The struggle to remember: Rhodes must fall in South Africa

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Chapter 6

The struggle to remember

Rhodes Must Fall in South Africa

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Introduction

In March 2015, students at the University of Cape Town (UCT) called for a statue on their campus to be removed. It represented Cecil John Rhodes, a British imperialist, mining magnate, and politician who had been active in southern Africa at the end of the 19th century. Launched some two decades after the first democratic elections in 1994, which marked the end of white minority rule in South Africa, the students' campaign to have the statue removed quickly gained ground and their call was heeded: on 9 April, a crane unceremoniously lifted the statue and took it away. The Rhodes statue being removed at UCT broke new ground in South Africa where, since coming to power in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) had allowed the vast majority of apartheid- and colonial-era monuments to remain in place. It also triggered contestations of other such monuments as well as broader debates about heritage policy (Marschall 2017; Ndletyana and Webb 2017).

Some five years later, in the wake of worldwide protests against racism, calls were again made for statues to be removed; now also in the former metropoles of empire. In early June 2020, a statue of 17th century slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol, UK was toppled and dumped into the harbour; in London, a statue of slave owner Robert Milligan was also removed; while in Antwerp, Belgium: a statue of Leopold II, once the country's imperial king, was taken away after it had been set on fire by protestors. Similar attempts at removing statues or seeking to change their significance through vandalism occurred elsewhere. Several observers noted the precedent of this form of activism precisely in the Rhodes Must Fall campaign in South Africa (Chigudu 2020; McKaiser 2020).

Why did the Rhodes statue at UCT fall? Why did the Rhodes Must Fall (RMF) campaign (also known by its social media hashtag #RhodesMustFall) emerge at that particular moment, and why did this first successful campaign to remove a colonial-era statue arise at a university? Existing research on RMF explores the motivations of those who initiated the movement, pointing to their sense of alienation as black students at an educational institution with

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colonial origins (e.g. Mamdani 2018; Barnabas 2016; Marschall 2017; Zwane 2019; Ahmed 2019; A. Nyamnjoh 2017). Some have analysed RMF in light of the history of identity formation in South Africa (F. B. Nyamnjoh 2016) while others have explored how social media shaped its impact (Bosch 2017; Knudsen and Andersen 2019). The campaign's follow-up – in the form of Fees Must Fall (Booysen 2016), aimed at cutting tuition fees at higher education institutions – has also been studied; as well as a Rhodes Must Fall initiative at the University of Oxford (e.g. Chaudhuri 2016; Ahmed 2019; Newsinger 2016; Knudsen and Andersen 2019). But why did it all start with a statue? Some studies note that RMF was a reaction against particular symbols, specifically "offensive colonial/apartheid iconography" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 223, 235; see also Marschall 2017; Holmes and Loehwing 2016). But while the Rhodes statue clearly was part of South Africa's heritage landscape, existing research has provided little analysis of the RMF campaign in the context of that landscape.

This chapter examines the Rhodes Must Fall campaign as a case of contested heritage in a society with a history of violent conflict and colonialism. It argues that the approach to monuments adopted by the ANC government yielded contradictions which led to a polarised landscape of memory, and the campaign to have the Rhodes statue removed was precisely a response to that polarisation. The government's approach from 1994 onwards was to allow most of the "white heritage" to remain intact, while simultaneously populating public space with symbols of the struggle against apartheid (Marschall 2010). This juxtaposition of monuments led to contrasting stories being told about the past which resulted in opposing messages, especially as "ANC heritage" increasingly converged around heroic symbols of resistance and struggle against oppression. When, in 2015, students called for the statue of Rhodes to be removed, this was at one level a logical consequence of the contradictions implied in juxtaposing the icons of the new order with those of the old. As the new order was consolidating, the datedness of the old symbols came into view more starkly. But beyond this, the Rhodes statue falling also implied a countermessage to the ANC from a new generation: that there are other struggles to remember, beyond the struggle against apartheid. To remember a colonised people's history is indeed a struggle, given that both apartheid and colonial governments had attempted to erase the history of those they subjugated, in the name of ideologies of white supremacy. Drawing on Rothberg's (2013) idea of remembering back, I therefore read Rhodes Must Fall as an attempt to remember previously obscured aspects of history, so as to substantiate claims about continuities in colonial epistemologies and calls for epistemic freedom.

While I have not collected primary data for this study or interacted with RMF participants, my analysis is shaped by observations I made as a student at the University of Cape Town in the late 1990s and during a visit to UCT in 2016. I contribute to the debate by analysing Rhodes Must Fall in the nexus between memory studies and postcolonial studies, to make sense of dilemmas

of heritage and remembrance in societies marked by overlapping legacies of conflict and colonialism. More specifically, I build on the work of scholars of commemoration in South Africa such as Marschall (2010) but also add to it, chiefly by offering a novel interpretation of how the heritage landscape evolved over time and by reading RMF as a response to those developments.

The chapter is structured as follows. I first introduce South African history until the 1990s and describe in more detail the Rhodes Must Fall campaign. I then introduce theory on heritage and memory, followed by an outline of the approaches taken to heritage in South Africa from 1994 onwards. Building on this, in the following sections I argue that the heritage landscape in South Africa grew increasingly polarised and analyse Rhodes Must Fall as a response to that polarisation.

South Africa as a society with multiple legacies

With the first democratic elections in 1994 and the enactment of a new constitution in 1996, South Africa emerged from a history of both violent conflict and colonialism. While it is debatable when colonialism ended in South Africa, it is clear that prior to 1994 the majority of the population, i.e. those identified as "black", "native", or African, had not yet had a chance publicly to deal with the colonial legacies. This is because the apartheid regime had built on past colonial approaches.

Apartheid, Posel asserts (2011, 319), "originated as a label for the system of institutionalised racism and racial social engineering inaugurated by the National Party after its election victory in 1948". From then on, policies intended to separate inhabitants along racial and ethnic lines were systematically enforced, so as to allow the minority identified as "white" (i.e. the descendants of European settlers) to exploit the majority through dispossession, displacement, and underpaid labour. From the point of view of the descendants of the settlers, the system "would guarantee their access to an abundance of cheap black labour, kept in check by rigorous and wide-ranging methods of state control" (Posel 2011, 322). Posel notes the "colonial facets of the [apartheid] project", tracing its emergence to the "longevity of colonial bureaucracies in South Africa" and "an already elaborate project of surveillance" (Posel 2011, 320, 328). While by the 1940s struggles for independence were underway in other regions, in southern Africa rulers "were busy resisting decolonization and broader African nationalism through re-creating the African world in their own image of separate development" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 169; see also Meneses, Braga Rosa, and Sena Martins 2017).

