

# RHODES FALLS

Transformation takes a leap forward

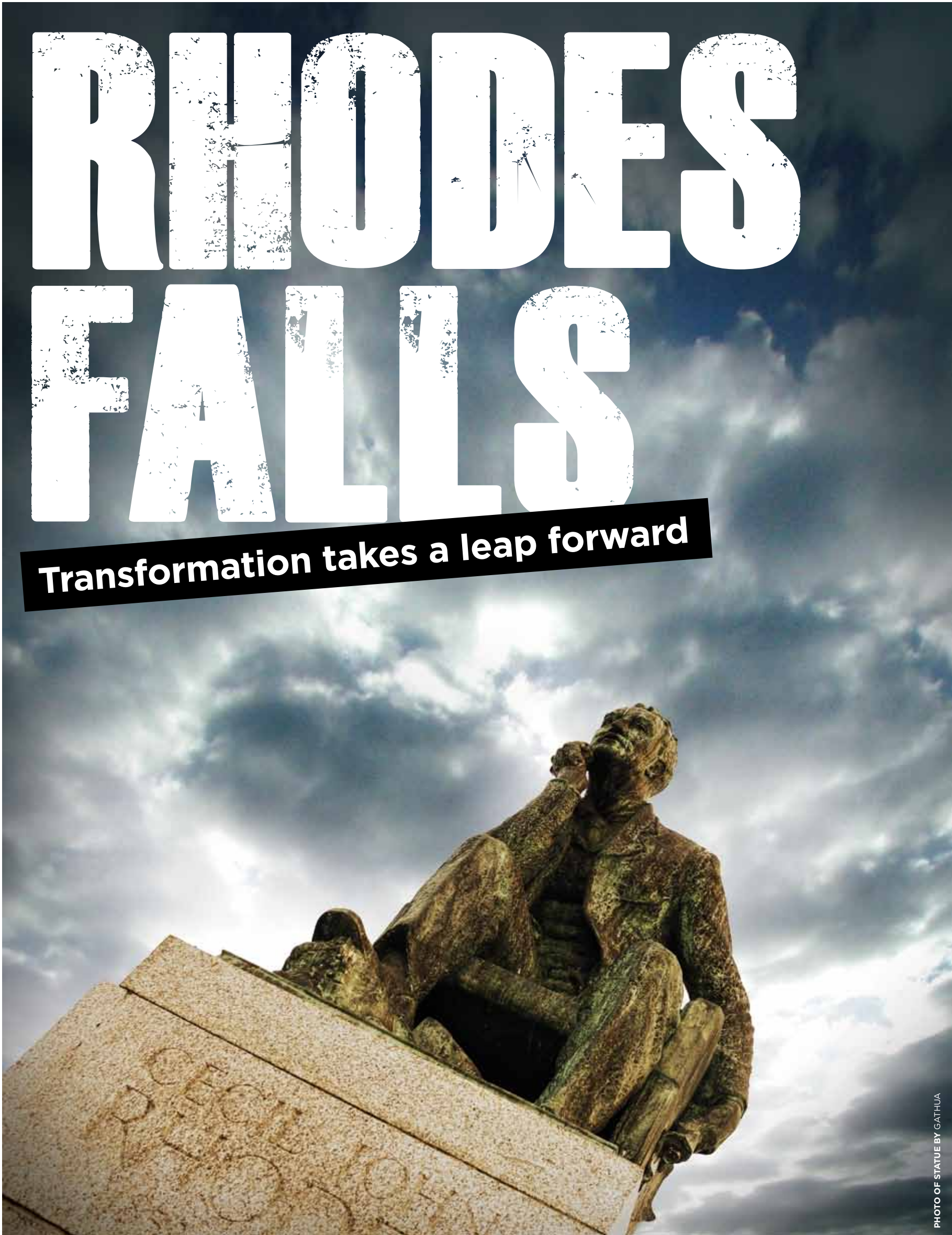


PHOTO OF STATUE BY GATHUA



## editorial



PHOTO BY YUSUF OMAR

PAST TENSE, PRESENT IMPERFECT:  
NOW WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

## “What’s going on at UCT?”

It’s a question many of us have been asked in different ways as we’ve covered the rolling protest of past weeks, centred on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes and his contentious legacy.

The answers distill to one thing: Rhodes is a symbol at odds with transformation.

A quote from a Student Representative Council statement sums it up: “The statue is a constant reminder for many black students of the position in society that black people have occupied due to hundreds of years of apartheid, racism, oppression and colonialism.”

But over the past weeks there’s been less unanimity on what to do with the Rhodes statue in the context of the future and UCT’s role as an educator, generator of new, inclusive knowledge and a champion of academic freedom. And how should it be treated in the context of a transformed – and transforming – institution?

Given the salience of these topics right now, we’ve cleared the decks to devote this edition of *Monday Monthly* to these questions.

Before we dive into what we have included between these sheets, we need to say something about what isn’t: in many ways, we’ve been circumscribed by who was able to respond in the time available, and who felt comfortable commenting in this particular medium.

We regret not having more time to do a full and fresh account of the knowledge project students have been shaping in the Archie Mafeje Room in Bremner (which the #RhodesMustFall movement has renamed Azania House). There are snippets of some of the powerful statements made at University Assembly, but these are by no means enough. This is something we wish to address overall in *Monday Monthly*: to give students more space, more opportunities to speak on topics relevant to them.

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ILLUSTRATION BY EDWARD LINLEY SAMBOURNE

## What matrix made Rhodes?

Cecil John Rhodes (1853-1902) was a colonialist, arch-capitalist, politician and white supremacist. He used his connections with the British Empire and no small dose of deceit to amass an empire of his own.

He bequeathed money to white men from the colonies to study at Oxford, and used the 1894 Glen Grey Act to force black men to leave home and earn (low) wages, often by working on his diamond mines. De Beers still monopolises the global diamond trade.

Rhodes craved British dominion from the Cape to Cairo. He explains in an 1877 letter: “I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race. Just fancy those parts that are at present inhabited by the most despicable specimens of human beings what an alteration there would be if they were brought under Anglo-Saxon influence.”

His 1877 will and testament dreamed of a “secret society” that would bring the whole world under British rule.

Was Rhodes just a product of his time? Mark Twain, Rhodes’ contemporary, objects: “I admire him, I frankly confess it; and when the time comes I shall buy a piece of the rope for a keepsake” (Chapter LXIX of *Following the Equator*).

*The Guardian’s* obituary called the “unscrupulous” Rhodes a “wrecker instead of a constructor of South African development”.

Lobengula, the Ndebele leader deceived by Rhodes of his land, would agree. So would the ‘natives’ of the time, whom Rhodes was in full support of flogging at the smallest provocation (see the Flogging Bill).

Olive Schreiner, another contemporary, blasted Rhodes’s British South Africa Company’s violent suppression of the Ndebele and Shona uprisings in 1896. She wrote in 1897: “We fight Rhodes because he means so much of oppression, injustice, & moral degradation to South Africa – but if he passed away tomorrow there still remains the terrible fact that something in our society has formed the matrix which has fed, nourished, & built up such a man!”

While UCT grapples with Rhodes’ legacy on a campus and in a nation still divided along colour-coded poverty lines, the need to interrogate history and find that “matrix” is as stark as ever.

RHODES MAKES WAY FOR  
TRANSFORMATION

Amid scenes of jubilation, the two-ton bronze casting of Cecil John Rhodes went quietly on 9 April, lifted by crane onto a flatbed truck and into temporary storage. Surrounded by euphoric students, the statue inched its way past the throng that had congregated to soak up the moment.

Story by Abigail Calata, Yusuf Omar and Helen Swingler

Photo by Roger Sedres

It will be held in storage until a decision is made by Heritage Western Cape about its ultimate fate.

This was a turning point for the university, 21 years into democracy and 186 years into its own history, said Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price after a special Council meeting on 8 April voted to support the removal of the divisive statue.

The trial or dummy lift earlier on Thursday morning had gone smoothly, said Andre Theys, executive director of Properties & Services. The main challenge had been determining the fixings for the crane.

All that now remains is the plinth, leaving the question: what comes next?

That answer, says Price, concerns the future and how the university transforms itself into an inclusive and welcoming institution for its students, staff and alumni.

“It [Rhodes’ statue] will be remembered for what comes in its place; probably not a statue but an acceleration, a renewed commitment to transformation to making the campus inclusive and to addressing the many issues which face not just the campus but the country and higher education.”

