

Breaking a Rainbow, Building a Nation

The Politics behind #MustFall Movements

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Chapter 1

Can Coconuts be Trusted with the Revolution?

It's probably best to start this book off by getting the elephant in the room out of the way.

Dinner-table discussions with my father can be fascinating. Who wouldn't take advantage of the knowledge of a man described as one of the 'fathers of democracy'?¹ He was the former director-general in the presidency in the era of Thabo Mbeki, former secretary-general of the South African Council of Churches, religious moral compass of the African National Congress, and one of the very rare ANC veterans who did what seemingly no other veteran would do at the time: he stood up against the Jacob Zuma regime.

My father has been my political school for as long as I can remember and, for most of my young life, he provided me with front-row tickets to a daily screening of *How to Build a Democratic South Africa*. A screening that included not only the director's comments but all the uncut footage that didn't make it into the public domain. Though not every screening is shown without criticism in my home, the experience has provided me with a wealth of insight into the hardships that the generation before me went through to give me the opportunities available to me today.

It's probably because of this that I find myself at odds with my father.

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His work in building a 'rainbow nation' is at odds with my desire to break it. Where he seeks to build unity, I seek to fragment it. My dad believes that we can change through reform, while I believe we can only improve through revolution. A revolution that breaks apart the pretence that the negotiated settlement in 1994 created a society that provided equal opportunities for all. Looking at the state of the country, in 2018, to say that we all have equal opportunities couldn't be further from the truth. I want my legacy to be that I was part of a generation that sought to build a society whose genuine intent was to benefit those who were not only historically marginalised then but who are still marginalised today.

I don't remember the 1995 Rugby World Cup because I wasn't in the country at the time and, to be honest, I am grateful that I wasn't. It has been my experience that those who were present to experience the joys of winning the tournament and kick-starting the rainbow nation project are the most adept at forcing you to inhale their second-hand nostalgia. The 1995 World Cup was the moment when President Mandela forced an entire generation of South Africans to drink the Kool-Aid of the rainbow nation. In one lifetime-defining moment, Mandela slowly handed the trophy to François Pienaar – South Africa's national rugby captain – gently placed his left hand over Pienaar's right shoulder and whispered words of thanks for what the Springbok captain had done to bring the country together. At that moment Mandela created a reimagined country. However, what was instilled into this newly formed country was not the belief that we were all hands-on-deck to change the country, but rather a sense of unquestioning obedience towards the status quo. A status quo that entrenched the belief that we are all equal, but some are 'more' equal than others. A status quo that assumes the double consciousness that took hold in our country to be unassailable.

Renowned African-American sociologist WEB Du Bois – and the first African-American to earn a doctorate from Harvard University – described double consciousness as 'the sense of always looking at oneself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity'.² South Africa's particular double consciousness allows and encourages us to live in a state of unsustainable stasis. It

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creates a sense of acceptance that we can live in what is an institutionally corrupt country and still believe that we are democratic. It impresses upon us the belief that a mineral-rich state where poverty is fuelled and driven by a mineral-energy industrial complex are compatible ideals in a modern society.

We have told ourselves that it is normal for our country to exist in a state where being black is to be disadvantaged at birth, yet supposedly is filled with the opportunity to achieve a level of prosperity in the future. We live in a country that is oddly enamoured with the struggle between its two souls: one that embraces a post-apartheid society and one that understands this society as a post-1994 one.

Not many people in South Africa have fully understood what impelled the student protests that gripped the country in 2015 and 2016. In fact, not even students fully understood what drove them passionately to question the state of the country during that period and continues to drive them now. What I do know is that it was the realisation of this double consciousness that has kept us in stasis, that made us aware that the country that was born in 1994, was still. It neither drove us forward nor did it drive us backwards. The protests that gripped the country in 2015 and 2016 were the first real nationally co-ordinated attempt by citizens of the country to resuscitate the urgency to change the status quo. A status quo which ensured that the dreams of millions of South Africans in 1994 were dreams deferred.

Young people across the country are beginning to look beyond the mirage created by this double consciousness and to reject the veil of ignorance under which the architects of our democratic dispensation created the country. Young people are beginning the process of 'unlearning'. Not within the confines of a classroom – the same classroom that tried to instil in them the sense of being born free – but rather through a process of their everyday experiences. Young people are beginning to look beyond the mirage of the miracle of 1994 and understand that for South Africa to grow effectively then #EverythingMustFall.

Although I consider myself one of those who is looking beyond the mirage of 1994, the question that should be asked of me is whether I should

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be trusted with what happens next. I am part of the political elite in South Africa currently caught up in a game of snakes and ladders. Ladders that lead to prosperity and snakes that lead to despair. We are an elite group of young people who, unlike others, have had the opportunity to embrace the concept of being born free, yet have rejected it.

In delivering the 2015 Ruth First Lecture, activist, author and one of #FeesMustFall's fiercest intellectuals Panashe Chigumadzi described this elite, the 'coconuts', as:

... a particular category of 'born-free' black youth that were hailed as torchbearers for the 'Rainbow Nation'; the same category of black youth that is now part of the forefront of new student movements calling for Rhodes to fall at our universities and in South Africa.

It is these very coconuts that have been increasingly disillusioned by and have pushed back against the notion of the Rainbow Nation. We were a conduit for the country's absolution from the real work of reconciliation as we were shipped off, Woolies skhaftins in tow, to the likes of Pretoria Girls High and Michaelhouse. Yet it is this very generation, supposedly robed in the privileges of democracy, that is now 'behaving badly' and 'militantly'. Instead of becoming the trusted go-betweens between black and white, we are turning to conceptions of blackness and mobilizing anger at the very concept of the Rainbow Nation. The fantasy of a 'colour-blind', 'post-race' South Africa has been projected onto us coconuts, but our lived experiences are far from free of racism.³

Fellow coconut Chigumadzi doesn't refer to coconuts in this context with the usual disdain that the term carries. She associates the term with agents who have rejected the weight of whiteness that their social reality seems to lay on their shoulders. Coconut Chigumadzi has chosen to self-identify as a coconut not because it attributes to her benefits within society, but because it gives her the freedom to refuse these opportunities. For her, this refusal to be co-opted into whiteness allows her to express a new form of radical anti-racist politics.

Day by day this form of politics is gathering new and more dynamic

supporters across the political spectrum. It is a form of politics whose tactics are formed through experiential learning and unlearning. It lends itself to interrogating both the concepts and metaphors of nation-building and multi-culturalism in South Africa to make it easier to understand the rejection of the notion of a 'rainbow nation.' This rejection has a dialectical element to it: a decision to reject formed by the experience of being rejected by those from whom you sought acceptance.

