#FeesMustFall: Discourse hidden in plain sight

by

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What Do #FeesMustFall's Hidden Transcripts of Subordination and Domination Reveal About Developments in South African Society Today?
Abstract
This thesis uses discourse analysis to understand the social processes at work during South Africa’s recent #FeesMustFall protest action. Through James Scott’s concept of the Hidden Transcript it constructed an empirical view of power relations through Twitter discourse extracted from the hashtag. The study found that miscommunication between universities and protesting students could be attributed to failure on the part of universities to make use of social media for dialectical engagement with students. However, it concluded that #FeesMustFall was instrumental in uncovering the historically veiled subaltern discourse, socially transmitted by the student population of South Africa on social media, which can only serve to benefit South African society in the long-run.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1. The Post-Mandela Effect

   “Great inequalities in status and power generate a rich Hidden Transcript.”
   (Scott, 1990: pp. 176)

On 5 December 2013, the death of Nelson Mandela (Mandela) gave rise to South Africa’s post-Mandela age. It was no longer the post-Apartheid era of Mandela, ‘father of the rainbow nation’, but rather signified the death of ideological imperatives, which was spawned from idealistic anti-Apartheid notions in South African society. The iconic rainbow nation narrative was profitably preserved for too long after 1994, developing a subjective discourse just as the 20th anniversary of the first democratic election in South Africa loomed. This discourse interrogated the ‘rainbow nation’ rhetoric, which Mandela’s government is believed to have strategically sold to the new multiracial society after the end of Apartheid, and which South Africans – drunk on post-Apartheid glory – were too eager to buy. It questioned the growing socio-economic divide between Black and White people, which the new democracy was meant to eradicate, i.e.

   The growing gap between rich and poor [was] like the elephant in the room, an overwhelming presence that everyone [tried] to ignore, and one which [would] sooner or later wreck the entire edifice (Alexander, 2013).

It is conceivable that the rainbow nation fairytale’s shortcomings would be liberated from the confines of Mandela’s post-Apartheid legacy when he passed, especially under the leadership of President Jacob Zuma (Zuma). The third president of the new South Africa at this time had a reputation riddled with corruption and rape charges, ostensibly shaking the very principles upon which the African National Congress (ANC), majority party, was founded. This is not to say that Mandela’s iconic status was at risk. Rather, subaltern South Africans still burdened by the effects of colonialism and Apartheid or centuries of violent structural and systemic racism, were irrevocably free to question the effect of the rainbow nation narrative on their discernibly unchanging status in society. Continuously marginalized South Africans

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1 1994 | On 27 April 1994 the first democratic election took place in South Africa since the end of Apartheid and Colonial influence.
were thus ready to change their subjugated identities discursively and openly, akin yet dissimilar\(^2\) in many ways to *The Struggle*\(^3\).

The new discourse emerged as text on social media, and as social practice, such as protest action and other forms of resistance offline. Thus, a steady counter-discourse emerged corresponding to Fairclough’s three dimensions of discourse: 1) text, 2) discursive practice, and 3) social practice (Blommaert, 2005: p. 30), although these distinctions may seize to apply, especially in the age of social media where communication is socially driven. More importantly, these practices are mediated through “ideological effects and hegemonic processes […] concerning power” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 30). Hence, hashtag movements on social media became decontextualized honing many subaltern voices and resounding a loud and clear roar of ideology\(^4\) through systematic cultural and social processes. As a consequence, #FeesMustFall became derivative, mutating the cause from simply free education to many other class issues preconditioned by Colonialism and Apartheid. For example, #RhodesMustFall (discussed later) and the decolonization project spawned #FeesMustFall, the free education project, which in turn spawned the outsourcing issue. Each of these became a stratified layer of the bigger issues involving classicism, elitism, and inequality in South African society. This stratification of societal issues thus forms South African society’s contemporary model of power relations: i.e. subordination at odds with domination.

Essentially, when Apartheid ended colonial and other hegemonic forces remained in tact despite social change. Under the new Black elite, who were themselves the formerly marginalized, discourse was re-represented, re-spoken and rewritten (Blommaert, 2005: p. 30). Subversive questions arose, such as why Apartheid’s preconditions for non-White races (i.e. Black people), which represented the poor marginalized and disempowered people, endured a systematically violent democracy for so long. The question regarding why these issues continue to prevail, is not something this modest thesis could interrogate, but it will

\(^2\) Dissimilarity between youth today and the Soweto Uprising of 1976 | During the 1976 Uprising students died for the cause and the violation to their human rights were more easily defined. Today the #FeesMustFall protestors struggle to legitimize their claim to free education as a human right, rather than a privilege; a claim which underscores their cause.

\(^3\) The Struggle | Apartheid’s marginalized used the term to describe their resistance and defiance.

\(^4\) Ideology | “[…] constitutes the historical layer in everyday conduct, while it provides immediate, on the spot social meaningfulness to such conduct” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 19).
tackle the way in which South African society’s social processes “shed light [these days] on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power” (Ibid) evident in the #FeesMustFall, free education and decolonization, movements.

So it is that two years after Mandela’s death the elephant in the room would begin its steps toward wrecking the entire edifice, as Alexander predicted. Through nation-wide student protests augmented by social media, the imagined answer to the class struggle was resolved by the poor: Free education should be directly proportional to the extinction of historically racist and elitist hegemonic processes in South African society. Before 1994 free education was an unspoken fantasy. It correlated the conceivable influence of education on social equality in the same way the former regime reinforced the very idea when they implemented the Bantu Education Act in 1953. Within this broader context, the question arose: Which historically veiled discursive practices and social processes constitutes the current liberation of previously veiled discourse in South Africa as demonstrated by #FeesMustFall?

1.1 Context

“If a ‘people’s democracy’ claims to exist to promote the interest of the working class, it cannot easily explain why it is breaking strikes and jailing proletarians.”

(Scott, 1990: pp. 55)

The hashtag #FeesMustFall was augmented in two ways: Social Media Networks (SNS) and offline demonstrations. Offline the protests caused nation-wide panic throughout the Higher Education sector, while popularity of the hashtag on Twitter, especially on 23 October 2015, officially baptized the movement ‘#FeesMustFall’. What will now follow is a contextual description of #FeesMustFall.

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5 Bantu Education Act | The Bantu Education Act of 1953 put “African education under the control of the government and [extend] Apartheid to black schools,” (Overcoming Apartheid: N.D, Para. 1). Hendrik F. Verwoerd was quoted as saying: “There is no place for [the African] in the European Community above the level of certain forms of [labor].” (SA History Online: 2016, Para. 4; Para. 31).

6 23 October 2015/ NationalShutdown | On this day students marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria after it was announced that Zuma would address them regarding the protests that prompted his response. He announced a 0% fee increase for the following year.
1.1.1 The Rise of #FeesMustFall

In March 2015, Chumani Maxwele, a student at the University of Cape Town (UCT), defaced the statue of Cecil John Rhodes, which is located on the university’s premises. The vandalism of the British imperialist’s statue made headlines as a strong political statement against the colonial hegemonies still prevalent in South African spaces. The act instigated the now infamous and polarizing leaderless hashtag movements, #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall, which were most likely influenced by, #BlackLivesMatter (Beukes, 2017). #FeesMustFall activists are now referred to as ‘fallists’ and a series of derivatives of the hashtags are used daily. These movements led to a third leaderless movement called #ZumaMustFall (referring to President Jacob Zuma), which prompted arguably the largest nation-wide protest in South Africa’s history in April 2017. Moreover, the ‘must fall’ hashtags have prompted smaller campaigns, some legitimate and others satirical and comedic. For example, the #datamustfall hashtag expressed upset over the high cost of Internet data in South Africa. Nonetheless, it was the University protests that started it all. The #FeesMustFall protest at the University of Witwatersrand (Wits) in 2015 was the first in a series of volatile protests at universities across the country after annual fee increases were announced. The hashtag was not only used to mobilize and organize students during protest periods, but remarkably also to crowd source funding for legal fees (in the event of arrests), as well as food and refreshments. When protests were appeased, the hashtag mediated dialectical engagement instead.

With the movement reaching its third year in 2017, Universities have had a monumental challenge communicating and connecting with students. Predictably, the protests were easily comparable to the 1976 Soweto student Uprisings, although thus far all but two casualties were reported, none of who were protestors. Thus far South African universities and the

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7 Cecil John Rhodes | Rhodes was the former Cape Colony Prime Minister (1890 – 1896), a British mining magnate, British imperialist, White supremacist, and the controversial face of the renowned Rhodes scholarship program. In essence, Rhodes still represents the dominant structures in SA.

8 Smaller ‘must fall’ campaigns | Two prominent radio personalities, Gareth Cliff and T-bo Touch, took the data issue to court attempting to take cellphone companies to task for high data costs. However, less polarizing, but nonetheless discursive ‘must fall’ hashtags such as #RainMustFall surfaced on social media to share information, images, and stories about the effects of the current drought in the Western Cape, South Africa. The appropriation of these derivatives of the movement is also a bone of contention among fallists, as we’ll later see.

9 Soweto Uprising, 1976 | Approximately 10 000 students in Soweto marched to end the Hendrick Verwoerd’s implementation of Afrikaans medium instruction (alongside English) to the Bantu Education Act. About 200 people are said to have died during the protest, which turned the rest of the world’s attention to South Africa. This protest is said to have started the black consciousness movement as the precursor to the end of Apartheid (SA history online).
government appeared to use SNS as a one-way communicative platform, rather than a discursive medium for engaging with the movements using a dialectical, constructive and engaging approach. During the protests, the universities’ various public communications were widely received with derision, while the government structures remained silent, only commenting publicly in news sources. Moreover, a growing dissatisfaction with the president was expressed through #FeesMustFall. This has “[created] a dialectics of context” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 74) and shifted the orders of indexicality, i.e. “connections between linguistic signs and contexts” (Ibid). A shift in the indexical qualities associated with education and the state respectively is novel, yet discernible in the discourse evoked from #FeesMustFall. As parastatal institutions much of the funding hinges on government contributions, which means the fallists’ struggle with universities is at odds with this reality. Ultimately, #FeesMustFall displays historically shaped power relations. Hence this thesis will attempt to uncover the intimate workings of #FeesMustFall through the paradigms of subordination and domination (Scott, 1990) using discourse analysis.

1.1.2 Background to the Study: Disparities Between Research and Practice

To date approaches to research of SNS movements in SA (proliferated since #RhodesMustFall in 2015) have mainly focused on the role of SNS in augmenting protest activities within the scope of isolated fields such as digital media (Bosch, 2016; Beukes, 2017) and data science (Findlay, 2015). A critical analysis of the rich and vastly available discourse and offline activities orchestrated by the movement is thus yet to emerge. The hashtag #FeesMustFall and related hashtags, such as #RhodesMustFall, which augmented the content of the tweets and other social media posts, created conditions for the communication to multiply and for various actors to engage in discussion. This thesis argues that the lack of critical focus on #FeesMustFall discourse with more subjective imperatives has resulted in, among other things, serious miscommunication between universities – or the dominant structures – and fallists – or subordinate structures – in this case. Hence, the role of social media will not be the thread that ties this thesis together, but rather, what Blommaert suggests about discourse analysis: “[it] should result in the heightened awareness of hidden power dimensions and its effects: a critical language awareness, a sensitivity for discourse as a subject to power and inequality” (2005: p. 33). The object of study is then “socially situated
and contextualized discourse” (Ibid), as opposed to the decontextualized, “symptomatic” (Ibid), analytical interpretations produced thus far (Beukes, 2017; Bosch, 2016).

These analytical interpretations were not successful in uncovering the meaningful contribution critical approaches to discourse analysis could make to hashtag activism. We can argue that an inter-disciplinary approach is required to combat these shortcomings for facilitating dialectical engagement between subordinates and dominants. In other words, these studies have not addressed the miscommunication between students and universities. Ultimately, discourse between fallists and universities in SA have emerged as ambitiously dialectical, and promising, in recent years – but, principally with the emergence of #FeesMustMall. The movement has opened up conversations, which the post-Apartheid government, may have silenced in a bid to create “the ‘self portrait’ of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen,” which Scott says is one of the many facets of what creates “the [misleading] public transcript” (1990: p. 18). However, the dialectic is, not only problematized through partiality (i.e. communication from subordinates to indifferent and unresponsive dominants), but also fraught with complex racial, privilege and class dynamics within this context. The disparity between the available research and the social reality it stakes its claim to is thus the privilege of big data research and the influence of SNSs over an empirical, qualitative, and social science approach to movements in the digital age.

1.2 Problem Definition

“Our point is not the obvious one that behaviors are impenetrable until given meaning by human actors … the point is that the discourse of the Hidden Transcript does not merely shed light on behavior or explain it, it helps constitute that behavior.”

(Scott, 1990: pp. 188)

The theoretical basis for this thesis is Critical Analysis of Discourse while the conceptual framework is James Scott’s Hidden Transcript concept (1990). The topic this thesis attempts to address is the anti-rainbow nation rhetoric currently challenged as a critique of the continuous structural subordination of previously marginalized South Africans who are still

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10 **Symptomatic analysis** | “[…] an analysis aimed at proving the (predefined) presence of a disease on the basis of an analysis of its symptoms” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 32).
trapped by, not only the failings of the past, but also the failings of the present government. The problem this thesis will address is #FeesMustFall as subaltern discourse silenced because dominant structures, such as universities and the South African government, fail to engage with South African society, within broader terms, on a dialectical level. This is especially a concern in the age of digital media where discourse and social engagement can reach society in more immediate and public ways.

It is thus important for this study to use Critical Analysis of Discourse rather than using isolated theoretical contributions to the study, such as Big Data analysis or data science – used in this thesis for support. Critical Analysis of Discourse can expand the conceivable reasons why activities around the hashtag (online) and the demonstrations (offline) constituting both universities and fallists have escalated. Two main topics can be identified: free education and decolonization. However, we also know that these are not the only issues evoked by the movements. Thus tackling the problem is dependent on distinguishing the degree to which the hashtag has provided rich content for analyzing South African society’s communicative practices and social processes. Scott’s assertion (above) is thus important to understanding the problem: Highlighting the discursive content alone does not give meaning to certain behaviors, as much as discourse ‘helps constitute that behavior’, i.e. how South Africans communicate, socialize and construct realities in a post-Apartheid, post-Mandela SA.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

“To understand the more luxuriant fantasies of the Hidden Transcript, they must be seen not alone but as the reaction to domination in the public transcript.”

(Scott, 1990: p.44)

The following objectives will guide this thesis:

• To explore various methods of discourse analysis for understanding the social practices constituting #FeesMustFall
• To identify the ‘Hidden Transcripts’ displayed by #FeesMustFall’s structures of subordination and domination, i.e. fallists and universities
• To identify the extent to which Critical Analysis of Discourse can disclose the veiled meanings behind social processes augmented by #FeesMustFall
• To produce a foundation for further study into Critical Analysis of Discourse, digitally-mediated or otherwise, within the South African context

1.4 Significance of the Study
An analysis of #FeesMustFall discourse will raise the level of importance placed on SNS mediums like Twitter. Ultimately SNSs generate legitimate discourse, if critically viewed, contrary to popular belief often attributed to the pervasion of ‘fake news’ and digital noise through these channels. As discussed, by adopting an empirical, qualitative and quantitative approach to the analysis, integrated perspectives on contemporary modes of discourse may produce a deeper understanding within the context of South Africa’s continuous struggle with the inequities symptomatic of the past. However, the difference between the subalterns described in Scott’s historical models (i.e. slavery, serfdom, etc.) and the subalterns today (i.e. students and/ or fallists) can be located in the disparity between their modes of access to sociopolitical infrastructure. Nevertheless, the common thread will always be located in the extent of the inequities.