Speaking to the media on 8 April after the Council meeting, chair of Council Archbishop Njongonkulu Ndungane said the

university will now continue with the planned review of other symbols and names over the remainder of this year, aided by the energy generated during recent events: “The student engagement on this issue has added an energy and urgency to addressing many other aspects of transformation and has mobilised members of the university community not previously seized with the issue. The university management will partner with the students, different staff structures and the UCT community to review and refocus our transformation plans.”

A SILENT WITNESS  
TO HISTORY

The Rhodes statue was a gift to UCT by the Rhodes Memorial Committee in 1934. It was commissioned in 1931 and created by sculptor Marion Walgate. It originally sat below the rugby fields, but in 1962 it was moved to a position above Madiba Circle, below the War Memorial, when the M3 was reconstructed and widened.

The statue has been a silent witness to decades of history at UCT, through the terms (or partial terms) of all five of its chancellors and eight of its nine vice-chancellors, and through moments of jubilation and shame.

Those were reflected in the extinguishing of the Academic Torch of Freedom in 1957 and its relighting in 1994; in the triumphs of each of UCT’s Nobel Laureates; in the [Archie] Mafeje Affair in 1968; the celebration of honorary graduate Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the country’s first democratic elections in 1994.

## CAUSE FOR CELEBRATION

But the month-long protests around the Rhodes statue provided other reasons for celebration, said Price after the Council meeting.

“We have students and a significant number of staff members who joined in with these protests, who aren’t content with ready-made answers but want to head out in search of better questions and better answers.

“We’ve seen staff actively engaging with the public, through the media, with the students and with each other, what this current moment in history means for us, and how best to respond.

“We’ve had venues that have been packed with people who care about this campus community, who care about its future and their place in that future. They have disagreed

vigorously; they have different views on how to get there but I think they share an ideal of a campus that is inclusive.”

## LIFE AFTER THE FALL

On university life after Rhodes’ fall, president of the Student Representative Council Ramabina Mahapa said: “This is not the end; on the contrary, we are just beginning to transform this university to the ideals it so much promotes. As the SRC, we encourage every student to participate and contribute to the social change that we are experiencing.”

Mahapa said that the statue’s removal would herald the immediate end of the students’ occupation of ‘Azania House’ [Brenner Building], and that the SRC would now advocate for transformation from a “governance perspective”, amid other student concerns.

STATUES NOT  
THE ANSWER?

The idea of erecting statues rests uneasily with many of the UCT community. It’s perhaps worth noting the plaque that was attached to the Rhodes statue, part of the university’s Heritage Trail, which read:

*“Rhodes’ imperialist and racist attitude to Africa causes much controversy and resentment today, but without this section of the Groot Schuur estate which he donated for the founding of a university, UCT would probably not have come into existence in 1918. Rhodes envisioned Boer War enmity between English and Afrikaner being laid to rest by means of the interaction of promising young people from these backgrounds in an academic environment. Just as many young Afrikaners in the 1930s and 1940s were uncomfortable on a campus which provided daily reminders of Rhodes and Jameson, today many students question the ways in which these figures continue to be memorialised.”*

Concern was expressed from the beginning, said UCT’s historian, Professor Howard Phillips in a *Sunday Times* interview.

The Rhodes Memorial Committee was a local body of Rhodes admirers, and when the offer of donation was made in 1931, Senate suggested that Council consider the advisability of erecting any statues on the campus.

It was speculated, said Phillips, that “it was either because of how objectionable the statue might be to Afrikaners, who were a strong minority on the campus at the time, or because of ‘an even wider idea that statues at some point – whoever they are of – would get you into trouble’”.

## IT’S ONLY THE BEGINNING

“Do you know what Rhodes did to our people?”

This exchange between students was overheard on the Jameson steps, as the crowd slowly filed away. The empty plinth is the beginning of a period of introspection for the university. ■



Going, going, gone: The colossus of Rhodes is removed from its plinth on upper campus, and students rise to take his place.



# RHODES FALLS

One month to the day after students publicly demonstrated their disgust at the legacy of Cecil John Rhodes – and the words “poo protest” hit the headlines – the statue of Rhodes on upper campus came down. We track the path to his unseating.



**09 MARCH 2015**  
Monday

Chumani Maxwele, a political science student, throws what is believed to be human faeces on the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on UCT's upper campus – a statement against modern-day colonialism and institutional racism. He calls for the statue of Rhodes to be brought down. Before long, the event is covered by major newspapers across the country. His actions set off demonstrations at UCT, Rhodes University and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

That same day, the SRC launches its Transformation Month at Molly Blackburn Hall. Week one focuses on gender, week two on sexuality, week three on disability. It's accompanied by a video and photo campaign focused on identity, 'Let me define myself'.

“There is no collective history here – where are our heroes and ancestors?” **CHUMANI MAXWELE**

**10 MARCH 2015**  
Tuesday

The Students' Representative Council endorses a call to have the statue of Cecil John Rhodes on campus removed. The next day, they send out a statement, encouraging all students to gather at midday the next day to discuss issues of transformation further.

“Rhodes has been praised for donating this land to the university, building the South African economy and bringing 'civilisation' to this country. But for the majority of South Africans this is a false narrative: how can a coloniser donate land that was never his land in the first place?”  
**STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL**

**12 MARCH 2015**  
Thursday

Hundreds of students gather on Jameson Plaza at midday for an open-air dialogue on a plan of action for transformation at UCT. The debate ends with students chanting “we want a date”. That evening, the statue is covered up with cloth and rope.



**16 MARCH 2015**  
Monday

The university holds the first of a series of transformation seminars, this one focused on heritage, signage and symbolism. SRC President Ramabina Mahapa addresses the audience before staging a walk-out.



**17 MARCH 2015**  
Tuesday

The Academics Union Executive Committee meets to discuss the **#RhodesMustFall** campaign. The next day, they send out a statement in support of the substance of the campaign, and calling for debate to map a path forward.

“Urgent campus-wide discussions, that seek to secure the broadest possible consensus among all stakeholders, are required to set out a clear roadmap for the process of transforming the physical environment of the university including the symbolism of objects and the names of buildings. We need a serious engagement about 'heritage that hurts'.”  
**ACADEMICS UNION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**18 MARCH 2015**  
Wednesday

Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price announces an accelerated programme to come to a final decision about the statue, culminating in a final call by UCT Council. He also articulates his personal position on the matter.

UCT creates the email address, [haveyoursay@uct.ac.za](mailto:haveyoursay@uct.ac.za), and asks for members of the university community – whether staff, students or alumni – to write in with their opinion on the Rhodes statue and broader transformation issues on campus. 1856 responses were received by 7 April, and collated into a final report that went to Council on 8 April 2015.

Nine former SRC presidents send out an open letter, supporting the call for Rhodes to fall.



A gathering called Black Monday sends out a statement on their use of posters of Adolf Hitler and swastikas to try to conscientise fellow students about the outrage they feel at having to face the statue of Cecil John Rhodes every day.

“It is because the brooding presence of Cecil John Rhodes is located in pride of place, at the focal point of the campus, that it acquires the connotations of founder, hero, patron, role model, and embodiment of UCT's heritage. I do not think the statue should be destroyed or hidden away. I just think it should not be *there* – it should be moved. This will not compromise our ability to record and debate the role Rhodes played in the city's and continent's history. And it will not change our acknowledgment that UCT acquired its site from the Rhodes estate, and the positive contribution that it has made to our institution and its students.” **MAX PRICE**



**19 MARCH 2015**  
Thursday

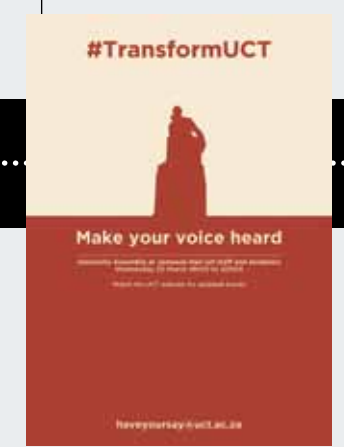
Student Parliament – the official structure for debate in student governance at UCT – votes on the motion for the removal of the statue: 80% are in favour. The next day, they send out a statement in support of the statue coming down.