The rainbow nation motif, in hindsight, was probably the most toxic way of bringing our nation together. The phrase was bestowed upon us by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the metaphor was used to describe how a nation historically divided had been united in its diversity. It became an artificial conch of righteousness but it belied the truth of the country's reality. The failure of the rainbow nation motif can be seen, ironically, in its strongest symbolic attribute: its imagery. The colours of the rainbow never intersect. They merely blend together at their fringe, creating white hues where they do. The image reinforces the belief that we must co-exist with one another yet ensure that our diversity runs infinitely parallel without ever truly integrating. The rainbow nation is simply an emotional ploy to garner support for a South Africa whose foundations are based on whiteness and, as such, perpetuates various forms of discrimination – often using our own democratic institutions to do so.

Using the idea of the rainbow nation we, as a society, have trapped ourselves in a false understanding of our social reality. We to and fro in a space where ignorance of those in your community is acceptable so long as you are at ease with sharing the community with them. We are not encouraged to feel uncomfortable in the face of difference. Instead, we are encouraged to ignore difference to make it easier for us to co-exist. The rainbow nation motif doesn't drive us together, it forces us apart. It prioritises the acknowledgement of our differences over the understanding of them. However, this 'easing' is primarily concerned with ensuring the comfort of white people. This comfort zone is predicated on the creation of white hues within the rainbow. Instances of integration in South Africa are often only accepted if they ensure that whiteness is made comfortable.

White hues are spaces that are centred on whiteness and permit the

existence of others. Whether these are shopping malls in suburbs or rugby stadiums across the country, the barometer for integration is not how many white people are in black spaces, but how many black people are in white spaces and are not causing a revolt. White hues are not the result of arbitrary happenings within society, but of a constellation of micro-actions (or coercive micro-aggressions) which create a macro form of societal easing for white people. A societal easing that generates a host of white hues across the country where interactions of difference must take place within the comfort zone of whiteness.

To coconuts, however, whiteness engenders a belief that you must be the right kind of black person in the right kind of situation. Your expression of free will is dependent on the institutionalised norms which have been set by the white people around you. What differentiates coconuts from black people, in general, is that even when you leave the aforementioned situation, whiteness stays with you, hunched over your shoulder, directing your every action. For a coconut, whiteness never requires white people; it merely requires a chained and co-opted mind.

The rejection of the rainbow nation narrative and its consequences will be a strong theme through this book. As such, it is essential to understand that my use of this concept of rejection is reliant on a distinction between young people who are born-free, coconuts and those who are born-into-bondage. In what can be considered a myth turned truism, there is a belief that every young South African born after 1994 is born-free. That we all will be inherently – or by circumstance – able to climb a ladder in life that leads to prosperity because we are all apparently equal. Coconuts, born-frees and those born-into-bondage are all forced to internalise this truism, even though only one group can actualise it.

Born-frees are a generation of South Africans who are indentured to the rainbow nation motif. Their existence is meant not only to maintain this motif but unconditionally accept that the injustice of the past has primarily been erased due to the democratic dispensation achieved in 1994 and the process undertaken by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1996. It is a wishful ideal that is imposed on young people who live in a post-1994/post-apartheid society. It's not enforced enthrallment, but it is

institutionalised into our society. We are, after all, Mandela's children and have been handed the torch to continue his legacy.

Thus to be born-free in South Africa is to accept the mirage that 'the seeming permanence of apartheid-constructed socio-political identities, and the socio-economic concentration of poverty among the black population as a consequence of apartheid policies' has been resolved, and in situations in which it hasn't, that you are able to overcome them.⁴

It is hopeful, as much as it is naive. However, only by accepting this mirage are you permitted to climb the ladder of prosperity. Any form of rejection is swiftly regarded as not following the ideals of building a rainbow nation. Stepping out of the boundary of the white hues that surround us without the permission to do so. The idea of 'permission' is important here because it infers that the *choice* to climb the ladder of prosperity doesn't exist (because it requires permission to do so). But if this permission needs you to believe in the mirage of the rainbow, are you truly able to climb the ladder of prosperity?

What makes coconuts especially fascinating and dangerous is that we are the only born-frees who, due to our proximity to whiteness, can reject the rainbow nation narrative yet still climb the ladder of prosperity. The ability for coconuts to have the actual choice to climb the ladder is pivotal when trying to understand the changing dynamics of politics among young South Africans. Coconuts such as me carry both the economic and social capital to create new forms of discourse within the mainstream narrative of South Africa. Our proximity to whiteness and whiteness's acceptance of us – so long as we behave – allows us not to fall victim to the rainbow nation but gives us the illusion of space to strive to build something different by rejecting it. Because we can exist in two worlds simultaneously, we are able to create new hues of interaction that were previously unimaginable or non-existent. Furthermore, we can bring to light injustices which the rainbow nation narrative placates and deems normal. Thus, while fee-related protests have existed for decades in universities such as the University of Fort Hare or Walter Sisulu University, it was only when the students with both economic and social capital from the more affluent and privileged universities joined the calls for reform of the fee system that

the mainstream narrative of the country became interested in the cause.

For the majority of young South Africans, being born-free has never been an option. The majority are born-into-bondage. They are caught in a perpetual cycle of social, economic and political exclusion from which they are unable to break away through their own volition, regardless of their belief or non-belief in the rainbow nation. For millions of South Africans, the inability to find an occupation or the means to resist the trap of impoverishment means they are bound to a life that belies the dream of a rainbow nation.

In 2015, 62% of the 18.1 million children in South Africa lived below Statistics South Africa's upper-bound poverty line of R965 per person per month (adjusted from its 2011 level of R779 per person per month), with 70% of black children living in poor households. Only 4% of white children lived in similar conditions. In addition to this, 62% of South African children resided in a household with only one employed adult and with the other 31% living in a household with no adults working.⁵ Towards the end of 2017, of the 20.2 million 15–34 year olds in South Africa, 38% (7.7 million) were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET),⁶ with over 70% of total unemployment in South Africa between 2004 and 2014 consisting of 15–34 year olds.⁷

Statistics and numbers reflective of every sector will all reveal similar glaring inequalities as they weave a story about how South Africa has failed its young people. For this group of South Africans being born-free is a pipe dream. Their liberation is dependent on the liberation of a small contingent of black South Africans who are born-free, and specifically coconuts. Coconuts, who for better or worse, are the most likely grouping to lift all young people out of impoverishment. This is because of how whiteness embraces coconuts when compared to ordinary born-frees and those born-into-bondage.

