

Book Reviews

Nyamnjoh, Francis B, *#RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa*. Langaa Research and Publishing Common Initiative Group 2016, 298 pp.

Nyamnjoh's *#RhodesMustFall* is a timely release that unapologetically incorporates through a critical discourse analysis, the nuances and debates buried in the mainstream analysis of the various Fallist Movements. Nyamnjoh follows pertinent narratives about the *#RhodesMustFall* protests and of the need to re-evaluate transformation beyond the obsession of symbols (pp 84-85). The protests are about "revolting against the terms of engagement dictated to them" (p 84) and about deep seated frustrations with the nature, extent and type of transformation that had been taking place (p157). Included in his analysis is the impact and consequence of police violence and the militarisation of South African campuses as a strategy against constructive engagement with the students. These responses are interpreted as a "mocking imperial defiance of black humanity" (pg.97) and the continued impact of colonialism as a system that "incorporated the racism of exploitation ... [and] the racism of elimination" (p 3). What is most striking in his discourse analysis is the combination of various narratives from different stakeholders that ultimately suggests a structure that has continued inside the universities to ensure that the black student is "crushed by a history of repressive encounters with the violence of dominance which Rhodes and UCT had come to incarnate" (p 82).

Significantly then, the call for decolonisation of the universities and the curriculum is about shifting the "hegemonic gaze of the Rhodes" that has been lodged in our thinking and pedagogical practises — it is about building an African nation of greatness and creativity and refuting the myth of African incompetence, backwardness and aggression. For the protesting students, teaching and learning "is an ontological project ... about an entire way of being" (p 160).

Thus from within this recognition of their own humanity, potential and capabilities, Nyamnjoh considers the issue of "whiteness" and "white-ache" (p 65) by referring to the literary works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Wa Thiong'o writes about the impact of colonial education on the mind-set, intellect and identity formation of black elites. This type of education drives the agenda of whiteness and the need to "whiten up" which he explores in

his novel, *Wizard of the Crow*. In this story Tajirika, a tribal leader, having accumulated wealth through dealings with his colonial master gradually aspires to the "power, privilege and social visibility that being white had come to represent" (p 65). It was about "white-ache" by a "black man celebrating the negation of himself" (p 65). The relevance of this analysis is intricately bound with the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall protests, considering the challenges faced by the protestors from those within their own ranks and from political leaders whom they expected would champion their cause. Thus those who subvert the struggles of the Fallists have been nurtured by a system of colonial education wherein "whitening up" takes place (p 66). A system that Rhodes was cognisant of when he established the Rhodes Scholarship programme (p 66). According to Nyamnjoh, this system develops the intellects of the elite and political leaders and alienates their minds from the societies and peoples they are supposed to protect and represent. These individuals then see their own as reactionary, aggressive and backward. Many of these elites have been "emasculated and neutralised" through an infusion of their sensibilities into colonial and colonised education and thus seek to emasculate and neutralise those around them. In this regard, these elites begin to favour the foreign over the local, they exhibit an "imported thinking" (pp 67-68) and are "minded by the language of power" (p 150). If one is to reflect on the statements by Gwede Mantashe and Blade Nzimande during the month of September 2016 in response to the student protests, the only way to describe their comments is through the lens of white-ache and whiteness. From this lens, elite and politicians are "seeking to be identified by europhilia in education and consumption" (p 70).

In contrast, the students are "leading a national debate" (p 145), demanding that "transformation is not merely a case of add a little black and stir, while continuing with the same structure and same rules" (p 148). The universities, on the other hand have displayed contradictory behaviour. Whilst claiming to nurture "consultative democracy even when the problem is the majority white establishment and its logic of practise, the obvious strategy [has been] to resort to legalisms and establishment civilities" (p 165). The #RhodesMustFall movement has opened a necessary dialogue redirecting the manner in which transformation and access to education had been channelled. They have rightly questioned the veneration of individuals who "reinforced racial segregation as a technology of power and privilege" (p 167) and of "colonial apologism rife in one of the world's most esteemed educational institutions" (p 171).

Whether from my own bias or from a lived context, the book is an

excellent exposition of the Fallist movement, the intricacies of the powers and violence entwined in their struggle and of a recognition of the fact that for as "long as these statutes are allowed to stand, we as a society can never begin the process of recognising the violence of our past" (p 171). Nyamnjoh has captured the relevance and essence of the movement through a thorough examination of the different discourses that have emerged since the statue of Rhodes was smeared with faeces, and his critical interrogation of the contexts and the subtexts make this book a must for all who are interested in understanding the dynamic vision and just demands of (in my opinion) the best of South Africans. More specifically, it is a critical investment for academics and university management who struggle to understand the nature and intensity of the pain and the recollection of memory for the students. This lapse in understanding has resulted in the militarisation of our campuses, the victimisation of the black bodies of students and the belittling of the call for a free, quality, decolonial education. If South Africans are to move beyond the belief that "the welfare of a country can be permanently based on fear" (p 33), those who are invested in education have to lead with greater integrity and compassion.

Quraysha Ismail Sooliman
Department of Political Sciences
University of Pretoria

Msipa, Cephass G, *In Pursuit of Freedom and Justice: A Memoir*. Harare: Weaver Press 2015, xiv & 185 pp.

In Pursuit of Freedom and Justice: A Memoir by veteran nationalist Cephass Msipa joins the list of memoirs and biographies of women and men who fought for majority rule in Zimbabwe. Born on 7 July 1931 in the Shabani District in the Midlands province (p 1), "a teacher by profession and a politician by circumstances" (p ix), Msipa was a key member of the nationalist movement and a prominent politician in the post-colonial era. Born of poor peasants, Msipa's childhood was typical of many of his generation until he became politicised at a young age, especially during encounters with Benjamin Burombo, a proto-nationalist and a friend of his father, whom he describes as his political mentor (p 4).

Msipa is a product of the Dadaya Mission, where the liberal Gar-