**20 MARCH 2015**  
Friday

Some 300 students and staff gather at Bremner, the seat of administration at the university, to demand a date for the removal of the Rhodes statue. A number of these students stay on, as part of the **#OccupyBremner** movement, and rename it Azania House.

At the Bremner gathering, flyers articulating the mandate of the UCT Workers Forum and UCT Workers Solidarity Committee are distributed. Demands include a R10 000 per month minimum wage and the end of outsourcing, while retaining all workers.



**08 APRIL 2015**  
Wednesday

UCT Council votes unanimously for the removal of the Rhodes statue from campus. The university announces it has a permit from Heritage Western Cape for temporary removal of the statue, while it urgently submits an application to have the statue removed permanently.

**09 APRIL 2015**  
Thursday

Following an early-morning test-run to ensure the statue can be removed in one piece, Rhodes comes down off his plinth on upper campus in the late afternoon. ■

For full coverage of these events and debates, go to [uct.ac.za](http://uct.ac.za)

**07 APRIL 2015**  
Tuesday

Convocation – made up of UCT alumni – meet to discuss the Rhodes debate. In closing, Prof Barney Pitso, president of Convocation, says that it's very important that UCT makes transformation its lifeblood.

UCT Association of Black Alumni hosts a public engagement about transformation issues, specifically admissions, employment and institutional culture. On the panel are Dr Max Price, SRC President Ramabina Mahapa, Dr Iqbal Survé, Dr Shose Kessi, a lecturer at UCT, and Advocate Rod Solomons.



**30 MARCH 2015**  
Monday

UCT's Association of Black Alumni comes out in support of the **#RhodesMustFall** campaign, and calls for urgent and accelerated transformation at the university.

**28 MARCH 2015**  
Saturday

A letter from the desk of the vice-chancellor updates staff, students and alumni on the path going forward.

“It is three weeks since the protest action began and one week since the occupation of parts of the Bremner Building. A group of between 30 and up to 300 people gather from time to time on the steps, occupy various rooms in Bremner and protest by singing, drumming, and dancing at various times of the day. About a hundred students sleep overnight in the building. The students also engage in many educational activities and the Mafeje room is indeed a vibrant, argumentative space with lectures, films, plays, discussions, sharing experiences and strategy.” **MAX PRICE**

**27 MARCH 2015**  
Friday

At a meeting of Senate, Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price tables a motion on behalf of the university's senior leadership to remove the Rhodes statue from its current position. An amendment was proposed by the SRC to remove the statue from the campus permanently. This amendment was supported, as was a further amendment that while awaiting a final decision from the UCT Council and Heritage Western Cape, the statue should be boarded up. The final amended proposal was supported by 181 votes, with one against and three abstentions.

The Academics Union releases a statement confirming their members' support for moving the statue. It also announces a series of fora to discuss institutionalised discrimination, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and ableism experienced by staff members at UCT; as well as questions relating to curriculum content and design, and whether these are appropriate in the context of transforming higher education.

**26 MARCH 2015**  
Thursday

Senior leadership discusses its proposal – that the Rhodes statue be removed from its current location – with members of the professional, administrative and support staff. Members raise concerns that they, unlike Senate, are given no official vote or platform on the matter, and raise other issues related to transformation.



**25 MARCH 2015**  
Wednesday

Students and staff gather in great numbers at the University Assembly in Jameson Hall and Molly Blackburn to express their opinions about the statue and broader transformation issues. The overwhelming voice in the hall is one of passionate demand for the removal of the statue.

**24 MARCH 2015**  
Tuesday

Vice-Chancellor Dr Max Price announces a further acceleration in the decision-making timeline on Rhodes' statue, explaining he's met with UCT's senior leadership (including deans, executive directors, deputy vice-chancellors and the directors of institutional planning and the transformation office). All are in agreement on a proposal for the statue to be removed from its current location.

TransformUCT, a grouping of black academics from different departments and faculties at UCT, stands in solidarity with students in the **#RhodesMustFall** campaign and the removal of the statue.



# STATUTE OF LIBERTY?

## TRANSFORMATION ON OUR MINDS

In the past weeks of protests, sit-ins and assemblies, the statue of Cecil John Rhodes became the lodestone for transformation debates at UCT. To add to the platforms given to students, staff and other constituencies on the issue, we asked a cross-section of the UCT community to reflect on Rhodes and other symbols in the context of transformation at the university.

Curated by Yusuf Omar  
and Helen Swingler



PHOTO BY MICHAEL HAMMOND

### HERITAGE THAT HURTS

ASSOC PROF SHADRECK CHIRIKURE  
Department of Archaeology

“Under normal circumstances, there would be no problem with Rhodes’ statue: Jameson, Smuts and others have all done terrible things, and yet they are part of our institutional and national memory.

The problem with the present is that all we have around us at UCT are reminders of the past; not the present, and not the future. If you cannot be promoted then it reminds you of the Archie Mafeje debacle. If you encounter a racist comment, all you see is the brooding statue of Rhodes and the strategically placed Jameson Hall. There is nothing to look forward to for inspiration as far as symbols are concerned. Post-1994 memorials are in very invisible places.

“What Rhodes’ statue teaches us is that tolerance exists only in an improving institutional context. Yale University has not changed its name because it was founded by a slave trader and Zimbabwe has so far resisted calls to exhume Rhodes’ grave. What is needed at our beloved UCT is real transformation, not only the talk of the past 20 years. Now that Rhodes will fall who is next? Are we going to relocate the Jammie Steps, relocate Jameson Hall, Smuts Hall and many other sad reminders of the history of oppression in this country? Are we going to relocate the university because it is built on land donated by Rhodes?

“Taken to extremes, this view suggests that the presidential residence at Groot Schuur must be moved because it was built by Rhodes. We have heritage that hurts at UCT, but we have ourselves to blame because of our inability to create new heritage that reflects times that we live in. We cannot blame Mr Rhodes for our failure to enrol more black students, we cannot blame Mr Rhodes for our reluctance to promote black academics and women, and we cannot blame Mr Rhodes for our failure to build statues commemorating 20 years of democracy.”

### UNTIL THE LION HAS ITS OWN STORYTELLER

DR RUSSELL ALLY  
Department of Alumni and Development

“The Rhodes statue captures in essence many of the underlying challenges of transformation that UCT faces. It represents the origins of the university in white privilege and black exclusion. Black people would not have erected a statue of Cecil John Rhodes if they had been part of the university from the beginning.

“The history of how the statue came to be positioned where it is today is interesting as a historical account, but the meaning is to be found in that old African proverb that says if the lion and not the hunter wrote the history of their encounter, it would be a different history that would be written.

“We can choose to focus on the excrement that one student threw at the statue to discredit the frustration that has been felt over years about how the story of UCT has been told – in its buildings, its names, its statues, its institutional culture – or we can begin to embrace a different narrative that integrates the lion into the story in a more humanising way.

“The space has now become a place of debate and reflection. Students across the racial divide agree and disagree with each other on what its fate should be. They quickly see that the



*Clockwise from top: Chumani Maxwele's headline-catching protest on 9 March 2015 (photo by David Ritchie, Cape Argus); students taping up the statue with #RhodesMustFall messaging on 19 March 2015 (photo by Michael Hammond); memories of the icon of colonialism being dressed up (by the Kultural Upstarts Collective) as a soccer supporter for Heritage Day in 2007.*

significance of this discussion goes beyond the immediate future of the statue. It is about the future of their country. About how they are going to live together long after this particular incident is a distant, fading memory.

“But this will probably be the most important education that they ever receive. For in a few years after they graduate, they will have forgotten most of what they learnt in the lecture rooms.

“Under the shadow of the foreboding presence that the Rhodes statue still continues to cast over our history, no blows have been struck. Nothing has been destroyed. No lives have been lost. No walls erected. Instead we have a contestation of ideas. We have a marketplace of different solutions offered to problems that have bedevilled our university for many years. We have conscious, engaged students prepared to grapple with what it means to build a different kind of South Africa. To create a more inclusive UCT, sensitive to the pain of the past, but confident of building a shared future.”

### WHITE LIBERALISM SHOULDN'T FORGET

SONWABO NGCELWANA  
Academic Planning Unit

“The presence of colonial symbols on campus always revealed the culpability of white liberalism in the plundering and mass

murder (of Afrikaners and blacks). This culpability numbed many white liberals to the pain and hurt of the ‘other’, and in later years white liberalism joined hands with Afrikaner nationalism to subjugate and commit the worst atrocities against the majority of people in South Africa.