Coconuts provide whiteness with its most fervent potential rival because of our proximity to it, yet we remain its primary ally within the broader discourse of race. To maintain our allegiance, whiteness interacts with us differently from how it interacts with those who are born-into-bondage. It functions and interacts with born-frees and coconuts in rather complex

ways that commonly play out through engagements that promote social inclusion. The proverbial 'Gosh, Thembi, I really like you. You aren't like the other black people who are [*insert your own stereotypical black action*]'.

Whiteness in this way makes the born-frees and coconuts 'other blackness'. Instead of whiteness accepting us 'other blackness' into its fold as equals, it leaves us in a state of purgatory. Waiting at the gates of salvation, with 'white' Peter our proverbial white saviour acting as a gatekeeper.

For those who are born-into-bondage, the maintenance of whiteness is dependent on their complete physical and mental subordination. The embrace of whiteness in this sense offers no mirage of choice. The system that whiteness creates through the rainbow nation ensures that these individuals remain trapped as the sacrificial lambs within the system. Whiteness treats this group differently due to its sheer size and requires a more forceful tactic that doesn't rely on purgatorial stasis. It involves a set of values that reinforce subjugation as the norm. This set of values has existed in South Africa since 1652.

Through its control of the born-frees through acceptance, the coconuts through choice and the born-into-bondages through subjugation, whiteness co-opts all of us into maintaining its hegemony in our society.

To white South Africans, to be at ease is to enforce and preserve their whiteness. I remember a conversation I had with Dr Max Price, former vice-chancellor of the University of Cape Town, regarding the pervasiveness of institutional racism at the university. When he posed the question to me about how to identify institutional racism within the university, I answered by saying, 'It's that you don't. It's the reason why it is institutionalised.' You are not supposed to know why the rules of the game are as they are; your role is merely to play the game within their ambit.

I sometimes liken institutionalised forms of discrimination to driving down a dark road with a car driving towards you. You don't sit in the car constantly wondering whether the oncoming vehicle will be in the correct lane or not. You don't spend those moments doubting whether the person driving towards you understands the basic rules of the road. Staying in your lane is simply an institutionalised norm that you've bought into without question because, without it, our road system wouldn't function. We

have bought into these norms and values because we have been told that it is the right thing to do and that without them, our system of co-existence wouldn't work. But we never ask who determined whether that institution-alised norm was right.

The act of not questioning the enunciation of rightness is deeply embedded in a discussion of decolonisation and decolonial thought, but it isn't a discussion I wish to engage in just yet. For now, I simply want to state that institutionalised discrimination requires us never to ask who enunciates rightness because doing so would breed a level of uncertainty regarding which side of the road is the 'right' side to drive on. We would be so worried about trusting our fellow drivers on the road that we would not want to drive at all, and thus a collapse of the system would ensue.

Whiteness is similar in this regard. It's a collection of institutionalised norms that guide our day-to-day interactions because we have been socially programmed to believe that if we don't follow these 'rules of the game', then our system will fail to function. Once you introduce the aspect of power relations – that is, social positioning, race, class, gender, heteronormativity, epistemology, ontology, authority – this breeds institutionalised forms of discrimination.

It's the day-to-day discrimination of this form that permeates our society. Therefore, if whiteness's logic is to create perverse inequalities that benefit people who just happen to be white, it follows that white people would choose not to reject such a system because it would not be in their self-interest to do so. This choice, whether consciously or unconsciously made, is what marks a white person in South Africa today as a '1652' – a maintainer of the subjugation of the other by whiteness. 1652s are white people in South Africa, regardless of how progressive they may be, who through their existence maintain whiteness by (un)consciously supporting it or giving it credence. Whiteness preserves and enforces (and reinforces) itself using institutions and not people. The rejection of whiteness by white people is fascinating in many respects, yet simultaneously trivial. Hence, I am not inclined to discuss with white people how white people should be better at understanding their complicity, but I do understand that there are many who remain what we would describe within the various #MustFall

movements as allies: those who support our effort but are not allowed be part of it.

It's on a point such as this that my father and I will disagree about how to build a better South Africa. Where he would be willing to design the country alongside whiteness, I would not let whiteness see the blueprints. I am the consequence of building a nation alongside whiteness, a consequence of the rainbow nation's white hue and its societal easing.

Societal easing is two-fold in nature. For coconuts, easing is the encroachment towards whiteness through purgatorial stasis and reinforced institutional subjugation. For 1652s, easing is the compliance with and maintaining of self-interest. Easing allows us to understand how the rainbow nation motif has been forced upon a generation of young people to sustain a neo-apartheid double consciousness; how it is one of the consequences of the post-apartheid project.

To reject co-option is to undo the easing of the rainbow nation motif and embrace a new politics of engagement. What is remarkable about this change in politics is its innateness. It's not a co-ordinated rejection guided by one central body. Rather, it is a process of self-emancipation, and it has begun to take root in various forms in South Africa.

A protest that took place at a school in Pretoria in August 2016 is a good illustration of this new politics of engagement. It is also a testament to this new form of politics. At issue, on the surface of it, was Pretoria High School for Girls' 'hair' rules as stipulated in the school's code of conduct. By drawing attention to school rules about hair, young womxn who attended the school were challenging a set of its institutional arrangements that perpetuated the alienation of blackness by whiteness under the guise of a code of conduct.

This 'code of conduct' can be best considered as an institutionally racist code that shames students for being black.⁸ It's not that the code of conduct explicitly stated that the natural state of black womxn's hair should be shamed. Institutionalised racism doesn't work that way. It doesn't show itself to the world because it doesn't require that form of signalling for it to exist and permeate. It's what the document infers, what it doesn't say, that allows those with preconceived and dormant prejudices a 'protected'

avenue in which they are (un)knowingly permitted to express these prejudices.