Apartheid was thus both a continuation of colonial modes of rule, and a recipe for intensified conflict between some of the groups that earlier colonisation processes had antagonised (Trapido 2011). The first Dutch settlement occurred in 1652, and in 1795 British forces seized the Cape region. This stimulated further inland expansion by settlers and led to clashes with indigenous people,

as well as conflicts between the settlers themselves (Trapido 2011). After the Anglo-Boer war (also known as the South African war) ended in 1902, racial segregation was adopted as a colonial policy (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 170). Segregation served various economic interests in the emerging "white" community (Trapido, cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 171) and resulted from a convergence of interests among the British and Afrikaners (the descendants of the Dutch settlers), expressed in white supremacy ideas (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 170). This convergence facilitated the Act of Union in 1910, which brought the different colonies and the other units of which the territory then consisted together under one white government.

It is not surprising, therefore, that a sense of being excluded from the nation was central to the formation of "African" identity in this space (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 171–172). Thus the *South African Native* National Congress, the first "black national" political movement which was established in 1912, was later renamed the *African* National Congress (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 172–173). Initially working to "contest racial discrimination" and "create national unity among Africans", the ANC adopted the Freedom Charter in 1955 which projected a "non-racial imagination of a multi-racial … nation" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2013, 172, 173). The ANC campaigned with non-violent means but faced growing government repression, especially from 1948 onwards, leading its leadership to adopt armed struggle in 1961 (Mandela 1994). The conflict between the government and the opposition had turned violent and would remain so until the early 1990s.

This escalation clearly built on the history of colonisation, including violent clashes between settlers and indigenous groups. Indeed, apartheid was merely the latest version of racialised ways of thinking about nationhood and intergroup relations. And yet, when negotiations started in the late 1980s aimed at resolving those conflicts, the past was configured chiefly as "apartheid". The first democratic elections in 1994, which brought the ANC to power, and the 1996 Constitution are both considered to mark a break with the past. But which past? The South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), the main mechanism established to address past wrongdoings, defined the past to be dealt with as the period from 1960 to 1994 (e.g. Hayner 2011). More than three centuries of acts committed in the name of white settlement and dominance were excluded.

Meanwhile, residents of the "new" South Africa found themselves in a landscape of memory dominated by the old order. In a country in which "the black majority … made up 84% of the population" (Ndletyana and Webb 2017, 101), by 1992 an estimated "97 percent of all declared national monuments" – some 3,500 sites and buildings – "related to the values and experiences of the white minority" (Marschall 2010, 21). This "extremely skewed heritage landscape" sent a clear signal, Marschall notes, that "non-white people never produced any material culture of note" and that they "have in fact 'no history'" (Marschall 2010, 21). Given the non-racial democracy of the "new"

South Africa, this could not last. But how could the landscape of memory be modified, without jeopardising the process of reconciliation?

The Rhodes Must Fall campaign at UCT and its immediate repercussions

Among the myriad of symbols of the history of white rule in South Africa was a statue of Cecil John Rhodes at the University of Cape Town, set up in 1934 "to honour Rhodes' contribution of the tract of land that forms the major part of the … campus" (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1219). Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902) was a British imperialist and businessman who served as the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 to 1896. Rhodes arrived in today's South Africa at age 17 (F.B. Nyamnjoh 2016), just after diamonds had been discovered in Kimberley. He rose to control key parts of this trade, drawing on systematic dispossession of native inhabitants and exploitation of their labour (Cleveland 2014). Rhodes was eventually considered "a pillar of the Victorian establishment" in England, having "gained his weight and stature … by founding himself upon the rights and territories of vulnerable peoples in southern Africa" (Haresnape 1984, cited in F.B. Nyamnjoh 2016, 4). By so doing and accumulating massive wealth in the process, Rhodes is considered to have assumed a "superman authority": he "seemed to own, or to be, South Africa" (Fitzpatrick 1924, cited in F.B. Nyamnjoh 2016, 3).

The campaign at UCT to remove the Rhodes statue was launched in 2015. On 9 March that year Chumani Maxwele, a black South African student, flung human faeces onto the statue and called for it to be removed. The next day, his demand was endorsed by the UCT Students' Representative Council; academic staff soon came out in support of it as well (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1219). Only a month later, students at UCT saw their demand heeded. Amid crowds of cheering, clapping, and dancing students, on 9 April a crane lifted the statue and took it away (Ahmed 2019).

The Rhodes Must Fall campaign was unprecedented in democratic South Africa as a form of activism successfully demanding the removal of a statue of a colonial-era figure (Marschall 2017; Ndletyana and Webb 2017). Since 1994 the vast majority of colonial-era monuments had "remained firmly ensconced where they were first erected" (Ndletyana and Webb 2017, 106). What is more, the removal of the Rhodes statue at UCT sparked similar actions across South Africa. In April and May 2015, more than 20 monuments representing colonial- and apartheid-era figures were vandalised, leading some white South Africans to convene around statues representing "their" heritage in attempts to protect them (Marschall 2017). This also triggered renewed debate about which types of monument should be populating public space, as well as government efforts to revise its heritage policy (Ndletyana and Webb 2017). As such, Rhodes Must Fall "mainstreamed heritage as a societal issue in South Africa in ways that had not previously happened" (Ndletyana and Webb 2017, 98).

Heritage and memory after violent conflict and colonialism

To grasp why the Rhodes statue was removed at UCT, it is beneficial to examine how commemoration had evolved in South Africa in the preceding years. In South Africa and beyond, the concept of heritage is often used to analyse such politics of memory and to frame associated policy initiatives; it is a particularly useful lens for analysing societies with complex historical legacies.

Broadly conceived, heritage is "the use of the past in the present" (Giblin 2015, 313). Along similar lines, Herwitz (2015, 42) defines heritage as "the granting of something that is finished … a second life". The heritage concept emerged in Europe, Herwitz (2015, 37) notes, in the 18th and 19th centuries in tandem with nation states taking hold as the template for political community (Tilly [1990] 1992). This is no coincidence. Objects placed and practices performed in spaces deemed significant by aspiring rulers would serve to tell a story about the group they claimed to represent, making the individuals it consisted of appearing to have a common trajectory. Also, on a more general basis, by marking terrain with objects meant to signify beliefs and experiences that are more widely shared, leaders can justify a claim to that terrain (Herwitz 2015, 42). Heritage thus helps to transform scattered individuals into a group – even a nation.

As an object of heritage, the statue is deemed "one of the most respected modes of paying tribute to individual leader figures" (Marschall 2010, 310). Reasons why statues are commonly used to represent leaders relate to how the statue functions as a tool to lay claim to land. If a leader is imagined to embody a group, a statue can serve to solidify the association between his group and the place on which it is located (historically, the vast majority of statues have depicted male figures). The casting of a representation of the leader in bronze or marble, materials often used for this purpose, helps create such an image of a solid connection between the leader, the group, and the land on which the statue is placed. Thus, for viewers, a statue's presence can prompt them to believe that not only the leader, but also the group with which the leader is associated, *belong* to that place – and that the place belongs to them. Location is thus essential. A statue is typically located "in a public place of honour" and on a pedestal, so as to represent the depicted person "as a model for present and future generations to 'look up' to" (Marschall 2010, 311).