Subordinates under colonialism and Apartheid were deprived of infrastructures such as social media, and consequently ideological systems, such as democracy, were oppressed and, in turn, suppressed. So the reality this thesis addresses is new, contrasted and compared to the realities described in Scott’s historical accounts, such as slavery. Additionally, we address online discourse despite the popular assumption that today’s subaltern does not have access to power and knowledge apparatuses such as smart phones, the Internet and, as a result, social media. Today subalterns have access to online mediums and as a result, to political discussion, despite the socioeconomic constraints that may prevail. It is the study of this new reality, a new political world in SA, where a degree of reversal in the qualities that define the subordinate and dominant are addressed, that yields significance. For example, each time a protest culminates with positive outcomes for fallists, a certain amount of dominance is revealed within their methods. Every action has a positive reaction, and the ends thus justify the means.
Therefore in contrast to other studies, this thesis abandons traditional sociopolitical analysis, which emphasizes insubstantial institutional channels of influence, such as institutional policy, believed to hinder societal progress. We test the notion of ‘real politics’ and the discursive value that social media contributes to a highly politicized context such as SA, where intuitional forces have merely skirted the edge of its value. The outcome should thus help dominant structures in SA approach communication with society’s marginalized in more dialectical and productive ways, through all the channels currently available to them. Optimistically, the thesis should serve as a basis for further study into subcultures in South Africa, particularly spawned from pre-democracy issues still prevalent in society.

1.5 Research Questions

As discussed, the study is multi-faceted and aims to uncover the main elements examined from hidden Twitter discourse, which was extrapolated from the hashtag #FeesMustFall. However, a number of questions arose from a preliminary empirical study of the Twitter activity during the protests since October 2015.

Therefore the following question will frame the analysis:

- What do #FeesMustFall’s Hidden Transcripts of subordination and domination reveal about developments in South African society today?

The following sub-questions will apply:

- How can Critical Analysis of Discourse unveil the ‘Hidden Transcripts’ in #FeesMustFall discourse?
- What are the key features of subordination and domination in South African society today?
- To what extent can the Hidden Transcript expose subordination and domination in South African society today?
- To what extent does the Hidden Transcript reveal developments in South African society today?
- What are the sociopolitical implications of social media on contemporary politics in South Africa?
- How can this study contribute to further research into critical analysis of #FeesMustFall discourse?
The research intends to enhance the field of communication by raising awareness that social media, and hashtags in particular, can make significant contributions to discourse and potentially undertake societal problems upon critical analysis. As a matter of recourse, the study also intends to open the door for further study into subaltern discourse within the field of discourse analysis for the purpose of understanding South African society through its Higher Education sector.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2. Uncovering Hidden Transcripts using Critical Analysis of Discourse to Understand South Africa’s Dialectical Revolution

This chapter addresses discourse analysis as the analytical model for this thesis along with its theoretical components. It also uses what would represent an additional discipline, i.e. social theory and anthropology in the form of James Scott’s Hidden Transcripts, as a paradigm through which to understand #FeesMustFall. The Hidden Transcript refers to the veiled discursive practices that take place under conditions of unequal power relations. Critical Analysis of Discourse, in a similar vein, addresses “the emancipatory potential of work on such inequalities in and through language [, which deserves] emphasis” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 33). This combination of social theory and discourse analysis forms the overall framework for the paper, taking it from a straightforward discourse analysis to a critical analysis, as we shall see. However, a few distinctions are necessary in order to critically evaluate the complexity discourse analysis presents as an analytical model.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Blommaert’s (2005) book titled “Discourse” provides an expanded view of discourse analysis as a method and distinguishes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) from Critical Analysis of Discourse, which is a distinction this study must make in order to justify certain methodological choices and outcomes. As a theoretical framework as well as a methodology for this thesis, the book presented a corpus of knowledge from many different scholars with varied historical and contemporary perspectives, i.e. Fairclough, among others. The combination of James Scott’s “Hidden Transcripts of Subordination and Domination; The Art of Resistance” (1990) with Blommaert’s contributions helped take this thesis from a straightforward analysis of discourse to a deeper concern for context and socio-historical processes involved in #FeesMustFall discourse.
2.1.1 Discourse Analysis: Contributions to the Study

First, the theoretical and methodological choice, i.e. discourse analysis, must be explained. It may be safe to say that hashtag activism, inherently discursive, has become a popular area of research since #BlackLivesMatter. In South Africa, hashtag activism as a social practice is perceived as a product of African American culture and language from which the subculture ‘Black Twitter’ emerged, as Beukes (2017) claims. The following is an extract from an interview between Beukes and a participant illustrating this point. Beukes’s study was “An exploration of the Role of Twitter in the Discourse Around Race in South Africa.”

It’s really modeled on African American culture and so looking at how the platform is usurped by younger black people and with this American Imperialism (this is how a lot of black people speak [in South Africa]) there is less of a distance between the diaspora. I do think this shapes how the discourses happen and just with the information age, the level of people’s consciousness has shifted and they are able to analyse [sic] issues of race and nuances more. (Ibid, Sosibo, 2017)

Sosibo’s testimony echoes Blommaert’s claim to the broad-spectrum definition of ‘discourse’ as “language-in-action” where “investigating it requires attention to both language and to action” (Ibid, citing Hanks 1996). Of course, there are many other complex derivatives of this definition, which Blommaert expands on throughout his book. However, this definition is important for its claim to discourse studies especially within South Africa’s multicultural and multilingual landscape. For example, Sosibo mentioned ‘African American culture’ and ‘American Imperialism’ as influential in South African Black culture. He also overtly states that ‘this is how black people speak’ in South Africa – referring to the distinguishable African American slang and dialect liberally used among Black South Africans. Thus we can deduce that the discourse is modeled from outside influences on local social constructions. The mimicry of Black American culture, a form of cultural appropriation as Rodgers (2006) derives it, is a distinction subverted in most of the studies, except for a mere mention of the #BlackLivesMatter movement (See Beukes, 2017). It is, however, a noteworthy influence on how we understand the inner workings of the discourse associated with #FeesMustFall through Scott’s Hidden Transcripts paradigm.

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11 Black Twitter | Scott theorized that “the complicity of fellow subordinates [with] dreams of settling scores for an insult will necessarily take a social form satisfying to peers and appropriately provoking to superiors, and the negation of a dominant religious ideology requires an offstage subculture in which the negation can be formed and articulated” (Ibid, p. 118). The thesis will touch on how the SNS Twitter can be a public and Hidden Transcript in these proliferated cases such as #BlackLivesMatter and #FeesMustFall.
For example, this mimicry also happens to illustrate what Scott (Ibid) called ‘infrapolitics’ or “[forms] of disguised resistance” that are situated in a “political environment of subject classes” where “subordinates lack […] a political life or […] what political life they do have is restricted to […] moments of popular explosion” (Ibid, p. 199), i.e. #BlackLivesMatter. There is thus an apolitical foundation from which these acts emanate, i.e. social media in this case, which is a Hidden Transcript within itself if we consider that these issues came to the fore more prominently with the advent of social media. The youth born after 1994 are best described as apolitical born-frees, who adopted a non-racial orientation in society, free of memories of Apartheid. So when #BlackLivesMatter trended in 2014, South African Black Twitter found a sense of belonging in the cause – what Scott calls a “resistance subculture” founded where “dignity and vengeful dreams are created and nurtured [and] counterhegemonic discourse is elaborated; [where] millennial dreams threaten to become revolutionary politics” (Ibid, p. 200) as #FeesMustFall has demonstrated in innumerable ways (Beukes, 2017). These demonstrations are descriptions of the ideological imperatives of discourse under conditions of domination, which situates #FeesMustFall in a favourable position as a subject for analysis. This is especially the case since “no discourse or social activity is ideology-free” (Ibid) – although, according to Blommaert (citing Fairclough) these forces must be terminated (Ibid) during the analytical process. However, as an inherently ideological cause, i.e. the idea of free education in a developing country, #FeesMustFall can within itself problematize the idea of an ideology-free analysis.

Still, it is the degree to which bias of this nature (i.e. ideology) influences the analysis that sets CDA apart from Critical Analysis of Discourse. While CDA created foundations for Critical Analysis of Discourse, even with a rich basis to critique, it does have some benefits. These advantages to CDA assisted this study in selective and purposeful ways. For example, one can infer that an SNS text (i.e. tweet or Facebook posts) as discourse will have a certain degree of ideological meaning, based on its function, which Blommaert said is imposed on the reader. He explains, citing Pennycook (1994), “the function of a text can be deduced from

12 Born-frees | Some define the born-free as “apathetic, apolitical and unaware of the history and struggle that preceded them” (Boryga, 2015: Para. 6). This definition is correct in some ways and problematic in others, but also incomplete, considering the current activities of political activism displayed through the #FeesMustFall protests, which manifests their political nature and awareness of Apartheid’s impact on their current conditions.
its meaning, and whatever is ill-intended will [thus] also be ill-received” (Ibid, p. 32). However, this describes a limited view of communication, since a text can also easily be well intended, yet ill received for a variety of reasons. Political correctness comes to mind as an example of the function of a university’s (or dominant structure’s) text on Facebook. To explain further, the following case is a better illustration of the point. A text or ‘transcript’ explicitly intended to avoid offending an audience, can indeed easily unintentionally offend instead. For example, when White students formed a human shield to protect Black students during the protests, as an act of solidarity, it was perceived in complex ways. Where some students exhibited gratitude and cohesion toward their fellow students, others criticized the White privilege exhibited (see Figure 2), although Black students requested the human shield on the very basis of White privilege, see Figure 1 below.

![Image](https://example.com/image1.png)

Figure 1: Twitter was divided on the human shield of White students protecting Black students from police brutality.

Additionally, James Scott can explain the subordinate strategy at play here as a “structural family resemblance” (Ibid, p. 21) to the post-Apartheid era’s rainbow nation rhetoric, which many Biko-followers see as Mandela’s symbolic consent to colonial hegemony – now

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13 **Case** | This is an example, on the basis of James Scott’s claim that the Hidden Transcript (as discourse) “does not contain only speech acts but a whole range of practices” (Ibid, p. 14).

14 **The Biko paradigm** | Within the broader society there exists a struggle between a Mandela, non-racial, all-inclusive paradigm at loggerheads with a Biko, zero tolerance, intentional decolonization paradigm (Wolff, 2016), which ironically continues racial
criticized by #FeesMustFall. Yet, in this case, Scott’s notion of ‘thin false consciousness’ applies. According to Scott thin consciousness, “maintains only that the dominant ideology achieves compliance by convincing subordinate groups that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable” by “[settling] for resignation”, as opposed to thick consciousness, which “claims that a dominant ideology works its magic by persuading subordinate groups to believe actively in the values that explain and justify their own subordination” (Ibid). The thick is “untenable” as Scott emphasizes, because it “claims consent”, whereas in this case the subordinate group are complying with the naturalization of the social order for a purpose; a Hidden Transcript, or display of White privilege that works for and against subordinates as an act of defiance in either sense. This is ultimately a public performance for the benefit of the cause.

CDA would interpret the White human shield devoid of the study’s implications on society, because CDA champions “theory as truth” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 33) and does not account for the existing or potential social processes at play. “[CDA displays] vague analytical models [,] does not analyze how a text can be read in many ways, or under what social circumstances it is produced or consumed [, and] collapses semantics and pragmatics” (Ibid, citing classifications under the guise of seeking justice for past transgressions. This means that distinctions between Whiteness, or Eurocentrism; Blackness, or Afrocentrism; and Otherness, or Western ideology among others, is promoted by questioning the origins of curricular knowledge through differentiation, demanding renewed differentiation.
Widdowson, p. 31). CDA, unlike Critical Analysis of Discourse, does not acknowledge the relationship from power, to language, to social processes. Blommaert thus lists three important aspects in Critical Analysis of Discourse which this thesis uses abundantly, 1) critical language awareness; 2) dialogue between linguistic analysis and social science endeavors; and 3) institutional environments.

Another critical difference between CDA and Critical Analysis of Discourse is the lack of

\[\text{[...]} \text{a sense of history” that CDA exhibits, that is in two ways, “a focus on the linguistic artifact, which almost invariably forces temporal closure on the analysis, restricting it to the here-and-now of communication; and a focus on the contemporary developments in one’s own society again forcing one’s eyes to look for the present and to see very fast developments as ‘historical’ […] (Ibid, p. 37).}\]

As many subordinates have noted during #FeesMustFall, both on social media and during the offline protests, the images and activities exhibited are reminiscent of the 1976 Soweto Student Uprising. This thesis thus delves into that history in order to understand the degree to which hidden expressions of defiance and resistance have impacted South African society and the reason why they claim that #FeesMustFall is a legitimate\(^{15}\) cause resuming the Uprising’s accomplishments achieved during The Struggle of 1976. The next section will look into how #FeesMustFall fits into a cycle of Hidden Transcripts through South Africa’s recent history combining Blommaert’s theories concerning ‘voice’ with Scott’s Hidden Transcripts.

2.1.2 Voice and ‘Hidden Transcripts’ in South Africa: Back to 1976

While the central object of this thesis is discourse, the “object of critique [in discourse analysis]” is voice (Blommaert, 2005: pp. 4). Like Scott’s conceptual framework, Blommaert’s theoretical framework provides a sociolinguistic interpretation of ‘power’ within Critical Analysis of Discourse positioning it as the potential to “[…] be an analysis of power effects, of the outcome of power, of what power does to people, groups, and societies,

\(^{15}\text{Legitimacy | #FeesMustFall is not only critiqued for it’s ideological imperatives but also because of its claim to the same imperatives of the 1976 Student Uprising. It is still unknown how many people died during the Uprising due to the Apartheid government’s cover-ups, but more than a thousand are thought to have died. Thus far #FeesMustFall has only claimed one life, a security guard at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology who was trapped inside a building during an arson attack. The idea is that the issue of #FeesMustFall is not a human rights issue, although this is exactly the fuel that drives the protest.}\)
and of *how* this impact comes about” (Ibid, pp. 1 – 2). The ‘impact’ is therefore an effect of the discourse’s historical and future contextualization because “what people do with words […] is to produce conditions for uptake, conditions for voice, but as soon as these conditions are produced uptake is a full social process, full of power and inequality” (Ibid, p. 45). That is, the discourse’s function contextualizes the text and is the text itself, “it defines its meanings and conditions of use” (Ibid). He provides a basic definition of voice by stating, “voice stands for the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so […] Voice is the issue that defines linguistic inequality […] in contemporary societies” (Ibid, pp. 4 – 5). South Africa’s oppressive language history (i.e. the Language Decree of 1974) is synonymous with its general history of oppression. Kamwangamalu (2003) went as far as describing this history, which is largely about radical social changes and unequal social processes, as synonymous with the four key eras in its language history. This signifies how closely tied language is to inequality and power relations in South Africa, where language became synonymous with the public persona of the ruling administration in each era, but also led to the use of English as Anti-Apartheid discourse despite it’s colonial origins.

Thus #FeesMustFall can be located within the concept of ‘voice’, and assumes a striking resemblance to past subordinate experiences under Apartheid, although meanings have changed. For example, the Open Stellenbosch movement’s protest against language oppression at Stellenbosch University became yet another successful byproduct of #FeesMustFall from 2015 (in addition to the #EndOutsourcing project, for example), although the issue has been a bone of contention since Apartheid ended. Of course, this was the exact same cause in 1976, which indicates a layer of intertextuality and synchronicity located inside the discourse around #FeesMustFall, as Blommaert defines it.