In the rule about hair, the code of conduct stated that 'all styles should be conservative, neat and in keeping with the school uniform. No eccentric/fashion styles will be allowed.' Although this statement may seem innocuous, it is anything but. In a report by a law firm which investigated the accusations made during the protest, it was found that 'the difficulties associated with different educators, who may be white or black, having different views on what constitutes untidy hair' would lead to incidences of uncertainty. Uncertainty importunately led to disciplinary action, both formal and informal, taken against black students whose hair, in the eyes and pervasiveness of whiteness, was deemed neither conservative nor neat. Uncertainty resulted in a black student whose hair was (subjectively) deemed unkempt by a white teacher being sent to have the bantu knots undone by a black teacher – a process that took over 80 minutes.⁹ Because of its institutionalised nature, the racism at Pretoria High School for Girls extended far beyond the ambit of the school's code of conduct. Uncertainty around how to manage black womxn's hair didn't lead to uncertainty about the action that was taken. Decisions in the face of this uncertainty are based on norms and values already prevalent. Norms and values that privilege whiteness. Norms and values, as the law firm's report indicated, strip students of their dignity.

Consider once again the situation in which you find yourself on a dark road driving towards an oncoming vehicle. Now if you extend this example to any other situation at any other time of day you find that the norm of what side of the road is the normalised side of the road to be on holds consistently. Institutionalised norms, if allowed and left unchallenged, can and will reverberate throughout society. And they apply whether you are driving on a dark road, a highway, down an alley, a dirt road, in rural or urban spaces, the parking lots of shopping malls, petrol stations or wherever. Unless the situation demands a reassessing of the norm, your default position is to stay in the lane that has been normalised. Institutionalised forms of racism and discrimination are no different.

This, at least in my experience, seems to hold even if you are placed in

a situation that demands a change in your norm. Even in such a case, you still feel uncomfortable with the change. Thus, at Pretoria High School for Girls, although on the surface the high school students' issues related to the code of conduct's limitation (and co-option) of black womxn's hair-styles in a manner different from 1652s in the school, this was not the crux of the argument. What underpinned the accusation was teachers calling students monkeys, or dirty kaffirs who belonged to schools in Mamelodi (a traditionally black township). They were also accusing the school of placating discussions around race. The staff even purportedly stated that 'black girls focus too much on politics and race and that's why they have no black achievers in education'.¹⁰ This spoke to a broader issue facing students, beyond a simple code of conduct. The code of conduct was just one tool used to express these issues against black students.

That the matter spoke to a deeper issue in the school was amply demonstrated by how the same issues and similar accusations were raised by many other students at other schools (and universities) across the country. This commonality between students' experiences is a clear indicator of institutionalised forms of discrimination having taken root.

We exist in a society where a variety of economic narratives informed by preconceptions of a situation are sewn together in a bid to embed expectations within the populace, expectations which shift economic behaviour, even when these narratives are sometimes frivolous. When a racial narrative regarding discrimination is sewn together, the narrative is often dismissed as speculation.

Mixed-race educational spaces in South Africa are fertile ground for clashes of identity because they are part of the few spaces left in our society that allow for forced integration; spaces in which you are always within the hue of the rainbow. Besides shopping malls and sporting events, how many other spaces does South Africa have, really, where we are forced to engage, almost every day, with people of another race without the option of retreating to our racial comfort zones? These spaces allow some of South Africa's many unresolved racial tensions to play out in secret. When they are exposed, this is usually met with shock and disbelief. This is our historical and selective amnesia at work.

The stories we hear from students are powerful explanatory instruments. They help elucidate the current position of a born-free in South Africa because they all have one constant: the search for acceptance. One student protester at Pretoria High School for Girls inadvertently explained this constant by detailing how the effects of this form of discrimination were deeply rooted in identity politics in South Africa: "This is about our identity as black people. We're tired of being told to be less than what we are so we can fit in."¹¹

To refuse/reject acceptance is a powerful political statement. Coconuts can jump-start the process of removing the whiteness that has gripped them. Even though whiteness may have helped to form who you are now, who you may be in the future, or even create a sense of belief that this whiteness is your best attribute, it still doesn't define you. To reject whiteness is to liberate your blackness.

Whether or not Pretoria High School for Girls intended to discriminate against its students is not important nor even relevant to this discussion. The critical point that requires a closer look can be illuminated by asking two questions of coconuts. Firstly, what explains the deep-rooted desire to embark on a form of renewed civil disobedience inspired by anti-racist politics? In the case of Pretoria High School for Girls, for example, unless the parents of the young womxn protesting had imbued them with untold forms of wisdom, what would explain their motivation for acting as they did? And secondly, should we be sceptical of the motives of the coconuts who are embarking on this form of politics?

The issue of the motives of coconuts and to an extent born-frees is what I believe will make or break any student-inspired revolution in the country. Essentially, why was a protest of students pertaining to identity politics able to garner more attention from the country and its citizens than the tragedy of a six-year-old boy who died by falling into a pit latrine in his primary school? Admittedly, this is an unfair and, to an extent, disingenuous comparison. However, I believe a juxtapositioning of these questions can do much to explain the waves of student protests in South Africa in recent times.

Both questions speak directly to the psyches of those who are coconuts

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and those who are not. The first question seeks to understand the renewed desire for mass co-ordinated civil disobedience through 'unconventional' tactics of disruption. And the second question seeks to understand how coconuts can reconcile their new form of politics within the double consciousness of a South Africa that wants to placate them by offering them opportunities and advantages that are not available to all.

The second question is of greater importance to me than the first. Where the first speaks of the danger coconuts pose to the dominance of whiteness, the second speaks to the danger this same group poses to the liberation of blackness.

Can coconuts be trusted with a revolution? Can they undergo a process of rejection that involves the removal of their complicity within a system that offers them opportunities for advancement, while simultaneously explicitly denouncing it, using the privileges the same system has vested in them?

The question of whether coconuts should be trusted has been missed by most political pundits. It is why many of these pundits failed to understand the nationwide university protests. It explains why vice-chancellors ran around like headless chickens in 2015 trying to understand the logic of #FeesMustFall and why they chose (and choose) to unleash private security and a trigger-happy police force on students as a form of engagement. Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib, at the University of Witwatersrand, was probably the most vocal of vice-chancellors regarding the role of coconuts, but his efforts to communicate this point were often drowned out at the time.

The student protests on university campuses of the last few years should be understood as the inevitable result of an elaborate nest of competing yet intertwined vested interests. It is a nest which, for instance, informed how neither university management teams, the Department of Higher Education nor students have been able to reconcile their differences about the role universities should play in South Africa. In addition, these obvious macro differences and contestations between national stakeholders were exacerbated by internal strife and angst among micro stakeholders within individual universities. It often surprised me how often an over-zealous head of department or dean of faculty can halt an entire national

transformational agenda over somewhat fickle issues.

Understanding when and how coconuts work to protect their interest (proximity to whiteness) and at the same time reject their co-option into the rainbow nation and born-free mantra is central to understanding the changing dynamics of youth politics in South Africa.

