter when the university engages with the court to interdict students and then brings police on to campus to enforce their will. There is a bit of a back and forth before the next speaker manages to give his input.

Titlestad made the closing remark on how she was part of fighting racism at UCT in the 1980s and that it was a sad situation that students and staff needed to still be fighting racism today. She then brought her specialised knowledge of heritage policy and law and advised the university management and students of the formal processes needed if the statue were to fall. What no-one can know at this stage, is that RMF will not only (re)create the pedagogical process of formal classrooms for themselves, but also show through their critical intellectual production, both in content and in form, how intellectual production coupled with political will can remake processes and insist on critical thinking and critical action.

5.4 Conclusion

The dilemma that Soudien sat with was not unlike many black academics and students who have both had to recognise at some stage in their engagement with the university, the exclusionary nature of the institution and the kinds of knowledge it reveres and accepts. He, as so many of us, has had to cower parts of ourselves to fit into the preferred forms of engagement that the university promotes. These traditional forms have some value for the pedagogical project but have drowned out the creative possibilities, especially for power to be challenged in the very hierarchical space of the classroom and seminar. There are spaces in the university where these traditional forms are challenged and even ignored, although they remain marginal to the university project. Adult Education is one such space that exists in very few universities, along with some art departments, where an emancipatory education and radical pedagogy is attempted. At least in Art and Education departments, schools and faculties, the theorising of practice is taken seriously. The seminar space with its accompanying traditions and hierarchies was respectfully and artfully disrupted by RMF

and in this moment also the SRC. Instead of simply boycotting the seminar, students attended and intervened in the conversation from the vantage point of the least powerful. They caucused to ensure that there was support for the planned intervention that, if not understood in relation to other processes leading to this moment, could be read as self-centred, unable to debate, unwilling to engage. As I hope to show, these moments were (re)writing and (re)creating the ways of being, as well as ways of being together at university, which was a different way of producing knowledge for themselves and for the project of decolonisation.

Some present were able to understand and submit to the critique being made by students while others were unable to move in their thinking and actions, to stay apace with how quickly things were shifting. Students were experimenting with *creative disruptions*, which allowed them as a group with the least power and influence, to take centre stage to put their position across. Interestingly, Sally Titlestad, who was the specialist in the seminar space, was able to recognise what was happening and relinquish (or redistribute) some of her power in the moment to shape the way the thinking and the action would proceed. She did this first by agreeing to allow the SRC president to speak first in place of her keynote. Second, she moved in the dialogue to agree that continuing without the students would not be appropriate as their voices and inputs were important and therefore supported that the seminar must end. Thirdly, she made explicit some of how her thinking as a heritage impact specialist had been influenced and her position on the statue shift after spending time at the mass meeting listening to the students' perspective, including their feelings and arguments about why the statue should be moved and how the statue remaining uncritically in a central position at UCT formed part of the larger issues of racism at UCT. Fourthly, she brought her specialised knowledge of the policy and legal frameworks that would influence the possibility of action or moving the statue into the dialogue as part of the conversation but not as the central information. This meant that the specialised knowledge, which would ordinarily have come up front and be centred, could have a different effect on the process of engagement. For the emerging RMF, who had left the room and were not interested in the legislated rules that continued to allow the glorification of what they had experienced, analysed and identified as the symbolic protection of colonialism and its heroes, the disciplining, consolidation of the symbolic status quo was unable to contain their imagination.

RMF, in their first week, challenged the university narrative and process around transformation, starting with the statue, by creating opportunities for themselves outside of the formal seminar space, to meet and discuss the content of the issue and also the form of the engagement. They then

took their disruptive, anti-hegemonic critique in content and in form, to the formal seminar space organised by the university. The action taken at this event, confirmed that there was a different kind of engagement that students were searching for through an anti-hegemonic entailment in the university. They had recognised that the institution could talk and research and write about the Rhodes statue, literally for years, and do absolutely nothing more. That especially at a university, where talking, questioning through research, disagreement and debate was the central form of action, that there needed to be a change to move the possible actions such as creative disruptions taken at university in a different direction. Also, as discussed in Chapter Three, UCT remains a largely white liberal institution, and liberalism provides the perfect frame for debate and discussion where everyone's position and opinion matters "equally" but almost no radical action and change can take place. The heritage panel detailed above is an important and illuminating account of the creative disruption of what students considered to be talk shops, which they analysed as having a limited engagement in the world or commitment to action in creating the world anew. They were also willing, urgently so, to think differently about the traditional processes and procedures of the colonial university that in the democratic South Africa continued in their experience, to exclude their ideas, feelings and experiences, while including them and claiming that they are full participants at the university.

Chapter 6: Azania House Occupation: Creative Disruptions and Reflective Space

Decolonisation for RMF was the process of disrupting the existing norms and making the alienation of black people, and also poor, women, queer and differently-abled people, strange.[356] This disruption took on many different forms. Discussed in the previous chapter are examples of this form of creative disruption, which took place with a periodic organised reflective space, from Chumani Maxwele bringing the shit[357], to the covering of the statue in white cloth by the SRC[358] and later black bags at the protest at the Cape Epic cycle race, the mass meeting on Jammie Steps, and the disruption and walkout of the public heritage seminar, to name a selection. The hijacking of formal meetings, panels, and other platforms created and used to oversee and "manage" the transformation agenda by UCT management, started challenging the hierarchies of the university structure and calling out the bureaucratic processes that stood in for, and exhausted radical attempts to affect actual change. The message conveyed by these hijackings were … you are not in charge of us, you are not able to lead on these issues, your process is corrupted and vacuous, and therefore you do not tell us what to do and how to do it anymore. The disruption in the first week of RMF was also, as discussed in the previous chapter, challenging the role and importance of the "specialist" and in so doing the place of specialised knowledge. The creative disruptions were read by the media and fearful, mostly but not exclusively white people, in the UCT fraternity, as barbaric, uncouth, and unproductive behaviour, which focused attention on these *constitutive acts* as misguided and inappropriate tactics or techniques. See the comment on the RMF Facebook page below, where they shared a link to an input done by Prof Mangcu at another university. The commenter used the post to (mis)read the creative disruptions of RMF as inappropriate for him, insisting that the traditional form of university-encouraged debate was the best and in fact only way to get people to agree with you or understand your position. The response from another person to his comment points out that this mode of university "dialogue or debate" had not changed much, and importantly that RMF's creative disruptions had indeed started [a] movement.

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[356] The norm at UCT and the alienation black students felt from this institutional norm is discussed in the Chapter 5

[357] For a video of the "poo protest" that took place on 9 March 2015 go to "UCT Campus Protection Services Manhandle Photographer." YouTube video, 0:2:28. "Cape Argus," March, 9, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWr9YNLF67w

[358] For a video of students covering the statue on 12 March 2015 go to "UCT students cover Cecil J. Rhodes statue." YouTube video, 0:5:52. "Tatenda Gundani," March 12, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYN4e9n6jbE

"**UCT: Rhodes Must Fall**

April 5, 2015 ·

Comrade Xolela Mangcu on Black Consciousness, Affirmative Action, White Guilt and why it's important for all South Africans to accept responsibility for the country.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T6XrxmNFoxM

YOUTUBE.COM

Professor Xolela Mangcu at Discourse Café

Professor Xolela Mangcu spoke to students at Stellenbosch University on 12 February. Amongst other, he spoke about Black Consciousness,…

Adriaan van Wyk UCT: Rhodes Must Fall, isn't it AMAZING how effective a clearly presented, logically sound discussion with people can be in getting your point across? Much better than spray painting the War Memorial, throwing faeces, banging on doors, disrupting your own education and making/allowing seriously racist comments on your page... Well argued points Prof Mangcu! Is there an unedited version of the discussion available?

Emma Arogundade yet all the reasoned logically sound discussions didn't start a movement.

Madavanhu (2017) tracks the UCT RMF Facebook page around three of what she identifies as significant moments in (1) March – April 2015 around the statue, (2) October 2015 #FeesMustFall and (3) February 2016 around the Shackville protest. "The critics were neither interested in engaging with the students as intellectuals nor were they willing to seriously listen to the concerns that the protestors were raising regarding the statue and the ways it symbolised for them white supremacy at the University of Cape Town".[359] She analyses in particular the comments made that show the racist attitudes towards RMF students. The UCT "Have your say boards" erected as an avenue for fostering debate about the statue by UCT management, were partly used early on as a university based platform for racist messaging attempting to delegitimise the protest. The UCT RMF Facebook page was publicly available over a longer period and therefore more easily accessible for racist attacks. Some of the commonly used labels given to RMF student activists

[359] Mudavanhu (2017) Comrades, Students, Baboons and Criminals: An Analysis of "Othering" on Facebook in Relation to the #Rhodesmustfall/#Feesmustfall Movement at the University of Cape Town, *African Journalism Studies, 38:2*, 35.

during the three significant periods covered by Madavanhu's study to patronise and dehumanise them were "kids, children, juveniles, idiots, morons, fools, baboons, monkeys, donkeys, savages, barbarians, criminals, thugs, and terrorists". She found while comparing the comments across the three periods that "… there was generally much more support for the #FMF campaign than for the #RMF campaign" … and for her it was "… not surprising that the attack on the movement decreased when the #RMF/#FMF movement directed the protest to the government" and also focused more on the issue of fees than racism.[360] The shit-statue protest period centred blackness and insisted on an anti-racist orientation, while the Marikana Campaign and #October6 protests and Shackville a year later, focussed on critiquing racial capitalism by highlighting the economic conditions of the majority of black people on and off campus. The first round of FMF that she focused on was a critique of both university fee structures and [the lack of] government funding for higher education, but white racists were much more supportive when the object of critique was the black government than when it was the white liberal institutional culture at UCT.

The perspective (as the Facebook post above shows), that focused on the form that certain protests took, in order to ignored the content of the message, and therefore missed that these creative disruptions were an essential part of black students and staff creating a space for themselves to "breathe", to air their shit, to make black pain visible, and by so doing participate more fully in UCT. Importantly, they were at the same time as the creative disruptions, building reflective space and also creating alternate platforms and spaces – learning-teaching spaces - with much more porous boundaries and less hierarchical and rigid curriculum and pedagogies, to start practicing a form to decolonise UCT. The deepening of awareness and consciousness discussed in the chapter on alienation, followed by the hijacking, refusing and rendering corrupt of the official, management controlled processes of transformation discussed in the first three key moments, was necessary for a new and more consistent critical reflective space to be imagined and possibly created or enacted. This is where the first of three occupations enter the RMF story and where I will discuss in more detail the consistent critical reflective space they created.

For Veriava, occupation remained a key part of student protest as he describes the importance of the occupation and in particular the reflective space at Wits where the FMF movement started, named assembly and not plenary -

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[360] Madavanhu, 2017, 40 and 41.

> "At the height of its confidence in October 2015, FMF (Fees Must Fall) transformed the university into an occupied space through a coordinated blockade of entrances to the institution and turned the main concourse of the administration building—called Senate House—into a 'political assembly.' Over the next two years this building, housing the university senate and the offices of senior managers, became the floor of the movement at Wits, the theatre of its unfolding contests, and the prize that running battles between militants and armed police were later fought over".[361]

In the acts of refusal, disruption, destruction, RMF experimented with turning the whole campus including public spaces and platforms into a pedagogical arena, extending the classroom boundaries.[362] This was also responding to what Henry Giroux has called the "hidden curriculum" or the parts of what is being learned in a classroom or at an educational institution that are not explicitly named as something being taught or expected to be learned. RMF made more explicit the lived experience of black students and staff on campus and exposed the silent and implicit privileging of the [white, heterosexual, male, middle class] norm, by coming up with creative and interesting opportunities for conscientisation or learning for themselves, but also for the broader UCT and Cape Town public.

The creative disruptions discussed in the previous chapter were disruptions being planned in a variable fashion, which resulted in part out of having periodic reflective spaces. The creative disruptions, which I will discuss in the next two chapters, on the occupation period including the organisation of occupation and importantly in this chapter, the educational programme at Azania One, and in the next chapter, the Sarah Bartmann statue protest, and the UCT organised General Assembly meant to discuss transformation and the Rhodes statue. The three-week occupation of the Bremner management building renamed Azania House, formed the base for a more permanent and therefore consistent space for reflection, critique and planning. It also played a critical role in ensuring that there was a more consistent radical praxis of which the critical reflective space was an important part, enabled by a continuously available space and processes at the occupation.

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[361] Veriava, A. "Leaving Solomon House: A(n Impressionistic) Portrait of the FMF Movement at Wits." *South Atlantic Quarterly 118*, no. 1 (January 2019): 195-204,

[362] See an article engaging the idea of "Fallism" as pedagogy: Ahmed, A. Kayum, "#Fallism as public pedagogy," accessed January 16, 2018, at url: http://africasacountry.com/2017/07/fallism-as-public-pedagogy/

6.1 Moment 4: Azania One Occupation[363] (20 March to 12 April 2015) – building collective power through radical praxis and meaningful engagement through consistent critical reflection

When the student threw shit on the statue and filmed the protest, it went viral and a number of students came to the statue because what they had been talking about in private conversations and small group formations [or caucuses] was now in the open, including beyond the boundaries of the university, even the country. The shit that they experienced in particular around racism and a continuation of colonial forms of heritage and governance was now in the open through the symbolic act of pouring human waste onto the statue of a white hetero-capitalist-patriarch. Within two weeks students had mobilised and organised themselves and occupied the university's management building.

The week leading up to the first occupation started with the Monday heritage seminar that students, in concert with the UCT SRC, had creatively disrupted and announced their impatience and lack of trust in the university to lead the process of radical transformation. A few days later on Thursday 19 March, the university put up the infamous "Have your say" notice boards around the statue, and *UCT News* republished the introductory chapter to a book on UCT history and treasures, written by Njabulo Ndebele in 2012 and titled Reflections on Rhodes: A Story of Time. Everyone seemed engaged in the question of the statue, many focusing on the form of the protest, but RMF questioned this attempt at "dialogue or debate" that the liberal form of the academic seminar and freedom of speech/academic freedom held dear.

RMF through their mission statement explained that amongst other things they:

> "… find it infuriating that management is attempting to open up a process of debate through their 'Have Your Say' campaign. Alumni have been emailed and asked for input, and notice boards have been put up near the statue to allow for comment from the broader student body. This is not meaningful engagement of black students by management, and in fact shows a complete disregard for the black experience. Management is making clear that they are not interested in alleviating black pain unless the move to do so is validated by white voices. It is absurd that white people should have any say in whether the statue should stay or not, because they can never truly empathise with the profound violence exerted on the

[363] For a video that shows the march to Bremner and the occupation see "Rhodes must fall now." YouTube video, 0:5:56. "Azania Rizing Productions," March, 9, 2015. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vCsLVWu9to

> psyche of black students. Our *pain* and *anger* are at the centre of why the statue is being questioned, so this pain and anger must be responded to in a way that only we can define. It must be highlighted that the push for dialogue around the statue reflects the disturbing normalisation of colonisation and white supremacy at UCT. That the presence of Rhodes is seen as debatable shows that management does not take seriously the terrible violence against black people historically and presently. Finally, it is revealing that while black protestors are threatened with and are facing investigations, the racist backlash from white students has not been dealt with by the university".[364]

The university management's attempt to open an engagement around the issue of the statue backfired as some white students used the notice boards to make racist attacks on the protestors and on black students in general. This confirmed the position that black students were starting to articulate that who should lead on issues of change, or the social position and how this influenced the identity of a person, made a difference. RMF drew on Biko's essay *Critique of the White Liberal* (1971) and the BC position on white involvement in the struggle for black freedom. Their mission statement has the following two paragraphs from Biko's essay:

> "What I have tried to show is that in South Africa, political power has always rested with white society. Not only have the whites been guilty of being on the offensive but, by some skilful manoeuvres, they have managed to control the responses of the blacks to the provocation. Not only have they kicked the black but they have also told him how to react to the kick. For a long time the black has been listening with patience to the advice he has been receiving on how best to respond to the kick. With painful slowness he is now beginning to show signs that it is his (sic) right and duty to respond to the kick in the way he sees fit… The (white) liberal must understand that the days of the Noble Savage are gone; that the blacks do not need a go-between in this struggle for their own emancipation. No true liberal should feel any resentment at the growth of black consciousness. Rather, all true liberals should realise that the place for their fight for justice is within their white society. The liberals must realise that they themselves are oppressed if they are true liberals and therefore, they must fight for their own freedom and not that of the nebulous "they" with whom they can hardly claim identification".[365]

These were powerful words first published in the *SASO newsletter Vol 1, No. 4* in 1971. And later popularised in *I Write What I Like*. They expressed the growing sentiment and idea espoused by BC that black people needed their own space to organise as a group, a black caucus if you like, in order to emancipate themselves first psychologically, before emancipating themselves materially, and that this was in service of emancipating the whole of South African society. It was a political idea that

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[364] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 7.

[365] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 6.

would inject new life into, at that historical moment, the beleaguered anti-apartheid internal resistance. Fifty years later, the ideas and philosophy of BC would be (re)engaged at a university under the watch of its VC who was a former NUSAS student activist in Max Price, who would know intimately the experience of being told by black student activists to allow them space to conscientise and mobilise themselves. Max Price explains his understanding of the move for a black caucus and that this:

> "is controversial, but a number of faculties have created fora for black or queer students only. The idea of having racially exclusive fora is anathema to a non-racial society, and the Constitution, but we have encouraged it, because we have had to recognise that if you see yourself as marginalised or oppressed, or not having a voice in an institution then you will not speak in front of those people who normally intimidate you, for whatever reason. So these have been helpful to identify these shared experiences, and articulate them. *Why do I come to this university from a school where I was top of my class, or where I was very confident, and I now experience this?* a black student might say. That is something that is best discussed with people who feel the same way. All of these things are dimensions of transformation that we will continue to push next year".[366]

On Friday 20 March a range of actions were organised including a march, which ended at the Bremner Management Building. The idea to occupy the building had come up in the initial meeting that took place the week before.[367] The normative way that protest in particular marches plays out is that people gather in one spot with placards and sing struggle songs. The march then proceeds to the seat of power and the highest ranking leader is usually called on to come down to the people marching to receive a memorandum of demands related to the issue that the march is set to engage. Usually there are also speeches and the march ends with everyone going back to "business as usual" in the hope that the powerful, who are understood to hold the key to unlocking change will respond to their demands. The RMF tactic of critique through creative disruption was extended on this day to include disrupting the now normalised performance of marches. It was a key moment [of madness and creativity], when students walked past the VC and into the management building to announce in practice what their statement had laid out – that they were taking over the leadership with a focus on transforming the racist institution of UCT. They also in this moment and through their statement announced that the programme they would be working through would be decolonisation and no longer transformation. This creative disruption was also a radical praxis of

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[366] Van der Merwe, M. "Interview: UCT Vice-Chancellor Max Price." *Daily Maverick.* November, 16, 2015. https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-11-16-interview-uct-vice-chancellor-max-price/

[367] RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015.

demanding the change that was needed by engaging in both [creative] thinking and [creative] action to achieve it.

Students occupied the foyer area of the building because they were not allowed beyond the security check. They remained in the foyer for a number of hours reciting poetry and singing. The foyer was the venue for the first "public" seminar when Prof Xolela Mangcu was invited to speak to students. Later that night, the SRC arranged for the building to be opened for the students who went upstairs and had the first of what was termed Archie Mafeje meetings, what would later be known as the plenary meeting, which took place in the Archie Mafeje Room. The RMF mission statement quoted above, the writing of which is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8, was discussed and accepted at this meeting in the early hours of the second day of the occupation that would continue for 22 days.

While at the heart of the three-week occupation was the tactic of creatively disrupting the usual functioning of the UCT management by taking over the building from which they operated, the occupation also allowed for much more to take place. In this section, I will reflect on and discuss some of these. In creating a literal or physical space for being together and thinking, a hundred or so mainly students slept at Azania House and created the time and space, two important pedagogical elements, to conscientise, mobilise and build solidarity, and in so doing also build black student intellectuals. They were organising the time and space, or how they would study to develop clarity around the key issues or what was being struggled for. Inherent in the action of occupying the space of university management was a critique of university leadership *and* representative forms of democracy. RMF students had started pointing to the failed South African transition and the transformation agenda that had emerged from it, through critical reflection on their own experiences of that failure (discussed in Chapter 5). The first week of protests leading up to RMF becoming somewhat more formalised through the occupation, started critiquing the possibility of white people (students and academics) to lead or maybe even properly understand what was at stake in the struggle over signs and symbols and in ultimately questioning racism at UCT. In recognising the (neo)liberal representative democracy that emerged out of the transition and settled in at UCT, RMF students through the occupation experimented in practice with more participatory forms of democracy. While black students created and led the ongoing occupation, black academic staff formed part of especially the educational programme that happened during the occupation and discussed later under the seminar titled "Black Academics Speak", but also showed solidarity through donating food for the occupiers, staying connected and accountable to student conversations outside of classroom spaces, and being willing to have students lead experiments

around the difficult questions of radical change. This contributed to both the maintenance of the occupation, which housed the consistent reflective space, as well as to the content of the engagements through the seminar but also the conversations happening in the in-between spaces of occupation-life.

6.1.1 Organising the occupation – building black solidarity through a confrontation with difference

The Education SubCom was one of the first to be formed on 17 March 2015 prior to the occupation. RMF later formed a total of eight SubComs, which were working groups that arose out of the need to engage particular questions and issues. These were made up of students who volunteered to think through various parts of what needed to happen in order for the movement to successfully enact the changes it understood as necessary for decolonising UCT. The suggestion that SubCom's could be used to organise the work emerged in the smaller group meeting that took place immediately after the 12 March mass meeting.[368] Even though the mass meeting was important and was understood by some as a step in the right direction, for others it seemed like just another kumbaya rainbow nation moment. Ru remembers how "… Kgotsi [Chikane]chose quite a number of white students to speak and they were on a Mandela rainbow type of narrative. Masixole and some of the PASMA guys wanted to speak and Kgotsi didn't acknowledge them at any point as the chair. He didn't give them a chance to speak. They were getting annoyed by that and others were also, and then a fight almost broke out. There was a lot of tension there".[369] The smaller group that met after the mass meeting managed to, through a suggestion by Mohammed, agree on the name Rhodes Must Fall (instead of the other option #TheStatueMustFall) and the RMF Facebook page was then set up by Ru Slayen with a small group[370] loaded as administrators of the page.

To the surprise of some of those who were present at the smaller meeting and especially to those who were administrators of the newly founded Facebook page, the page had posted pictures of the mass meeting "…and someone had typed a whole description with the post saying something about this was the day that UCT students came together and that we will never forget, literally quoting Desmond Tutu on Rainbowism... Chumani made this random white guy an admin on the page who

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[368] RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015.

[369] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[370] Ru Slayen, Alex Hotz, Chumani Maxwele and Mohammed Jameel Abdulla

then proceeded to literally post his own things and his own stories about what happened".[371] It became clear to the other RMF page admins that there had been a take-over of the narrative of the newly formed RMF or if not a takeover a white-washing of the narrative. In the absence of RMF's own analysis or statement, the white student through his posts, presented as RMF's posts as he had admin status, put forward his personal view, which was also an ANC-influenced view, as the RMF one. This moment resulted in black RMF students realising that they needed to try and take back control of the narrative "…we wanted to organize a meeting with all the black student groups on campus and to hopefully take over the page because it at that stage already had about a thousand likes and we could see that this thing was going to be an important space to contest, and it was either going to go the Kgotsi [Chikane] way or it was going to become something else".[372] There was also an acknowledgement by Maxwele in the meeting immediately after the student plaza mass meeting that:

> "… we are likely to disagree on many things such as the use of faeces (during protest). But what happened today was a united unanimous approach from students saying we want to have the statue removed, today's rally was the statement from students to the university. We must take the individual out of the picture and act as (a) unified student body. Student organisations must put aside differences and unite on this - the experience of black pain at UCT must be universally acknowledged".[373]

What followed was a concerted effort to get black student formations into one room in order "… to contest and to form a kind of block and take over that space". Ru remembers one of the challenges being that there was bad blood between Masixole Mlandu and the PASMA group and Mase Ramaru and the South African Young Feminist Activists (Say-F) who had been posting horrible things about each other on social media. The meeting started with these two constituencies basically apologising to each other and committing to work together for a greater cause, which was RMF and fighting institutional racism at UCT. That was an interesting and important moment, which brought black students together and which saw black feminists suspend their issues and critiques of black patriarchs for the moment. Masixole remembers that Chumani had come around and spoken to individual patriarchs to encourage them to park their differences and see the strategic value of a

[371] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[372] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[373] RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015.

broad black alliance at UCT.[374] One key outcome of this meeting " … was for a smaller group to get together and try and articulate basically the politics that we felt that this RMF thing had".[375] Students who were keen to build RMF moved from a more collective student space[376], to delegating a smaller group to do the writing and organising work, which was meant to be fed back to the broader black caucus group for input and ratification or adoption.[377] This importantly also included involvement of black worker formations and the BAC through a meeting where these different constituencies discussed their various issues and demands. The importance of building an alliance with workers was stressed by a "… NEHAWU member and Workers Solidarity Committee member [as] he reminds us that the worst victims of sexism/racism/exploitation are workers! Draw them in!"[378] Another key outcome of the initial meeting was that "… [t]here will be an open meeting with this staff representative next week to discuss how staff and students can collaborate on both the Rhodes issue and institutional racism at UCT in general".[379] This mass meeting of a broad black caucus took place the following week at the CAS Gallery and academics, workers and students spent time talking to each other about their experiences of being black at UCT.[380]

6.1.2 Caucus vs Plenary – building fertile grounds for collective work

According to Napier and Labuschagne writing about "… whether a caucus undermines the democratic principle of representation" using the South African experience, review the literature available and posit that the "… concept of "caucus" has historically been imbedded within practical politics and in the disciplines of political science and history".[381] They point out that the role and function of the caucus is mostly based on the US experience but also includes countries using the Westminster parliamentary system. My own search for academic writing on caucuses, especially outside of the ones on practical or parliamentary politics, also didn't bear much fruit. It is however well known in popular politics that a caucus is a collective that meets to discuss and strategise around key issues in order to better prepare to represent those issues to a broader group of people,

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[374] Mlandu Follow-Up informal Interview, 2019

[375] Slayan, Follow-Up informal Interview, 2019

[376] The 12 March mass meeting was both a large student caucus, and was also a once-off mass [diverse] plenary space

[377] This writing process and how the statement came into being and came to say what it did is discussed in Chapter 8.

[378] RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015.

[379] RMF Founding Meeting Minutes, 12 March 2015.

[380] Ibid, 2015.

[381] Napier and Labuschagne, 2017, 208.

with the purpose of convincing them of their position or proposal. How these smaller groups function depends on the context and purpose of the group. The word caucus could be used to describe a range of smaller groups and their relation to a bigger related group. Some synonyms for caucus presented by a quick search include fraternity, clan, faction, bloc, offshoot, clique or splinter group. As you can see, the adjective can have a negative or positive connotation. "What emerges from the definitions provided are that caucuses generally operate in secret, they plan strategy and devise policy, membership is limited only to party members, and they decide on candidates for election".[382] If we think about students meeting around the statue protest actions, they were not consciously secret but rather they were meeting to plan action to keep the momentum of the RMF cause alive and to conscientise students and others about their cause to have it removed. Once the mass meeting had taken place and an open call was made for anyone to meet immediately after to continue planning the way forward, it became clearer that a smaller group of people would be meeting to do additional work around the statue removal. The small group that met after the RMF Facebook page was started and then used to represent one (white) students' view on the mass meeting, was more like the party caucus described by the traditional definitions above. They agreed to meet to try and unify black formations on campus behind the RMF name. It was out of this group that a small number of students were mandated to write a first draft of a mission statement that could incorporate the concerns and theoretical and political orientations of the majority represented. Their job was to ensure that the mission statement put forward some key ideas coming from the three main group orientations, which was what initially led to the three pillars that framed RMF's thinking and action – BC, pan Africanism and black radical feminism.

I am using the word caucus to mean something different to the traditional practical political caucus described above. In various struggles, usually smaller groups of people, have formed caucuses to meet around a particular issue. A good example of this is when women meet to discuss and plan how to further the rights of women in a broader group. In a similar vein, LGBTIAQ+ groups have also met outside or rather inside of broader collectives to discuss issues related to their particular struggle. As you can see a caucus can be organised around a particular part of someone's identity, especially when that part of their identity is marginalised in the broader societal and even activist space. As described above, there was a black caucus that gathered out of concern that the narrative of the fledgling RMF would be captured by a rainbow nation… non-racial… post-racial theme. This

[382] Napier and Labuschagne, 2017, 210.

black caucus was like a traditional caucus in that they sought to try and unify disparate black groups that had been organising separately around issues of racism, and in so doing were focussed on presenting a unified black position and formation for the broader UCT student community. A caucus can thus be organised differently depending on the context and have differing roles and functions. The kind of caucus I am interested in thinking about is the one that emerges out of the suggestion and then creation of SubComs to do the work of the collective or, as I will explain in more detail later, the plenary as broader collective.

In an attempt to democratise the building of RMF and the running of the occupation, there needed to be more thought given to doing in practice what their critique was suggesting was necessary – creating structures or systems for radical praxis. In critiquing representative democracy, and trying to make processes clearer and more accessible to the average person, RMF set up the collective Mafeje Meetings, which were similar to what Veriava (2019) described as an assembly created by Wits students during their Fees Must Fall occupation. Anyone could attend the Mafeje Meetings, which became more popularly known as Plenary, the space for everyone to have their say. The SubComs became the structural vehicles through which smaller groups of students volunteered to do the more detailed work of crafting statements, radical actions, educational events, publications, and so on. Below is a list of all the SubComs (a form of caucus by function) that eventually were established and operating from Azania One.

1. education (one of the first SubComs started – discussed in this chapter)
2. radical action (which included protests – also one of the first SubComs started)
3. writing (started in the second week of the occupation – discussed in Chapter 8)
4. creative expression (such as performance protest example of Bartmann protest later)
5. media (running the social media accounts and liaising with mainstream media)
6. support (which included food donations, cleaning, hosting – usually more gendered forms of social reproduction)
7. intersectionality audit committee (set up to see if the intersectional principles were being put into everyday practice)
8. strategic or strat com (discussed here with regards to Azania One and Shadow leadership)

Each of these SubComs contributed to building the occupation space, a headquarters for RMF and the decolonisation project housing consistent reflective space. People volunteered to be on different

SubComs and some people participated in more than one.

The StratCom was formed a bit later and emerged as a result of the Mafeje Plenary realising that there was already a group of people, euphemistically called the "shadow leadership", who had been meeting in a form of hidden or secret caucus, what remained of the black caucus discussed earlier. Student occupiers were angry that this "shadow leadership caucus" was operating secretly during the occupation. Even though they were a varied group of students representing all of the three RMF pillars, they were all student activists who had been involved in various critical resistance work on campus. When the group was found out and challenged in the Mafeje plenary meeting they tried to justify why their group was needed. Masixole and Chumani both admitted to having been meeting secretly to discuss and strategise ways forward. Both tried to justify and insist that their work was necessary and important. The plenary was not satisfied and they were "dragged" for most of that meeting. Some of the students who had not been very vocal in the Mafeje plenary space or the nightly seminar plenary space, found their voice through this challenging of power internal to the movement. In that sense, this process built the character of students by enacting a critique of some of the more vocal students who had more power to speak in the plenary spaces. The day after this discovery and then first discussion in the Mafeje plenary, the issue was raised again. This time Ru responded by telling the story of how the group started meeting, and detailing who they were and that they had in fact started meeting prior to the mass meeting held shortly after the first statue protest.[383] In so doing, the broader plenary members understood that the "shadow leadership" had been working together to create the critical consciousness for themselves and popularise the struggle around the statue but also broader issues at UCT. This led to the Mafeje Plenary deciding that there would be an additional SubCom called the Strat Com where the "shadow leadership" plus two representatives from each SubCom would hold transparent meetings to coordinate and deliberate around daily plans as well as more longer term ones. This process led to what was considered a more democratic way of operating and allowed for a different kind of process of leadership and accountability. SubComs would report their work through their two representatives into the Strat Com, which would then deliberate and make proposals to be ratified and agreed on by the Mafeje Plenary. This set up a double accountability process, which aimed to systematise or structure the radical praxis understood as core to the work of RMF.

Each SubCom had their own meetings and processes but they were all linked to the workings of the

[383] Slayan, Follow-Up informal Interview, 2019

other SubComs and the (often rotating) chairs of each SubCom formed the Strat Com as described above. During the three-week occupation, these SubComs met to discuss, analyse, critically reflect, and then come up with suggested implications and actions of the learning's. This radical praxis, of searching again or (re)searching - reading, thinking, writing, questioning through critical dialogue, as well as principled action, formed part of the daily lives of permanent occupiers as well as people coming in more sporadically. All these committees did important creative disruptive work and also tried to operate prefiguratively to live or practice the radical change they wanted to see happen. This was an attempt to put into practice the ideas and values being developed. I will focus here on the education SubCom SubCom (and in chapter 8 on the writing SubCom), as this was more explicitly linked to creating the intellectual and pedagogical project of RMF, and the SubComs I attended as a participant-observer. It must be remembered though, that much was happening outside of these formal and more traditional spaces of intellectual production.

To follow is a mapping out of how RMF came to develop their analyses and critiques, in concert formulating actions to achieve the change they saw as urgent and necessary. They were theorising their practice. They were also making explicit, making good sense, from what had become the implicit common sense or popular knowledge of black "born free" students at UCT - that the institution remained racist, sexist, ablest, homophobic and elitist, and that up until now, the only way to succeed and be accepted was to assimilate to the project of whiteness, maleness, middle classness, heteronormative-ness…

The Education SubCom set about (re)searching, discussing, and planning a number of things – one of the most important of which was organising a nightly public seminar series at Azania House. These events continued after the end of the first occupation, through the second occupation, although the form and frequency of the engagements changed in response to the context. These seminars were open to the public and drew up to 200 people per event, sometimes more. The form of the events differed from the usual university classroom space, even as it also engaged with some of the techniques and methods of the traditional classroom. Intellectuals (academic, student, activists, artists) were invited by the Education SubCom to give inputs varying from 40-90 minute lectures followed by a question and answers session; PowerPoint presentations; viewing of interesting films followed by discussion; and so on. These were not new forms of teaching-learning and classroom structure. But if you look closer, and those who attended can attest, these were more than the familiar, normative, classroom forms. I will try and give you a glimpse into those important intellectual spaces described by Prof Xolela Mangcu as "[c]ontrary to the racist garbage that black

people will lower standards, black students have showed up and called out the university's wrong assumption about black intellectuals. Every night over the past week, black staff were taking turns to conduct seminars with the students in … Azania House. The quality of the discussions was not anything I had seen at UCT, Cornell, Harvard or any of the universities I had attended.[384] This point was important to make but misses that the critical intellectual work was not only happening in the seminar space and certainly was not only happening when black academics entered the seminar space.

The Education SubCom led the ongoing discussion and development, of a *form or frame* for the educational space and the critical dialogue it allowed or contained. This frame took seriously the lived experience of black students and the imbalance of power relations at UCT – connecting how power operated in the structures of the classroom, the university and society, but also importantly in Fanon's words, "putting the last first". There was an explicit centring of this lived experience named as "black pain" in all of the discussions and workings of RMF, which became more and more thought through and practiced every day. The RMF mission statement under the heading Centring Black Pain explains:

> "… At the root of this struggle is the dehumanization of black people at UCT. This dehumanisation is a violence exacted only against black people by a system that privileges whiteness. Our definition of black includes all racially oppressed people of colour. We adopt this political identity not to disregard the huge differences that exist between us, but precisely to interrogate them, identify their roots in the divide-and-conquer tactics of white supremacy, and act in unity to bring about our collective liberation".[385]

Each discussion, be it in the seminar series, the SubComs, the general assembly, even the interactions in the communal and social spaces at Azania House, took seriously this radical praxis, understood further as a frame made up of the philosophy and concepts of BC, pan Afrikanism, and black radical feminism, with a practise which attempted to revolved around the idea or concept of intersectionality. Again from the RMF mission statement under the heading "An Intersectional Approach":

> "We want to state that while this movement emerged as a response to racism at UCT, we

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[384] Mangcu. X. "The Rhodes debate: My biggest fear is that we will find ourselves in a racial civil war." *News 24*, March 29, 2015. https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/The-Rhodes-debate-My-biggest-fear-is-that-we-will-find-ourselves-in-a-racial-civil-war-20150430

[385] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 6.

> recognise that experiences of oppression on this campus are intersectional and we aim to adopt an approach that is cognisant of this going forward. An intersectional approach to our blackness takes into account that we are not only defined by our blackness, but that some of us are also defined by our gender, our sexuality, our able-bodiedness, our mental health, and our class, among other things. We all have certain oppressions and certain privileges and this must inform our organising so that we do not silence groups among us, and so that no one should have to choose between their struggles. Our movement endeavours to make this a reality in our struggle for decolonization".[386]

The collective statement writing as conceptually and ideologically interweaving the varying positions of black formations at UCT was genius, some would say suicidal. Students with different social positions and therefore struggles, wrote different parts of the RMF mission statement, which meant that there was a broader and more inclusive vision for struggle. Asher writes about the radical attempt to (re)imagine the black nation by holding the dialects between BC, pan Afrikanism and black radical feminism, in the last stanza of a poem titled:

> "isms and schisms and the Black imagination:
>
> imagine the Black nation.
>
> Bikoism in conversation with Black feminism. beyond Mbekism and neoliberal imperialism toward a new pan-Africanism. LGBTQIA+ism: forward to intersectionalism. resuscitate Lembede-ism. revisit No Sizwe-ism and at all times nurture a lively imagination because from the imagination of the Black nation the new Black nation will emerge as a nation in realization >>"[387]

Reference is being made in this stanza to other traditions of thought and politics, that have been side lined since the ANC captured the liberation narrative, something that can go beyond the ANC-led transition – Steve Biko (BC), Anton Lembede (Pan Africanism), No Sizwe was the pseudonym for Neville Alexander (New Unity Movement and Workers Organisation for Socialist Action). This poem reflected the radical experiment of revisiting and trying to unify black struggle against the historic and current divisions segregating black struggles.

6.1.3 Seminar Series – renewing the pedagogical arena, practicing anti-hegemonic entailment

Some students like Alex were exposed to the history of Rhodes through the formal courses they

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[386] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 6.

[387] Gamedze, A. "The Black Imagin(ed)nation," *The Johannesburg Salon Volume 9*, accessed June 22, 2016. http://www.jwtc.org.za/resources/docs/salon-volume-9/FINAL_FINAL_Vol9_Book.pdf

were taking at university. Some RMF students were not only involved in questioning the status quo at UCT. Others were part of creating the spaces for discussion about these issues even before March 2015. Students were conscientising themselves and each other about issues on campus through these "nonformal" education spaces. During the occupation, and through the Education SubCom, interested students volunteered to collectively take responsibility for what, in formal university processes, would be called curriculum development and would traditionally be the domain of a specialist academic in their role as teacher. These responsibilities would include selecting the topic to be engaged, formulating the question/s to be asked, selecting or suggesting which writers to read in order to engage the selected topics. These were also spaces where students and those who attended the nightly public seminar, were reading and discussing writings that spoke more to black experiences, analyses of oppression, and questions of decolonisation and revolution. These spaces were the beginnings of more systematically alienating the alienation that they as black students experienced, by making it strange. Strange to be black in a majority black country, with a black government, but feel like an outsider. Strange to see statues and portraits and artworks that memorialise and elevate white people. Strange to be at university but not see writings and histories of black people entered in the curriculum. Strange to see that the majority of academics who teach remain white more than two decades after apartheid officially ended. They were also spaces that disrupted the normative classroom processes by (re)distributing the power that was traditionally and formally held by academics. The Education SubCom was the caucus space where those interested in consciousness work could collectively and on behalf of plenary organise some of the time and space of the occupation with issues related to more formalised spaces of learning and intellectual production.

6.2 Power relation – who is teaching who?

This educational experimentation was part of how students (re)created themselves and imagined a different role or way of being as black students and as intellectuals. Part of this work was about (re)imagining the relation between "student" and "teacher",… who is the architect of the classroom space and who commands the authority and responsibility to teach and learn? They were also boldly taking on the collective role of teacher, in their own learning and the possible learning of their peers and importantly broader society, taking on the role of public intellectual.[388] Traditional or formal

[388] Thamm, M. "#RhodesMustFall: Who's driving the debate?" *Daily Maverick*, accessed February 20, 2016, https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-04-08-rhodesmustfall-whos-driving-the-debate/

education would speak about the fundamentals of formal curriculum work considered to be a specialised function (along with knowing the content intimately) as selecting what texts to read and topics to have seminars on (selection); who to invite to give input around the themes or topics identified; what topics should be dealt with when (sequencing); how often educational events needed to happen and for how long (pacing). This process was led by the RMF Education SubCom, which I will now discuss in more detail.

6.2.1 Plenary spaces - as important diverse pedagogical space

RMF set up a democratic plenary space where all decisions about the occupation and the movement that was emerging were discussed and agreed upon by consensus. The collective plenary space, popularly known to those in the occupation as the Mafeje meetings, often mandated smaller subcommittees to action decisions taken collectively and a system of reporting back and accountability was created and built. The relation between the Mafeje Plenary Meetings and the SubComs took the form of what I describe as the plenary space – a diverse, collective space that some people would imagine as the flat democratic collective space, as opposed to the SubComs, which functioned as caucus spaces or single issue/single function collectives. The key work of one of these SubComs, the Education SubCom, was to create more consistent opportunities for study and reflection. The key place for this was the nightly seminar they organised that extended the Mafeje plenary space to include those who were not on campus and possibly working or attending classes during the day.

This was in order for students to create a pedagogical space internal to the movement and the occupation, where they were educating themselves through engaging with a range of speakers, where there was consistent critical reflection on the ideas and questions raised by speakers, as well as a continued conversation reflecting on what had taken place throughout the day, and a reflection on how power was operating in the plenary meeting space, and the public seminar space. This is where critical practical reflexivity was enacted - there was an interweaving of radical ideas and how these ideas were put into practice. A radical form of praxis was emerging that made sure that the concepts students were engaging through reading radical texts, were in conversation with the practices that were being set up and reflected on in the occupation. It was made explicit that what students were experiencing in the occupied space mattered hugely as they had spent most of their

time as black students in university classrooms where they felt silenced, alienated and in some instances attacked. Students' lived experiences were taken seriously because they referenced the social conditions at UCT, and the public talks were seen as supplements to these rather than the other way around, which is the usual set up in the traditional classroom. This enhanced the texts engaged in the seminar to include the testimonies of people around the experience of being black at UCT. Students also felt like co-creators of the space and the process of their own and others' education.

6.2.2 Critical practical reflexivity – reflection-in-action

There were a number of moments in the seminar space where participants "disrupted" the presentation or the discussion to bring their personal experience and feelings to the fore or to call out someone in the room who was saying or doing something that felt oppressive to another. In order to build solidarity and understanding in the space, it was felt that anyone feeling oppressed by someone else's unconscious behaviour or wielding of their privilege, should be empowered and supported to disrupt the conversation and directly "call out/in"[389] the offending person in the moment. Power imbalances because of questions of race, class, gender, sexuality, etc. were "called in" and people in the room were in some cases open to critical engagement and bringing themselves as fully as possible to the discussions, while being held accountable to the framing of the space as centring black experience, and the pillars of BC, pan Africanism and black radical feminism. Most of these kinds of disruptions were examples of creative disruptions as they, despite the discomfort experienced, were valuable engagements with the unconscious or internalised oppressive behaviours harboured by people in the space. This was an attempt at prefigurative space, where students where enacting a new form of pedagogical engagement in the collective space of both the Mafeje plenary and the seminar plenary. They were creating a new way of being that was calling the future world they wanted to create into the present, at least to experiment with practicing a different way of being in critical dialogue together, where disruption and discomfort were useful pedagogical resources.[390]

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[389] The difference between calling someone out and in is that calling someone out – making public and visible to the person to call out the violence of their action or words, which can sometimes be done or perceived to be done to exclude and make the person feel bad and by so doing other them in ways that are part of the problem vs. calling someone in – making public and visible to the person for the purpose of keeping them in the conversation and for them to learn.

[390] Boler, M. and M. Zembylas. "Discomforting truths: The emotional terrain of understanding difference." In *Pedagogies of difference: Rethinking education for social change,* ed. P. Trifonas, 110-136. New York:

The period of occupation allowed for a pedagogical space for engagement and critique where people from the movement could disrupt processes internal to the movement, first in the Mafeje plenary space, which was inward looking focussing on sustaining the occupation and its operations. And then disrupt more publicly in the seminar plenary space, which was more outward looking, open to the broader public and attended by students, academics and activists from around the country sometimes further. These creative disruptions were done in order to critique the replication of power and oppressive behaviour in the room or occupation and ultimately in society, as this disruptive engagement spread across many university contexts.