Heritage serves to tie people to places also because tangible objects facilitate remembering. To remember can be understood as to "bring something absent to the fore of consciousness" (Feindt et al. 2014, 28). Such "acts of mental representation" (Feindt et al. 2014, 28) are triggered by signs, such as statues. But whilst a sign can trigger memory, it cannot preserve it. Only individuals have the capacity to remember; memory is a property of the mind (Corning and Schuman 2014, 500). At the same time, remembrance "is not an autonomous activity of an individual but is dependent on the social context in which it takes place" (Beiner 2016, 14). Individual consciousness is thus the carrier

of "social frames of remembering" (Feindt et al. 2014, 30). We remember, in other words, both as individuals and as part of groups (Wertsch 2009, 119).

If a statue is a sign that triggers memory, what it *signifies* is thus shaped by social interactions. The remembering that we do as part of groups we see ourselves as belonging to has been called *collective* memory. According to Bar-Tal,

> Collective memory is a shared narrative with societal beliefs on particular themes regarding the remembered past of the society that provide an epistemic foundation for the group's belonging, solidarity, existence, mobilization, and courses of action.
>
> (Bar-Tal 2013, 138)

At the heart of this definition is narrative. For Temin and Dahl (2017, 907), narrative "is concerned with the plot structures of stories and the way that characters travel through a temporal progression of events". As participants in historical discourse, citizens pick up "the facts in the historical chronicles" and "actively arrange [them] in narrative form through different plot structures" (Temin and Dahl 2017, 907).

Conditions of violent conflict make collective memory more important as a device for identity and orientation. Bar-Tal (2013) explains that to live with violent conflict implies having to take everyday measures to secure one's own well-being, in a situation where key institutions and infrastructures are no longer reliable or have collapsed. Among an individual's multiple identities, large-scale conflict is likely to activate the in-group identity which may be threatened by the conflict. This will lead individuals to seek security and support in that group, which in turn will strengthen loyalty to it. Conversely, experiences made during conflict are likely to make people more hostile towards the "outgroup", against which their own group is fighting.

It is precisely because experiences of violence tend to tie people to some groups at the expense of others that collective memory may become partisan. By implication, so does commemoration after violent conflict (Brown 2019). People will be used to thinking about their own group as being in the right; the government, too, will be seen as harbouring loyalties to one side (Murphy 2017, 70–75). Therefore, "politically partisan, ethno-nationalist, and often antagonistic, forms of commemoration predominate" (Brown 2019, 52). McDowell and Braniff (2014, 14, 15) likewise note that after violent conflict, "commemorative landscapes" of monuments and memorials not only "document the suffering and resistance of the community"; they also "serve to invoke fears of the collective other" of whose violence they "act as constant reminders".

But there is also another dynamic at play. In negotiated transitions from armed conflict, group leaders will have to commit to non-violence. They must convey this new commitment to their constituency in a way that can convince their rank-and-file that it will help them reach the aims for which they have been fighting. To this end, commemoration is useful – if pursued with a shift in

emphasis. By highlighting past acts by group members that are consistent with the project of peace, such as non-violent acts of courage, commemoration can help convey such subtle shifts in the narrative about the group (Brown 2017, 3). Drawing on evidence from Northern Ireland and Lebanon, Brown (2019) argues that such "adaptive" commemoration "partially recalibrates conflict narratives, nuances political messaging yet also works to maintain group cohesion". In its focus on the continued cohesion of the in-group however, the commemoration remains partisan, primarily oriented towards that party's future (Brown 2019).

Compared to situations of violent conflict and their aftermaths, colonisation and colonial rule have a rather different impact on group formation and cohesion. Given that South Africa is marked by both legacies, it is useful to consider how colonialism is likely to shape heritage and remembrance.

As noted, heritage emerged as a tool to lay claim to territory and aid nation-building in 18th and 19th century Europe. In South Africa, white settlers used heritage actively to bolster their claim to rule: for example, in 1952 the government published a book entitled *South Africa's Heritage* with the subtitle "The story of white civilisation in South Africa from the landing of the first Dutch settlers with Jan van Riebeeck to the present day" (cited in Peterson 2015, 16). Such texts were accompanied by the building of monuments, including statues. Analysing colonial and apartheid South Africa, Holmes and Loehwing (2016, 1211) posit that commemoration took "the form of public monuments, especially statues, engaged in a type of … practice that aims transparently to produce icons, or re-presentations of historical figures". Such *monologic* commemoration, they argue, was used "to identify and celebrate heroes and leaders in order to construct a singular vision of the South African nation" (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1209). Those deemed "heroes and leaders" would, of course, only be seen as such by some, chiefly the white settler population. But while the singular vision of the nation was an imagination, it was bolstered through attempts to "exalt … the figures of individual men" by reifying them in statues, so as to "celebrate the power and might of the minority rulers" (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1212).

Given how intertwined heritage is with the colonial order, after colonialism, heritage practice can be expected to be conflictual and contradictory (Giblin 2015, 316). So too in post-colonies like South Africa where, on the one hand, heritage work is supposed to allow the experiences of the once colonised people to be recognised through monuments, as a symbolic form of reparation aimed at validating their history. On the other, it involves appropriating from local communities meaning-making objects and sites for the purpose of building the "liberated" nation (Giblin 2015). The new rulers who do so, moreover, draw on practices developed in Europe and refined in the colonies, including by their predecessors, to appropriate local objects and practices that they deem significant in order to consolidate their power (Giblin 2015).

And yet, counterforces are also at play in the post-colony. The promise of decolonisation, which in South Africa came with the first democratic

elections in 1994, also yields expectations of epistemic freedom. Ndlovu-Gatsheni defines such freedom as "the right to think, theorise, interpret the world, develop own methodologies and write *from where one is located* and unencumbered by Eurocentrism" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018, 3, emphasis added). But such attempts to interpret the world from where one is located are complicated by the fact that colonialism for so long sought to "dislocate the organically defined groups" (Rothberg 2013, 362). It did so not just through dispossession and displacement, but also through practices aimed at erasing the history of the colonised people and their material culture. For Fanon, colonialism thus "turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures, and destroys it" (cited in Rothberg 2013, 365). Writing from southern Africa, Ndlovu-Gatsheni similarly argues that "on the graveyard of African indigenous knowledges, colonialism planted European memory" (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

If colonisation subjugated people by seeking to erase their knowledge systems and history, a likely result is alienation, or "experiences of disconnection, disruption, or distortion" in how the colonised relate to themselves and the world (Lu 2017, 188). Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o describes the colonial process as one of "continuous alienation", nudging the individual toward "looking at oneself from the outside of self or with the lenses of a stranger" (cited in Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018).

