Introduction: From Ivory Tower to Market Place: What Future for the University in South Africa?

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To reflect on the political and institutional conditions of academic work, a group of intellectuals came together at the University of South Africa in October 2005 for a Symposium, 'From Ivory Tower to Market Place. What Future for the University in South Africa?' Analyses, questions and visions—of present conditions, possible effects, and alternative paths—were explored in contributions to the Symposium. The papers compiled in this edition of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* reflect the issues and concerns debated during that encounter.

Among the voices and debates in higher education, this edition does not stand alone. It is part of the wealth of documentation testifying to the unprecedented transformation of the higher education sector throughout the world, including the rest of Africa. Changes in funding, research policies, university governance and the power of the professoriate, coupled with advances in digital communications technology and in the knowledge industry have inevitably led to debates expressing concern not only about academic freedom, but about the very *raison d'être* of the University (see Derrida 2004:129). Such is the magnitude of the current crisis, so radical the changes, and so deep the bewilderment experienced by academics, that intellectuals like Bill Readings, reflecting on the ruins of the University, asks how today, we speak of the university (see Readings 1996:5, 10, 19, 167). Derrida poses the question negatively and thereby more emphatically: Today, 'how can we not speak of the university?' (2004:129). Derrida poses this question in the negative for the following reasons:

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> On the one hand […] it is impossible, now more than ever, to dissociate the work we do, within one discipline or several, from a reflection of the political and institutional conditions of that work. Such a reflection is unavoidable. It is no longer an *external* complement to teaching and research; it must make its way through the very objects we work with, shaping them as it goes, along with our norms, procedures, and aims. We cannot not speak of such things (Derrida 2004:129).

We cannot not speak of the University. We cannot stand by, silently watching tendencies that threaten the unique nature of this institution. Moreover, we cannot ignore the vagaries of higher education policy in South Africa that Salim Vally outlines in this edition of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*:

> Higher education policy has failed, often on its own terms, as bureaucrats renege on the lofty ideals of numerous discussion papers and scramble to reconfigure the landscape – now suggesting a cap on student numbers, then revising this, then suggesting a "differentiated" university system.

University transformation, it turns out, is enmeshed in a complex web of inter-related processes that have long taken it out of the ambit of what the anti-apartheid struggle had once envisaged as a socially and politically transformative educational agenda. Instead, transformation has become aligned with the com-mercialisation of education, with restructuring and rationalisation and, in post-apartheid South Africa, with conflicting directives of Africanisation, employ-ment equity, job creation and poverty alleviation. This marks one of the peculiarities of South African post-apartheid higher education. On the one hand, the state's policies have created openings for the play of market forces in terti-ary education, creating conditions for corporate managerialism; on the other hand, they are advocating redress and curriculum development.

   What renders South African policies for higher education peculiar and spe-cific, at the same time renders them contradictory, as Grazia Weinberg points out in this volume. Two traditional models of the University underlie the present policy articulations: the University of (National) Culture and the University of Excellence (Readings 1996). The University of Culture, established in tandem with European nation-state formation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centu-ries, extols the regulative idea of a unifying or unified national culture, and makes that the principle of the organisation of knowledge pursued in university study and intellectual culture. The University of Excellence emerges in the latter part of the twentieth century with the decline of the nation-state. Mod-elled on the corporation, it is emptied of cultural content, branding itself through a vacuous appeal to 'quality', which is constantly monitored by a corporate administration in terms of quality control and performance management. The

attempt to correlate the University of (National) Culture with the University of Excellence, as current higher education blueprints do, is thus fundamentally flawed because these two models of the University are incompatible with each other.

One arena in which this contradiction is played out is that of university admissions and exclusions. Corporate models of university governance have in effect intensified the struggles around exclusion of students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds from universities on financial grounds (see Brutus 2006:xi-xiv). In a collection of essays recently published under the telling title *Asinamali*, Andrew Nash explains this development in the broader context of the class re-alignment during the 'transition':

> The restructuring of higher education has been presented as a process of overcoming the legacy of apartheid. [...] There is some truth to this account of the restructuring, but it is far from being the whole story. This account obscures the project of class re-alignment that was an essential part of the transition from apartheid to democracy. The transition included the demobilization of a liberation movement with radical aims and a mass base, at the same time as the ANC government committed itself to neoliberal economic policies and to building a new black elite strongly oriented towards global competitiveness. Although the rhetoric of non-racialism and democracy was used to explain and justify the restructuring of higher education, this class project had a more consistent role in deciding the form of the new higher education system (Nash 2006:1-2).