“White liberals will not link the legacy of CJR to the massacre in Marikana and to the pervasive structural inequalities that characterise SA. To be frank, I do not give a damn about the fate of CJR’s statue.

“As much as its presence is an affront to a lot of people, white liberalism should not be made to forget its avaricious appetite, which still perpetuates itself in the enormous wealth, privileges and opportunities that it still enjoys 21 years after democracy. My views on ‘transformation’ are too extreme to put on paper; suffice to say, dislodging power, privilege and opportunity by ‘rational dialogue’ has never borne any fruit.”

### AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH

GLENDIA WILDSCHUT  
Transformation Services Office

“History is shaped by the storytellers, and their narratives become the dominant and entrenched discourse for generations, and written into historical record often as uncontested truths.

“There can be no debate about what the real story is of Cecil John Rhodes’s impact on this country, and indeed on the continent of Africa. In recent weeks, more of this story – buried for so long, or conveniently ignored as an inconvenient truth – has been articulated in various public platforms and in the opinion pieces of most media. But for the recent student-led focus on the relevance and symbolism of Rhodes, embodied by his dominant statue in pride of place, in

“The problem with the present is that all we have around us at UCT are reminders of the past; not the present, and not the future.”  
**SHADRECK CHIRIKURE**



all probability much of this history would have remained buried under the cloak of a more amenable interpretation of Rhodes' 'contribution' to the university.

"The issue of the statue has come to be a symbol of the many untransformed terrains at our university. Frequent accounts of the alienation people feel have been told between the four walls of the transformation office. The stories have been told with anger, hurt and disappointment, but not without the passion for change and a desire for UCT to be the best in *all* aspects of its existence.

"Once again UCT has been thrust into a crucible moment in which it is forced to confront the awfulness of the past; and we cannot miss an opportunity to engage all its constituents on the vexing question of how we deal with that past, and the consequences it plays out in our present. That this issue has become a national debate should spur us on to focus our collective energies to begin to shape a new narrative for UCT.

"As director of the Transformation Services Office (TSO), I am of the view that the statue must be removed, but not without the university community taking the opportunity for a deep and introspective dialogue, for an all-inclusive conversation about our past and the kind of future we envisage for the university. The ultimate aim of the process is to create a new narrative, to vision a future and to deliberate together on how to co-create it. We can shape the way in which we want to be through this moment.

"A way to achieve this is constructive engagement which involves genuinely being open to the possibility of hearing the 'other' and engaging with others around difficult issues. It's about having those difficult conversations in an open and transparent way.

"Our challenge here at UCT is to examine our history. To thoroughly question what place the symbols of colonialism, oppression and apartheid have in our current reality and how the legacies of our past will impact the future. After removing these symbols, what then? How will we ensure that the present consequences of our past will not be repeated in the future?

"In examining our current challenges, we need to ensure the spaces for dialogue are kept open. So like Prof Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, in an article in the *Sunday Times*, I am uncomfortable with seeing the mouths of some of our students strapped. Perhaps I miss the meaning of this. If we're saying we're not going to speak, what are we saying about constructive engagement?

"As Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Crain Soudien would say: the university is a marketplace of ideas. It's about keeping in mind that the role of the university is to always engage in a knowledge project.

"We certainly, and particularly from the TSO's side, are thinking very hard about how we can create those small spaces for conversation, where people feel that their opinions are honoured; they feel that they are able to speak. In creating these safe spaces, we will go a long way towards impacting positively on our institutional climate.

"We've got a long way to go; we have to work incredibly hard on shifting mindsets and changing racial and other stereotypes."

### KNOWLEDGE WORTH VALORISING

**PROF LESLIE LONDON**  
School of Public Health and Family Medicine

"UCT needs to reflect on its visible symbols, because the culture of an institution cannot be separated from the statues, pictures and iconography of those whom the university chooses to valorise. Whom we honour in our symbols is a powerful message to staff and students.

"That UCT benefited extensively from Rhodes' legacy is a fact that can't be airbrushed out of history. But it will be an appropriate statement if UCT removes Rhodes' statue from its present position to make it the subject of a critical social history. A space for a critical narrative on Rhodes' role in South Africa should be created without the need for the statue.

"However, the same colonial gaze that Rhodes exerted looking north to Cairo is a gaze that continues to permeate UCT at large. In all our Senate committees, for example, are we serious about thinking about Africa as a place of knowledge generation, from which we can learn, or do we simply treat Africa as a place to colonise, patronise, or, alternatively, as a place over which our gaze passes northward in search of our European and US role models?

"I fear much of UCT is still locked into the latter mind-set. If the 'removal' of Rhodes' statue is to mean anything, we need a far deeper and ongoing reflection on what we consider to be knowledge worthy of valorising."

### LAST LAUGH ON RHODES

**JUDGE ALBIE SACHS**  
Law alumnus

"Rushing up the steps of UCT so as not to be late for my early morning lectures, I always winced as I passed the statue of Cecil John Rhodes. At that time I would have supported melting down the statue and selling the bronze to support scholarships for students from the Eastern Cape and Zimbabwe. Today I feel there is a much more meaningful and creative way to go: instead of extinguishing Rhodes, we keep him alive on the campus and force him, even if posthumously, to witness newly constructed surrounds that tell him and the world that he is now living in a constitutional democracy.

"I can give examples of how this was managed in a similar situation. One is the Old Fort Prison in Johannesburg, where the new Constitutional Court was to be built. Some said the prison was a site of humiliation and despair that ought to be razed to the ground to make way for a hospital or school. We said no. There was too much history in those cells.

"A two-stage competition was won by architects in Durban and a town planner in Johannesburg. Their design was based on placing a building representing justice under a tree right next to the walls of the notorious Number Four prison. The result: a sharp and memorable dialogue has been set up between the past and the present.

"My proposal, then, is that UCT lay down the principles based on the anti-racist values of our Constitution, which should guide the transformation of the Rhodes statue; invite the public and professionals to produce designs for the creation of an imaginative and renovated space in which the statue should be located; and, finally, establish a broadly-based panel, in which the present generation of students would have a strong voice, to choose the most appropriate entry.

"In this way, we could have the last laugh on Rhodes."



### HEROES ARE TEMPORARY

**OWEN KINAHAN**  
Building and Development Committee (UB&DC)

"UB&DC and Properties and Services strive for a holistic experience for our community of 40 000. This small town with a core business of teaching and learning with supplementary residential and recreation services must give value for money to students, parents and other funders. We are custodians of a huge land investment, specialist buildings and decades of priceless intellectual capital.

"South Africa and Cape Town in 1928 had no local role model for a new 'national' university. Teachers from universities abroad taught established curricula in buildings that seemed familiar. Yet their students were still those with means and foundation education. It was meant to heal and grow a newly unified country after two horrendous wars.

The complex, constant layers of Dutch/Afrikaans vs English, north vs south, South African-born vs foreign, rich vs poor, pro- and anti-war, pro- and anti-Republic, pro- and anti-segregation, quotas and corrections, and race and gender are nothing new. UCT has faced these crises in the past after robust interaction.

"The Rhodes statue touchpaper is disconcerting for the scale and ugliness of racial polarisation seen. That it is a global phenomenon is small comfort. Also disheartening is that basic tenets

of democracy and scholarly engagement seem to be adrift. Are we going to learn anything from this as individual South Africans? If insulting the duly-elected President of Convocation is okay, and it's not necessary to have other points of view, it doesn't look like it. It is apt to recall anti-Nazi Lutheran pastor Martin Niemöller's admonition that concludes '... then they came for me – and there was no-one left to speak for me'. We fail UCT and ourselves if all we do is line up targets for many years hence.