After such profound experiences of loss and disorientation, where can freedom be found? If colonialism worked through attempts at erasing the history of the colonised, postcolonial quests for epistemic freedom must involve attempts at remembering that history. Taking narrative seriously is a first step. For if empire's power lies partly in the authority to define "the Other", as Said ([1978] 1995) argued, the Other can still "write back" by articulating their own experiences in narrative form. Said suggested that "stories … become the method colonised people use to assert their own identity and the existence of their own history" (Said, cited in Rothberg 2013, 367–368).

Rothberg (2013, 370) builds on this to suggest that, just as the formerly colonised can write back, they can also "remember back". Through practices centred on specific sites, they can change perceptions of the history of those sites and what is implied by that history. Through such practices of remembering back, reconfigured narratives may emerge which reflect shared beliefs among many formerly colonised today, contributing to their re-constitution as a group with a history that is intersubjectively validated.

Approaches to heritage in South Africa from 1994 to 2015

What forms of heritage took precedence in South Africa after 1994, and how did it shape practices of commemoration? Throughout the period from 1994 to 2015 assessed here, the ANC was South Africa's ruling party, with

Nelson Mandela serving as president until 1999, followed by Thabo Mbeki (1999–2008) and Jacob Zuma (2009–2018). The ANC has won every general election since 1994, though it has seen its share of votes and voter turnout drop over the years (Booysen 2015). The approach to heritage adopted by this government was shaped most decisively by three policy initiatives: the National Heritage Resources Act, adopted in 1999; the National Legacy Project, adopted in 1997; and, following up on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the reparations policy adopted in 2003 (Marschall 2010, 175). I will now introduce these, beginning with the last.

The post-TRC reparations policy

The Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act 34 of 1995 established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which was mandated to investigate acts that could be classified as gross human rights violations in South Africa between 1960 and 1994 (e.g. Hayner 2011). One of its aims was to grant "reparations and other forms of assistance" to those who were identified as victims of such violations (Marschall 2010, 77). To this end, the Commission recommended that the government should provide monetary payments and practical assistance to victims, help rehabilitate their communities, and provide "symbolic reparations, such as days of remembrance, monuments, and places of memory" (Marschall 2010, 77). In its reparations policy adopted in 2003, the government offered more limited compensation to victims than that which had been recommended by the TRC. But in terms of the reparations deemed "symbolic", the policy was more in line with the Commission's advice. As Marschall (2010, 78) notes, upon the reparations policy being adopted "various agencies of the state … immediately began investing in commemorative markers such as memorials, monuments, and statues".

The heritage policy framework

These new commemorative markers entered a landscape of memory that was already being shaped by South Africa's new heritage legislation. The National Heritage Resources Act (NHRA), adopted in 1999 and implemented from 2000 onwards (Marschall 2010, 28–29, 34), defines "heritage resource" as "any place or object of cultural significance" (cited in Ndletyana and Webb 2017, 103). For the tasks of identifying, conserving, and managing such resources, the Act established the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) at the national level but also delegated considerable powers to the provinces (Marschall 2010). Local communities, too, were to "take ownership of heritage in their midst and play an active role in conservation and management" (Marschall 2017, 215).

But as Marschall (2010, 36) further notes, choices as to "whose cultural heritage is deemed worthy of preserving" are "invariably … politicised and culturally biased". Taking stock of the sites which had been declared heritage resources under the NHRA until 2010, she finds that those sites generally were "contemporary in nature, often associated with the liberation struggle and the recent transformation" (Marschall 2010, 37). As for the monuments inherited from previous eras, the Act stipulates that any existing "public monuments and memorials … must be protected in the same manner as places which are entered in a heritage register" (Ndletyana and Webb 2017, 104).

Already in 2000, though, the government requested further guidelines on this matter. The then Minister of Arts and Culture Ben Ngubane requested the SAHRA "to compile a register of all apartheid and colonial monuments that inhabit the South African public space", in order to "motivate for the removal, reconfiguration, and re-interpretation of the colonial-apartheid monuments and … the commissioning of new monuments to address the historical imbalances" (cited in Marschall 2010, 38). But the SAHRA responded by stressing "the importance of conserving the … monuments and statues … as cultural heritage items and as historical testimony to a chequered past" (Marschall 2010, 39). Its key recommendation was to install new monuments "located in appropriate places … to achieve a more balanced heritage landscape" (Marschall 2010, 39).

Thus, the new policy framework yielded no "radical changes to the existing monument landscape" (Marschall 2010, 29). By 2010 there were still "no concrete guidelines or criteria" for how to facilitate the removal of selected colonial and apartheid-era monuments" in heritage policy (Marschall 2010, 144). Meanwhile, the majority of such monuments had been allowed to remain in place (e.g. Holmes and Loehwing 2016).

The National Legacy Project

And yet, the ANC government took the SAHRA's advice to install new monuments located in "appropriate" places, as a means gradually to change the heritage landscape. Such lines of thinking were reflected in policy initiatives already in the 1990s, most notably the National Legacy Project. Started in 1997, this project was aimed not only at "facilitating the construction of new monuments, memorials, and museums", but also at "encouraging the re-interpretation of existing commemorative markers and their associated historical narratives" (Marschall 2010, 175). To this end, in 1998 it was decided that a few "high-profile heritage developments" would be realised throughout the country. By 2010, eight such projects had been implemented or were near completion (Marschall 2010, 175). Some of these projects set a trend "for the principle of countering existing … contested monuments" (Marschall 2010, 276). In these commemorative initiatives, the authorities chose to have the new monuments placed close to existing ones (e.g. Ndletyana and Webb 2017;

Holmes and Loehwing 2016). "From national to local level" in South Africa, Marschall (2010, 300) points out, "one can detect a determination to seek out opportunities for complementing the old with new monuments, juxtaposing one set of symbols and values with another". In each case, she adds (2010, 298–99), "the new commemorative object derives part of its intended meaning from the presence and specific 'message' of the older monument". Two significant projects in which this logic was adopted were the Ncome monument and Freedom Park, which I now will introduce in turn.

The Battle of Blood River/Ncome project is an early example. The battle in question occurred in 1838, as part of the so-called Great Trek of Afrikaners who had left the Cape Colony, by then under British rule, in search of land and independence. In what is today the Kwazulu-Natal province they faced resistance by ethnic Zulus, and the Afrikaners emerged victorious from the resulting battle while the Zulus suffered massive losses. While a stone cairn had been put up at the site already in 1866, at the 1938 centenary, Afrikaner groups had a monument built around this cairn to commemorate their victory. In 1971 that monument was moved and expanded, making it even more vital to Afrikaner heritage practices under apartheid (Marschall 2010, 278–280). The monument consists of replicas of 64 ox wagons, wrought in iron and cast in bronze. Placed in a vast D shape around the 19th century stone cairn, they constitute a closed formation, also referred to as a *laager* in Afrikaans (Marschall 2010, 280; Daniel 2019).