Policies of empowerment have proved uneven and equally contradictory, and in some cases counterproductive, Adam Habib and Sean Morrow argue in this volume, where it has been a matter of mechanistically enforcing quotas in response to gender and racial equity requirements. In their opinion, these policies have created barriers to research productivity in South Africa.

The concerns over the multifaceted connotations of 'transformation' have been echoed in critical analyses across some higher education institutions and departments. The Vice Chancellor of Wits University, Loyiso Nongxa initiated a series of lectures, entitled 'Facing Up to Race: Equity, Diversity and the Idea of the University', that took place at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER) in April and May 2006. In a covering document, he states:

> [T]he project of "transformation" has often become attenuated, as a largely managerial, bureaucratic or quantitative exercise with the primary concern of ensuring that adequate numbers of female and black students and staff find places in the universities. This has generated controversy, anger and anxiety in many constituencies with an interest in the future of higher education (Nongxa 2006).

The new managerialism in higher education, which displaces an erstwhile cultural elite nourished by white privilege, provides the parameters of employment equity that became mandatory in academic appointments, as it did in all sectors of the economy and civil service, since 1996. It coincided with the re-orientation in development policies towards economic growth thought to be sponsored by the private sector, through foreign direct investment and through the increasing role of international financial institutions displacing the role of the state, coupled with cut-backs in social spending. It spawned a notion of 'globalism', associated with the idea of 'a single market for goods, capital, labour, services, skills, and technology' (Chachage 2001:3). The blueprints for 'poverty reduction' through this notion of economic growth held numerous implications for post-apartheid restructuring of higher education. Education policy came to extol the objectives of skills training in line with the job market and of the design, marketing, and delivery of 'knowledge products' to paying clients. As in the provision of other basic and social services, 'cost reduction' and 'cost recovery' became prime criteria for 'viability', 'sustainability' and 'efficiency'.

'Contrary to the hegemonic discourse', says Vally, '[the corporate model] is neither efficient nor effective and most importantly has little to do with sound pedagogical practices'. Critique, one of the hallmarks of intellectual engagement, has become a risky endeavour. Academics, particularly those among them who represent dissenting voices, are subjected to surveillance. It is a surveillance premised on distrust, individual advancement, and the devaluing of commitment to, and of the very notion of, education as a public good.

A market-orientation in the 'production', 'marketing', and 'delivery' of 'knowledge products' was upheld as a recipe for universities to 'pay for themselves'. A new stratum of financial planners has come to the fore, issuing directives that become frameworks for curriculum restructuring and research 'management', and displacing academic leadership as criterion for eligibility to academic office.

The corporate university has given rise to unbridled careerism in the corridors of learning. Remuneration levels for senior academic-administrative service have become decisive for aspirations and expectations of candidates above the satisfaction of academic work. The status that comes with a senior management post has displaced traditional cultural capital—i.e. the professor as academic leader—in defining social position. In other words, the professional-managerial 'class', living off the academy rather than for it, has acquired social and economic dominance over the traditional cultural elite. This would also explain the 'capital flight' from the humanities and the decline of their 'market value' in broader terms. The previous ideal of the 'dis-interested' nature of

critical academic inquiry, that made 'academic' an adjective or adverb signify-
ing 'irrelevance' to instrumental reason and vested interests, has become a
distant memory. The business world is sponsoring an 'intellectual' elite that
now assumes authority in matters outside commerce. This is strikingly obvi-
ous in newspapers like *The Weekender* and London *Financial Times* which
have become culturally more acute (or hands-on) than the standard papers,
while clearly serving the interests of that elite.

The intrusion of the state or big business into the University has stimulated
a number of debates on academic freedom and university autonomy. In his
essay on Apartheid's University, Premesh Lalu argues that today these two
issues should be reconsidered in the light of what has happened in the past. In
his view, challenges by mainly English-language universities to state interven-
tion in the name of academic freedom under various apartheid regimes remained
limited because of their partial nature. Universities did not reflect on their own
implication in the racial policies of the state; they failed to acknowledge the
existence of a prior contract that linked them with the state, and which compro-
mised their opposition to apartheid.