*In its simplest form, intertextuality refers to the fact that whenever we speak we produce the words of others, we constantly cite and re-cite expressions, and recycle*

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16 *Language Decree* | This decree led to the 1976 Student Uprisings. It instituted the implementation of Afrikaans and English language mediums of instruction in schools across South Africa (i.e. an attempt to stop the use of African languages in South Africa).

17 *Key eras* | From 1652 to 1795 there was *Dutchification*; 1795 to 1948 the *British Anglicization*; 1948 to 1994 was *Afrikanerization* (Apartheid); and from 1994 to present day, there is Democratization with 11 official languages valorized (Kamwangamalu, 2003).

18 Open Stellenbosch’s success | In 2017 a new Language Policy was established, which included English and isiXhosa as official languages with the promise to develop isiXhosa as an academic language.

19 #EndOutsourcing | At Universities such as Wits, UCT and CPUT, students (and staff) have successfully protested to insource cleaners and other outsourced human resources. Universities are now systematically insourcing to avoid exorbitant costs, thus facilitating the free education process.
meanings that are already available. Thus every utterance has a history of (ab)use, interpretation, and evaluation, and this history sticks to the utterance [...] Intertextuality grounds discourse analysis firmly into histories of use – histories that are social, cultural, and political, and which allow the synchronous use of particular expressions to acquire powerful social, cultural, and political effects (Ibid, p. 46).

Hence during the protests, both #FeesMustFall and #OpenStellenbosch, students sang traditional Struggle songs and utilized 1976 discursively, which effectively generated a Struggle nostalgia that not only criticized the current shape of South African society as unchanging since 1976, but also celebrated current activists or fallists as comparable to the 1976 revolutionaries.

Furthermore, the Struggle nostalgia has mutated into a new discourse, although the discourse continues to comprise anti-colonialism sentiment. Essentially, the digital space has provided a metadiscursive platform for fallists, in what Blommaert calls ‘entextualization’:

[...] the process by means of which discourses are successively or simultaneously decontextualized and metadiscursively recontextualised, so that they become a new discourse associated to a new context and accompanied by a particular metadiscourse which provides a sort of ‘preferred reading’ for the discourse (Ibid).

In the case of #FeesMustFall a new community can be identified as the ‘woke’ generation (Findlay, 2015). The hashtag #staywoke can be described as yet another subculture that emerged from #BlackLivesMatter. The common thread binding #staywoke tweets is the call on people to remain aware at all times. For example, one user tweeted, “Don’t be fooled! This is a ploy, carefully orchestrated to divert from the real issue. Sabotage at its best. #FeesMustFall #StayWoke” (@)VanessaDossi). One can infer that this was in reference to Jacob Zuma’s 0% fee increase announcement, judging from the date and time. However, the ‘woke’ community tends to use the hashtag in ways that are reminiscent of the Black Consciousness movement, “[grappling] with, among other things, questions of identity and social structure” (Alexander, 2013: p. 140). The metadiscursive social practices are thus located within the Struggle nostalgia exhibited and entextualized in #FeesMustFall.

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20 #OpenStellenbosch | Like #FeesMustFall, #EndOutsourcing and other protests, Open Stellenbosch was mediated through hashtag activism.
Additionally, the transcendental significance of Scott’s work, as a concept framed on historical cases, yet relevant within the digital context of this thesis, resonated with Blommaert’s view that,

\[
\text{\textit{[\ldots] a critical analysis of discourse need to transcend the present and address history in and through language. Power and inequality have long histories of becoming \[\ldots\] what looks new is not new at all \[\ldots\] it is} the outcome of a particular process that is systemic, not accidental \[\ldots\]} \text{ (Ibid, p. 37).}
\]

Contemporary voice has infinite implications in the digital age thanks to hashtags and the prolific nature on online platforms, however, understanding and being understood affords us complexities within interpretation. This section argues that Twitter’s discourse has evoked ‘voices’ rendered open to interpretation on the basis of the public nature of the platform (Twitter) where these voices are found. Here we will also reconstruct the concepts from which ‘voice’ is framed in order to interpret its correlations with the diverse conditions at the time of (and illustrations used in) the published work of Scott from nearly three decades ago.

The longevity of Scott’s work, underscored by his study of subaltern discourse, is undeniably significant and relevant to this study despite changing technologies and social orders; the pace of cultural change, socializing and discursive practices in general.

For example, the idea of what is ‘public’ and what are ‘hidden’ in Scott’s terms, can be contentious at present. Definitions of ‘public’ and ‘hidden’ in the digital realm depend on a number of factors and influences to the extent where they intersect within a spatial dissonance perpetually at play. The result of this dissonance is that subjectivity is mediated in a similar way, to the extent where “the absolute duality of ‘objective’ and ‘subjective’ is false” because “as we use these objects, they become an extension of ourselves, overcoming the subject-object dichotomy” (Uldam and Verstergaard, 2015, citing Gibson 1977). The object here refers to technology and social media. This idea will be further explored during the analysis.
2.2 The Cycle of Hidden Transcripts in South Africa’s Recent History

To recap, we’ve already established in the introduction that it is significant that #FeesMustFall gained willpower after Mandela passed and in this chapter we’ve established that some of that resolve was due to the #BlackLivesMatter movement. However, locating the historical significance of Hidden Transcripts within recent history, gave rise to an interpretation of certain historical events as key phases liberation movements in South Africa. As discussed at the beginning of this section, #FeesMustFall’s claim to the 1976 Soweto Uprising is legitimate under the auspices of this conceptual and theoretical framework. Thus began the idea of South Africa’s Hidden Transcripts as representative of a cycle of liberating acts of defiance that leads back to 1976.

The first phase in the cycle, as discussed, took place in 1976 when the tragic yet revolutionary Soweto Uprising took place; 23 years after Verwoerd’s Apartheid government introduced the Bantu Education Act. It was ultimately the threat of language oppression that gave rise to a deathly level of defiance against White supremacy.
The second phase took place in 1994 in a more discursive way, when South Africans elected the first Black president and democracy ensued. This was unquestionably representative of what Scott, citing Hill (1972), called the “world turned upside down” or “a day of revenge and triumph” (Ibid: p. 6); a previously unfathomable reality to the previously oppressed. A democratic vote can equate to a publically defiant subordinate transcript, but upon closer examination it was the rainbow nation rhetoric that unwittingly posed a threat to power relations. For as Scott suggests, “the public transcript, where it is not positively misleading, is unlikely to tell the whole story about power relations … It is frequently in the interest of both parties to tacitly conspire in misrepresentation” (Ibid, p. 2). This idea will be further interrogated later.
The third phase in liberating discourse was widely criticized (see for example, Blommaert, 2005), and took place in 1996 during the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) hearings. These hearings served to appease the relations between perpetrators and victims of Apartheid. Blommaert’s analysis of the hearings from the perspective of CDA revealed some of the more hidden aspects of the transcripts that would not befit the dominant public discourse. Blommaert describes the ‘Hidden Transcript’ as “a term […] to identify processes of resistance against hegemony” (2005, p. 94), which he says may have hindered the outcome of the TRC. Blommaert’s study revealed that testimonies were “full of codes of expression that [did] not match the new public transcript, and therefore [was] easily misunderstood as a narrative without pain and suffering” (Ibid, 95). However, he agrees that the TRC presented a historic shift in the transcript:

“The TRC occasioned a historic shift for voice in South Africa. Stories of suffering and cruelty that were – necessarily – unspoken and unspeakable during the Apartheid era suddenly became central stories of the nation. The invisible was made visible; the marginal was given prominence: a set of completely new conditions for ‘allowable’ stories was introduced and caused a monumental series of dramatic, formative narrations” (Ibid, p. 85).

His analysis also found critical results that pointed to a conflict in the unveiled discourse:

[…] traces of the subcultural illegitimacy of suffering: the absence of explicit suffering markers defines [the victim] as a historical subject, setting him in the larger picture of Apartheid and indexing his role (and identity) […] the victim] stuck to the codes of the Hidden Transcript, to the orders of indexicality of his subculture […] a Hidden Transcript is [thus] brought to the surface, full of codes of expression that do not match the new public transcript, and therefore easily misunderstood as a narrative without pain and suffering (Ibid, p. 95).

The TRC’s work was nonetheless necessary for the new dominants to find unanimity in the public transcript. Therefore a suppressed discourse ensued for many years under the guise of ‘rainbow nation’ rhetoric. That is, until the fourth phase’s “dialectic of disguise” (Ibid, p. 4), previously discussed as the passing of Nelson Mandela in 2013. If we consider that social media proliferated as a discursive medium well after 2008 when Facebook was introduced to the world it is understandable how subordinate discourse latched onto social media to liberate formerly veiled discursive practices after the ‘Father of the Rainbow Nation’ died. The ways
of hiding and publicly exposing the transcript changed drastically from 1996 (TRC) to 2013 (Mandela’s death). See figure 4, dated just one day after the passing of Mandela, as one Tweet evoked a counter-discourse thought on social media.

Thus it is important to note that there is a hegemonic conflict between public and private space in contemporary society; innovative technology and social media have blurred the lines between what is public and what is hidden. Again, social media has also become a caricature for ‘fake news’ as Trump calls it, which has had dire implications on the uptake of legitimate discourse, rendering important voices in this space stifled by all the noise.

There is something to be said about the legitimacy of fallist discourse in the realm of social media. Fallists complained about the skewed perspective of the media (i.e. online and offline news platforms), portraying protestors as hooligans, while the peaceful and legitimate political activism went unnoticed, as will be discussed later. Tweets would range from proving the media’s reports to counter-narratives in which the ‘hooligans’ were not fallists, but rather coopted (political) groups. Therefore the discursive content produced during “everyday conversations, offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears to be public transcript” (Ibid, p. 4 – 5) could be opened to interpretation and further investigated for the sake of legitimacy. What we saw during #FeesMustFall is discounting of social media discourse that could make a positive impact on communication, but is distorted by power (Scott, 1990). (For the purpose of this thesis the term ‘practices’ here is broadened to digitally mediated contact, i.e. social media discourse, the object of analysis.) With this in mind, a search for literature on post-Mandela discourse was found to be limited, and understandably so. The topic of discourse in South Africa is within itself a limited discipline in terms of the prospect of uniquely South African theories.
Yet, South Africa’s post-Mandela era (after death) has presented significant and diverse areas for empirical and theoretical research.

In the absence of South African contributions, we thus turn to Scott. Citing Barrington Moore, he suggests, we should “imagine a gradient of radicalism in the interrogation of domination” (1990: p. 92), in which ‘domination’ presents itself as the hegemonic and structural subjugation of previously marginalized South Africans by the Black elite in power after Apartheid. The anti-rainbow nation rhetorical sentiment expressed after Mandela’s death presents itself as the least radical step, “[criticizing] some of the dominant stratum for having violated the norms by which they [claimed] to rule” (Ibid); i.e. the promises made in 1994 were not fulfilled and after Mandela’s death and criticism ensued. The middle step, incidentally also the fifth phase in the cycle of liberation explained thus far, came when Chumani Maxwele defaced the statue of Cecil John Rhodes at UCT on 9 March 2015 giving rise to the #RhodesMustFall movement, which symbolically “[accused] the entire stratum of failing to observe the principles of its rule” (Ibid). That is, decolonization, while not explicitly addressed in the constitution, is broadly implied in the principles underscored by the promise to address the injustices of the past regime.

The most radical step came the same year when protests piggybacked off the #RhodesMustFall movement, challenged university fee increases and shook the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). In turn the Wits protests caused a nation-wide shut down of universities under the banner #FeesMustFall. This step is described as “[repudiating] the very principles by which the dominant stratum justifies its dominance” (ibid), i.e. the call was for free education in 2015, and instead a 0% fee increase was announced. Today, the movement refuses to accept annual fee increments and the call for free education continues with annual protests taking place since 2015, which effectively gave birth to repudiation of dominance over the poor, uneducated and subaltern. This takes us back to the question in the introduction and completes the cycle as South Africans find themselves back in 1976 with students starting a revolution. This time it is augmented by social media, while the current forces of domination may inadvertently be blind to the counter-discourse hidden in plain sight.
2.3 Conceptual Framework: The Hidden Transcript Paradigm

Hidden Transcripts have been described already at length. However, this section will further illustrate its significance while describing its many facets.

2.3.1 Hidden Transcript: Definition and Contextualization

The following diagram (Figure 5) illustrates the concepts that will guide this thesis:

- **Draft 1:** [Diagram of Hidden Transcript Paradigm]

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**PUBLIC**

- **Transcript** (James Scott, 1990)
  - "...a complete record of what was said..." (Ibid, p. 2).

**DOMINANT**

- **Defining statement:** [Provide a direct quote or summary]
  - "...the 'self-portrait' of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen." (Ibid, p. 18).

**SUBORDINANT**

- **Defining statement:** [Provide a direct quote or summary]
  - "Every subordinate group, out of its ordeal, creates a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant." (Ibid, p. xii).

**FACEBOOK**

- **Parastatals** (Universities)
  - University of Witwatersrand (Wits) FB posts.
  - "...the 'self-portrait' of dominant elites as they would have themselves seen." (Ibid, p. 18).

**twitter**

- **Public**
  - "Therefore, when viewed as an unmediated platform allowing anyone with access to the Internet to participate in a discussion, Twitter can be seen as a democratizing tool, in the context of Jürgen Habermas' public sphere, as an arena, independent of government and market, dedicated to rational debate and which is both accessible and open to public inspection and scrutiny." (Beukes, 2017: p. 200).

- **Hidden**
  - "Every subordinate group, out of its ordeal, creates a 'hidden transcript' that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant." (Ibid, p. xii).

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**Social Media (Public Platforms)**

- "...a complete record of what was said..." (Ibid, p. 2).

**Discourse Analysis (Blommaert, 2005)**

- "...an analysis of power effects, of the outcome of power, of what power does to people, groups and societies and of how this impact comes about..." (Ibid, p. 2).

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**Twitter Topics: Discourse** (Beukes, 2017)

- "What makes South Africa different is that there is a very vigorous public discourse here. South Africans want a platform where they can be heard and be part of a conversation." (Beukes, 2017: p. 200, citing Goldsmith, 2006).

- "Twitter is empowering black South Africans to flourish by providing a platform to speak about issues such as race, discrimination, inequality that previously would only have been discussed in private." (Ibid, p. 202).
The diagram expresses how each constituent of this thesis is connected to Scott’s ‘transcript’ concept and Blommaert’s discourse analysis. #FeesMustFall is thus a transcript in all its practices, offline and online. However, it also constitutes social processes of unequal power relations, which is why it is being analyzed as discourse in this thesis. #FeesMustFall presents both a public and Hidden Transcript between dominants and subordinates in society as a form of resistance to colonial, racist, classist and elitist hegemonies. Therefore the diagram illustrates two sides of this spectrum: Facebook is located on the ‘public’ side because of the public transcript’s close relationship with dominant structures since universities have mainly used Facebook as their communicative platform; and fallists, or subordinate structures have used Twitter, on the ‘hidden side’ of the spectrum since, as explained, the discourse can easily be engulfed by the popularity of the hashtag and become concealed under the noise.

Twitter is fallists’ chief platform discursive practices, although protests can take on the same discursive form. Hence both online and offline platforms are solidly linked to subordinate structures in this diagram. The lines between what is public and what is hidden in terms of social media platforms are dotted because they are symbolically blurred. While hashtags of #FeesMustFall’s temperament are sites of public expression, some ‘voices’ go unheard as a consequence of the ‘trending’ phenomenon or popularity, as previously explained. However, the analysis should uncover the reasons why some are heard in the form of RTs and favorites, while others are ignored. Therefore SNS platforms may be public, but hashtags situate discourse in a hidden locale when a topic or hashtag trends, disappearing into volumes of textual discourse.