So, if one believes that rejecting the born-free identity is possible, then what does the process of rejection entail? From personal experience – and to be honest I don't know how else to explain this in a manner that gets the point across – the process is shit, and it's taxing. It's a process that requires deep introspection about yourself and your place in society. Once it begins, however, it snowballs.

Some white friends become allies; most turn into enemies. Others simply treat you like a plague to be avoided. Your blackness becomes a regular site of interrogation both by yourself and by others. It's a process in which you must either acknowledge or fully come to terms with the fact that you have been marked as an 'other' – you are different, exotic, eccentric, angry, dangerous, erratic, irrational and emotional. The designation is not intended to describe you but rather to place a label on your existence. You are never truly free to be who you want to be. You can only be what whiteness wants you to be.

The process of rejecting your born-free identity makes you understand that you are only a subject within whiteness's own dialectical understanding of its own reality. It's a process in which you realise that you have no real voice. You are mute. You have no control over the process once it begins. It leaves you bare and exposed. Many describe the process as deeply violent at its core. They say it requires that you strip away what has made you who you are so that, hopefully, you can find out who you should be. Though I wouldn't personally describe the process so vividly, I will admit it takes quite a psychological toll on a person. My time in #RhodesMustFall probably best illuminated this for me, but there were earlier signals.

Every young black person in South Africa has that one clear moment in life when he or she realises that they are black. It's a surreal moment. For some it's joyous; for others it's innocuous. For most it's traumatic. I am not

talking about looking in the mirror and noticing that your skin is different. This is not an arbitrary and mental genetic understanding of your racial profile. Such an understanding of race should be left to the prerogative of 1652s. This moment is different because it is the moment when you realise that you are the victim of a social construct of blackness that bears a heavy socio-historical weight. Some come to terms with it at an early age, while others come to the realisation during high school or university. My own moment came in the second grade during a game of cricket in which our teams were deliberately separated along racial lines; the typical blacks-versus-whites trope. All coconuts go through this at some point, either explicitly or implicitly. To be told to be on the black team is one thing, but to be on the black team that is significantly worse than the white team is another.

Segregating teams by superficial difference is an arbitrary separation usually done for convenience. We could easily have been separated along dark and light-coloured shirts or even differing hairstyles. Yet out of all the arbitrary forms of separation I could have experienced, the segregation by race in this instance led me to realise that for no fault of their own, the white team were still more advantaged than the black team. Whether this was due to those on the white team having been exposed to cricket for a longer period or maybe having a cricket net at home, it became evident that there were perceived differences in ability. These differences closely mirrored race.

Perception is extremely important. Perception doesn't rely on the truth. Perception seeks to understand trends around you to which a truth value is allocated. Whether these values are fallible or not, perception contributes to the building of your understanding of reality. Perceptions, in my second-grade example, such as: why did it seem as if everyone on the white team had all the necessary sporting equipment for the game and everyone on the black team didn't? Why was the white team's skill apparently significantly higher than the black team's? Why did some people on the white team have cricket nets in their homes and no one on the black team did? Why did it seem as if the white team had been to more Proteas cricket games than the black team? Why did I want to be on the white team so badly?

These were my thoughts in second grade, and they led me to realise my place in society relative to those in the white team. Perhaps it was an infantile realisation of my ability compared to my white colleagues at the time, but it was a realisation none the less.

Regardless of when you understand your positioning within society through this realisation, the real obstacle black students face is finding a space in which they can verbalise it. Internalising it is easier than expressing it because the latter necessitates an uncomfortable interaction with the dominant identity.

I went to Sacred Heart College – one of South Africa's multi-racial 'progressive' schools – for most of my basic education training. A Catholic school which often forgot it was Catholic. In fact, it could be argued that my school was probably one of the best in creating a multi-cultural space founded on achieving respect for your dignity regardless of your difference(s). Through what I believe must have been some form of social engineering, you could never really guess from looking at the school which culture, religion, race, creed or ethnicity was in the majority. Yet, even in this space, I was never comfortable about asserting my realisation of being a young black man in a white world and, in this case, in a white school. Even with all our diversity, everything was still in relation to the centre; a centre that espoused whiteness.

In the absence of a space to articulate my realisation and fully come to terms with it, I felt the need to be on the 'winning' team. The White Team. It was a need that continued to play itself out through my life. It usually took place in two ways, and both involved an adjustment of my identity through a change in my behaviour.

The first was the need and desire to be the right kind of black person in the right kind of situation. This usually manifested whenever I found myself in a white space, for example, Claremont in Cape Town, especially when I was a student at UCT. (For the uninitiated, Claremont, in Cape Town's Southern Suburbs, is an overwhelmingly white and unduly privileged space.) I felt the need to assimilate into the culture of Claremont to exist in it. It is a culture that I look back on with disdain and disgust. From clubs like Tiger Tiger or Stones, I was always confronted with whiteness,

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rape culture, patriarchy, ableism, sexism, racism, and so on.

Yet, at the time, I assimilated. I talked like the right kind of black person. Acted like the right kind of black. Danced in a manner foreign to me because of the fear that any other way of dancing would bring some form of social exclusion. I felt a need for a level of proximity to whiteness, yet at the same time I hated all that was around me. I had to become the right kind of black in the right kind of situation. I sought the appeasement of whiteness while simultaneously looking to distance myself from the 'others'. To survive exclusion, I had to conform and adjust towards the dominant identity, whether that be black or white. I changed my behaviour both consciously and unconsciously as a means of embracing whiteness and as a means of survival. The goal was never to gain the respect of my colleagues. The goal was to gain acceptance and admittance into their centre, even if the centre proved to be hollow.

The second way of adjusting my behaviour involved black spaces. Acceptance here is always a double-edged sword. On one side, you are constantly trying to be black enough for a space but not so black that you won't be able to identify with whiteness and, more importantly, that whiteness can still recognise you. To identify with whiteness gives you social leverage in society. But the critical aspect here is that within these black spaces do you seek to be black or an 'other'? Though the former might seem like an obvious choice, I argue that coconuts who don't embark on a process of rejection for the most part fall into the latter category. They prefer to identify as being an 'other' because it's a form of self-determination in our society that allows you to keep a semblance of your social leverage.

Your search for recognition as a unique black individual will always be constrained by the parameters of whiteness. You can't identify as someone the centre doesn't recognise as being in existence. Through the coconuts' logic, their existence should not place whiteness under threat but should instead ensure its superiority. Why else would we change our accent to sound *more* black (especially in black spaces) or as a way of ridiculing the way black people grasp the English language?