Outlined above are some of the conditions which contribute to the ruination
of the University as we know it. For South Africa, some alarming trends and
findings are documented by Peter Stewart in this volume. Over a ten year pe-
riod (between 1995 and 2006), the University of South Africa, for instance, has
seen a near-doubling of student numbers, with a simultaneous decrease in aca-
demic staff, and a deterioration of academic working conditions. In the same
period of time, administrative workloads have increased drastically. Poor re-
muneration, working conditions and support have taken their toll on research
activity of academics. The paucity and poverty of research emanating from
South Africa are noted by Habib and Morrow. National spending on research
and development has declined in absolute and relative terms.

However, it would be misleading to conclude this overview on a note of
'the university in ruins', as Readings (1996) did in the mid-1990s, when judged
by present conditions. The conditions outlined above certainly do contribute to
the ruination of the University; but the topos of 'ruins' is less than appropriate,
as it still presupposes an outline of a bounded space. While numerous hetero-
geneous tertiary education institutions in South Africa have been merged in
the last three years, the transmission of knowledge in core functions of teach-
ing and research has become increasingly decentred. Institutions have diversi-
fied, competing with each other as they are chasing 'market shares' of stu-
dents, and seeking to secure external sources of funding through entering into
partnerships with foundations, companies and other business ventures.

This development is positively noted by Piyushi Kotecha and subjected to vigorous critique by Vally. Kotecha's essay reflects, in the main, the line adopted by the new managerial class in the University. She puts forward an argument in favour of the diversification of higher education institutions as a way out of the dichotomies created by the coexistence of a University of (National) Culture and a University of Excellence. While the former is placed on the foundation of state funding and the idea of a public good, the latter is associated with private-corporate interest, and with specific programme, niche area and project-based funding.

A different notion of diversity and Africanisation is envisioned by Neville Alexander, that of diversification in language policy, leading to the enrichment and intellectualisation of African languages in South Africa, in line with principles of linguistic human rights. The author sees the adoption of this kind of language policy as a form of empowerment which he links with the eradication of poverty and economic inequality.

Equally concerned about present developments, the Wits Vice Chancellor's lecture series faces up to the contradictions of 'transformation' generated in South African higher education policy, while placing them within a framework of critical inquiry, human rights and social justice:

> The aim of this lecture series, workshop and roundtables, then, is to revisit the debate on "transformation" in three respects: (1) by anchoring it within a critical, even philosophical, reflection on issues of equity, social justice and redress; (2) by re-examining the idea of the university in a rapidly changing culture and a knowledge-based economy often driven by technological innovations, consumerism and instrumental reason; (3) and by situating these discussions in a comparative perspective, drawing on similar experiences elsewhere, including other parts of Africa. We want to examine to what extent the ethical project of non-racialism in South Africa shapes our ideas of a transformed university. What remains of the role of the university in a democracy at a time when global economic competition dictates most political, cultural and social choices? (Nongxa 2006)

Impelled by these and related questions, this edition of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* aims at taking this debate further, to provide specific case studies and diagnoses, and to indicate some paths towards re-shaping the academic terrain. Most importantly, however, in reclaiming an independent critical discourse on issues in higher education, it is our wish as editors, and on behalf of each contributor to this issue, to be part of a larger debate across the African continent.

Taking stock of conditions in academia in South Africa over the last ten years, comparing notes of their effects and searching for alternatives, Peter Stewart calls for a review of the core academic roles that are key to the actualisation of the strategic plans of universities. A renewal of core academic roles can only become fruitful for tuition and research if the initiative is taken by academics in what he calls a 'critical collegial movement'. This could extend to research collaboration across institutional boundaries, which Habib and Morrow advocate.

Drawing attention to the pivotal role and common ground of the humanities, specifically, John Higgins points to the fundamental social force of literacy that has become obliterated in higher education policy and restructuring and in research funding. Literacy forms the bedrock of reflexive communication, contextual understanding, and critical and creative thinking. 'Declining' critical literacy as social force, as he argues the National Research Foundation's funding policy and university restructuring do, means undermining the very goal of social development professed by education policy.

Similarly, Ulrike Kistner argues that the core relation between teaching and learning, that has been variously analysed in terms of charisma, tutelage, transference and sublimation, is deeply embedded as a social value in different forms and histories of societies, and is not about to go away by managerial or financial fiat.