Lastly, both structures can be placed under the hidden and public transcript banner, as a direct result of the intended functions of their discursive practices. While the “public transcript [can be seen as] ‘the self portrait’ of dominant elites as they would have themselves be seen” (Ibid, p. 18), subordinates are also active in public discourse, although “the question that remains is the extent to which dominant descriptions monopolize the public transcript” (Ibid, p. 54). This thesis addresses the relationship between subordinates who are subordinates.
today, dominants who were subordinates pre-democracy and the hegemonic influences of colonialism and Apartheid that have led to the current resistance under these circumstances.
Chapter 3: Methodology

“Discourse analysis should result in a heightened awareness of hidden power dimensions and it’s effects: a critical language awareness, a sensitivity for discourse as a subject to power and inequality.”

(Blommaert, 2005: p. 33)

Since the emergence of the hashtag #FeesMustFall, this study technically commenced. At first, from the point of view of a staff member of the university sector, and later as a public participant in the ongoing discourse. For the purpose of this particular study it then became necessary to elevate the ever-present interest in the topic by taking a more systematic approach to collecting data, from the point of view of a student abroad interested in the social dynamics at play. Additionally, it was discovered that thus far research on the topic of #FeesMustFall has mainly centered on specific social mediums and their influence on particular topics through identifying the main attributes of the hashtag. These attributes include communities, key topics (for example, racism) and levels of engagement, such as data science projects. Big data is a provocative form of data collection partially because data of this nature is measurable. These studies, however, prove to be one-dimensional in that the dialogical and subjective imperatives of critical analysis of discourse can be overlooked, thus not uncovering the multi-faceted social processes involved in the construction of the discourse. It became clear that the ‘trendy’ status of the hashtag (#FeesMustFall) within the areas of data science and communication signified that the topic required a more empirical and inter-disciplinary approach.

The #FeesMustFall movement became famous for their revolutionary claims, yet the core focus of these studies was quantitative. If something trends, legitimate discourse gets lost in the noise, leaving little room for dialectical approaches that could be necessary to appease destructive offline behaviors, which are usually the result of poor communication between different orders of power. Therefore, the thesis employed empirical-qualitative and quantitative methods based on digital data collection and analysis, in conjunction with the application of Critical Analysis of Discourse as a method.

The study commenced with scraping data from Twitter using the hashtag #FeesMustFall with help enlisted from computer programmers, Adrian Foster and Darryn George. In their line of work they discovered a code written by a programmer who goes by the alias Jefferson-
Henrique. The code, written in Java, helps extract old tweets from Twitter by mimicking the platform’s scrolling affordance programmatically as far back in time as required. Currently Twitter allows the extraction of tweets dating back seven days from the present. The data is downloadable from the platform itself, while anything older requires the services of a third party. There are some drawbacks to this ‘free’ method, however. Firstly, it is impossible to estimate the level of accuracy in terms of quantity and quality of data; secondly, the code is case sensitive (for example, #FeesMustFall vs. #feesmustfall) increasing the odds of missing quantities of data depending on how the search is carried out; thirdly, for unknown reasons, though the code included a time frame starting at January 2015, it only started extracting tweets no sooner than October 2015. For the sake of this study, however, the quantity of data extracted was sizeable enough to draw conclusions, since the focus was mainly on the tweet content. The data collected via the code also proved to be more presentable and usable than data collected from Twitter after comparing a test run from the platform with data extracted using the code.

Firstly, the file extracted using Twitter’s downloadable affordances (obtained from Kyle Findlay) presented itself as one large mass of data for which a good amount of cleanup was required in order to read tweets and draw quantitative conclusions such as number of RTs and favorites. Instead of indicating the number of times a tweet was retweeted or favorited, the same tweet was listed numerous times with only the user or twitter handle shown to differ from tweet to tweet. This means that information such as RTs would have to be manually counted. The data scraped using the code, however, proved to be clean, readable and in good shape to draw both quantitative and qualitative conclusions as an original tweet was shown with the number of times it was retweeted in a column separate to the tweet. It also included links, additional hashtags, mentions, and other information separately. This means that a tweet was easily traceable to Twitter and could be verified and analyzed accordingly, especially in cases where an image accompanied the post.

In order to combat flaws in the data collection process, verification contingencies were necessary. A site called ‘First Tweets,’ a website programmed to track the first tweet as well as the Twitter handle responsible for the tweet, was used to verify the discrepancies in time frames adverse to when the protests started and when the hashtag may have been conceivably
first used (i.e. March 2015). Hence, using ‘First Tweets’ it was discovered that the first tweet might possibly have been posted on 15 March 2015, after #RhodesMustFall, which related the two movements digitally. The site, unfortunately, also proved to reveal a discrepancy in the results, as the first tweet identified could not be found on the Twitter platform itself. Fortunately, another tweet identified second on first tweet’s thread (see analysis), was found on Twitter by doing a quick search for both the user or Twitter handle, and key words in the text shown in the data. The discrepancy between what ‘First Tweets’ identified and what the unfavorable search results in Twitter produced, might apply to some external factors, though. For example, the tweet itself could not be found, but the user’s Twitter handle was found. The user of the same Twitter handle (as shown in the First Tweets result) was shown to have joined Twitter in August 2016, which is more than a year after the First Tweet site’s results indicated it appeared. This could mean that for the sake of anonymity for a number of reasons, the original user of the Twitter handle may have changed their details and deleted the tweet after the hashtag gained popularity.

These holes in the methodology were addressed by cross-referencing the links extracted from the results in First Tweets as well as the results, from the scraped data, which included links to the original tweets, with the Twitter platform itself. Once the data was successfully organized, the software tool, Mallet, was used to analyze and extract key information as a basis and to extract a sample for the overall analysis. This included key topics, which Mallet grouped into clusters of key words (proven ineffective to this study), top 20 RTs, and top 50 related hashtags, as well as a trend graph illustrating number of tweets using the hashtag over a period of time, which we shall later see in the presentation of data.

As seen in Figure 3, 2015 presented a pivotal time in South Africa’s cycle in the “dialectic of disguise and surveillance that pervades relations between the weak and the strong” (Scott, 1990: p. 4) since 1976. This is how Scott, after all, suggests we conceptualize power relations “to understand the cultural patterns of domination and subordination” (Ibid). With this in mind, it was important to include the movement that led to #FeesMustFall, as part of the cycle of events since 1976. This was necessary not only as a matter of comparison, but as a vignette of, not only the act of defiance that led to both movements, but a key relative of the hashtag #FeesMustFall, as the data will show. Extracting data from the hashtag
#RhodesMustFall provided new leads in the analysis, such as identifying the first act of defiance that polarized South African discourse and shook rainbow nation rhetoric to an even greater extent than after the death of Nelson Mandela. Ultimately, the offline act of defiance, as discussed in the introduction, led to a dialectical shift in communicative practices in the South African landscape. One could almost say subordinate discourse was finally freed.

A trial and error approach to the methodology led to the final methodological choices when the Topic Modeling exercise proved fraught with shortfalls. Twitter was chosen as the key object of analysis for subordinate transcripts since it is the platform synonymous with trending topics, having instigated the hashtag affordance in 2003. It was also chosen for practical reasons, such as the mere fact that data was more readily available thanks to the user interface that includes a continuous scroll through the newsfeed. However, more importantly, as Beukes (2017) suggests, “[Since 2015] Twitter has increasingly become a platform for previously marginalized groups such as young black South Africans; serving to convene, organize, channel arguments and influence public action around issues …” (Ibid, p. 196). Meanwhile, it became obvious that to complete the dialectical picture a dominant transcript was necessary to the study.

Facebook was chosen as the key object of analysis for dominants, i.e. Universities who were communicating with students and the public during the protests on the platform. Where Twitter is the fallists’ choice, Facebook is that for Universities since it provides enough space for statements longer than the 128 characters that Twitter affords. This is mainly true within the South African context, unlike other countries where dominants make use of social media for populist rhetoric and divisive discourse (E.g. Donald Trump). Another reason why Universities or dominants choose Facebook could be that Facebook mainly affords space to communicate with a particular audience, i.e. those who ‘like’ and ‘follow’ the page; and although the posts are public, it ensures that the messages reaches the intended audience more closely. However, because of the comments affordance, data was harder to scrape using the same code, among other restrictions, such as licensing. For this reason illustrations from these posts were used, but the object of analysis representing dominant discourse became Zuma’s broadcasted announcement instead. The data indicated that Zuma’s broadcast was key in setting off the popular use of the hashtag on 23 October 2015. This spike in activity
thus drew attention to the relationship between the level of activity on Twitter and the level of violence at the Union Buildings where he made his announcement.

As discussed earlier under the objectives of the study, the purpose of the research, among others, is to understand the hidden meanings behind discourse pertaining to #FeesMustFall. A modest approach was chosen for the sake of objectivity, as opposed to combing through every unit of data accumulated using the algorithm, although awareness that a level of subjectivity is always present in any study was always present. As a staff member of a university, a student abroad, and a South African, some subjectivity within the analysis cannot be circumvented. However, the choice to avoid other forms of qualitative data collection such as interviews, and an altogether netnographical approach, was not made lightly. Not only was this done so that the study was focused on the discursive content of tweets, but it was also for the sake of deploying an unbiased interpretation of South Africa’s societal structure. In other words, as support, the trend graph obtained through Mallet assisted in understanding the time frames, and thus contexts contributing to the hashtag’s popularity or dwindling. Furthermore, South Africa not only has 11 official languages and a multitude of cultures, but these days the society appears to be even more stratified into complex class structures and subcultures that are no longer as clearly defined as during pre-Democracy. With Blommaert’s assertion “Context is potentially everything and contextualization potentially infinite” (2005, p. 40) in mind, it was thus difficult to choose interviewing a group of people who would represent South African society as a whole in a definitive sense. Hence, doing so would be unseasonably ambitious for this humble paper.

This study was complex in that it privileged content, but did not discount the value of big data as a basis from which to investigate patterns of use of the hashtag and the contextual influences on its use, as discussed. At the same time, the historical context was a necessary component of the research in almost equal measure to the discourse analysis theory and Hidden Transcripts concept through which not only #FeesMustFall, but history had to be viewed. For this reason the idea of the cycle of liberating hidden discourse came about as it emerged through the theory that context was not only a supportive component of discourse analysis, but rather, inherent to it. Like changing from spectacles to sunglasses, the analysis was approached from these various paradigms to ensure a holistic and integrated approach
would deconstruct #FeesMustFall while reconstructing its social processes as Hidden Transcripts of subordination and domination.
Chapter 4: Findings

4. Data presentation

“[...] through social media, it seemed to me that suddenly the floodgates around issues of white privilege, inequality, racism and ignorance opened up in the public sphere whereas before these issues were mainly discussed in homes and social circles of black and white communities separately. Social media, particularly Twitter, has played an important role in opening up these conversations.”

(Beukes, 2017: p. 198 – 197)

To recap, this was an empirical study using a critical, integrated approach to discourse analysis. The study examined #FeesMustFall and associated hidden social processes as fundamental to understanding discourse in South Africa today. As discussed in the Methodology, the data was collected both quantitatively and empirically. What follows is a descriptive summary of the quantitative data with some empirical support explaining the data’s significance in the study of #FeesMustFall.

Firstly, while the focus of the study was on #FeesMustFall, the data indicated that #RhodesMustFall was the act of defiance that unveiled:

a) The suppressed reality that colonial domination imposes on public space;

b) How that domination transcends public space and has also transcended time (i.e. social changes in history) through hegemonic social practices;

c) The effect colonial domination poses on the collective memory and realities burdening SA society’s subaltern to date.

It was therefore necessary to quantitatively extract data from the hashtag #RhodesMustFall as the precursor that shares the fourth phase in the discourse liberation model seen in the literature review. It is also significant that the hashtag instigated the ‘must fall’ discourse that followed, while #FeesMustFall surpassed #RhodesMustFall in popularity. The reason may be obvious, i.e. free education would affect subordinates’ immediate social circumstances more than decolonization would if we contextualize decolonization as the removal of the Rhodes statue. This notion can more appropriately be explained through “Pierre Bourdieu’s work on economies of symbolic forms and systems of reproduction in society” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 13). As explained, it was language oppression that officially caused the most impactful act of
resistance in SA during 1976, but at its core, it was the effect of that language oppression on education and social mobility that inspired it.

Again, subordinates endured 23 years of the Bantu Education Act, though alternative forms of resistance were conceivably present at the time. But, we have to ask why language oppression, specifically, led to the single largest act of defiance in SA’s history. It is therefore not surprising that it is in the educational arena where the decolonization project took an unrelenting stance as opposed to more public social arenas such as the unskilled labor force. From Scott we can infer a reason why it is the ‘intelligentsia’ who have had revolutionary impacts on social inequality in South Africa (i.e. 1976, #RhodesMustFall, and #FeesMustFall):

The anomaly, which the revolutionary party and its intelligentsia will hopefully resolve, is that the working class under capitalism is involved in concrete struggles with revolutionary implications but, because it is in the thrall of hegemonic social thought, is unable to draw revolutionary conclusions from its actions (Ibid, p. 90).

Uneducated or ‘working class’ subalterns in South Africa equate education to socio-economic freedom firstly, and decolonization secondly. However decolonization is not far behind as we can infer from the consistent presence of the #RhodesMustFall hashtag during the #FeesMustFall campaign as the data indicates. Reactions to #RhodesMustFall were no less polarizing than to #FeesMustFall, yet it garnered less (but in no way little, as we shall see) support than the free education project.

Secondly, it became clear that related hashtags invoked supplementary ‘voices’, as defined in the literature review, producing various conditions for being understood and understanding, in turn (Blommaert, 2005). These voices were calling society to action in the same way the ‘must fall’ verb phrase in the hashtag does, also appearing as an anchor in other related hashtags (E.g. #ZumaMustFall). One such voice was mediated through the hashtag #EndOutsourcing, which became a clear call to action for universities to insource the large portion of the university labor force that are subcontracted. Instead of using #StartInsourcing, the call to action is an urgent cry, much the same as the rest, for subordination as a byproduct of the subcontracting issue to stop or ‘end’. The #EndOutsourcing hashtag was, firstly, motivated as a measure to help reduce university fees by getting rid of costly expenses, and
secondly, in solidarity with outsourced staff such as cleaners and campus security (i.e. society’s working class) who are paid significantly less as a result of the subcontractors taking a large portion of their salaries. On the other hand, there is a costly effect of insourcing on universities since it would demand an increase of resources in other departments such as Human Resources and Finance, among other financial implications.

The #EndOutsourcing and other #FeesMustFall related hashtags in this way became ‘Hidden Transcripts’ in their own right. While serving as supplementary voices in many cases, these hashtags indicated a subordinate structure or hierarchy. #FeesMustFall mediated this subordinate hierarchy between the Educated (i.e. students or “intelligentsia” as Scott suggests) at the top and the working class (i.e. outsourced workers, among others) at the bottom. In support of this idea Scott says, “[…] the Hidden Transcript is a social product and hence a result of power relations among subordinates” (ibid, 119). Similarly, Scott asserts, “What we confront, then, in the public transcript, is a strange kind of ideological debate about justice and dignity in which one party has a severe speech impediment induced by power relations” (Ibid). The ‘speech impediment’ can represent the significance of education in discourse, as previously indicated in the first finding. Nevertheless, we can say that the top 20 hashtags in this way indicated a pattern of intertextuality, through calls to action, giving a voice to the voiceless.