The Mafeje plenary and the seminar plenary spaces were understood and inhabited as a pedagogical space of solidarity and learning, even as it was necessary to disrupt the people holding power in that space. These creative disruptions caused discomfort, and this discomfort was important to ensure that the plenary spaces were creative and new. But even as RMF were experimenting in the non-formal space they had occupied and formalised towards a different end than the traditional university classroom, there was an informal space of study, where many who were not first language English speakers, and who were not as comfortable with some of the texts being discussed, etc. spent time jamming together every night. This more organic space engaged the age old form of black resistance work – music and song and poetry, which was primarily done in students' home language, IsiXhosa, IsiZulu, AfriKaaps mainly. This informal jam space was a place where students learned each other's languages, and engaged in more artistic forms of being together.

For this chapter and thesis I will engage some of the more formalised seminar events in more detail than others. Below I will draw out some key discomforting moments of creative disruption to detail the argument I have laid out above. I was present for these seminars and therefore able to reflect from a proximity that many who have written about RMF are unable to do. I have selected five seminar exchanges to focus on to sketch a picture of them and illustrate the varied forms and texts they engaged but also to map out a bit more the way that pedagogical moves were made, that ensured that people in attendance were on a steep learning curve together.

Routledge Falmer, 2003.

6.2.3 Monday 23 March 2015 (8pm – midnight) - Screening and Discussion – Concerning Violence

The first RMF seminar I attended was the public screening of the documentary *Concerning Violence: Nine Scenes from the Anti-Imperialistic Self-Defense* released in 2014 and directed by Swedish filmmaker Göran Olsson. The documentary is 90-minutes long with excerpts of Fanon's text *Wretched of the Earth*[391] from the chapter Concerning Violence (and some quotes taken from the last chapter, Colonial War and Mental Disorders) overlaying, if not yet unseen archival footage, then at least seemingly forgotten video archive of experiences of colonialism. The documentary was interesting as it brought into film the text that a number of students were reading, had read, or had heard others reference. Some in the packed seminar may however have never come across these words. The preface chapter[392] was written and read out by Gayatri Spivak, feminist scholar who authored the important essay *Can the Subaltern Speak*, who boldly claimed that "… This is a teaching text". She posited that "… Fanon's lesson was that you use what the masters have developed and turn it around in the interests of those who have been enslaved or colonized. In this he is with great leaders like W.E.B. Du Bois and Nelson Mandela. Fanon did not stop at thinking colonization, but wanted to do something about it. He gave his time and skill to the healing of those who suffered from violence".[393] Not everyone was happy with her comparing Fanon to Mandela, understood more and more by young South Africans as having made too many compromises in favour of the white South Africans who benefitted from apartheid yet gave up little post-apartheid.[394]

Later on there were sounds of agreement as she said " …we would have gained greatly if this man of fire and resolution had lived long enough to give us his wisdom when the colonized nations regularly fell into internal violence and internal class struggle and internal greed after so-called liberation".[395] It was as if Spivak was speaking directly to us in the room and our historic moment. But she also was resolute with her critique of patriarchy and Fanon's participation in it through sexism and homophobia … "Colonizer and colonized are united in the violence of gendering, which

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[391] Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth.* London: Penguin Books, 1967b.

[392] Spivak, G. Preface to Fanon's Wretched of the Earth…

[393] Spivak, G. Preface to Fanon's Wretched of the Earth…

[394] Naidoo, Fieldnotes, 2015

[395] Spivak, G. Preface to Fanon's Wretched of the Earth…

often celebrates motherhood with genuine pathos. Here we have to promote our brother Fanon into a changed mindset".[396] There is loud agreement and a bit of discomfort in the room, as this critique of Fanon is not new to many of the black radical feminists. Spivak ends the preface, which frames viscerally at least the very next chapter of the documentary like this … "The people under colonization have had no practice of freedom. You cannot decide without practice. The ones you see on the screen are a small part of the people, the poorest of the poor, mobilized into violence by sovereign leaders: cannon fodder. This practice goes on in all armies, all resistance movements, in the name of nation and religion. Here Fanon would have been useful today. As for gendering, we must ourselves gender "the people." Our brothers Kant and Fanon are not useful here".[397] A black feminist has laid the critique of Fanon and violence out succinctly to frame what is to come next. The documentary, by coincidence, was staging in film the battles that would play out during the life of RMF and that were there even before - the question of violence and patriarchy.

Olsson (2014) explains that the challenge for him was to "… transfer a nonfiction book into film, keeping the text and the book feeling of the film. So we have chapters, we have a preface, we have graphics, someone's reading the text…".[398] It is not just anyone reading the text. It is singer, songwriter and activist Lauryn Hill, whose raspy voice is calmly reading some of the most hard-hitting quotes from the book "… colonialism is not a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield, when confronted with greater violence" … and … "Decolonisation, which sets out to change the order of the world, is, obviously, a programme of complete disorder." What this documentary was doing felt like a reading group. Lauryn was reading large parts of the chapter to all of us, with all of us. I have always found it impossible to watch any movie with English subtitles and be able to ignore the words. In this documentary, the text is presented centrally in large font so as to definitely be read by those watching.

The documentary was interesting and well received, but also shocking. It showed up the explicit physical colonial violence and the revolutionary violent responses for liberation that took place in Africa. There is footage from especially the Lusophone countries of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-

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[396] Spivak, G. Preface to Fanon's Wretched of the Earth…

[397] Spivak, G. Preface to Fanon's Wretched of the Earth…

[398] "Göran Olsson Interview (Concerning Violence)." YouTube video, 0:11:10, "Dogwoof," November 27, 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6utS7T9PYck&app=desktop

Bissau, but also Liberia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. It also shows archival footage of the racist personal interactions of colonialism, the ones that would be considered less violent, but clearly experienced as violent by the majority of people in the room. A scene where young white teenage boys are playing golf with grown black men carrying their clubs; an interview with a white man in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia, named after Rhodes), who boldly refers to his "man servant" as a "stupid thing". In addition to the scenes of blatant racism are those of poverty, exploited workers, terrible living conditions and extraction of mineral resources. It is a lot to take in but at least we are not alone. There are also scenes of guerrilla operations and interviews with women freedom fighters from Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo). The visual plus the textual is a lot to take in but everyone is focussed and listening.

The conversation afterwards was lively and engaging. People were grappling with Fanon's thesis that the necessary response to the violent system of colonialism is through the violence of resistance. There are varied interpretations of this proposition. Some people (an academic present) suggest a less violent interpretation. Some students push back and express the feeling that they are confronted and subjected to violence every day and that they have tried to talk and engage about it, but their views are not heard. People are wondering if violence indeed is the only thing that privileged white people with power will respond to. There are diverging views in the dialogue and the questions continue until midnight. I left, but the occupiers continued conversations in smaller groups as the "official programme" ended. It is a fiery start to the seminar series. The urgency of the task of decolonisation is heavy. It is also clear that closing the seminar in no way ends the discussions.

6.2.4 Tuesday 24 March 2015 (8-10.15pm) Seminar Question: What is the Post-Colonial University, Curriculum, Canon?

How I will write about this seminar will be to weave much of my own fieldnotes with the reflections of Brian, who wrote and published his thoughts on the seminar on his blog the day after the event titled *UCT Black Academics: When they arrive!*[399] Brian had also written a blog post the year before titled *Black Academics: Where are you?*[400], where he had publicly criticised black

399 Kamanzi, B. UCT Black Academics: When they arrive! Blog Post, accessed May 16, 2017 at url: https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/uct-black-academics-when-they-arrived/

400 Kamanzi, B. *Black Academics: Where are you?* Blogpost, accessed May 20, 2017 at url: https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2014/11/07/black-academics-at-uct-where-are-you/

academics at UCT for not being present in the public debates and engagements that were happening daily at the university.

The Mafeje room was packed for the next nightly seminar.[401] Various academics had been asked to input to a seminar around the question: What is the Post-Colonial University, Curriculum, Canon? Black academics took turns to speak to the question in whatever way they preferred. Zethu Matabeni from HUMA chaired the seminar that was also part conversation, part meeting, part testimony. It was run informally with staff sitting on the floor with the audience of largely occupy students and a range of others, standing when they were speaking. It felt like an intimate family gathering. There was something of a parental orientation from the academics towards the students, which they seemed to accept and enjoy. This seminar could not be more different than a traditional panel discussion. Not only were people talking together, they were also interweaving their personal experiences and challenges with their ideas about the curriculum, the canon, and the university. It was what, I imagine, raised the feeling of intensity in the room.

People from the following departments spoke - Gender Studies, History, Psychology, English, Media Studies, Sociology, and someone from UNISA working on BC and masculinity. The inputs were varied. Some people spoke of their experience within their discipline. Others spoke to the institutional mechanisms that obstruct moving towards a more decolonised university. Some spoke about their experiences at UCT as it related to the possibility of being heard. Brian remembers that "… after the third and the fourth academic had spoken our conversation had become firmly guided and grounded in "African Feminism". Several speakers spoke wisely of the crushing effects of the "Patriarchy", violent masculinities and the absolute necessity of intersectional views for discussing visions of curricula and learning spaces".[402] The questions of patriarchy that Spivak had raised the night before in her preface, were connected today to thinking about visions of curricula and pedagogy. The Education SubCom members who had organised the events were also listening intently to the reflections by black academics and teachers.

Shamil Jeppe from History spoke about how in the decade he had been at UCT he had fought to try and have a course on what he calls deep (or pre-colonial) history. He reflected on the challenges he faced with colleagues who were resistant to this content but then also challenged students because

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[401] Naidoo, Fieldnotes, 2015

[402] Kamanzi, B. *UCT Black Academics: When they arrive!* Blog Post, accessed May 16, 2017 at url: https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/uct-black-academics-when-they-arrived/

he explained that there were not many students who wanted to learn deep history.[403] This suggestion extended the thinking around history beyond the confines of the colonial, that we were so vividly reminded of in the film screening the night before. The challenge however was not only to the History Department and the university but also to the students. Victoria Collins-Buthelezi from English continued by speaking about students needing to put pressure and ask for the content they wanted to see in the curriculum. That some academics had tried internal to departments to change the curriculum but that they cannot succeed in doing so alone. Imraan Coovadia also from English commended the students for taking the initiative and ensuring that their voices were heard.[404]

Brian remembers that "…Yaliwe [Clarke] and her colleagues affirmed for us that there are strong, solid bodies of knowledge that dissect and discuss the post-colonial language that was forming the substance of the protests and occupations at the University in this latest manifestation. They encouraged us to continue learning, working hard and to not be afraid to use these tools".[405] Yaliwe Clarke is an academic hailing from Zambia who has been teaching and writing in the African Gender Institute (AGI) where a number of feminist students have been studying. Her message to students was that there are canons available of people who have been thinking and writing about these issues from the African continent. Hers was not just a critique of the dominance of the Euro-Centric canon, it was also an encouragement directed at students to look beyond these limited resources to the continental ones that are available, even if not as readily, but in need of engagement.

Brian recalls that "… [o]ffers were made to hold seminars from Psychology to Pre-colonial Africa as the conversation began to reach its climax it had also begun to move beyond the domain of rhetoric and into a space of mutual commitment to engage and change".[406] The solidarity shown to students by academics, which included critique, was an important moment in the struggle to radically change UCT. Academics were not handing over their power to students but rather were committing to work with them on the quest to decolonise the university. At this stage students were also using the language of post-colonial, which changes within a few weeks as they build a critique

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[403] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015.

[404] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015

[405] Kamanzi, B. UCT Black Academics: When they arrive! Blog Post, accessed May 16, 2017 at url: https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2015/03/25/uct-black-academics-when-they-arrived/

[406] Ibid.

of the post-colonial. As was becoming the norm, there was a moment of joyous electrifying singing of struggle songs. People had been sitting for over an hour and someone decided that it was a good time to sing a struggle song about Chris Hani, the SACP-ANC leader who was assassinated during the transition period.

I will let Brian describe what happened next:

> "As quiet once again befell the room as the crowd was called to 'order'. An Academic [Ruchi Chaturverdi] who hailed from India, working in the sociology department stood up and insisted that she would like to sing to us. She sang a protest song from India that had reminded her of action that had taken place in lands far away from where we now sat and stood. The song's beautiful complexity and language on one level was understood by very few and yet – on infinite levels was understood by each and every one of us".[407]

The anti-colonial now decolonial struggles from around the world resonated with many in the room. The sense of solidarity was not just with the academics standing and speaking and singing in the room, but also to distant places that know the violence and struggle against colonialism and its remnants. The inputs had stretched over two hours and yet everyone was present, attentive, and listening.

> "As hands raised quickly from all corners of the room when asked. A fire in my heart grew just that much brighter, knowing that even when the statue falls and the energy from this moment dissipates into other spaces, the hunger and thirst for change remains deep in my generation. I am so grateful to be alive at this moment. So excited to see what my peers and our parents can contribute to a new era of growth for the country, the continent and the world. Of course with its own challenges, its unique deficiencies and limitations".[408]

During the engagement a few black cishet male students asked what is meant by intersectionality and what it would mean to "drop [or give up] their patriarchy".[409] There were genuine questions of clarity coming from students, where people were risking and saying I don't understand what you mean. Kopano Ratele, a UNISA professor, spoke to the issues being raised around masculinity. It did not go unnoticed that a South African black man was engaging with young black men about patriarchy, also through having researched and written on masculinity. It was such an important moment of vulnerability and risk by the questioning students. The response was also one of care

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[407] Ibid.

[408] Ibid.

[409] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015

and engagement or calling in, and the feminists in the room did not seem to mind the honesty, even as it confirmed their experience of sexism by cishet students.

It is hard to capture what the intensity and energy in the room was. As you can read from my fieldnotes and Brian's reflections, this seminar was unusual. I think it is important to recognise that intellectual work where people entail themselves in the engagement, can produce a more engaged and connected kind of dialogue. Of course the content of resistance is energizing at particular points but this seminar was not without critique and moments of discomfort. The message that was being brought into the space for engagement was not simply words strung together in the usual thought through, ordered fashion of an academic presentation. In both content and form, academics were questioning and modelling a different way of making inputs and thinking and questioning. One that permitted and even encouraged people to speak from their disciplinary knowledge as well as their experiential knowledge.

The next day the campus was abuzz with activity. The Sarah Bartmann performance took place during the day, followed later in the evening by the UCT University Assembly from 6-8pm, both of which I discuss separately and in more detail in the next section of this chapter. The nightly seminar continued after the university assembly and had to be held outside Azania House in the parking lot because there were too many people to fit into the Mafeje seminar space. The lecture was given by Elelwani Ramugondo focusing on occupation, consciousness and health.

6.2.5 Thursday 26 March 2015 (8pm) - Jay Pather – "Symbols and Identity"

There was already a conversation happening when I arrived in the Mafeje Room about whether white people should be allowed into the seminar space. As a result, Jay Pather's input was delayed until around 9.30pm. But before he eventually was about to start his PowerPoint presentation a black woman student brought to the attention of the house that there was an older white man (apparently UCT alumni) in the seminar space who was abusive to her and some other black women students earlier in the day and was escorted out of the space by UCT security personnel. She raised that she could not feel safe in the space with this person again sitting in after what had taken place earlier in the day and with nothing having been done to process what had happened.

The seminar plenary space was in that moment being used to think through ways of engaging the power dynamics and activities that had not only harmed the students concerned, but could potentially harm the fragile project of decolonisation that students were experimenting with. The

issue had been discussed in the earlier Mafeje plenary, but no-one had predicted that the older white alumni would return after what happened earlier and after being put out of the building. There was some consideration paid to the fact that Jay Pather had arrived on time and was scheduled to start at 8pm, but it was clear that the student who had raised her concern was not going to be ignored. The Mafeje plenary was a type of first level reflection internal to the occupation and the issue was then present for engagement at a second more outward facing public level in the seminar plenary. The questions discussed in both of the plenary spaces had relevance for each other. On the one level, the concern was how to continue to build the kind of spaces and relations that took racism, sexism and all forms of oppression or misuse of privilege and therefore power seriously and ensured that there was reflection and responses to harm that were not only not ignored but also didn't take a long time to address. At another level, the concern was about how to address the instance of harm experienced by an RMF student in real time with everyone concerned in the room.

There was a lot that went on in the Pather plenary, but I will highlight some key things that seemed to me to be outside of the traditional university seminar space, which holds to a rigid form of engagement and replicates in dialogue, what is understood as the best form of engagement around an idea. The idea up for engagement was the problematic racist and sexist interaction that had occurred earlier in the day, and how ignoring what had happened would condone the violence experienced by the RMF student, which was an adherence to the status quo where white men could treat black woman violently and get away with it without any accountability or sanction. The person chairing the session tried to mediate between the woman raising the objection and the white man who was trying to defend himself. The chair asked the floor for direction at which point one of the vocal black cishet men students who had been present in the occupation instinctively spoke in support of the white man, appealing to everyone to give the man a chance to defend himself. This move created an uproar from many in the room and when things calmed down enough for someone to speak, the point was made that woman would no longer stand by quietly while men, black and white, rally to support each other's patriarchal bullshit. In that moment, the cishet black student chose to respond in the way that is usually the case when harassment is reported – the first move was to give the "perpetrator" a chance to respond rather than believe the survivor.[410] The room was now divided with women students proclaiming their exhaustion with black cishet men who align so easily with white men with regards to their patriarchal privilege, even as they very quickly and in

[410] I use the language of perpetrator and survivor as this is how radical intersectional feminists have identified the transgressor and instead of calling the woman a victim rather identify her/them as a survivor of violence.

fact in the preceding days were complaining about how the presence of white people was violating because of their unconscious racism.

The fiery debate continued and ended when it was agreed that the planned session would not continue until the perpetrator was removed. There was also a suggestion that the problematic black cishet male students should also leave, but it was eventually agreed that they could stay, but only after the student who suggested giving the perpetrator a chance to respond apologised for that ill-conceived suggestion. This discussion, which was a creative form of disruption of the seminar space, could happen with such conviction because many in the room had spent time reflecting on what had happened earlier in the day in the Mafeje plenary. Both the internal Mafeje plenary and the seminar plenary provided spaces for consistent collective reflection on action and specifically in this case reflection-in-action. These discussions also animated the question about whether white people should be allowed in the occupation space because of how violently and unconsciously they behaved.

The session eventually ended proper around 2am. Interestingly, the presentation took place and there was intense questioning and discussion, which did not only focus on the content that was presented by Jay through his presentation. The seminar space was holding a three-track discussion. First, about the ongoing experiences and lessons learned from those of the occupation with a view to building the movement. Second, about the content presented by the speaker on the topic selected for the evening seminar. Third, about instances of oppressive and unconscious behaviour expressed by attendees of the plenary that could be reflected on in-action. The explicit willingness to allow into the conversation texts made up of the lived experience of people occupying the space (meeting and social spaces), including their historic experiences from outside of the space, framed the engagements as not only exposing and tackling power and the way it was wielded to privilege some and oppress others in theory and in documentaries, and in PowerPoint presentations, but also in critical practical reflexivity.

One further interaction in the Pather plenary worth highlighting was when a number of women students, tired of trying to explain to most of the black cishet men in the room about intersectionality and the multiple oppressions black woman and queer people experienced in ways that black cishet men did not, started giving testimony about how some had been sexually assaulted by black men. One particularly difficult testimony was given by a black woman student who explained that even with the white cishet man removed she did not feel safe in the plenary space or occupation because she had been gang raped by a group of black men. That even though the black

cishet men in the room had nothing specific to do with that particular experience, she wanted them to recognise that at some level they had the power to violate in ways that was as bad as white men could. And importantly that she couldn't just expel all the men but that she expected black men in particular to be able to find empathy and therefore solidarity with the cause of black women because of their experience of racism.

The seminar was unbelievably charged and people had risked and shared and fought in a way that laid bare the difficulty of tackling power and how it was enacted on each other, even in spaces that were trying to be conscious and practice anti-hegemonic entailment. It wasn't clear how the seminar would be closed. No words or talking felt like it could hold everyone who had participated and witnessed the conversation. I cannot remember exactly who or how it started, but we broke into song, which everyone quickly rose from their seats to join. We sang struggle songs and some hymns until there seemed no more left to sing. It ended in the early hours of the morning. "Song also became one of the most important ways of collectively responding to the testimonies of racial and sexual violence that emerged in debates and education sessions in the student occupations".[411]

6.2.6 Monday 30 March 2015 (6.30pm) - Suren Pillay – Decolonising the University

Suren Pillay[412], a professor from the neighbouring University of the Western Cape, was sitting at a single table much like would be the case at a traditional seminar or lecture. The Mafeje room was again packed to capacity with RMF occupiers, visiting students and academics from other universities and black academics from UCT, scattered in chairs, on tabletops, on the floor and standing. The paper he presented was meant to focus on decolonising the university but was later titled "campaigning and mobilising". He started his lecture pointing out how he was particularly encouraged by "the connections you have made between subjections of different kinds, particularly two very neglected forms of subjection - in the sphere of knowledge production, and in the sphere of gender and sexuality".[413] His proposition in the lecture was that to rethink and reimagine the South African university in the direction of justice and tackling the wrongdoing of colonialism and apartheid, one had to think the question of violence. He made a distinction between three kinds of

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[411] Gillespie, K. & Naidoo, LA. (2019, a). Introduction #MustFall: The South African Student Movement and the Politics of Time. In *South Atlantic Quarterly (2019) Vol. 118*, Issue 1, 190-194, January 2019.

[412] Suren Pillay was a student activist in the anti-apartheid struggle who studied at UWC and went on to complete a PHD at Columbia University under the supervision of Mahmood Mamdani. He has worked on questions of violence and written on non-racialism.

[413] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

violences he sees as important - political, economic and epistemic. He carefully unpacks how political and economic violence were perpetuated against black people through colonialism and apartheid and spends some time engaging how programmes of political and economic justice was attempted as a response to the violences. His main proposition was to place centrally the under engaged of the three violences, epistemic violence described as being:

> "perhaps the most important of the three violences. Why would I say that? Well, you have to think a person an animal first in order to treat them like an animal. You have to have a concept of what a human looks like first, in order to misrecognize another human as property or a slave. Epistemic violence is about thought. And the political and economic effects of that thought. Colonialism's political violence and capitalism's economic violence had to be *thought* first. The abstract history of the march of human freedom, let's not forget, is also the concrete history of conquest, colonialism, patriarchy, and the struggle for equality".[414]

Situating violence internal to the modern European university, Pillay clarifies much of what RMF have been grappling with. "Epistemic violence is then in the very marrow of everything we think is good about our modernity, its concepts and its achievements. If the struggle for political and economic transformation asks where are our black students and where are our black professors, the struggle against epistemic violence adds: and what are we teaching and researching and how are we doing that and why are we doing that?"[415] Many black UCT students have described themselves as "born frees" who have gained access into the formerly white university precisely because there has been a struggle to correct the political and economic violences or injustices of capitalism through colonialism and apartheid. But as was evident with RMF, even though they didn't have the language to describe their experience of the education and classroom project at UCT as epistemic violence, they knew that it was violent and very disturbing for them.

But if Pillay was finding much synergy with what RMF was asking and doing, he also used his lecture to raise a critique of South African exceptionalism by pointing out how our (and our university's) orientation still remained largely to the West, ignoring much of what has taken place on the continent which we form part of. He also warned that what he calls "Eurocentric Modernisers, come in all shades, genders, shapes and sizes, bearing all kinds of passports". He highlighted the ways in which epistemic violence can be somewhat dealt with by including Africa

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[414] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[415] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

in our curriculum and adding a book here and there, renaming buildings and removing statues and artworks. But pushes further and asks whether we also:

> "… have to reconfigure the entire curriculum in ways that allows us to think the world, now equipped with the intellectual heritages that we have been taught to ignore from across the previously colonized world? Who then will teach the teachers if our existing faculty are limited in interests and expertise? How do we recruit new knowledge into our universities that breaks with geographical and linguistic apartheid so that the antiquated idea of a Department of English can be a Department for the Comparative Study of Literature? And how do we bridge the continental fault lines between Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, and Arabic knowledge? And should a decolonized knowledge project ask questions about the work that the disciplinary forms of knowledge do to reinforce unequal power relations or inhibit our thinking about certain objects of knowledge in particular ways?"[416]

The end of his talk engages the way in which political economy was important but not sufficient. The talk was well received and there were a number of rounds of questions. Mase Ramaru chaired the session where all but one of the questions came from students. Brian probed Suren by asking if it was possible to decolonise the university, not the conceptual one but the one actually inhabited, without violence at all the three levels, and if it was indeed necessary to retain the university in what we are talking about. Kgotsi Chikane asks about how to decolonise the university, not in the humanities but in engineering and the sciences. He also posits that the form of violence he would advocate for in the university is the violence of argumentation, where one can violently take over someone's ideas with your own. He asks Suren whether he thinks there should just be balanced views at a university. An older white man, from his accent sounds German – says "I would just like to ask about the violence (pointing to Kgotsi). Could you do something with Karl Marx's sentence of "violence is the midwife of history".

Suren responds at length to the questions and asks "… does the notion of violence and social change work for us? Do we have to, in a sense, work with the idea that we have inherited, from a certain kind of modernist sensibility, that the ends justifies the means?"[417] The question of violence has been present since day one of the seminar when the documentary on Fanon's Concerning Violence was screened. Suren continues the engagement by reminding everyone that there "…is a

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[416] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[417] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

debate about whether Fanon in that sense, and this might require a whole conversation[418] and focus on its own, was in his essay on Concerning Violence, prescribing violence or diagnosing violence. The difference between the diagnostic, which is Fanon's training as a psychiatrist, and his mode of thinking a problem, and the prescriptive is up for debate".[419] He goes on to affirm that even though "… universities are authoritative spaces that certificate knowledge" that he and others have a critique "… of the idea that knowledge can only come from within the university" and "… we have a critique of the conceit of professional academics who think that we are the only people that can produce knowledge".[420] He suggests that we may not have to choose one or the other, working outside the university or within, but rather choose to work strategically in the spaces that we are in. He goes on to describe what he thinks is happening in the RMF occupation "…it seems to me that this is one of those kinds of experiences, where something is being enacted, not within the rules of the system necessarily, but precisely because it transgresses the rules of the system, it enables change of the rules of the system".[421] He ends his answers about violence by saying "… I am not advocating any kind of violence but I think I am talking about the ways in which epistemic violence can be undone from within the kind of spaces that we have access to and that we can work within".

He spends the rest of his time critiquing the liberal state and in particular it's attempt to "… create an ideal type of the state where we all become liberal individual subjects, who don't have any attachments because attachments are bad". He spends some time trying to encourage those present to think difference anew. He clarifies that the question he is trying to pose is whether:

> "… our rejection of colonial categories of difference, and the aspiration towards universal citizenship, of sameness, of homogeneity - has that been a desire that runs us into trouble all the time, because we continue to see violence enacted on it, we continue to see that as much as the market grows, as much as people develop as workers or as peasants, that they also continuously everywhere hold on to these attachments. So maybe, one of the ways that we think about this is, that we don't reject difference because colonialism imposed it on us, in the same way that we don't reject universalism because it has a certain kind of colonial and imperial history. We maybe take these things, and we say we have a different concept of

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[418] RMF hosts a conversation with Achille Mbembe on Fanon's chapter concerning violence and then also hosts him on the same day for a public lecture on Decolonising the University. To see recordings of the public lecture and Q&A go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g-lU4BCsL8w

[419] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[420] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[421] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

difference".[422]

This questioning of difference and the idea that we do not need to wholesale reject difference but need to rethink and reimagine it is something that RMF will continue to grapple with especially because the black radical feminist tradition has worked to insist that we grapple with difference but relate this to structures and systems of power and privilege. The tension between uniting broadly black struggles at UCT, including outsourced workers, academics, and students, and recognising that peoples' different identities influences their access and experiences of privilege and oppression, remains present in the seminar and informal discussions. Suren ends his response to the first round of questions by proposing that:

> "… You could not actually create and cultivate a concept of difference that was democratic, egalitarian, open, respectful of others – but maybe we can construct it politically, without it being a coerced identity. Without it being an enforced identity, that it has volountrous elements that people can choose their identities based on what they want to be. But that we try to think our way out of these limited options all the time – because things were imposed on us we rejected it - but let's think about what we can create in its place, without the legacies that they come with, and that means thinking of possibilities, and experiments and strategic alliances and strategic ways of thinking".[423]

The chair takes the next round of questions, which starts with Puleng asking "… how in the situation we are in, [do we] handle the colonised mind?" She describes how "… we are hitting brick walls left, right and centre. We've been in this room for a long time, and everywhere we turn, we hit against a new brick wall of our own kind of systematic, Eurocentricised, knowledge systems. So even when they look black or they feel black, the longer we talk about them, we realise that they are not". She extends the question by asking how if it is so hard for her to do – to acknowledge that her mind is colonised and work towards trying to decolonise it – is she going to be able to engage people who don't even care about decolonising their minds? Or in her words "… How do I get people who are not as invested in that project to engage with it?" She admits that it seems like a "monumental task" that has taken unbelievable amounts of stamina to drive thus far and she wonders then if it is only "… a very small group of people who are going to be able to do this". The question of leadership and insisting on a more collective project was with RMF from the beginning. The experiment with more flat structures attempts to function differently to the representative

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[422] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[423] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

democratic model that RMF is critiquing. Another way that this question has been asked as it relates to education is who decides the vision and the tactics and strategy to achieve the future goal? Progressive formations have battled over this question. The idea that a vanguard or small group have the answers is what RMF have been pushing against, yet the question keeps re-emerging especially when thinking about who writes. There has been a democratising of the dialogue and speaking space but as is always the case who writes the stories remains a small group of people.

Another black women student asked if it is possible to take the corporate and capitalist impetus out of the notions of Cosmopolitanism and Afropolitinism. Mammalema asked the final question, which he said was an extension of Puleng's one. He was interested in thinking about if we were looking for an ideal university space and an ideal society, where some kind of equality reigns, and how do we deal with religious laws which don't easily evolve and rather stagnate. How do we influence religious institutions to take on some of what we are proposing? In these questions, it becomes a bit clearer that RMF students are both thinking about the content of what the presenter has put forward but also continually thinking about how to do consciousness work, or conscientisation of others, and of how to change ideas at an institutional level as well.

Suren responds to the last set of questions by making a number of key points. Firstly, he admits that Afropolitanism is "… too powerful a juggernaut available to marketing people and all kinds of corporate types" but that there has to be a struggle to create alternate conceptions of it. He tackles the big question of how to deal with the colonised mind and religion next, starting by explaining how:

> "… one of the things that colonial modernity does is it separates this idea of attachments, [which] becomes part of pre-modern identity. And the idea is that progress leads us to become individuals, who are free from the attachments, [for example] of culture... And one of the assumptions there that it builds up is that the realm of culture is static, is fixed, is unchanging, is conservative, is tradition. And the realm of freedom and citizenship of the individual is dynamic, it changes, it's flexible, and that is where progressive freedom happens. So it pits, if you like, culture, tradition, backwardness, against freedom, [the] individual, reason, and so on. And I think that when we think of traditions, whether it be cultural identity or the question of religion, along those lines, in some ways we are repeating a certain kind of inherited concept of religion or of culture. That we all know in fact that the story perhaps is not as clear as that because there are many religious identities that have always been renegotiated, that they are always multiple, that they are always contested from within. That they can be both the ways in which colonisation was authorised but also the

> source of anti-colonial revolts in Latin America through liberation theology. So these stories are always ambiguous".[424]

What he is doing is to question as many have done, the violence of the modernising project that was bundled up with colonial conquest. He was asking everyone to consider the tenets of liberal democracy with its roots in the colonial project but he was also pointing out how these assertions and projects have always been contested from within. He continued to answer the question about how to convince others of this by returning to the question of epistemic violence and how he proposes that it is "… the hardest thing to persuade people about" because the other two violences political and economic, you can see more easily and there has been much debate about it and what is needed to respond to it. He then points to the Mamdani affair that happened at UCT a few years earlier, when he was a student at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). He reminds everyone about how few people supported Mamdani when he was hosting the big seminars that were challenging the normative narrative of modernity and asking people to rethink how they were understanding and teaching the history of the continent. That the faculty and students who endorsed his arguments in those meetings were very few and that resulted in him feeling isolated. But that now it seemed to him that RMF students might think they are a small number of people but that "… the reverberations of this outside of this room, and across the country is incredible".

He also reminds them "… that small groups have always made incredible changes in the world. In any kind of massive social upheaval, it is small groups of people that are involved. So that, in a sense, shouldn't discourage you, because the effects of it you can't necessarily see from within the group. And you can't see it in the moment". He takes some time to contribute to the intergenerational dialogue that seemed to be missing over the last few weeks when he tells the story of his own involvement in the anti-apartheid student movement of the 1980's where:

> "… we had a slogan 'each one, teach one', when we were boycotting classes. We didn't stay away from school, we did the same thing. We came to the school and you knew you couldn't trust the textbook and so you had to find all kinds of other sources of knowledge, and you got people to come and speak and all the stuff was banned. We had never seen a book by Fanon, … you might have seen a photocopy of a photocopy that somebody had. But it's always that notion that I think has been part of the movements here is 'each one teach one'. We will learn together".[425]

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[424] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

[425] Pillay, S. Epistemic Violence 2015

He suggests that one of the ways towards decolonising the university is for faculty to be persuaded not to be defensive and "… the more we can recognise and acknowledge that, yes I recognise that that is important knowledge, but I don't know it and I can't teach it, and I am not familiar with its history, or its language, or its debates, but I am prepared to invite or bring in people who can, then we open up a little space". This is such an important point to make, not only to encourage students to recognise that there are knowledges that have been excluded from the university, but also that there is a possibility of a more collective project in teaching. It suggests to me another important point about the possibilities of decolonisation that rest on the uncertainty of knowing. Or put differently, that acknowledging that there are some things that one doesn't know, even as a learned professor and teacher, that are important to engage, is not a weakness but a strength that pushes us in the direction of more collaborative knowledge and teaching work.

To end this reflection and engagement with the seminar I will give the last word to Suren as he unpacks his analysis of the moment and his primary point about how to think going forward:

> "I think that we are at a moment where the sort of hold of a colonial, modernist imaginary of the world, of liberal sensibilities is really at a crisis across the world, and we confront various kinds of political violences that we are trying to make sense of. And maybe it has to do with not simply trying to aspire to something that we keep failing at, but trying to think about why is it that we are failing? So it is really to return to the problem. Rather than what is the solution now. Maybe we haven't got the problem right. I think that's what it is about.

Creative disruption was a key part of the RMF strategy, as they experimented with disrupting the UCT management, the old programme of transformation, and as was seen in the occupation plenary spaces, disrupting themselves. They practiced disrupting themselves and in so doing disrupting the conditions of alienation and assimilation they had become more and more conscious of. Where these creative disruptions met the building of new understandings of difference, against the colonial and apartheid logic of segregation, was in the attempts that insisted that there was no "return" to a singular authenticity, but rather a return to the plenary space, which was a confrontation with black difference. This awareness of self as in some ways similar but always also different, was a self-awareness that was crucial to the process of becoming an intellectual.

6.2.7 Tuesday 31 March 2015 (8pm) - Marikana Solidarity Committee – Screening and discussion of documentary "Miners Shot Down" – white people asked to leave.

I use field notes taken at the event and the recollections by a few people who attended the seminar. Approximately 200 people were packed in the Mafeje Room to watch the explosive and Emmy

award winning documentary *Miners Shot Down*, which follows the mine workers strike at Lonmin Mine in the North of South Africa[426]. The film looks closely at what has been termed the Marikana Massacre, one of the deadliest attacks by the "post-apartheid" government on black workers in South Africa. Alex, who was a member of the UCT Marikana Support Committee, had suggested to the Education SubCom that they invite them to screen the film and have a discussion afterwards. She remembers "… I had suggested that they come but had thought that they would think about what the politics were and who would be doing the speaking, but obviously that didn't happen".[427]

The film and discussion was presented by the UCT Marikana Forum and the conversation was facilitated by one of its members Andrew Nash, Professor of politics at UCT, and board member of International Labour Research and Information Group (ILRIG). The audience was mostly dead quiet and focussed on the documentary except for one moment when a strike leader commented that the black police were in the control of the boers. To which the audience responded with a "yes!". For anyone who watched the news reports that showed the mowing down of striking mineworkers by the police, it was difficult viewing. The documentary itself has these now infamous images but also does a forensic style expose of further killings that took place off camera.

It is a hard documentary to watch and there is silence in the room as it finishes but as people are taking a moment to sigh, Andrew Nash immediately makes a move to contextualise the film. The first thing done was to link Marikana to Rhodes' history of dispossessing black people of their land and of forcing them in to labour, and that Marikana was part of that legacy. There was also reference made to Olive Schreiner's critique of Rhodes and his view of treating people like cogs in a machine for producing capital. Nash then acknowledges that "… this protest has been so important to changing so many things about UCT. Old people like me have been so heartened by your protest. It gives us faith that students are not using higher education to get BMW's but are building politics here".[428] A pamphlet is then handed out which suggests that it is not just about bringing transformation to an elite institution but also about transforming society. The pamphlet[429] is titled "Rhodes Statue: fighting for equality or for a more inclusive elite?" This of course lay bare

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[426] For an interview with the director and producer of the film see Frassinelli, P.P.(2016) The making and political life of MinersShot Down: an interview with Rehad Desai and Anita Khanna, Communicatio, 42:3, 422-432.

[427] Hotz, A. Voice Note, 11 August 2019.

[428] Naidoo, Fieldnotes, 2015.

[429] For a copy of the pamphlet see Annexure ?? or visit the UCT Marikana Forum Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/uctmarikanaforum/photos/pcb.1585532211731062/1585531811731102/?type=3&theater

the question of whether the South African transition was about diversifying the elite, by making sure that black people have access to leadership roles across government, universities and the corporate sector. Nash, who is also a white man explains how the UCT Marikana Forum "… have tried to set out an agenda for transformation beyond racism." The student chair then tried to link the structure of organisations of capital to the structure of universities, especially through the question of outsourced university workers, who have no right to strike without being fired.

Some of the comments from audience included one about how black men were gunning down black men, which made the person realise "… how good the colonising process was at turning black people against each other". Also, that it is still so prevalent that black people support the oppressor, which suggests that the right way to go is to support the oppressor. The question of class was engaged with the comment that they have been "… noticing on social media that a lot of blacks that grew up in Constantia are quick to side with the oppressor. Cyril Ramaphosa has been assimilated into the system. This is something we should discuss". This input was asking people to consider the ways in which black people post-apartheid, who had achieved some wealth, were supporting the system. It was asking difficult questions about the relationship between race and class and about the emerging black elite.

A black 29-year old woman introduces herself as not a student but applauded the students for providing an example. She explained that:

> "many of us are so-called sophisticated and well educated. But those voices of mine workers and shack dwellers like Abahlali[430] are not taken seriously because they are not considered educated. We need to think about how we engage those voices. Yesterday we had a speaker talking about epistemic violence. Here we have an example of language like 'barbaric' and 'animals'. This is why we are involved in the project of decolonising our minds: we need to think about the origin of these ideas and these terms so that we can start to change them".

A white older man from UCT Workers Forum[431] (Jonathan Grossman) spoke about "… how we need to move beyond the terms of rational debate, to feel rage and anger at the barbarism of capitalism" and continues by stating that "… the biggest sharing and democracy we have is not in parliament, but in spaces like this room, or on the koppie at Marikana. Look at how you have disrupted UCT by standing together and being angry. This is power. It is the demand to return hope

[430] Abahlali is a shack dwellers movement

[431] The UCT Workers Forum was established around 2010 as a non-union forum of different workers at UCT.

and place to you". He goes on to suggest that it is "… important to understand not just in terms of South Africa. Chilean and Congolese workers are going through the same thing. We need to reimagine the university so that we can ask questions about what kind of awareness and society we want". This is the first time since the inception of the nightly seminar plenary that the discussion has been opened, some would say dominated by white men. There was an agitation inside the room and as Alex explains "… there was already conflict in the RMF StratCom outside the venue about Nash and Grossman coming to the event in the first place, so that is why I sat outside for most of the seminar. I was there initially and there was tension about not having white people in the room".[432]

The next person to speak was a black woman coming from the UKZN in support of the RMF student protest. She suggested that "… you have a chance to extend your movement to include struggles beyond the university. People are having these conversations well beyond the university. Abahlali has its own university". Then Masixole contributes by saying "… I feel violated in this space. I feel violated by white people telling us what to do talking about class. As much as I appreciate this training, this space right here is being violated. The presence of whiteness is violating". There is much significance in the intervention. It brought into the seminar plenary space the ongoing conversation about what the role of white people, students and academics, are in fighting racism. This is reflected in the RMF mission statement that quotes Biko at length on the role of the white liberal in the struggle of black people. The question of the predominance of the class analysis to the detriment of the race analysis, which is an old debate on the Left was also surfaced by the intervention because of who delivered the critique and what they have chosen to focus on.

There was a brief controversy about media presence in the seminar space. Sipho from Media for Justice who was recording proceedings clarified that he spoke to people yesterday and got the go ahead to film. But people want him to turn the camera off. The next person to speak is Puleng who reminds everyone that "… the nature of this space is a black space. White people can come but you can come in the capacity of ally and you come and listen. In this space, the white voice has too many echoes. That is the point of this room". A conversation ensues that seeks to add to the way in which the space of the seminar and occupation are framed and inhabited. People suggest that media ask for permission to film every time a session starts to ensure that the people attending, often

[432] Hotz, A. Voice Note, 11 August 2019.

including new people, give consent to be filmed. Someone suggests that "… we need to establish a set of ground rules about white people and media because each day we cover the same ground and it's time consuming". Out of this comes a set of rules that people are asked to read before joining the plenary and SubCom meetings.

The conversation returns to the question of white people's involvement in the RMF struggle. Someone suggests that "… we don't need white people interpreting the film for us and telling us how to make sense of our reading of the situation. In this space we have taken Biko and Fanon as our intellectual leaders. We have to take their advice to say that our gift is to offer humanity, and we must keep our humanity as our gift to others so we don't lose our own". The comment made points out that for many it was the first time that they watched the documentary about the massacre and that it was grating to go from that very visceral experience of violence against poor black men to two white men leading the reflection and discussion with little sensitivity to how the seminar space had operated up until that point. But then also the fact that a pamphlet was distributed suggesting to RMF what their analysis should be. Another comment confirmed that "… we certainly don't need white men telling us that our pain is ok to feel. black people didn't get time to speak because white men took up time. We all have something to say". This where the white people in the room are asked to leave the seminar space. I spoke to two white women academics who were in attendance and had to leave along with all the other white people. I asked them what it was like to be asked to leave and whether they thought it was justified. They both independently had felt that the two white male academics that had spoken did take up a lot of talking time, something that they would not necessarily be aware of or think problematic because they are often allowed to dominate conversation at UCT in meetings and in the classroom. They both felt that it was within the rights of the black students present to ask to be allowed to reflect on the difficult movie they had just watched without having to manage white people's lack of consciousness with regards to how they dominate conversation.

I have shared in some detail five of the seminar plenaries organised by the education SubCom that took place during the Azania One occupation. This was to give a sense of the kind of educational work RMF were doing but also to highlight some of the intensity and importance of the questions they were grappling with. As can be seen, the content or curriculum used during the seminar was varied from PowerPoint presentations, to documentary film screenings, to reading together. Importantly, the content of what was happening in the occupation and the seminar itself was also seen as valuable for the learning space ensuring that the framing of the content to be discussed was

broad and flexible, allowing for time to engage the scheduled content but also the other content that is always going on when groups of people are gathered to listen, think, discuss and learn together. I will now focus on two events that took place on the same day but were very different. Both events involved creative disruptions that had at their core the goal of consciousness work outside of the occupation space.

Chapter 7: Creative Disruptions extending Azania House

7.1 Moment 5: Sarah Bartmann Performance – Wednesday 25 March

RMF were experimenting more and more with creating an internal process of disrupting the way power usually operated in meeting and classroom spaces. As mentioned earlier, the plenary (Mafeje meetings and the Public seminar) and SubCom meetings were spaces where RMF students could reflect and practice and build a muscle for disruption or challenging or questioning of the problematic norms and power relations and structures present even internal to the majority black occupation space. The public seminar plenary space, which was attended by a number of people from outside of the occupation and the university community, was a space where RMF students were practicing at a more public level, a new way of being that incorporated creative disruptions into the normative practice of the pedagogical space they were (re)inventing. The next two moments, the Sarah Bartmann Performance and the General Assembly disruption are two examples of RMF taking the creative disruption onto a much bigger stage, seeing the whole campus as a pedagogical arena. Both of these events took place on the same day.