"Much can be quickly and easily done:

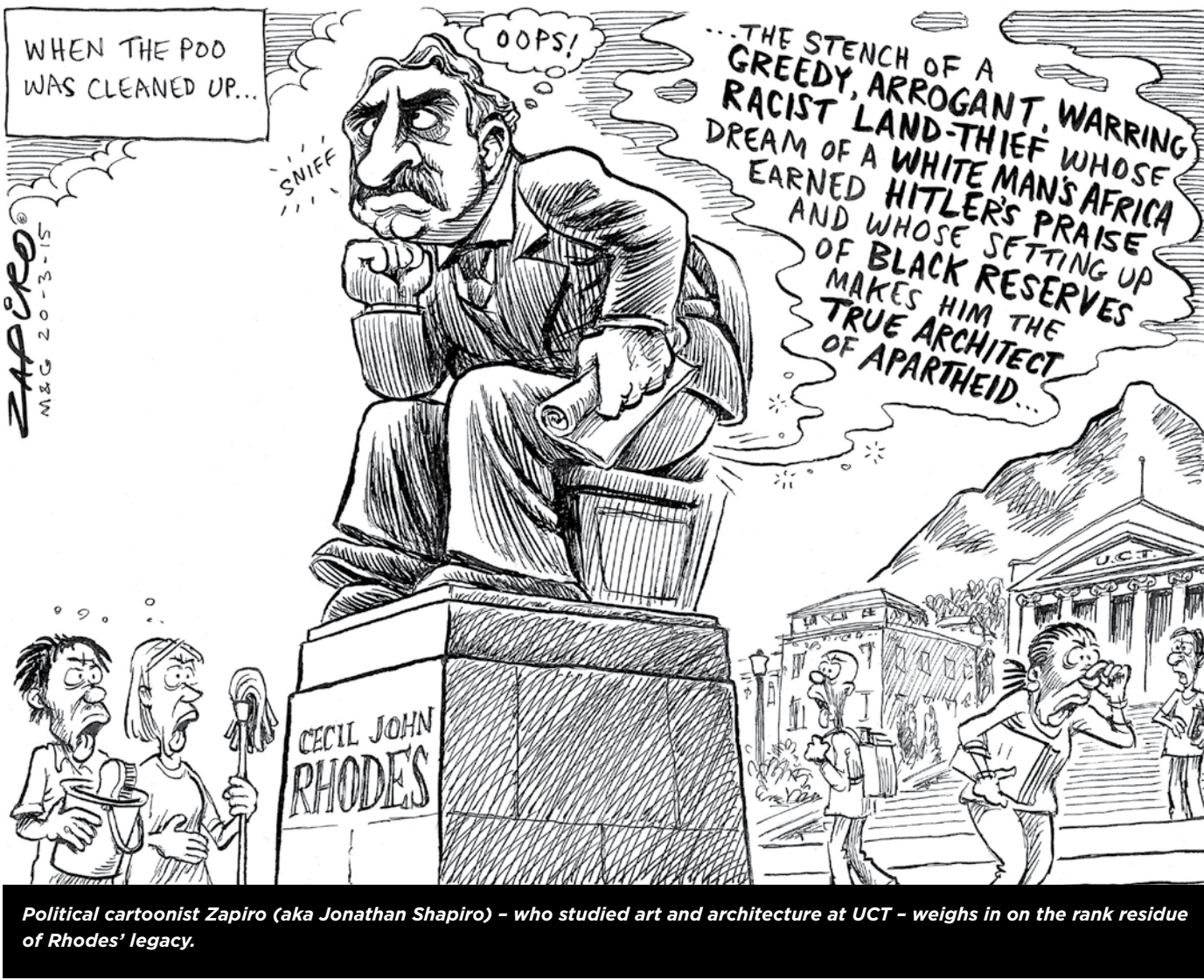
- Our heritage signage fails. It doesn't engage or invite enquiry. Best practice now does all that with a dynamic geo-locator.
- A brilliant initiative in modern Germany simply quotes Nuremberg Laws in public places. This 'stop and think' function is a quantum leap in engagement. South African legislation and indeed, UCT's own rules where they bowed to apartheid, would do 'pause to ponder' equally well.
- We know heroes are temporary. Why, as a university, don't we rather celebrate our many achievements and milestone events?
- Telling the whole truth cannot be selective.
- New names aren't always a solution. New livery, imaginative embellishment and fresh uses and functions can be.
- Our newest buildings are not colonial by any stretch of the imagination and no longer happen secretly behind hoardings. We engage on the web from design to disruption to delivery and 1% goes towards artworks.
- We can't chew the cud forever. The Rustenburg slave burial ground on middle campus has taken too long. The revamped *JS Mendi* memorial below Kopano was swiftly achieved, and is firmly embedded in its neighbourhood."

### FALSE MANTLE OF RADICALISM

**PROF NICOLI NATTRASS**  
Centre for Social Science Research

"UCT exists because Rhodes supported elite education. We embody this legacy even as we reject his racism and sexism.

"Staff and students aspire to UCT precisely because of its international reputation. The admission system advantages black students, but they still have to be good enough to get in. Selection committees favour black South Africans, but competition is strong because UCT attracts applicants from all over the world. My colleague Xolela Mangcu argues compellingly that UCT could do more to attract black South Africans currently working at elite overseas universities like Harvard. His is a simultaneously



Political cartoonist Zapiro (aka Jonathan Shapiro) – who studied art and architecture at UCT – weighs in on the rank residue of Rhodes' legacy.

transformative and elitist project. Rhodes would approve (once he got over the presence of black and female academics).

"We are all part, to varying degrees, of the internationally circulating elite Rhodes envisaged. When I was a student in the 1980s I threw red paint on his statue (the precise motivation escapes me – I think Marxism and alcohol were involved). But I accepted the Rhodes scholarship, an opportunity that helped land me a job at UCT.

"Sizwe Mpofu-Walsh, one of the past SRC presidents supporting the 'Rhodes Must Fall' campaign, is currently a student at Oxford. His tweets for the campaign are interspersed with Oxford happenings, like meeting Lord Patten for a 'wide-ranging chat'. He too is part of the elite educational project associated with Rhodes. Hopefully he will also aspire to a job at UCT.

"Removing the statue will provide the illusion that we have rid ourselves of Rhodes' legacy. It would cloak UCT in a false mantle of

radicalism, hiding the embarrassing truth that we are an elite institution that reinforces social inequality on a daily basis. The statue should be moved – but let's keep it somewhere on campus to remind us that we are the living legacy of Rhodes' elitism, and have a corresponding debt to society."

### GALVANISE TRANSFORMATIVE ENERGY

**JUDY FAVISH**  
Institutional Planning Department

"UCT is at a critical juncture in our history. I have been profoundly moved and shaken by the outpouring of anger and alienation of black students and staff. The campaign around the Rhodes statue has galvanised students and staff at UCT – and indeed in other parts of the country – around the need to accelerate the pace of transformation at universities in South Africa.

"Having listened to the views expressed by the staff and students at the assembly the other night, I believe that it is incumbent on the entire university to stand back, listen and reflect on what must be done to send a clear message that the entire university community has heard the pain and anger which has been expressed over the past couple of weeks.

"We all need to demonstrate by our actions that we want to move forward collectively to build an institution that values and affirms diversity, acknowledges our location in Africa, is representative of the demographic population of our country, and can play a meaningful role in promoting social justice in our country."