Thirdly, the top 20 RTs from both #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall provided a sample of discursive topics indicating a dialectic in the public transcript between subordination and domination, constructing SA’s reality through tweets. Refer to Table 1. It was found that for a tweet to gain popularity through RTs, it had to be:

a) Newsworthy or topical, directly related to events happening on protest grounds, E.g. in both cases the top most retweet was related to protest action in progress;

b) Challenge dominant structures, E.g. #RhodesMustFall’s top retweet questioned where the order to arrest Chumani Maxwele came from, and in the case of #FeesMustFall, the top most retweet challenged ‘White academics’ who were more willing to cancel classes for the #ZumaMustFall protest in April this year, than for #FeesMustFall protests in 2015 and 2016;
c) Inspire confidence in the movement, E.g. in the case of #RhodesMustFall, at least five of the biggest RTs were about increasing numbers, solidarity and growing support locally and abroad, while #FeesMustFall’s biggest RTs included some of the same sentiment. However, it was the news that one student jailed for six months after the 2016 protest passed with Cum Laude having completed exams in jail, in addition to the news that he was finally released, that was strategically used to inspire confidence in fallists over at least four of the top RTs. The rest were related to events as they were happening on the ground to combat false claims about violent or disruptive fallists;

d) Challenge the media’s dominant narrative, E.g. one tweet distinguished between fallists from political university structures as non-violent protestors, while another indicated that some protestors admitted to being coopted to disrupt;

e) Call to action, E.g. While the call to action is evident within the hashtags themselves (i.e. ‘must fall’), a call for support was sent out in the form of trying to find someone by retweeting her picture, in the case of #FeesMustFall, and calling for financial support for a ‘bail fund’ in the case of #RhodesMustFall.

Understanding the social processes involved in popular tweets garnering favor was essential to the study as an entextualisation exercise. The top RTs in this way provided “a sort of ‘preferred reading’ for the discourse” as Blommaert would say. By contributing to the visibility of a tweet through the retweet affordance individuals are not merely mimicking the other’s words, but are transforming it’s meaning in the process (Ibid, p. 48). It is thus important for this analysis to uncover why some tweets were more popular than others for the thesis to answer what the discourse evokes about South African society.

Certain parameters stated in each section will guide which tweets will be analyzed while the analysis will be based on understanding the #FeesMustFall campaign through,
This section will thus consider the concepts of voice, contextualization and ideology when analyzing select RTs in order to answer the question, ‘what does #FeesMustFall’s Hidden Transcripts reveal about developments in South African society today?’

4.1 #RhodesMustFall
To recap, the algorithm began extracting #FeesMustFall tweets from October 2015, regardless of the specified time frame (which was from January 2015 to December 2015). It thus became clear that the #RhodesMustFall data could contextualize South African discourse (as it currently stands) from the first act of defiance, since defacing the statue precluded the #FeesMustFall campaign. Furthermore, Scott points out that “The first step in understanding [the Hidden Transcript] is to place the tone and mood experienced by those who are speaking defiantly for the first time near the center of our analysis” (Ibid, p. 203). Thus, the algorithm selected the #RhodesMustFall data from March 2015, when Maxwele defaced the statue, to December 2015, after the #FeesMustFall protests, although the hashtag continues to be used discursively. We only needed a small sample to support the study since the focus is on tweet content and related topics, with quantitative support where needed.

The trend graph for #RhodesMustFall also indicates that although the hashtag’s popularity took a dive between March and May 2015 when the protests were slowly dissipating and the discussion was kept alive on Twitter, it amplified again in October 2015 when #FeesMustFall surpassed #RhodesMustFall’s popularity as a result of the march to the Union Buildings on 23 October 2015. #RhodesMustFall, while it instigated the larger decolonization project, mainly focused on decolonizing UCT, which still speaks to the effect it had on the broader public if it could revolutionize discourse in this way. Therefore, the consistent use of #RhodesMustFall, regardless of popularity, is notable when located within the Hidden Transcript. The statue was removed, but the hashtag prolonged. This speaks to the broader issue of decolonization in South Africa as more than just the removal of an object, or decolonization of material space, but rather related to a subjective change in social realities for subalterns.
4.2 #RhodesMustFall: Findings

What follows is a description of the data collected from the hashtag #RhodesMustFall, as the precursor to, and instigator of, #FeesMustFall. As discussed, extracting this data was significant in uncovering the Hidden Transcript located in the act of defiance initiated by Chumani Maxwele, who used human faeces to deface the statue of Cecil John Rhodes.

4.2.1 Data: #RhodesMustFall

Table 1 indicates the top 20 most retweeted posts on Twitter. The table shows the users whose posts were retweeted, the dates on which they were posted, the number of RTs and the number of favorites (FV), as well as the textual content of the posts. Additionally, we are able to see the accompanying hashtags, which broadens the intertextual scope of the content, as discussed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USERNAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>RT</th>
<th>FV</th>
<th>TWEET TEXT</th>
<th>HASH TAGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 18:08</td>
<td>1110</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>Proof the police targeted Chumani Maxwele. They pull him in as he is trying to calm the crowd. Who gave the order? pic.twitter.com/s9KAmhiLLB</td>
<td>#UCTshutdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/20 14:06</td>
<td>792</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>The white human shield outside Rondebosch Police Station #UCTshutdown pic.twitter.com/aRb7RW12zP</td>
<td>#UCTshutdown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DanielJHannan</td>
<td>15/12/20 12:15</td>
<td>510</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>The #RhodesMustFall campaigners are not alone in wanting to destroy old statues that they consider unacceptable*. pic.twitter.com/lJocydxKEt*</td>
<td>#RhodesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 15:47</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Dear Cape Town you told us to take it to parliament. We did. Where are you now? They shot your students #FeesMustFall</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/23 15:59</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>We said #FeesMustFall not #FeesMustStayTheSame. And once again, workers were excluded as they always are #EndOutsourcing</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #FeesMustStayTheSame #EndOutsourcing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindelo_</td>
<td>15/03/19 22:06</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>University of Oxford students standing in solidarity with the #RhodesMustFall movement at University of Cape Town. pic.twitter.com/cNX711n1zFc</td>
<td>#RhodesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/12/10 19:30</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>While Zuma is a problem, the appropriation of the Must Fall* hashtag by white ppl unrelated to the decolonization project is unacceptable.*</td>
<td>#RhodesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Username</td>
<td>Date/Time</td>
<td>Likes</td>
<td>Retweets</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 21:00</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>We currently desperately need financial assistance for our BAIL OUT fund. There are many arrested comrades after the protests at parliament.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 21:16</td>
<td>253</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>For the BAIL OUT fund, here are our details once again. pic.twitter.com/aWpSZisJCt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 17:40</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>A women was hit and it is unclear whether she is alive or not #NationalShutDown pic.twitter.com/ngxVOlloIN</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/20 2:27</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Black child u are on ur own. This system was never built for u, only to exploit u. All we have is each other pic.twitter.com/g6e62GQHQQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DanielJHannan</td>
<td>15/12/19 12:09</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>Worse than the stupidity of the #RhodesMustFall mob is the cowardice of the authorities. My @Telegraph column. <a href="http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/universities-and-colleges/12058543/The-campaign-to-topple-Oxford-Universitys-Cecil-Rhodes-statue-is-too-silly-words.html">http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/universities-and-colleges/12058543/The-campaign-to-topple-Oxford-Universitys-Cecil-Rhodes-statue-is-too-silly-words.html</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/22 11:29</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>This is the largest gathering of UCT students we have seen. Stellenbosch and UWC are on their way here as well.pic.twitter.com/BFCInLmHbu</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackvoices</td>
<td>15/04/13 20:30</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>South African university removes statue of British imperialist #Rhodesmustfall pic.twitter.com/5eKh8oaSPW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/20 14:04</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>We have called for the white allies to make a human shield to protect us. They have obliged. High white discipline #UCTshutdown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/11/05 14:32</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>South Africa, your children are crying out for change. We can't breathe. #UJShutdown #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/JG4FFv7N40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/21 7:19</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>The police have shot a student at NMMU. An injury to one is an injury to all! #NationalShutDown #FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>15/10/24 16:54</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>We'll inform the financially excluded students that they can start paying tuition with symbolism #FeesMustFall <a href="https://twitter.com/busimkhumbuzi/status/657929604594847744">https://twitter.com/busimkhumbuzi/status/657929604594847744</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean3JvV</td>
<td>15/04/08 10:59</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>Amazing how people get fired up over a statue - that same energy should be used to fight poverty, unemployment &amp; corruption. #RhodesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates the top 20 related hashtags, which generated a sample for discussion in the analysis that follows.
Table 2: #RhodesMustFall, the Top 20 related hashtags.

Table 3 indicates the number of original posts using related hashtags, and excludes the number of RTs. Here we can see that #FeesMustFall is second to the rest, which speaks to the close relationship between the two hashtags.

Table 3: #RhodesMustFall, the Top 20 related hashtags by numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HASHTAGS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#RhodesMustFall</td>
<td>13 760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td>633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#RhodesSoWhite</td>
<td>364</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UCT</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#openstellenbosch</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Rhodes</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#SouthAfrica</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#RhodesHas Fallen</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#whiteprivilege</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#RhodesStatue</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#EndOutsourcing</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#LUISTER</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#transformUCT</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#BlackLivesMatter</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NationalShutDown</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#TransformWits</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#WitsFeesMustFall</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UCTshutdown</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#RhodesIsFalling</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#ZumaMustFall</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The trend graph below (Table 4) is an indication of the popularity of the hashtag between October and December 2015. From this we can see that after the events following the defacing of the statue, the popularity declined, but steadily continued, increasing during the #FeesMustFall protests in October 2015.

Table 4: #RhodesMustFall, trend graph of activity from March to December 2015.

Table 5 indicates the number of originating posts using the hashtag by month, and excludes the number of RTs. We can therefore see that during March when the indecent occurred activity was at its highest, which speaks to the impact of the act on the liberation of discourse.

Table 5: #RhodesMustFall, trend activity by month and number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ROW LABELS</th>
<th>TWEETS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>5 683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>4 591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep</td>
<td>536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>2 242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>1 098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAND TOTAL</td>
<td>16 542</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.2 Top 20 RTs

Table 1 is an overview of the Top 20 RTs posted between March 2015 and December 2015. The table indicates that 14 of the top RTs originated from the Twitter handle
@RhodesMustFall. One can infer that as the official Twitter account of the UCT Rhodes Must Fall movement (though, leaderless), with 10,5 thousand followers, the account served as an informative, but also discursive voice during the protests. It then stands to reason why the account managed to garner popularity through RTs, having a relatively strong following and as the most tangible embodiment of the leaderless movement – in other words, as the symbolic ‘face’ of the movement. However, this doesn’t discount the significance of the content of the 14 RTs as indicative of richly veiled discourse. After all, “[…] the social spaces where the Hidden Transcript grows are themselves an achievement of resistance …” (Scott, 1990: p. 119). Some of the key focus areas of the discourse evident in these tweets were already discussed above. There is one, in particular, that may get lost unless critically evaluated as a ‘meeloper’ of tweets, gaining a mere 261 RTs and 20 favorites: “While Zuma is a problem, the appropriation of the Must Fall hashtag by white ppl [sic] unrelated to the decolonization project is unacceptable” (@RhodesMustFall, 2015).

Firstly, it addresses a particular group of people in society who are a) White, and b) using the verb phrase ‘Must Fall’ unrelated to the decolonization agenda upon which it was started. However, it also acknowledges Zuma as a ‘problem’ in line with the broader contextual discourse augmented by the hashtag #ZumaMustFall, and thus subtly draws a comparison between the White people the text addresses and Zuma. By singling out White people, as opposed to any others who abuse the phrase, the discourse is strategic and intentional by metaphorically connecting whiteness to the dominance of colonialism in South Africa. By opening with, ‘While Zuma is a problem’, we can infer that the tweet is a dialectical response to an event or a broader discourse that appears to be gaining support within the broader context. The date also indicates that the tweet was posted around the time of the emergence of #FeesMustFall, which was when the critique of Zuma emerged more discursively.

Within this context, the tweet can not only be read as a critique-cum-defense of Zuma, who is a minority on an individual level and a post-Apartheid dominant on a societal level. But while it also critiques White people’s misuse and abuse of the anchoring phrase ‘must fall’ on a more overt level, it’s metaphoric subtext serves as a Hidden Transcript. On an even more intertextual level, the movement’s critique of the slow progress of decolonization is a critique, not only of the current government, but all post-Apartheid governments and puts
Mandela’s government at the apex of that critique through the mere mention of race. Mandela’s ‘rainbow nation’ is thus entextually connoted with colonial dominance here as “discourse lifted out of its interactional setting [i.e. Twitter] and transmitted together with a new context [i.e. Colonialism, Apartheid, and other racist dominant structures]” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 47), since he was the champion of non-racialism and forgiveness for past transgressions. Yet, it’s been said, “Non-racialism’ is the founding myth of the new South Africa” (Alexander, 2013: p. 98). We can say that this tweet embodies a veiled social process located in a “pattern of repression [highlighting] for us the circulatory system of the Hidden Transcript” (Scott, 1990: p. 126). The buried urge to critique non-racialism comes to the fore when criticizing White people publicly in this way.

What is also interesting about this tweet is its pattern of subordination illustrating Scott’s claim, “[…] most of the struggle of subordinate groups is conducted in much more ambiguous territory” (Scott, 1990: p. 191). For example, the function of the phrase “is unacceptable” in this tweet is to pass judgment on White people. However, it comes from an awkward position of authority and conviction as the majority racial group with minority status and the added claim to the Black experience, assuming the power position in a subordinate display of resistance, i.e. the #RhodesMustFall campaign broadly speaking. This tone, invoking power and authority, speaks to the change in atmosphere that defacing the statue qualified, “as if the dam impounding the Hidden Transcript had suddenly broken” with a great “psychological impact” and a “strong sense of recaptured human dignity,” “self respect and personhood” (Ibid, p. 209 – 211).

The modest size of this thesis does not allow for the further analysis of RTs. However, this particular tweet was chosen as the embodiment of a Hidden Transcript favorable for discourse analysis as a result of its language, function and the social practices that evoked its hidden meaning.

4.2.3 Top 20 Hashtags
A variety of discursive topics emerged from the top 20 related hashtags sample, which is indicative of #RhodesMustFall’s mushroom effect. As previously mentioned, the thesis must exercise some restraint due to its limitations. This section will therefore focus on significant
related hashtags that illustrate Hidden Transcripts. For example, it is noteworthy that at least eight of the twenty related hashtags addressed racial discourse. These related hashtags are important to note for contextualization, i.e. “all activities by participants which make relevant, maintain, revise, cancel … an aspect of context which, in turn, is responsible for the interpretation of an utterance in its particular locus of occurrence” (Blommaert, 2005: p. 41, citing Auer, 1992). Not only are these additional hashtags indicators of the events that dominated the discourse around the protest, but also as indicators of the sentiment expressed in a discursive way. For example, while a hashtag such as #BlackLivesMatter still generates discursive content about race relations in America, and the world, hashtags such as #RhodesSoWhite, #openstellenbosch, #whiteprivilege, #LUISTER, #transformUCT, #BlackLivesMatter (as a related hashtag), and #TransformWits within the context of #RhodesMustFall’s campaign were clear indicators of ideational discourse in process. That is, “ideology [that] stands for the ‘cultural’, ideational aspects of a particular social and political system, the ‘grand narratives’ characterizing its existence, structure, and historical development” (Ibid, p. 159) broadens the scope of the tweet content through related hashtags. Furthermore, #BlackLivesMatter as an American hashtag culturally processed through local SA discourse, is indicative of the transcendental nature of hashtags and SNS, which expounds present events through space (i.e. transnationally) and time (i.e. historically). The #BlackLivesMatter movement gained attention in the years leading up to #RhodesMustFall, but the shared subaltern experience of Black people in the USA and in South Africa is historically tied to oppression and colonization.