One of the Creative Expression SubCom's actions brought critical attention to another symbol on campus. Brian explains:

> "… the collective occupying Azania House orchestrated protests and performance art demonstrations across the campus, interrogating the legacy of colonialism and how it is memorialised on campus. In a particularly powerful piece popularly titled Saartjie Baartman, a collective of artists left from Azania House and walked through campus in chains, black paint and diapers, moving towards a sculpture on Baartman located in the university library".[433]

They performed the piece, they video recorded and circulated the piece further, and then also did a written reflection on the performance, which they published. Here I will let one of the performer-student-teacher's Ernie, who was also in the Writing SubCom explain:

> "We reject her presentation in the library, we reject that her standing naked commemorates her and retains her dignity. Further we see no difference in the racist, sexist methods used by the French and British in the freak show attraction, than her presentation in the UCT

[433] Kamanzi, B. "Rhodes Must Fall" – Decolonisation Symbolism – What is happening at UCT, South Africa? *The Postcolonialist*. March 29, 2015. Accessed on September 27, 2018: http://postcolonialist.com/civil-discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/

> Oppenheimer library. Thus we aimed to illustrate that the violent objectification and sexualisation of the black body is a system, which feeds into the stereotype of racial superiority so subtly and insidiously, that it is hard to detect even by those bodies it represents in real life. So our aim is to challenge a history that represents us as a fetish, as base sexual beings. There are Particular ways in which Saartjie Baartman's spirit and legacy can be contextualized and respected. Thus in our climatic end, we Draped her and covered her hoping to show that these violence's inflicted on the black body and psychology still continue, and we will not stop until we decolonise the black body and mind!"[434]

The critical reflection by Ernie who also performed in the piece, engaged in form and content a critique of the representation of Bartmann through the statue. In the content of the written piece he historicises the treatment of black people as bodies and uses the infamous and horrific case of Sarah Bartmann[435] to make the point that these "… obscured obnoxious representation of our somatic features violate our dignity". In his action and writing Ernie is critically reflecting on colonialism but is also drawing attention to the subtle ways in which the representation through statues and sculptures at UCT, feed into or maintain the stereotypical and racist ideas about black women in particular. By comparing the representation of Rhodes through the statue of the thinker looking out over "his" land in a suit, with the representation of Bartmann naked and also in the library as some kind of resource to be studied, the students are exposing the subtle ways in which inequality of representation continues on campus. This was not the first time a critique of Baartmann's representation through the Willie Bester[436] statue in the library was made. In 2001, at a panel (including the artist), panellists and attendees in particular from UCT's own African Gender Institute and the Centre for African Studies, raised concerns about "the absence of any contextualisation at the site of the sculpture's exhibition"[437] amongst other things. It was almost fifteen years later that black people continued to critique and this time protest her representation in the library, and this time through a creative disruption of the status quo.

In the writing and performance piece, they are clear to reject the representation and also demand an

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[434] Koela, E. The History of the Black Body has been Exoticised and Fetishized in a Pornographic Fashion, in *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 101.

[435] Pumla Gqola (2010) discusses Bartmann's story in Chapter 2: (Not) Representing Sarah Bartmann of her book *What is slavery to me? Postcolonial/slave memory in post-apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

[436] Willie Bester is a black South African artist and sculptor who protested the apartheid system through his artwork. See his website for more detail on his life and work at https://williebester.co.za/biography/

[437] Gqola, P. (2010, 65). *What is slavery to me? Postcolonial/slave memory in post-apartheid South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

action to rectify what they have analysed as unjust. By draping her with cloth in an act of symbolic care, as opposed to the way they were simultaneously covering up the Rhodes statue sometimes in cloth but mostly in black refuse bags, they were insisting on some form of restoration of her dignity. Images of this performance were included in a photo essay set to Ernie reading his poem also published as part of RMF Writing SubCom's edited volume.[438] Here the poem over-laid with the images of RMF protests show the variety of performance and protest forms RMF were engaging in to make explicit how the signs and symbols at UCT perpetuated a colonial narrative at the expense of an African centric one. The Bartmann statue was covered and uncovered a few times from that point on. RMF covered her again as part of the one-year RMF exhibition opening by black women during the procession that walked across campus and stopped at various points for inputs including the then empty plinth where Rhodes used to sit. The RMF women who draped her wore all black and carried sjamboks. A white American man, who was a UCT academic and worked in the library where the statue stood clothed for a number of months, decided shortly before his retirement from UCT to take the cloth off leaving her naked again. The last time she was covered before being moved was by black woman academic staff in 2018. The statue was eventually moved to the CAS Gallery where it has been differently contextualised and presented for viewing.[439]

Another such performance and teaching-learning experience that creatively disrupted UCT was when individual RMF members sat on a single chair placed in various public spaces on campus facing an empty chair. They invited students and passers-by to sit down and ask them any questions about RMF, decolonisation, or what was going on. The performer-teachers reflected that they were surprised by how many people took the time to sit down and the intensity of the engagement they had. These experiments, or new versions of teach-ins, became a significant contribution to the educational landscape of UCT. Black students were leading the educational process of making meaning about situations, contexts, histories, symbols, and struggle at UCT. Another lesson from the (re)invention of decolonial practices then is the sometimes individual, but more often the collective conscientisation of teaching-learning, by creating alternate spaces and expanding the boundaries of the classroom, taking learning into broader life and bringing life into the more traditional classroom space.

The Bartmann piece could be seen and understood as simply another protest. Yet to my mind it was

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[438] See the video here https://vimeo.com/133753695

[439] See an online student project discussing the creative disruption https://saraiamtara.wordpress.com/rhodes-must-fall/

providing an example of a complexified view of critique and engagement with signs and symbols on campus. Students were broadening the meaning of critique to be more than simply reading, writing or even talking about the sculpture. The piece was also connecting the varied partial or misrepresentations of historic figures, uncritically skewed in the direction of promoting colonial history by presenting Rhodes unproblematically and Bartmann as a naked and tragic figure.

The pedagogical work that RMF was doing was not simply bound to the nightly seminar, even as this expanded the boundaries of the curriculum by engaging both programmed content as well as the content of what came up in the practice of learning. RMF were communicating their critiques through the creative disruptions that took place across the campus. Through their radical praxis, they were also simultaneously reflecting on their critique and actions in order to clarify and create new or different questions for the time they were inhabiting. Puleng Stuart, a member of the Creative Expressions SubCom and a 2nd year drama student explained as her input to the UCT General Assembly, what she has been part of doing as an RMF activist, which points to the central role of creative production taking place alongside critique:

> "… we are performers so we came and performed our struggle for upper campus because it seems that that is the only way to get people to really hear us because words seem insufficient so often. So to see something obviously seems to make an impact, which is great because that's what we do. But what I am urging people is to come and see what it looks like when people believe in the change enough to make it… we occupied a building because we said the way that we are being taught is insufficient. The structures are oppressive. This is a debate about pedagogy. It's about how we teach. What we say is relevant knowledge and saying that the European frame is the best that we can do for our people is saying that we are lacking a fundamental amount of creativity. And within Azania House right now, there is an immense amount of creativity. And I want you to know that that space is an educational space. What is happening is that we are deciding to take on our [own] education... And it is phenomenal, it is phenomenal the debates that are coming out. The people that are willing to come and speak to us. The lecturers are there. The lecturers who we want to teach us have arrived... So I just wanted to say that I know that a lot of the apathy, which we are really struggling against, because there is so much apathy. It is loud how silent some people are. So I know that a lot of that apathy comes from either a fear or lack of understanding. But the thing is that that is not acceptable, because the space that we have made is one that is inviting people to come engage and create discourse and that is also saying, you don't have to agree but ask. No one has been turned away unless they came and took down our signs and was actively trying to be confrontational but it is an open forum and I urge people to try. Try to engage with this discourse because this is history and it is

phenomenal! What is being talked about is phenomenal".[440]

I will in the next section detail the creative disruptions that RMF and others engaged in at the University Assembly called to discuss transformation and the Rhodes statue.

7.2 Moment 6: UCT General Assembly[441] – Wednesday 25 March

UCT called a university assembly as a different platform to discuss and debate the issue of the statue and transformation at the university by a range of the university's constituents. This assembly took place in the university hall called Jameson Hall, but popularly renamed by RMF as "Marikana Hall"[442], which was overflowing on 25 March 2015 from 6-8pm. A transcript of the first 40-minutes of the assembly was published by Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*. The assembly was creatively disrupted throughout as students used the platform to air their experiences and also analyses of the context that was UCT. The first major disruption was a challenge to who was selected by the university to chair the assembly session. Keenen Hendriks, the speaker of the student parliament, was the student chair and the co-chair was Prof Barney Pityana, the recently selected chair of UCT's convocation and a UCT alumni. Importantly, Pityana was a founding member and first general secretary of the SASO and the BCM alongside the likes of Steve Biko and Mamphela Ramphela. Many of the RMF students were aware of his "activist credentials" or history in the formation of the BC philosophy and movement.

It took a while to get the crowd settled down. The student chair spent a few minutes introducing himself, the topic, and describing the kind of engagement that should take place emphasising that "… this is a university, [this] is a space where ideas matter. I appeal that you do not attack each other or people personally, but to vigorously attack ideas rather than people, debate robustly the ideas".[443] Pityana as co-chair began introducing himself as chair of UCT convocation and a proud alumni of the university. He expressed his pride in being at the assembly, at the engagement that has been taking place and asserts that "…I think it is historic; it is a historic moment. I know there

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[440] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[441] For the video recording of the assembly go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWVJnBVnyPc

[442] The biggest hall at the centre of UCT's Upper Campus was renamed in 2018 to Sarah Baartman Hall

[443] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 15.

will be a time when we all remember the significant events in our time in our university".[444] One significant event was about to take place. A student raised his hand to make an intervention. He proposed that Pityana is unable to chair the assembly because of the views he had expressed in public about the statue. He claimed that Pityana would therefore have a mandate or will be influenced by the views that students have criticised. Below is the engagement between two professors about the statue protest and what the students are doing.[445]

UCT: Rhodes Must Fall

March 14, 2015 ·

Prof. Gqola vs Prof. Pityana on #rhodesmustfall:

(Prof. Gqola 1000 - 0 Prof. Pityana)

Pityana to Gqola:

Pumla, it has taken me a while to find words to address your post on the defamation of the Rhodes statue on UCT Campus, as well your remarks about transformation and how you feel about the university. I happen to be the newly elected President of UCT Convocation. I am not expressing myself as convocation in this matter. I am very honoured to have been asked and I accepted knowing full well the debates raging about transformation at UCT. My interest, if I may declare, is that UCT is a valuable brand in higher education in our country. It is not, however, a perfect institution by any means. No university would justifiably claim to be so. My lingering question about your take on the protest and the reaction of the UCT Communications is whether or what approach should we take to the monuments of a painful past. Should all the Boer generals be decapitated at Union Buildings, or the statue of Louis Botha outside Parliament in Plein Street, or Queen Victoria at the Legislature in Pietermaritzburg? I submit that we do not have a coherent policy about any of these. In other words, should we airbrush these villains of the past, and pretend that they never existed? Secondly, should you not rather be asking yourself deeper questions about how human being can carry human waste - with all the health hazards that may pose - in order to demonstrate one 's dislike of a villain of capitalist and imperial South Africa? In the end, I argue, the villains have managed to dehumanise us and we become complicit in that. Rather should we not be learning lessons from history, debate matters of principle, remember always that the university by its nature is an arena for the contestation of ideas. The university authorities cannot be faulted for addressing the unlawful actions of the protesters . But it must never end there. A more intelligent engagement within the academic community must wrestle with the issues.

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[444] Ibid, 2015

[445] See the post here https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/posts/prof-gqola-vs-prof-pityana-on-rhodesmustfallprof-gqola-1000-0-prof-pityanapityan/1554660161476143/

Gqola to Pityana:

Prof Barney Pityana, I don't think there is a place for the statues of colonial, genocidal, misogynist white men at UCT or any other public institution, except a museum, in a free country. Their removal is neither airbrushing nor something we should apologize for. It is a refusal to glorify colonial violence and it is a rejection of their sanitisation. Rhodes' statue's continued pride of place is an affront that makes the excrement throwing seem like child's play.

Rhodes did not just throw excrement on Africans. He did so much more. And the statue symbolically re-enacts this violence, validates it, and on a good day rubs our faces in it. It also is very apt metaphor for how brutal UCT is to Black people all the while engaging in double speak and PR. A few years ago, a PhD candidate (it may have been a postdoc) repeatedly hit a white professor with an umbrella. While the media and UCT officially expressed shock, Black people who had graduated from UCT with a postgraduate degree or (had) worked at UCT expressed shock only that it had taken this long and one incident. Obviously, none of us had acted similarly. But the choice to read that incident as self-defence is telling. It is not unlinked and cannot be delinked from what that statue does, means, and stands for.

What are public statues *for*? They are not just physical irrelevancies. They are powerful concrete reminders and celebrations of the figures they represent. They tell us about who and what matters, who is disposable, who should be invisibilised. And the throwing of excrement on Rhodes' bust is an expression not of righteous indignation, but of rage.

It is justified rage. It is an ideal to speak of universities as spaces of contestation. At UCT, Rhodes wins against more than two decades of sustained anti-racist (and) Black contestation, refusal, pushing back. What Chumani Maxwele did is what we all should have done two decades ago - symbolically and literally. But, even, as we insisted as SANSCO/SASCO, PASO and AZASCO in going on a solidarity strike with workers, ensuring no classes went ahead for the duration of the worker's strike, the first strike in UCT's history, we were engaged in polite contestation. What good has repeating ourselves done? UCT 2015 is too alike to UCT 1990. Polite contestation gets met with Rhodes. Black rage, as Hugo Canham's work so beautifully illustrates, is fuelled by the wilful ignorance that characterizes white supremacy's response to Black resistance and humanity. I wonder how much of Hugo's particular development of this understanding was further illustrated by his own experience as a Black student at UCT.

As a young revolutionary, Prof Pityana, you co-founded a movement that taught us something indispensable to freedom, but that is frighteningly absent from much other anti-racist thought. You taught us that as Black people, we are never just bodies. How we feel, think, imagine, play matters. You taught us that our spirits, dreams, trauma, beliefs matter, that psychological violation and psychological liberation are not only real but central to any project of freedom. We believe that unconditionally. Acting out in Black rage is self-defence; it is making the body mirror what the interior feels. UCT is not the apartheid state, and if you and your comrades took the latter on, how can you blame those students for using the wonderful tools you bequeathed us to free all of us from Rhodes? Deeper analysis? I don't know what is deeper than BC and feminism. I really don't.

Let a 1000 schools of thought contend! #Transformation

At one level the students are expressing their dislike of Pityana's position above. At another level they are countering the move made by UCT management who invited Pityana, as a BC stalwart and founding member, to co-chair the assembly. RMF were critical of UCT management's ability to invent, plan and oversee radical transformation, but they were also weary of "elder activists" who were radical anti-apartheid activists in the past, but in the present held positions of power in "post-apartheid" university, business and/or government institutions. Pityana, still on stage was smiling, seemingly at the proposition that he be publicly removed from his role as co-chair. The student then requests that the student co-chair stop Pityana from behaving in the way that he is "… because this is not a laughing matter". A large number of people in the audience cheered and stood up showing the substitution sign used by a soccer referee to signal the replacing of a player on the field with another from the bench.[446] Another student proposed that Rekgotsofetse Chikane, a student member of convocation, replace Pityana. After short discussion between the two co-chairs the floor is given to Pityana to have a right of reply to the assertion against him. He clarifies that what he has:

> "… said is that it is very, very important that we raise the issues at all levels in the context that we engage in the debate. My point is that it is in fact incumbent upon us, as a university community, to actually consider all the issues and think about them and particularly to have a very creative and critical and intelligent view about history. How we handle it. And therefore, to the extent that this is a transformation issue, I am on record that the students and staff and management of UCT, are actually cutting new ground on the issues of transformation".[447]

If this was an attempt at repositioning the importance of freedom of speech and the "fairness" of dialogue and debate a la the liberal university, then Pityana would have upfront placed himself on the side of the debate, with Crain Soudien and others, that argued for equal airtime and a valuing of all feelings and inputs about the statue equally. As the assembly unfolded, a sharp critique of whose voices mattered in the statue debate was articulated from various inputs. I will highlight some of the important inputs made and highlight the key critiques that emerged. Pityana took a seat in the audience and Chikane took up the position of co-chair. He made the point that the statue issue was dividing the campus and that:

> "… racism should not be something that divides us; we should be unified against it. So today's discussion is for us to engage on this issue, to expose those who are racist in this

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[446] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015.

[447] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015.

> institution because they are here! [loud applauds] But most importantly, we are going to have a discussion that, for the first time, students are actively participating in because they've been allowed to speak truthfully".[448]

The SRC President and the VC are then allocated seven minutes each to give an input to kick off the assembly discussion. The first thing Ramabina did was insist that the security open the doors of the hall and let students in.[449] He then raised the critique that was being made of the SRC and students because of their walk out of the Heritage seminar the week before. He suggests that students who experience the university's inaction around various issues including financial exclusion, gendered residences, inadequate mental health support, etc., understand this as the university walking out on students. He then explained that the issue of the Rhodes statue and the lack of transformation on campus have been raised in written form and in debates but that the university never had a different response other than that … "the university continued to respond in the same way, by saying that Rhodes has donated money or land to the institution; therefore, we must pay homage to him and we must glorify him with that statue. And that we find it as utterly unacceptable".[450]

Ramabina questioned academic excellence and the way transformation at UCT was equated to mediocrity especially when there was a call for an increase in black academics and students. He proposed that there be a complete review of all the people that are Professors at UCT without PHD's. He insisted that white mediocrity must be questioned. He called for a complete review of signs and symbols at UCT and highlighted the problematic name of the very hall in which the meeting was taking place – Jameson Hall[451]. He mentioned the Latin song sung at graduation and said, "we can't identify with that". He asked everyone to look around at the portraits on the wall

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[448] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 16.

[449] "I (Ramoupi) arrived about 15 minutes late for this meeting and I couldn't enter the hall; I had to go to the adjacent hall, the Molly Blackburn Hall, where there was a live audio-visual screening of the proceedings. And when we heard the SRC President saying, "Please open the doors," we all ran outside this small hall and entered Jameson Hall where the meeting was taking place. I must say, I was not surprised to see that the hall was not actually full; there were so many empty chairs especially in the middle of the hall. But university security must have been ordered to keep most of the students and public outside the main hall where the meeting was taking place" (Ramoupi, 2015, 15-16).

[450] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 17.

[451] Leandra Starr Jameson was a physician by profession and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1904-1908. In 1985 he led an unlawful raid called the Jameson Raid against the boers in the Transvaal, the precursor to the Boer War , for which he was found guilty and briefly imprisoned.

and pointed to the fact that there were no black people represented. "Do not bring the issue of "Let us preserve our heritage", when you created that heritage, we were not here; we were excluded from being here!"[452] He posited that the reason why white people can't understand or empathise with the condition of black people at UCT is because they lack the experience of it. He ended by appealing to everyone to remember that "…as we engage, let us ensure that our engagements and discussions do not wrongfully manifest into hate and anger because, then, we are not going to go anywhere as an institution".[453] There is a loud standing applause.

Price took the stage and waited for the singing of the struggle song *Senzeni na?*[454] to die down and began by appreciating the good turnout to engage and also thanks "…the students that have triggered this protest because it is only because of the vigorous protest that we have this kind of engaged discussion this evening".[455] His next point is to insist that management and the executive and himself are not the enemies and that they are fighting for the same goal and want "… joint ownership of this project" of transformation. He continued by naming all the university constituencies from management down to convocation, senate, even PASS staff, who will be lobbied to support the position of moving the Rhodes statue. It was interesting that this announcement did not garner even one clap from the audience. He stated that the proposal of moving the statue had been a long time in the making but then also recognised the SRC president's initiative that he took the previous year when he wrote an article and a letter talking about artworks, statues, names of building, etc. He then goes on to say that they did not realise that this was of such importance and urgency that it needed to be tackled ahead of things like pass rates, financial aid for students, accommodation, etc. Students start singing Senzeni na? He turned to the chair and asked for protection. Mr. Chikane intervenes and quells the singing reminding the audience that the VC had only a few minutes left to speak and then the event would be for students' voices to be heard.

The VC reiterated that they wanted to hear students' views but that they did not want the assembly and process to become:

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[452] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 18.

[453] Ibid, 2015, 18.

[454] Translated into English as asking 'what have we done'?

[455] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 19.

> "… divisive, which fragments the university, and one which leaves a whole lot of people behind, because we have not actually expressed our views on justifying positions. Simply to make a demand without explaining, in this case it will be the statue, but the next time it will be the name of Jameson Hall, next time it will be other statues or other symbols. What I think we need collectively to do, is to make sure that, of the two paths we can take, the path that polarises the campus vs. the path that unites and creates understanding. That we create understanding and that we create greater unity and that we tackle this problem together. That is what this meeting is about and that is what the process should be about going into the future".[456]

The above suggestion is proposing that the assembly and statue process end in what Chikane has poignantly described as a "rainbow conclusion" or a false moment of unity, but also claims that there has not been proper and detailed thought and explanation as to why the statue has no place at a post-apartheid public university.[457] His last point stressed that "… the university wants to once again to involve everyone in discussing the issues of staff transformation, of institutional culture, of curriculum".[458] As I will now show through the voices and inputs of students, academics and workers, the assembly participants would creatively disrupt and critique the position of UCT management, which is also a liberal argument that sought to protect the rights of everyone to speak on any issue, and which encouraged slow deliberation and slow change.

The co-chairs select six speakers to make the first round of inputs. Ameera Conrad, a 4th year theatre maker spoke first.[459] She makes a move that emphasised the value of different forms of engagement in addition to academic ones. "This might seem somewhat out of place, but as a member of the constituency of the Hiddingh Campus performance arts, I believe it is important to engage with issues through dialogue, performance, and creative means".[460] The poem she reads was published in *The Salon* as part of the Writing SubCom and appears in full and is discussed in detail later in this chapter. She ends the reading of this moving poem by putting masking tape over her mouth with the words "Let me cry" written in black marker, having started to tear up during the last stanza. She receives a rapturous standing ovation and heartfelt hugs from those standing in line to

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[456] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[457] Chikane, R. *Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation*. 2018.

[458] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[459] Ameera goes on to write the play called *The Fall*, that reflects on the RMF struggle around the statue, which goes on to critical acclaim.

[460] Ramoupi, N. (2015). Black Students Speak Their Minds at UCT: Bantu Biko Alive in Their Frank-Talk, *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA*, 2015, 19.

speak next.

Mase Ramaru speaks next and exposed the very real fear felt by herself and other student activists after an incident that occurred during the occupation. She detailed how three students were attacked in the Bremner Building by G4S supervisors (private security company employed by UCT) in the presence of the university registrar Hu Amor. She explained that "… He did not once try to stop it. He did not once try to protect the students. And when we approached him about it, he said they are just doing their jobs. I don't think the job of the campus security is to assault students, but to protect them".[461] She continued by pointing out that she had raised this issue at the Institutional Forum the day before the Assembly in the presence of the VC and the DVC Transformation Crain Soudien, and even though they asked the university to deal with this incident of violence nothing substantial had yet been done. She then read a Facebook post by a UCT student:

> "What is it with these people? All you are trying to do is rid the country of anything that has to do with history. If it isn't for Rhodes you wouldn't have a university to go to. Wouldn't you call for the removal of the Mandela statue because he was responsible for countless murders and deaths during the so-called struggle years? But no, you wouldn't demand that because he is black. You only want things that concern white people in history. You would all still be running around in loin clothes in the bush and living in mud huts, because as history has proven that black tribes were nomadic and in fact have never built anything worth calling a city or a town. For that matter, all you have ever done is go around and rape and pillage different tribes you came across. Now that you are demolishing South Africa as a whole and raping and pillaging everything the white man has built now you start with his history. Just remember that without the white man and what he has built in South Africa, you would in fact have nothing except mud huts and loin clothes. So why don't you use the university education and fight for something worthwhile like true democracy and government that is not riddled in corruption and nepotism. But no you won't because you are black and after all you voted them in power, didn't you? Your parents spent their hard-earned money sending you to university so you can act like idiots, instead of seeing what's right in front of your eyes. A government that is ruining your future".[462]

Mase ends with a question for the VC and the university "is it fair for people who are so motivated by hate to take part in this process? These are people we are sitting in a lecture theatre with. Is it fair for them to take part in this process?" It is an important question, which lays bare the problem with freedom of speech, especially as it relates to issues of transformation and redress.

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[461] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[462] Ibid.

A white first year humanities student speaks wisely about the ways in which society has taught him to be prejudiced and that while he needed to constantly work against that socialisation, it wasn't enough. He proposes that white people must not be driven by fear but that transforming institutions was part of what was needed to transform UCT and South Africa. Next to speak is Alex Hotz:

> "This university doesn't protect black students. This university protects white privilege and white supremacy. When Chumani Maxwele threw shit at the statue, the university was very quick to condemn him and release a long statement about all the rules that he had broken and the distaste for what he had done. But I would like to read you something and its available to everybody on Facebook…These are the people I have to share a classroom with, sit in tutorials with, but they feel this way about us as black students. This is what a student says : "This is what happens when the monkeys are allowed to run things." And there is a cartoon with a monkey taking a dump – then they say, "Ummm, what in hell are the blacks talking about their history. Do they even have a written language or history or libraries to house their history? Stupid monkeys!" … you wonder why this is tolerated. This is blatant racism and we don't get a statement, we don't get an acknowledgement, we get nothing".[463]

Alex asked the question "When are black lives going to matter to this university? When are our lives going to matter?"

Kopano Moroka[464] adds that his input:

> "… is an expansion on the point Mase raised about white violent voices in transformational spaces. Seen on Facebook, in reply to the RhodesMustFall and its predominantly black constituents: "Uncultured pigs! Then they will go eat a millie with those same filthy hands. Then throw the cobb on the floor. They say pigs have the intelligence of a three-year old child these are just savages". These are voices in this space. These are voices within this transformational discourse, and I don't understand how it is not problematic, that we are trying to privilege these voices! I don't know how voices can be facilitated through the 'have-your-say boards', when no-one is being held accountable for the racist vitriol that they are spilling all over us! I cannot breathe! So I ask management… is this the narrative that you would like to be complicit in perpetuating for the black constituents of this university?"[465]

He walked to the back of the stage and pinned up the printout of the Facebook comment he read out on the back wall to loud applause. A number of others do the same such that the racist comments

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[463] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[464] https://artthrob.co.za/2018/04/24/performative-politics-and-the-commoditisation-of-the-black-artist-towards-an-epidemiology-of-institutional-whiteness/

[465] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

are up front for all to see and read. Moroka has also referenced the cry that emanated from the USA and BLM campaign. Another important critique was made through the inputs and next it was Mohamad's turn:

> "I feel traumatized. Within … the space that is supposed to be open for us to share our experiences, I feel traumatized. Not because somebody overtly said mean things about me. Not because they called me a monkey or because they insulted me in some overt manner, because institutional racism is not like that. It's not that easy. It's what is between the lines. It's those educated people who use rationalisation to silence your experience. And I am not talking about some first-year student or person that goes to Tiger Tiger (night Club where UCT students were involved in racist incidents). In this moment I am talking about what Max Price (the VC) said earlier. He said and I quote directly "be careful in moving forward, that you do not divide us." But in fact we are divided. He said, "… be careful in moving forward not to be leaving people behind" but we have been left behind! And this illustrates our exact point. When people are speaking of progress. They are speaking from their white perspective. When we speak, we are speaking about our pain ... And they are saying compromise on your emancipation because it makes us uncomfortable".[466]

Mohammad was exposing how racism operates at UCT as it can be distributed and enacted in a way that is less overt than some of the racist student comments on social media and the "Have your say boards". A range of other people spoke and asked questions of the institution and the UCT management. Some of the other key moves made and questions asked included:

> "a warning about debates, because you see, the debates must not happen in a never-ending circle… this is the same thing that happened in Israeli-Apartheid week where the Vice Chancellor keeps saying no let's have more debates lets have more of this, let's talk more. Call so-and-so, call so-and-so to come and talk. And that is an ultimate red herring because what happens is that we never actually come to a decision and make a statement".[467]

The issue of the percentage of black academic staff came up and a white male student raised the point that the EBE Faculty polled its students and that 60% said no to the removal of the statue. The student continues that he:

> "… know[s] that there is a strong voice for the removal of the statue but you must remember that there is a responsibility for you to change the minds of the people in your lectures. You need to. You cannot ignore the fact that so many students feel like the statue shouldn't be

[466] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[467] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

removed. Therefore there is a need for discourse with your fellow students".[468]

A member of staff then makes an incisive critique of liberalism and the SA transition when he posits that:

> "… the issue of the statue, and the struggle that the students have taken up at the University of Cape Town is what I call the tipping point of dealing with liberalism in this country. By liberalism I mean both white liberalism and black liberalism. Actually the problem of transformation in higher education is as a result of the compromise that was made at Kempton Park. So the negotiated settlement in this country created a problem because now students and us as academics as people who are in this so-called democratic space and dispensation find it difficult because the hands of our politicians are tied because of the controversial agreements of Kempton Park. The problem is Kempton Park. Therefore the Rhodes statue and all colonial symbols must go. No issue about it".[469]

Another white male student suggests that transformation is imperative, and by that he explains he means that "… it is unacceptable that we still have such a small proportion of black lecturers, that we still don't have a representative student body, that many of the syllabi that we are taught are Eurocentric". He goes on to clarify that these things should happen so that everyone can feel welcome and that they have a place at UCT but that we shouldn't change the "… immense historical value in the physical campus of UCT". He proposes that the issues raised are in fact not about the statue "… but about institutional racism and institutional culture". He refuses to see the connection between the institutional racism at UCT and the legacy of colonialism symbolised through the centrality of the statue. He in effect is making an argument against the idea of a hidden curriculum. This came across as another move towards a non-racial rainbow nation without the anti-racist work required to deeply change the institution and by so doing the experiences of the most marginal at UCT.

Adam Haupt an academic who has been at UCT for 13 years congratulates students for the civic engagement they have led, which he said had never been seen on campus in his time. He used his time to detail for others his experience of Azania House Seminar plenary:

> "Last night I spent 3-4 hours at Azania House … I was invited as a black scholar to 'drop knowledge' in a hip-hop term, but I was being schooled. I didn't feel that I could speak. I felt that I needed to listen. I was humbled. I was shocked in our informal discussions with

[468] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[469] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

> the students afterwards that many of the students were in fact undergraduates. The level of sophistication, I just assumed they were post graduates… the way they can stay on point, … at one point party political players attempted to hijack the process, those players got schooled and got taken down".[470]

He made two more points that affirmed what students were doing and challenged them to think more broadly about why university contexts were the way they were post-apartheid.

> "Symbols matter, signifiers matter, but this is just the beginning of the battle…the other big battle is the way in which … public institutions are infiltrated by neoliberal economic policy. Policy that places a low premium on public spending so that government spends less on education, on welfare, on health care, etc. The funding to universities has shrunk, and if you want to change this next generation, professionalise everyone and have engaged citizens, universities have a very crucial role to play. So beyond fighting the battle on campus, we should look to government and say to them, increase public funding spending… and support universities in their efforts to transform".[471]

A white male students admitted that he is not surprised that so many white people in South Africa and at UCT admire Rhodes and think that he represents their history and do not want the statue removed. He claimed that white people just don't know so many things about South African history. He rather thought:

> "that it's scary that UCT, being the best university in SA allegedly, in Africa allegedly, although it's not very African… is that you can study economics at UCT for 3 years and leave with no idea of how South Africa's economy came into being. How Cecil Rhodes contributed to the compound system, migrant labour, pass laws, those sorts of things".[472]

He made another important point about the need to work against the colonial effect that had erased the importance of indigenous African languages and suggested this in addition to simply reading a more diverse canon of writings. His general point though was important, that "… white South Africans, myself included must be forced to become more empathetic and that is through education". In his input he managed to point to the ways in which white privilege and supremacy hides itself from the people who benefit from it, white people. That the answer to that lack of consciousness about Rhodes' legacy and the colonial system that he built and which enabled him is a different kind of education than what UCT has been offering.

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[470] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[471] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[472] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

A black woman international student from Zimbabwe implored people to remember that they are African and asked them to think about how they identify. She affirmed the proposition made earlier that white people have a limited knowledge and understanding of the continued violences of colonialism and apartheid. She warned that "… if you are a white South African and you think that you can isolate yourself from being African and that statue outside doesn't bother you. You need to think twice because the future is moving a lot faster than your consciousness". She insisted that people needed to educate and inform themselves in addition to what UCT was able to teach. A black male student made the following argument about how the education system as a whole was in need of change:

> "Once upon a time before I came to UCT. I was in primary school and I was taught, and that was brainwashing, that Rhodes was a great man, a very successful business man, who … had ambitions of constructing a railway line from Cape Town to Cairo. So the first time I came to UCT and encountered that statue, it prompted me to learn more about who Rhodes was and in all fairness with all due respect to everyone here, white or black – Rhodes is actually the exact opposite of what justice is. He is the exact opposite of what equal rights is, he is the exact opposite of what peace is. And for a university, at least at this time, that prides itself in being a strong proponent of equal rights and justice, I find it strange that this university still harbours the Rhodes statue in this campus. Therefore in my humble opinion, this statue of Rhodes must be removed".[473]

A black woman student issued a declaration, a warning and an invitation:

> "… it is one helluva thing standing on this podium as a black woman with Rhodes still there. But I want to mention something that I am not sure that Dr Price quite understands. This movement is not just about a statue. It's not just about a university. It's not just about a curriculum. It's not just about land. It's about reclaiming black history as well... I want to remind you Max Price, that you shouldn't be caught on the wrong side of history. And what we doing here is changing the world... Please come [to Azania House] so we can teach you what Africa will look like in the future".[474]

Elelwani Ramugondo, a black woman professor in Occupational Therapy who has been an academic staff member at UCT since 1998, and who went on to become the special advisor to Max Price on transformation over the next few years, pointed out:

> "… that liberalism hides under the principle of academic freedom. This principle however

[473] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[474] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

> proposes that all are equal in the system. Yet we still face the coloniality every day. I heard today from students that were told that they could not bring the debate about the statue into a master's course. Essentially, they cannot bring the reality they live into their academic work and potential research… So my question is, does the Vice Chancellor have a responsibility firstly to acknowledge the pervasive nature of coloniality and secondly to call it out?"[475]

The next input is from Patricia Bevy, a PASS staff member for six years. She highlighted that UCT does not protect workers and reminds people about the fact that that they still outsource workers. She pleaded with the vice chancellor and the UCT leadership to protect workers and to allow them "…to add value to this institution that we are proud of". She encouraged other PASS staff not to be fearful and to speak out because it "… is our institution. We need to protect and look out for the best interest and do things in the best interest of this institution". As the chairperson of NEHAWU, she explained how "… as a union we face situations daily of people being oppressed, bullying, discrimination. People leaving this institution because they cannot escalate anymore… We went to the ombud(sman). We cannot escalate anymore. We went to the VC with issues". The assembly at this point seemed to be settling into a more traditional engagement with everyone having their say in a calm and reasonable manner. After a few speakers, a black male student takes to the podium and makes this emotive input:

> "You can take them out of the bush, but you obviously can't take the bush out of them … morons, animals, stupid monkeys. But we are here today to say that the existence of every black face, Indian face, coloured face exists and is important. We will no more subscribe to what that statue says to us – that we do not exist. We will not subscribe to what this institution propagates, of being colour blind. We demand to be seen. We demand to exist. We say that this [showing the racist social media print out], will not happen on our watch. It will happen on your heads. Dr Max Price… blood is on your hands! Blood is on your hands! Blood is on your hands!"[476]

He is pointing directly at the vice chancellor and then turns and takes the print out and pins it to the back wall of the stage with the other racist comments that ensure that the overt racist ideas are physically in the room. This creatively disrupts the "rational" debate form with an expression of the anger and rage that black people at UCT feel but are taught to keep inside. The creative disruption is both through the performance of the input and through the act of ensuring that the racist nature of the institution and some of the overt racists that make up the institution are exposed, made visible,

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[475] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[476] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

or made conscious. The inputs seemed to me to be teaching those in attendance who are willing to critically engage the content that racism is alive and well but also that it is clear to more and more people that the liberal university form tries to keep peoples' engagement on the rational level, and also that there is a way that liberalism can hide or mask the racism through a misuse of the ideas and practices of non-racialism and even academic freedom.

A black woman student made the connection between the racist social media comments to the curriculum that is taught at UCT by explaining that:

> "… the reason why you find racist comments on the social networks like saying Europe civilized Africa is because of the curriculum here at UCT. African studies is treated as an extra curricula, you only get it at a post graduate level. Last year I only got to hear about Cecil Rhodes when I was doing South African political thought. But now because they are seeing that many students are getting conscious, they have moved it to a master's level. What is the management saying about that?"[477]

In other words, she asked us to see the connection between the way Africa and African thought is problematically understood in relation to the centrality of European thought, which continues to dominate at UCT. Another black women academic, Darlene Miller, details her academic history through UCT and then international institutions of higher learning. She explains that she continues to teach at UCT Sociology Department on a contract basis for very little remuneration and claims that many qualified black academics are being kept out of gainful employment in South Africa. She is followed by a black women student who explains:

> "I stand before you overcome with a very deep sadness. That today I must stand before you, and stand before management, appealing to you to see me. To legitimise my struggle, to prove to you that I have suffered. [voice filled with emotion] I feel so humiliated and undermined by this entire process. I have been at the House of Azania with my comrades and my sisters and my friends. And we have been inboxed. We have been getting wall posts people asking us to stop being racist. When I dare to say I am black, I am racist. When I dare to say I have suffered because I am black, I am spreading racist hate. When a comrade pours pota-pota over a man who colonized, he is barbaric and yet I go back to Soweto to that pota-pota. When this imagined dream of a rainbow nation ends .. When I demand to shape my own institution. When I demand to tell my narrative, I am spreading racist hate. I am malicious. I am barbaric. I should be kicked out. I don't deserve to be here ... black lives don't matter at UCT!"[478]

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[477] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[478] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

A black male second year student in the Commerce Faculty warns about:

> "… the dangerous precedent set by Mandela and his leadership … that everything that has to do with black pain needs a negotiation as to whether it is valid or not. I think that when you have faculty councils who think that they need to run a poll (referencing the earlier input about a poll), to see whether or not black pain is valid, and then they will act. What I am saying to UCT's management is that just because there are black people in this room right now, … what you have thought, [that] this is a discussion, a debate, a meeting of the minds… no it is not. Black people have been negotiating with you for a very long time, and … it is time [that] us as black students we are taking a stand and we are looking for the justice for our people, that our previous leaders did not acquire. And we are saying we are here, this is our space, and we are tired of asking that you must see us and that this space needs to include us. Because we will make you include us. Whether you like it or not!"[479]

The many inputs are also pointing out how black students in particular are no longer willing to continue with business as usual, which at UCT has been about assimilating black people into the liberal democratic project that has failed and continues to fail the majority of black South Africans post-apartheid. Black students are no longer willing to uncritically be appreciative and thankful for being one of the few black people to be offered a seat at the table, hegemonic entailment and assimilation. The final input from the floor comes in the form of Xolela Mangcu who a professor in the Sociology Department is and who:

> "… stopped in the 1980's explaining myself to white people on racism period. On issues that are intellectual … I will engage, but I will not justify myself on the vulgarity of Cecil Rhodes' legacy and how it deformed this country. Number two, the position that you are in now, … many of us were in this position in the 1980's. I was a student at a liberal university in the 1980's called Wits University. It was exactly the same situation that you are in. The white students, the majority couldn't care less about our struggle. They couldn't care less and all of those people who were at Wits University in the 1980's know what I am talking about. They chased us, they insulted us, but we never stopped because … were it not for that truth telling, we wouldn't be here today. They wouldn't be having the freedom to insult you. And so be very clear, be very clear, that this place here, this society here, is what it is because black folk fought for it. They fought for it with white counterparts. But you must never let anybody tell you, that this is not our creation. And that you don't have a right to this place. That your ancestors who built this place… You know Max … I want to talk to you my brother as a parent. I have been thinking about this thing as a parent for the past week and I have been saying to myself, these are other people's children. And to see you being abused, where you have been abused without the protection of the university… in fact

[479] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

> to go through this whole thing I have taken off my hat as an academic and I have been thinking to myself, but these are other people's children. And I would like the university to take off all of its defensive, intellectual guard and look at these children as other people's children".[480]

He ended his input addressing the students and then finally the VC again:

> "… you guys have shown this university… you have called this university out ... I have been with you for the past week or so. The level of intellectual rigor I have seen in your presence, in your company, has blown me away. And don't let nobody, and don't let nobody, and don't let nobody tell you anything else. And finally, Max I want to say, I find it racially offensive, whenever the issue of black professors comes up and you are asked about it, the issue of standards must find itself into that. I find it really, really racially offensive … I am not here to justify myself to my colleagues. I went to the same schools as they did and even better schools. I am not here, I am not here, I am not here to justify myself to anybody. And we should not as black people, whenever anybody talks about us as academics inject standards… (addressing students again) - You guys are the leadership. You are intellectual leadership. You've called this place out. You have upped the bar. And the country and the world are looking at you for leadership".[481]

At this point the hall burst into applause and song as people slowly started to move out of the hall. The assembly didn't end in the normative rainbow conclusion. It did not even end with a response from the two initial speakers or the Vice Chancellor responding to the many difficult questions directed at him. A large number of people marched out the door, past the statue and back to the Azania House occupation, where the nightly seminar had to be conducted outside in the parking lot because there were too many people in attendance. As mentioned earlier the input was given by Elelwani Ramugondo focusing on occupation, consciousness and health.

7.3 A question of time

The Rhodes[482] statue, a symbol memorializing a man accused of being one of the most "successful" and therefore also problematic "heroes" of colonialism, was the site for a protest against his legacy and also the history of colonialism that he exemplified. It symbolically questioned the relevance and prevalence of the person *and* the system he represented at a university campus "post-apartheid" and

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[480] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[481] Naidoo, UCT General Assembly Transcript, 25 March 2015.

[482] For a useful resource list on Cecil John Rhodes compiled by Dr. Ian Forrest for the student newspaper The Poor Print, see https://thepoorprint.com/2017/04/28/cecil-rhodes-and-the-commemoration-of-the-past-further-reading/

"post-colonialism". This questioning of time appeared to be present in a lot of what RMF were asking. They were also raising what Wendy Brown (2005) calls "untimely" critiques of the "new" South Africa. She argues that critique and in the case she is discussing, critical theory:

> "… is essential in dark times not for the sake of sustaining utopian hopes, making flamboyant interventions, or staging irreverent protests, but rather to contest the very senses of time invoked to declare critique untimely. If the charge of untimeliness inevitably also fixes time, then disrupting this fixity is crucial to keeping the times from closing in on us. It is a way of reclaiming the present from the conservative hold on it that is borne by the charge of untimeliness".[483]

Ameera wrote the following poem, titled *On exhaustion and a lack of understanding,* that she read out at the university assembly and published in the first RMF collection of writings where she speaks about the ways in which the transition has encouraged a form of forgetting about the past:

> "I am tired God Almighty,
> I am tired
> of being told that we need to move on,
> that we need to forget,
> that we need to put the past behind us,
> that Apartheid is over.
>
> They don't understand.
> We never will.
> Our bodies are monuments of centuries of torture, trauma
> terror
> these exist in us
> we live it every day.
> We built this country
> slaves
> whips at our backs –
> The Man holding the whip did not build –
> we built.
>
> Apartheid is not over.
> No magic TRC wand can bippity-boppity-boo! it away.
> Our glass carriage is still a pumpkin,
> rotting,
> pulled by rats.
> A polite revolution over tea and crumpets, good Sir,

[483] Brown, W. *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, 4.

'twas the order of the day.

When could we mourn?
When could we cry?
When could we scream
for our loved ones lost
our chances trampled on?
Please Mastah Baas Meneer, [Please Master Boss Sir]
Asseblief, [Please]
Gee my 'n kans om te huil [Give me a chance to cry]
vir my ma [for my mother]
en my pa [for my father]
en my susters [for my sisters]
en broers [and brothers]
gee my 'n kans om te huil. [give me a chance to cry]

Let me stand up for myself
and for those who stood before me.
Let me march for myself
and for those who marched before me.
Let me call out *AMANDLA*
and raise my fist
and let me cry
after hundreds of years
let me cry".[484]

The questions that arise out of this poem, other RMF writings, and discussions in RMF meetings deal with time, memory, and transition. What time is it? Post-apartheid? Post-colonial? Revolutionary time? What has been the pace of change? How long will it take? How long are people willing to wait? Why has so much of the colonial system prevailed? Why are its symbols still retained? Ameera is insisting in this poem that people are being forced into forgetting about the injustices of the past. Also that the processes of remembering after centuries of oppression and pillaging of Africa and its resources including people, have been insufficient. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which is lauded and looked to by many across the world as an important and somewhat sufficient process to deal with the violences of apartheid, is critiqued in this poem as insufficient. An excerpt of another poem titled *Hyperreality in the Colonised World* by Brian also questions time and the processes of change:

[484] Konrad, A. On exhaustion and a lack of understanding. In *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 30.