Striving to be the right kind of black person in the right kind of situation

or trying to be black but not too black are methods by which you work to be on the winning team, whether you're in a white or black space. More importantly, these methods allow you to stay in the good graces of whiteness overall. You pick and choose the ladders to obtain upward mobility, while desperately avoiding the snakes that will send you sliding down. By rejecting whiteness, we are refusing to play this game. Instead, we are actively working towards sliding down the back of the snake.

Each of us rides this snake for different reasons. Some ride it because they have no choice, while others ride it because the life they previously experienced has been violently exposed to them to be a myth. To undergo this process of liberation is to simultaneously undergo a process of reconstruction. It's treacherous, and it is by no means easy. This reconstruction can mean that you'll lose everything – friends, family, job opportunities, studies, livelihoods. Friends are usually the first to go. They become the most natural symbol of one's own oppression. We usually don't bear the responsibility of ending the friendship ourselves. As soon as we begin to enunciate our blackness, whiteness responds by rejecting us. Removing us from Facebook, no longer inviting us to the sleepovers, the dinners, meeting the parents, drinks.

To be young, black and conscious in South Africa is to be in a state of constant and uncertain liberty. It's a state of mind in which you are juxtaposed between wanting the status quo to be maintained and yearning for and needing revolutionary change. This inner conflict, which has been created by a liberated mind, is the state of being a young black-conscious individual who has rejected the idea of being born-free in South Africa. You are free from the mirage of a country created by the imagination of those to whom it no longer belongs yet confined by the constraints that it must include them.

Whiteness seeks to remove us from its embrace because we threaten it. We place its position at the centre at risk when we dare to usurp it rather than simply remain constant in relation to it. Exerting my identity undermines the identity of whiteness. Yet exerting my identity calls into question my commitment to follow this feeling of emancipation from whiteness to its natural conclusion. It challenges whether or not I am

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willing to dismantle the system in which I exist to place myself in the centre at the expense of whiteness and the social leverage it has afforded me. This uncertainty of the coconut's commitment begs the question: as a coconut, are you willing to slide down the snake to join those who have been excluded from the born-free ladder and assist them in the revolution, the chimurenga?

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had gripped the protest. Some found joy in it, while others found despair. Regardless, it held onto our imagination like a vice, often dictating our motivations. No one was immune, but some were better at resisting its consequences than others.

Should Coconuts be Trusted with the Revolution?

I don't want to give the impression that #FeesMustFall was a coconut revolution. This certainly was never the case and would be an insult to the many students who sacrificed their futures for the belief that they could change the lives of others. #MustFall movements, through the essence of their motives to achieve economic freedom in our lifetime, cannot and should not be considered a coconut revolution. However, to deny the influence of coconuts and the black elite, both political and economic, within the movement would be to pretend that snakes don't hide in tall grass. We don't lie in wait because we want to betray the masses; we lie in wait because we can. We have been trained to do it our entire lives. It protects us from the glare of a post-apartheid society while affording us the opportunity to prowl South Africa's post-1994 society unnoticed. Benefiting from the certain privileges it creates for us, while avoiding most of its worst consequences. That being said, though coconuts have been afforded the privilege to mask ourselves under the guise of being 'not one of those blacks', we still simultaneously face some of the realities of being 'one of those blacks.'

Our proximity to privilege, and whiteness, can also imbue us with a need to preserve it. We have been given a bite of true economic freedom in our lifetime, even though we know it remains a tasteless mirage. A mere

illusion of the senses created to numb us from the pain of the reality of our society. From rooftop drinks in Sandton, dinners at the One&Only at the Waterfront in Cape Town, to embracing the gentrification of Maboneng in central Johannesburg, we embrace a world that only a few short decades ago would have been unimaginable. Spaces that provide a window into an existence that was reserved for a few. It would be a mistake to underestimate how much one would do to remain in a fantasy rather than return to reality and take the brunt of it. It is a dilemma not unique to coconuts or the black elite. If you were offered the opportunity to enjoy true freedom and all the fruit it bears, but you knew that failure to grasp it meant to enjoy nothing at all, where does this place you? How badly would you fight to ensure that even if all is lost in your attempts to achieve complete freedom, you could still return to life in your mirage? In fact, would you even know that you were trying to return at all?

Coconuts and the black elite, like any other group within #MustFall movements, will try to steer the movement in a direction that favours them best. But unlike other groups who compete for the soul of the #MustFall movements, we hide in the tall grass, hoping that no one sees us, yet banking on the knowledge that enough people can sense our presence. We unconsciously influence #MustFall politics to protect our self-interest under the impression that our acts are for the greater good. The presence of a bigger villain allows the gaze to turn away from us. We are asked questions we're never truly expected to answer and as a result, in the same way that we traverse our post-apartheid society, coconuts chart the landscape of #MustFall politics; cautious, conniving, curious and always cunning.

It is difficult to see ourselves as the enemy because we barely make it apparent even in our own eyes. During all my years of student activism, the greatest lesson I took with me was: never trust someone who wants to go to jail. Ironic as this might sound coming from me, I believe the urge to be jailed for your cause should undergo some interrogation. This is not to say that being detained for a cause should be a demerit. I am not saying here that those who were jailed were there for the fame and acclaim, although I also wouldn't say it's impossible either. However, people who actively seek to be jailed have either been jailed before and have no qualms about

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returning, or they have a get-out-of-jail-free card in their back pocket. Either way, their enthusiasm to be jailed should be a warning sign rather than a quality instinctively to be admired.

In my experience, the ones who have the get-out-of-jail-free card are the ones who are the keenest to be arrested. The card comes in various forms. For some, it's the possession of a political surname, knowing that you have the means to pay your bail, understanding how an arrest will or will not affect your future job prospects, scholarships and/or bursaries, or simply knowing that in the event of a trial you will be able to handle the long and arduous process. For others, it is simply not having to truly worry that your personal incarceration will impede the ability for your family to unshackle itself from its economic bondage.

The threat to #MustFall movements by coconuts and the black elite is neither direct nor upfront. It is cerebral. Like any good poker player, we never reveal our cards, unless we intend to. We influence the natural logic of these movements in such a way that their actions will not jeopardise our own ability to achieve economic freedom on our own accord. Our self-interest nurtures a desire to utilise both our access to resources and proximity to whiteness to maintain and grow our endowment of privileges. Whether it is through their ability to take control of plenaries, to provide resources to the movement, or as part of the silent majority of the silent majority, the black elite use their unique position in society to reinforce their need to achieve their own economic advancement. We are subtle in our influence but pervasive in our overall effect.