4.2.4 #RhodesMustFall: The Initial Act of Defiance

“An objectivist view [, a)] would never allow us to understand the provocation and excitement generated by the first act of defiance [and, b)] would have us assume that the determination of the power of the dominant is a straightforward matter, rather like reading an accurate pressure gauge [:] estimating the intentions and power of a dominant is a social process of interpretation highly infused with desires and fears [:] evidence is never entirely unambiguous [:] subjectivity of subordinate groups is not irrelevant to its reading […].”

(Scott, 1990: pp. 220)

The hashtag #RhodesMustFall may have first appeared on Twitter on 12 March 2015, according to ‘First Tweets’, as mentioned previously. It can be deduced that the first
#RhodesMustFall tweet followed what Scott would describe as a subordinate’s ‘first act of defiance’ when Chumani Maxwele defaced the Cecil John Rhodes statue with human faeces at UCT on 9 March 2015. According to the first tweet retrieval website the text simply read, “At this point we just need a date. #RhodesMustFall” (@mmabatho_t), see Figure 6. Unfortunately, the site indicated Thobejane Mmabatho (@mmabatho_t) was the first to use the hashtag, yet rigorous searches to find evidence on Twitter proved unsuccessful, as discussed.

Nevertheless, identifying the first tweet assisted to correlate the context (i.e. the offline and online influences) with Scott’s emphasis on the fundamental moment that paralyzed the hegemonic stimuli characteristic of domination and structural subordination, perpetuated by the Hidden Transcript:
"The moment of dissent of the Hidden Transcript crosses the threshold to open resistance is always a politically charged one"; "[...] it is all too apparent that the open declaration of the Hidden Transcript in the teeth of power is typically experienced, both by the speaker and by those who share his or her condition, as a moment in which truth is finally spoken in the place of equivocation and lies" (Ibid, 207; 208).

The statue defacing illustrated the first ‘dissent of the Hidden Transcript’ and the resulting Tweets using the hashtag illustrated the ‘moment in which truth [was] finally spoken’ and distributed among subordinates ‘who share [the same] condition’ as South African society’s subalterns, previously disadvantaged groups. Defacing the statue with human faeces was a powerful symbolic gesture indeed, with Maxwele like the proverbial pigeon defecating on one of the most hegemonic symbols of colonial domination in Higher Education. Scott, citing Runajit Guha, said he convincingly argued “that open acts of desacralization and disrespect are often the first sign of actual rebellion” (Ibid, p. 196), which rings true in this case. Not only this particular statue, but also others have memorialized Rhodes around the country. The historic British imperialist and White supremacist also continues to be the face of Rhodes University in Grahamstown, and the prestigious Rhodes scholarship, the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation, as well as the Rhodes Memorial located on the slope of Table Mountain in Cape Town. All these associations with Rhodes have since been questioned and brought to task.

Therefore, while the accuracy of the first recorded tweet using the hashtag is not essential to this study, it was worth investigating as well as citing since the dates correspond to Maxwele’s impactful public act of resistance. Unearthing the first tweet presents an opportunity to connect the offline act with the “sudden acquisition of guts” or “[an event] that weakened the power of dominant groups” (Ibid, p. 218) illustrated through the post-defacing Twitter discourse. Scott leaves this theory fairly open to interpretation, fearing the claim to the conceivable social constructions in the interpretation of ‘truth’ in his final chapter. In this way he challenges the objectivist view that would, a) “Never allow us to understand the provocation and excitement generated by the first act of defiance,” and b) “[...] would have us assume that the determination of the power of the dominant is a straightforward matter, rather like reading an accurate pressure gauge” (Ibid, 220). He thus emphasizes the subjectivity hidden in publicly declared transcripts or discourse. Some of these objectivist views could be read in some of the Twitter discourse discussing antagonism toward the defacing of the statue:
“How does it prepare you for running your own business, or being gainfully employed, when you put poo flinging on your CV? #RhodesMustFall” (@gargunzola, 2015)

“@ewnupdates really?? Could have fooled me, acting like brain dead, poo throwing ignorant morons #RhodesMustFall” [sic]. (@MargoACarr, 2015)

“#RhodesMustFall #UCT’s new claim to fame: the place where a poo thrower dictates procedure, ‘without interference’.” (@TheaFox, 2015)

The last of these is in reference to the university powers refraining from taking action against Maxwele, the subordinate who in this way is perceived to have “[dictated] procedure” (Ibid) or power. However, if one considers the discourse Maxwele liberated, offline it resonates with Scott’s theory about the power of subjectivity:

> “An individual who is affronted may develop a personal fantasy of revenge and confronting, but when the insult is but a variant of affronts suffered systematically by a whole race, class, or strata, then the fantasy can become a collective cultural product”
> (Scott, 1990: p. 9).

This ‘cultural product’ took many forms, such as a non-violent protest after the defacing in which students mainly occupied the space around the statue in vast numbers singing *Struggle* songs and bearing placards containing further hints of publicly defiant discourse. Arguably, the most prolific cultural product Maxwele launched was the hashtags #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall and the discourse or “psychic purge” (Beukes, 2017) the social media platforms, particularly Twitter, mediated.

This subjectivity can be explained only by identifying the tweet next in line as the ‘first tweet’ using the hashtag #RhodesMustFall. This tweet was found inside the Twitter platform itself (see Figure 7 below). Data collected using data mining methods concluded that Jerome September (@JeromeSeppie), was the first to use the hashtag on 15 March 2015 by mentioning eNCA news (@eNCAnews), SABC News (@SABCNewsOnline) and the UCT Student Representative Council (@UCT_SRC)’s Twitter handles as a public messaging affordance mediated by Twitter. Mentioning these well-known local news sites got the Tweet widely distributed, although only Retweeted 81 times, which is a relatively small number in comparison to Big Data samples. Unfortunately, we cannot account for screen shots that may
have been shared without mentioning September or quoting his tweet. The post, however, was indeed newsworthy referring to a real time event taking place on the campus by stating, “UCT students demanding the removal of the Rhodes statue… #UCT #RhodesMustFall” (September, J. 2015). The tweet was accompanied by an iconic image of students occupying the common area around the statue as seen below in Figure 7.

Figure 7: One of the first tweets using the hashtag included news channels and the student representative council as a means to proliferate its use.

September’s tweet may have presented itself as the post-defacing pressure point that led to the proverbial ‘flood,’ which we can correspond to Scott’s “broken dam” (Ibid, 211) analogy. He uses this analogy to illustrate the impact of a defiant event; such as we’ve established Maxwele’s public declaration to be. Maxwele’s discourse “conveying the subjective power of [its public declaration]” (Ibid, 206) sparked the occupation of the space in peaceful protest, and subsequently September’s tweet. In turn the sequence of events prompted “… the social atmosphere generated when an entire category of people suddenly finds its public voice no longer stifled” (Ibid, 210). One such example can be found in a reply to September on Twitter, quoting his original Tweet and expressing solidarity by ending it off with another hashtag, “#IWasHere” (Siphokazi, 2015). This simple addition to September’s quoted tweet illustrates Scott’s view that “those who take this bold step experience it as a moment of truth
and as a personal authentication” (Ibid, 208). Ultimately, this step was empowering for South African subalterns represented by the students reminiscent of the 1976 Soweto Student Uprisings.

As a matter of recourse, today the technological and democratic landscape in South Africa and globally has evolved the way in which hidden discourse is mediated. Jiménez (2017) citing Corsin explains this blurring of boundaries between the offline and online world in this way as “civic platforms” that are “delimited” and “not just physical or digital space, but ‘a scattered constellation of practices-idea-people-objects sharing common principles’” (cited by Dominguez-Figaredo, 2012: p. 205). Since the 1976 Uprisings there has not been a revolution to match the on-stage, public defiance that in essence led to the end of Apartheid. However, the students today finally had something to say after years of accepting the rainbow nation public discourse so widely dispersed by the Mandela rhetoric, and who could speak against it during Mandela’s post-Apartheid lifetime? It is therefore no coincidence that these events have come to pass since Mandela’s passing in 2013.

Scott infers:

Subordinates who have never even been afforded the opportunity to build a collective culture offstage have little choice but to improvise when they do take the stage, and this improvisation will have a large component of unassociated suppressed belonging (Scott, 1990: p. 217).

Initial reactions of disgust at the act of using human faeces as an object of defiance is a conceivably hard act to associate oneself with and yet the deed could be seen as Scott’s ‘improvisation’ that led to ‘a large component of unassociated suppressed belonging’ and gave rise to South Africa’s subordinate Twitter discourse on the topics of decolonization, free education and structural racism that continue to plague contemporary South Africa. It is therefore significant that it was only in the post-Mandela era that the long-standing hidden discourse suppressed with rainbow nation rhetoric was finally unveiled.
4.3 #FeesMustFall

From the #FeesMustFall data we can find that #RhodesMustFall was the 23rd most used related hashtag. The low ranking may seem insignificant in comparison to others like arbitrary, less discursive hashtags such as #UnionBuilding, where the #FeesMustFall march took place in October 2015; #NationalShutdown, indicating tweets about most (if not all) universities shutting down on that day; #FeesHaveFallen, an indication of tweets about the 0% increase in fees, i.e. not free education; #Wits, the university where the #FeesMustFall protests started, and #SouthAfrica, among others. However, it ranks high without those hashtags, which may have been added for less discursive communicative motives. Out of the top 20 related hashtags the discursive hashtags were; #ZumaMustFall, as it led to a leaderless movement still active today; #ANCMustFall, as it indicated a connection between the post-Apartheid leaders and the issues at hand; and #UPrising, indicating a kinship with the Soweto Uprising. However, the rest can be described as reactive hashtags, reporting on or talking about the protest in real time, it’s consequences and associated feelings or sentiment.

4.3.1 Data: #FeesMustFall

Table 6 indicates the top 20 most retweeted posts on Twitter, similar to Table 1 in the #RhodesMustFall section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>USERNAME</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>RT</th>
<th>FV</th>
<th>TWEET TEXT</th>
<th>HASHTAGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simamkeleD</td>
<td>2017-04-06 13:53:00</td>
<td>2058</td>
<td>1210</td>
<td>White academics are cancelling classes so people can attend tomorrow’s march against Zuma. Don’t remember them doing so for #FeesMustFall</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kimheller3</td>
<td>2017-01-14 22:14:00</td>
<td>1751</td>
<td>1275</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall leader jailed for days writes exams, gets 4 distinctions #FreeBonginkosiKhanyile #Fees2017 pic.twitter.com/oa3ouWtMsu</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #FreeBonginkosiKhanyile #Fees2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caspar_Lee</td>
<td>2015-10-23 13:17:00</td>
<td>1594</td>
<td>6926</td>
<td>Sending my support from London, wish I could be there in South Africa right now. #FeesMustFall</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RediTlhabi</td>
<td>2015-10-23 12:55:00</td>
<td>1312</td>
<td>264</td>
<td>Let it be recorded that it was not #FeesMustFall that started fire. It was youths wearing Sasco and ANC tshirts. Crowd shouted No Violence*</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karabo_Mokgoko</td>
<td>2017-03-01 13:41:00</td>
<td>1265</td>
<td>1283</td>
<td>Dear ppl that were saying #FeesMustFall protestors are failures, BonginkosiKhanyile got 4 distinctions while imprisoned, let that sink in.</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #BonginkosiKhanyile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Username</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Text</td>
<td>URL</td>
<td>hashtags</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean3JvV</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>This is why we march!!! Education has the POWER to transform South Africa. #FeesMustFall #UnionBuilding pic.twitter.com/mSdFbtHhXU</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #UnionBuildingpic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RediThabi</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>It is not #FeesMustFall that is jumping over fence and burning. I am seeing them. It is Sasco and ANC Soshanguve</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FeesMustFall</td>
<td>2017-02-15</td>
<td>Alice Students have shutdown the main road protesting lack of proper classes and being expected to study outside. #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/tXqc9EB8Mm</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ayeshakajee</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>This is solidarity! Students protect their Muslim peers who pray Friday prayers at union buildings. #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/gPAIm1faYo</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SiphiwoNzaw</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>Two of the protesters have indeed confessed to being from a local branch of some youth league. They were sent to disrupt. #FeesMustFall</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VernacNews</td>
<td>2017-05-09</td>
<td>BREAKING NEWS: Bonginkosi Khanyile has graduated cum laude after spending 6 months in jail for #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/2aOpjDw1u</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kim_Khandas</td>
<td>2015-12-16</td>
<td>Black people: #FeesMustFall White people: Stupid monkeys* White people: #ZumaMustFall Black people: pic.twitter.com/StscbqdJ1E*</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #ZumaMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AbigailJavier_</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>As they pray, a human shield stands in front @LiveVIPZA #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown unionbuilding pic.twitter.com/hy9pvQYEQo</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown unionbuilding</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MapsMapony</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>There are so many non-students in the protest looking to cause chaos. Pls note that this is not a reflection on the students! #FeesMustFall</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FeesMustFall</td>
<td>2017-03-01</td>
<td>BREAKING NEWS: The Constitutional Court has granted bail to #BonginkosiKhanyile after spending 5 months / 155 days in jail #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/glvt1PT1k</td>
<td>#BonginkosiKhanyile FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mehlulisizwe</td>
<td>2017-04-07</td>
<td>Retweet till we find this lady......we still need everyone s support on #FeesMustFall #AntiZumaMarches pic.twitter.com/mqzz4Sxqw</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #AntiZumaMarchespic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBCBreaking</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>South Africa police fire stun grenades &amp; water cannon at #FeesMustFall protest in Pretoria <a href="http://bbc.in/1W8Afrp">http://bbc.in/1W8Afrp</a> pic.twitter.com/MJmMDEIKMI</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>eNCA</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>BREAKING NEWS: President Zuma says there will a 0% increment for varsity fees. #FeesMustFall pic.twitter.com/3WKz1VeYOK</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReadaBookSA</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>URGENT: Wits and UJ students being called back to their buses. PLEASE RT. #UnionBuildings #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown</td>
<td>#UnionBuildings #FeesMustFall #NationalShutDown</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WitsFMF</td>
<td>2015-10-23</td>
<td>Let us appreciate some leaders who made #FeesMustFall movement possible. Dedicated to non-violence #UnionBuilding pic.twitter.com/UAjTOb2Ko</td>
<td>#FeesMustFall #UnionBuildingpic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 indicates the top 20 hashtags related to the #FeesMustFall hashtag.
Table 8 indicates the number of tweets posted using each hashtag.

Table 8: #FeesMustFall, top 20 related hashtags by numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HASHTAGS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#FeesMustFall</td>
<td>62741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#feesmustfall2016</td>
<td>3669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UnionBuilding</td>
<td>2385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#NationalShutDown</td>
<td>1754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#FeesHaveFallen</td>
<td>1371</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UnionBuildings</td>
<td>1315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#EndOutsourcing</td>
<td>1227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#zumamustfall</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Wits</td>
<td>736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#SouthAfrica</td>
<td>732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#FreeEducation</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#ANCMustFall</td>
<td>442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#zuma</td>
<td>423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UWCShtDown</td>
<td>414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Fees2017</td>
<td>382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UPrising</td>
<td>369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#sabcnews</td>
<td>368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#ANC</td>
<td>343</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#TUT</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#UWC</td>
<td>312</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9 indicates the popularity of the hashtag between October 2015 and December 2016.