> "Hyperreality.
> The inability to differentiate. To distinguish.
> Reality... From a simulation – An imitation.
> Hyperreality.
> What is real? And what is fiction? Hyperreality is the space where both collide.
> Making it impossible to know where one ends. And the other begins. That is Hyperreality.
> Now. In the Colonised world.
> We live in a time many have decided to call Post-Colonial. We celebrate, now timeless, tales of struggle for freedom.
> Remember Madiba. Nelson Mandela. **The right to vote. The right to participate. The right to shape.**
> New found emancipation. Brought to us by legend worthy parties that seized power through National Liberation. The Post-Colonial world.
> Is a Hyperreal fantasy…"[485]

Brian was also questioning the current moment and the vehicles and institutions that allow for people to participate and shape their future through the system of representative democracy. RMF challenged the idea that representative democracy was necessarily the best way to ensure justice for, in particular, the black majority. I have been discussing how RMF experimented with new forms of leadership that placed engaged radical praxis, collective critical thinking and action, as central to a democratic project. In addition to questioning the relevance of the Rhodes statue, RMF was using it to open up a critical dialogue about the continued racism, sexism and exploitation that they experienced as present in UCT's institutional culture and practices. Here they were doing important work to challenge the idea that the past was in any way over or locked away in museums. They started doing intellectual work for themselves, they encouraged others to (re)consider the moment through a range of texts including testimony, song, poetry, writing, and importantly critical reflection on their action and later critical 'reflection in-action'[486]. Some of them also created different kinds of spaces, to contemplate collectively this question of time and its relationship to radical change or revolution. It seems to me they were time travellers taking us back to the future. Back to the South African transition to democracy, where revolution was neatly packaged under the idea and programme of transformation. Back to critique the failing of the transition and its version of transformation, to propose a future that repurposed an old idea of decolonisation in order to develop a different radical programme. All of these actions contributed to developing a radical praxis that moved university life from the terrain of talking, questioning and debating, the

[485] Kamanzi, B. Hyperreality in the Colonised World. In *The Johannesburg Salon, 2015*, *his emphasis*, 102.
[486] Schön, D.A. The Reflective Practitioner: How professionals think in action. New York: Routledge, 2016.

traditional forms of intellectual labour or "actions" that the university housed, to having students be part of producing the spaces for learning, the content to be engaged, as well as the pedagogy of the space. But importantly, linking the reading, conversation and writing to the world and to action directed at changing their world more consciously. This is similar to what students fifty years ago in South Africa (SASO) and the international student revolts in the USA and France. Students seem at various moments in history, to be the primary ones who remind the university and academics of its, and their potential and relation to society, to not only be relevant to the world, but also to being able to change it for the better.

The complexification of critique, incorporating in practice some of the key lessons of decolonial thinking, took place at the level of the symbolic (the statue, the artworks, building names, etc.), the personal (person of Rhodes, individual students experiences of pain and alienation), and the structural/systemic (UCT as an institution, the higher education system, and the post-apartheid state). This created the conditions for students to scratch at the scabs of apartheid and colonialism, opening a porthole for themselves into a not too distant past, but one that they are considered by many to have been "saved from", to (re)imagine a more radical future. This "time travelling"[487] or moving between the past, the present and the future, meant that they were (re)interpreting and (re)writing the legacy of Rhodes to expose more viscerally the physical, political and epistemic violence inflicted by him and his ilk in the past and how this violence persists into the present with his uncritical memorialisation. Listen to Ntabeleng explaining in a critical essay titled Why Decolonisation at UCT is Imperative:

> "We are tired. We are angered and we cannot continue to live and learn in a space that denies us of our existence. We cannot continue to be treated as merely anonymous Black faces without a history, because we have a history. And that history did not begin when white colonialist men robbed us of our dignity. It did not begin when they cornered us with their guns and stole our land. It did not begin with slavery and colonialism, nor did it begin with apartheid. We had a history and our own narratives long before that, and by UCT conveniently omitting that in the academic curriculum and symbolic representation of this institution; UCT is omitting us and working into gradually erasing us. Us, people of colour. Us, Black women who carry a multitude of mountains and storms on our exhausted backs.

[487] See the Ruth First Memorial lecture I gave in 2016 spelling out how I understood the student to be time travelers Publica[c]tion 2016, 49 accessible at https://gorahtah.files.wordpress.com/2017/11/publicaction_pdf-for-web_pages1.pdf

> Us, Black students who desire to be taught by Black female professors. Us, Black students who yearn for UCT to stop acting like Black women are flowers in revolutions and start teaching us about Mama Lillian Ngoyi, Mama Nomzamo Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, Mama Charlotte Maxeke, just to name a few.
>
> Us, nappy headed Black women with graceful knots in our rich hair, who are suffocated by the shackles of this university that celebrate white supremacy and male entitlement, through celebrating the likes of imperialists and misogynists' such as Cecil John Rhodes, Jan Smuts, Leander Jameson, Barnard Beattie".[488]

Students were calling into the present the ghosts of the past as a way of complicating and contributing to the destruction of the continued glorification of colonial and apartheid figures, the Rainbow Nation myth, and the non-racial narrative it produced.[489] They were also engaging in an intersectional analyses that asked further questions that pointed to the conditions of racism, classism and sexism in particular. RMF and a younger generation of students were demanding that the past be reckoned with in order to imagine and move to a better present and possible future. When students in RMF write that Rhodes was a mass murderer and a thief, they are not basing this on any legal findings against him but rather they are insisting that Rhodes the person, the legacy and the system account for the devastation that it caused the indigenous people of Southern Africa. Alex discussing how she differs from others in RMF around what to read and learn about and argues that:

> "… people ask why must we learn about Cecil John Rhodes (or Olive Schreiner) – why must we look at dead white men? And I think, I don't want to isolate myself from these. I want to know what these people are saying so that I can have an argument. I don't want to be told my argument, I want to understand why I have these beliefs and these arguments… Imagine I didn't do 'South African Political Thought' and know why Cecil John Rhodes is such a monster".[490]

Alex is affirming that she found some value in her formal classes at UCT, although she largely found her Law classes problematic. Critically encountering the figure of Rhodes in a politics course enabled her to read and learn about the problematic character that Rhodes was. When Brian talks about Rhodes he understands him in relation to the emergence and development of UCT as an institution, not simply being the person who seized the land and then "gifted" it to UCT for public

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[488] Morake, N. Why Decolonisation at UCT is Imperative. In *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 53.

[489] While non-racialism has at times in post-apartheid history been a radical anti-racist position, it has become synonymous with more liberal and even conservative positions post-apartheid where non-racialism comes to mean post-race.

[490] Hotz, A. Interview Transcript, 2015, 15.

use as a university, but as an architect of the knowledge project and how this project related to colonialism and capitalism. He explains his understanding of decolonising the engineering department that he studies in and the relevance of Rhodes to the Engineering Department:

> "… if you look at UCT you see the formation of the mining industry with Cecil Rhodes and in particular – the university was meant to supplement that project. They were creating engineers that would have fit nicely into that environment – it was specifically for that. Not much has actually changed. A lot of our engineers still go into Anglo. Even when funders come… they're coming from Anglo, the mining sector, or from Sasol to talk to us. So, you also see that there is actually an unbroken line in that sense. And that things are being remarketed but you still see defence and mining and energy in its most unclean forms coming to speak to us".[491]

Here we see a questioning of time by complicating the framing of the Rhodes statue as anachronistic because some experiences at UCT feel like they continue the original work that it was meant to do. RMF were making the point that what was strange or wrong about UCT was that the statue remained after so many years and various efforts to discuss and work towards having it problematised and removed, had not resulted in any radical action being taken. That the statue remained, precisely because what it symbolised still flowed fairly seamlessly with how in this instance the Engineering Department at UCT operated.

Unfortunately, as is shown in Terri Barnes' (2018) new book titled *Uprooting University Apartheid in South Africa: from liberalism to decolonisation* the colonial project of Western liberalism, remains more firmly entrenched than simply the style of the buildings or the selection of statues, building names, and artworks. At the centre of the university project remained a largely untransformed knowledge project, championed by what some have argued is a glorified provincial Eurocentric curriculum passed off as universal, and taught at the professorial level by descendants of colonial settlers, using the age old lecture form as the most prized teaching endeavour. A large part of the UCT community including alumni, did not see the problem with the Rhodes statue remaining as a central figure of the campus. There was also a link being made to the broader history of dispossession through a segregated education system and the development of the university as an integral part of the colonial and later apartheid project. Colonial education more broadly and the apartheid chapter of that formal education project, enacted what Suren Pillay called epistemic violence on black people. Many more have written on epistemic injustice and more and more

[491] Kamanzi Interview Transcript, 2015, 10.

students were being exposed to these ideas through reading other canons and epistemic traditions especially decolonial ones. The statue, while initially central to the protest and discussion, quickly became a way into thinking critically about the university and broader society. This is best evidenced by paying close attention not only to the speeches and writing of the students and the movement as intellectual production, but also their conscious effort or practice, to set up the questions and discussions to more critically and deeply explore and critique UCT and broader South African context. Importantly, students were asking what the role of a university now should be especially in relation to its context. Brian confirms that:

> "[t]he removal of the statue, while largely symbolic, has been an appropriate rallying cry by which to tangibly address the practical implications of so called "transformation", redress and the re-imagination of what the role and function of an African University should be".[492]

Motimele's essay

> "highlights the way in which the universities' insistence on the conclusion of the academic program (curriculum-time), the need to balance university financial books (capitalist-time), and the obsession with research output and student throughput (production-time) are all expressions of the dominance of neoliberal-time. Students and workers refuse to be keepers of neoliberal-time by disrupting their roles as human capital with a focus on issues of racial, sexist, classist, ableist, and epistemic exclusion and exploitation".[493]

RMF organised the occupation around the central theme of black pain caused by alienation and othering discussed in Chapter 5, framed by the three RMF pillars. By centring black pain, students were clearly articulating and creating a space that was understood to be "safe" for black students to talk about the experience of being at a university where the norm or hegemonic subject was a white, heterosexual, middle-class, able-bodied man. By students understanding and explicitly naming this hegemonic subject position, they were starting to build a critique of racism, capitalism, heteronormativity, patriarchy and ableism, and were engaging the university community about these issues. Importantly, and simultaneously they were working out how to call out the ways these oppressive systems showed itself internal to the movement and the desired "safe" space through, even the people who had committed themselves to wanting to dream a different future and work for

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[492] Kamanzi, 2015, http://postcolonialist.com/civil-discourse/rhodes-must-fall-decolonisation-symbolism-happening-uct-south-africa/)

[493] Motimelo, M. "The Rupture of Neoliberal Time as the Foundation for Emancipatory Epistemologies." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 118, no. 1 (January 2019), 205-214.

radical change.

The framing of the pedagogical space by drawing on the political and philosophical histories and thinking of BC, pan Africanism, and black radical feminism brought together a truly interesting, even if complex set of traditions of thought and politics. This explicit combination framing their radical praxis provided a new trajectory in the political and even theoretical landscape at universities. It is by no means an exaggeration to say that the question of decolonising universities that RMF put on the agenda, has influenced many academics, departments and universities across the world. Many books and articles have been written about RMF, the South African student movement and decolonisation, including honours, masters and PHD's tackling many of the important questions that RMF have raised. Other students from around the world have taken up the question of decolonising and critiquing their own university institutions.[494] The three pillars of RMF were developed because there were a range of students who made up the moment/movement and contributed actively in thinking through a new frame for the struggle of transformation or radical change. The occupation provided a pivotal pedagogical space or consistent reflective space for the development of RMF's analyses and vision with action for a new and better future especially for marginalised people.

[494] See a discussion about #RhodesMustFallOxford here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7PxFaf2Z7kk

Chapter 8: Writing Dangerously: Evictions, Publication and Mediation

In this chapter I will look at three more key moments, all of which take place after the Azania One occupation. These spaces take the form of a second and third occupation named Azania Two and Azania Hall respectively and for a period after the first occupation the consistent use of other "friendly" spaces at UCT. The structures during these later occupations, while in some ways continuing with the plenary-caucus format, do not function as systematically because of the different set up of the occupations. The first protest that RMF organised outside of the UCT campus is detailed under the heading "Afrophobia protest". But before I move into the next set of key moments I will contextualise the next phase of RMF through briefly engaging the removal of the statue along with the removal of RMF from Azania House.

8.1 Rhodes statue falls, RMF evicted from Azania House

The political pressure created by RMF resulted in various university structures meeting to discuss and ratify a unified position on the Rhodes statue. A UCT Marketing and Communication statement announced that the UCT "… senate has voted overwhelmingly in favour of recommending to council that the statue of Rhodes be moved when council holds its special sitting on Wednesday, April 8 2015".[495] A special sitting of the UCT Convocation, chaired by Barney Pityana, was held on the 7th of April and for over two hours alumni of the university expressed a range of views on the statue. The UCT council, the highest decision making body at the university, unanimously agreed at the special council meeting on 8 April that the statue would be removed to a storage place on Thursday 9 April 2015. RMF called a mass meeting for the day of the statue's removal and a programme leading up to the removal took place from 3pm at Azania House. The gathering was chaired by Zethu Mathabeni, an academic in the Faculty of Humanities who was present at the occupation and part of the BAC. Speaker after speaker gave messages of support for the process that had led to the impending removal of the statue. An LGBTIAQ+ activist who had also supported RMF and been present in the occupation gave an input focusing on the intersectional nature of the struggle and the attempts in Azania House occupation to work with this reality. They made the now famous poster that read "Dear history this revolution has women, gays, queers & trans remember that #RhodesMustFall".

[495] UCT Statement: Further info on UCT Senate vote in favour of moving Rhodes statue, *UCT News*, 27 March 2015

The RMF statement read out before the statue's removal started by boldly asserting that the protest against the statue was "… an action that called into question the neo-colonial situation and the rainbow nation mythology that is suffocating our country".[496] In the very short statement RMF mapped out some of the key lessons learned over the month-long struggle to have the statue removed and to build a collective consciousness and radical praxis that would ensure that students and the university community at large could no longer ignore the urgent need for change. The process to build this collective consciousness, detailed in Chapter 7 included asking people to take responsibility for building their own critical self-consciousness as a contribution to building the collective one, each person themselves becoming a kind of caucus space as one part of the plenary space. The RMF statement confirmed what they believed they had learned reflecting that "… in the time we've spent at Azania House we have begun to understand the need for a new language that challenges the pacifying logic of liberalism".[497] Through the various critical creative disruptions and in conjunction with the engagement with more radical decolonial writings and ideas, RMF developed a critique of the liberal university institution and its pacifying logic and practices. The statement goes on to explain how "… [t]his logic presents itself to us in these ideas of "reform" and "transformation", which are legitimized by the Constitution - a document which violently preserves the status quo. Transformation is the maintenance and perpetuation of oppression, hidden within meaningless surface-level change".[498]

RMF were connecting the logic of reform to transformation, and critiquing the lauded SA constitution as complicit in the process of preserving the status quo. Transformation was exposed as being insufficient to counter the realities and effects of being the most unequal country in the world. They were also proposing that the constitution enacted a form of violence by maintaining or ensuring slow change and therefore working mainly in service of the unequal status quo, and therefore against the black majority.

RMF reminded people that the UCT management in fact mostly resisted the removal of the statue and the calls for radical change and only under severe pressure from protest action did they concede to the student demands. Through the statement read out before the removal of the statue, RMF announced that their programme going forward would be one of decolonisation. Their

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[496] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 12.

[497] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 12.

[498] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 12.

understanding of what that entailed was that the "… decolonisation of this institution is thus fundamentally linked to the decolonization of our entire society. Therefore when we say Rhodes Must Fall we mean that patriarchy must fall, that white supremacy must fall, that all systematic oppression based on any power relations of difference must be destroyed at all costs".[499] This announced the intention of RMF to continue to build in particular an intersectional framing and understanding of what decolonial change should look like. Suren Pillay's insistence during his seminar plenary that the idea of difference needed to be reimagined, and the early calls and actions to try and unite black struggles across difference at the university were engaged and grappled with. This proposition introduced a "new" language to talk about radical change, that challenged UCT as an institution but also implicated the ANC and the South African government, and exposed the left in South Africa to some not-so-new ideas about how the complexity of oppression had changed such that focusing on one form of oppression while ignoring another would not suffice. This opened debate across the political and social spectrum, with everyone from political parties, unions, NGO's, social movements, and the average person thinking and talking about what the RMF students were doing at UCT. The intellectual production coming out of RMF, worked through in the plenaries, were being communicated in their statements, which in addition to expressing the continuation of building their decolonising programme, was also doing teaching work, tackling the epistemic violence of colonialism, not simply through "epistemic disobedience" but through "epistemic redistribution" – the process of sharing learnings from and individual and a collective level in RMF with a broader audience. They ended the statement by detailing the broad programme that would try to continue to unite the struggles of black students, workers and academic staff. They explain that:

> "… the next step to be taken by our movement is a three pronged approach, based on workers, academics and students. Firstly, we will be launching a campaign against the unjust exploitative system of outsourcing, used by UCT to cut costs and shirk responsibility at the expense of workers' lives. Secondly, we will be launching a campaign around the financial and academic exclusion of black students. Thirdly, we will be focusing on the underrepresentation of black academics, which goes hand-in-hand with our continuing research into the development of a decolonised curriculum".[500]

And in the final line they issue a warning " … that Azania House is ours, and we will not leave". Unbeknownst to them, the university management had already obtained an interdict against students

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[499] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 12.

[500] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 12.

naming a few key students as respondents, and preventing them from continuing to disrupt the functioning of university management including through the occupation of buildings. In effect, this interdict would be the first step to prohibit the peaceful disruptive protests that had been the hallmark of the first month of RMF's life. It would also prove to be the legal instrument that would be used by university managements to break student activism and bringing police onto campuses in future student protests. After the statue was removed and students marched back to Azania House they arrived to find the building locked. Students quickly however found their way back into Azania House, but this did not resolve the issue of the court approved interdict. RMF returned after the monumental and joyous programme that culminated in the removal of the statue, to be met with one of a number of moves to take back control of the processes of change by UCT management. RMF would spend a few more days in Azania House but would be successfully evicted by 11 April 2015. The process of negotiating or coercing RMF to leave Azania House requires more engagement but will not fall within the ambit of this study. But this was the first moment of legal intervention through the courts and police at the UCT campus in this round of student protest.[501]

8.2 RMF Statements

RMF issued a number of statements most of which can be read in full in *The Johannesburg Salon.*[502] They produced a statement on 10 April 2015, responding to the eviction order they received after the removal of the statue. They used this statement to point out that the:

> "… University claims that it wants to establish meaningful forums for discussions in light of "Council's renewed commitment to the project of transformation at UCT" yet within hours of the removal of the statue, management has sought to forcibly remove us from Azania House. Furthermore, with the exception of the notice of eviction, Management has made no tangible efforts to establish lines of direct communication with the movement in Mafeje. This is yet another exhibit of Management's insincerity and engagement in bad faith".[503]

The rest of the statement is written in bullet form and aimed to dispel a "… number of [the] unfounded and bizarre allegations against our movement". It also details how the Azania House occupation had in fact been to-date the most meaningful forum for engagement for black students,

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[501] Chumani Maxwele was also embroiled in a legal process started by the claim that he had assaulted the security guard who tried to stop his statue protest. He had laid a counter charge against the security guard.

[502] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 6-19.

[503] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 17.

workers and academics and specifically that the "…occupation has strengthened our ability to collectively deliberate on our plight as students, academic, non-academic staff and other stakeholders. [And] … it has become an educational institution for alternative pedagogy and critical engagement".[504]

RMF issued a lengthier statement on 13 April 2015, explaining what transpired from their point of view after the statue was removed. The statement starts with a theorisation of what it means to be black at UCT but relates this to being black in the broader South African, African and global context. They lay out the ways in which UCT management misunderstood the structure and relationship of the SRC and RMF by assuming that an agreement with the SRC to end their involvement in the occupation meant a general end to the occupation. As RMF pointed out, this commitment was agreed to by RMF with the SRC and not a "splintering" of the movement as was communicated by the VC in a communique, labelling the remaining occupiers as deviant and potentially criminal.[505] RMF questioned the narrative that the university had put out, which attempted to co-opt their successes, especially the claim that these were as a result of UCT's "rational debate". They opposed the VC's interpretation that:

> "… sufficient consensus on the removal of the statue that was eventually achieved is a vindication of management's "deliberative process" to engage UCT stakeholders on the issue, and more broadly a vindication of the university as a space for rational discussion. We contest this reading of events. In the 20 years prior to the Rhodes Must Fall Movement the above mentioned "deliberative processes" have been embarked on by management countless times. The presence of this statue and the continued colonised state of the university, its staff demographics, treatment of workers, institutional culture and curriculum content are clear evidence of the failure of these processes in effectively decolonizing the institution".[506]

They do however recognise that they need to end the occupation and explain that they do so because of the intimidation tactics used by the university in particular the naming of four students in the interdict, which would place undue stress on them including the possibility of high legal fees if the interdict was not adhered to. They announced that "… following the university's indictment, we are forced, more than ever, to acknowledge that Azania House is not a geographical location, but a commitment to black humanity. It is with that firmly in mind that we have chosen to end our

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[504] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 17.

[505] This point is addressed by Shabashni Moodley in her Salon article as well.

[506] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 14-15.

occupation of Azania House".[507] Continuing to hold a consistent reflective space, or even a periodic one would prove to be a challenge going forward. In addition to the programme detailed in their previous statement they demanded that the university not instigate any further internal or external disciplinary actions or coercion against student activists; that the university provide an alternate physical space for the movement; and that the university must continue to remove colonial relics and respond to the rest of RMF's initial demands explained in their mission statement.

In deliberating about the ending of the occupation, RMF realised the importance of the occupied space of Azania House in the process of thinking and action or radical praxis. They were determined to secure another space to occupy permanently as a home base for the emerging decolonial programme they were inventing and as a space that would allow the differing foci of parts of the diverse movement to continue to cohere to a degree that kept people in critical conversation with each other. They operated without a physical space from 11 April until they occupied the UCT Avenue House, which became known as New Azania House or Azania Two, on 29 April 2015. Below I will discuss some of the programmatic work, both protest and educational events, that continued after the ending of the first occupation. These events remained organised with a consistent reflective space, albeit it without for two weeks, the physical space that occupation afforded. I will pick up again the question of the second and third occupation after engaging two key moments in the "Afrophobia protest" and the "Intellectual Work Continues" sections.

8.3 Moment 7: Afrophobia Protest – 16 April 2015

RMF continued to meet to plan the way forward for the movement even as they realised that it was very difficult to organise without a physical space. Importantly, they also recognised the need to get involved in issues off campus. They agreed to protest and highlight the inability of the South African government to curb the xenophobic violence that kept flaring up since the 1990's in South Africa.[508] A march was planned to the Cape Town Central Home Affairs offices on 16 April 2015. Mase remembers how:

> "The Rhodes Must Fall movement was also very vocal and active in creating awareness around xenophobia, or what we refer to as "Afrophobia"… As a movement, we decided to

[507] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 15.

[508] For a brief history of this violence see https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xenophobic-violence-democratic-south-africa

> embark on a protest outside the Home Affairs office in Cape Town, demanding a response and action from the Home Affairs minister against the Afrophobic attacks. We were met with hostility and got into a confrontation with the security guards. The Home Affairs officials refused to address us. We proceeded to march to parliament where we continued our day of action. The demonstration was successful in mobilising people and bringing attention to the seriousness of the Afrophobic attacks and the need for a solution. The protest was not easy and soon turned very volatile because of police harassment. The police used stun grenades and physically assaulted us. For many of us, it was the first of many days we would be contending with police brutality".[509]

This off campus protest action caused the first serious physical injury to a student bursting the ear drum of Ezra Mokgope.[510] The Afrophobia action was a continuation of the critique of the transition through writing about and exposing the ANC-liberation movement turned government. Thembinkosi Okonko critiqued the role of the ANC post-apartheid in relation to another outbreak of xenophobic attacks that he argues were Afrophobic attacks. He does this by engaging with one of the key texts that RMF was thinking with, relating the reflections of transition from liberation party to post-colonial governments experienced decades before to the North of South Africa:

> "In the "Pitfalls of National Consciousness" Frantz Fanon echoes similar sentiments and castigates the national bourgeoisie (in our case the ANC) for precipitating black on black violence. He argues that "the native bourgeoisie [ANC] which comes to power uses its class aggressiveness to corner the positions formerly kept for foreigners. The National bourgeoisie's mission has nothing to do with transforming the nation; it consists...of being the transmission line between the nation and capitalism. It [the ANC] waves aloft the notion of the nationalization and Africanization of the ruling classes [BEE]...The working class of the towns, the masses of unemployed, the small artisans and craftsmen for their part line up behind this nationalist attitude; but in all justice let it be said, they only follow in the steps of their bourgeoisie... foreigners are called on to leave; their shops are burned, their street stalls are wrecked, and in fact the government... commands them to go, thus giving their nationals satisfaction".[511]

RMF students were engaging decolonial literature to analyse the state of the transition into democracy, not just the performance of the university with regards to radical change, but linking their experiences at the institution to the experiences of broader black struggles.[512] Some have

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[509] Ramaru, Feminist Africa, 22.

[510] See https://issuu.com/varsitynewspaper/docs/merged_small for more reporting on the protest.

[511] Okonko in *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9, 2015*, 32, his emphasis.

[512] Amongst other engagement RMF met with community-based activists in Athlone, with Phillipi High students in Phillipi, and engaged with activists at Community House in Salt River to mention a few off campus engagements.

understood the black students of RMF as simply the ungrateful children of the emerging black elite disinterested in broader political questions.[513] Sometimes going as far as suggesting that they have been manipulated to take up the fight of disgruntled black academics to use a crass racial politics to pave the way for easier acquisition of positions and promotion in the historically white university institution. To simply believe this would be to ignore the work that was done to move beyond the university, both in the realm of ideas and action. With regards to the Afrophobic attacks that took place from March through to May 2015, RMF discussed critically why they believed these attacks were continuing. They put out a statement condemning the Afrophobic violence and published the collectively developed statement (although penned by Thembinkosi it is signed as RMF) in the RMF edited collection of critical writings coming out of the struggles and thinking during the first two months of RMF.[514]

The violence experienced by RMF students at the hands of the police at this protest revealed for students how the state would respond violently to being challenged. In some way the "limited protection" provided by protesting on the UCT campus was understood for the first time relative to the ways protests were dealt with in poor and black communities and on historically black university campuses. RMF had experienced the shutting down of their occupied space by UCT management after the statue fell, when an eviction order was taken out against occupying students. The police were called to evict students from Azania One only a few days earlier, which many students and academics who were present describe as traumatising on the level of personal safety. But it was also traumatising because they were evicted from their political home, which was not a political party home but a physical and intellectual space that they had created and built to do the work of decolonising UCT, while becoming themselves intellectuals.

8.4 Moment 8: Intellectual Work Continues

8.4.1 RMF Seminars

The Azania House nightly seminar series had come to an end but the Education SubCom continued to meet and organise reading group sessions, lectures and panels to keep the plenary space alive. Below is a list of engagements that formed part of the continued public RMF education programme:

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[513] Long, Wahbie. 2018. "Decolonising Higher Education: Postcolonial Theory and the Invisible Hand of Student Politics." *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy 69*: 20–25.

[514] Read the full statement here https://jwtc.org.za/the_salon/volume_9/themba_msimang.htm

- 22 April (HUMA) - Lungisile Ntsebeza – Curriculum Reform through discussing the African Studies curriculum. How to create an African Centred Curriculum at this Institution
- 22 April - Problematising Afro/Xenophobia Friday, 8pm at CAS, Themba to facilitate
- 23 April – Panel Discussion on Decolonising the Curriculum – Pumla Gqola; Z Magubane; Thato Pule; Mbali Matandela – chaired by Xolela Mangcu (attended by Max Price)
- 28 April - "Brown" people in Black Consciousness.
- 29 April, 11am – Engaging Achille Mbembe – Fanon's Concerning Violence –Reading Group with Achille
- 29 April - Public Lecture at UCT - Concerning Frantz Fanon. Mase Introduces Achille and confirms that this is an RMF event and part of Seminar Series.
- 6 May – Small group conversation with Amina Mama on writing.
- 6 May - Evening Public Lecture hosted by AGI and RMF. Amina Mama – Decolonisation 101 - Mase Ramaru and Mbali Matandela introduce Mama

These educational gatherings allowed RMF through their Education SubCom to invite black academics they wanted to engage, but in so doing also created a public intergenerational conversation space, discussing ideas with an older generation of black scholars and intellectuals. As is evident from the list above, the topics they asked people to speak on considered critical and difficult questions of curriculum change, the place of Africa in curriculum and history; the relationship between afrophobia and xenophobia; issues around race/racism; violence; feminisms; knowledge production and the role of writing and publishing. These spaces for engagement were important but the need for a home to occupy was still present. Students were experiencing exclusion in the form of financial and academic exclusion and there was also a student housing crisis brewing. RMF had negotiated with management that they would leave Azania House but that the university had to identify a new space for the movement to inhabit. A number of weeks had passed without any commitment to resolving this. RMF occupied Avenue House[515] on 29 April 2015 and posted a statement the following day titled "Statement issued by the Rhodes Must Fall Movement on the reclaiming of Avenue House".

[515] Also referred to as New Azania House and/or Azania Two

8.4.2 Writing SubCom

In addition to thinking about curriculum and pedagogy, RMF also engaged in a range of writing. The first time the idea and importance of writing was raised and minuted was in the meeting held after the Jammie Plaza mass meeting. It read: "… Proposal for weekly submissions of testimonies of experiences of racism at UCT by students (mirroring the efforts of academics last year). For all those writing, send what you write to the media - now is the time to publish! UCT hates bad press".[516] The suggestion to have a specific Writing SubCom came out of the second meeting of the Education SubCom where it was minuted that:

> "[d]iscussion of a writing group. Mbali heading it? Perhaps people from all disciplines should be involved? Suggestion from Brian to gauge what people want written about, and writers to use these topics, see where their own expertise lies, and go from there. (Not necessarily part of education sub comm)".[517]

The writing SubCom was started in the second week of Azania One and was made up of volunteers, some of whom were also part of the Education SubCom. Some of the students involved in the Writing SubCom were Ru Slayan, Mbali Matandela, Asher Gamedze, Thuli Gamedze, Brian Kamanzi, Ernie Koela, amongst others.

Writing SubCom meetings were often about making time for people to reflect and write about their experiences in the movement and the experiences of being black at UCT. A number of RMF students who had been writing prior to the movement, started working together thinking about what it meant to collectively produce reflections on their struggles and experiences of being black at UCT. This group of writers emerged during the beginnings of RMF and continued to be called on even when the SubCom was no longer meeting regularly. The Education SubCom, as detailed above, continued to meet and plan educational events into April and May 2015 with a break during the mid-year exams and holiday. Even though there was a two week period in April where RMF was not occupying a physical space, they continued to meet regularly at friendly spaces across campuses including the Centre for African Studies (CAS), African Gender Institute (AGI) and in the Biko Building that housed the SRC offices. Members of the Education and Writing SubComs continued to produce different forms of written work in their individual capacity, but also as I will detail now, collectively. The collective statement writing was taking place consistently during the

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[516] Minutes of meeting following Jammie Plaza Mass Meeting, 12 March 2015, 2pm

[517] RMF Education Subcom Minutes, 22 March 2015

RMF occupations and events and continued throughout RMF's existence into UCT FMF, with the members of the collective changing over time. Various forms of collective writing continued to take place and will be discussed in this key moment, that is not a moment but an ongoing process of sharing ideas, critiques, and reflections coming out of the continued fight for free, decolonised education. This section therefore is not specifically applicable to the timeline of key moments as the rest of the identified moments are.

8.4.3 Writing Statements

The first collective writing processes emerged out of the need to write RMF statements. The RMF mission statement was collectively discussed and some key elements to be covered in the statement were laid out in an early meeting.[518] The following day, a small group of students:

> "… met up in a classroom in Leslie [Social Science Building] and we started trying to draft something that encapsulated the politics. And that group was myself, Leila, Ntokozo, Mbali and Mase… It was quite a small group. But I distinctly recall these five and we wrote basically the first draft of that document… in that initial statement, there is the different paragraphs outlining the politics. Then there is the list of demands at the end. So we didn't do the [full] list of demands. I think we probably included some but the idea was that the list of demands would be decided collectively but the statement itself, … was going to be a draft proposal that would be read out at some later stage to a broader group to be accepted or rejected or edited … And in that space, that would be where the list of demands would be consolidated".[519]

The next day was the mass meeting of people involved in black struggles on campus chaired by Mbali and Mase and hosted at CAS. Invited were various student formations including PASMA, the Black Mondays group, the Muslim Youth Movement, amongst others, and representatives from the BAC and various workers on campus including National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) members. Each constituency was given time to detail their experience of discrimination on campus.[520] It is on this day that UCT management also put up the "Have your say" boards across campus and UCT news republished the introductory chapter to a book[521] on

[518] RMF Meeting Minutes, 17 March 2015

[519] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[520] RMF Meeting Minutes, 19 March 2015

[521] See full chapter here https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-03-19-reflections-on-rhodes-a-story-of-time

UCT's history and treasures.[522]

On Friday 20 March, the campus was abuzz with activities, which culminated in a march to the Bremner Management Building and its occupation.[523] Students spent hours singing struggle songs and reading poetry and the first public lecture moment by Xolela Mangcu took place in the foyer of the building because students were not allowed to go beyond the security checkpoint. Later in the evening, the SRC arranged to have students let into the building proper and the first Mafeje Plenary meeting took place after midnight and was chaired by Chumani. It was at this meeting that the initial draft of the RMF mission statement was heard and "officially" adopted with some minor changes. Ru, who was the only one present of the group who had drafted the statement, read it out and remembers that he "… was thinking oh god … people are going to think this thing is ridiculous and they are not going to agree with the stance on white people… I didn't have very high hopes… [but then] everyone was snapping their fingers and basically it was very well received".[524]

Ru recalls that even though the mission statement was well received, "… one of the major issues in that period … it was an inconsistent thing, acceptance of the statement was then immediately contradicted by things in the meeting". One example he recalled was that even in the meeting where the statement was accepted and clearly had a critique of white people leading on issues of transformation, a white male student still took up a lot of space talking in that meeting with no resistance or critique. Be that as it may, the adoption of the statement " … was very important because from that point on we could continually reference the statement as a kind of anchor" and work towards the collective vision they had laid out that included the positions of BC, pan Afrikanism and black radical feminism.[525]

The key sections that framed the initial draft of the RMF mission statement were titled: who made up the collective; centring black pain; an intersectional approach; on "reverse racism"; student leadership; engagement with management; objectives of the movement; ending with four long term goals namely:

1. The removal of statues and plaques commemorating racists; The renaming of

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[522] Njabulo Ndebele in 2012 and titled *Reflections on Rhodes: A story of Time*.

[523] This is discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

[524] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[525] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

buildings from names of racist or average white people to black historical figures; The re-evaluation of artworks which exoticise Africa, poverty, and the black experience and are predominantly done by white artists; The recognition of suppressed black history relevant to the institution such as slave graves on campus, and black people who have contributed to the development of the university.

2. The implementation of an Afro-centric curriculum. By this we mean treating African discourses as the point of departure and only examining Western traditions in so far as they are relevant to our own experience; Financial and research support of black academics and staff; Radically changing the representation of black lecturers across faculties; Revising the limitations on access to senior positions for black academics.

3. An admissions policy which explicitly includes race and which prioritises black applicants; Improved academic support programmes; A meaningful interrogation of why black students are most often at the brunt of academic exclusion; The development of an improved financial aid system; Improved facilities which deal with sexual assault, as well as facilities which help black students deal with the psychological trauma as a result of racism.

4. The end of victimisation and intimidation of workers; Challenging the system of outsourcing which diminishes UCT's accountability towards workers and gives rise to worker vulnerability; The implementation of support structures for workers similar to those offered to students for sexual assault and mental health, as well as access to services dealing with labour, family and housing issues.[526]

Importantly, there "… were a number of meetings after that, some with workers and [the] BAC as well to consolidate a [longer] list of demands".[527] The final statement included 28 long term goals and was publicised on the RMF Facebook page on Wednesday 25 March 2015. There was also a statement written titled Bremner Occupation, which was uploaded to the RMF Facebook page on Monday 23 March 2015 and detailed why they were occupying.

The initial writing task that was suggested in the first Education SubCom meeting related to what the Education SubCom identified as the first of the SubCom's three pillars, namely Awareness, Ideology and Recognition - "… Awareness - writing brief descriptions of figures relevant to places where we protest at meridians this week".[528] At the outset, the awareness that was envisioned as supplementing the process of getting the Rhodes statue removed, was an "… [a]wareness around

[526] RMF Draft Mission Statement, 20 March 2015

[527] Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[528] RMF Education Subcom Minutes, 17 March 2015

problematic figures/names at UCT [as example] Rhodes, Jameson, Beattie".[529] This entailed a number of Education SubCom members researching who the figures were and what their historical relevance was. It was later proposed that consideration be given to produce "… a newsletter, perhaps [to] collaborate with [the] writing [sub] committee".[530] The Education SubCom organised a joint gathering with the Writing SubCom for Tuesday 5 May in the AGI Seminar Room, which was a conversation with Amina Mama to discuss informally the topic of writing. Ideas that came out of this discussion with Amina Mama were published as part of the *Johannesburg Salon Volume 9*,[531] which I will discuss in more detail now.

8.4.4 The Johannesburg Salon

One of the first collections of writings published by RMF was Volume 9 of the online magazine the *Johannesburg Salon*, which was collectively edited by the RMF Education and Writing SubComs. This came out of the desire and realisation by the Education SubCom that RMF needed to be producing its own narrative. Some of this work was being done by the RMF Statements that were written by a group of statement writers, mainly Ru Slayan. But there was a need to engage in different forms of writing on key issues.

The opportunity to produce and publish a collection of RMF writings gave the Writing SubCom a place to publish the work that they had been doing from Azania House. It was agreed in an early meeting at the Azania One occupation, that the Writing SubCom would begin to develop pieces for publication and that the online magazine was a potential space to publish as it was freely accessible and was designed to be read online or downloaded as PDFs.[532] There was also a multimedia functionality that would allow a broad array of forms of "writing" engagements. The writing that did take place during the first two months of RMF, seemed to take place as and when individuals could manage to write between organising the occupation and all that it entailed. There was much going on but members of the Education and Writing SubComs eventually planned a full day meeting in the boardroom of the New Azania House occupation, two months later, to collectively figure out a process of deciding what to do with the pieces that had been completed and which of these writings to include and how to order them into a collection. Present for this five-hour

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[529] RMF Education Subcom Minutes, 17 March 2015

[530] RMF Education Subcom Minutes, 31 March 2015

[531] Gamedze/oneSTAB, Decolonised Notes, The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9, 2015, 49-51.

[532] Naidoo Fieldnotes, 2015.

workshop were Asher, Brian, Ernie, Mbali, Thuli, and myself.[533]

A number of the individual students who made up the RMF Education and Writing SubCom's continued to write individually but importantly, they also continued to publish collectively. I discuss two more examples of this collective publishing work later in the thesis. Firstly, the *Vanguard Online Marikana Special Collection* was done as one part of the RMF Marikana Memorial events of August 2015. Secondly, the *Pathways to Free Education* publication driven by the Pathways Collective formed a year later in July 2016, to continue the work of producing a publication taking forward the work needed to be done to map out ways to attain free education coming out of the #FeesMustFall movement started in October 2015, and discussed in Chapter 9.

8.5 Moment 9: Mediation

8.5.1 Occupations and the politics of space

After being evicted from Azania House or "Azania One", RMF continued to create a consistent reflective space in the form of SubCom and plenary meetings, protest action as well as panels, lectures and some reading groups. They realised that the university would probably not deliver on its promise of an alternate space for the movement to operate out of. Even though they had been forced "… to acknowledge that Azania House is not a geographical location, but a commitment to Black humanity"… and they had successfully continued to hold a consistent reflective space and a multipronged programme of education and critique, they also realised that occupation was a central tool and mode of struggle.[534] Occupation allowed the movement to more easily gather and organise from a central location. It was also the most constructive form of disruption in that it provided the plenary and SubCom spaces that allowed for them to disrupt each other through collective critical reflection [or critical practical reflexivity] and also forced the administration and management to pay attention and respond to the movement's demands. They highlighted this in their statement when they explained their realisation of "… Management's inability to take any of the demands we have made as a movement seriously, unless accompanied by bad publicity – evidently the only language this institution understands. Our move into Avenue House is therefore partly a result of

[533] Because of space I will not go into more detail with regards to the process of collectively publishing this volume in this thesis. The writing or content of this volume is engaged directly throughout though.

[534] *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 15.

Management's failure to make good on its own promise".[535]

Azania One had also unwittingly created a space for black students who were unable to secure permanent housing to have a roof over their heads, food to eat and a sense of community. The student housing problem would become more apparent to activists as the mostly hidden stories of students sleeping in libraries, computer labs and common rooms were revealed. Other strategies homeless students were forced to invent was bunking in other students' accommodation on a rotational basis, creating precarious living conditions for them and for fellow students. RMF clarified that the most important reason they "… are claiming Avenue House as the new Azania House [was] to protest UCT's failure to provide housing to students. A number of students were living at Azania House because they were displaced by the university and had nowhere else to go, despite these students having consistently approached student housing for help".[536]

The predictably racialised nature of the problem once again brought into consciousness, the racial inequality that persisted post-apartheid, particularly in Cape Town. The last section of the RMF statement on the occupation of Avenue House titled Why Avenue House? explains that:

> "Avenue house forms part of the student housing system at UCT. One ought to ask why it is that the overwhelming majority of students who are left displaced and without accommodation happen to be black. The reason is that the housing system as it exists, functions to preserve the institutional culture that violently alienates and displaces black students. Avenue House is a part of this system that denies many black students their right to belong at this university. Our presence here serves to highlight that reality. We would like to make it clear that we do not intend to disrupt the administrative work happening at Avenue House; that is not the goal of this occupation. Staff here have agreed to make designated parts of the building available to us to use without disrupting their work. It is unfortunate that staff have not returned to work today despite this agreement, as despite its failings the services they provide here nonetheless impact on the lives of many black students at this university".[537]

The daily life of the second occupation continued with plenary meetings, but these no longer took place twice a day but rather twice a week on Wednesdays at 6.30pm and Sundays at 4pm and more often when necessary.[538] The agenda items and discussions of plenary meetings ranged from

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[535] RMF Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 18.

[536] RMF Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 18.

[537] RMF Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9,* 2015, 18.

[538] RMF Meeting Minutes, 10 May 2015

discussing the charges against certain students, finalising a Code of Conduct for the occupation, organising exam deferrals for those who had spent the previous few months in occupation, to following up with black student movements from different campuses who had visited RMF and remained in conversation with them from UKZN, Rhodes, Stellenbosch, and Wits.[539] RMF hosted an important event on 7 May titled "#DecriminaliseBlack – Taking a stand, It's time", and they explained their rationale for such a campaign and call to action as follows:

> "Comrades we find ourselves in the midst of a nation-wide crackdown against black student organising. The Rhodes Must Fall movement has faced continued threats of internal disciplinary action from the University management who sought to engage with the movement on issues pertaining to transformation & curriculum reform while simultaneously holding students and the movement at large under duress with disciplinary charges overhead.
>
> These actions arise in the context of student-led demonstrations from Stellenbosch University, where the Open Stellenbosch collective members face threat of internal processes that are directly an attempt to curtail protest action that has brought to the forefront an important and unambiguously necessary conversation.
>
> These actions arise in the context of a WITS University president who was removed from his position by their Vice Chancellor Adam Habib, who has acted in a manner that has raised serious concerns around the separation of powers between student governance structures and the University management.
>
> These actions arise in the context of a Rhodes University Campus that has in several instances made distinct efforts to aggressively curtail demonstrations by the Black Student Movement.
>
> Throughout history at different moments, student demonstrations have paved the way for radical and necessary conversations and action. It is in the spirit of this moment that we call for Nation-wide solidarity across campuses throughout South Africa to march under a common banner demanding an end to the criminalisation of black students".[540]

The communication and meetings with the newly formed black-led student movements at HWU's had been happening but this event was the first call for unified action on a national scale. Student's in these movements at HWU's started moving between campuses more freely and deliberately, and

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[539] RMF Meeting Minutes, 10 May 2015

[540] RMF Facebook Event Details, 7 May 2015

began recognising the ways in which the various managements were using similar strategies to curtail student activism. Azania Two was also the place that I did a number of my interviews and was the venue where the Writing and Education SubCom's met for the day long workshop to discuss and make decisions about the first collective RMF publication of writings discussed earlier in this chapter under the heading Johannesburg Salon.

RMF through their statement offered a critique of the university stating that if " … the University does not prioritise the needs of those students who are most vulnerable, whose lives have become a proxy for death as a result of 400 years of oppression, then the institution commits itself to protecting those who benefit from that very oppressive system".[541] They continued by explaining that Avenue House therefore:

> " … can no longer belong to UCT alone because the university has failed black students in this regard. Instead of real decolonisation, the university is committed to a process of 'transformation' – a process of liberal paternalism which has left us, 21 years after formal apartheid, asking the same questions about our country: Why is our land in the hands of white people? Why do white people dictate where and how we can live? Why do white people dictate how and what we learn? This University too, belongs to black people and therefore no black student should ever be turned away from a university when it sits on his or her land".