### A SUSTAINABLE SOLUTION

**GUY CUNLIFFE**  
Green Campus Initiative

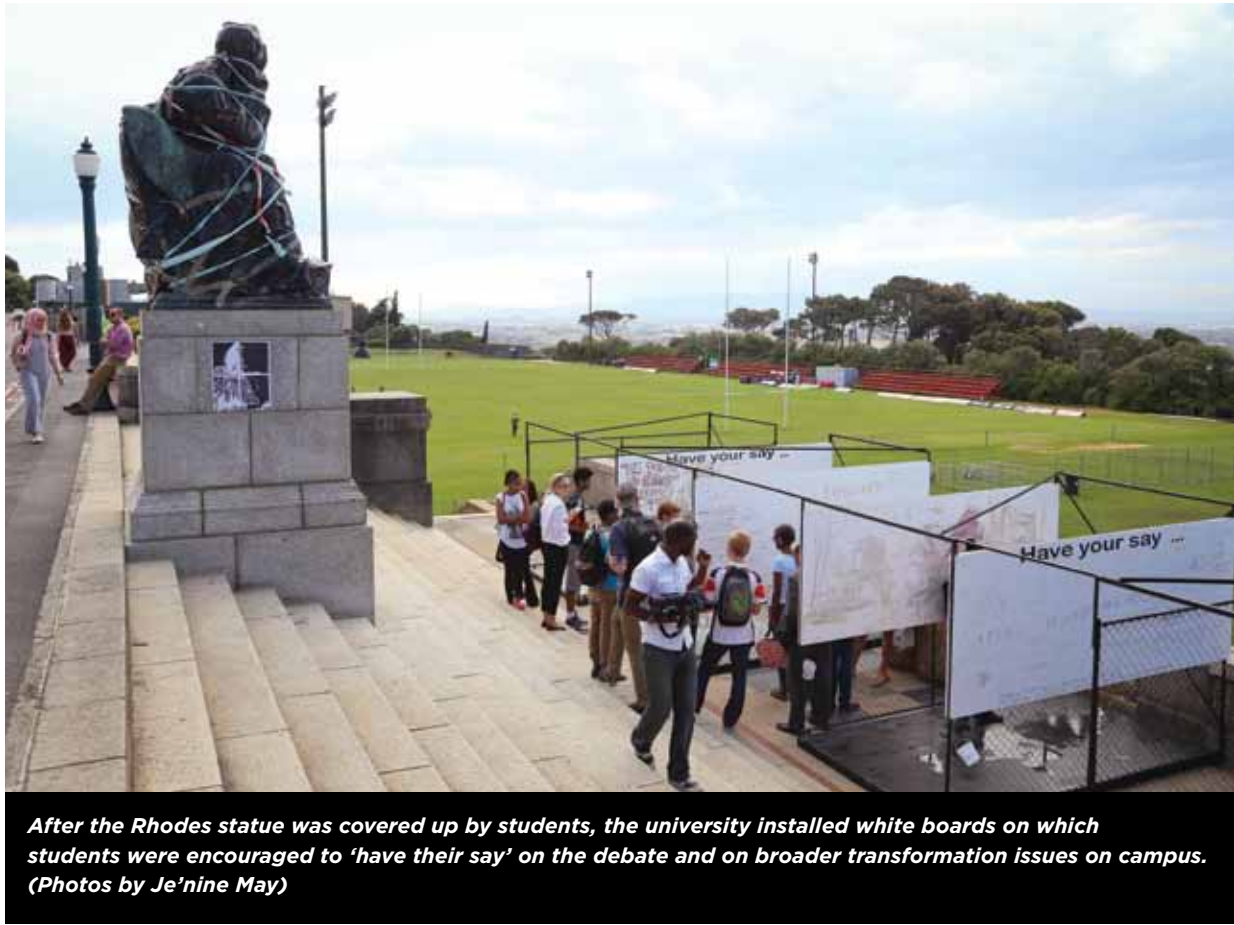
"I applaud the Senate's resolution for the Rhodes statue removal. But, given its prime position on campus, what – if anything – should take the statue's place?

"The removal of Rhodes presents us with an opportunity to do something different. Instead of celebrating another person, we could use the space to acknowledge a principle that is fundamental to today's UCT, through appropriate artwork and symbolism.

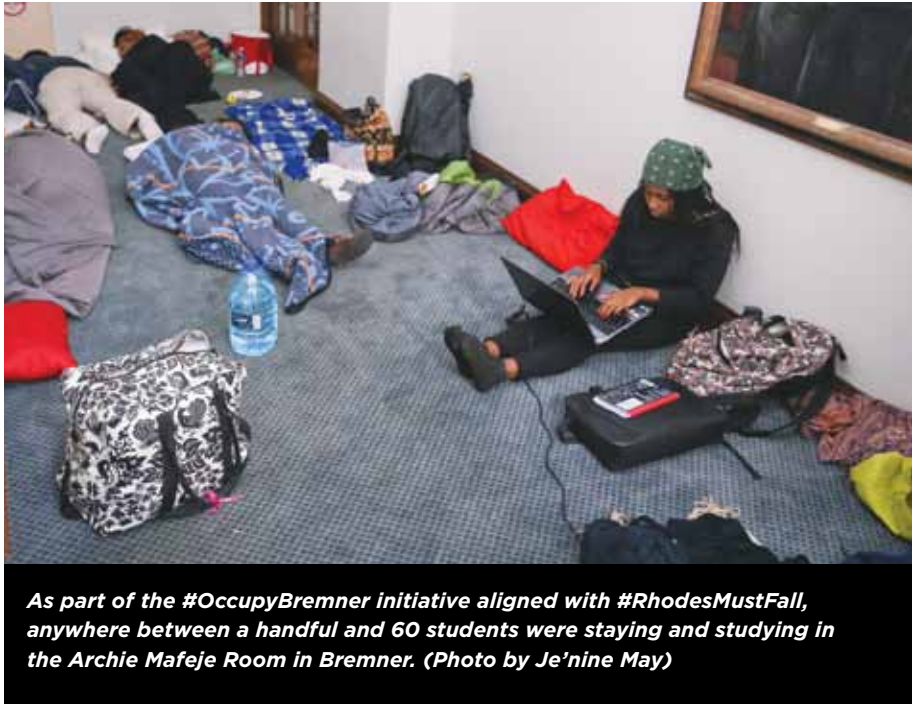
"One such principle is sustainability. Often this is considered in terms of recycling, energy-intensity and carbon footprints. But we can go further. Inequality, by nature of the disproportionate well-being it brings to different people, is not sustainable. Thus, the issue of sustainability is itself another branch of greater social transformation. At a time of reflection upon our heritage, curricula and social norms, we ought to consider how we can transform UCT's campus to better reflect the needs of the community, both of today and of the future.

"One idea is to have a tree: it could be built from recycled material or other reusable items to symbolise growth and future sustainability. Or, if the ground could accommodate it, why not replace the statue with an indigenous tree that could symbolise growth and potential?

"There is scope within the broader transformation discussion for changing the status quo of energy systems and consumption-based 'capitalist' lifestyles, that have their origins in Western and European cultures – another feature of colonialism, courtesy of Cecil John Rhodes and others."



After the Rhodes statue was covered up by students, the university installed white boards on which students were encouraged to 'have their say' on the debate and on broader transformation issues on campus. (Photos by Je'nine May)



As part of the #OccupyBremner initiative aligned with #RhodesMustFall, anywhere between a handful and 60 students were staying and studying in the Archie Mafeje Room in Bremner. (Photo by Je'nine May)

"Removing the statue will provide the illusion that we have rid ourselves of Rhodes' legacy."  
**NICOLI NATTRASS**





COLLECTIVE IDENTITIES, SHARED SPACES

PROF LORETTA FERIS  
Marine Research Institute

“In a recent inaugural lecture I spoke about the meaning of place and space and how we relate to places and spaces through our identity and through place attachment. I emphasised that the experience of a ‘sense of place’ is manifested through symbolic meanings related to culture and heritage and ancestry.

“Colonisation and apartheid through, inter alia, their symbols of dominance, power and ultimately exclusion have robbed black people of their sense of place in South Africa. Over the last two decades we have started to gradually reclaim those spaces in a way that makes them spaces for collective identities. We have done that by reclaiming our heritage in instances such as Saartjie Baartman or forging a shared heritage through the iconic symbolism of a collectively revered Nelson Mandela.

“The current institutional culture at UCT creates a space that is reminiscent of a heritage of dominance, and Rhodes is the ultimate expression thereof: wealthy, white, English – speaking and heterosexual (or in his case, at least the appearance thereof). Rhodes and what he portrays entrench a culture at UCT that in many subtle and nuanced ways excludes those of us who do not conform to these dominant modes of identity.

“However, what is more important than removing the statue from campus is addressing Rhodes’ legacy of power and dominance. It is only then that we lay claim to a shared sense of place at UCT.”

HISTORY CAN’T BE UNMADE

REINETTE POPPLESTONE  
Disability Unit

“Who is it that first said that not even God can change the past? It seems to me much more crucial to learn from the past than in some way to try to unmake it. I am 100% with Jonathan Jansen on that.



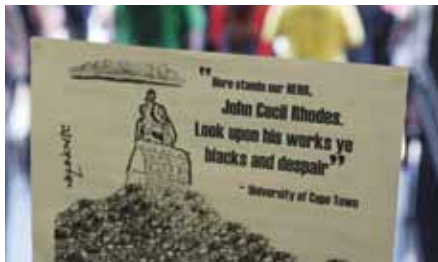
“I have little real sense of the power of symbols. Would I feel differently if I could see?” REINETTE POPPLESTONE

“We cannot unmake centuries of history. We cannot unmake the architecture of the university. The university stands on perhaps the most valuable piece of real estate in the peninsula, bequeathed by that old scoundrel Rhodes. I assume that in complex ways the university’s endowments continue to be fed by individuals and bodies which have strong links with our colonial past. Is the university likely to find itself losing benefactors? Is that an inappropriate question?

“I have little real sense of the power of symbols. Would I feel differently if I could see?