Table 9: #FeesMustFall, Trend Graph.
Table 10 indicates the number of tweets posted using #FeesMustFall for 2015 and 2016 respectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>54 339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>5 721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60 060</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11 breaks down Table 10 into the number of tweets posted per month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year/ Month</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015 Oct</td>
<td>45 368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Nov</td>
<td>7 078</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015 Dec</td>
<td>1 893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Jan</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Feb</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Mar</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Jun</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Oct</td>
<td>3 028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Nov</td>
<td>1 192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 Dec</td>
<td>1 423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60 060</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.3.2 #FeesMustFall: Findings

As with the #RhodesMustFall section, this part of the thesis will focus on presenting and analyzing a selection of tweets from the samples provided by the top 20 RTs supported by the top 20 related hashtags and the trend graph, as extracted from Mallet. A few limitations should, however, be noted. Firstly, it must be emphasized that the data was collected from the period October 2015 to May 2017 for the purpose of gaining as broad as possible an overview of the Twitter activity. As a Topic Modeling software programme, Mallet works best if the corpus of data is as vast as possible, however, this wide time frame also served to
gain an understanding of the changing patterns in activity over time and the resultant
counting discourse the tweets invoked.

An empirical reflection found that the level of destruction caused in 2016’s protest was
considerably more costly than in 2015. However, the discursive activity on Twitter did not
reflect this change in tone through reactive tweeting as in previous years. In fact, October
2015 produced 45,368 original tweets, which is, needless to say, considerably higher than
October 2016’s 3,028. Additionally, no tweets from 2016 made the top 20 RTs list. A
reporter for Eye Witness News, Ziyanda Ngcobo, had some explanations for the difference in
dynamics between the 2015 and 2016 protests, which could make sense of the
disproportionate Twitter activity:

[In 2016] there was so much tension amongst students’ hostility towards the media.
And amongst the leadership themselves. They [seemed] quite divided on issues. Even
with the announcement that there was going to be a shut down, not everyone
supported the remedial announcement that there was going to be a shut down. It
doesn’t seem like most [Student Representative Councils (SRC)] were in control [in
2016]. You will remember that in 2015, it was SRC leader Nompendulo Mkhatshwa,
and predecessor Shaeera Kall who were leading the movement. In 2016 because there
was a great emphasis on being a leaderless movement we saw different kinds of
people. Not having a leader or designated person did play a dynamic on the way
activities played out. (Ngcobo, 2016)

The only inaccuracy in this explanation is that Mkhatshwa and Kall were not leading the
movement in 2015. Instead, they were the leaders of the Wits #FeesMustFall movement
specifically since they were also the leaders of the Wits SRC who were the first to raise the
issue in 2015. However, Ngcobo’s account does have merit, especially regarding the
witnessed friction between leaders (i.e. the SRCs) and student bodies that subscribed to
protesting for the free education project. At the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, for
example, the student body was unhappy with the SRC who were conceding to the Vice-
Chancellor during meetings at a lavish hotel. The student bodies saw the SRC as catering to
their own needs, rather than that of the cause, and the result was more destruction of property
and a shut down of the university periodically, while a security guard was killed in an arson
attack on the security building.
Additionally, the total damages between 2015 and 2016 amounted to more than R1 billion (Business Live, 2016), while 2015 was responsible for a R460 million portion (Govender, 2016), and 2016, the remaining portion. Additionally, 2016 saw 567 persons arrested in 265 cases (Business Tech, 2016) in comparison to 2015’s approximately 30 arrests – various news sources reported varying numbers of arrests, (Eye Witness News, 2015). For these reasons, the cause gained a less than favorable response in 2016 while the public and discursive engagement shifted to what could be described as #FeesMustFall fatigue.

A quick survey of the 2016 portion of the combined data indicates an unfavorable response to these events. For example:

“What society are we living in that if you can’t get something for free you burn down a building until you get you way?” (@markasferreira).

“What if we get free education and you guys already burnt your institution?” (@Sbo_Vukela).

“Why are libraries being burnt? Why are the learning facilities being burnt?” (@NeoMohapi).

“#FeesMustFall2016 strikes in some areas have honestly lost their main purpose” (@ImThatNiggaKev_).

However, there were also some users tweeting against this shift in discourse:

“Too many of us also seem to care more about buildings than about the poverty & inequality that still defines our society” (@stefanf28).

“Our desire for free quality decolonized education is more pivotal than life and death” (@RanalaSilver; @MaageMohlabe).

“Most White people only comment on destruction of property but they [are] quiet in the plight of the poor child, often black” (@SamNtomble).

“I refuse to entertain hypocrits who speak against violence on property and not violence against students” (@DocursR).

While it is true that the 2015 numbers are vastly larger than 2016’s as a result of the number of tweets posted on 23 October in particular, it is plausible that support for the movement
waned as destruction of property and violence proliferated, essentially pausing the study activity of students who became frustrated with the halt in studies. In 2015 Zuma appeased some students when he announced a 0% increase in fee increments, so it stands to reason that under the banner of #FeesMustFall the movement would ultimately seek a reality that includes free education as opposed to an annual 0% increase in fees. On the other hand, an annual 0% increase in fees does not seem conceivable under South Africa’s declining economic circumstances. Nevertheless, universities could not sustain another year of fees remaining the same as 2015’s, while government does not cover the shortfall, and an announcement that Wits would increase fees by 8% ultimately resulted in 2016’s volatile protests, though the university pledged to support the free education movement. Support for the movement thus waned. Did the naturalization of subordination in the broader public concede in this instance? An analysis of retweet samples may invite possible answers.

4.3.3 Top 20 RTs

Table 6 shows an overview of the top 20 RTs between October 2015 and May 2017. Of these, 10 were posted on 23 October 2015 – the day of the march to the Union Buildings. Seven of the top 20 were posted in 2017, with two of these related to the anti-Zuma marches; while four related to the detainment and release of fallist, Bonginkoski Khanyile, and his Cum Laude achievement. Khanyile wrote exams while detained for about six months as a result of alleged crimes during the #FeesMustFall protest in 2016. In fact, Khanyile and the anti-Zuma march were the subjects of the top two most retweeted posts. It is also significant that 12 of the Top 20 contained images, which may or may not have contributed to the popularity of the tweets as may be conceivable – images do attract attention on social media. In light of the empirical findings above, this section will attempt to understand what these RTs reveal about #FeesMustFall’s Hidden Transcript.

The top retweet comes from a complex public debate that emerged in April 2017 before a nation-wide anti-Zuma march. The debate centered on whether or not to protest. It would be the largest march ever recorded in South Africa, but fallists and South Africa’s woke

21 Anti-Zuma march | An anti-Zuma march took place on 7 April 2017 after the president reshuffled his cabinet for what was the 11th time, according to Business Live (2017). This has had a massive impact on the economy with the value of the ZAR (South African Rand) dropping considerably.
expressed anger at the public’s excessive support in this instance when many other causes, such as #FeesMustFall, #RhodesMustFall, #Marikana\textsuperscript{22} and the ever-increasing gap between the rich and the poor, and White and Black people, specifically, were overlooked. Further more, it would be the first instance of a nation-wide, multiracial, ‘united’ front in support of the same cause. A pervasive, dialogical debate ensued on social media, although the march went ahead garnering the most support for a cause in South Africa’s history.

The tweet claims “White academics [were] cancelling classes so people [could] attend [7 April 2017’s] march against Zuma. Don’t remember them doing so for #FeesMustFall.” A CDA would draw our full attention to the exclusion of ‘White academics’; apply a “theory-as-truth” perspective to the analysis and close off the dialogic process that would unveil how the message is understood, or ‘voice’ as we should interpret it. However, a Critical Analysis of Discourse would have us ask which social processes were involved in constructing the meaning behind this tweet. After all, it was retweeted 2058 times, which implies that an audience believed this tweet, and chose to become key actors in sharing the discourse. What appealed to 2058 users? If we consider that this tweet represents just one user’s experience, does it change its meaning? Or does it change if we consider that if 1210 users favored the tweet, they share in his experience – broadening the context from one to many? What can we interpret from this discourse as text, and discursive social practice?

As with the #RhodesMustFall example, a racial discourse can be identified in this tweet. However, within the context of the #ZumaMustFall campaign, the meaning of the racial discourse changes. Here it serves to further comment on just how wide the gap between White people and Black people are in SA society impacting a diverse ideological imperative in discourses, i.e. the implication is that Zuma stepping down would affect White people more favorably than free education would. Furthermore, the tweet places an indexical category on a specific group of White people, i.e. academics, and we’re thus forced to consider that this may be a student tweeting about a particular Higher Education institution. As a tweet from a student about academics at an institution, the text could be viewed as a display of dissidence or defiance since, “[Relations such as these] are not simply a clash of

\textsuperscript{22} Marikana | During a strike at the Lonmin platinum mines in 2012, 34 miners were killed when police opened fire. Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa has a stake in the mine, and it has thus become a discursive byproduct of the #FeesMustFall and anti-Zuma marches, not having reached the level of discursive practice as the leaderless movements itself (marikana.mg.co.za).
ideas about dignity and the right to rule, they are a process of subordination firmly anchored in material practice” (Scott, 1990, p. 188). This relationship can also be interpreted from the tone, as the tweet reads more like an innuendo than an outright critique of White academics, although the emphasis on race does ironically mitigate the feigned innuendo. This tweet thus invokes an anti-rainbow nation ideology and also a #FeesMustFall ideology, i.e. “[constituting] the historical layer in everyday conduct” (Ibid, p. 19), mediated by a hashtag that calls society to action. It’s a subordinate transcript addressing “one thing to those in the know and another to outsiders and authorities” (Scott, 1990: p. 184). The audience is being asked to critically evaluate the motives of White people at the march, and critically evaluate the role White people play in South African society today. However, on a platform such as Twitter, the tweet’s intentions could broaden to reflecting ideas to White people, asking them to critically evaluate their own motives for marching against Zuma.

It is however, significant that the time between the top retweet and the second still places 2017 at the forefront of discursive engagement with #FeesMustFall tweets when the year has not yet produced conditions for protests about fees just yet. This significance forms part contextualizing the discourse. In January 2017 Khanyile’s Cum Laude from prison was announced while he was still imprisoned. Thus, the second most retweeted tweet contained the hashtag #FreeBonginkosiKhanyile along with #FeesMustFall and #Fees2017. In 2016 those imprisoned were described as hooligans and troublemakers as can be found in the Twitter data. A Cum Laude pass unwittingly became the symbolic act of defiance against this public transcript imposed by dominants such as the Education minister who released the cost of the damages the year before. Within itself, Khanyile’s Cum Laude elevated the status of not only himself, but also other fallists. As a Hidden Transcript, passing with Cum Laude may seem far-fetched, however Critical Analysis of Discourse opens a narrow view of a text and social practice to context, history, voice and ideology in a way that favors this interpretation.

4.3.4 #FeesMustFall: Hidden Discourse on Stage
Through data mining 66 170 tweets were scraped from Twitter for the 23 October 2015 to 29 May 2017 period. The data-mining project attempted to extract data starting from January 2015, however, the programme only managed to extract beginning 23 October. The biggest
reason for this may be that a few variations of the spelling of the hashtag #FeesMustFall may have influenced which data was picked up. For example, this may have been case sensitive, as discussed. For the sake of consistency and because this study is largely focused on the discursive content of the tweets, rather than a statistical analysis, the discrepancy may not be detrimental to the study. According to the ‘First Tweet’ site, see Figure 8 below, the first use of the hashtag was recorded on 21 March, not long after #RhodesMustFall in conjunction with the decolonization agenda. In this case, the tweet was tracked back to the Twitter platform, as can be seen below in Figure 9:

However, the first tweet used the initial caps variation of the hashtag, i.e. #FeesMustFall, and it is therefore conceivable that the algorithm may not have picked it up because it was perhaps not as popular then. It may have picked data starting on 23 October 2015 because of the sheer volume of tweets using the hashtag corresponding with the nation-wide protest that took place on that day. More specifically, it was the day that Zuma would respond to the protests publicly in Pretoria, which prompted thousands of students to March to the Union buildings where he was expected to announce whether fees would fall or a zero percent increase on annual fee increments would ensue. What ensued was an anti-climactic response
from Zuma, who was also hours late to making the uncharismatic announcement simply stating that there would be a zero percent increase.

In Table 9 the Trend Graph illustrates the rapid fall in tweets from 28,958 tweets on 23 October to 3,519 tweets on 24 October, although it does show a consistent use of the hashtag over 2015 and 2016 indicating increases when protests would pick up just before or during exams when annual fee increases were due to be announced. This is a clear indication that the protests leading up to 23 March at the Wits University, among others, were only the beginning and that subordinates had more to say on the matter in the form of discursive Twitter transcripts during the nation-wide March.

4.3.5 The Public Transcript: Subordinates vs. Dominants

“Power means not having to act or, more accurately, the capacity to be more negligent and casual about any single performance.”

(Scott, 1990: 29)

An empirical study into the public transcript, which was mostly in control of dominants during Scott’s time, found that universities were shifting from posting monotonous press releases about the effects of protest action on Facebook to addressing the issue of free education head-on. Wits, for example, went as far as pledging to work towards free education for all. Vice-Chancellors took on new roles, as leaders of the institutions, and subordinates to government simultaneously; they would have to answer for the fee increases, and implore government to assist with the shortfall through state funds. From afar it seemed like both dominants in this case were assigning blame in the other’s direction, while students became increasingly defiant. Within this context we must consider Scott’s assertion, “To understand the more luxuriant fantasies of the Hidden Transcript, they must be seen not alone but as the reaction to domination in the public transcript” (Ibid, p. 44), which brings us to the following key incident.

One pivotal moment arose the day President Zuma announced the zero percent increase in fee increments (on 23 October 2015). It seemed like the ultimate public standoff between defiant subordinates and an indifferent dominant, i.e. President Zuma. The president’s apathy showed as he failed to address the students directly, instead opting for a live broadcast from a
pressroom inside the Union Buildings, reading mechanically off a stack of pages (SABC Digital News, 2015). After the announcement, the protests got more violent because students were angry that they were not addressed directly (eNCA, 2015), illustrating Scott’s view that “power distorts communication” (Ibid, p. 32). Furthermore, Scott asserts, “there is no system of domination that does not produce its own routine harvest of insults and injury to human dignity” (Ibid, 37). Therefore, one student in the crowd’s response was, “Why is our president running away from us? We were waiting for him to talk to us. We voted for him. Jacob Zuma is supposed to respect us as voters” (eNCA, Ibid). At the heart of this discourse is the notion that the post-Apartheid government that fought for freedom and democracy during Apartheid has failed the people who voted them into power, i.e. subordinates. Scott calls this kind of power “euphemized” (Ibid), i.e. post-Apartheid rhetoric created the “appearance of unanimity among the ruling groups” and the “appearance of consent among subordinates” (Ibid, p. 55). Furthermore:

\[\ldots\text{dominant elites attempt to portray social action in the public transcript as, metaphorically, a parade, thus denying, by omission, the possibility of autonomous social action by subordinates. Inferiors who actually assemble at their own initiative are typically described as mobs or rabble (Ibid, p. 45).}\]

This accurately describes Zuma’s public transcript. Through Blommaert’s guidance, i.e. “The precise scope and range of action of the state are an empirical matter; what we cannot do […] is to eliminate it from analysis or to treat it in purely idealistic terms” (2005: p. 220), we are unable to discount Zuma’s response to the protests because it is inherent to the Hidden Transcript. Thus, from Zuma’s approach on the live broadcast we are able to distinguish his status as a dominant elite in the new South Africa from his status as an anti-Apartheid veteran.