After the first democratic elections in 1994, provincial authorities were quick to discuss how "some sort of Zulu focus" could be added to the monument (Marschall 2010, 282). Due to resistance at the provincial level against financing the new components, the National Legacy Project stepped in – before the 160th anniversary of the battle. In 1998, the new monument, called Ncome, was inaugurated – located to the east of the river, facing the old monument to the west (Daniel 2019). True to the zeitgeist, the NLP had stressed that Ncome should signal a commitment to reconciliation. And yet, the monument consists of "two roughly parallel plastered and painted masonry walls, describing a semi-circular 'horn' shape", and on the outer walls "metal shields with painted cowhide patterns representing different regiments that fought in the battle are … mounted" (Marschall 2010, 290). Marschall notes that the "Zulu battle formation imitating the horns of the buffalo has … become legendary within Zulu culture" (Marschall 2010, 290). More recently, Ncome has indeed been referred to as a "symbol for Zulu nationalism" (Daniel 2019).

When comparing the two monuments, the similarities are striking: both are expansive structures close to the terrain, both depict battle formations, and Ncome "faces the Boer *laager* in a simulated front" (Marschall 2010, 290, emphasis in original). And while it can be interpreted in various ways, Marschall sees Ncome mainly as "a proud celebration of heroes who fought … against oppression" (Marschall 2010, 288–289). A narrative celebrating the fighting spirit of the Zulus was thus added to the narrative celebrating that of the Afrikaners, making the two monuments mirror each other.

The idea of countering existing commemorative markers by placing new ones alongside is not unique to South Africa. Some such responses have been called counter-monuments, a term "referring to a structure or artistic work that not only confronts an existing monument, but also fundamentally contests or interrogates the tradition, conventions and functions of monuments and memorials" (Marschall 2010, 300). In South Africa however, Marschall observes that Ncome and later monuments built next to existing heritage do not contest the tradition of monuments as such. On the contrary, they "affirm" the monument genre by adopting many of the same conventions (Marschall 2010, 301), in terms of materials and style. Just as the Battle of Blood River monument is grandiose in design and solemn in style, Ncome has an imposing presence on the terrain, seeking to speak, as it were, the same monumental language as its counterpart. Marschall thus reads the juxtaposed monument not as a counter-monument but as a "critical response" (Marschall 2010, 300).

The second project in the NLP portfolio with a similar logic is Freedom Park. Drawing on the idea first realised in post-revolutionary France of a heroes' acre (Marschall 2010, 211), Freedom Park was supposed to honour all those who had fought for freedom in South Africa and to serve as their "symbolic resting place" (Marschall 2010, 211). Launched in 2000 and "conceptualised as the most important, ambitious, and financially well-endowed element" of the NLP (Marschall 2010, 209), there was no obvious location for Freedom Park. Given its intended function for all of South Africa, its designers took the decision to locate it on the hill opposite the Voortrekker Monument.

The *voortrekkers* were those descendants of Dutch settlers who, in the early 19th century, moved east- and northward from the Cape in search of land and independence. It was at the 1938 centenary of that "Great Trek" that the first stone was laid for what became the monument to the *voortrekkers*, just outside Pretoria. Inaugurated in 1949, the Voortrekker Monument is still deemed "the most prominent (and therefore now most contested) commemorative structure of the apartheid era in South Africa" (Marschall 2010, 164). A tall building on top of a hill, its architecture is seen as serving "to reinforce the central myths of Afrikaner history, notably the construct of the Voortrekkers as a 'nation', the connection between the Trekkers and the land, and the notion that Afrikaners are God's chosen people" (Marschall 2010, 166).

The proximity of the Voortrekker Monument (VTM) was probably not the only factor shaping the decision on where to locate Freedom Park. But once the decision had been taken, Marschall (2010, 213) argues that over time, the "idea of establishing a relationship with the VTM, ideologically 'countering' it but also … connecting with it as a symbol of reconciliation … emerged as an increasingly important imperative". Freedom Park came to reflect VTM dynamics in several ways, she argues. Similar to how Afrikaner nationalists had promoted the VTM and the Battle of Blood River monument as hallowed ground, Freedom Park "is treated and promoted as hallowed ground". Likewise, just as those two "white" monuments became symbolic centres for

the Afrikaners, serving to justify their claim to nationhood, "Freedom Park is actively *being made* into a symbolic centre, the foremost 'shrine of the nation'" (Marschall 2010, 214215, emphasis in original).

But which nation? Unlike the VTM, Freedom Park was supposed to tell a more inclusive story about the nation in South Africa. Indeed, it was supposed to acknowledge "the historical struggles (their victims and heroes) of different populations in South Africa's long, divisive past … even if these wars were fought with conflicting interests" (Marschall 2010, 210–211). As such the Park could, at least initially, be read as an adaptive form of commemoration: one that seeks to "recalibrate conflict narratives" (Brown 2019) for purposes of forging a broader political community. And yet, I will argue, in its realisation a more restrictive vision of the nation emerged.

As noted earlier, the African National Congress had a long history of envisaging the South African nation. When Mandela came into power in 1994, the imagination of a "rainbow nation" gained prominence; an idealised vision of different communities living peacefully together. But this vision was a passing moment. A more significant articulation of the nation in post-1994 South Africa emerged during the Mbeki presidency (1999–2008), signalled most powerfully in a speech given to parliament by Mbeki – then Deputy President – in 1996, on the occasion of the adoption of the new Constitution (Mbeki 1996).

Entitled "I Am an African", Mbeki's speech centres on two main themes: reconciliation and struggle against oppression. It does not, however, lend itself to one singular interpretation. I read it as reflecting two different visions of the South African nation, both drawing on traditions within ANC's intellectual history. On the one hand, Mbeki generously identifies himself as related to the various ethnic and cultural groups in South Africa. This echoes the ANC's inclusive vision of the nation, first articulated in the 1955 Freedom Charter. On the other hand, as Mbeki celebrates the achievements of those who resisted minority rule, he stresses that "I am born of a people who would not tolerate oppression" (Mbeki 1996). This reflects another vision that has prevailed in the ANC, referred to earlier, namely the sense of being excluded from the nation – which triggered the attempts among Africans to get organised in the first place. "African imaginations of a South African nation, Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2013, 172) notes, "were born within the context of resisting imperial, colonial and apartheid imaginations that excluded Africans from the imagined nation". No wonder, therefore, that resistance against oppression emerges as a key theme in a speech on behalf of the ANC, meant to set the tone for a new South Africa. Even if South Africa belongs to all those who live in it, as per the Freedom Charter, Mbeki still suggests that the "core" of that nation is made up of those who "would not tolerate oppression" – i.e. those who resisted apartheid (Herwitz 2015, 41).

Thus, if Mbeki's main themes were reconciliation and struggle against oppression, his speech did not resolve the contradiction between them. If

those who resisted oppression are at the heart of the new nation, what about those who oppressed them, and the many more who benefited from the systemic effects of that oppression? In the name of reconciliation, they should be included. But unconditionally? Chipkin, for example, reads the speech as signalling that "whites are recognised as Africans only in so far as … they 'recognise the injustices of the past'" (cited in Marschall 2010, 232).