“Will removing the statue improve UCT’s employment equity profile? Will it enhance the quality of teaching and support students receive? Will it increase the number of staff with disabilities the university employs and the number of students with disabilities the university admits?

“And most pressingly for me, will it provide the funding we so desperately need to improve services for staff and students with disabilities already on campus? If it will, by all means remove the statue. And certainly, if it will go some way towards uniting our currently strife-torn university community, let’s get rid of the thing.”



Moments from the #OccupyBremner movement – characterised by struggle songs, sit-ins and teach-ins. (Photos by Je’nine May)

POTENT SYMBOLISM

ASSOC PROF TOM MOULTRIE  
Academics’ Union

“The statue has no place in its current position on campus. It is an insensitive and hurtful reminder to hundreds of students and staff who pass it every day. University governance structures (the executive and Council, particularly) should take the lead and declare their support for the statue to be removed.

“While the logistics and processes associated with this are resolved (and this may take some time), it would be fitting to render the statue invisible.

“In addition to its potent symbolism in its own right, the statue raises further – more difficult – questions about transformation at UCT. We need to understand why the process has been so slow, and why so many initiatives would appear to have failed. Is it through lack of commitment, or an inability to comprehend the full magnitude of the transformation challenge facing the institution?

“How do we recast syllabi and curricula to enhance their relevance in contemporary South Africa?” TOM MOULTRIE

“The statue has opened the space for serious engagement about issues facing academics in the institution: what are the delineations of institutional discrimination at UCT? How do we recast syllabi and curricula to enhance their relevance in contemporary South Africa? Are there invisible barriers to academic advancement? “The #RhodesMustFall campaign has catalysed these, and myriad other debates across the university. This is surely for the good of the institution.”

A JOURNEY LESS TRAVELLED

PROF MOHAMED JEEBHAY  
School of Public Health and Family Medicine

“The changing (albeit at a slow pace) demographic patterns in the undergraduate student population at UCT over the past decade has contributed towards the creation of a growing critical mass of black students who articulate an increasing sense of alienation, due to the pervasive Eurocentric institutional culture.

“From an institution that purports to be Africa’s premier university, it is unacceptable to be oblivious to subtle, and in some cases not so subtle, forms of institutionalised racism under the guise of striving for academic excellence. The ongoing glorification of icons of white privilege, institutional culture, scholarly prowess, and ‘philanthropic’ gestures are all symbolised in the prominent display of the Rhodes statue on the main campus – this must end through the symbolic permanent removal of the statue off campus.

“At the same time the inadequate transformation in the postgraduate student population and staff composition over this period in the health sciences faculty, and I daresay in the university at large, has put into sharp focus the lack of urgency on this front. The continued erosion of funds that were historically earmarked for transformation purposes further illustrates the apathy towards effective transformational change.

“This has contributed to a paucity of credible role models for students, a lack of inclusive spaces that affirm identities and voices that have hitherto been silent, and insufficient reorientation of curricula and training that reflect an appreciation of the country’s developmental needs.

“Upholding the dignity and cultivating respect for all students and staff alike in our daily relationships, and having a more deliberate effort to include black voices in a meaningful way that avoids feelings of being ‘discriminated

80%

AT A SITTING OF STUDENT PARLIAMENT ON 19 MARCH 2015, AN OVERWHELMING 80% OF THOSE PRESENT WERE IN FAVOUR OF REMOVING THE RHODES STATUE FROM CAMPUS.

against’, will contribute towards building a more humane and caring generation of South Africans. It is a long journey; but a journey we must all undertake, with uncompromising determination and haste, together.”

REMEMBERING A BRUTAL PAST

PROF ELKE ZUERN

2014 visiting professor in the Department of Political Studies

“Colonial era monuments offer visible reminders of the injustices of the past, carried into the present. For this reason, there are very clear arguments for their removal but also a pressing question as to how the brutal histories of violence, racism and injustice might best be remembered.

“Protests over the Rhodes statue reminded me of a similar debate in Namibia. For almost a century, a colonia-era monument stood overlooking Namibia’s capital city. The Reiterdenkmal is a monument to the German colonial troops, the Schutztruppen, who fought indigenous resistance. Its plaque stated that it honoured the brave German warriors who gave their lives to rescue and preserve the land for king and empire.

“At the unveiling of the monument in 1912, the German Governor Theodor Seitz stated: ‘The brazen Rider of the Schutztruppe, who from this site overlooks the country, announces to the rest of the world that here we are the masters and will remain so.’

“Only three years later, South African troops occupied Namibia, ending German rule. Still, the monument remained until it was moved in 2009 and then removed in 2013.

“On the grounds where the Reiter stood, a new independence museum and a genocide memorial were erected. While this is a welcome move, unfortunately, there was no public conversation over how best to remember and represent the injustices of the past. The Namibian government employed a North Korean firm to build the new structures, without opportunities for public input. But, creative actors were at work behind the scenes. Last time I was in Windhoek in late May 2014, I found the Reiter had seemingly retreated inside the German colonial fort. He was positioned to gaze at the new Independence Memorial Museum. This seems to be an appropriate final resting place.

“My hope is that local and international visitors are encouraged to step inside the fort to see the Reiter and that the museum provides visitors an overview of its significance in colonial and post-colonial history and debates, including demands for reparations.”

“Berlin provides a cogent example of how painful histories can be rendered as constant acts of remembrance in the present.” FRITHA LANGERMAN

NEW ARTICULATION FOR THE SITE

ASSOC PROF FRITHA LANGERMAN  
Michaelis School of Fine Art

“After the statement issued by the Academics Union and the near-unanimous Senate vote on Friday, there is no longer an open question of what should happen to the Rhodes statue. That it be removed and never returned to the campus is the prevailing opinion on campus, yet following its boarding and removal, a void will appear where it once stood.

“It is this space that is of interest. While bronze male statues have been toppled throughout the world and frequently replaced by other erect, male effigies, I think that it is recognised by the university community that this should be resisted. The concern for many of us is that the university management will respond with the same lack of urgency and imagination as it has in the past.

“Berlin provides a cogent example of how painful histories can be rendered as constant acts of remembrance in the present. Buildings and sites are inscribed with the residue of past acts of violence – silent witnesses to death, removals, destruction and forced separation. This city gives many pointers as to how the archive of our complex past can be woven into the symbolic language of a future UCT.

“To remove the statue without a plan for how the site will be articulated is a mistake, and those departments concerned with visual symbolism – architectural and art departments – must be brought into the discussion early. A forum was held at the Michaelis School of Fine Art last week in which first-year students presented constructive solutions for the site. One idea was that the plinth should become a viewing platform where staff and students would be able to command the view for themselves, symbolically gesturing to their own futures.

“Another suggestion was that the sculpture be melted down and used to cast a plaque commemorating this ‘moment of rupture’. Were this possible, a combination of the two may be the most desirable: a bronze, commemorative viewing platform that in transforming a symbol of loathing into one

of optimism realises a decisive triumph. This does present a conceptual problem. Has the bronze statue, by a form of transubstantiation, become the tainted body of imperialism?”

IT’S NOT ABOUT CECIL

ZETU MAKAMANDELA-MGUQULWA  
Ombud

“Transformation is a pervasive issue at UCT. Given the highlighted need for more transformation, Cecil is not a name in history; but his legacy is experienced by some of my visitors in the present, thus making the university reminiscent of the past. I doubt if statues, art and images at UCT would be a primary bother if the university life was different to what Rhodes conceptualised.

“What now? One can appreciate that the students are simply asking for a date for the removal of the statue. UCT will have to look into substantial issues of transformation.

“Martin Luther King Jr said: ‘History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamour of the bad people, but the appalling silence of the good people.’

“The current climate gives UCT an opportunity to re-focus its transformation agenda, to develop and revive its communal spirit, and to be a true African university, where all its members feel that they belong and are proud members of the association.”

BAGGAGE OF THE PAST

PROF HUGH CORDER  
Department of Public Law

“For me, this issue is all about transformation. On the immediate issue of the fate of the statue, I align myself entirely with the Senate resolution. In its place, I want no statue, just a plaque, explaining what was on that spot, and why it was removed.