The ownership of land and it belonging to especially black South Africans was interwoven with the question of housing. The statement clearly pointed to the racialised nature of not only land ownership but also the ways in which white people in a "post-apartheid" university context continued to be in powerful decision making positions. The university Management tried to insist that RMF leave Avenue House. RMF responded to this insistence with two letters, one addressed to Prof Petersen (1 May 2015), who for a period took over communicating with RMF, and one to the VC Max Price (7 May 2015).[542] Both of these letters communicated to UCT management that the movement refused to leave their occupation or enter into dialogue or mediation if the threat of disciplinary action was used to coerce them and if the demands they were making on university management were not met. RMF also responded to the claim by management that they were going against the agreement between UCT and RMF after the engagement that resulted in RMF leaving

[541] RMF Statement, The Johannesburg Salon, Volume 9, 2015, 18.

[542] RMF Letter to VC Max Price, 7 May 2015

the Azania One occupation.[543] To this effect, they challenged the management narrative that negotiating with RMF was pointless because they agreed to things and then claimed that the movement was not in agreement about the decisions binding them. They strategically noted the way in which the university had in fact not followed through on its promise to "do everything reasonable to make spaces available on an *ad hoc* basis upon specific requests for venues for a particular time and duration", pointing out that they had requested to use the Archie Mafeje Room in Bremner for the public lecture by Prof Achille Mbembe and that the university executive had turned down this request without providing any reason.[544] Furthermore, with regards to space, the university had until that point not found an "appropriate" space for the movement to operate out of.

RMF went on to challenge the idea that they should be operating out of a space which management would make available through the SRC, seeing this as UCT misunderstanding the movement and its role as related to the SRC and the normative student governance processes. They also sought clarity about the UCT requested "dialogue", in terms of the purpose of such a process, pointing out that to them the request conflated two processes, "… a 'mediated process' aimed at restoring trust and resolving issues between RMF and Management, while at the same time he talks about wanting to 'co-determine a Transformation agenda for moving forward'".[545] They reiterated their openness to mediation but insisted that this could not be done through a coercive process because any "… restoration of trust or resolution of issues cannot happen in the manner proposed, with students being threatened by Management before we even begin talking".[546] They also challenged UCT's insistence that transformation remained the idea that the university organised its change process around, whereas RMF was interested and available rather, for discussion and engagement on the decolonisation of the university. They insisted that once "…Management makes this necessary ideological shift, we are ready to talk".[547] In both letters they resend the RMF statements previously written to make the point that the university management needed to read and actually engage RMF's thinking before they could honestly engage in some form of mediation.

In the second letter RMF reminded UCT that they believed they had done nothing wrong and

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[543] RMF Letter to Prof Petersen, 1 May 2015

[544] RMF Letter to Prof Petersen, 1 May 2015

[545] RMF Letter to Prof Petersen, 1 May 2015

[546] RMF Letter to Prof Petersen, 1 May 2015

[547] RMF Letter to Prof Petersen, 1 May 2015

therefore did not see why they were being criminalised. They go on to propose the following four conditions, which if met would allow them to enter mediation:

1. There will be no disciplinary action pursued by the University against the Movement, or any individuals acting in line with the Movement's objectives, for any and all actions relating to the occupation of Bremner Building, the removal of the Rhodes statute and the current occupation of New Azania House (Avenue House).
2. Management will cease its attempts to remove us from New Azania House (Avenue House) during the course of such mediation, and until an ***agreed upon*** space that has been found after ***consultation with the Movement***;
3. The Movement will ***participate in selecting*** and must agree to the mediator appointed.
4. The University agrees that the mediation will deal with certain issues, particularly the ***issues of space and the meeting of our initial demands*** as outlined in the documents attached in our previous letter.[548]

They end by requiring the university to provide these undertakings in writing and propose that the terms of such mediation are as follows:

1. The mediation will begin on a date mutually agreed upon by the University and the Movement.
2. The mediation will be conducted over a period of time agreed upon by both the University and the Movement
3. The mediation will at least deal with:
   - ***issues of space****; and*
   - ***our initial demands*** as outlined in the documents attached in our previous letter[549]

The second RMF occupation was meant to end after around three weeks when on 18 May 2015 the VC sent out a university wide article[550] announcing that they had made "… an executive decision to grant an amnesty in respect of all protest-related incidents that occurred between the first protest on 9 March 2015 and 18 May 2015. No disciplinary action will be brought against any student or staff

[548] RMF Letter to VC Max Price, 7 May 2015

[549] RMF Letter to VC Max Price, 7 May 2015

[550] Read the full article here https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-05-18-uct-grants-amnesty-to-protesters

member in respect of these events".[551] Of course the amnesty was only applicable according to management if everyone occupying Avenue House left by midday on the 18th.

RMF had however decided at the plenary meeting before the announcement that they would not move from Avenue House and would risk disciplinary and court action from the university. The "… consensus in the plenary was that amnesty is granted to criminals and we haven't done anything so this thing actually doesn't mean much, and we decided to stay and then got hit with an eviction order. Some people got suspended – that was the first round of suspensions".[552] The second occupation differed in a number of ways to the first one but I am interested in the tension that arose between those who wanted to continue to occupy Avenue House regardless of UCT Management's attempts to get them to move, and those who felt it was at some point no longer strategically viable to continue to occupy. The question of what was gained and lost by having a physical occupation was back on the agenda as well as the looming threats of disciplinary action that RMF was trying to avoid. There was at that point however more disagreement between the core RMF members who were keeping the occupation alive than when the question of ending Azania One took place.

What was being debated was the relationship between principle and strategy, in that RMF was stressing the issue of black land ownership and the need for black students, staff and workers to have their own space at university on principle, especially after the long history of land dispossession of black people. A decision based on this principle was taken to stay in the second occupation, which won out over the possibility of a strategic decision to leave the Avenue House occupation and move into Avenue Hall on the same property but in a separate small building. This moment of choosing a principled decision rather than a strategic one meant that the university proceeded with charging RMF students and obtaining a court order to evict students from Avenue House. As it turns out, a few days later, RMF agreed to end the occupation and move across into Avenue Hall, but this would only be possible if RMF entered into a court ordered mediation process with management.[553] Ru explained that the "… way in which we left Avenue house was something that was quite important in that it led to the next thing, which was a period of mediation with university management which had various kinds of repercussions".[554] Alex remembers the period as

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[551] Price, M. *UCT News*, 18 May 2015

[552] Slayan, Follow-up Informal Interview, 2019

[553] RMF Focus Group Interview Transcript, 10 September 2015

[554] Slayen Interview Transcript, 2016

follows:

> "June period started in a very difficult – we were in a very difficult situation because we had just been evicted from Avenue House – had to go through a whole mediation process; the charges would be dropped against students – and then out of that process we had a brilliant programme around Marikana which kind of relaunched the movement in a particular way and led to the end outsourcing moment and then fees must fall".[555]

I will now detail the processes Alex mentions as mediation, Marikana, and the October 6 national protest to end outsourcing.

8.5.2 Mediation begins

The mediation process came about as a result of the critical disruptive work being done by RMF students, workers and staff and the disciplinary actions brought against students by the university. The initial charges laid against four students for the Azania One occupation, was done to force RMF out of the management building. The four students named on the interdict were also the names of the four students that had complained about intimidation and a case of physical aggression by a male Bremner staff member against a woman student.[556] Instead of responding to the complaints by investigating the staff member concerned, the university manipulatively used the names of the four student complainants to lay a broad counter charge relating to the occupation. RMF responded by calling for students to put forward their names in solidarity with the charged students, which eventually resulted in two hundred and forty names and student numbers being sent to management.[557] There was also a call for the university to mediate rather than criminalise students.

The mediation process eventually started mid-July and ended with the signing of an agreement between RMF and UCT Management on 18 August 2015. It was agreed that a maximum of eight people would be represented by each of the parties. The RMF students delegated by the RMF Plenary to attend the mediation sessions were Mase Ramaru, Mbali Matandela, Alex Hotz, Masixole Mlandu, Ru Slayan, Brian Kamanzi, Alex Hendriks, and Thato Pule.[558] The two parties jointly agreed to a two-person mediation team from the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation,

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[555] Hotz Interview Transcript, 2016.

[556] Detailed by Mase's input at the UCT General Assembly in Chapter 7.

[557] RMF Document Strategy for June Mediation, 2015.

[558] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

who convened a meeting for the parties to put forward their respective perspectives. RMF had developed in consultation with the RMF Plenary a terms of reference (TOR) and UCT Management had their own TOR.[559] A joint TOR was agreed to for the mediation, which outlined the scope and broad themes of the debate (RMF Document Strategy for June Mediation, 2015). There were report backs given to the RMF Plenary, and engagement around the way forward with mediation. For many of the RMF mediation team, the experience of being forced into face-to-face meetings with the VC and his management was at one level draining and infuriating but at another it kept them focused on clarifying certain of their positions and the kinds of arguments they needed to make to achieve their desired outcome.[560]

In the first meeting it was noted that only Max Price spoke from management and that later in the process it became clear that there were internal disagreements from the management side. This played out so that when others from the management mediation team did speak, Price would almost want to interrupt them and tell them that they shouldn't have shared the information they just had.[561] Much like the insistence on a certain decorum during for example public panel discussions, Price dictated what respectful engagement should look like. RMF mediation team members recall feeling like this was dishonestly portraying a kind of respectful equality in a situation where power was operating quite differently. They also noted that Price got visibly angry and had to remove himself from the mediation room when they were detailing their experiences of racism and black pain. He apparently returned on this particular occasion and told everyone that he was so angry at them that he had to leave to compose himself. RMF mediators critiqued the resultant engagement from management's side where they tried to speak from a point of "dispassionate, clinical objectivity" and also where they had to be warned about the way they were wielding their own power unconsciously, especially with regards to the way that Price engaged the women RMF representatives.[562]

One of the things RMF wanted to get out of the mediation, in addition to having charges against students dropped, was for management to agree that UCT was racist and that its transformation

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[559] The original Terms of Reference for each party are noted in the RMF Document 'Mediation Planning', which can also be consulted to follow the ways that RMF representatives tried to counter the contentious points raised in the mediation process.

[560] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

[561] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

[562] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

agenda had failed. This was something they outright refused to do in the beginning, then came around to agreeing that they could see how some people may experiences UCT that way, to eventually by the end acknowledging that it was racist. RMF also wanted to ensure that they did not commit in the final agreement to anything that would curtail the movement's ongoing work to decolonise the university and society. The UCT Management according to the TOR and the arguments made in the mediation meetings, wanted to get RMF to (1) formalise a structure so that it could be held to account more easily, (2) apologise to council members for the disruption of their meeting prior to the removal of the statue, (3) admit to the UCT code of conduct and agree that the occupation was illegal, and (4) promise not to disrupt the university in future.[563] They also wanted to show that there was some kind of reconciliation, and that they had rebuilt trust and a rapport with students.

RMF read and argued for a restorative justice approach that did not criminalise resistance and critique, and also instead of agreeing to the rule of law, they asserted that they preferred to speak about and be committed to justice. They argued that the question about who is in need of apology was contentious because they could certainly make a case for the university needing to apologise to students because of the lack of transformation. In the end the three points committed to in the mediation agreement were as follows:

1. UCT Management will permanently withdraw disciplinary charges relating to continued occupation of Avenue House beyond 18 May 2015

2. RMF agrees to identify representatives in order to be able to engage management directly in relation to protest that is possibly disruptive to the normal functioning of the university. RMF will engage with UCT Management prior to such action, ideally face-to-face.

3. In the event that no agreement is reached during the engagement, and disruptive actions arise directly from any protest, RMF recognizes that UCT Management will take action which may include disciplinary measures in line with the university student and/or staff code of conduct. In taking any such action, UCT Management bears responsibility to apply the rules in accordance with UCT's values and in the pursuit of justice.[564]

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[563] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015

[564] Mediation Agreement Document, 18 August 2015

While the mediation process was taking place, RMF continued to engage on panels inside and outside of UCT, in solidarity events with other university campuses, and creating connections and highlighting through the RMF Facebook page, similar protest activities from around the world. What follows will give you a sense of the varied engagements RMF continued to organise and participate in, most notably a public event Disrupting Gender (18 May); discussion with theatre making students on an experimental documentary UMVA (20 May); supporting a workers demonstration (20 May); a conversation on student perspectives on Humanities extended degree programme (21 May); launching the Conscious Soup Kitchen (24 May); a delegation met with fellow student activists in Johannesburg; an online conversation with the National Union of Students' (UK) Black Students Campaign (30 May); Panel discussion on Decolonising the University (20 June); Defacing of confederate monuments and burning of confederate flags in South Carolina USA (22 June); a conversation on sex and sex education between RMF and Peoples' Education (23 June); the debate around the statue of Dr Marion Sims (24 June); Bree Newsome removing a confederate flag in the USA (27 June); a public debate on "Heritage symbols in post-colonial contexts at the District Six Museum" (29 June); a public talk on Youth Activism at Claremont Mosque (6 July); Bigotry Must Fall press conference by Queer Revolution (7 July); an RMF activist representing the movement in Atlanta USA (11 July); the debate and activism of #RMFOxford around removing Rhodes Statue (12 July onwards); Know Your Continent free public history course (starting 1 August).[565]

In addition to these, RMF spent time planning the Marikana Campaign, which took place in August. While UCT management were throughout the mediation process, tone policing, lecturing, pulling into engagement and taking up the time of, what they understood to be RMF core leadership, RMF including the RMF mediation team members were planning their epic Marikana Memorial Campaign. Instead of the mediation process tiring out, assimilating, convincing, and inducting RMF leadership into the institution and its idea of leadership, the RMF mediation team describe the process as inspiring them to continue with their radical activism in service of decolonising the university.[566] They describe leaving hours long mediation meetings to join others at Azania House to report back to the RMF Plenary and also to plan the Marikana Campaign. They were not allowing their proximity to UCT management to sway them from their constituency or the reason

[565] All these engagements can be found on the UCT: RhodesMustFall Facebook Page.

[566] RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015

for entering mediation in the first place. They also realised that much of the intellectual work they had been doing in RMF meant that they were able to engage with the academics, who were also senior managers in the university, in a way that showed them the power of their own critical consciousness to argue and debate.

The RMF mediation team reflected how they had to school Max Price because of the way he was engaging that showed his unconsciousness with regards to his male privilege. They described examples of how in the beginning he would interrupt and talk over especially the women RMF students such that they had to interrupt him to point this unconscious behaviour out. And that when they had done so it became apparent that he "… really hadn't even thought about that until we brought it up. About how that could affect the power dynamics in the room".[567] Mase remembers that it was "… also in those instances that you realise that the people who run this university are so damn clueless. They are so clueless. They sit in their offices and they have the most clinical approach to anything that happens but in terms of having some type of political consciousness. They lack so much of that".[568]

The RMF mediation team made up of some of the most formidable student intellectuals were realising through the mediation process that put them in direct conversation with UCT management and leadership, that the consciousness work they had been doing on themselves and collectively had resulted in them understanding the social and political context of the university much more than the people paid to know and lead the university. Mbali explained that she "… also think[s] they don't realise what a privilege it was to have us in that room because they were clueless about what was going on".[569] Alex's agreed and added "… that [it] is a typical manifestation of white liberalism… they write a statement where they condemning us, but they want to show they want to engage with academic freedom and freedom of expression, so they say it's good that the students are discussing this thing but…". Mbali finishes her sentence "… they also have no clue. I mean after months of protesting they still don't know what students at the university are saying. We have released so many statements, we have been on so many media platforms and as a VC you are making decisions for this institution. How can you not know what's happening?[570] They also realised "… that we

[567] RMF Focus Group Interview, Matandela, 9, 10 September 2015.

[568] RMF Focus Group Interview, Ramaru, 9, 10 September 2015.

[569] RMF Focus Group Interview, Matandela, 11, 10 September 2015.

[570] RMF Focus Group Interview, Matandela, 11-12, 10 September 2015.

have been opening up space for engagement more than these people have".[571]

The mediation process confirmed for RMF intellectuals that they needed to continue to organise conscientisation for themselves and for the broader UCT community in the absence of a university programme to do so. They also became more confident in their intellectual and leadership role, having witnessed first-hand and the limitations of the UCT management.

[571] RMF Focus Group Interview, Ramaru, 7, 10 September 2015.

Chapter 9: Building student-worker solidarity and the class question

Demands related to worker rights were fundamentally part of the student resistance of 2015 and can be seen in the following ten demands related specifically to worker rights listed as long-term demands in the RMF Mission Statement published on their Facebook page on 23 March 2015:

- Implement R10 000 pm minimum basic for UCT workers as a step towards a living wage, in the spirit of Marikana.
- Get rid of the Supplemented Living Level, which prescribes a poverty wage.[572]
- Stop using the Consumer Price Index which ensures that wages never really increase, leaving workers in poverty.
- End outsourcing. The companies must go, the workers must stay.
- There should be no capitalist companies making profits at this public sector institution. Workers must know that their job is safe, has decent working conditions and ensures comfortable lives.
- Education for workers and their families must be free.
- Stop the victimisation and intimidation of workers. No worker must be penalised in any way for supporting and joining protest action, including strike action, at UCT.
- Workers must be able, without penalty of any kind, to refuse work that is a danger or hazard to their health and safety.
- Provide workers with access to services dealing with labour, family, housing issues.
- Provide workers with avenues through which to report and address experiences of racism, sexism and other forms of abuse. These avenues must assist in enforcing legal action against

[572] For more on understanding the Supplemented Living Level and history of SLL at UCT in see honors thesis Budlender, J., (2014). Does UCT Prescribe a Living Wage? : Evaluating the University of Cape Town's prescribed minimum wage for its outsourced workers. https://www.ekon.sun.ac.za/postgradconference2015/budlender_full-text.pdf

the perpetrator.[573]

As one can see, there was an alliance between outsourced workers and students at UCT, which was built over many years through a range of formations. The worker specific demands were included as a central part of the RMF mission statement and demands in the statement writing process detailed above. Some workers and worker leaders were present and actively participated in the RMF occupations and also the public engagements organised or attended by RMF, most notably the Heritage Seminar, UCT General Assembly, the event leading up to the removal of the statue, and importantly the meeting at CAS Gallery where the long list of demands that end the RMF Mission Statement was negotiated. As I have made explicit in each of the moments I have detailed, these meetings always included as one point of reference the experience of black people at UCT, which highlighted some of their shared experiences, while at the same time detailing the differences experienced from one another. The alliance between students and especially outsourced workers developed further as a result of the RMF work done around the Marikana Memorial Campaign and the mediation they were forced into by UCT management, as discussed above under the heading Mediation.

On the very day that the statue was removed, RMF clearly laid out the focus of its ongoing campaign to decolonise the university. Fighting outsourcing was named first, alongside the issue of fees and debt and exclusion of students. Importantly, students continued to include workers struggle on campus in their analysis and action. They also included a critique of what was being taught and who was teaching it by analysing the transformation of the professoriate as unacceptably slow, and the curriculum as almost entirely Eurocentric. RMF was analysing the social context at UCT including issues around the privatisation of the university and the fees and debt this promoted, which related to student life and struggles. They also critiqued the dehumanising practice of outsourcing and what this meant for the lives of poor black workers on and off campus. They continued supporting black academics who remained the minority especially at the higher academic levels of associate professor and professor. They were committed to fighting at an epistemic level, the continued exclusion of ideas and writings from the "Global South" and especially from the African continent through a critique of the Eurocentrism of most of the UCT curricula. Having said all that to introduce the relationship between RMF and workers, I will now focus in on three important protest actions that took place monthly between August and October of 2015, and that

[573] RMF Mission Statement, *The Johannesburg Salon, Volume* 9, 2015, 8.

placed workers issues and solidarity centrally, namely the Marikana Campaign, Piketty protest and October 6 national protest against outsourcing.

9.1 Moment 10: Marikana Campaign – August 2015

When reflecting on the crucial moments after the Azania One occupation, the Marikana week protests that RMF organised to commemorate the massacre of 34 striking mineworkers in 2012, emerged as pivotal in the minds of a number of RMF students.[574] The Marikana Massacre was the bloodiest state sanctioned attack on black South Africans since the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960. Following Valela[575], Naicker and Helliker[576] point out that the moment, which the new iteration of black student movements grew, was not merely a post-apartheid moment but significantly also a post-Marikana moment. They go on to explain that this:

> "… is significant because in many ways it affects the forms and practices of the movement. For example, as with the platinum miners' rejection of the National Union of Mineworkers with its affiliation to the ANC through the tripartite alliance, each of the BSMs in turn has rejected partisan (political party) politics as well as representative structures like their respective SRCs (in the case of Rhodes University and Stellenbosch University); alternatively, they formed autonomous structures even if the university SRC is sympathetic as is the case at UCT and Wits".[577]

The critique of representative democracy and party politics explained above, and the creative and critical praxis that RMF became known for, coalesced into what turned out to be an important week of events that made up the Marikana Campaign at UCT. There were at least a dozen ideas to raise awareness of the massacre but also expose UCT's complicity through the figure of Judge Ian Farlam a UCT Council member and UCT's investments in the Lonmin mining company that the

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[574] I interviewed RMF students in May 2015 and then returned to interview them a year later, where I asked about what in their experience were key moments in RMF's lifespan. What emerged as significant for them were the Marikana Campaign, October 6, TransCollective disruption of RMF Exhibition, Rape at Azania, and Shackville.

[575] Valela, N. 2015. The Rhodes to Perdition: Why Rhodes was never ready for the BSM. *Daily Maverick*. Accessed November 2017 at url: http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-03-26-the-rhodes-to-perdition-why-rhodes-was-never-ready-for-the-bsm/#.VdWfCkWACf4

[576] Naicker, Camalita and Helliker, Kirk. Biko, SASO and Current University Student Struggles in South Africa: A Comparative Analysis of Conditions, Discourses and Practices. Unpublished paper

[577] Ibid, unpublished.

workers were striking against.[578] When listing the general ideas that were circulating from previous RMF Plenary meetings about the Marikana Campaign the first bullet point reads "… Mambush Statue where Rhodes was?".[579] While this replacement did not take place during the Marikana Campaign it did highlight the way in which RMF was thinking about what figure to focus on when considering what to memorialise and actively work to remember at UCT. The other general ideas that had been raised as possible actions to include during the campaign were to

> "… occupy [the public] Rhodes Memorial – seminars performances and lights at night; Rhodes lives on in Lonmin slogan; Bring [Joseph] Matunjwa to speak at UCT; Women's Day and Marikana, gendered perspective on Marikana; Have RMF members speaking on morning radio on the day, write articles for the press; Link up with comrades from Wits; Find out whatever other activities will be happening on the day; International solidarity (from London! Where Lonmin is based)".[580]

Part of the power of the Marikana Campaign was that instead of selecting one of the many provocative and interesting ideas above, RMF worked with the broad black and progressive collective of UCT members to organise a week long Marikana Campaign that brought to fruition much of the ideas they had imagined together. This radical praxis continued to expose the UCT Management and the broader liberal university idea that to be "academic" was to be engaged in endless debates and conversations but no action.

The last time the Marikana Massacre was discussed by RMF was at one of the education SubCom's film screenings during Azania One on 31 March. Most people remember this moment as the night white people were thrown out of the vibrant educational plenary space of Azania House, and many (mis)read this as "reverse racism", "authoritarian", "anti-democratic", and "anti-intellectual". Jonathan Jansen, just a few days ago when accepting an honorary doctorate from UCT was still referencing the moments where black students at UCT insisted on having a space free from the input of even white progressives, in order to think together about their engagement with the extreme anti-black violence that continues through the democratic dispensation. The analysis of non-racialist black people, especially the ones who were given honorary status at universities by affording them roles as university managers, were outraged that students would boldly take the space they needed to organise themselves and following BC, recognise the entailment of white people in the continued

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[578] RMF Marikana Day Planning Meeting Minutes, 2015.

[579] RMF Marikana Day Planning Meeting Minutes, 2015.

[580] RMF Marikana Day Planning Meeting Minutes, 2015

global racialised capitalist system. This argument missed that a diagnosis of the condition of university life and South African life post-apartheid, was one that required anti-racist work, not idealistic dreaming of an equal non-racial society.

One of the most important things I continue to try and emphasise is the way in which RMF, and indeed other student formations from the 2015 period onward, held a radical praxis that insisted on thinking and conversation and action to transform the world by disrupting and exposing the violent and unequal status quo. Central to the diagnosis of the failure of the status quo were the intersecting oppressions caused by capitalism, white supremacy and patriarchy. The engagement with the Marikana Massacre in particular, placed the experience of racism, exploitation and inequality, and sexism squarely on the agenda of any discussion and action intending to honestly and critically engage with the complicity of UCT in this horrific part of our post-apartheid history. Again the tension of holding a more critical, complex and intersectional space both made the Marikana Campaign difficult, but also powerful. In the week leading up to the Marikana Campaign, RMF hosted a conversation with Dr Omar Ricks and Andile Mngxitama titled "Black Lives Mattering: From Marikana to Ferguson".[581] RMF explains that as it "… enters a new phase of development we begin to take stock of the long road ahead and we prepare to build lasting connections, centring Black Pain, as we drive forward the struggle for Decolonisation to its logical conclusion, Liberation", and that the engagement is meant to "… engage with the problem of "Black Lives Mattering" through connecting experiences and struggles all the way from Marikana through to Ferguson".[582]

Farrow argues that RMF essentialises race, in particular black identity and the experiences of black pain, through the use of Eric Garner's expression in the last moments of his life … "I can't breathe".[583] While it is true that RMF clearly and continually centred black pain in its thinking, organising and action, and that there surely were some students who would slip into shallow conceptions of identity, it seems that the RMF archive shows precisely the opposite. It does this by showing how RMF centred blackness and in particular the pain of being black, but that this was always done while attempting to complexify the causes and experiences of such pain. The

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[581] RMF Facebook Event Page, 14 August 2015.

[582] RMF Facebook Event Page, 14 August 2015.

[583] Farrow, D. 2017. Honours Thesis: Rhodes Must Fall and the Politics of Identity in Contemporary South Africa. Cultural Studies, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

conversation leading up to the Marikana Campaign week was not about collapsing the experience of black pain and in this extreme case black death, from Eric Garner being strangled to death by an American police officer allegedly for selling illegal cigarettes, to striking Marikana mineworkers being mowed down with live ammunition by South African police. The constant work done by RMF from its inception was precisely to make space for and try and hold difference, in its statement writing, in particular its mission statement and collective writings, but as you will see with the Marikana Campaign actions, a multiplicity of angles, analysis, methods of protest, forms of expression, and so on. The claim that RMF was primarily identity politics is to take the worst and most marginal parts of the movement, or maybe more accurately was to read from a distance, what many imagined was happening without actually entailing themselves in the process of intellectual development that RMF was on.

The Marikana Campaign is yet another moment where RMF's modus operandi of building a solidarity of purpose across black struggles at UCT to respond to the context of a white liberal institution with a view and commitment to changing it to something better, is well archived. The Marikana Massacre took place three years earlier on 16 August, which fell on a Sunday in 2015. RMF started the memorial day in a plenary meeting at 2pm and placed 34 white crosses across the grass in front of Azania Hall. They announced in a post that "… the #RhodesMustFall movement is hard at work preparing to reflect and put into action our contribution to the project of decolonisation" with an accompanying photograph of a student hammering one of the white crosses into the grass and in the background a circle of red chairs where the reflection and plenary meeting took place. RMF also announced that it would be hosting the birth of the "Blacks Only Church" in Azania Hall at 6pm where Pastor Xola Skosana would deliver "… his sermon titled "Criminals defending imperialism"".[584] They then released a 6-minute short film they had made, which vividly linked the abominable condition of black life in the townships of Cape Town to Marikana and to UCT. The first 2-minutes of the documentary titled "UCT Fails Again: Remember Marikana"[585] shows township life with the poem written and being read out by Nazlee Arbee and Ntebaleng Morake, quoted here in full:

> "Nazlee reads…
> I wonder if sky scrapers
> were built for sinners

[584] RMF Facebook Page, 16 August 2015

[585] View the short film at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VO7mIgyXoM

trying to bridge the gap
between the heavens and the earth.
The slave ships never left
they're prettier this time round.
We've built mansions with our bare hands
and went home to shacks.
The stars glimmer
on the hip of the sky
like a chrome pipe after a fresh murder.
The city is an open wound.
The townships
are an open tomb
a blood bath after birth.
You are slave
because you are black
you are black
because you are slave
for centuries, white men have turned the wombs of black women
into graves
it is the massacre of our existence.

Ntebaleng reads…
You do not matter!
They will slaughter your names, their tongues an axe; cutting you in pieces. Rest in peace follows you around like a haunting ghost. Or maybe not, because you have become the ghost.
I can imagine it hit your spirit like a stone. Paralyzed your insides; your breath on crutches. The muscles of your heart stumbling to keep everything in place. And those tears that rolled down your face uncontrollably served as a reminder that your body and soul are still one.
One! [They were on the floor] They wore their ebony folded faces; the lines on their skins dancing viciously like the Holy Bible in the hands of the poor.
One! We helped the pack, and we were told not to cry because clouds, dark clouds, would follow them.
One! They were gone. Gone to be swallowed by the greedy tummy of the earth; labouring for what could have otherwise become theirs".

The image changes at this point to a video of the Avenue Hall Occupation with the doors open and students assembling in the background. In the foreground is the installation of white crosses scattered across green grass with the images and life details of each of the 34 killed mineworkers. The image most in focus and at the front is the "man in the green blanket" MamBush] Ntebaleng continues…

"One! Neo-colonialism happened. Capitalism happened. Anti-Blackness happened. [Marikana happened]. And slavery kissed them in the cheeks, and shot them when they turned their backs to move.
One! They were on the floor. Dead.
One! They left their homes to make a living, instead making a living took their lives; and they came back as corpses.
One! Their lives were reduced to a hashtag on twitter.
One! She's gone to the same mine that killed him. And she too might not make it alive, like him.
One! One too many. One compromise too great.
One! You do not matter!

Nazlee and Ntebaleng together …

Gun
Clack
Bullet
Shot
Black
Body
Drop
Nothing to see".[586]

At the midpoint the voice of Masixole Mlandu continues explaining RMF's position by announcing that RMF does not only want the Rhodes statue to fall but also his legacy. He informs the viewer that the research that RMF has done highlighted to them the complicity and the UCT management's involvement in the mining industry who are "… partners in crime". At this point the picture changes to one looking out over the Cape Flats with the empty base where the Rhodes statue used to stand. Masixole questions the role of UCT as an institution as the picture turns from the city scape to the university and the Devil's Peak Mountain towering behind the World War 1 and 2 memorial slab and behind it the Marikana (Jameson) Memorial Hall. He confides in the viewer that the evidence found through researching publicly accessible documents detailed UCT's investments in the Lonmin Mining Company, and has resulted in RMF thinking about what "… it means to be in an institution like UCT, which in itself presents the commodification of education. That we are trained to be masters or gatekeepers of white monopoly interests" and "… how the institution safeguards the status quo of our society. He goes on to say that RMF is calling "… out the

[586] RMF Marikana Anniversary Special Collection Complete, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

university's involvement in Lonmin Mines, to say that UCT itself has got blood on their hands" because of "… our brothers who have died in Marikana". He draws attention to the figure of Ian Farlam who chaired the Marikana Commission of Enquiry and was also a UCT Council member.

The short film-statement ends with the RMF demands with regards to the Marikana Massacre being to "… (1) rename the Jameson Memorial Hall to Marikana Memorial Hall in honour of people who have died and in honour of the role that UCT has played in perpetuating and guiding the capitalist interest; (2) we want the university to remove Farlam as … a member of the UCT council … ; and (3) we want the university to write a statement detailing how they are involved in the mining industry and how they have been involved in the commodification of education, to train people so they will be good administrators of an unjust and racist system".[587] The short film-statement closes with an invite to "… join RMF on the 20th of August as we march against UCT's hypocrisy, in solidarity with the slain of Marikana".

The short film-statement made connections between UCT and the Marikana Massacre and in so doing linked the university to the neoliberal process of corporatisation and marketisation. It called out UCT and its involvement with the Lonmin mine accusing UCT of having blood on its hands. It critiqued Farlam as chair of the Marikana commission and part of UCT's council as well as the university's money invested in Lonmin. But it did this by also insisting that through a wider form of writing or expression, including the poetry, the images, and the music selected, we open ourselves not simply in rational conversation, analyses or debate, but also open more of ourselves to the experience of engagement with the massacre. There is a different experience of ideas, questions, statements and demands when it is expressed through multiple forms. These actions called on everyone especially UCT to #RememberMarikana, but also to "historicise and contextualise" this expression of violence, from the State's complicity to the university's, pointing even to the colonial legacy of Rhodes as reflected in "… the bittersweet irony that we discover that the London Stock Exchange listed company, Lonmin, was a former division of the company known as LonRho (London Rhodes)".[588]

The urban guerrilla art collective #TokoloshStencil also remembered the Marikana Massacre and drew attention to UCT through the #UCTHasBloodOnItsHands protest campaign on the N2

[587] RMF short film, Marikana and UCT. August 2015

[588] RMF Marikana Statement, Vanguard Online RMF Complete, 2015

Highway and across the UCT Upper Campus[589], which sparked debate about both the content of the campaigns as well as the methods or form of protest[590], with some arguing that this was vandalism and criminal.[591] The campaign captured national media attention as images of the graffiti protest also spread via social media. Both RMF and #TokoloshStencil critiqued UCT and the ANC-led government through the photograph of the stencil "Ramaphosa Kills" sprayed in red paint; the poem by Asher published as part of the RMF Marikana Special Edition of the Vanguard Online Magazine and read out live on national radio; and newspaper articles quoting Alex and RMF being clear that "… Jacob Zuma and Cyril Ramaphosa have blood on their hands".[592]

RMF hosted an educational event that saw Asanda Benya from the UCT Sociology Department give an input titled "The invisible hands: women in Marikana" on Monday 17 August at 6pm in Azania Hall. The next morning they found "… that CPS ha[d] taken out our crosses! Comrades woke up at the occupation this morning to find the crosses commemorating the 34 slain miners removed from the occupation".[593] People were outraged that security would have removed the commemorative installation of 34 white crosses. At 1pm, RMF addressed a media conference where they read out a fuller statement sharing the research they had done on UCT's links to Lonmin. This statement was published on their Facebook page and later as part of the Marikana Edition of the Vanguard Online Magazine.[594] RMF clarified what they understood decolonisation to mean when they confirm that they see UCT "… as an integral part of the machinery of colonialism, [which] is deeply implicated in the events of Marikana". In addition they detailed their analysis explaining that:

> "the massacre of Marikana lies at the center of the problem of South Africa. The collusion of the state and white monopoly capital has not been clearer since the negotiated settlement

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[589] RDM Newswire, 17 August 2015

[590] See https://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2015-08-17-graffitti-protesters-target-uct-over-marikana-links/ ; https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/marikana-graffiti-stirs-up-debate-at-uct/ ; https://www.news24.com/Archives/City-Press/Tokoloshe-creates-graffiti-for-Marikana-victims-20150430 and http://tokolosstencils.tumblr.com

[591] Hodes, R. 2015. See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-08-20-op-ed-how-rhodes-must-fall-squandered-public-sympathy/#.Ve2Pl52eDGe

[592] The Citizen, 18 August, 2015. See https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/540935/zuma-ramaphosa-have-blood-on-their-hands-uct-students/

[593] RMF Facebook Page, 18 August, 2015

[594] Marikana is why Rhodes Must Fall: Statement on the Marikana Campaign, *Vanguard Online*, 19 August, 2015

that formed the nightmare that is contemporary South Africa - the "new" dispensation".[595]

RMF was remembering the Marikana Massacre as not some anomaly of the post-apartheid period but as central to diagnosing the failure of South Africa's not so new dispensation. Much of what the massacre revealed – pain, exploitation, (neo)colonialism, inequality, and much more – was collated into a second piece of collective publishing by the Writing SubCom, which I will discuss in more detail now.

9.1.1 Vanguard Online Magazine – Marikana Special Collection

The loose collective of students in the Education and Writing SubComs continued to produce writing for popular and social media as well as in this case, a special collection around the memorial of the Marikana Massacre. There was flexibility with regards to being able to include poems, images of mind map style notes, a statement, an audio recording alongside a poem, a case study, and so on. This flexibility was possible because of the kind of platform set up through the online magazine's website. It allowed for different forms of writing, from critical reflections, to poems, to statements, but also audio visual representations of written work. The website was started by Panashe Chiguamadzi and Thato Magano who ran it as an explicitly black space for young people to share their ideas and musings on a range of issues important to this group of South Africans.

The publication of the Marikana Special issue was done as one prong of the RMF organised Marikana campaign in August 2015. This took place alongside a week-long programme. The RMF Facebook page announcement below[596], detailed the Vanguard Magazine Marikana Edition[597] produced by the RMF Writing SubCom.

> UCT: Rhodes Must Fall
> August 19, 2015 ·
> See this week's edition of Vanguard Magazine, compiled by the RMF Writing Subcommittee:
>
> "I do not remember Marikana" by Thuli Gamedze

[595] Marikana is why Rhodes Must Fall: Statement on the Marikana Campaign, *Vanguard Online*, 19 August, 2015

[596] See https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/posts/see-this-weeks-edition-of-vanguard-magazine-compiled-by-the-rmf-writing-subcommi/1618289858446506/

[597] Unfortunately the Vanguard Online Magazine site is no longer live. I have saved in pdf format all the pieces that made up the RMF Marikana Special Collection.

"You do not matter" by Ntebaleng Morake
"Silent - conscious - terror" by Ernie Koela
"Digging.Into.The.Womb" by Mbali Matandela
"The river runs deep" by Brian Kamanzi
"The August Agenda: A Celebration of Violence in South Afrika?" by Shabashni Moodley
"Marikana is..." by Asher Gamedze
"Case Study: Decolonising engineering and preventing another Marikana" by Brian Kamanzi
Video Poem by Nazlee Arbee
"Marikana is why Rhodes Must Fall: Statement on the Marikana Campaign" by RMF

The RMF statement on the Marikana Campaign[598] reminded the reader of the horrific massacre of 34 striking miners from the company Lonmin, by the South African Police as they protested for a living wage. It identified the "… University of Cape Town, as an integral part of the machinery of colonialism, [which] is deeply implicated in the events of Marikana". They also analyse the massacre at Marikana as revealing a central problem in South Africa being the "… collusion of the state and white monopoly capital", which they posit "… has not been clearer since the negotiated settlement that formed the nightmare that is contemporary South Africa - the "new" dispensation". The statement goes on to insist that the state violence expressed through this massacre "… must be historicised and contextualised" and that they understand the "… unholy trinity of our nation's (dys)function" as "… the violence of a) South Africa, b) the state, and c) its police". The statement announced in a more traditional way, that UCT was linked to the Marikana Massacre through investments they had made from their retirement annuity fund into the company Lonmin. It also questioned the connection between Judge Ian Farlam, who chaired the Marikana Commission of Inquiry, and was also a UCT Council member at the time.

Asher's poem "Marikana is…" also posits a complicity between Ramaphosa representing the State and the corporates, and Farlam representing UCT, and Supercare an outsourced company that UCT uses to exploit cheap black labour:

"… marikana is plunder, it is exploitation, oppression, it is the tyranny of capital, the tyranny of the [con]stitution, it is profit, it is starvation wages
marikana is the police, it is the police-state
marikana is cyril ramaphosa
marikana is farlam, it is scape-goating
it is lonmin

[598] Read the full statement here https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/posts/rhodesmustfall-media-statement-marikana-campaignremembermarikanafollowing-the-wa/1617794738496018/

it is uct, it is supercare, it is outsourcing, the contemporary form of labour exploitation
marikana is our history
marikana is our present"[599]

The RMF statement drew attention to the ways in which big mining companies, which Ramaphosa is part of through his former role on the Lonmin board of directors, have invested/donated millions of Rands to UCT and how this has potentially impacted knowledge production:

> "in the engineering, economics and politics departments who house many programmes that propagate a neo-liberal conception of development and society that does little more than prepare them for careers and professions that exist to preserve the status quo and generate white monopoly capital".[600]

Mbali's poem "Digging.Into.The.Womb" speaks to this complicity (Matandela Vanguard, 2015):

> "Dig.
> Cut.
> Bruise.
> Deep.
> The invisible hands of the economy dug into the womb of the black woman.
> And put chains on her existence –
> the black existence.
> These hands dug life out of her womb and left concrete tombstones.
> The mass occurrence of black bodies dropping to the ground is silenced.
> Lonmin platinum has silenced universities and politicians using figures and interest rates that are only a fraction of their colonial gains.
> With gunpowder, colonial greed interferes into black lives to civilize, fix, use, exploit – repeat until dead.
> The police shot, the politician shot but the hand that is unseen is the one that created the battle between black people.
> The invisible hand belongs to the white collar, white face and white structured system".

In this part of the poem she was drawing attention to the complicated nature of exploitation in the "new" South Africa. The way in which a black government oversees and aligns with the corporate sector that remains largely white owned and controlled. But also the complicity of universities who receive endowments, scholarships, and new infrastructure from large companies. Another piece in the Marikana collection further makes this point about complicity under the title "Case Study:

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[599] Gamedze OneStab, Marikana is… *Vanguard Online*, 2015

[600] RMF Statement Marikana Campaign, 2015

Decolonising Engineering and preventing another Marikana".[601] Here Brian suggests that there was little if any space to think outside of the content of the electrical engineering undergraduate curriculum he was part of, in particular no space to think about the relationship between engineering and society, let alone social justice. That he understood this as a failure of the university, which preferred to produce graduates for the market.

In this short reflective piece, he uses his experience as a student to analyse a range of important issues. Interestingly, his reflection raised questions and critiques at multi levels of the South African State, the ANC as political party, the corporate sector, the university, the engineering department, down to the level of the engineering student. He shared his insight into "… the effect that industries can have in the pursuit of knowledge and education", and challenged other engineering students at UCT to work "… in places like this [where] we would need to develop a critical consciousness in order to combat the very basis of the 'engineering' school".[602] He then argues that they "… need to think proactively on the engineer in society historically, in the present and in the future, emphasising complicity in exploitation and providing a path forward away from the machinery of white monopoly capital".[603] He ends by suggesting that especially as there is an increase at a national level of investment into science and technology, engineering students "… must remain critical and circumspect of our positions" in order "… to ensure that we can empower each other to build in light of what has happened and not in spite of it".[604]

The RMF Statement also linked the exploitation of Marikana mineworkers to what they explain as the way UCT was exploiting its workers who were outsourced, both struggling for a living wage as individuals and against the dehumanising practices of employing "cheap black labour". The campaign statement went beyond simply analysing and historicising the issue at hand and reiterated and added to the demands made in the short film by demanding:

> "… the immediate renaming of the Jameson Memorial Hall to Marikana Memorial Hall, the removal of Judge Ian Farlam from council, a statement from the Vice Chancellor condemning the massacre, and the report and submission of a dossier detailing UCT's

[601] Kamanzi, B. Case Study: Decolonising Engineering and preventing another Marikana, *Vanguard Online*, 2015.

[602] Ibid, 2015.

[603] Ibid, 2015.

[604] Ibid, 2015..

relationship to mining corporations in Southern Africa".[605]

Again this RMF statement was doing multiple things. It provided an analysis of the causes of the Marikana Massacre and linked it to UCT via the figure of Rhodes and his involvement through the development of the exploitative mining industry as well as through the continued relationship between this industry and the university's engineering department. It went on to link the analyses of the current conditions, to contextual and historical ones, insisting in a short space that there needed to be action in the world that came out of the analyses and challenged power head on. Points made in the RMF Marikana Statement were also mostly elaborated on and sometimes critiqued in the nine other pieces of writing that make up the collection. The collection was therefore a publicising of the RMF statement to a national and international audience through its online presence. Two of the contributors, Mbali and Asher, were invited onto a national radio station to discuss the views set out in the collection as well as to read one of the poems titled "Marikana is…".

The contributors to the collection were also part of the *Johannesburg Salon Volume 9* collection, and had all, except for Shabashni who was based in Kwazulu-Natal, participated in the collective process of guest editing the 125-page volume of RMF writing. The process of working collectively for this special collection on Marikana was different in that the relaying of the pieces was done electronically and the compilation of the collection was largely completed in Johannesburg where *Vanguard Online* editors were based. The collection was not presented as a unified whole, but rather individual pieces of writing spread across the online platform's various sub-sections of poetry/cultural pieces, analyses/commentary, and opinion pieces.