The evolving heritage landscape would reflect the same contradiction, and Freedom Park, more specifically its Wall of Names, illustrates how it was tentatively addressed. Aimed to honour "the country's heroes", the Wall of Names "is inscribed with the names of all those who lost their lives in eight selected events that shaped South Africa's history" (Marschall 2010, 226). By the time of its opening in 2006, "75,000 names had been collected for inscription" (Marschall 2010, 226). Some white South Africans, however, found that people they would see as heroes were not identified on the Wall, or intended for inscription. These complainants were veterans of the South African Defence Force, who had been deployed during the apartheid era to fight communist groups elsewhere in southern Africa. Their letter to the Park's CEO Wally Serote said that "as young conscripts, they had believed they were defending the freedom of the (white) South African nation against … autocratic communist dictatorship" (cited in Marschall 2010, 234). Serote declined their request to have the fallen soldiers listed on the Wall. His decision sparked considerable consternation. Whose freedom is Freedom Park for? One analyst commented that the Park must "make a choice between reconciliation and commemorating struggle heroes" (cited in Marschall 2010, 239). Defending his position, Serote did not deny that such a contradiction exists, but he suggested "the contradiction is in the nation" (Marschall 2010, 239; Autry 2012, 159).

This example illustrates that in practice, commemorating heroes of "the struggle" took precedence over the goal of reconciliation. Every nation has its foundation myth and in ANC's South Africa, resistance and the liberation struggle" were placed at the core of that myth (Marschall 2010, 37). By implication, Freedom Park reflected a more restrictive vision of the nation than the vision laid down in the Freedom Charter. This narrower vision saw the nation as composed of all those who had resisted the oppression – the majority. Freedom Park became a place to honour those who had fought against the oppression that, for them, the Voortrekker Monument would symbolise. Thus, by virtue of it being located on the opposite hill and by virtue of its emerging message, Freedom Park increasingly came to challenge the VTM. As a monologic form of commemoration, that apartheid-era monument was meant to stand unrivalled (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1214). Now rivalled by the most prominent symbol of the new order, its credibility was at stake. The custodians of the new order, in Freedom Park, signalled that while reconciliation is key, safeguarding the freedom of the majority is more important.

A polarising landscape of heritage

While Ncome and Freedom Park were high-profile heritage developments, in their approach of placing a new heritage site close to an existing one, they were similar to a range of other cases (Marschall 2010). What effects did this juxtaposition strategy have on the credibility of the old monuments?

From 1994 to 2015 South Africa's heritage landscape harboured growing contradictions. The more it was populated with commemorative markers meant to reflect experiences of the previously silenced majority, the more it would narrate different versions of the country's history. The narratives emerging from the new monuments had conclusions diametrically contrary to those emerging from the "white" heritage. In the many cases, where the new monuments were placed close to existing ones, this contradictory effect was magnified.

Some scholars suggest the juxtaposition led to a more diverse memory landscape (Holmes and Loehwing 2016, 1215). Granted, more people would now have "their" stories told through the growing number of monuments. But the narratives emerging from the new sites were hardly diverse: the vast majority converged on the themes of "resistance" and "struggle". One example is the new monument to honour the contribution of women to the struggle against apartheid, called the Monument to the Women of South Africa. Holmes and Loehwing (2016, 1217) read this new monument, located in Pretoria, as "legitimating previously marginalised voices". Marschall (2010, 263) however points out that this monument firstly represents women collectively; and so largely ignores the difference made by specific individuals (as before, almost all the statues of individuals set up in the "new" South Africa depict men). Also, the women's monument follows the resistance/struggle script: it is dedicated to women who "meet men's criteria of being courageous resistance fighters" (Marschall 2010, 263). The new monument has an implicit juxtaposing logic too, as it responds to an existing monument (in Bloemfontein) which was set up during the apartheid era to honour the role women played in the Afrikaner community. The significance of telling a different story about women, namely about their contributions to "the struggle", is reflected in the fact that the new women's monument was included in the NLP portfolio (Marschall 2010).

Many new monuments also converged in their look, which Marschall identifies as a distinct "post-apartheid memorial aesthetic" marked by "triumphal heroic imagery" (cited in Minkley and Mnyaka 2015, 56). This raises questions about the extent to which the new markers would tell the stories of local communities. An example is a memorial in Duncan Village, set up to honour protestors who were killed in clashes with the police in 1985. The statue, inaugurated in 2008, depicts a larger than life-size warrior. Placed on a high pedestal, he is lightly clad, holds a spear and a shield, and looks as if he is shouting. On inaugurating the memorial, President Mbeki described it a "fitting tribute to our heroes and heroines, and a testament to the triumph of justice over the

abhorrent system of apartheid" (cited in Minkley and Mnyaka 2015, 50). But villagers who survived the event disagreed with the memorial's design, saying that "we used rocks and not spears" and "were not semi-naked like that warrior" (cited in Minkley and Mnyaka 2015, 52). Minkley and Mnyaka (2015, 55) read the contested nature of the statue as a result of tensions between "local forms of representation" and "Mbeki's distinct vision of an African Renaissance", a vision that allows for "a turn towards a celebration of Africa's 'mythic' pre-colonial past". This helps, I would add, to anchor the struggle and resistance narrative in a broader history, thereby authenticating it. Given the utility of this turn for the ruling party, it is not surprising that Duncan villagers' complaint of a lack of consultation over memorial design (Minkley and Mnyaka 2015, 53) reflects a broader trend. As Marschall (2017, 213) finds, among black communities, "lack of consultation, perceived distortion of community memories, ANC domination, and party political appropriation of local narratives … have been the most frequently cited sources of dissatisfaction" with the new heritage sites.

To the extent that the landscape of memory diversified, this was strictly within the parameters of "the nation" that were set and streamlined under Mbeki's leadership. As Booysen (2015, 15) argues, a key way in which the ANC regenerated its power under both Mbeki and Zuma was to "nurture, replenish and reinvent [its] close association with the political liberation of South Africa" – more specifically, its association "with struggle and liberation". To cultivate such an association, commemoration is, of course, a vital tool. Having new monuments built that project a narrative of struggle allows the ANC to present itself as the party that has won that struggle and brought at least the promise of freedom to the masses. The ANC's struggle credentials have been key to help it win every election since 1994; indeed Booysen suggests that "the ANC is masterful at constantly reminding South Africans not to forget the miracle moment of the 1994 elections and the liberation" (Booysen 2015, 18). As a new generation has emerged with no personal memories of that struggle, and as the ruling party has been subject to considerable criticism over various governance issues in recent years, "replenishing" the association between ANC and (the promise of) freedom through heritage has assumed even greater importance.