The source of a 'critical collegial movement', however, cannot be entirely generated from within the institution of the University, and least of all in its present shape. Moreover, none of the contributors to this edition of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* supports a return to the ivory tower. We would agree with Derrida that thinking has to be vigilant and suspicious of that understanding of the role of the university that regulates it according to a technical ideal of competence and the demands of the market (Derrida 2004:151). Engaging with Kant's *Conflict of the Faculties* ([1798] 1992)*, Derrida argues that it is precisely in a place *outside* of professional education and technical competence that truth can and has to be spoken with autonomy, and without concern for 'utility' (2004:152).

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Developing Contradictions: Diversity and the Future of the South African University

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Abstract

The manner in which the contemporary university is represented evokes an 'either/or' conceptualisation of the university as either staying loyal to the fundamentals of teaching, research and outreach, or a wholehearted participation in the neoliberalisation of higher education. This paper begins by questioning whether this dichotomy is as clear-cut as is suggested. It proceeds to examine the idea of a market-driven university as an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) construct in an attempt to highlight the very different context and challenges faced by a developing country like South Africa. At the most obvious level, the objectives of the White Paper (1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) pointed to achieving both equity and efficiency simultaneously by increasing access to address apartheid's legacy and increasing cost savings and streamlined functioning. This dual imperative placed on the South African university has the benefit of opening up the institution to a range of possibilities that are neither exclusively ivory tower nor entrepreneurial. The remainder of the paper intends to unpack what these roles, functions and identities could be for the future South African university.

Résumé

La façon dont l'université contemporaine est représentée évoque une «double» conceptualisation de celle-ci, soit en tant qu'entité restant fidèle aux principes de base de l'enseignement, de la recherche et de l'animation soit en tant qu'entité participant pleinement à la néo-libéralisation de l'enseignement supérieur. Dans

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cette étude, on commence par s'interroger pour savoir si cette dichotomie est aussi nette qu'elle est suggérée. On examine ensuite l'idée d'une université tournée vers le marché comme une pratique de l'Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Économiques (OCDE) dans une tentative visant à mettre en relief le contexte très différent et les défis auxquels est confronté un pays en développement comme l'Afrique du Sud. Les objectifs du Livre Blanc (1997) et du Plan National sur l'Enseignement Supérieur (2001) visaient à atteindre à la fois l'équité et l'efficience par l'accroissement de l'accès afin de faire face à l'héritage de l'apartheid, par l'augmentation des économies et par la rationalisation du fonctionnement. Ce double impératif auquel est soumise l'université Sud Africaine a l'avantage d'ouvrir l'institution à un éventail de possibilités qui ne sont ni exclusivement une tour d'ivoire ni entrepreneuriales. Le reste de l'étude montre ce que pourraient être ces rôles, fonctions et identités pour la future université Sud Africaine.

The debates that repeatedly swirl around South African universities cover a wide range of topics but have, I would like to argue, a common driver or more precisely a discursive reflex. Whether the burning issue is institutional autonomy, the university as a public good, enrolment capping, higher education governance, policy overload or graduate throughput, there are specific ways in which the debate is couched that warrant further examination.

Take the public good argument for example. Is South African higher education a public or private good? If government sees it as a public good, then the state should be prepared to fund it. If, on the other hand, it is felt that the value generated by a degree pertains to the individual that obtains the degree then it is fair to argue that the individual should pay, and thus, it becomes a private good. The argument makes use of the private/public dichotomy in order to highlight the contradiction within a state that argues that higher education is essential for the building of our nation and then introduces a funding framework that effectively reduces funding to institutions. Much of the same conundrum occurs in the enrolment capping argument. The massification of the system is necessary if we are to build up the high level skills that we require in this country, but the state cannot afford to fund unconstrained growth. It is also necessary to note that this tension is not always only between the state's strategic objectives and higher education. By way of another example, the Department of Science and Technology (DST) needs an additional 6,000 researchers in our system by 2008 if it is to meet its target of one percent of GDP spent on Research and Development (R&D), while the Department of Education (DoE) is trying to control the numbers who access the higher education system from the input side.

The common element in these debates is not surprisingly an oppositional mode of argument that inevitably breaks down into an 'either/or' statement. However, a developmental context, like South Africa, requires so many interventions at all levels that we find ourselves in a perpetual contradiction. While the debates may look like either/or, the reality is that we need solutions for an 'and/and' scenario. To return to the tension between the objectives of DST and DoE, we need more researchers and yet if we continue to prioritise growth in this sector, as we have been doing over the past five years, our universities will simply run out of infrastructural resources like physical space and sufficient lecturing staff, not to mention the additional funding that will be required.