I came across this subtlety in an interesting conversation I had during #RhodesMustFall in 2015. The conversation brought to light the role of the black elite and coconuts in the movement and the influence they were beginning to have on decisions that were made. It took place during one of the more uneventful plenary sessions in the first few weeks of the occupation of Azania House. The session concerned logistics. I was pulled aside by someone I didn't know at the time who whispered that #RhodesMustFall was classist. Surprised at the blunt nature of her comment, I pressed her to explain. She went on to say that it made absolutely no sense to hold a plenary meeting on a Sunday afternoon. Realising that I was firmly in her

crosshairs of criticism, I trod lightly as I let her continue.

In my mind, the only group that should have felt aggrieved by the time and date of plenary that day were the Christians. The role of religion within #RhodesMustFall was often underplayed. The majority of #RMF on-the-ground supporters and protest cows were somewhere along the spectrum of being Christian. They went from Christian in name only to full-on fundamentalists. Most kept their staunchest views to themselves, so long as the movement maintained the veneer of a Christian aesthetic. This would later change due to the utterances by Zizipho Pae, a prominent student leader at the time. She made a Facebook post about the United States Supreme Court's decision to legalise gay marriage. She described the decision as institutionalising and normalising sin. It was a student like her, I thought, who would be the most aggrieved by the scheduling of the plenary on a Sunday. I was wrong in this instance.

It was a sobering moment when my companion explained how it was absurd that those who organised the plenary and knew how these sessions often lasted hours longer than scheduled, still organised them on the day on which Cape Town's public transport system came to a halt. Apparently, the organisers of plenary meetings had either never taken public transport on a Sunday, or they lived in one of the university residences, or they had access to a vehicle. It should be noted that none of the above makes you one of South Africa's black diamonds. Instead, it entails that you enjoy a level of socio-economic leverage not available to most South Africans and in particular most students. Socio-economic leverage that more often than not seems to mimic class – hence my companion's allegation. This conversation forced me to think about how often decisions made by those with socio-economic leverage influenced the logistics, motives and overall direction of the movement. Was there a difference between those students who arrived at a protest with a car and those who travelled there by public transport? Or a difference between a protester from one of South Africa's top private schools and one from a school that still had pit latrines? How do these disparate groups come together to fight the same economic battle? Should they even trust each other? Or is trust a necessity at this point rather than a desire?

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I constantly asked myself: how does the average black 20-something-year-old, born in Johannesburg and who spent most of their schooling and university life in the top tier of our educational system find themselves in the heart of a protest focused on economic emancipation? Why do they feel aggrieved with the current situation if their background allows them to avoid the worst ills of our society? What is their definition of economic freedom and is it similar to the definition of those from impoverished backgrounds? What limits are they willing to push to achieve their goals?

I don't trust the black elite and I hope this chapter helps you understand why. I don't trust them because I grew up among them and I have come to the realisation that, once they achieve their goal, they may just become worse than those we currently despise.

Growing up within the private school network and subsequently finding myself at UCT, I was exposed to a lifestyle that has increasingly become common in South Africa. It is a lifestyle where being able to shift from the rural areas of Bushbuckridge on one day and end up in a high-rise all-white party in Sandton the next is a norm. To traverse the globe on family vacations while simultaneously pleading that you are fighting for the economic freedom of others doesn't cause a single moment's pause. I describe it as the 'Pop Mabodlela' phenomenon. My issue with my generation is not that we live the lives that we do, but rather that we allow the world to expect that we would automatically be on the side of black people in the country. It is an odd assumption to make and one I do not believe is fully deserved.

In a variety of situations over the course of the evolution of #MustFall politics, from #RhodesMustFall to #FeesMustFall, this assumption has been shown to be shockingly brittle. How easy was it for students to lay blame on the shoulders of TUT for the events that played out at the Union Buildings and in the streets of Pretoria the day President Zuma announced 0%? To throw them to the wolves and label their actions as 'typical of TUT'? As if the protests against fees that characterised #FMF before 2015 were somehow less righteous than our own. Why was it that in its inception, #RMF paid no heed to the economic plight of students at UCT?

Coconuts and the black elite continuously demonstrate their inherent bias to preserve their privilege yet seem to believe they are the great allies of the revolutionary cause.

However, it is not the way we implicitly stereotype that I believe to be the real issue at hand. Rather it is the use of our socio-economic advantage to gain, maintain and distribute power that entrenches this assumption as a norm.

Take language, for instance. In plenary sessions, English was the predominant language used. Its use was not only a tool to communicate but also one of control. Though some would swap and change between English and vernac, the dominance of English became quite pronounced. It enabled some to gain the trust of the masses by eloquently enunciating elaborate preambles and soliloquies in an elegant and enigmatic manner. Verbose? Yes, indeed. Effective? Most definitely. The purpose was to capture the imagination of the crowd and sway them in your direction. The dominance of English in South Africa is not a historical happenstance. It was a deliberate strategy to gain control of the populace by dictating which language had the greatest authority. An authority one would need if they wanted to move up the social ladder. Hence the use of English became an authority in the protest, although not without a level of pushback.

With the notion of decolonisation taking strong hold, it would become difficult for English to dominate entirely. English often represents an existential threat to most languages in South Africa and the desire to resist such a threat remains strong. One example is the repurposing of the national anthem that completely removes English and Afrikaans from the original. A deliberate act and a protest in and of itself.

Another reason for pushback came from the desire to be able to communicate as broadly as possible with as many students as possible. With English being more of a language of instruction rather than a home language, naturally English would be a mechanism to marginalise in specific instances. There are a variety of reasons why pushback happens, with these two being only the tip of the iceberg.

Some students find indigenous languages – ‘indigenous’ not being the word I would prefer because it presumes a lack of universality – alienating

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and English as the best means of communicating with them. The assumption that everyone speaks English fluently because they study in English is also false. It allows certain power relations to take hold and entrench themselves. Yet, for the black elite, for whom both English and another 'indigenous' language come naturally, this dynamic plays directly into their hands. English was often inadvertently used by the elite as a means of gaining authority in the protest, but, simultaneously, employing English as the dominant language was also pushed against. We become masters of English, yet also its most ardent detractors. This can be a dangerous dynamic and it plays out in many other ways too. English is only one site where this dynamic plays out.