In the period up to 2015 assessed here, the ANC thus had an interest in promoting forms of heritage that would solidify its association with the struggle for freedom. I argue that this is more effectively done when the new monuments stand in contrast to the symbols of the oppression that the ANC portrays itself as having defeated. In making this argument, I partly deviate from Marschall's account of the logic of juxtaposition. For her, the generic new monument in South Africa, placed next to an existing commemorative marker, "may interrogate the existing marker's intended message, perhaps undermining its credibility". But at the same time, she argues that the new monument "essentially respects the integrity of the older monument and acknowledges its validity as

a potentially important symbol for a specific community" (Marschall 2010, 301). But logically speaking, a new monument cannot both acknowledge the old monument's validity as a symbol and at the same time undermine its credibility. Over time, the net effect of the juxtaposed new marker will either be to validate, or to undermine the credibility of the old.

I argue that the new symbols increasingly came to undermine the ability of the old ones to come across as valid because, given the political context, the juxtaposition did not give equal voice to the new and old monuments. The new heritage assumed a comparatively different discursive position. That position is shaped by power relations, specifically the extent to which the narrative of the nation emerging from heritage is echoed by those currently in power. In South Africa, with the ANC winning every election from 1994 to 2015, the monuments that were set up to commemorate the heroes and victims among the previously silenced majority had the discursive upper hand. If, in theory, the confrontation between Ncome and the Battle of Blood River monuments is one among equals; over time Ncome wins. If in theory Freedom Park simply "faces" the Voortrekker Monument, in practice it confronts it – and it does so as a living form of heritage, endorsed by a democratically elected government. Over time this contributes to reducing the VTM to a shadow of its former self, making it look defunct and outmoded. As the ANC order consolidated, the message grew clearer: the "white" heritage not only symbolised a bygone age, but a regime that had sought to oppress the majority. For this is precisely the message being sent by the new monuments; that "we" – the Zulus, the black Africans, the young black students – we resisted, we fought, because we were oppressed. And the symbols of that oppression are still in place, right next to the symbols of liberation.

The ANC is likely to have found it increasingly useful to leave the old monuments intact. As those markers remind people of the "old order", which the ANC signalled was abhorrent, the new order, even with its shortcomings, would come across as more desirable and worth protecting. It could be countered that the ANC was bound by the 1996 Constitution, including a commitment to allow South Africa to be for all those who live in it. But the reconciliation rhetoric wore thinner over time; as noted, those in power were criticised for reneging on it in some heritage cases. And yet, the ANC kept winning every election. What is more, allowing the "white heritage" to stand can be read as a minimal commitment to reconciliation. Thus, the juxtaposition strategy had no downsides for the ANC: it allowed it to cater to the white community, by signalling respect for their collective memory; and it made the old commemorative markers look increasingly antiquated, obsolete, out of touch – even provocative.

The argument about the old monuments losing validity over time is also supported by evidence about how the guardians of those monuments responded to the new heritage. Both the Battle of Blood River and the Voortrekker Monuments, Marschall notes, "have been ideologically repositioned" as a

result of their juxtaposition with Ncome and Freedom Park respectively; with "their management now officially disassociating itself from the exclusive, racist discourses" that for most of their history were associated with these markers (Marschall 2010, 298). But if those who today manage these monuments no longer wish to confirm the message they once were built to convey, what is left of the monuments' credibility? Effectively, the guardians refuse to articulate that message. In other words, the juxtaposition strategy has muted the old monuments' capacity to speak.

The result of juxtaposition of new and old monuments is therefore, ironically, to resuscitate the logic of monologic commemoration. The new heritage increasingly mirrored the old, not only in the conventions of the monument genre but also in its political function, namely, to rally voters in order to regenerate the government's power around its project of nation-building. While sites such as Freedom Park bear some hallmarks of "adaptive" commemoration, the ANC increasingly came to embrace a partisan vision in its choice of new commemorative markers, allowing it to "narrow [the new heritage] into more dominant 'authorised versions'" (Minkley and Mnyaka 2015, 56).

In sum, the landscape of memory did not diversify. It polarised in a contest where the new monuments came out ascendant, making the old ones look increasingly ready to fall.

Rhodes Must Fall as a response to polarisation

The successful campaign to have the statue of Cecil John Rhodes removed from the University of Cape Town's upper campus in 2015 represented, on one level, a logical consequence of the ANC's consolidating approach to heritage over the preceding 15 to 20 years. On another level, the RMF campaign broke with the ANC line and even sought to transcend the polarised heritage conflict.

RMF as an affirmation of the ANC line

In one sense, the initiative to have the Rhodes statue removed from UCT was a logical consequence of the ANC's approach to heritage. Obviously, the RMF campaign defied the ANC's official line of allowing "white" heritage to stand. And yet, as I have shown, that official line was contradicted by a more subtle dynamic, as a result of which the white heritage was increasingly undermined. As the landscape of memory was populated by symbols of the new order which increasingly converged on a heroic, triumphal narrative of victory in the struggle against oppression, the symbols of the old order came across not just as relics of a bygone age, but also as the losers of that struggle. The apartheid- and colonial-era monuments increasingly came across as symbols of that oppression which the new heritage signalled had been worth resisting, in the name of freedom of the racially-defined majority.

Given this dynamic, statues like the one of Rhodes came across as not just antiquated and obsolete, but as misplaced. In the new South Africa, led by an organisation which for more than a century had advocated for the rights of Africans, a person like Rhodes, who once stood for the diametrically opposed philosophy, was ontologically out of place. This is likely to have been particularly clear to a new generation of black Africans who had been admitted for study at one of the country's best universities. To them, the minimal commitment to reconciliation signalled by allowing the white heritage to stand did not resonate as fully (Ahmed 2019). That commitment to reconciliation was a fruit of the transition in the 1990s, which was not a formative experience for the generation entering UCT in the 2010s, most of whom were born after Mandela was released from prison in 1990. This "born-free" generation was accustomed to living in an ANC-governed South Africa and had reasons to take their democratic freedoms for granted.

It was this generation of bright African minds who would take that logical step of demanding that the statue of Rhodes must fall. The logic was: if he is symbol of "our" history of oppression, why should he even be memorialised (Holmes and Loehwing 2016)? The recognition of Rhodes as a symbol of oppression became clear, I argue, partly as a result of the polarisation in the heritage landscape. While the ANC had allowed white heritage to remain intact for several reasons, including political self-interest, the new generation of black students would not harbour the same loyalty either to the project of reconciliation or to the idea that markers of the old are useful reminders of the "darkness" of history. For them, Rhodes was offensive simply because he was a symbol of oppression of people that they could identify with in the past (Ahmed 2019). And the statue was particularly offensive because it was located at the heart of an institution devoted to the production of knowledge about the world, including Africa (Ahmed 2019). Such an African university should, arguably, allow (South) Africans to learn about the world in a way that makes sense for them: it should allow them to gain knowledge that helps them connect to the world around them and beyond them. Rhodes, by contrast, represented a colony as a result of which Africans had been violently dispossessed, displaced, and disconnected from their social and cultural moorings.