Thuli Gamedze's piece responded to #RememberMarikana, which troubled RMF's own idea of memorialising a massacre as evidenced by the title "I do not remember Marikana". They argue that the "new" South African produced black middle class (of which they are one) is an unique addition to the "detailed, violent construct of blackness", which following apartheid legislation continues to divide black people into racial categories, which they see as "… an effective tool in preventing the decolonisation of this country". They continue:

> "With this idea of division in mind, I think it might be important to reflect upon the more abstract divisive potentials of white supremacy amongst black people. The conversation around black people possessing (or being possessed by) an oppressed imagination is well

[605] RMF Statement Marikana Campaign, 2015

> into play, and, in relation to the notion of 'Remembering Marikana', I think it is important to consider this imagination, most particularly in terms of its own divisive potential. Because, if there exists a stratification of oppressed peoples, then too, there must exist a parallel stratification of our imaginations".[606]

Thuli's piece is thinking about the future and the constraints placed on the possibilities of imagination, by the oppressive system and hegemonic forces under which we all live. They were also considering the way in which our ideas and actions can work to re-inscribe or constrain some of the potentialities of our activism, both in the action we plan and enact and also the way we think and dream our responses to violence. They point in particular to the way that the "… 'separate-ness' of real life, memory, and imagination is dangerous because it allows us to individualise experience in a way that values the 'isolated' human, over the collective experiences and memories of multiple oppressed people".[607] They go on to ask some pointed and difficult questions to themselves, their RMF comrades and the black middle class at large, relating to the proposition or insistence to "remember Marikana":

> "This inference specifically to 'memory', presumes obviously, the act of remembrance - *an action that situates one's current self outside of the memory itself.* When we say 'Remember Marikana', therefore, who are we actually addressing? And what is it that these peoples' memories signify? Why do we need *them,* in particular*,* to remember?"[608]

I quote at length the end of their piece, which seeks poetically, by repeating the proposition to "remember Marikana" and unpacking what this means, to make the self-critique:

> "'Remember Marikana': When we say 'Remember Marikana', the implication is that we are addressing a faction of society who possess the ability to forget.
>
> 'Remember Marikana': The phrase 'Remember Marikana' therefore, is inherently directed at those who cannot remember anything tangible about Marikana, and who lack the experience to recognise its systemic significance.
>
> 'Remember Marikana' : The instruction seems to imply that the memory of Marikana is a static object that we can all access, and that we should all access. It does not link the memory of Marikana to an imagination governed by the experience of living Marikana.

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[606] Gamedze, T. I do not remember Marikana, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

[607] Gamedze, T. I do not remember Marikana, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

[608] Gamedze, T. I do not remember Marikana, *Vanguard Online*, 2015, their emphasis

‘Remember Marikana’: It plays on ‘human’ choice, appealing arbitrarily to a middle-class ethics whose moral dilemma is either to remember. Or not. It says that three years have passed and that there is danger of this event being ‘forgotten’. It implies that those who can choose to remember are those whose memories matter. In essence, it is a continuation, a re-enactment of anti-black divisive violence because it deepens the stratification of memory between black peoples in making a value judgement on whose memory is important. It gives certain narrative power to black people with money.

‘Remember Marikana’: It does not address those who remember Marikana through their existence in the everyday, those black people whose material livelihood confirms their place of un-humanness within South African society. It does not address those who do not choose whether or not to remember; those who cannot forget. It does not seek to be self-reflexive, but rather it seeks self-affirmation.

‘Remember Marikana’: The phrase falls short in every regard because it over-values my ability to reflect and imagine, putting forth that I might even ‘remember’, and in doing so, it negates the validity of the very existence of the black working class individual who is living proof of systemic crime in which I am complicit.

‘Remember Marikana’: I do not ‘Remember Marikana’. A film documenting the events of the day does not jog my memory, for in my shock and sadness, I am imagining a single day of brutality; I imagine bullets, shouting, and I imagine fear. I imagine extremism, physical violence, and horror. It is a nightmarish, individualised event- it is isolated; it made it on the news.

‘Remember Marikana’: I do not live the everyday of the Marikana Massacre; I do not share in the collective memory of a disinherited black working class for whom Marikana reflects the status quo in ways that should not be surprising. I recognise Marikana as a date not to forget but this is only because I am not living there- I am not living in it.

‘Remember Marikana’: I have the ability to commemorate Marikana because my perception is a two-dimensional one, one of mourning, rather than of ongoing and consistent suffering. I do not ‘Remember Marikana’ but I am given the space to write on it. I do not ‘Remember Marikana’, but a liberal culture, protected by a value-system which prizes representation of existence, over existence itself, allows the educated black middle class to work themselves into such intellectual frenzy that we forget the fact that the majority of our population actually ‘Remembers Marikana’- not through memory nor film, not using the newspapers, and not via the grapevine.

‘Remember Marikana’: Our country remembers Marikana, and is silenced by a sentiment that recognises the narrative only of those who have long forgotten.

‘Remember Marikana’: We need to recognise Marikana in the suburbs, we need to see Marikana at UCT; we need to accept that we are Marikana- not in solidarity but, as the black middle class, a force made specifically as an opposition to the decolonisation of our people”.

Thuli is talking here about time and space. They were calling into question the relationship between the past and the present, and also how distance which is more easily considered through time, was also manifesting in space or the material lives of black people. The space or distance between the black working class and the black middle class is in their view cemented, even expanded, by the process of memorialising or reflecting uncritically on this terrible massacre. They questioned the educational and meaning-making processes of re-membering that could further alienate the black working class by having the writings, movies, reflections, artworks, lectures, thesis on the event (that they explained is not an event but the violent reality of working class black life), done by people who are far away from the lived reality that has produced Marikana. Here again is the question of what distance does and does not do in trying to think critically about a violent and yet historically significant event. Entailing themselves and the black middle class, critically thinking about their positionality and possible complicity in the event and memorialising action (which happens to be of a written and therefore educational form as part of a broader activist repertoire). They end the piece refusing to hide their complicity:

> "'Remember Marikana': I do not 'Remember Marikana' for the very reason Marikana happened - I am the black middle class, and this uprooted twenty-year-old memory has more representative, historical power to speak on blackness, for blackness, than the ancient truth of the material meaning and condition of the black *status quo* now in South Africa".[609]

Through this piece of creative and critical writing I see a grappling with the difficult but important reframing of intellectual and political traditions through the three pillars that RMF identified and used to think again, what radical intellectual work could look like. It demanded a critical engagement with a class critique, while also recognising the racialised nature of the problem. It encouraged self-reflexivity rather than self-affirmation, and named their complicity in the complex oppressive systems that continue to contribute to South Africa being the most unequal place on the planet.

Thuli's brother Asher Gamedze grappled with similar questions about time and the complexity of a black government overseeing the oppression of the black majority when he started his poem explaining what "Marikana is…":

> "marikana is the everyday reality of contemporary south african life

[609] Gamedze, T. I do not remember Marikana, *Vanguard Online*, 2015, their emphasis

> marikana is the contemporary reality of everyday south african life
> it is the very foundation on which our country is built
> it is cheap labour
> it is cheap black labour
> it is white capital
> it is white minority capital
> it is in post-reform apartheid where a few black faces obscure the true structure of the white supremacist superstructure
> in post-reform apartheid where those few black faces allowed access to the exclusive fruits of plunder, buttress, legitimate and preserve the structure of the white supremacist superstructure
> marikana is the pitfalls of the african national congress, the pitfalls of transition, the pitfalls of a negotiated settlement
> it is the sunset clauses and the success of the late apartheid reform strategy
> it is the shattering of skew discourses of freedom that serve to conceal society and its violent reality
>
> marikana is whiteness
> the wilful ignorance of privilege
> the blissful arrogance of ignorance: it is privilege and the violence on which that system exists
> it is monopoly mining capital, it is cecil john rhodes
> it is the reason that rhodes must fall"[610]

While the Marikana Massacre has been understood to speak to the critical intersection of race and class through white supremacy and the failure of the black government to institute a more socially just democratic order, RMF insisted on also understanding the importance of including a critical engagement with the gendered nature and repercussions of the massacre. Shabashni Moodley's contribution to the collection titled "The August Agenda: A Celebration of Violence in South Afrika", reflected on the research of Asanda Benya, a member of the UCT BAC, which focused on the multiple and interconnected struggles by women of Marikana prior to the 2012 massacre, and explored how they had to fight for recognition in the processes after the massacre. This erasure of women's reproductive labour is not new. The piece discusses two dates on the August agenda of South Africa, meant to contribute towards social justice - 9 August Women's Day and 16 August Marikana Memorial. It raises the uncomfortability of mainstreaming the fight for women's rights into a national public holiday. She laments that:

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[610] Gamedze OneStab, Marikana is… *Vanguard Online*, 2015

> "… [t]he insistence that we 'celebrate women' is directly proportional to a patriarchal, neo-colonial, corporate agenda that simultaneously seeks to harm, hollow - out and vulnerabilize Womyn. It makes life a living hell for Womyn by commodifying their bodies, alienating their bodies, over-burdening their bodies, using excessive force against their bodies, thereby, pushing them to submit to exploitation".[611]

She connects the struggles of women across various sites where she explains that it:

> "… does this [to] the Womyn on the farms of DeDoorns, Franschhoek Estate and Klapmuts. It does this to the Womyn Traders on the streets of Durban, Johannesburg and Cape Town by confiscating their livelihood goods. It does this to undergraduate Womyn who are raped during orientation week at universities. It does this to Womyn who use transactional sex to secure a place in university residences. It does this to black-lesbian-queer-trans Womyn by raping and murdering them. And, it does this to the Womyn of Marikana".[612]

Focussing on Marikana, without ignoring the ways that women and gender non-confirming queer people are exploited everywhere including at universities, she explained the way Benya's work detailed how migrant women who come looking for work on the mines are "… confronted by a paternalistic, bureaucratic web" created by the mines requiring proof of community based residence; the power that lies with the local chief to either afford or deny such proof based on many women's "migrant" status; and the resultant push of women towards domestic partnerships with men who work on the mines. Supporting the mine workers though their reproductive labour, Marikana women were and are hidden from the imaginations of the effect of the massacre. She ends her piece by drawing into the patriarchal web the figure of Jacob Zuma, the sitting president of South Africa at the time of her writing the piece, and Ian Farlam the man leading the Marikana Commission of Inquiry for the South African government. She highlights the ways in which these two men and the "… conduct of Ian Farlam particularly, his attempt to disregard and invisibilize the voice of Marikana Womyn" … make UCT complicit in the violence of erasure and exclusion of the women of Marikana.[613] She echoes the call for Farlam to be removed from the UCT Council. This reflective piece engages the scholarship of Benya as well as popularises her work to a broader audience, in addition to having hosted her to do a lecture as part of the campaign week.

A section of Mbali's poem also addresses the complexity of the experiences of the women of

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[611] Moodley, S. The August Agenda: A Celebration of Violence in South Afrika, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

[612] Moodley, S. The August Agenda: A Celebration of Violence in South Afrika, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

[613] Moodley, S. The August Agenda: A Celebration of Violence in South Afrika, *Vanguard Online*, 2015

Marikana:

> "Marikana weeps as she drinks her own blood again, while the ancestors watch the miners relive their lives as slaves.
> The women of Marikana wept, mourned and died on their knees as parts of them were scraped out like the residues of a depreciated tool –
> worthless.
>
> The black womb will never recover from the 16th,
> where the politician turned a blind-eye to the trauma of black widowhood because BEE benefits needed to be secured.
> The black female is still being beaten to her knees by the chains of production, but the masochistic
> And misogynistic politician watches his profits accumulating.
> Rand – dollar, Rand – pound and Rand-Colonialists.
> She is pounded into non-existence and she hardens for survival.
> Survival is the only currency she has in a society that values life according to the JSE markets and white standards".[614]

Asher's poem "Marikana is…" adds to the complexification of understandings of oppression:

> "… marikana is migrant labour, the destruction of the fabric of black social life: it is the destruction of the black family, simultaneously, the engendered construction of the black family, gendered labour - paid and unpaid. it is drunk absentee fathers, hostel raids, invisible women, urban alcoholism, hut tax and eleven-month contracts
>
> it is the bantustan, the rural slum, the labour reserve, the decentralised space of black reproduction… of misery, death, and the funeral dirge
> [out of view]
>
> marikana is unseen, decentralised misery; the reproduction of black death
>
> it is the structural violence of the suburbs: the old black woman who, on one crutch, with help from her grandson, feebly hobbles to my door, and asks me for money. it is she who is the surplus of the system, one of the blacks that capitalism spat out - surplus to its requirements".[615]

The collectively published special Marikana edition popularises the critical debates that RMF were having with themselves, and in conversation especially with black academics working on the issue.

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[614] Mtandela, M. Digging.Into.The.Womb, *Vanguard Online*, 2015.

[615] Gamedze OneStab, Marikana is… *Vanguard Online*, 2015

It also contributed to extending the conversation beyond UCT and the social media realm where the RMF short film was circulating, by taking the conversation onto national radio, and holding a media briefing, as well as connecting with activists holding Marikana memorials, marches, and other actions. A number of photographs were shared via the UCT RMF Facebook page, which highlighted the Marikana graffiti around campus including the stencilling, onto the World War memorial plinth, which stands directly above where the Rhodes statue stood, of the now iconic MamBush man-in-the-green-blanket with the words Marikana 16 August on its one side and Remember Marikana on its other. There was also a provocative question sprayed in red paint with one word on each of the six pillars at the front of the Jameson Memorial Hall, which read "MAX PRICE FOR BLACK LIVES?". This question implicated UCT and its VC Max Price by asking what the maximum price for black lives where, especially in a context where UCT had invested pension funds into the company Lonmin that employed the striking mine workers killed while continuing to outsource poor black workers.

Two further events were planned as part of the campaign. The first was an evening conversation at 6.30pm on Wednesday 19 August 2019 at Azania Hall. The event was titled "Conversations on Justice for Marikana" and the event page details section explained: (UCT RMF Facebook, August 2015):

> **Details**
>
> "The Rhodes Must Fall Movement invites conversations around what Justice for Marikana will mean in light of the different positions of black organizations at UCT on this issue. We encourage all members or formers of RMF to attend so that we can robustly debate one another and determine a way forward.
>
> We open special invitation to black students from Trans-Collective, Queer Revolution, SASCO, ANCYL, PASMA, EFF, ALUTA, InkuluFreeHeid, DASO and any other black students from political movements who wish to participate.
>
> We reaffirm that this conversation is to determine a way forward through constructive and honest conversation beyond the protection of social media.
>
> BLACKS ONLY"

Alex remembers that "… there was a lot of antagonism that happened in that week" and that "…

Marikana was the first time we explicitly, as RMF, where anti-ANC or put the blame on the ANC, which obviously triggered SASCO".[616] Brian added that RMF had "… tried to make an event also to speak to some of the political organisations on campus and we made it explicitly clear that only black students would be allowed to come through".[617] The attempt by RMF to bring together black people at UCT from different formations to have a critical conversation about justice for Marikana, highlighted the ideological character of RMF expressed through the framing of its decolonising work as an intersection of BC, pan Africanism and black radical feminism. RMF had managed up until this point to remain non-partisan and individual participants had left their political affiliations at the door, although one could make informed guesses about the people who were politically affiliated by the hand signals they used and the revolutionary songs they sung. These signifiers were definitely also shared across political affiliation that was unusual, even resulting in a combined fallist hand signal being created, which created a hand salute with the three inside fingers of the hand held straight. The part of the South African National Anthem that came out of the anti-apartheid movement was also remixed into what later became known as the Decolonial National Anthem.[618]

The invitation to talk honestly about Marikana did however open the old fault lines between very explicitly the ANC and the PAC that can be seen in their different responses to the RMF invitation below:

> "SASCO UCT statement
>
> We note the invitation to attend the debate on Marikana by RMF. SASCO is an organization that is bound by its own constitution where it clearly stipulates in section 4(b) the principle of non-racialism. Section 5(2) of our constitution again states that one of our primary objectives are to promote unity. We therefore cannot be part of a discussion which seeks to alienate other groups. Also note that we mourn the death of ALL lives lost during the miners' strike in Marikana. We too seek justice for ALL the lives that were lost . We welcome the commission of inquiry and its processes as one of the means that are being used to seek justice. We furthermore encourage SASCO members , in fact all PYA members to attend talks and engage in debates hosted within faculties as well as by the Marikana Forum. We are currently busy with plans on how we can better serve students of UCT.

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[616] Hotz, A. RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

[617] Kamanzi, B. RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

[618] Gillespie, K and Naidoo, L. (2019, b). Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa. In *The South Atlantic Quarterly 118:1*, January 2019

Forward the workers struggle Forward!"[619]

And then:

> "Marikana massacre is close to our dear hearts, it reminds us as black People that we live in an occupied land, a land that rejects our worth and mask our pain in all kinds of concepts : Rainbow Nation, Human Rights Day, Youth Day etc.
>
> The Pan Africanist Student Movement of Azania welcomes the invite of a black space about black issues. If we are to antagonize the white arrogance that exist in our country, which black folks have become the maintenance tools of, we will need to have these conversation within ourselves. Realizing that our suffering is not accidental but a designed machinery to produce a capitalist labour force and having realized that the student struggle is an integral part of our national liberation struggle.
>
> We therefore call upon all members, supporters and sympathizers of PASMA to soldier on with the RMF movement as we fight in the name of those black bodies who nourished the tree of African freedom with their blood in Marikana.
>
> Yours in the struggle,
> Athabile Nonxuba
> Chairperson
> UCT PASMA"[620]

This highlighted the differentiated way that people through their political party formulations of understanding oppression, positioned themselves on the question of white people. RMF with its strong BC orientation was clear on the need following Biko, to critique the white liberal and regain voice and power for black people, not by silencing white people but by creating caucus spaces where black people could think for themselves anew about the liberation of black people. The split between the ANC and PAC stemmed from how these two political organisations and traditions dealt with the land question and the race question, with the ANC choosing an alliance with the SACP including the many white members and the PAC insisting on black independence and return of the land to those who were dispossessed.[621] At the core, RMF had chosen an anti-racist position and in so doing critiqued and showed up the shortcomings of the non-racial or post-racial project of the ANC's rainbow nation mythology. Mbali noted that it "… showed that … all the different

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[619] (FACEBOOK reference, sic, 19 August 2015)

[620] (FACEBOOK reference, sic, 19 August 2015)

[621] Gillespie, K and Naidoo, L. (2019, b). Between the Cold War and the Fire: The Student Movement, Anti-assimilation, and the Question of the Future in South Africa. In *The South Atlantic Quarterly 118:1*, January 2019

stakeholders … that were part of RMF let go of their partisan politics, but in the Marikana week the SASCO became that stakeholder that used to exist, that chose their party over the politics of the movement".[622]

The campaign culminated in the RMF Marikana solidarity march on Thursday 20 August 2019, with the following programme:

> "UCT: Rhodes Must Fall
> August 20, 2015 ·
> Reminder -
> Programme as it stands -
> 12.30 - Assemble at Bremner
> 12.40 - Handing over of demands
> <March from Bremner to Marikana Hall>
> 13.00 arrive at Marikana Plaza
> 13.10 Address by RMF
> 13.15 Poem by Nazlee Arbee & Ntebaleng Morake
> 13.20 Mama Judith
> 13.30 Comrade Mathunjwa & Guest"[623]

The tension from the day before spilled over as Mbali noted that you "… really saw party loyalists coming up one after the other, and eventually it got to a point where at the march the SASCO members were calling each other to leave the march so they were rounding up all their comrades to leave".[624] Besides the normative action of the march and handing over of demands, the programme included the carrying of the 34 white crosses that had been symbolically placed outside Azania Hall on the day of the massacre, then stolen by UCT security, then found and carried along as the march was also somewhat of a memorial procession. It included Mohamad scaling the Jameson Memorial Hall to hoist a green blanket in place of the UCT flag as a symbol of Marikana. It also included the reading of a poem, and importantly two speakers from outside of the university community to address the march. RMF explained that:

> "… comrade Joseph Mathunjwa from AMCU, who was instrumental in the broader Marikana solidarity efforts on the ground and around the country, will be flying in to Cape

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[622] Matandela, M. RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

[623] UCT RMF Facebook Page, August 2015

[624] Matandela, M. RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015.

Town to join us in the March and will address us as part of our programme.

We have also received word that comrade Mama Judith, who is an activist and community leader of the Marikana settlement in Phillipi, will also join and address the march as we charge forward in holding our institution accountable in an effort to push for solidarity to Marikana and to drive forward broader calls of decolonisation both within UCT and beyond".[625]

The collective reflection done by RMF members in our focus group interview, who were also part of the RMF mediation team, explained and clarified the importance of the march and the campaign more generally as follows:

Masixole: And also the interesting thing about Marikana especially the march was how at some point we thought that the movement didn't have masses, so we had to pull in many numbers to come and protest. Because most of the mobilisation happened so fast, and we didn't really go in saying, door to door, res to res, it was word of mouth. But people pulled through so to me it showed how even our perception of the movement internally, blinds us from seeing that we still have some sort of support outside and people pulled through. Unexpectedly so.

Mase: I think for a very long time as a movement, we have been having conversations around extending the narrative beyond just UCT and obviously other campuses and other universities, which is already happening, with the formation of many other different movements on different campuses. But I also do think that it kind of actualised the conversations that we had been having about moving out and exploring and extending the narrative outside of us because that means we have built relationships with potential allies who can make that happen. Who can ensure that the conversation around decolonization doesn't just stay at UCT or in RMF but it becomes a national conversation, which I think was a big deal also having Joseph Matunjwa there, because it also extends the narrative that means that the conversation about Marikana is not just had by RMF or by students but it's had on a bigger scale. There is recognition that when we speak about a decolonial project, it exists at campus, yes of course we said and were speaking, we said a lot about Farlam and his association to UCT and UCT's silence around the Marikana massacre, but it is also about sparking action and making the conversation around decolonization, making it national, which I think Marikana was able to achieve for us. At this point, maybe those conversations are had in isolation, or people are still having them amongst themselves nationally, but the most important thing is that it is happening, and it happened, and it was a project of RMF… we can say this movement is still going to carry on because it is bigger than us and it is bigger than the individuals in the movement, and bigger than the in-fighting, or the squabbles or whatever. And if it is not us then someone else is going to take

[625] UCT RMF Facebook Page, 19 August 2015

it forward. The people who have joined us in this movement will take it forward. I think it was also a shift for the movement because at that point, that is where we kind of said well this conversation is not ours alone anymore. Or it is not ours, it's much bigger. It's not in our hands.

Brian: We didn't try to control it.

Mase: And I think it's a good thing because we have been thinking about not controlling it.

Alex: I think also what I have noticed about what RMF has done… Not only is it channelling and challenging a narrative and presenting a narrative, but … the left is having to reimagine itself and say this is not working, … going to march outside parliament in the same way we do all the time. And all these mailing lists, and class, class, class, class, class, … and fighting amongst themselves, they having to rethink how they fit into this narrative actually? Where are we? Because I think we are also saying, partly yes you are experienced and you have done this but your way hasn't been working. So how do you fit in, where do we fit? I think it has been very interesting to watch on a national level how these conversations are playing out.

Mbali: I think what was interesting for me is how Marikana week actually made the movement look at itself critically. Our relationships with the workers had really, it was really weak before Marikana week and even after the week was over, we had to sit back and look back and look at some of the blind spots. The blind spots that had sort of side lined the workers' demands, some of our blind spots, when we had taken the workers' demands into our own hands instead of letting them speak for themselves. Out of Marikana week we formed a new task team for workers and these are people who were set out to speak to the workers and sort of have the mandate to ensure that our relationship with the workers is quite strong.

Mase: … I think that it forced us to recognise that we allowed that relationship to deteriorate. Because we do actually have quite a strong relationship with the workers and we have had a very lengthy and fruitful relationship with the workers but for a very long time we have from our side we have not been stepping up the way that we should have.

Alex: That is because we haven't been stepping up the way we should have even in other spaces, to be honest.

Mase: … what Marikana Week actually did for us, it allowed us to actually say we are doing something wrong here. We have this great relationship with workers but we not working hard to maintain it. So how are we going to move forward? And how are we going to ensure… Because today I even met up with Mr X and Mr Y and they were quite happy that RMF was back having a conversation with them. And I think it is so important because … it is one thing for us to speak about Marikana mine workers, and the workers in isolation like they not there. But it is another thing to recognize that they are there and they are very open to that interaction, but we should also remember that that openness means that they have to

lead it.

In trying to better understand the importance of the shifting of focus to engagement with workers I asked, "how does that relationship work? Is it a case of there has been a long relationship and RMF is now stepping in to lead around it?" And they responded (RMF Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015):

> Mase: I think we have been clear from the get-go, that our relationship with the workers is one of solidarity and we will take the lead from the workers and we can't be leading them. Even from Azania One, having discussions about centralizing the outsourcing campaign was around, so we needed to consult with the workers and kind of understand how they want to move forward around that because the movement in itself forces us to check ourselves. To check those blind spots and to check ourselves and say it is not our fight to fight, but we can be there to be co-conspirators and to be allies.
>
> Brian: But on the other hand though, we are pushing our own avenues from our own position and I guess the next month will show how, or if those things bear fruition. We are not, it is also not true to say that we are submitting to their leadership.
>
> LAN: So you struggling with people basically?
>
> Brian: We not struggling, ja we are like walking together
>
> LAN: You walking together, and you organising together?
>
> Masixole: Ja, and I think also speaking to Marikana week and the workers, to me it was very interesting to also see people who are anti-black in the middle of the Marikana week. You had the ANC youth league outside condemning the RMF by saying Zuma and Ramaphosa are involved [in Marikana]. Articles were coming out and [social media] statuses were coming out. From people who are RMF members from the beginning. Now when we speaking about your own political party being involved you start to hold back. But also what brought, also in that week, the issue of class within the movement,… can we now be allowed to lead the struggle for workers, can we see workers as people in isolation? What happens to members of us, who their mothers are still working here. Can we take that fight on, hence this thing of struggling together and hopefully the fruits will bear next month if things happen in the way that we want.

The mediation process and the Marikana Campaign, which were overlapping processes brought huge learnings for RMF. They continued to support the struggles of other BSM's importantly sharing the #OpenStellenbosch student-made documentary on experiences of racism at the

University of Stellenbosch[626] and supporting Chumani Maxwele at the Western Cape High Court where he was challenging his UCT suspension.[627]

9.2 Moment 11: Piketty Protest – 30 September

RMF had creatively been disrupting the status quo at UCT for the previous half a year and had come out of a week-long campaign, highlighting the plight of black mine workers. They connected the Marikana massacre to critiques of the ANC-led Government and its complicity with the mining sector, but also UCT through its connection to Lonmin and council member Ian Farlam, who chaired the Marikana Commission of Inquiry. They were also starting to connect the exploitation of black workers on the mines to the exploitation of black workers on the UCT campus through the practice of outsourcing. This kind of critical connective work was exposing the multiple ways that they and we are all complicit with the problematic status quo - hegemonic entailment - even as they/we try not to be. RMF also complexified the content and form of its analyses and message as it had been doing, from the poo protest. Performative protest that is not backed up or anchored by collective radical consciousness and education work will fall flat. RMF had been doing the critical reflective work, which supported the radical praxis work in a consciousness exploding period for themselves and many others.

RMF had been highlighting the inequality on campus between black students, workers and staff and their white counterparts also exposing the white institutional culture, which worked to produce this normalised inequality. They were making connections between oppression and violence out in the world and the ways in which they and the university they belonged to if not actively perpetuated this violence then inadvertently contributed to it. It would come as no surprise therefore that RMF along with the LSF planned to disrupt the high profile lecture to be hosted in the Jameson Memorial Hall that RMF had just a month earlier renamed the Marikana Memorial Hall. This was a hall where they had led the truth telling that occurred during the UCT Assembly detailed in Chapter 8. They were about to speak their truth to not only the renowned French economist Thomas Piketty, who specialised in inequality and was set to deliver via Skype a lecture titled “Income, wealth and persistent inequality”, but importantly also Trevor Manuel, the ANC leader who had overseen as Minister of Finance, the transition from RDP to GEAR, which created the conditions for cementing

[626] UCT RMF Facebook Page, 22 August 2015

[627] UCT RMF Facebook Page, 24 August 2015

South Africa as the most unequal country in the world. Included in the line-up of speakers were the sitting VC Max Price and the previous UCT VC Njabulo Ndebele, with additional academics from across the Western Cape universities, set to give inputs on inequality.

"As it turned out the most compelling people to take the stage were students from the Rhodes Must Fall movement (not on the official program of course)".[628] Some of the posters held up by the students who stood silently across the stage read "Workers' rights and left action; revolution not reform; end exploitation at UCT; Rhodes Must Fall; Marikana Memorial Hall". When Trevor Manuel ignored the protestors, students left and returned in a more disruptive fashion singing struggle songs. After a brief negotiation with Max Price a woman student representative was given a few minutes to deliver a statement from the podium, after which they left the event. A number of journalists who were in attendance wrote about the disruption and RMF sent a statement to the *Daily Maverick* online publication, detailing why they had undertaken the action, which they call "consciousness-raising", explaining what they were demanding and why, and insisting that the struggle against injustice and inequality would intensify if the university did not respond on the side of justice.

Again, they were producing intellectual work that was entailing and positioning themselves and the institution they formed part of, and were performing the three tasks ascribed by Wallerstein of analytical, moral and political tasks of intellectual work.[629] They were also critiquing and vividly exposing the way that the liberal university and its academised forms could be so dishonest in its own work. Strangely, the *Daily Maverick*, which usually publishes whatever is sent to it, decided not to do so with this RMF Statement, and instead allowed someone else named Marilize Van Der Merwe, to write what later became a two-part piece on the Pikkety protest (1 October 2015) and then the #October6 protest (6 October). She mentions in the first article that the RMF "… statement is nearly 1,500 words long, so it's not feasible to quote it in its entirety", but one wonders why the Daily Maverick didn't publish the RMF statement, which explained in detail why they undertook the action and how they engage Pickett's writings and critique them.[630] It could not be about word count, as previous articles by Hodes and others, and Van Der Merwe's piece itself, were over the

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[628] Stanwix, 2015

[629] Wallerstein, E. "The Sociologist and the Public Sphere." In *Public Sociology: Fifteen Eminent Sociologists Debate Politics* edited by D. Clawson, R. Zussman, J. Misra, N. Gerstel, R. Stokes, and D. Anderton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 169-175.

[630] Van Der Merwe, Daily Maverick, 1 October 2015

1500 word mark, but this didn't seem to be a limitation on their access to having their ideas and reflections published.

At the beginning of the statement, RMF took on the white liberal institution and its liberal intellectuals when it posited that:

> "Although many may wish to deny it, the year of 2015 in Higher Education at historically white institutions has been the year where "Decolonisation" has been thrust into the tired imaginations of administrators and "intellectuals" who have failed to lead South Africa towards a more positive trajectory and have succeeded spectacularly in developing one of the single most unequal societies on the planet".[631]

With this paragraph, RMF questioned whether academics were in fact "intellectuals" and critiqued their work as reflecting "tired imaginations" who had failed in the task of imagining and creating through their work and engagement a new South Africa. They go on to link this disruption to their previous work and announce the new focus of their attention:

As the discourse surrounding "decolonisation" thrust forward by this particular movement begins to gain traction both nationally and internationally, we have begun to push harder on our commitment to the exploited and outsourced workers at UCT - whose voices, like ours, have been brutally suppressed for far too long.

This campaign against outsourcing is undertaken with clear continuity from RMF's campaign demanding justice for Marikana in light of our home institution's complicity through its persistent exploitation of workers, and it's continued investment in a colonial legacy of social, political and economic violence that it steadfastly refuses to take responsibility for.[632]

The statement then details the history of outsourcing at UCT and exposes that the "… ideological motivation for the introduction and continuation of this exploitative practice is the idea that universities should be run as businesses, focusing on their 'core function'- academia. Workers and the jobs they do are deemed 'peripheral' and handed over to external companies to manage".[633] The statements that RMF write are not merely announcing an issue with some analyses and demands. They are detailing and relating the ideas to the practices of their own institution and as is shown by

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[631] RMF Pikkety Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[632] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[633] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

the next quote, revealing students' complicity by explaining that " … the justification given by the management of these institutions for this practice is to decrease costs to keep fees low for the sake of students - almost all of whom are unaware of the conditions workers are facing in their name".[634] They do the same with regards to the UCT management's complicity by going on to demonstrate with a practical and local example of how "… all [the] while these same administrators take home salaries which are sometimes, as with many university vice chancellors such as Max Price, in the order of millions of rands.[635] They take some time in their statement to engage Piketty's work but point out the hypocrisy of the event by sharing the life details of the person after whom the lecture venue, Jameson Hall is named. The work of exposing the hidden curriculum at the university that allows for the continued memorialisation of people central to the colonial project, seeks to bring to the fore for critical engagement the ways that the university contradicts itself by speaking with one tongue and acting in opposition to this. They, for example highlight that Jameson:

> "… was a medical doctor in the late 19th century … who had used his reputation to facilitate the dispossession of Africans at the hands of none other than Cecil John Rhodes. This, among many other dimensions of Jameson's legacy including acts of targeted violence provide the backdrop through which the #RhodesMustFall movement is prompted to reject his memorialisation, particularly in the context of a conversation with an author such as Piketty, whose central thesis addresses the issue of legacies, inheritance and their relation to capital".[636]

Then possibly also responding to a critique by Max Du Preez on Twitter ("Does #rhodesmustfall disrupters of Piketty video link at UCT even know what his theories are & what he said about #Marikana?"), they explain that:

> "the #RhodesMustFall movement is acutely aware of Piketty's case study on Marikana in his acclaimed book, "Capital in the 21st Century". We critique his failure to adequately consider the intersectional dimensions of the people involved – be it race, gender or otherwise. Nonetheless, the fact remains that his conclusions surrounding inheritance and its relationship to growing inequality can and will be taken through to their logical conclusion by RMF and other revolutionary organisations".[637]

Another point made in the statement and announced during the brief time given to them on the night

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[634] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[635] Some of these ideas were to be seen on placards that would be carried at the October 6 march.

[636] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[637] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

to address the attendees, was to pay respects to a Supercare outsourced worker, Mam'Victoria "Dledle" Luzipho whose "… death went unacknowledged by the institution but was reported on by UCT multilingual student newspaper Vernac News. In their words: May your soul rest in peace Mam'Victoria. Sizohlala sikukhumbula". The Max Price for black lives was again in question. What did it mean that UCT could host lectures and conferences on inequality and at the same time practice outsourcing, which could only exacerbate and cement inequality inside its own institution?

They continued by pointing to the work being done towards a more national campaign against outsourcing that they and other progressive UCT formations have joined in making this clarion call and they explain the importance of "… our collective conceptualisation of a truly decolonised university". They acknowledge the relevance of this work relying "… heavily on the ongoing work initiated by progressive staff, student and worker organisations at the University of Witwatersrand and the University of Johannesburg in calling for an end to outsourcing across public institutions, along with the immediate implementation of a dignified living wage".[638]

The Piketty protest was an "… opportunity to pressurise the university into providing the material substance and political will required to improve this deeply unjust landscape in which the ivory tower of UCT finds itself". It was also a week prior to the planned national day of action against outsourcing. RMF made the broader public aware that "… as UCT is presently in an active dispute with the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) over demands that seek to tangibly change the living conditions of workers at the institution", and it strategically announced that they expected a decision to be made regarding the dispute, likely to ensure that the university did not just continue with the years of ad nauseam talks it had managed to hold with protesting workers, students and academics around the outsourcing issue.[639] They prompted the university to have some answers at the council meeting scheduled to take place before the national day of protest insisting that the "… decision of the university regarding the dispute will be released by the University Council on 5 October 2015".[640] The disruption of the Piketty lecture, the statement read out during the disruption, the media interviews and engagement, and the statement that RMF wrote[641], all sought to expand the "business-as-usual" "engagement" with social justice

[638] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[639] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[640] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[641] in solidarity with Decolonise Wits, UCT NEHAWU Joint Shop Stewards' Council (JSSC), the UCT Workers

and transformation issues, which remained largely in the realm of ideas put into a false or limited action in the age old university form of "talk shops" purporting as contributing to understanding, thinking, and writing that contributed to change. They insisted that you needed to read differently, including reading and listening seriously to the experiences of those you seek to think, talk or write about. They insisted that you needed to write differently, speaking to the experiences, including analysis and questioning, but importantly entailing oneself through some self-critique, and then insisting that the research work, the writing work, the public engagement work, also include timeous action.

The Daily Maverick interviewed Kylie Hatton, UCT's Deputy Director of Communication and Marketing, for a response to RMF's statement and actions. She proceeded to affirm the university's age-old processes that RMF had spent the 2015 year critiquing and exposing as insufficient. In her own words the:

> "… University of Cape Town, in partnership with the Nelson Mandela Foundation and three other Western Cape tertiary institutions, hosted an event on 30 September 2015 to discuss poverty and inequality, as part of UCT's ongoing strategic initiative to address this topic and seek out solutions to this growing problem in South Africa. Many of our academics work in this field and it is precisely because UCT is committed to addressing these problems that we were honoured to host one of the most important current global thinkers on inequality".[642]

She missed entirely the critique of liberal academic form in sufficiently grasping the complexity of the problems at hand through the limited university academic project. She continued by explaining that " … [a]dvertisements and media releases before the event made it clear that all members of the public were invited to attend, at no charge. Hence, members of RMF and any other groups were free to attend and participate. The event was also live-streamed for those who could not attend. An additional overflow venue where the event could be watched on a large screen was also provided in case the hall reached capacity".[643] Here you see the university's limited, technical understanding of what it means for some of the members of the UCT community to attend and participate in an event such as this one. They clearly did all the basic surface level, technical work for the event to be "public" and freely accessible to all with little acknowledgement or understanding of the exclusionary and hierarchised nature of the spaces created for engagement, in this instance on the

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Forum, the UCT Workers' Solidarity Committee and UCT Left Students' Forum (LSF)

[642] Hatton, K. Interview. *Daily Maverick*, 2015

[643] Hatton, K. Interview. *Daily Maverick*, 2015

topic of inequality.

> "When they staged a silent protest, the event organisers let the protestors be [but] … RMF then proceeded with a second interruption, which brought the event to a standstill. After this they left … They did not take the open-microphone opportunity. Their claim that workers were forced to remain outside is dishonest. Nobody who arrived and asked for a seat for the event was turned away".[644]

Here UCT explains clearly that they are happy with disruption as long as it doesn't disturb their plans too much and they can proceed with their performance of care and critical engagement. What students had come to understand was that the liberal university would happily continue with its banal and at least to them inept processes for engagement and deliberation in order to stage its commitment to social justice and transformation. This is why, in Hatton's words, it is for UCT "…incomprehensible that members of RMF and the UCT Left Students' Forum claim the event failed to include them", because UCT management and most white liberals, and even some black ones, naively believe that "… [t]hey had full opportunity to take part, make their voices heard and to participate in the question-and-answer session. Instead, they opted to disrupt the event".[645] They did leave the event to continue without them, as was done with the Heritage seminar earlier in the year, but as was the case there too, the absence of the persons affected by the topic at hand was more obvious and viscerally in the space, creating discomfort.

I won't go into detail about the way in which Hatton defended UCT's labour practices but will allow her to show the incompetency of the people leading our institutions. She and many believe that the "… [d]isruption was unfair to event guests", … and that the "… protesting students refused to engage with the discussion", which to her "… is not democratic behaviour nor responsible freedom of speech," because "… [d]isrupting an event that other people wish to attend is not acceptable" .[646] The question of other peoples' rights to events and even to education emerges again when the shutdown tactic of students radically disrupt the status quo of higher education. The question of whether the bubble of middle class South African liberal democracy could continue as usual, and who had the right to the university's and later State's "protection" is important. RMF in disrupting this bubble was insisting that the bubble needed to be burst and who was able to enter, speak, and benefit needed to be redistributed. For RMF, the status quo, even in university

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[644] Hatton, K. Interview. *Daily Maverick*, 2015

[645] Hatton, K. Interview. *Daily Maverick*, 2015

[646] Hatton, K. Interview. *Daily Maverick*, 2015

classrooms and events was a violent one, which performed and solidified a comfortable unknowing for the privileged few.

RMF through the Rhodes Statue, Marikana, and now also Piketty engaged creative disruption, amongst others, had showed up the ineffectual university intellectual project, the dishonesty with which it purported to care and want to contribute to tangible change, while not allowing themselves to be roped into participating in this performance. Again, they were doing this not on their own and for only their own benefit, but were acting in concert with other black UCT community members, moving more and more to the most marginalised and oppressed ones. And as the statement announced that a:

> "… day of national action in calling for these demands at public universities across the country has been set for next Tuesday: this is the #October6 campaign. At UCT in particular, should the university decide not to end outsourcing or implement a dignified living wage in its decision on the 5th, the #RhodesMustFall movement and allied organisations will proceed to the #October6 mobilisation efforts in full force".[647]

Interestingly, Van Der Merwe understands and writes about the announcement to committed national action and mobilisation by RMF as unleashing "chaos". The word chaos appears twice in her first article on the Piketty protest when she explains that the " … event on Wednesday proved ill-fated when, in addition to Piketty's passport problems, chaos ensued" and later that "… RMF is adamant that should demands not be met, chaos will be forthcoming".[648] It then appears twice in her second article when she says that "… the movement promised that chaos would be forthcoming if their demands regarding the conditions for workers at universities were not met" and that "RMF threatened that chaos would be forthcoming if the outcome was not favourable in their view".[649] As you would have seen, the Piketty protest was a creative disruption, which made a powerful point that didn't shut down the event completely even as peoples' imagination of it was that it was chaos producing. Maybe it was inducing a kind of chaos, the definition of which according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary[650] is "a state of utter confusion," for many who had their usual way of thinking and engaging disrupted, by the creative and critical interventions. Ven Der Merwe contends that regardless how violent and unequal the status quo is, this does not apply to her or everyone and she

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[647] RMF Piketty Protest Statement, 1 October 2015

[648] Van Der Merwe, Daily Maverick, 1 October 2015

[649] Van Der Merwe, Daily Maverick, 6 October 2015

[650] See https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/chaos?src=search-dict-box

therefore has the right to be at such an event. And that it is right to be able to participate and feel good about witnessing others think, analyse and diagnose, without leaving space for doing something to change the problematic, for some deadly, unequal status quo.

9.3 Moment 12: October 6 - Student-worker alliance and the fight for outsourcing to fall

The #October6 national day of action against outsourcing proved to be a pivotal next step in student movement organising leading up to the #FeesMustFall moment, which I will discuss in the next chapter. I will end this chapter discussing the day of events and interventions and arguments that were made from UCT through RMF. I was at this point back in Johannesburg at my own university Wits University and I will introduce this moment with some input from my own experience in organising the same event but from the Wits side.

The #October6 national action grew out of a desire to take up the challenge that RMF and other BSM's had made to everyone based at a colonial university and in what they analysed as a colonial society, when they changed the terms of the debate and struggle from transformation to decolonisation. The National Working Committee of the United Front, a broad front bringing together progressive formations across different struggles, met with a small group of people at Wits at the end of the first semester of 2015, "… to discuss some of the UF's plans and to get advice on how to better orientate to campus struggles".[651]

A larger public meeting was then advertised and held on 29 July in Wits Central Block, with the poster reading "Linking Struggles: A Discussion on the United Front". Students, workers, staff and various progressive formations from Wits and UJ were in attendance. The next meeting took place on 5 August with the poster reading "Uniting Struggles, Decolonising Education, Remaking the University, Public Meeting". The collective of people who continued to meet almost weekly organised themselves into four working groups namely Curriculum, Student Academic and Financial Exclusions, Workers and Outsourcing, and Modes of Engagement. Much of the engagement was about learning about the different contexts between UJ and Wits and on Ahmed Veriava's insistence, ensuring that we ground our ideas, questions and analysis in action. The question that framed much of our meetings and engagements was "What does a decolonised, public African university look like"? At one point in the process we took up the suggestion that to

[651] Private email correspondence, 21 July 2015

decolonise following Fanon would be "to put the last first, and the first last", which we agreed would mean a prioritising of the struggle of outsourced workers who were most precarious at universities. The date of October 6 was suggested fairly randomly based on the usual activities of the academic calendar to be not too close to end of year exams. In September I was tasked with connecting our plan for a national day of action to other BSMs' local actions in solidarity with workers and against outsourcing and the activities that were ongoing at other universities. It was agreed that the Oct6 date worked for most university formations, and while a number of universities were embroiled in their own specific struggles, most were supportive either through verbally pledging support, writing a statement of support and in some cases, importantly organising simultaneous protest actions as in the case of RMF at UCT.