Another site is the idea of staying woke rather than being woke – woke being the awareness of society's constraints and impediments which adversely affect historically marginalised groups. Woke politics are interesting. They speak to the gladiator inside all of us. The desire, in situations of risk to one's well-being, to be the greatest protector of yourself and others. Being woke is the state of acknowledging that the world as it seems is often not what it is. To find yourself in this state is frightening yet enlightening at the same time. It is a rush once it is in full swing. Everything feels, smells, tastes and seems different. Relationships you once deemed immovable in your life now seem feeble. Foundations you had built your ideas on now have newly found cracks that quickly turn into chasms. Family members you once deemed cornerstones suddenly feel more like pebbles that need to be skipped away into the distance. With the help of others, through a process of learning and relearning, being woke opens the world to new possibilities and opportunities. However, it also opens you up to new threats as well as the perception of threats, creating a deep desire constantly to stay woke and keep your guard up.

I define staying woke as the ongoing process in which you are constantly seeking out new weapons to not only defend yourself but attack those who you feel are a threat. The more weapons you gain, the more threats you perceive. It is another arms race of sorts, one that I don't believe is necessarily harmful, but which does have unintended consequences. Like any arms race, any new party that seeks to arm itself becomes *persona non*

grata within the community. At least until the moment in which it achieves a level of wokeness that demands the community's respect. Even then, it is still under certain conditions. You see this play out the most when those still in the proverbial dark seek enlightenment and are told they should undergo this process on their own. Staying woke has evolved into being a gatekeeper of enlightenment rather than its torchbearer, bringing those in the dark into the light.

The notion that bringing someone into the light is a tiring task is one that is not unfamiliar to me. It is a frustrating exercise. I wouldn't personally deem it violent, as some may, but it is arduous. When you begin the process with someone, the expectation is raised that you should end the process with them as well. You become, in the eyes of those you are trying to educate, a teacher not for a moment but for a lifetime. It is not a commitment you want to sign up for every single time you try to educate others. As a result, it does become tiring for most. I would never force someone to educate others as they are well within their rights not to. However, what I do believe to be dangerous is the belittlement of those who wish to know more and crave enlightenment. It is a belittlement that is more vindictive than dismissive.

Often, a confrontation between a white person and a coconut is fuelled by an underlying tension historically linked to an experience between said individuals rather than some broader objective. If the coconut didn't come from the same school, they would often project their own experiences onto the random white student. I have done this myself at times and I am not ashamed of it. It became my way of expressing my anger. However, the danger that I pose in doing this is that I mask my own personal anger with my own denial of economic emancipation within the white community in a private school with that of the search for economic freedom for the disenfranchised child living and going to school in Alexandra township. It is obscene to believe that our struggle is one and the same. Similar we may be, but it is our differences that inform our politics towards whiteness and wypipo. Through our socio-economic leverage, we are more than capable of turning the head of the child from Alexandra fighting for economic recognition within their area towards the fight for recognition in

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a school such as St John's. We disrespect the movement not through our acts, but in our 'true' intentions, intentions that should be but are often not interrogated.

There is a darker side to #MustFall politics. Not its violent delights or its exclusion of wypipo. For all its effort to change our society, its underbelly is riven with untenable relationships. Compromises. The focus on achieving economic freedom in our lifetime by disrupting institutions and norms requires certain balances to be achieved because of the nature of inequality in our country. It requires a pact to be agreed upon by disparate socio-economic groups and identities. We learned during #RhodesMustFall that the acceptance of toxic masculinity and chauvinist hoteps (pro-black males with backward views of notions of social progress within society) was often a negotiated compromise between the dominant men who sought out the 'black feminista' as drivers of the ideological umbrella the movement needed to gain broad-based support and the centrists and radical black feminists who realised that these same men were most adept at galvanising the base. #MustFall politics actively excludes 1652s but makes room for certain wypipo to become allies. It accepts religions while acknowledging that these same religions actively work against some of its pillars. #MustFall politics created a bridge between those in HBIs and those in HBWs. It accepted that certain compromises were necessary so that it could carry on with its mission and ideals but interrogated each one and acknowledged the risks they brought to the surface. Yet #MustFall politics turned a blind eye to what I believe is the biggest threat to the movement.

The basic framework and ideology of #MustFall created a blueprint for how a change in our post-1994 society could and, dare I say, should take place under a generation of people temporally detached from our apartheid history. #MustFall movements work towards de-linking us from the current state of nature that imagines South Africa as a country that is equal for all. They argue that it is just a mythological construct laid over the social and economic truths of the country. We may be resilient as a country, but we are not unbreakable.

#FeesMustFall might be the current iteration of #MustFall politics,

ut it will not be the last. It was unique in that it was the first to test the lueprint of achieving economic freedom in our lifetime, a blueprint that ighlighted how to actively mobilise young people on a sustained day to ay programme to both agitate and advocate for change in a post-1994 ociety. It stands to reason that the success of the movement in even- ally achieving its goals will undoubtedly embolden some to improve e process. To highlight its weaknesses and amplify its strengths. To hift the blueprint out of the ivory towers of universities and into spaces roader based and representative of the plight of black people across outh Africa.

Eventually, the questions will be asked: what to do with those who have ad a glimpse into the world of the economically emancipated, and should ey be trusted. Should the revolution include them? In the same breath, ose who have glimpsed this supposed utopia should turn the question on emselves: are they willing to risk it all to achieve freedom for all, to give p the proximity to whiteness in order fully to embrace a world no longer ictated by 1652s?

The rainbow nation no longer exists. Its hold on our national consciou- ess is being taken apart, piece by piece, by a generation of young people o longer enamoured with it nor in awe of it. A generation willing to build new society that no longer uses the imaginings of a post-apartheid one s its foundation. It is a movement that sees the future of the country as a lank canvas, an opportunity to pick up the baton that was once dropped nd start the race for change again.

During the protest at parliament, one image that stuck with me was that f a poster that read 'Our parents were sold dreams in 1994, we are just ere for the refund.'

The rules that governed the engagement of young people in politics have egun to be rewritten. The terms of engagement have been altered as we nove further away from the end of apartheid in its more formalised and egal state into an apartheid that is more informal yet still visceral. We are ar from the beginning of the end game, but our country and our par- nts need to start thinking deeply about how to chart the future. If they re unwilling, the mission will be taken on by someone else. But just as

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#FeesMustFall refused to be told how they should engage in politics, any future iteration of #MustFall politics will most likely take on a similar demeanour. One that I do not believe will be persuaded to stop, even when it achieves its goal.