YOU SAID IT  
Voices from the University Assembly



“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 and 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.” Ameera Conrad



“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 porta-porta over a man who colonised, he is barbaric. And yet I go back to Soweto to that porta-porta when this imagined dream of a rainbow nation ends in June.” UCT student



“You are African. White, black, coloured, Indian ... If you are a white South African, and you think that you can isolate yourself from being African, and that statue doesn’t bother you, you need to think twice. Because the future is moving a lot faster than your consciousness.” Danai Musandu

“Liberalism hides under the principle of academic freedom ... This principle presupposes that all are equal in the system, yet we still face coloniality every day.” Elelwani Ramugondo



“Transformation is not something to fear. Transformation is progress. It’s something we need to go through to enrich humanity ... When a little child walks into Jameson Hall, and they see only white academics on the wall, they associate academic success with being white. I want to change that ... Transformation is about [ensuring that] one day, I can bring my children to Jameson Hall, and they can see that if you want to succeed in academics, you can be white, black, Indian, coloured, Christian, Muslim, everything.” Bevan Willoughby







“Yet the statue is the trigger for the outpouring of frustration that many students feel. The protests ignore what has been repeatedly and seriously attempted, both to widen student access and support and to pursue staff development, focussing on black South African, over at least the past 25 years at UCT. Yet we have not succeeded, racism remains subliminally and subtly in many aspects of what we do, because we are part of South Africa.

“One utterly imperative aspect is often lost in these uncomfortable times. Transformation goes beyond (the required) demographic changes, to a focus also on class origins: to an institutional culture based on the values set out in the Constitution and the achievement of social justice. We cannot wish away our past, every single one of us carries that baggage, no matter what our culture, race, religion, class, gender, etc may be. Unless we confront these pasts honestly, we are doomed to repeat their injustices and evils.

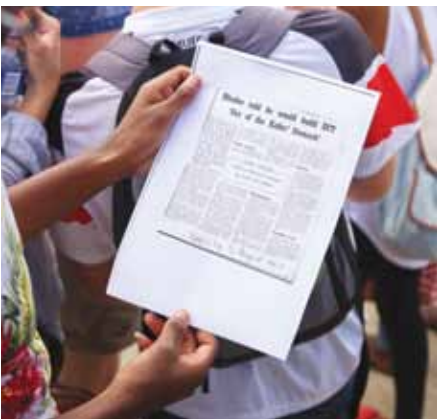
“So, we must all listen and consider carefully all views expressed, and insist on the discipline of fair process and rationality in argument.

“We must demand respect for dignity at every stage of this journey, no matter what barbs are flung at us: this is the only way to the least unjust solution for us all. It’s hard to do, and requires courage. Of one thing I am absolutely sure: on all sides, the resort to grandstanding and simplistic solutions is extremely unhelpful, and frankly damaging.”

**CURRICULUM MUST EDUCATE RACISTS**

**PROF ANDREW NASH**  
Department of Political Studies

“The Rhodes Must Fall campaign has already changed UCT in ways that go far beyond the statue. To remove the statue and keep what it



symbolises at UCT would be a false victory. Removing the statue should not obscure the demands for an end to institutional racism at UCT and for a curriculum (and intellectual culture) that addresses the most pressing needs of our own history.

“At UCT, the questions of racism and the curriculum are integrally connected. This is confirmed by the outpouring of crude, anti-black racism from UCT students, staff, alumni and others in response to the campaign, showing how little impression UCT’s official non-racism has made on those who are formed by that curriculum.

“There are several reasons for this chasm that separates the official beliefs to which all at UCT pay lip service, and the racial hatred aroused by the campaign. First, commoditised education gives priority to learning how to succeed rather than becoming a fuller human being; you learn what you need to say and in what jargon, rather than discovering what you truly believe.

“Second, the ideology of ‘excellence’ in higher education – understood as bureaucratic quantification of achievement – promotes an ethic of individual self-advancement, which generally orientates towards wealth and power. Reliance on wealth and power ensures avoidance or censorship of issues that disturb the wealthy and powerful.

“At UCT, the questions of racism and the curriculum are integrally connected.”  
**ANDREW NASH**



*Clockwise from top: Students marching from the Rhodes statue to Bremner on 23 March 2015 (photo by Je’nine May); Chester Missing visits campus to interview students and the vice-chancellor on the Rhodes debate (photo courtesy of the #RhodesMustFall Facebook page); photocopied pamphlets were a low-cost yet effective medium of communication between students during the protests (photo by Je’nine May).*

“UCT’s elitism carries within it the germ of racism. Elites are by definition concerned to exclude others from power and privilege, and in South Africa race is one more hidden mechanism of exclusion. We should be grateful to have many students willing to stand together against our legacy of inequality. They are UCT’s best hope of contributing towards a more equal world by challenging a bastion of privilege within the most unequal society in the world.”

**THE STRUGGLE OF MEMORY AGAINST FORGETTING**

**RENATE MEYER**  
UCT Libraries’ Special Collections

“The best suggestion I’ve heard for the Rhodes’ statue is that it be moved to the old zoo, which was part of Rhodes’ vision for a private menagerie to house animals from around the British empire.

“As Albie Sachs has pointed out [see page 8], creating layers of history could, when presented sensitively, comment more effectively [on Rhodes] than the simple removal of the offending artwork. Yet I’m very mindful of the discussions and debate around what the statue represents and why it should not remain where it is.

“I believe there are many precedents for alternative re-constructions of narrow histories. When governments or rulers are ousted or are overthrown, it’s often the case that representations of knowledge are burned, broken or erased. Such systematic destruction of historical artefacts is different to redressing historical imbalances (such as the removal of sculptures of dictators).

“In South Africa, much of our public artwork consists of figurative representations, predominately of individual white men. This ‘public art’ has been informed by a complicated history of state ideology – often quite didactic in nature and singular in context. As such, the policies that concern artworks and representations need to be challenged and transformed.

“Ten years after the Rwandan genocide that left hundreds of thousands dead, I was part of a task team that looked at how to remember these atrocities in constructive and instructive ways. I was struck by the fact that so many

years later, one still entered churches and areas to find thousands of bones and skulls, clothing and personal effects, left where they lay.

“In other areas, bodily remains were covered with lime to preserve them and left in public view. This, a Rwandan teacher told me, was so that the world would not forget. These public spaces of remembrance throughout Rwanda do more than any memorial sculpture or wall could do.”

**LISTEN TO BLACK VOICES**

**ASHER GAMEDZE**  
UCT researcher

“This pressing question is at the heart of the movement: how can we reimagine and forge a university, the values and guiding principles of which diametrically oppose its historical and current status as a satellite remnant of colonial empire?

“I suggest that the most important thing in this undertaking is to listen to black voices. Blackness speaks from daily experience of institutional racism and it must dictate the terms of ‘transformation’.

“UCT will never break with its colonial, elitist roots if ‘transformation’ debates give so much weight to the voices of those whose ancestors were Rhodes and his colonial cronies; history tells us that they are reluctant to break down the empire the benefits of which they inherited.

“That is why Rhodes still sits comfortably, and that is why he must fall.”

**THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS**

**PROF JACO BARNARD-NAUDE**  
Department of Private Law

“Many have expressed dissatisfaction about the focus of the student protests on aesthetics: the Rhodes statue. They fear that transformation will fall by the wayside of the revolutionary zeal with which the students are protesting for the removal of the statue. But Jacques Rancière tells us that politics is constitutively an aesthetic activity in that it is an activity that always already involves the conditions of sensuous perception. Politics determines a ‘distribution of the sensible’: what and who may be seen, heard and felt. As an emancipatory activity, politics consist in making visible that which was not visible, ‘audible as speaking beings those who were previously heard only as noisy animals’.

“Politics occurs when the logic of an established order is confronted with the logic of disagreement, which represents a fundamental discord that arises when an emancipatory political subject polemically contests her subordinated position and perceived invisibility in a given distribution of the sensible by asserting that this subordination/exclusion amounts to a wrong that can only be addressed through a reconfiguration of the distribution of the sensible.

“The logic of disagreement that has arisen out of the student protests resides in a fundamental frustration with the slow pace of transformation. This is a disagreement with the continuing public exhibition of symbols of oppression, with the lack of representation in the academic staff and perhaps most importantly, with forms and processes of thought and ways of doing that underlie all these phenomena.

“An optimistic reading of the events surrounding the #RhodesMustFall campaign suggests that authentic democratic politics in South Africa is still possible – for this the students deserve our gratitude. A more tentative reading cannot but insist that the work that remains to be done always begins on the day that the statues of the old order collapse.” ■