Besides agreeing broadly on the issue to mobilise around, the date for such a mobilisation, and the clarity of making space for workers to lead in the solidarity action, the question of how to negotiate a national event or uniting struggles as the first two meetings at Wits were framed, was considered. The UF's attempts at this had previously failed at uniting broadly left progressive forces. The consideration included a process to ascertain some agreed similarities and demands, without losing the local specificities of the outsourcing struggles and the needs of the people on the ground in different institutions. This was, at a different scale, the same question that RMF had been experimenting with through its task teams and plenary spaces and their relation, but also with its attempts at intersectional engagements that held criticality in each moment, both the content being discussed and the form through which the content was being engaged. This wasn't just straightforward dialectics at work but rather multiple and overlapping dialectics. The long work that had been done on different campuses[652] over many years provided some archives and documentation that could be shared about those ongoing struggles through the demands and concessions made at different times by workers and management. These existed in the various workers charters and minimum working conditions documents that outsourced workers with students and a small number of progressive academics had put together. These were shared and read across campuses. It was broadly agreed that these would be used to demand some immediate movement from management, because everyone assumed that the fight for outsourcing to fall would continue to be a long one. Each campus agreed to different minimum wages (UCT agreed on R10,000 but UJ and Wits workers followed the R12,500 demand from the Marikana striking

[652] For example at UCT https://www.groundup.org.za/article/ucts-muddled-minimum-wage_2512/?fbclid=IwAR0n9n1ggFbgQkmVQ9uc1h6H0ErUHEwipx5LtmWesNEQnjHOzww4IHhgaEI

mineworkers) for example, but everyone agreed that workers' children should be allowed to study for free.[653]

In addition to the archive and documents that came out of different outsourcing struggles, there was also the experience of some key students who had been in the outsourcing struggles at one university and then found themselves at that time in another university. I think here of the many students who translated across institutions like Thembi Luckett (From UCT to Wits), Rosa Manoin (from Wits whose twin sister was involved in similar struggles at UCT), Thenjiwe Mswane (between UKZN, UCKAR, UCT and Wits), and myself between UCT and Wits. The connection between RMF and Oct6 was also strengthened by the occupation of the VC's office around the MJL worker dismissals at Wits where a core group of students had been struggling with Wits workers earlier in the year.

> "A joint statement was adopted but it was agreed that each participating university would use the joint statement and add in the second part of the statement the context or university specific analysis and demands. It is to be noted that the statement writing process at Oct6 was to have one person draft a statement based on the collective discussions and arguments made and agreed on in the ongoing meetings such that they captured the collective decisions. This was then circulated for input by all and for engagement at a meeting. This process meant that the ideas and debates were travelling real time between different universities and the formations seeking to end outsourcing. These formations were now also much more clearly a broader alliance between workers, students and staff, but also between universities. A similar process was followed with regards to the posters made to invite people to public meetings of the Oct6 collective. There was a specific linking of the themes or question to be addressed at that meeting, highlighting that the meeting was both about discussing and debating ideas and about planning action. The four Wits Oct6 working groups also operated in a similar fashion, with the main collective meetings or plenaries keeping a collective democratic space open for all and led by workers (often chaired by workers or students), and then going off into caucus groups according to peoples' interests or skill set. The #Oct6[654] action on and towards the programme on the actual day[655] stands as an archive to the collective and individual work done by those who made up the fluid collective, which had a number of people in attendance and doing the work consistently.

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[653] To read the Workers Charter handed to university managements of UJ and Wits see the October6 Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/October6DayOfAction/posts/1513295105659293?__tn__=K-R

[654] The detailed #Oct6 and #FMF work that needs to be done is vast but I will not engage this in my thesis because of time and page-limit constraints, except to point briefly to how these relate to and influence RMF because a number of ideas and analyses are applicable across these moments/movements too.

[655] Reportage about the Wits event can be read here https://mg.co.za/article/2015-10-06-huge-protest-decries-witss-outsourcing-practice

RMF distributed the joint Oct6 Statement on 5 October and circulated posters detailing the programme for the day as follows:[656]

UCT: Rhodes Must Fall

October 6, 2015·

PROGRAMME FOR TODAY:

12:00 – 14:00 MARCH: from Lower Campus, via Bremner Building, to Marikana Memorial Hall

13:00 PRESS CONFERENCE: Bremner Building

FROM 14:00: MARIKANA MEMORIAL HALL

14:00 – 16:00 Presentations from allied organisations
· RhodesMustFall
· Left Student's Forum
· Palestinian Solidarity Forum
· PASMA
· SASCO
· Decolonise UCT Law
· NEHAWU
· Black Academic Caucus

16:00 – 16:30 Workers arrive after workday ends

16:30 – 18:30 ReThink Africa Workshop/Panel: "Understanding the National Living Wage Debates"

Mam'Nozi - Supercare and the Workers Forum
Mzwandile Zazi - UCT Student
Bandile Ngidi and Ayabonga Cawe - ReThink Africa

AND #Outsourced DOCUMENTARY SCREENING (Released today by RMF)

18:30 – 19:00 Poetry, Music and Closing words"

The #Oct6 programme at UCT shows the diversity of engagement that RMF[657] had come to understand as the basics of engaging an issue critically, but differently so. Marching to where

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[656] UCT RMF Facebook Page, 5 October 2015. Accessed at url: https://www.facebook.com/RhodesMustFall/posts/1634140180194807?__tn__=K-R

[657] You can see some of this diversity at Wits too

management was housed (where institutional power sits) was a standard feature of RMF and other historic actions but it also included an engagement with people off campus through the media briefings, where carefully crafted statements were read out to reach a broader public. Additionally, students and workers were interviewed for their views by different media[658] for example, Brian was quoted as explaining that this "… campaign is against the exploitative system of outsourcing used by UCT to cut costs and shirk responsibility at the expense of workers' lives" and that in "… radically decolonising the institution, we cannot act only in our own interests as students, but need to support the workers who experience the greatest levels of oppression through racism, exploitation and dehumanisation".[659]

On this day, because of the importantly diverse nature of the collaboration there was space made in the programme for allied organisations to address each other from the stage on the issue at hand and space was made in the planning to ensure that workers who clocked off from 4pm could join. There was an engagement in the form of a panel towards "… Understanding National Living Wage Debates", followed by addresses from workers and students. The RMF made documentary titled Outsourced[660] was screened for the first time and the evening ended with poetry, music and closing remarks. Ru recalls that:

> "… of course people [we]re … engaging workers – mainly Masixole and a couple of others who were building relationships with workers the entire time, but that was when I think pretty much every worker at UCT [understood that] this thing is big … the students are behind us … everyone's talking about outsourcing – the whole campus, we went literally [through] the whole of upper campus, we went through buildings … and then we ended up in Marikana Memorial Hall and there also we had all the different organisations. This was also one of the first moments I think, of all the different organisations coming and giving statements of solidarity. So we had Palestine Solidarity Forum, RMF was sort of hosting the thing but PASMA, the #Transcollective, the #QueerRevolution, #PatriarchyMustFall, all these groups and others".[661]

The march moved across the middle and upper campus with the banners and posters reflecting the

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[658] See also https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/UCT-workers-demand-R10-000-basic-salary-end-to-outsourcing-20151006?fbclid=IwAR3FVvUVpLOGY3vdz3Fd-idxgIn4BCl4cO5gCOmW0zZ_TWzorJoqyVzv0Y4

[659] See https://www.iol.co.za/capetimes/news/uct-defends-outsourcing-workers-amid-protests-1926033

[660] To view the documentary go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pu_pm5g3Ao&t=1s

[661] Slayan Interview Transcript, 2016

diversity of groupings and issues.[662] The presence of the Marikana workers and the work done a few weeks earlier during the Marikana Campaign where present in people carrying the symbolic white crosses, sometime like a poster, sometimes heavily on someone's shoulder and other times turning into a weapon to fight with. Other banners and placards seen on the day read "Sharpeville. Never Again. Marikana. Again"; Max Price = R2.8m, Workers = Poverty wage"; "Outsourcing is UCT's Living Slave Memorial"; "Workers' Rights and Left Action"; "Asinamali"; "Max Price for Black Lives? #Oct6 #RMF"; "End Outsourcing Now!"

Part of the significance of #Oct6 at UCT was that it brought together all the broadly left or progressive groupings on campus that had been involved in worker issues and included broadly progressive groups who ordinarily organised around other issues like the struggle in Palestine, or the conditions of black academics, the student political formations, and so on. These could be considered caucus groupings to a broadly, even if undefined and not meeting in practice, progressive collective or plenary. Importantly, the caucus groupings that had grown out of but remained uncomfortably inside the RMF plenary space also supported the event, these being #QueerRevolution, #PatriarchyMustFall, #DecoloniseUCTLaw, and the #TransCollective. "Putting the last first", which is also holding others in mind and putting their needs centrally, meant that people and formations suspended their need to center their own struggle and desire for change, or more accurately in RMF fashion, to hold their own issues, struggle content in mind and listen out for and raise those as they related to the way that the event and procedures unfolded. This practice of solidarity, which was about showing up to support others in need and struggle, by putting them first or at least alongside your own struggles, and holding yourself and your struggles in mind and body, seemed to change the nature and experience of the event.

The 42-minute documentary film that RMF made opens with a scene overlooking the Langa Cemetery at sunrise, including the RDP Houses[663] and in the far distance the mountain that UCT is built in front of. A women worker's voice rings "… I think we had enough. We really had enough. Phantsi, Phantsi ke-Outsourcing! UCT must wake up and smell the smell of the coffee. It's about time". The words "End Outsourcing" appears and a solemn lonesome trumpet begins to play as the frame moves to show thousands of shacks. The feeling one gets is that you are in an outsourced

[662] For images and video reportage see https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/western-cape/pics-uct-protest-over-outsourced-labour-1926122

[663] These are Government built houses, which formed part of their Reconstruction and Development (RDP) programme popularly known as matchbox houses

place, and you can see the beautiful mountains in the far off distance. The scene then cuts away showing roads leading from the outsourced place to where minibus taxis transport poor black people towards the mountain. And then train tracks with township on either side, leading towards the mountain, all the while a solemn trumpet plays in the background, while black people move via public transport from the townships of Cape Town towards the mountain, the city centre and the university. You are immediately in the place from which the documentary will speak. The stark difference and continued racial and class segregation of Cape Town frames the opening scene. The documentary is in the main made up of the stories of six UCT outsourced workers with English subtitles where necessary. The interviews are divided by the sounds of struggle songs being sung, you find out later, by UCT outsourced workers at a meeting. The solemn trumpet returns at different moments too, and sometimes we see the spaces where outsourced workers quietly go about their daily business almost invisible to the rest of the campus, in cafeteria's, driving shuttle buses, standing watch, tending gardens, and cleaning everywhere. The stories are difficult to listen to as they tell of racism, ill treatment, job insecurity, illness and a shared sense of not being valued or appreciated for the work they do. The real life implications of outsourcing are detailed by workers through them telling their stories.

The documentary makers pull out a few quotes from each of the workers' stories, which are shown over the last five minutes, beginning with workers and students singing struggle songs and dancing together at a meeting. The voice of a women outsourced worker says in isi-Xhosa with English subtitles: "We, the workers are marching against outsourcing, We are sending a clarion call to all the workers and shop stewards to march against outsourcing". The trumpet starts blowing its solemn tune again. The picture pans to an empty Jameson Plaza at Upper Campus the site of many a mass meeting. Then up to the Jameson [Marikana] Memorial Hall steps and door. Walking around the back and into clean toilets and bathrooms and hallways, and libraries, stairwells, through different buildings, and outside quads. The voices of the different workers interviewed return as closing statements, which also appear as English subtitles providing a text for viewers to read together.

> "Some of our colleagues have passed away because of the conditions we work under".
>
> "I have children. How will I send them to school, with such little income?"
>
> "Yes I'm afraid to get fired. If you speak the truth, you get fired"
>
> "The hours we work. The way we are working now. The conditions we are working under"

The image on screen changes to the artwork that has painted the shadow of the now removed Rhodes Statue, indicating the residue of Rhodes at UCT.

> "If I could be employed by UCT, there would be a difference"
>
> "This is my voicing. I want to voice it out even if I lose this job"
>
> "Because of these struggles, every part of my life suffered"

The last quote is the one the documentary started with … "I think we have had enough. We have really had enough. Phantsi Outsourcing!" And then the following text scrolls in place of the traditional credits at the end of a film:

> "[We demand]
> - A basic minimum wage of R10,000. Introduce a minimum basic wage of R10000 plus a R10000 annual bonuses as a step towards a living wage for workers in private companies. This must be a pre-condition for any private company seeking business at the university;
> - Wage gap: Narrow the wage gap between the highest and lowest wage earner to 1-25 for both public and private workers at UCT. In 2014, the highest wage earner, the UCT Vice-Chancellor, enjoyed a salary of over R2.8 million per annum.
> - Review (of) the Out-Sourcing as a model for service delivery in the university;
> - Re-Employment: Directly re-employ all workers in outsourced services within the university;
> - The full implementation of the recommendations of the UCT Council appointed outsourcing review committee.
> - Decent benefits and facilities for workers in private companies at the university;
> - Job security: In the interim, keep and protect the workers who are here and no unilateral transfer from contract to contract;
>
> A special thank you to the workers who shared their stories. Your words are much appreciated.
> #EndOutsourcing
> #DecoloniseLabour
> #October6"[664]

The reflective space that now also included the campaigns and the programmes they produced

[664] NEHAWU, UCT, Statement, 5 October 2015

formed part of the reflective space of the movement. These and the continued attempts to hold diverse struggles in one space proved to lay the groundwork that would lead to what many have described as the most powerful protests in South Africa post-apartheid, the #FMF protest and moment/movement, which I will discuss in the following chapter.[665]

9.4 Moment 13: FMF moment/movement

Much has been written about #FeesMustFall and while there are different analyses and interpretations of its importance, a number of these agree that it was one of the most significant if not the most significant protest in democratic South Africa thus far. For the purpose of this thesis, I will engage the #FMF moment by focusing on its dynamics at UCT and in relation to RMF. The FMF movement also spans 2015 to 2018, across a number of universities, cities, and demands, and in 2020 some universities have been shut down over NSFAS issues, accommodation, and financial exclusions. As Veriava explains:

> "… [o]ne of the challenges of writing about FMF is the extraordinary heterogeneity that has come to characterize it. Every campus, in fact, with its unique histories, student body compositions, and configurations of political forces, is particular. Every formal student representative structure, organization, political caucus, affinity group, reading circle, or autonomous supporter, adds to its diversity".[666]

In writing this moment/movement, I will focus in on the first round of #FMF, and in particular the end of year period of 2015. I was myself very involved as a post-graduate student at Wits University in 2015 where I eventually was one of three students, with Lwazi Lushaba and Anele Nzimande, who alongside three outsourced workers Deliwe Mzobe, Mathews Lebello and Richard Ndebele, who negotiated with Wits management around nine key demands to put a halt to the first round of #FMF shutdowns in order for examinations to be written. This was the process through which Wits agreed on a number of the key demands of Wits 2015 FMF most notably, to an agreement in principle, to end outsourcing. This agreement instituted a year long process of further negotiations between Wits Management and outsourced workers represented by various elected workers, FMF student leaders, and two academics (Noor Nieftagodien and Shireen Ally), all of

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[665] The Shackville and #TransCapture moments of creative disruptive protest are important but not considered in detail in this thesis.

[666] Veriava, A. "Leaving Solomon House: A(n Impressionistic) Portrait of the FMF Movement at Wits." *South Atlantic Quarterly 118*, no. 1 (January 2019), 200.

whom worked tirelessly and for no remuneration or reward, to flesh out the detail of the insourcing agreement as part of the Wits Insourcing Task Team.

Gillespie and Naidoo argue that the university student protests of "… 2015-16 had two distinct origins and orientations, each reflecting a core critique of the contemporary university and its relationship to society".[667] We understood these two related and connected strands as decolonisation and antiprivatisation. #RMF is understood as the first of the new #MustFall moments/movements beginning at HWU with a decolonisation focus, whose demands as discussed in detail in earlier chapters, centred on the critique of the white liberal university including the signs and symbols celebrated, the Eurocentric curricula, the untransformed academic staff, and institutional racism. As I have shown throughout this thesis, outsourced worker issues were also always part of RMF's demands but this became more central particularly in the moments discussed in the previous chapter, of the Marikana Campaign, Piketty Protest and Oct6 national campaign against outsourcing. Additionally, questions of academic and financial exclusion were always part of RMF's demands, but not up until this point, central.

The #FMF movement started at Wits University as a response to what had become annual above-inflation fee increases. It spread to other universities and importantly this antiprivatisation strand included HBU, which had been struggling around issues of fees for many years. The FMF was more mass based and included the demand initially for no fee increases, which quickly broadened into a debate about free higher education and in some quarters thinking about education as a public good. This strand of the movement, while critiquing the slow creep of privatisation through focussing on fees, also built the alliance between students and workers around resisting the corporatisation of public universities, which saw universities upholding inhumane cost cutting measures through the outsourcing of poor black workers. Gillespie and Naidoo note that as "… they articulated their demands and arguments, however, the two trajectories borrowed from each other to produce a fertile set of political terms for a neoliberalising postcolonial society. They developed and refined a shared demand that became a rallying call for student protesters and their supporters: 'Free Decolonized Education Now'".[668]

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[667] Gillespie, K. & Naidoo, LA. (2019, a). Introduction #MustFall: The South African Student Movement and the Politics of Time. In *South Atlantic Quarterly (2019) Vol. 118*, Issue 1, 190, January 2019.

[668] Gillespie, K. & Naidoo, LA. (2019, a). Introduction #MustFall: The South African Student Movement and the Politics of Time. In *South Atlantic Quarterly (2019) Vol. 118*, Issue 1, 191, January 2019.

Mbali reflecting on RMF's role in FMF says "… I guess you could say we were the backbone of starting Fees Must Fall here, and people often forget October 6, [which] was a critical moment because that's what actually spilt over into fees must fall".[669] The spilling over into FMF was a moment where we had "… to branch out beyond the people within Rhodes Must Fall to bring in a broader community of students".[670] Ru recalls that:

> "… the first Sunday [18 October 2015] after the Wits Fees Must Fall happened, we met [in Azania Hall] with all the different organisations [and] … that was the space where we had hundreds of students and workers every day for that whole period – any time of night – the workers on night shift, day shift would all come through for meetings– I don't actually know how it would have been possible to do all of that if we didn't have the space. So it was interesting the way in which our kind of stupid principled decision to stay in the house made … the hall that much more of a precious thing, and it ended up being super vital to Fees Must Fall and [ending] outsourcing".[671]

Azania Hall, which was the third occupation, continued throughout the FMF period and provided a space for meeting to reflect, plan, and recover from what would turn out to be the most intense week of protesting. The RMF Facebook page shows daily updates of events and plans on UCT campus but also shares updates and pictures from other university protests, especially Wits and UCKAR. RMF and a representative from each of the organisations that had been part of the Marikana and Oct6 campaigns, were present at the plenary that decided to shut down UCT on Monday 19 October, while sending representatives to meet with UCT management. While the Azania Hall occupation was important for organising, a fourth occupation took place by the end of the first day of shutdown.

UCT Management, after insisting in the signed mediation agreement that RMF provide representatives to engage management around future protests, refused a meeting on the Sunday evening and were initially only prepared to meet the representatives that came to Bremner for a 8am meeting on the morning of the shutdown, which had started two hours earlier. RMF strategically posted a Facebook update, which showed the management of Wits and UCKAR sitting negotiating with students and the third image of UCT management talking to students through the locked gates of Bremner, with the caption "Wits Management talking to students x Rhodes Management talking

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[669] Matandela Interview Transcript, 2016.

[670] Hotz Interview Transcript, 2016.

[671] Slayan Interview Transcript, 2016.

to students x UCT Management refusing to talk to us".[672]

UCT eventually cancelled classes and closed the university, which resulted in all the protesting students and workers leaving their positions at the various university entrances and gathering at Bremner where three men from UCT Management eventually came out to talk with students. The demand, as had happened at Wits the week earlier was to summon members of the university council, the highest decision making body of the university, to ensure that:

> "… [all] fee increases must be suspended, all outsourcing tender processes frozen, and an emergency meeting between council and students and workers must be called so that we can decide together how much we think it should cost a working class student to attend UCT, and whether or not we think those who work for us should receive a living wage".[673]

The first round of public engagement ended in a stalemate and students and workers eventually, through a badly bolted gate, managed to enter the Bremner Building, which then was reoccupied. This occupation was less about having a space to meet and discuss and more about putting pressure on the university management to engage. A more detailed account of the FMF moment/movement needs to be engaged but I will not do that as part of this thesis because of time and space constraints and to try and hold close to the RMF process within the FMF one, which became both a parallel and overlapping process. It is however important to note that the university had pre-emptively obtained a court interdict to stop any disruptive protests, even if peaceful, which the court issued raising questions about the over-reach of the courts to prevent peaceful protest. This interdict named three selected students (Brian, Thato and Ru) and a NEHAWU worker leader as well as a number of the student and worker organisations that had been organising around ending outsourcing, comically also interdicting for the first time a hashtag in #FeesMustFall.[674] The interdict gave UCT Management license to call the police in to violently break up the peaceful, even if disruptive, protest. It was the first day of many that were peppered with stun grenades, rubber bullets and arrests. As is well documented, the presence of police at protests in South Africa, often serves as an escalation of tensions rather than de-escalation, which proved to be the case with the student protests too.[675]

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[672] RMF Facebook Page, 19 October 2015

[673] UCT RMF Facebook Page, 19 October 2015

[674] Cowen, N. High Court issues interdiction against a hashtag in #FEESMUSTFALL, 20 October 2015. Accessed May 2017 at url: https://www.htxt.co.za/2015/10/20/high-court-issues-interdiction-against-a-hashtag-in-feesmustfall-doc/

[675] Rayner, M. and Bladwin-Ragaven, L. A Double Harm: *Police misuse of force and barriers to necessary Health Care*

9.4.1 Securitisation

Looking at my home institution, I recall clearly how the start of the #FeesMustFall negotiations and so-called management "hostage" situations escalated to a point where protestors had been caught in a standoff with a shell-shocked management team who summoned the police and fled their then occupied administration building. Peaceful songs and seated students surrounded by excitable journalists chanted into the night as police vehicles surrounded the occupation. Without provocation the police continued to grow in numbers and prepared their batons and canisters of tear gas before our eyes. Students doused their scarves and shirts with water in anticipation of what was to come and in a matter of minutes that felt like hours the scene had shifted from song and solidarity to the smoke of stun grenades, the sounds of running feet on tarmac and the shouting of names of young people who had just been arrested. This was just the beginning. This was only one campus. This happened countless times, with unchecked unthinking violence that we will likely never hear of – much less get a chance to address.[676]

The repression of students that Brian describes above had a twin strategy. The state provided millions of rands worth of policing as well as spy equipment and personnel from the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to quell any disruptive protests. The university, on the other hand provided millions of rands employing the services of private security companies to supplement and support police as well as the services of lawyers to pre-emptively close down space for protest at universities through court interdicts and eviction orders. The team work was spectacular. Most of this is documented by activists, some NGO's and media houses. What has gone largely unnoticed has been the support of liberal academics in justifying this authoritarian and repressive response. The criminalising of resistance to the status quo as a kind of "swart gevaar" by the white conservatives and while not as openly as them the white liberals' nicely worded arguments with the same undertones. And in need of more thinking and theorising, the black liberal arguments spun as the bold move to "save our institutions" by stopping the onslaught of a third force (old ANC and SACP rhetoric), Pol Pot Brigade (Adam Habib's book describing academics who supported student movement and critiqued the cosy relationship between university management's and police as well

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Services: Responses to student protests at the University of the Witwatersrand, September to November 2016. Johannesburg: Seri, Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa.

[676] Kamanzi, B. Securitization and the public university. *Publica[c]tion,* 8, 2016. See https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2015/11/23/enemies-of-the-state/ for the full article.

as their own suppressive forces)[677]; and Boko Haram (Achille Mbembe's now infamous Facebook Post, which he went on to defend when called out[678]).

The intellectual labour put into discrediting and criminalising student (and academic) resistance needs more critique. Brian points out how:

> "The construction of the student "protester" became associated with criminality as the iconography of public order policing units and nameless and faceless private security militia descended on campuses in reactionary attempts to re-establish 'order'. Vice-Chancellors Adam Habib and Max Price in particular took it upon themselves at different stages over the past few months to divorce and misconstrue the purpose of specific campus protests as they wrestled for control of public sympathy to justify their strategy of militarising campuses by capitalizing on sporadic violent outbursts by students and quite possibly agent provocateurs so as to instrumentalise their imagery to separate the movement from the public and sympathisers on their respective campuses".[679]

At Wits for example, a senior black feminist scholar and a black post-colonial scholar were found to have been "advising" the Vice Chancellor on how to make good arguments in the public and social media domains that would vindicate himself and the university for their calling police and private security on to campus. All the while these senior black academic staff members would attend some of the meetings held by academics to discuss how they at Wits could respond to the university's threat of violence against students and its own workers and staff.

9.4.2 Solidarity

The power of the FMF moment/movement, much like the power of the shit-statue protest moment, was partly made through the ongoing struggles and organising that had been happening at universities around financial and other exclusions including the fight to end outsourcing. Another part was the solidarity shown between various progressive formations internal to campuses and then importantly the solidarity shown across different universities. In the Western Cape, RMF had been meeting and supporting actions at the other HWU in the province through the BSM #OpenStellenbosch. This university was the furthest away from UCT in terms of kilometres but remained a majority white institution similar to UCT. It was during FMF that RMF started to meet,

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[677] Habib, A. Rebels and Rage: Reflecting on #FeesMustFall. Cape Town: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2019.

[678] Kamaldien, Y. Academic Compares UCT protestors to Boko Haram, *Cape Argus*, 17 October 2016.

[679] Kamanzi, B. Securitization and the public university. *Publica[c]tion,* 8, 2016. See https://briankamanzi.wordpress.com/2015/11/23/enemies-of-the-state/ for the full article.

support and go to the two other universities in the province, which are the majority black institutions of UWC and CPUT. If you were to ask the question of who 'the last' were in terms of universities in the Western Cape, these two universities in particular CPUT, which is a university of technology[680] were certainly understood as lesser than USB and especially UCT. Also in terms of who the student body was, as many black working class students attend CPUT. FMF was an opportunity for RMF to expand this principle and practice outside of their privileged institution to experience first-hand the inequality and difference between university institutions. The march to Parliament, which I will engage more below, was a moment in the Western Cape of unity across university institutions, which took up the demand for free education and an end to outsourcing to the government.

9.4.3 Parliament

I have argued elsewhere that there were three critical protest actions directed at the ANC and its national government that took place in different cities over consecutive days, and led to the massive victory of a government funded 0% university fee increase for 2015 amounting to over R1 billion.[681] Exactly a week after the first FMF shut down at Wits, the first one took place on:

> "… Wednesday the 21st of October [when] students from universities across the Western Cape attempted to storm parliament during the tabling of a budget report and insisted that the Minister of Higher Education Dr Blade Nzimande come out to address them. Six students were arrested and later released. The minister came outside to address the crowd and when he attempted to get the attention of the crowd by shouting the revolutionary call Amandla! (power!), it was met with the response of Ngawenu! (with you!) instead of the usual Ngawethu or Awethu (with the people). He did not manage to address the crowd who chanted #FeesMustFall and #BladeMustFall".[682]

This was followed by thousands of students from Wits and UJ marching the next day to Luthuli House, the ANC Headquarters in downtown Johannesburg and handing over a memorandum to the ANC Secretary-General Gwede Mantashe demanding that the government

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[680] Universities of technology offer mainly certificate and diploma courses and focus on students becoming technicaly qualified within a specific field, through offering more 'hands-on' courses than traditional universities. They are said to focus more on teaching students practical skills than theoretical concepts.

[681] Naidoo, L-A. (2016, a). Contemporary Student Politics in South Africa: The Rise of the Black-led Student Movements of #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall in 2015. In Nieftagodien, N. (ed) *New Narratives of Youth Struggle*. Wits University Press: Johannesburg.

[682] Ibid, 2016a.

> "… immediately release the funds to ensure a 0% fee increase for 2016 without universities imposing austerity measures; (2) urgently put forward a specific plan of action to realize free quality higher education; (3) ensure it provides the resources to immediately end outsourcing of workers at institutions of higher learning".[683]

The third day of action was a march by university students, staff and workers from various campuses, called by the ANC-aligned student organisation SASCO. Thousands of people marched to the seat of national government in Pretoria called the Union Building. Inside, the then-President Jacob Zuma met with university managements through the Vice Chancellors along with their student leaderships. This was a performance that tried to legitimate the representative structures of the state and university institutions, making a decisive move against the student and worker alliance that was built outside of the formal structures of the university, student governance and even worker union formations. Those who had been organising, mobilising and facing down police and private security attempts to end the shutdown protests, were left outside of the negotiated settlement of a 0% increase in university fees funded by the state. By the time the president announced the 0% increase via a live media briefing, students outside had created a riotous scene, which was televised across the world. The expectation was that there would be some announcement related to free education. Government and university managements expected that the shut downs end and that universities prepare for end of year examinations. While many students did want to return to class, and ANC-aligned student formations were encouraged if not instructed to get students back to class, a smaller number of non-aligned and non-ANC aligned students continued with the shutdown at a number of campuses, bolstered by worker support, not satisfied with a 0% fee increase, which was neither fees having fallen or free education. Importantly, there was also at this point no pronouncement on ending outsourcing.

The following week on 28 October, UCT was the first university to announce that it would end outsourcing at the institution followed by Wits on 1 November 2015. The UCT management then proceeded, in a similar fashion to government, to sideline the worker-student alliance, in favour of negotiating the details of insourcing with the very union, NEHAWU, who had failed to properly represent outsourced workers. This resulted in the workers being given a weakly negotiated insourcing deal at UCT, as opposed to Wits where a months-long process including FMF representatives from students, workers and academics, led to a more collective and engaging

[683] Ibid, 2016a.

process of insourcing.[684] The intense struggles that were waged at campuses across the country resulted in a historic increase of government funding to universities through the 0% decision and an end to the practice of outsourcing at a number of universities. University managements agreed that students in alliance with workers had managed to achieve in two weeks what they were unable to do in over a decade. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, there were rich and varied FMF processes at each university, which requires more detailed engagement. For the purposes of this thesis, I will end the FMF moment/movement reflection here except to say that student activists were tired, traumatised and needing to focus on writing exams at this stage. The FMF protests picked up at different times across different campuses the following year but there were recurring protests at universities for the following five years. The South African Government also established a presidential commission of enquiry called the Heher Commission to investigate the feasibility of free higher education and to make recommendations to the president.[685]

The end of year exams at UCT were finished on 27 November 2015 and allowances were made for students to write examinations between 11 and 26 January 2016, giving students time to recover and prepare for their examinations.[686] While the question of free education was far from resolved, the 0% fee increase had the result of calming resistance at many universities including UCT. What it did not do was resolve another issue that had been simmering at UCT and had already exploded at UCKAR and CPUT. The question of student housing was the issue around which UCT student activists rallied in early 2016, having occupied Avenue House and raised issues of student housing the previous.

The student was declared person of the year of in 2015.[687] RMF ended the year with a number of spaces to reflect for themselves and also included engagements with people from outside of UCT. On 15 November, the plan of action announced for the following day reminded everyone that there would be no shutdown or disruption of campus but instead there would be a midday vigil discussing police brutality followed by a 5pm plenary meeting.[688] The post that followed announced that the

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[684] It would be interesting to have a deeper analysis as to what the different conditions were that might have accounted for these differences, but this falls outside of the scope of this thesis.

[685] DOJ&CD, Official Website: Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training, available at http://www.justice.gov.za/ commissions/FeesHET/index.html (last visited 15 September 2018).

[686] See https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-12-24-letter-to-2015-uct-students

[687] See https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2015-12-14-2015-south-african-person-of-the-year-the-student/

[688] UCT RMF Facebook post, 15 November 2015

POA was changed because of #RapeAtAzania where RMF/FMF "… refuse[d] to be a movement that continues with business as usual when we are shaken to our core by this grievous offense"… and announced that:

> "Instead, 13:00 at Azania will become a space of visible solidarity with the survivor, as we come out in numbers to support our fellow comrade. Of equal importance, our 13:00 gathering will serve as our public condemnation for such to happen in OUR space; condemnation and accountability for those who are complicit in the patriarchy and violence in our space and forging a way forward for this movement to truly meet up to its intersectional claims".[689]

Negotiations between RMF/FMF and #EndOutsourcing representatives, UCT management and the Joint Shop Stewards Council (JSSC) continued in the new year. Students and workers had been subjected to attacks over the year from management, its private security and the police but were also facing attacks from people inside the movement. #RapeAtAzania being one such moment. All of this took place while students were meant to be attending classes, studying and preparing for exams. UCT agreed that students who were involved in or affected by the protests could write deferred exams in January 2016. RMF/FMF held a few more events as the year wound to a close. They held a "… socio-political, cultural and intersectional Potsoyi" where "… [o]rganisers from the movement gathered to celebrate the conclusion of a historical year".[690] Also:

> "… [o]n Friday the 4th of December #RhodesMustFall brought in key delegations of students from High Schools in Khayelitsha and the surrounding flats. This was an opportunity for them to build ties with the movement. Topics covered during the seminar include: The history of the movement; Interrogating ways to dismantle patriarchy and create safe spaces within black-led movements; and Defining the decolonial project and looking at a plan of action going forward. The itinerary included activities, discussion, music, food and a competition where textbooks were awarded. Ilizwe! #RhodesMustFall".[691]

Their Facebook page continued to highlight activities such as encouraging people to sign a petition by #RhodesMustFallOxford for Oriel College Oxford to remove the Cecil Rhodes statue, as well as critical reflective pieces reflecting on Decolonising as art practice.[692]

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[689] UCT: RMF Facebook post, 16 November 2015

[690] UCT RMF Facebook post, 27 November 2015

[691] UCT RMF Facebook event, 4 December 2015

[692] To read the article they shared written by Thuli Gamedze go to https://africanah.org/decolonization-as-art-practice/?fbclid=IwAR1X7Euu_A81FAZSJgphmlW_asx0BysT7bZxPuLenEztdq6zBlhcM5LbpnY

9.5 Concluding remarks

From the Afrophobia protest at the gates of parliament, to the Marikana Memorial campaign implicating the ANC-led government, and the resultant inaction by SASCO and ANC-Youth League members, to the disruption of the Piketty lecture and in particular Trevor Manuel who chaired the event, RMF was not sparing its critique for the white liberal institution and its white liberals. They were also critiquing the black liberals, from Crain Soudien, to Xolela Mangcu, Barney Pityana, Trevor Manuel, Nelson Mandela, Bishop Tutu, and the young black liberals in training at SASCO and the ANC. The complicity between the white liberal university and the black post-apartheid apartheid state was what they were revealing even as they were wary of attacking black people. Maybe the political identity of non-white would have been appropriate. The FMF moment radically confirmed the relationship between the state and all public universities, black and white when university VCs chose to ask the state and its violent institutions that RMF diagnosed early on as being at the root of the violence of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 10: Discussion: A radical distributed intellectual project

Throughout these lengthy descriptive chapters on the actual work and experiences of the RhodesMustFall student movement at the University of Cape Town during 2015 and 2016, I have tried to create a thick description and an entailed analysis that stays close to the terms, people and complexities of the movement as it unfolded. I have tried not to move too quickly into my own conceptualisation or analysis for fear of working in an extractivist or simplistic way through the lives and material of the people involved. In this chapter, I provide the analysis that I have made in implicit ways throughout the description. I hope this analysis will be recognisable from what has been already written, but I will make it clearer for elaborating the argument. The effort is towards grounded, positioned, interested conceptualisation and towards an argument made with and for this and future transformative movements.

1. *Black students of RMF became intellectuals in opposition to the university, not in conjunction with the university. Positioning themselves at odds with, and in critique of the university as it was, created the richest and most significant means for students to learn, to teach and to create an intellectual agenda that could come to terms with the social condition they inherited.*

UCT may have in its history some luminaries who fought apartheid, for example, Jack Simons and Raymond Hoffenberg but, in the main, the institution, its academics, and its curricula benefited from and were involved in the racist segregationist apartheid project.[693] UCT was comfortable providing elite higher education through Eurocentric curricula, taught by white academics to a majority white student body for most of its history. I have detailed some of what this complicity looked like through the 1968 Mafeje affair and the student protest it provoked. UCT's compliance with the hegemonic South African order revealed the complicity of the white liberal project in apartheid's white supremacist one.[694]

Post-apartheid, the institution remained wedded to a Eurocentric and white liberal project as can be seen by the slow inclusion of black academic staff and students, as well as in the continuation of the

[693] Hendricks, F. The Mafeje Affair: The University of Cape Town and Apartheid, *African Studies vol. 67 no. 3*, 2008

[694] Barnes, T. *Uprooting University Apartheid in South Africa: from liberalism to decolonization*, 2019.

Mafeje affair[695] and later the Mamdani affair,[696] and with the outsourcing of service workers that started at UCT in 1999.[697] Additionally, young black people were welcomed into the institution as part of the project of assimilating "born frees" into middle class subjectivity and a fake and improperly non-racial "rainbow nation". This came under sharp scrutiny and critique through RMF, which recognised that UCT had opened its doors in a process of desegregation, but noted that they were being admitted under white supremacist conditions. The project was to learn and become certificated in a particular discipline or field of study, and to enter into middle class employment and a form of life closely approximating white life under apartheid. The specialised knowledge learned through the curricula was however accompanied by a hidden curriculum that taught that black life was cheap and outsource-able, and that black students and academics were welcome as long as they were willing to accept tutelage and leadership from white academics (who were also mostly heterosexual men).

Black students became aware of this dominant hegemonic norm that placed white, heterosexual, English-speaking, middle class men (symbolised most starkly by the statue of Cecil John Rhodes) at the centre of the university. This awareness was followed by a realisation that while they themselves were not easily identifiable inside of the dominant norm, they were not alone because others were also excluded. The reckoning with the racist university that they found themselves in, allowed them to critique the university and refuse not only its contribution to the reproduction of existing society, with its ongoing racially-marked inequalities, but also its project of inserting them into a hegemonic entailment in that society, into its image.

The experience and recognition of UCT as a racist university in contrast to its image as the bearer of standards and excellence, was the starting point for the student movement and the creation of black student intellectuals. The refusal to accept the terms of assimilation into the racial life of the university was the foundation of a project of black learning, conscientisation and the making of new ways of being at the university. This refusal created fertile and powerful grounds for intellectual work.

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[695] Lungisile N. The Mafeje and the UCT saga; unfinished business?, *Social Dynamics, 40:2*, 2014, 276.

[696] Ramoupi, N.L.L. African Research and Scholarship: 20 Years of Lost Opportunities to Transform Higher Education in South Africa. *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 38(1)*, 2014.

[697] Luckett, T. and Mzobe, D. #OutsourcingMustFall: The Role of Workers in the 2015 Protest Wave at South African Universities, *Global Labour Journal, Vol 7(1)*, 2016.

2. *The experience of alienation from the white university institution provided the grist for the beginning of the movement, but the movement could not have happened unless that experience was collectivised and transformed into an ensemble of experiences that were put into conversation through intellectual work. They moved from experience to consciousness together.*

Black students experienced the politics of the university not simply through a cognitive recognition of the hegemonic norm replicated through it, but firstly and, most importantly, through the painful experiences of being othered from and by that norm. I have called this "alienation" and the alienation they experienced was multiple. RMF students recognised the way social spaces at UCT were segregated especially along racial and class lines. This was replicated inside the classroom with a flagrant inequality of resources – their experience of many white students taking notes on laptop computers, travelling to university in expensive cars and buying lunches at the expensive cafeterias on campus. Black students also experienced being alienated from their lecturers, sometimes because of big class sizes but also as a result of faculty remaining largely white (and male), and identifying more easily with other white (and male) students. Similarly, the curriculum was predominantly referencing white and male authors from the "Global North" who brought a Eurocentric perspective to bear on what knowledge mattered at the university.

Instead of taking these experiences as "normal" they alienated the alienation by looking at it critically and making it strange. Working against the normalisation of racial discrimination was part of the critical (anti-hegemonic) work done. Their critique of the university stemmed from relating and linking their experiences of alienation to the social conditions at UCT and the university's relationship to South African society. They were also translating the experiences and feelings of alienation into what they called "black pain". Importantly, they created spaces and processes where they could critically reflect on and question these experiences collectively in order to clarify for themselves how power was operating. By making black pain a collective experience and then a discussable experience, they disturbed the process of assimilation and the hidden ways power and the powerful were operating at UCT. In one critical action, the shit-statue protest highlighted the strangeness of the white liberal institution's durability, by questioning the symbolic white arrogance (the statue) paralleled and confronted by the misery of black reality (the literal shit of poor black life in Cape Town townships). The feelings and experiences of alienation were no longer solo

affairs but rather became a powerful collective, indeed a "chorus".[698]

The chorus was constituted and led by RMF students who gathered people working against oppression on campus into one room and worked to collate, through conversation grounded in experiences of being black at UCT, a collective set of demands that accompanied their mission statement. This chorus grew as more students, staff and workers committed to coming consistently to the RMF-organised gatherings especially the occupations and the spaces of critical reflection and dialogue the occupations housed. Many people were compelled towards and by these transformative learning spaces and engagements. People were doing individual work towards learning about themselves and others who shared some of their experiences but, crucially, they were doing this work together with a diverse group of others. Making space for people to discuss their experiences, analyses, ideas and plans for action opened the conversation and allowed for diverse engagement. Black workers, students and academics were finding each other and finding ways to engage honestly and with as much awareness as possible of the politics of this collective.

3. *The chorus held the genius. Far from the image of the lone genius as the figure of the intellectual, what became apparent in RMF was that the rich and fertile grounds for intellectual work was the plenary space the students created for themselves: collective, multiple-questioning and plural. This collective space was crucial to the production of self-definition, self-theorisation, self-critique, and a shared project of anti-oppressive praxis towards solidarity.*

Students created and ran two types of plenary spaces, diverse collective spaces for engagement which were the Mafeje Plenary meetings and the Education Seminar Plenary space. The occupation and RMF radical praxis (thinking in action) were discussed at the Mafeje Plenary meetings and decisions were taken by consensus, in essence, building and sustaining the occupation. It was also the space where the various SubComs, working as smaller collectives or caucuses, reported back. The Education Seminar Plenary space was the more public plenary space often held after working hours so that students, academics and the broader public could attend. This was the more outward-looking space for thinking with others as these seminars were attended by a range of people including people from outside of UCT (and sometimes out of Cape Town). The importance of both these plenary spaces cannot be over-emphasised as they fed into each other. They provided space to

[698] Hartman, Saidiya.

think, question and plan together, and also to build a confidence not only to speak in general but also to speak of the analyses and critiques they were developing together.

The plenary spaces also allowed them to challenge each other's ideas and proposals, and to figure things out together. They were building a different way of being at UCT, counter to the feelings and experiences of alienation, a more confident and agentic, even emboldened way of being. There was a third plenary engagement which took place outside the "control" of RMF. These were large or small diverse gatherings of the UCT community, for example, the Heritage and other seminars, panels and lectures, the University Assembly, the mass meetings called by different UCT members, meetings of the UCT Council and the Alumni Association, among others. RMF participated in these plenaries to influence the way they were structured, to surface the hidden curriculum they were reading, to creatively disrupt them and/or to confidently participate in them.

In concert, RMF's framing of the pillars of BC, pan Africanism and black radical feminism revealed important traditions and ideas that influenced their praxis. Of particular importance was the (re)arrangement of self and then self to other through attempts at (re)defining the black self, post-apartheid, and both of these in relation to the liberal university. Equally important were the efforts towards self-critique and an engagement inside the multiple-questioning RMF plenaries. This was made possible through a laborious commitment to returning to a space of intense engagement with each other to figure out how to work together in some kind of harmony, while firmly confronting the ubiquitous ways power was trying to undo and break apart what was being built. They kept each other alert and resourceful, and most importantly, inventive.

4. *The distributing (or sharing) of subjectivity, experience, thinking into a collective process skills, resources, interests, knowledge and talents was crucial to the production of the plenary. Distribution, organised as/through the work of caucus, created the possibility for plenary work, which was working on difference and the intellectual ferment it enabled.*

The small group formations that came together to assemble RMF as a movement (student formations and collectives, the BAC and outsourced workers) as well as the groups that grew out of RMF on the basis of shared experience and interests, were very important to the success of the collective work happening in the diverse plenary space. Caucus spaces were organised around peoples' interests and experiences, their skills and talents, ideas, needs and plans coming out of the Mafeje Plenary meetings, in particular. The Mafeje Plenary would mandate a task to a smaller group as the need arose and some of these would be temporary once-off groups while there were

also SubComs set up to create more consistent spaces for meeting and discussing plenary agreed-upon work. The life of the plenary depended on the functioning of the SubComs and other caucus spaces. The processes between the plenary and caucus allowed for a flexibility of participation and a practice of shared accountability. It was an attempt to make the workings of RMF accessible, transparent and open to anyone who showed up and was willing to participate.

Contrary to popular belief, RMF was not leaderless or unstructured, but rather experimented with a space and system of accountability, engagement and reflection that allowed for radical praxis to be cultivated. Its critique of representative democracy was accompanied by the practice of a more participatory kind of collective political project. The caucus, both in the form of political/issue based positions and in terms of the SubCom work, was a key building block that extended the work that people were doing on themselves, through critical reflections of experiences, self-analyses and self-critiques. It also meant that there was a sharing of the labour and an opening up of the movement to those who came. The caucus allowed for participants to bring issues, critiques and ideas to the plenary space for engagement and, where possible, for resolution. This added to the fiery and transformative encounters that the plenary held and sustained.

Alongside flattening hierarchies was an attentiveness to the way power operated in collective engagement. Black radical feminist theory, informed through the praxis of intersectionality (upheld during Azania One by the Intersectional Audit Committee), invigorated the consideration of parts to the whole. As caucus was to the plenary, different experiences of privilege and oppression, felt through multiply constituted identities, were appraised towards building black solidarity. Out of thinking about the relation of parts to the whole, came the necessity and difficulty of dealing with difference.