The either/or conceptualisation of the world presumes that claims for truth should be mutually exclusive. The inherent contradiction of capitalism lies in the fact that the huge technological advances generated by capitalists' ownership of the means of production exist in tandem with, and feeds off, mass poverty and inequality. For many Marxists, it was felt that the contradiction would become so great that it would lead to the poor understanding themselves as an oppressed class, uniting and claiming for themselves the means of production, whether through violence or other means. Thus the contradiction would be resolved in the creation of a new social order. However, in reality, the inherent contradiction has grown apace and has even become global in nature. As the lukewarm outcome of the G8 Summit testifies, Africa remains the proletarian continent, dwelling in the midst of this contradiction.

For all the attempts at logical consistency in the policies that direct our country, the contradiction of what President Mbeki calls the two economies permeates all our attempts at nation building. For those involved in higher education, the most enduring and arresting instance of this lies in the Green Paper (1996), the White Paper (1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001). Three words resonate throughout these texts, usually within the same sentence, and are repeated so often that they recede from view: equity, redress and efficiency. These terms form the corner-stones of higher education policy making, they are built into its discursive field. And yet, they indicate a plethora of contradictions that have dogged our debates on higher education policy.

A broad-brush picture of the state's—and DoE's—assumptions and pressures could read as follows:

- *Valuing equality, non-racism, non-sexism:* As articulated in the Constitution, South African democracy is based upon equality, non-racism and non-sexism. These values show a commitment to social upliftment and ensuring personal rights for all. However, after the Washington Con-

sensus, the state's economic policies are steadfastly neoliberal, based on an ethos that entails the privatisation of its assets and the opening up of the country to international markets and increased competition.

- *Looking backward and forward:* The DoE's gaze from 1997 onwards was necessarily backward looking in order to redress the continued legacy of apartheid. But to sustain higher education requires that the DoE addresses pressing future challenges like globalisation, SADC access, GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services) and the like.

- *Pursuing equality and redress:* The pursuit of equity and redress requires a substantial investment and reconfiguration of the sector while the purpose of efficiency (in a neoliberal context) is towards a lean, value-driven system where only the economically profitable institutions would survive.

- *Servicing national and African education:* Higher education must service the idea of a 'national and African education' which holds that graduates, sensitised to African issues, are essential in order to ensure the continuation and future success of the nation. In other words, graduates need to foster and guarantee democracy in South African society, while also being able to compete at highly competitive international levels.

- *Meeting Employment Equity targets:* To ensure that Employment Equity targets are met at the level of staffing, young black academics are brought into the system at the inevitable cost of experienced white academics—the graying professoriate—who are leaving or taking retirement. This has profound consequences both for research output and teaching experience. In addition, these young, black academics are also being cannibalised by the massive resource needs of the state and business, both of which are under pressure to achieve equity targets.

- *Participating in a knowledge economy:* The multiple outputs required from a sector participating in a knowledge economy are undercut by a funding framework that unintentionally rewards the homogenisation of the sector, and all universities and universities of technology are equally rewarded for conducting research irrespective of whether they have the expertise or available resources.

These resultant tensions and contradictory objectives mean that the state in general, and the DoE in particular, are battling with their own ideological contradictions. They are pursuing neoliberal objectives in a broadly socialist frame of reference while speaking the language of redress to the disenfranchised

majority, and while protecting institutions (mostly historically advantaged) that are economically sustainable.

Two points are worth highlighting here. Firstly, it seems that our birthright from the moment of democracy was the need to deal with ongoing tensions, paradoxes, inconsistencies and competing needs. And this situation will not change for some considerable time. Secondly, it is perhaps naïve of us to entertain the belief that higher education policy, since the White Paper (1997), has been logical. The brutal absurdity of apartheid has created systems that require equally involved measures by way of rectifying the situation. Moreover, as Haddad incisively points out: '[E]ducational planning is actually a series of untidy and overlapping episodes in which a variety of people and organizations with diversified perspectives are actively involved - technically and politically' (1995:17).

