

## HOW I ENVISION A DECOLONISED UCT TO BE LIKE

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UCT has dismissed all the other demands the movement has made. Azania House has gotten back to being called Bremner House. They have repainted the walls and got rid of all the posters. It is as if there was never an occupation there. Everything is so clean and back to its place.

I am told that the struggle for a black space in UCT did not only start a few weeks ago by Maxwele. That is also did not start with Vernac News questioning UCT in 2014. That it also did not start with Imbizo 5 on the same year. People tell me as well that the movement Concerned Centre for African Studies in 2010 were not the first people to want curriculum transformation in UCT. People tell me also that the Mamdani Affair of 1998 whereby Mahmood Mamdani was refused implementing an Afrocentric curriculum was also not the first time a black scholar to stress about Afrocentric studies pre-colonialism at UCT. People have also told me that the Archie Mafeje Affair where an African Scholar was refused promotion to professorship because of the colour of his skin in 1967/8. I am also told that UCT was built in 1829, but that it was only in 1980 where they started admitting black students in relatively large numbers. The Black Alumni of the 1990s also related it to me that there were the ones carrying non-violent protests fighting against racism. As far as the movement is concerned, the struggle continues. This will not be the last movement that seeks to challenge the legacy of colonialism in this space.

My sister will be in university four years from now. I wouldn't want her to try so hard to fit in. I envision a system of higher education that would let her embrace herself and background as she is. I envision a decolonised University of Cape Town where black students don't have alter themselves and cultures in trying to fit in to the system of white culture. I envision a UCT where no one will laugh at her accent because she would be coming from Thutho Lesedi High School: a township school.

*I envision a decolonised UCT that will not laugh at me when I present my research paper in isiZulu, citing Scholars from the UKZN.*

I envision a decolonised UCT as a brave new world has places for people like me that come from the village and townships of South Africa. I envision a decolonised UCT that does not demonise my culture simply as barbaric and evil. Where my culture won't have to remain at the gate of UCT, waiting for me to fetch it when it is vacation.

With decolonisation, I see a UCT where I do not have to constantly hide my arms with long sleeve jackets because of being constantly asked why am I wearing these funny beads, this scary animal skin around my wrist as well as having this scary cow's skull on my neck. I envision a decolonised UCT that will not prosecute me for burning impepho in my room. I envision a decolonised UCT that won't let the fire alarm go off whenever I attempt to light it because I do need to connect with my elders emsamu.

The UCT I envision is the one that won't propel me to speak English all week long just to be accepted as intellectually equal to everybody. I envision a decolonised UCT that will not laugh at me when I



present my research paper in isiZulu, citing Scholars from the UKZN.

I envision a decolonised UCT where my intelligence is not measured by how far I can quote Karl Marx, but about how far along I can critique the teaching system without being sent to Valkenberg Mental Hospital. I wish for a UCT that will not tell me to tone down my anger when I talk about apartheid and white Supremacy.

I envision a decolonised UCT where Haile Sellase, Walter Rodney and Julius Nyerere are used as a point of reference for Africa's unique economic development systems instead of the tyrants which the western academia work has painted them to be.

I envision a UCT where I do not have to hold only to Dr. Shose Kessi and Dr. Litheko Modisane as my supervisor because these are the only successful blacks that I see teaching me since there aren't that many of them to choose from anyway.

I envision a decolonised UCT where my fellow colleagues won't frown upon me when I eat with my own hands in formal occasions, because till today I do not know how to eat with a fork and knife. I also do not know how to walk in heels, so events like Invest



Soc and Forest Hill Formal often kick me out saying, I am not formal enough, that I have worn tackies and therefore I am “inappropriate” for the occasion.

I envision a decolonised UCT where no one will keep asking me, “Is it heritage day today or are you going somewhere special today? Your traditional clothing really suits you”, but a UCT that joins me in making traditional attires a norm instead of a once off heritage day on the 24th of September.

I envision a new UCT where workers whose jobs won't strip them off their dignity because currently they are reduced to cleaning, driving and garden objects that no one ever takes notices of. I envision a decolonised UCT that does not reduce grown men into children who feel the need to regain their manhood only when they go back home to their wives who they beat, taking out the frustration they get from the places they work in. I envision a new UCT where

old mothers of someone out there do not have to face humiliation they get from students who reduce them to kitchen girls. Kitchen girls that are supposed to clean after them and even their soiled pads that get dumped carelessly in the toilets. I dream of a decolonised UCT where students greet them and appreciate and recognise their existence.

I wish a decolonised UCT will recognise that we come from families that teach us inhlonipho, the same inhlonipho that hates children who turn a blind eye to elders when they are in need.

Inhlonipho hates those who don't respect elders even though the system in the residences teaches us to turn a blind eye by criminalising those it calls trespassers. Trespassers are those who should not be helped when they need to be swiped in to residences because CPS will take care of that. I envision a UCT residence that will not take me to disciplinary Court just because an elderly woman who cleans this place forgot her access card and then asked me to open for her.

I envision a decolonised UCT where the system of white supremacy won't elevate black people to higher positions just so that they can serve as watchdogs and police officers who oppress other blacks at the bottom. Instead, I wish for a UCT that does not hire blacks just because of being black by the skin. I wish for a system that will take into regard that you black and still concerned about the development of another black person.

I envision a new UCT that will allow me to bring even 10 people if I want to my graduation instead of the two tickets it gives me. I envision a decolonised UCT that will build rondavel and Ndebele type of architecture instead of the Michael-Angelo style I see all around campus.

I imagine a new wall of fame in UCT that has people like Winnie Ma-Dikizela Mandela, Nkosi Johnson, Hamilton Naki, Brenda Fassie, Queen Ndzinga, Mambush Noki, a portrait of that person that lives on the street, that black and poor farmer as people who will dominate UCT's wall instead of the Oppenheimer's and Queen Victoria that are listed there.

In short, my friend, I sit alone in my room, dope myself a bit so that I can be able to see all these because reality is just refusing me to see them, to touch them, thus I go in a trance to imagine them happening. That, for me would be a decolonised University of Cape Town, regardless if a Van donder or a Akokpari is the Vice Chancellor.