5. *Far from the stereotype of racial and political homogeneity that has been attributed to the student movement's work on blackness, at the heart of the RMF project was the confrontation with difference. The pan-Africanists needed the feminists, the feminists needed the transcollective and the BC students needed the pan-Africanists among others; the diversity of black experiences were amplified in confrontational and transformative ways. Students allowed themselves and others to become different in new ways. This included an important confrontation with class difference and the nurturing of the imagination and practice of solidarity.*

The beginnings of RMF came out of a plea for people to suspend their differences in service of uniting and building black solidarity around the statue and against racism at UCT. This move was anchored through a meeting of a broad black caucus, of workers, students and staff, with the statue as its immediate target, but also as a symbol for a broader critique of the university's institutional racism. RMF extended this politics through a range of further demands, complexifying the diagnosis of the social relations at the institution, thus deepening the political space of the intervention. RMF strengthened the black student-led plenary space, into a multiple and intersectional space. If RMF appeared as a unified caucus within the broader university, this appearance occurred as a result of an enormous amount of work across difference in the Mafeje Plenary and Seminar Plenary spaces in conjunction with the SubComs and the more informal gathering spaces in occupation. The heterogenous composition of the idea and practice of blackness RMF was proposing, as well as the intense work to hold and work with that difference, became obvious when one sat in these plenary and caucus spaces and observed the work that was actually being done at the heart of the movement.

The originary plea to suspend difference tentatively held together and was an important orientation to begin the work. Queer and black radical feminist students' insistence on an intersectional approach, written into the mission statement and reiterated often after that, was what made the 2015 student protest unusual. There was an attempt to hold a more complex engagement with ideas and practices of oppression and privilege, including refusing to put in abeyance the struggles and issues of women and queer people who were part of the movement. Spending much time together including sharing living space through occupation, meant that people got to know each other's ideas and behaviours more intimately. The plenary and caucus spaces became opportunities to think about oppressions in the world, but also the ways in which oppressive behaviours were manifesting inside the movement. Inequality is entrenched in especially South African life, and this is true in universities and resistance movements also. The race and class lens are often used to speak about oppression and inequality, at the expense of other issues and other lenses like gender and sexuality. But women and queer and trans students insisted that a fundamental imperative of RMF had to be fighting oppression in whatever way it showed up.

While there was a claim that RMF did not enter into enough, if any, intergenerational dialogue, there were a number of relationships and engagements that suggested the contrary. These included the building of alliances with black academic staff and other (especially outsourced) workers. Peoples' experiences of blackness and especially the oppressions they endured were valued as an

important source of knowledge to make UCT and the world more just. Following Fanon, who suggests that decolonisation is "putting the last first", RMF were at some point willing to support the struggle of outsourced workers as the main focus of their intellectual and political work. This was important work towards solidarity and was underpinned by an insistence on ideas and action being held together, as vital ingredients for successful struggle to transform UCT for the better.

6. *The commitment to radical praxis – to thinking in action – moved everyone involved ongoingly towards new ideas and towards new ways of articulating themselves in a context that they themselves were transforming. Thought in action is a most powerful force for the creation of intellectual intensity.*

RMF took on the practice of calling out "talking left and walking right"[699] or saying progressive things but then in practice doing the opposite. By agreeing to an intersectional approach of understanding privilege and oppression, RMF was in principle agreeing to try and think about and respond to all forms of oppression on campus, and work to relate through critical reflection their ideas with their actions. This was an attempt to honestly think about the world while also trying to transform it.

RMF critically reflected on their experience including of racism and the ways that power and privilege operated at UCT and started explaining their feeling of alienation and oppression through the idea of "black pain". They collectively read, discussed, planned actions using a variety of methods, and then reflected on the responses and experiences of those actions. This praxis they brought into the life of their occupation through the caucus and plenary spaces made available for precisely this action-reflection cycle. Importantly, they did not only reflect on past action, but they developed in their caucus spaces, and then brought this to their Mafeje Plenary meetings, and the Seminar Plenary meetings and eventually wherever they attended different kinds of gatherings, an ability and muscle for reflecting on the conversation while it was happening. This meant that they were closing the distance, in terms of time, between when something transgressive or problematic took place, and when someone was able to recognise it, raise a critique, and think about and discuss what had just happened. This created an intellectual intensity, an awake-ness or attentiveness to the content of what was being discussed but also the content present in the form of how things were happening or being communicated. This meant that there was a criticality that understood that

[699] Patrick Bond argued in his book *Talk left, Walk Right: South Africa's Global Reforms*, that there was a major difference between then President Thabo Mbeki's radical rhetoric and his actions

power was operating to amplify certain people and silence others, and therefore also certain ideas. There was a concomitant desire to use these moments to surface the politics of the engagement, or the content of the form, how they were collectively thinking about thinking to reorient their entailment in the conversation.

When RMF identified outsourced workers as the most oppressed and silenced members of the UCT community, they took the proposition that decolonisation was "putting the last first" and put it into practice. They made space for outsourced workers to speak and think about their conditions at UCT. They amplified their voices by doing research and conducting interviews, which later formed part of a documentary film that shared these experiences of oppression at UCT with a broader audience. They worked on conscientising themselves and workers and a broader public about what they had identified as an inhumane practice at UCT. They built solidarity by getting to know workers more intimately. This was not just a progressive campaign that they were devising. They were being changed in the process of working to change the lives of the workers they shared a campus with.

7. *The classic South African protest forms of the march and the memorandum were extended by the work of creative disruption that RMF produced. There was a madness of breaking the frame, refusing the terms they had been given, and a braveness of renewing a repertoire of dissent.*

South Africa is referenced as the "protest capital of the world".[700] Most of these protests have taken place in black and poor communities around demands for better services from the State. The main modus operandi is usually a march to a local government representative to hand over a memorandum, or similarly in the case of a worker strike a march to the company bosses. The shit-statue protest was a creative disruption, which formed part of a repertoire of shit-protest in Cape Town.[701] Maxwele's shit protest was creatively disrupting the status quo, which in this case was also the leafy, middle class white university. Crucially, the disruption drew attention to broader issues of white arrogance and racism at UCT and performed the function of a port key – transporting those who witnessed either the actual protest or the video recording of it via social and mainstream media, towards action. For some the action was to expose their racism and desire to

[700] Runciman, C. South African protestors echo a global cry: democracy isn't making people's lives better. In *The Conversation*, 18 May 2017.

[701] Baxter, V. and Mtshali, M. 'This shit is political; shit is real.' The politics of sanitation, protest, and the neoliberal, post-apartheid city. In *Studies in Theatre and Performance, Volume 40*, *Issue 1*, 2020.

protect the statue uncritically, and for others the urgent need to contribute towards ensuring change through action.

RMF worked to think about creative ways to put into action their ideas and critique in service of a radical praxis. The plenary spaces served as spaces with mostly familiar people, where students practiced a form of disruption that was creative in that it opened up space through disrupting the normative processes that had become so ritualised at the university. When the disruption opens up for a different kind of questioning then different kinds of answers and actions can emerge. This is what makes these disruptions creative. RMF then turned its creative disruptions towards a broader public by participating differently in the broader UCT community, for example, at the UCT General Assembly, Heritage seminar, Council meeting, and so on.

The creative disruptions were also visceral in the sense that they were not afraid to break with the notion of "civil" engagement. When they believed that the UCT council should not decide on its own whether the statue be removed, they strode into the UCT Council meeting, disrupting the business as usual of the most powerful decision making body of the institution. When their analyses and experience told them that discussing the statue and the merits of moving it or keeping it in its place, would lead nowhere other than to have the university feel like it was making an informed and sound decision, they attended the seminar and creatively disrupted it by giving their input and leaving the seminar, forcing those that stayed to think differently about how to respond and what to do. When a white professor who was leading a RMF seminar plenary tried to tell them about how they should respond and feel about the documentary on the Marikana Massacre, and proceeded to hand out a pamphlet explaining what they needed to do to support Marikana workers, they creatively disrupted their own seminar by asking all white people who were present at that seminar to leave because of what they represented in the space. When black men students decided to second guess a woman student in the Seminar Plenary, when she bravely called out a person attending who had verbally and physically abused her earlier on that day, the seminar on "Symbols and Identity" was suspended so that a difficult discussion could be had about the way in which men unite to defend themselves and patriarchy even across racial difference.

There were many uncomfortable disruptive moments that created opportunities to work at radical praxis. These opened spaces and options for different responses to old questions and experiences. Through radical praxis and creative disruption RMF was fostering a confidence that could make the normative or hegemonic strange. They were themselves more aware of how they were partaking in the elite and white liberal university that UCT was. They were looking for different ways of being

in a post-apartheid South Africa, with provisional access to liberal democratic space.

8. *All of the above involves the explicit production of anti-hegemonic entailment in institutional and historical process.*

What does one do with the knowledge of one's complicity in an unequal and violent society and world? I have discussed above and across the thesis, the content and process of RMF's intellectual project. Through a radical praxis, consisting of critical reflection and action, "born frees" were experiencing and making sense of the failure of the new South Africa concealed through the myth of the non-racial democratic "rainbow nation". Black student intellectuals were also refining their understanding of and opposition to the university as they came to experience it at UCT and then worked to understand its history and function in the colonising project of modernity. This process and self-study deepened their understanding of the hegemonic project that they were entailed in, both institutionally and historically. They were encouraged to participate in this "hegemonic entailment" through their schooling and the pressure put on them to orient themselves towards what in post-apartheid is considered a "good life" – middleclass aspirations, which in South Africa (and the world) mostly means white aspirations. The project of civil rights, or desegregation, or democracy, in South Africa has in the main been a project of assimilating through and into colonial institutions and structures. It is of course impossible to place oneself outside of the colonial project.

The important and difficult work of critically reflecting on the shared experiences of alienation and pain, as well as the confrontation of difference, clarified the possibilities and difficulties of solidarity. The plenary and caucus spaces as well as the occupations and creative disruptions allowed for a critical engagement with the unconscious (and hegemonic) ways that privilege and oppression were internalised and acted out. This was the work of confronting hegemony and the ways we are all entailed in reproducing it.

RMF's black student intellectuals through coming to consciousness about this entailment, were working out what the hegemonic represented at UCT, and how they were affected by it. Black students becoming intellectuals involved confronting and admitting to themselves, then each other, then others, that they were uncritically accepting the schooling and later elite university education they had had gained access to without much critical dissent. They were (re)thinking themselves and the university they found themselves in, through excavating their experiences of alienation and black pain. They had a sense that something was not right, but together found a language and collective study to clarify and understand those feelings and in so doing the social condition they

found themselves participating in. The university in its formal and hidden curricula, did not help them with this questioning. They did this important critical learning work in spite of what the university was teaching but did it because of their situatedness in the white liberal university.

RMF built plenary spaces, which were important reflective and learning spaces, to figure out together an *anti-hegemonic entailment*, and then to practice this disruptive entailment creatively. It started with a desire to disrupt the hegemonic norm signified through the hidden (and not so hidden formal) curriculum of symbols exemplified by the shit-statue of Rhodes and evolved into creatively disrupting the untransformed nature of UCT. They then proceeded to disrupt the hegemonic entailment that made its way into the occupation and the movement. They were learning about themselves and each other but urgently about the difficulty of holding a collective project together. They did this labour by making more time and space of their own design through caucus spaces, SubComs and smaller issue based collectives, to strengthen the antihegemonic arguments coming from these smaller group formations who shared similar experiences of oppression, even from inside the movement. The relationship and movement between and into these smaller caucus spaces and the plenary spaces were fundamental to the vibrancy of the critique and learning. Trying to understand and, even harder, change social relations is the work of transforming the world, and for RMF's context, decolonising it. This was also what created the intellectual ferment. Far from simply understanding themselves as the easy embodiment of the young black revolutionary, the black student intellectuals brought the critique, of the university, of post-apartheid, and of each other, engaging with the different ways they were hegemonically entailed based on the diverse make up of their blackness.

Building solidarity was/is a gruelling affair. Confronting and disrupting the way power operates inside the radical attempts at decolonisation was a heavy burden to carry. Their hardest and best moments were the ones where difference emerged explicitly, and the black student intellectuals, instead of separating themselves out as not complicit in the oppressive ideas and actions of comrades, dug in trying to critically reflect in service of a radical praxis, or of walking the transformative decolonial talk with each other. We all know it is easier to write about others and things far away. Moreover to think and write about something close and intimate, with a veneer of "objectivity". Positioning oneself as complicit and entailed, creates a fissure, which needs constant work. Discerning how our actions relate to our ideas, and where they contribute to the maintenance of hegemony or the disruption of it, is complex critical intellectual work.

As Wallerstein suggests, all intellectual work is performing an intellectual function of analyses but

also moral and political functions, which many try to hide or obfuscate responsibility for. RMF's black student intellectuals were breaking the frame of what was considered intellectual work by producing knowledge about the content and especially the form of intellectual work. Their thinking and writing, which has influenced mine, entails the reader in the complexity of the argument, and does not follow the hegemonic academic form of presenting and producing criticality and knowledge. The complexity of the argument is not one outside of feeling or experiencing and is not diminished by an engagement with more than just distantiated theorisation. That is not to claim that entailed intellectual work is easier, although it may be more honest. Or that it is only black intellectuals who can do it. Entailed intellectual work is hard and complicated. But with all the knowledge produced in the social sciences, which diagnose and interrogate and suggest different understandings of the world and all our problems, and yet fail to help create ideas and actions towards a more just one, I am suggesting that we be open to altering the what and the how of intellectual work, especially at universities and for our time.

RMF worked to renew the repertoires of dissent in practice, calling on some old traditions and ideas, but (re)contextualising them for their time. Black student intellectuals experimented and left traces for us of creating urgent forms of intellectual work for our difficult time to come. They highlighted the complexities of the content and form of analysis and have challenged us to dive into the complexity through acknowledging our entailment. However they are clear that critically conscious entailment, especially for those who are oppressed in one way or many, is an anti-hegemonic one. And for those who are privileged, whether that be through having access to higher education or by being granted undeserved privilege because of the amount of melanin one has, it is even more urgent to clarify one's entailment (in fact everyone should be encouraged to do this, but the work is different if you are oppressed). In every moment and every movement, we have to ask ourselves the question: how am I entailing myself here? Whether you are in the field, or sitting at a desk writing, or standing in front of a class or a mass meeting. We have to ask that question of ourselves but importantly as RMF did, also about the institutions we are involved in – our families, our religious and educational ones, our neighbourhoods, our collectives and organisations and movements.

9. *By making the hidden curriculum of the university (and the largely white middle class liberal democratic bubble) painfully visible, RMF shifted the terms of the white institution irrevocably.*

I am convinced that black student intellectuals, in concert with other students, workers and staff, shook the foundations of the university and the many who were part of the university community,

and watching it, at the time of the mobilisation. People from near and far, in varying parts of the education system, were also struck by the audacity and creativity and vitality of RMF. UCT in particular has changed indisputably. RMF helped open up the possibility of being differently at UCT. In so doing, they forced an old, rigid, and hierarchical institution towards change. This can be evidenced by the rising numbers of black students at UCT, and in particular the numbers of black faculty including in leadership positions. It can also be seen in the insourcing of service workers, and the pushing back of the neoliberal strategy of outsourcing on campus.

There was a change in the self-awareness of black students (workers and staff) about their entailment at UCT and the possibilities for changing the institution. Racism at UCT, at least for a while, was on the back foot, having been outmanoeuvred by RMF. In addition to racist interactions and micro-aggressions at UCT the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission (ITRC) report acknowledged the "… structural and symbolic elements of racism, [which] it is clear from the evidence before us that UCT can best be characterised as an integrated structure in which assimilation into a dominant culture was privileged".[702] RMF insisted that the university through its leadership acknowledge this institutional racism by building an analysis and exposing the institution and its ideas and actions. Black student intellectuals built this critique and the confidence to make it publicly, also getting UCT management to unwittingly agree to this fact in the August 2015 mediation process. Later the ITRC, which was an independent inquiry into the 2015/2016 student protests, also acknowledged that UCT:

> "… [o]n the basis of submissions received and an analysis of policies and other documents, we have, reluctantly, concluded that racism does exist at UCT, that it goes beyond attitudes and beliefs and is aided and abetted by poor management systems which administratively result in discrimination on a racial basis".[703]

RMF students were refusing the social condition they were inheriting at UCT and became committed to critiquing the university and post-apartheid society. Making post-apartheid black life painfully visible to each other and as part of exposing the hidden curriculum of UCT was an important starting point and led to a time of vibrant reimagining or as I have argued elsewhere time-

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[702] Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission (IRTC) of the University of Cape Town, Final Report, March 2019, 33.

[703] Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission (IRTC) of the University of Cape Town, Final Report, March 2019, 2.

travelling[704] – calling into the present a better more just future, and in the process remaking themselves and the institution.

704 Naidoo, L-A. Hallucinations. In Publica[c]tion, 2016. Publica[c]tion Collective, Gamedze, A., Magano, T. and Naidoo, L-A. Publica[c]tion. Johannesburg: Self-published. Or Naidoo, L-A. (2016, c.). The anti-apartheid generation has become afraid of the future. In Mail & Guardian Online.

Coda: The composition of anti-hegemonic entailment through epistemic redistribution

What does one do with the knowledge of one's complicity and entailment in an unequal, and for many, violent education system and society?

It is a heavy burden to come to consciousness about oppression and exploitation and to recognise your own. This is compounded by the discomforting realisation that we are all, at different moments and in different contexts, able to hurt and dominate others, or support the systems that do. It is my contention that the figure of the "honest intellectual" helps position us, especially those of us who have space and time to research and write and teach, as entailed in the violences and failures of our world. And if we are to be honest, we would have to start from the acknowledgment that we live in what Vijay Prashad describes as "miserable and gruesome times", where "[m]any of us journalists and writers have become actuaries of suffering".[705] The time has passed for us to continue to count the suffering and violence and inequality. Some of us are on the receiving end of such experiences, but we are tutored through assimilation into the unjust hegemonic order, into believing and being rewarded for trying to convince ourselves and everyone else that we stand apart from the world. We know things are bad for the majority, the point is to figure out how to have our work and lives change that. My thesis tracked the emergence and the sustained work of students in the RMF movement over the course of 2015. I paid particular attention to the ways in which a cadre of powerful student intellectuals was built in and through the movement, as they experimented with figuring out together how to contribute to a more just and in their framing decolonised university and society.

The thesis uses several concepts from the literature on intellectuals to understand the work of the student movement. Most importantly Wallerstein's notion of the "honest intellectual", Said's idea of the intellectual as oppositional and exiled, and a range of writers from the black radical tradition to argue that making explicit the political, moral and historical stakes of the white university allowed students in RMF to take over the intellectual project of the university. Also the notion of the "revolutionary intellectual" involved with and in freedom movements like the anti-slavery, anti-colonial, anti-apartheid and other resistance movements, specifically the:

[705] Prashad, V. Letter From the Great Wound: The Eleventh Newsletter, *The Tricontinental*, 12 March 2020.

> "idea of the 'great wound' [which] comes to us from Frantz Fanon, who wrote in 'The Algerian Family' (1959) that the revolutionary intellectual must 'look more closely at the reality of Algeria. We must not simply fly over it. We must, on the contrary, walk step by step along the great wound inflicted on the Algerian soil and the Algerian people'.[706]

Black RMF student intellectuals refused to simply fly over the festering wounds at UCT and I have tried to follow their lead by accounting as closely as I could, the reality of their struggle. As a participant-observer, I was both an insider to the movement as well as an outsider, who shared their experiences of being in the university while also being critical of it. My work is positioned against the false framing of RMF and what they were doing, dangerously misunderstood because so many chose to simply fly over and not engage the detail of what was transpiring. The challenge of being inside and outside of the movement and the university, made the writing difficult. The thesis, while following some of the conventions of a PHD thesis, is written in an unconventional narrative form, in order to convey in the writing, the complexity of my entailment. I only discuss nine claims towards the very end of the thesis because I did not want to jump to abstraction and the big picture prematurely. I also wanted to give whoever reads the thesis something that felt more like a step-by-step journey through the fire, than a too easy flirting with some of the ideas. I stayed close to the students getting to know them and their struggles intimately because these were in some ways my struggles too. I hope that I have managed through the writing to encapsulate the battle that black student intellectuals of RMF went through working to articulate their experiences, feelings and critiques. My proposition is that entailment, while uncomfortable and compromising, complexifies the experiences and how we are able to know and think about something. I have entailed myself throughout the last five years and have extended this entailment to the writing process. My hope is that in reading the thesis you would have experienced my entailment and learned more and differently about the production of black intellectuals.

I am not writing about intellectuals that had postgraduate degrees, a recognisable base, or that have books or that are published. I am writing about intellectuals that were working to construct their own ideas and their own place in the public domain. It is this process of construction that I am focusing on because that is what was left out in much of the reportage of RMF. Not only were they portrayed as (too) militant, their ideas were not discussed or taken seriously. What I want is to

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[706] Ibid, 2020.

convey the difficulty of their experiences but also the difficulty of making sense as it is being constructed. I am therefore in a moment of reporting, but I am also conveying what black student intellectuals of RMF are doing and reconstructing it as they do it. I am in the construction and I am writing about their construction.

I have traced through this thesis, how black students began to reflect on their experiences of racism and other forms of oppression and marginalisation at the university as an experience of painful alienation and assimilation, an experience they described as "black pain". The many testimonies of these experiences of black pain given throughout 2015, and taken up in the FMF movement that followed, would not in and of themselves have created the critiques and analyses and change that took place. As Ruth Wilson-Gilmore reminds us:

> "experience is a complexity to be critically addressed rather than a cumulative condition to be described. After the fact, it seems so obvious – that were experience all it took to make the world otherwise, the sum of exploitation would already have produced its own cataclysmic reversal".[707]

Although students were possibly at different points subsumed, overwhelmed and/or paralysed by these wounds of experience, RMF student intellectuals in concert with those who kept coming back and especially engaging in the collective spaces and processes they co-created, went beyond just describing their experiences. As Silvia Federici points out:

> "Doing political work must be healing. It must give us strength, vision, enhance our sense of solidarity, and make us realize our interdependence. Being able to politicize our pain, turn it into a source of knowledge, into something that connects us to other people—all of this has a healing power".[708]

RMF connected the subjective ensemble of experiences to each other, but importantly also to the social conditions they were operating in. This resulted in these alienating experiences fuelling anti-assimilationist impulses and beginning the collective intellectual and activist work of revealing the hidden curriculum of colonial education and white subjectivity at the heart of the project of UCT. The thesis makes careful account of the critical collective conversations and disruptive actions that

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[707] Wilson-Gilmore, Ruth. 2019 Foreword. in *Cedric J. Robinson: On Racial Capitalism, Black Internationalism, and Cultures of Resistance*, xii.

[708] Federici, Silvia. 2020 *Beyond the Periphery of the Skin: Rethinking, Remaking and Reclaiming the Body in Contemporary Capitalism*, 126.

the movement hosted, theorising that its critical confrontations across different politics and subjectivities within the condition of black struggle created a rich democratic and anti-hierarchical praxis. It argues that one of the most important expressions of this praxis was the experimental relationship established between plenary and caucus, which elicited fierce intellectual activity because of the collective anti-hegemonic entailment of black students in the disruption of the white university.

No-one was outside of fault and therefore critique and disruption. As the black radical feminists help us understand, as context changes, power changes, and as we move quickly across difference, so too does the possibility of us changing from oppressed to oppressor. There were no holy grails during this time. Not the statue of a dead white racist capitalist coloniser claimed as white liberal; not the BC stalwart and Chair of UCT Council; not the black professor biographer of Biko; not the homophobic decolonial psychiatrist scholar; not the black philosopher-darling of the North; not the bad colonial portraits posing as art; not the black DVC Transformation Report-writing non-racialist; not the black man DA opposition political party leader; not the white expert professor on inequality; not the black ex-minister of finance that played a central role in the failed transition; not the black shit throwing instigator; and not even themselves.

The point for me is not to keep trying to deny our entailment, our complicity, whether conscious or unconscious. The task is to figure out collective processes that allow us to see our hegemonic entailment, or complicity with the status quo, with a view to creating practices and learning at every moment, how to instead work towards an anti-hegemonic entailment, against the status quo and interests of the powerful. The question of how long it will take for many more to realise the value of and join in the collective intersectional anti-hegemonically entailed intellectual work is yet to be answered. One of the collective attempts at such intellectual work only lived briefly at the university, in part because the experiment with anti-hegemonic entailment cannot belong to or in the university as it is.

Epistemic redistribution

Having briefly summarised the work that this thesis has covered I notice that one of the most profound ideas and modalities of anti-hegemonic entailment that was attempted throughout RMF was the idea and process of (re)distribution. Where I am landing, is with the proposition that perhaps we can tentatively call this “epistemic redistribution”. This is something I would like to take forward and work on as an idea as it seems to be an important way to think about undoing the

violence of the university project or what Ahmed calls "… the university's paradoxical architecture", where:

> … the university occupies a paradoxical position for Black and other marginalized bodies: it is simultaneously empowering and dehumanizing; it offers the possibility of acquiring knowledge that could serve as a liberatory tool from the violence of socio-economic marginality (Black liberation), while at the same time, the physical and epistemic architecture of the university can create an oppressive, alienating space for Black, queer and disabled bodies among others (Black pain).[709]

RMF were experimenting with a form of epistemic redistribution because what they were doing, was creating a kind of undercommons, which was in the university but not of it. But in it not only to change it but in it to open it out, to be committed to an epistemic project that is about sharing, that is about multiplicity, that is about disrupting the idea of a singular other, a singular "us" that you get assimilated into, and an homogenised "them" that gets excluded. At heart, it is an intersectional, multiple, complex cracking open of the epistemic project and in particular in this historical moment, the epistemic redistribution is in the direction of the marginal or the excluded or the othered, or what has been spoken about as "the last", who are not in any simple way a specific identity or set of identities but identified through a collective analyses of the social conditions and context in which one moves.

Of course any redistribution including the one that was attempted through RMF is complicated as a politics of redistribution is almost inevitably tied to a politics of recognition. At its core it is about a valuing of difference, not a hierarchising but an acknowledgement of the multiple ways that structural powers, systemic powers, and institutions, separate us and hierarchise us and forge us from birth, violently into this system that is about competition not collaboration, about the individual and not the collective.

"Epistemic criminality" or "fugitivity", following the Undercommons[710], is then about recognising and valuing disobediently, broader ideas about what reading, writing and sharing/publishing is. But it is in the spirit of a much more capacious understanding of these things, which work against the colonial and epistemic (university) project that is about specialisation, narrowing, individualising,

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[709] Ahmed, A.Kayum, 2019, 3-4. The Rise of Fallism: #RhodesMustFall and the Movement to Decolonize the University. PHD Thesis, Columbia University.

[710] Harney, S. and Moten, F. (2013). *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions.

and not only doing that to the epistemic project but it is doing that to the life of the academic and intellectual. Limiting their/our thinking, limiting their/our lenses and potentially what they/we can or cannot see, and all of that is mapped through or by colonialism and racism and patriarchy and capitalism and other structuring powers.

Into this epistemic project step the student intellectuals, the 'epistemic redistributors', taking on a criminal relationship to the university, which operates like Marx's "weapons of the weak" or in fairy-tale-style stealing from the rich to redistribute to the poor, and inciting the poor to do the same. Steve Biko and Abram Ramothibi Onkgopotse Tiro, and other student intellectuals of the past were assassinated because they were understood as criminal and the apartheid system considered them a huge threat and therefore expungable. This was partly because they were stealing and redistributing the knowledge of self-love, love for others who are oppressed, and ideas about revolution and freedom, possibly even the emancipative possibilities of the project of knowledge itself, away from domesticating (neo)colonial and now (neo)liberal education.

Epistemic redistribution through a subject position recognising the importance of being entailed inside but always orientating that not only towards the performance of "epistemic disobedience"[711] as Walter Mignolo puts it, but towards a commitment to redistribution so that it is not just acts inside of the epistemic frame that are individualised, that can be acknowledged and awarded by the university as it exists in the main in the world. This is not an epistemic disobedience in that sense, this is an epistemic redistribution that is both disobedient to the powers that be, the methods, the disciplines, the histories, etc., to be doing that while at the same time, waking each other up, inviting more people to join the chorus. Why this is to a degree "epistemic disobedience", for anybody to write about from across the sciences, or to decolonise, but rather it is in my mind "epistemic redistribution" if you are entailing yourself honestly and exposing critically the power structures that frame the world, the university, but also your internal life. Epistemic disobedience into epistemic redistribution as pedagogic processes that build critical anti-hegemonic entailment.

I will end finally, with an apology. The reason the thesis is long and so insistent on extended description had to do with the fundamental claim about entailment and the production of black

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[711] Mignolo, W.D. Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom. Theory, *Culture & Society 2009, Vol. 26(7–8):* 1–23. SAGE, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, and Singapore

intellectual life. The moves that the black students made against the white institution and the white supremacist society in which it existed, had so much to do with the specific arrangement of conditions in which they were hegemonically entailed and through which they sought to generate an anti-hegemonic entailment. That is to position their lives, their thinking and their collective processes against ongoing racism and other forms of oppression. The particularity of the situations in which they found themselves is precisely the stuff of the world with which they had to work and through which they made their politics. So although I apologise to my reader for the length of the thesis, it has seemed to me, to be precisely the point of the argument to show how our intellectual work always takes shape in and against the world as we inherit it. This work in and against the world cannot be described in any simple way as rational or emotional, as distantiate or proximate, as structural or subjective, as personal or political, or any other binary, but as the complex and layered experience of the world as it is productive of all of these matters.

I have attempted to hold the tension between thick entailed descriptive work, that some will consider mere 'reportage', and the making of 'good sense' that tries not to easily fall into presenting experience uncritically. It was challenging for me to refuse abstraction and distancing that much academic work in parts of the social sciences rewards and expects. My learning through this PHD process has clarified how compromising academic work in its current institutionalised forms is. More especially when the question and topic one is engaged with is about radical resistance or anti-hegemonic work. This thesis is therefore not written so that it can easily be decoded and placed into a particular disciplinary boundary. Sense making in the social sciences, as I understand it, can and should be a deeply complex and compromising exercise. Because I have attempted a different kind of writing work, it asks for a different kind of reading work. I hope what you have read was as discomforting for you to read as it was for me to write, and that the work we do together opens possibilities for learning and conversation that are meaningful and propel us all to more critical world making. This thesis, and all the processes it has afforded, is written from the vantage point of an impostor or fugitive. It refuses to hold in mind as an audience, primarily the privileged few who formulaically decipher meanings and analyses put forward in academic work. I know what you are looking for but you will not easily find it here. In the creation of this thesis, I have chosen to refuse to do the work of translation that makes the world and especially struggle against an unjust world, easily readable and understandable to an academic or more traditional audience. Fred Moten raises this challenge when he questions whether the kinds of concepts and conceptual work done are useful for imagining a new future. He asks us to consider what happens when we as othered, excluded, oppressed peoples "… refuse that which was refused to you", which I read as attempting

to reckon with the compromising nature of the academic project, while also building on and connecting to intellectual traditions somewhat outside the possibilities of easy capture by the academy.

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Appendix A: List of Interviews Conducted

Interviews 2015-2016

Abdulla, Mohammed Jameel, 7 May 2015, Mowbray

Abdulla, Mohammed Jameel, 12 March 2016, Rondebosch

Dladla, Ntokozo, 16 May, Mowbray

Dladla, Ntokozo, 14 March 2016, Mowbray

Gamedze, Asher, 8 May 2015, Observatory

Gamedze, Asher 11 March 2016, Observatory

Hotz, Alex, 14 May 2015, Mowbray

Hotz, Alex, 11 March 2016, Rondebosch

Hotz, Alex, Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015, Steve Biko Building UCT

Kamanzi, Brian, 6 May 2015, Mowbray

Kamanzi, Brian, 11 March 2016, Woodstock

Kamanzi Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015, Steve Biko Building UCT

Matandela Interview Transcript, 17 May 2015, Rondebosch

Matandela Interview Transcript, 10 March 2016, Afric Gender Institute UCT

Matandela, Focus Group Interview, 10 September 2015, Steve Biko Building UCT

Mlandu, Masixole, 11 May 2015, Mowbray

Mlandu, Focus group Interview, 10 September 2015, Steve Biko Building UCT

Mlandu, Masixole, 14 March 2016, Mowbray

Mlandu Follow-up informal Interview, 2019, UCT

Ndlovu, Duduzile, 16 May 2015, Rondebosch

Pule, Thato, 15 May 2015, Rondebosch

Pule, Thato, 13 March 2016, Mowbray

Ramaru, Mase, 11 May 2015, Mowbray

Ramaru, Mase, 12 March 2016, Rondebosch

Ramaru, Mase, Focus group Interview, 10 September 2015, Steve Biko Building UCT

Slayan, Ru, 15 May 2015, Mowbray

Slayan, Ru, 12 March 2016, Rondebosch

Slayan Follow-up Informal Interview, 23 April 2019

Additional once off interviews in 2015

Mammalema, 17 May 2015, UCT Hiddingh Campus, Gardens

Refilwe, 14 May 2015, Mowbray

Scott, Lwando, 14 May 2015, Rondebosch

Zwelakha, 11 May 2015, Mobray

Appendix B: Participant Information Sheet

Dear Research Participant

Participant Information Sheet

My name is Leigh-Ann Naidoo. I am a student at the School of Education at the University of the Witswatersrand. I am currently enrolled for a PhD in Education, of which this research project forms a part. I am doing research on the formation and participation of black intellectuals in the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) Movement at the University of Cape Town.

My research topic is, **Intellectuals as Change Agents: Case Study of Rhodes Must Fall Movement at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.** Part of my research is to do in-depth interviews with selected student leaders and staff of the RMF movement in order to find out more about the research I mentioned above. I have selected you as one of the student participants to be interviewed because you have been part of the RMF movement, and because you are doing work on one of the movements subcommittees, and are therefore more intimately involved with the thinking and action of the movement. It would therefore be appreciated if you would be willing to be a participant in my research. If you have any concerns about participation, or any questions that you would like to ask about the study please contact me at the email address or cell phone number below.
If you would like your interview to be anonymous and any reference made to what you have said, please indicate this on the consent form that you will be asked to sign, which will allow me to audio record the interview with you. Please feel free to request anonymity if you do not wish to be identified by name.

Your data will be archived as part of the commitment to the retaining of the history of student politics and movements, unless you indicate that you would like the data relating to you to be destroyed, in which case the data will be destroyed within 5 years after completion of the project. If you are comfortable with the data being archived it is likely that this archive be at the University of the Witwatersrand. My research will result in a PhD dissertation or research report out of which I hope to present my findings at relevant conferences and publish parts of it in relevant journals.

There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. You will not be paid for participating in the study. Any information picked up by the researcher during the research will have NO impact on you. Benefits of the project will be that you have contributed to a better understanding of the role of black intellectuals at UCT and in the South African education landscape. Interviews will be scheduled to take place at a time and place of your convenience and should take no longer than two hours. If it is deemed necessary, a follow–up interview may be requested.

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this project, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you explicitly request it, your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study. If you are not willing to participate in the study at a later stage, every effort will be made to exclude any comments made by you.

_____ _____

Leigh-Ann Naidoo
9A First Avenue,
Melville, 2092, Jhb
Lnaidoo10@yahoo.com
(cell) 072-0237271

DATE

Appendix C: Consent Form for Audio Recording Interviews

CONSENT
Please complete, sign and return the form below, indicating whether you give permission for the interview/s that you participate in to be audio recorded. Also, indicate clearly that you are 18 years or older.

Below is a summary of points detailed on the participant information sheet.

- The research contributes to the degree of PhD in Education at Wits University
- Researcher details – Leigh-Ann Naidoo will carry out the in-depth interviews
- The title of my research is, **Intellectuals as Change Agents: Case Study of Rhodes Must Fall Movement at the University of Cape Town in South Africa**
- The interviews conducted will be audio recorded with your consent
- Please feel free to request anonymity if you do not wish to be identified by name.
- The data collected as it relates to you will be archived as part of the broader project of archiving South African education histories.
- There are no risks in participating in the research project as well as no benefits for you other than that you are contributing to the knowledge production in relation to the topic.
- Time involvement will more than likely be two hours for an interview to be conducted and possibly a follow-up interview, which will be determined and negotiated separately.
- Your participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any stage of the research process.

I _____hereby give permission for the interview/s I participate in, conducted by Leigh-Ann Naidoo, to be audio recorded.

AGREE [ ] (please tick box) DISAGREE [ ] (please tick box)

I give permission for my name to be used in the research report and any further publications that come out of this research.

AGREE [ ] (please tick box) DISAGREE [ ] (please tick box)

I am 18 years old or older [ ] (please tick box)

Signature of interviewee: _____ Date: _____

Signature of interviewer: _____ Date: _____

Appendix D: Semi-Structured Interview Schedule for 2015 interviews

Pre-Interview

The pre-interview briefing will take place before the interview starts. This will entail the researcher going through the Participant Information sheet attached to this interview schedule. In this pre-interview briefing, the researcher will introduce herself, the degree that the research is part of, what the research is about and so on (as per the Participant Information sheet). Once this process is complete, the researcher will go through the Informed Consent Form, which summarises the key points on the Participant Information sheet. Then she will go through the consent for audio recording the interview and ensure that the interviewee signs this form.

Interview Schedule

Introducing yourself and your relation to education

1. Tell me a bit about yourself, where you come from, where you went to school, your family and parents' relationship to education?
2. What informed your decision to come to university? And UCT in particular?
3. Tell me a bit about what are you studying?

PART 1: How did power relations enable and constrain the unfolding of the event (RMF)?

4. What was your first experience of the broader UCT environment?
5. And going into a classroom at UCT for the first time?
6. Describe the social relations on campus, prior to RMF, during first part of RMF, and now.
7. What was most significant and most difficult about your undergraduate programme for you? Post-graduate?
8. Was there anything that you disagreed with in the way in which you were being taught?
9. What does it mean to you to be a black student at UCT? How has this changed over time? Give examples.

PART 2: What was the event about? How do you make meaning of the event?

10. What do you think the main challenges/problems in your favourite class are? Give examples. And your least favourite class?
11. What kind of staff has taught your favourite or most loved class and can you describe the kind of interaction you had/have with them? What kind of staff taught your worst or most hated class, and can you describe the kind of interaction you had/have with them?
12. What was / has been / is your relationship to your best course/ curriculum? What do you think should change? What was / has been / is your relationship to your worst course/ curriculum ? What do you think should change?
13. How do you imagine this change taking place?

14. Can you describe if / how your relationship to the university and the process of learning changed?
15. What is the relationship in your understanding between society and the classroom/ society and the university?
16. What would you think is the main challenge/problem in our society today? How has our society changed after 1994?
17. Were / are you involved in social action (political or other forms), outside the university context?

PART 3: Can we count what RMF is doing as knowledge production? If so, how?

18. In what way did learning in the RMF movement feel different to being in a lecture or a tut? In what way did it feel similar? What are the key differences?
19. What do you think decolonisation means in general, for universities?
20. What does it mean to Africanise the curriculum? Explain for UCT environment and explain this in RMF. Maybe discuss the difference between these two contexts.

Conclusion: Question about reading, teaching and thinking

21. Would you describe yourself as an intellectual? Why/Why not?
22. Do you see yourself and other students playing a leading intellectual role in the formation of RMF and its agenda? And in the community around RMF?
23. Do you see yourself and other students as propagating ideas?
24. Do you think it is important for people to become academics? Why?
25. What qualities have you seen in the very best academics? And teachers?
26. Who has been the person who has been the most significant teacher to you in your life? Why?
27. What in your mind is the difference between an academic, an intellectual and a teacher?
28. What kinds of things do you read and what are your favourite things to read? What has been the book that has influenced you the most?

Appendix E: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule 2015

Interview Schedule

PART 1: Reflection on changes in RMF

1. What are the key moments in RMF and the student movement since June 2015?
2. What has changed since last year, good and bad?
3. What of these is the responsibility of the university and what are influenced, or as a result of macro forces within society?

PART 2: Work in the movement, learning and teaching

4. Describe the different roles and work students are doing in the movement?
5. Do you feel like you are doing intellectual work? Why/Why not?
6. How has your thinking changed if at all?
7. Are you thinking differently? On your own, with others, when reflecting on action?
8. How is your course work helping you in framing your understanding of current events and the actions you want to be taken in response to these?
9. When do you feel like you have learned the most? Can you describe this?
10. When do you feel like you have taught? Can you describe this?
11. What is your relationship to the general UCT student body?
12. Are you recruiting students and how do you do that?

PART 3: Shackville, Intersectionality

1. Explain how Shackville came about?
2. How was the programme around the installation set up?
3. Explain what happened in the 24 hours of Shackville?
4. Does intersectionality remain at the core of the project?
5. When does black radical feminism appear as a possible replacement to intersectionality?
6. Rape at Azania, men being chucked out?
7. Trans collective disruption?

Conclusion: Repeat from the first interview

29. What does your philosophy of learning and teaching primarily consist of? How do you understand questions of learning and teaching?
30. In what ways does learning in the RMF movement feel different now to last year? In what way does it feel similar? What are the key differences?
31. What do you think decolonisation means now in general, for universities?
32. Why do you think it is important for people to become academics?
33. What qualities have you seen in the very best academics? And teachers?
34. What are you reading at the moment?
35. Would you describe yourself as an intellectual? Why/Why not?

Appendix F: Focus Group Semi-Structured Interview Schedule 2016

PART 1: Mediation with UCT management

1. Can you tell me the story of the mediation process from the perspective of the movement?
2. Can you explain how RMF ended up in mediation and what the it entailed?
3. How did mandates work?
4. What kind of conversations took place outside the mediation?
5. What have you learned about the institution through this process? And about the movement?
6. What has been your relationship with the tactics of disruption given that you have been in the belly of the institution?
7. What were the major arguments or content of the mediation that was useful? Difficult? Clarifying?
8. How did you change or grow, or what did you learn as activist intellectuals through this process?
9. What do you understand the role of the movement to be now?

PART 2: Marikana Week Action

10. How did the idea of doing the event around Marikana emerge in the Movement? And when?
11. Who planned it and what were the discussions around how to manage the event on campus?
12. What was the relation between the mediation process and the Marikana planning and implementation processes?
13. Why Tokolosh stencil? What happened? Who was connected, etc.?
14. How did the Marikana event change your relationship to other stakeholders on campus? Workers, other students?
15. How did it shift the politics of the movement to work on something outside the university? The broader social issues? You did this once before with the Afrophobia…
16. Describe the events.
17. Responses from people? On Campus and off?
18. What was your experience of the second publication in Vanguard Magazine?

PART 3: I want to drop this to a personal level and ask you how things are going at home and with your families, as you have continued to build the movement.

19. What kinds of discussions, conversations, support, and/or critiques have you received from friends, parents, siblings, partners?
20. How do you feel you have been changed by being actively involved in the movement?
21. How has your relationship to your university work changed?
22. What is easier and what is harder as a result of your involvement in the movement?

Conclusion: Politics of the Movement and relation to other movements

23. What has been the thinking around disruption on campuses?
24. What do you think the politics of the movement are? Is it still secular?
25. What has been RMF's relation to Open Stellenbosch and Black Student Movement?
26. What are your thoughts on the EFF's claim at Wits and TUT that physical violence is a necessary form for decolonisation?
27. Describe the formation and thinking around the starting of a Blacks Only Church.
28. Describe why and how the movement responded to Rebecca Hodes.

Appendix G: Consent Form for Audio Recording Focus Group

Participants Consent Form for Audio Recording of Focus Group Discussion

Please complete, sign and return the form below, indicating whether you give permission for the interview/s that you participate in to be audio recorded. Also, indicate clearly that you are 18 years or older.

Below is a summary of points detailed on the participant information sheet.

- The research contributes to the degree of PhD in Education at Wits University
- Researcher details – Leigh-Ann Naidoo will carry out the in-depth interviews
- The title of my research is, **Black Radical Student Intellectuals as Change Agents: Case Study of Rhodes Must Fall Movement at the University of Cape Town in South Africa**
- The focus groups conducted will be audio recorded with your consent
- Please feel free to request anonymity if you do not wish to be identified by name.
- The data collected as it relates to you will be archived as part of the broader project of archiving South African education histories.
- There are no risks in participating in the research project as well as no benefits for you other than that you are contributing to the knowledge production in relation to the topic.
- Time involvement will more than likely be two hours for an interview to be conducted and possibly a follow-up interview, which will be determined and negotiated separately.
- Your participation is voluntary and can be withdrawn at any stage of the research process.

The focus group participants listed below hereby give permission for the focus group interview/s they participate in, conducted by Leigh-Ann Naidoo, to be audio recorded.

We give permission for our names to be used in the research report and any further publications that come out of this research and we confirm that we are older than 18 years.

Signature of focus group participants:

1. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
2. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
3. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
4. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
5. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
6. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)
7. _____ (Initial and Surname) _____ (Signature)

Signature of interviewer: _____ Date: _____