



**Colonial history and
#RhodesMustFall**

Statue Removed, April 9, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yWI2LXoQlH4>

Ian Landsberg, "Cecil John Rhodes statue removed from UCT!", 3:33

A black student

This is a great achievement. A great achievement for the movement. But it's only a stepping stone for what is yet to come. We have bigger victories to claim as black students.

A white student studying politics

I'm for anything that contributes to bringing us together, closer, like unity on campus. I feel like the statue, it being there, and what it represented, was kind of like a divide among students.

**Let's see how this event
came to take place**

UCT students talk about the statue of Rhodes, April 15, 2015

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q64uX8BDe4A>

MTV ZA (3:30)

The Vice Chancellor speaks

I trust it will be clear that these are my personal views and not those of the institution.

I have previously stated that the Rhodes statue is indeed a symbol of UCT's colonial past. Many have noted that as it currently stands, the statue of Rhodes is unmediated by any critical commentary or historical contextualisation. There is nothing to suggest to any passer-by how the university situates itself in relation to Rhodes' actions and their impact. At the very least, we need to engage with that.

One option is to leave the statue as it is, but to place a plaque on its base that acknowledges the many injustices of colonial conquest enacted under Rhodes' watch. This might be accompanied by another artwork to be located alongside Rhodes, to "speak back" by way of alternative values and convictions. However, it is, in my view, the particular location and setting of the Rhodes statue that is the problem and it cannot be addressed by contextualising the statue or installing alternative icons.¹

¹ <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2015-03-18-from-the-vcs-desk-rhodes-statue-protests-and-transformation>

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 acknowledgement that UCT acquired its site from the Rhodes estate, and the positive contribution that it has made to our institution and its students.

A white former student comments on protest

Renaldo Gouws, "The "RhodesMustFall" Movement | South Africa" (5:29)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=abMMdhKAAKk>

I'd just like to congratulate the RhodesMustFall movement for showing exactly who they are. What is that you might ask? A bunch of idiotic thugs whose sole purpose in life is to cause racial divide, and to blame the past, but not the present, for the current disposition in this country.

— Renaldo Gouws (time 4:30)

**Yet Gouws agrees with
the protesters' critique of
white privilege...**

**Who gets to represent
history? Who speaks on
behalf of history?**

Resistance through exposing

This is an image of me sitting on the same plinth that The Rhodes Statue stood on. On either side of me is a sign for a cis female and a cis male. I see my body as the in between, but even more so, something that cannot be quantified and reduced into a physical sign. There is no other stronger indication of my presence than my own body. In this picture I chose to take off my shirt. This should only be interpreted through a political lens. A poor black trans queer womyn sitting bare where a colonialist was once worshipped is a revolution in itself. I sit facing UCT unlike Rhodes, Rhodes sat there to look down at the “peasants”. Being one of the peasants I have a responsibility to confront his empire hence the choice to face UCT, which is part of Rhodes’s legacy.