To the extent that Rhodes Must Fall was a response to an experience of alienation among black students at UCT (e.g. Mamdani 2018; Barnabas 2016; Marschall 2017; Zwane 2019; Ahmed 2019; A. Nyamnjoh 2017), this resonated to some extent with ANC heritage policies. As noted, the approach that became dominant assumed a narrative of struggle for freedom amongst South Africans. Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2018) reads Rhodes Must Fall as a continuation of this history of struggle in which a new generation, less encumbered by the constraints that came with the transition, boldly asserts their wish to be free also in their ways of thinking and seeing the world. To realise that epistemic freedom, certain symbols had to be removed – namely, symbols of individuals who were part of a history which denied Africans their freedom, including by

attempting to erase their history and knowledge systems. Read this way, RMF is in line with the ANC's narrative of struggle and resistance, increasingly solidified in monuments and memorials. It only took a new generation of students to tip the balance in favour of that narrative. And while the RMF was ideologically diverse, significant voices in it did toe the ANC line (Ahmed 2019).

RMF as a contestation of the ANC line

And yet, Rhodes Must Fall also signalled defiance to the ANC leadership. Cecil John Rhodes had been a colonial ruler; the African National Congress had been established after his death. Most sites and objects declared "heritage" after 1994 referred to the struggle against apartheid; a large part of them were meant to commemorate apartheid-era events. The ANC clearly sought to come across as the liberator of the majority and could only credibly claim such a status if focusing on the apartheid period. The party could not credibly claim to "own" the struggle against colonialism in a similar way. And this is not only because the organisation was established as late as in 1912.

Compared to the struggle against apartheid, the struggle against colonialism is harder to remember. Colonialism works, Fanon noted, by distorting, even destroying the past of the colonised (Fanon [1961] 2002). It works by planting the memory of the coloniser in the soil of the colonised people's land (Ndlovu-Gatsheni 2018). It works by seeking to present heritage as the material culture of the coloniser, so as to lay claim to that land. Colonialism works by fragmenting the colonised people and manipulating their identities; it works, in short, by attempting to make the colonised believe that they have no history as a people.

For the formerly colonised, remembering that history is therefore a struggle. This is a struggle the ANC had not started; it had after all won every election in part by reminding voters of the liberation from apartheid. In this light, the campaign to have the statue of Rhodes removed from UCT can be read as an attempt at reconnecting with a collective past as a colonised people. For, as noted, the new monuments set up under the ANC's leadership tended to stay true to the conventions of the monument genre (Marschall 2010). And this very fact, that the new markers continued to be defined by the conventions of the old, echoes a larger postcolonial dilemma: can you be free from the colonial condition, if you continue to adopt the conventions and language of the coloniser?

The mirroring of ANC heritage in the conventions of the white heritage, even if it led to polarisation and a landscape increasingly skewed in favour of the ANC, thus came with a catch. The ANC locked itself, as it were, in the language and conventions inherited from the old system. By calling for the Rhodes statue to fall, and seeing it falling, the students at UCT opened up new space – for rethinking how "we" can articulate our own aspirations and histories, in text and concrete form. It is significant, therefore, that the students

did not suggest building a new statue of an anti-apartheid hero next to the one of Rhodes, as per ANC logic: instead, they opened that space at the heart of the university. Meanwhile, they occupied the main administrative building of UCT in March 2015 and for some weeks engaged in joint study of the works of Fanon, Biko, and others and discussing their next initiatives (Ahmed 2019). Instead of countering the old statue with a symbol of the current "order", the students carved out space for rethinking that "order" in light of a deeper history.

By engaging with the space where the Rhodes statue had stood and by leaving it open, the students arguably tried to remember back (Rothberg 2013). They sought to reinterpret the university so as to make it their own (Ahmed 2019). And in this quest for epistemic freedom, the void at the site where the Rhodes statue had once stood could be used to reconfigure the narrative about South Africa. In contrast to the dominant ANC narrative of a struggle against apartheid that had been won, this narrative was about a struggle against colonial predecessor regimes which, the students suggested, had not been won. They saw continuities from colonialism in South Africa's persistent inequalities. And, drawing on Black Consciousness, Black Radical Feminism, and Pan-Africanist thinking (Ahmed 2019), they also sought to shed light on how empire and its legacies still shape dominant epistemologies at universities like UCT. Thus, they developed a critique not only of continued Western influences on the curricula but also of the extent to which the education system helps African students connect to their world so as to contribute more fully to it.

Conclusion

The Rhodes Must Fall campaign at UCT lasted for about a year (Ahmed 2019). But as this chapter has shown, for South African heritage work and associated practices of commemoration, this successful attempt at having a colonial-era statue removed marked a turning point.

The campaign broke with the approach adopted after 1994 to allow monuments representing the apartheid and colonial era to remain in place. But more importantly, it represented a first deliberate attempt at changing the narrative emerging from the "new" heritage landscape. That landscape was increasingly polarised in a contest where the ANC heritage had gained the upper hand. The campaigners logically responded to that polarisation by tilting the balance more decisively in favour of the new order through having one of the most powerful symbols of the old order – the figure of Rhodes – removed from one of the country's most prestigious universities. But the campaigners also countered the ANC by suggesting that there is more than one struggle to remember. Beyond the struggle against apartheid, there is also the struggle against colonialism. That struggle is harder to remember, given that the colonised were systematically fragmented and unmoored. By engaging with this deeper history, the campaigners sent a signal about how heritage might become more

meaningful, in an implicit critique of the increasingly monologic, heroic form it had assumed under the ANC.

Heritage can only do so much. Given how closely tied it is to colonisation and state-building (Giblin 2015), it would be naive to expect it to enable people to connect to their fuller history. Heritage on its own cannot disalienate people; given the tendency for it to be captured to promote political interests, it is equally likely to prove alienating. This is why the RMF campaigners' insistence on removing a commemorative marker without replacing it carves new ground. By opening up the space at the centre of the university for re-interpretation, the campaign showed that it is possible to transcend a polarised conflict between the symbols of the old and the new order. It is in that unmarked space that narratives of the political community can be shaped which are flexible enough to encapsulate the evolving quest for one's own historical itinerary. By refusing to speak the language of the monument genre, and instead freeing the space where the statue once stood, the RMF pointed to the possibility of remembering back as a way to build community in the post-colony.

In attempting to build community by remembering back, Rhodes Must Fall shares affinities with the campaigners who had the statues of Colston, Milligan, and Leopold removed in June 2020. Perhaps the most intriguing question raised by the RMF campaign is whether the struggle against colonialism in fact has been won. If it has not, is South Africa even a *post*-colony? Is it a former settler colony, or still a settler colony? Likewise, are the UK and Belgium truly post-imperial? In the void left by the removed statues, there is space to engage and find out. The struggle to remember continues.

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