The idea of the dominance in the new South Africa is no longer complex; it is polycentric, where “the actions of […] non-state actors need to be understood with reference to the state” (Ibid). So in this case, “where the state’s authority appears to [have been] overruled by [the students, i.e. the state conceding to protests]” (Ibid) Zuma’s Hidden Transcript manifests where his message differs from his approach. The news reports failed to mention how late he was for the announcement while students braved the hot weather conditions without sufficient food and water, for example. However, fallists were also quick to rewrite their
account of events on Twitter while various pervasive stories about violence and damage to public property spread, as previously mentioned (Beukes, 2017). Additionally, the revolutionary aspects of the protest were mitigated by Zuma’s indifferent, monotone, mechanical approach to making the announcement. That is, he was reading someone else’s words, uncharismatic in his delivery, and stated long term solutions in broad terms. What is even more significant is that he failed to acknowledge the movement’s similarities and parallels with 1976, which in many ways reduced the fallists’ protests to nothing more than rebellion in contrast with its revolutionary imperatives.

This analysis may risk siding with CDA, as “a view from above” that “[projects] specific (and often analytically unmotivated) interpretations onto discourse data” (Ibid, p. 33). However, analyzing Zuma’s body language takes heed from Scott’s advice to look for activities “where the divergence between […] the public transcript and the Hidden Transcript was greatest” (Ibid, p. x). The public transcript was read from a page on camera, and the divergence was located in his expressionless body language, which became the Hidden Transcript in as much as what he did not say became it. For “there is no social location or analytical position from which the truth value of a text or discourse may be judged” (Ibid), and we are forced to reinterpret what is not visibly available to us.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5. Discussion
To recap, the study found that #RhodesMustFall was the act of defiance that unveiled the suppressed realities of colonial domination on South African society, how this domination transcended public space and time through hegemonic social practices, and the effect of colonial domination on the collective memory of subalterns. Secondly, related hashtags provided supplementary voices in some cases, such as arbitrary hashtags more linked to current events in progress, and complementary (discursive) voices, such as #Uprising – an indication of the liberation of the collective memory of the Soweto Uprising, in others. Thirdly, the study found that the hashtag’s popularity was as a result of newsworthiness, content that challenged dominant structures, inspirational content, changing the public narrative and calling subalterns to action.

The following section will serve to discuss key topics that arose from the study and conclude the thesis by attempting to answer the research questions. The key discussion points focus on the break in communication between students and universities and what the future holds for universities in South Africa after the impact #FeesMustFall has had on the Tertiary Education landscape. The conclusion will address the research questions by starting with the sub questions and concluding with a discussion on the over-arching question based on the study’s findings.

5.1 Dominants Dialectical Failings
This study, quite noticeably, focused on the liberated hidden discursive practices of subordinates, which was illustrated through power relations in the South African context. Subordinates are identified as students within the context of #FeesMustFall, while universities are the dominants in this case. The study was a critique of universities with regard to their inadequate use of the available public platforms for dialectical engagement with the #FeesMustFall movement. Instead of using Twitter and engaging with the hashtag, and thus connecting to students on a lateral level, Universities reactively used platforms such as Facebook as repositories for press releases after offline conflict. The engagement thus took
the form of crises management (see example, Figure 10), rather than dialogue. These posts only served to increase frustration, as the comments sections will verify (see Figure 11).

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**Figure 10**: An example of a post published by Wits University, which mainly served to inform, rather than engage.
Figure 11: A comments section unrelated to figure 10, however, the post was similar in content. These indicate that fallists were using the platform discursively despite the subject matter of the post. However, it does not bode well for power relations when there is no response to the comments.

Furthermore, a quick survey of Wits’s Facebook posts, as an example of dominant discourse, indicated a reluctance by the university to use the hashtag #FeesMustFall. Only two posts were found to contain the hashtag although many posts were related to the protests. It should
be noted that the hashtag does not only serve as the name of the movement, but also the chief form of communication as the public transcript of subordinates, or the students. In other words, the hashtag’s purpose transcended popular discourse by becoming a voice within its own right, i.e. requiring a response, and requiring engagement. The hashtag created a discursive means for communication between subordinates and dominants, which universities essentially ignored. It should also be noted that the data, extracted using the hashtag, did included little to no tweets from university accounts. Thus, we can infer that universities avoided engaging with the hashtag. As discussed briefly in the analysis, universities relied on meetings with SRCs, which proved to stir more action as groups of students became privy to special treatment, losing the respect of the movement in the process. Why did Universities choose not to use the hashtag to create dialogue? The answer did not clearly materialize from the findings, although the thesis can safely state that the hashtag’s vast quantity of data is an indication of the high level of engagement that took place while offline protests were ensuing.

The spike in activity on 23 October, the highest of its kind since the movement started (see Graph 2), made it clear that Zuma’s announcement at the union buildings was a focal point in the discursive social practices of dominants and set the tone for the power relations that would ensue. The result of Zuma’s failure to engage with fallists resulted in a power struggle, which has transcended space and time, in the sense that a culture of protesting has led to students gaining the upper hand in most cases. There is thus a growing sense of anxiety around the reversal of roles between subordinates and dominants in the Higher Education sector where students are winning the power struggle. Scholar, and former Vice-Chancellor, Jonathan Jansen (2017), recently wrote a book that takes the dominants’ perspective, in which he concludes that this time in South Africa’s dialectical history will culminate in “The end of the South African University” as the subtitle pointedly remarks. However, a critique of the movement, implied by the title, is based on his subjective experience of the side effects of the protests. This means that his conclusion is constructed on the premise that fallists cannot be engaged with in meaningful ways. This thesis argues that they can.
5.2 The Future of Higher Education Discourse in South Africa

South African Education’s democratic imperatives underscoring the new wave of liberated discourse around identity politics, race, decolonization and social structure, while ideological, can result in parity between subordinates and dominants. Though the cycle of liberated hidden discourse (Figure 2) indicates a revolution back to 1976, we can infer that similar to the influence of the Soweto Uprising’s instigation of the end of Apartheid (in many ways); this particular movement could lead to the next phase in South Africa’s progress to revolutionary social change, despite Prof Jansen’s reservations.

The first step is for universities to take better care at cultivating discursive and dialectical engagement on all available communicative platforms, especially on social media. This requires taking social media discourse more seriously by consistently keeping up to date on research into the discursive practices of the public on the various SNSs. If we can recall, the idea of ‘voice’ is the means by which conditions for uptake are created, and in this case Twitter and the hashtag augmented the means for universities to engage with fallists or subaltern voices. Twitter in South Africa in no way represents the full complement of subaltern voices – see, for example, the inclusion of related topics, such as #Marikana and #EndOutsourcing as precursors to #FeesMustFall within the broader landscape of subordinate resistance. In the case of #FeesMustFall, however, Twitter provided a sample and a model for formulating suitable responses to the offline and online discursive practices. A movement augmented by social media should be engaged with as such. For universities to inform their use of social media effectively, serious research using empirical and integrated approaches, i.e. from various disciplines, will be required. Universities should thus appoint expert researchers with the means to use integrated approaches. Additionally, an integrated approach to discourse analysis, including CDA and Critical Analysis of Discourse, can hone Big Data analysis by using it in support of discourse studies in South Africa. These studies must thus always be underscored by the changing discursive practices advanced through social media and technologies.

Another important distinction, which may broaden further studies, is the difference between social and anthropological theories as conceptual and theoretical frameworks into social media studies. The distinction, the differences through which Scott skirts at times, is located
in the societal (anthropology) and cultural (social theory) implications of a phenomenon such as #FeesMustFall. In Scott’s work the lines are not as clearly defined, since his concept of Hidden Transcripts hinge on culture and the processes that constitute societal structure, where power relations influence both of these. We can thus construct #FeesMustFall as a cultural product, or mutation of social media discourse, that has irrevocably affected society, by finding ways to successfully integrate these disciplines.

This study’s focus on Twitter, however, does highlight the inadequacies of Facebook data mining methods. It calls for a need to drive quantitative analysis of Facebook’s contributions to discourse in support of online empirical and netnographical studies. Since universities prefer Facebook to Twitter, the fallists intentions, protests, and engagements were more readily available for analysis. Although the focus on fallist discourse was justified throughout the thesis, it is unfortunate that universities’ social media communications were limited to brief examples and empirical evidence. However, this presents an opportunity for further study into the Hidden Transcripts of universities’ communicative practices. Scott’s claim that “Power distorts communication” (Ibid), it can be argued, is prevalent in both the cases of students and universities. The idea of what is public should be directly proportional to the level of exposure the tweet content received. One could argue that while students were free to disclose their true feelings on Twitter, and the hashtag not only augmented their voices but also the level of perceived power fallists possessed, they were in fact disempowered by the proliferation of the hashtag. Its popularity thus negated the hashtag and, one could argue, the movement’s claim to legitimacy, since it became easy to ignore the authentic voices in the throws of all the noise.

5.3 Conclusion
This study has identified the subjective practices of South African subordinates engaging in Higher Education protest action through social media. One can say that social media provided an amalgamated stage for communication from various actors, subjects, places, and points in time. To understand these practices a discourse analysis was deployed that included both CDA and Critical Analysis of Discourse. Though similar in some ways, Critical Analysis of Discourse as a method, is not to be confused with CDA, which “focuses its critique of the intersection of language/ discourse/ speech and social structure” (Blommaert,
Instead, Critical Analysis of Discourse functions as an integrated method for analysis that broadened the analytical context of our study from just analyzing language, speech and social structure to an analysis of “power effects” (Ibid, p. 1). These ‘power effects’ broadened the scope of the thesis in space and time, from social media data that offered pictures of present day realities, providing a more dialogical approach to critically reflect on #FeesMustFall as a socially constructed phenomenon with cultural imperatives. In other words, using Scott’s conceptual framework for subordination and domination, i.e. power effects, we were able to interrogate the various ways in which #FeesMustFall exposed South Africa’s historically conditioned locus of hegemonic inequities.

These hegemonic inequities were located beyond the discourse extracted from the SNS data, presenting subordination as historically preconditioned in South African society through a historical cycle of liberated hidden discourse. We saw that 1976 played a key role in #FeesMustFall discourse and that parallels, with major deviations, between the two protests, do exist. Today, the former subordinates have become the dominants, and the power struggle is less clearly defined. Formerly, the boundaries existed within racial inequality. The result is a dangerous power struggle that provide favorable conditions for dominants to descend even further into hiding their agendas, and subordinates to descend even further into subordination, which Scott attributes to “ideological hegemony”, which occurs when “subordinates … occupy positions of power” (Ibid, p. 82). An example was presented as Zuma’s 0% fee increase announcement, which was an illustration of the dominant public transcript. It only further veiled dominant structure ideological imperatives, when his body language and demeanor during the live broadcast were noticeably contradictory to his discursive actions, i.e. He did not directly address fallists, which caused greater upset giving rise to more questions and more revolt.

The subcultural aspects of social media thus became a key feature of subordination in South Africa though #FeesMustFall. A decontextualized site for highly contextualized discursive practices, social media characterized subordination as naturalized since dominants continued to ignore their publicly liberated discourse on SNS by remaining silent, or publishing sanitized (Scott, 1990: p. 87) statements, and avoiding use of the hashtag to engage with fallists. This indifference to the symbolic display of power proliferated and exposed by the
hashtag in turn became a key feature of domination in South African society. Failing to use the hashtag to communicate with fallists further perpetuated this indifference. This thesis therefore only managed to analyze Zuma’s public display of dominance in the public transcript, as opposed to universities’ social media statements and other communicative practices. It is therefore important to note that further integrated study into dominant transcripts on social media, such as Facebook – identified as the chief SNS used by universities to communicate – is required in order to identify more features of domination and subordination.

Furthermore, the Hidden Transcript, as a paradigm through which to view subordination and domination in South African society today, exposed the many ways in which social realities are constructed in covert and strategic ways. The thesis argued, for example, that the public and the hidden continue to be a bone of contention jarred by SNS and, especially, hashtags. In an “atmosphere of freedom” (Ibid, p.121) Twitter simultaneously hid discourse as the “privileged site for the transmission of popular culture”, which is “usually at odds with official culture” (Ibid), when the popularity of the hashtag soared in unprecedented ways. From Twitter to a leaderless movement spanning two years of unresolved activity that will only further in the years to come, the hashtag has become a site of both public and hidden discourse; public as “the social expression of thoughts in some context” (Ibid) and hidden through popularity, or an accumulation of noise (too many voices) on Twitter. One could say that the hashtag decontextualized the broader discourse and resounded suppressed sentiment after so many years of repressive rainbow nation rhetoric.

The unveiling of the Hidden Transcript (suppressed sentiment) through #FeesMustFall has thus shown us that South African society has become resistant to the sanitized public transcript, which rainbow nation rhetoric encompassed. The preconditions of subaltern realities are being interrogated against the extremely violent Apartheid ideologies as well as the reconstructed, yet equally violent, rainbow nation ideologies; violent in the latter case because it only managed to passivize the extent to which the historical hegemonies of colonization on South African society until the advent of social media, and Mandela’s death. Through the #RhodesMustFall and #FeesMustFall revolts, South Africans have emerged ready to purge their society of the past in dialogical ways discursive and public confrontation.
Racial discourse is no longer taboo, nor hidden, and identity politics are at the forefront of communication. We can thus say that the Hidden Transcript has shown us that while South Africa’s cycle of liberated hidden discourse has returned to the discursive practices of 1976, it has opened the door for society to develop to the next phase in social change. For if James Scott was able to use historical subaltern examples that parallel present day events where the difference is vast, yet the similarities are uncanny, we can predict that the Hidden Transcript will remain intact, just as firmly as revolutionary aspirations of the subaltern will continue to prevail.

Additionally, with the advent of Black Twitter and hashtag activism, we can safely say that social media has asserted its influence of contemporary politics in South Africa; although this thesis argues that dominant structures are still too indifferent to its value. The revolutionary aspirations of the subaltern are thus expedited through social media, from apolitical subjects critiquing their political counterparts online. A clear example was the related hashtag #ZumaMustFall and #RhodesMustFall, which broadened the #FeesMustFall agenda from simply free education to anti-corruption and decolonization respectively. Although the free education agenda is implicitly political within the realm of Education as a centering institution, the imperatives of fallists were subjective and stemmed from human rights issues driven by the sentiment that politics have failed South Africa’s subordinates. As the ‘born-free’ generation, fallists are characterized as apolitical, however, as Scott infers, subordinates are forced to engage in practices akin to dominant structures in order to engage in the struggle for power or equality. Thus, as free tools for discursive engagement, SNSs become sociopolitical sites influencing contemporary politics in South Africa by providing platforms of shared communicative practice that transcends space and time. One could say that social media’s sociopolitical implications on contemporary politics in South Africa may be located in the extent to which action surpasses mere speech, which is a direct critique of and resistance to government’s inaction as the #FeesMustFall discourse implies in the data.

To conclude, #FeesMustFall’s Hidden Transcripts of subordination and domination have revealed South African society’s reconstruction of the post-Apartheid rainbow nation rhetoric through resistance and defiance. South Africa’s subaltern will no longer submit to their subordinate status so firmly precondition through historical and hegemonic social practices
and are doing so using social media as sites of political engagement. #FeesMustFall has thus fundamentally changed communicative practices in South African society. This thesis recommends that dominant structures, universities, government institutions and dominant elites alike, pay closer attention to social media discourse by integrating research methodologies and theoretical frameworks within the discipline of discourse analysis in order to more critically evaluate the changing discursive practices presented by social media. It is up to society to deploy the discursive practices available through social media by searching for the legitimate cries of the subaltern. South Africa is developing from a society with a past to a society confronting its past. This change must be acknowledged through continued efforts to model discursive practices around South Africa’s unique and developing society.
6. References