So if the rational either/or model of policy formation cannot be used to understand the intricate, developmental, politically contested space of South African higher education, it is further dismantled as an investigative mechanism by the new demands that attend globalisation. If our sector has, over the past seven years, been involved in policy introspection and implementation, the pace of change in higher education internationally has been rapid, to say the least. Suddenly we are confronted with virtual, franchised, and corporate in-house universities, institutions that bear no resemblance to our traditional understanding of the university.

We also find that education has miraculously transformed itself into a service. Countries like Canada, Australia and the U.S. are already at the GATS door, eagerly awaiting the opportunity to set up university shop in the southern African region. And this is not, just simply, another instance of the way that borderless globalisation is impinging on another aspect of our lives. The university's relation to globalisation is predetermined by the fact that the phenomenon of globalisation is made possible by the role of knowledge and knowledge production. The university then is valorised because it generates the same knowledge upon which globalisation depends.

Knowledge plus ICT channels and a common interacting platform that the internet provides make it possible to respond speedily to global market opportunities. It is these developments, in large part, that have made countries like India and China able to leap-frog many OECD countries. The ravenous hunger that defines global capitalism creates an urgency (some may say panic) within all sectors. There is simply not enough time for higher education to take time off to adjust to the tumultuous transformation agenda of the past seven years.

This sense of urgency for higher education is clearly conveyed in a remarkable discussion paper released by President Mbeki in June 2005. The document raises a sustained critique of the sector, accusing its leadership of being 'too close to the coalface' to understand the critical role that the university needs to play in society. The document puts forward Princeton University as an example of the kind of mission, output and quality that is needed in South African universities. In a recent survey Princeton is rated as the ninth best university in the world, but the gist of the critique offered on our universities is that we are collectively and individually under-performing, that we may well not be focussing on the right areas and that the sector lacks self-confidence. It is, in the words of the document, 'timid', and the role of academics as too much of trainers rather than that of innovators (Mbeki 2005). The sector presently awaits a promised second paper that will put forward proposed interventions, but the implications are immense. After this period of restructuring in the name of transformation, are we getting a message from President Mbeki that higher education needs to reconfigure itself once more in order to meet global challenges for excellence in higher education?

If indeed another bout of change is coming, I would like to use this opportunity to flesh out what this change may bring, and how it might be used as a space for realising different kinds of blueprints for higher education, neither strictly traditional nor voraciously entrepreneurial.

We need a new way of thinking about the sector that can accommodate and embrace the and/and demands placed upon us. And by way of introducing an and/and reading of higher education, I would like to propose the four following—and hopefully contentious—assumptions about the future identity of the sector.

One, in South Africa (and internationally) there no longer exists, in Lyotard's (1984) phrase, 'a grand narrative' of the university. The image of the university with elaborate Gothic architecture that is removed from society, where time-honoured traditions continue undisturbed, where students go through a hallowed rite of passage to emerge as critical citizens possessing all they need for future success; this image no longer exists. Or more precisely, it exists as a branding idea that is consciously or unconsciously sold to parents, students, donors and the public. You may, of course, point out the examples of Oxford and Yale, or even Princeton, to prove me wrong, but it is my contention that these august institutions have sufficient third stream revenue in order to ward off a post-modern reality and to put forward a deliberately constructed image of the university as steeped in tradition.

Two, it is likely that our university system will become increasingly diverse and fragmented. One of the shortcomings of the present funding framework is that it unintentionally promotes homogeneity in our institutions. It rewards institutions for the same things. However, President Mbeki's (2005) document makes it very clear that the higher education sector must become a lead sector that produces a much wider range of outputs. At present, higher education, including the Further Education and Training (FET) band, is not meeting the human resource development needs of the country; interventions are underway to ensure the required alignment.

Three, we need a hypertextual logic for the university. In extending the second assumption, it becomes clear that the flourishing of the higher education sector will depend on our ability, and agility, to maximise opportunities as they arise, and not purely for profit purposes, but also for our long-term sustainability in the face of dwindling state funding. How does this relate to the notion of a hypertextual university? The experience of reading on the internet is radically different to reading a hard copy. In cyberspace, hypertext, with its proliferation of links, constantly discourages a linear approach to reading. Instead, one is continually invited to leave the text under scrutiny in order to explore related issues. The university, with its myriad of disciplines, should be ideally suited to linking within itself and externally to produce new forms, innovative collaborations, patents and spin-off companies.

To offer a few examples: 150,000 FET students are an anomaly when compared to other countries. A nearly 1:5 ratio between FET and our universities should be the other way around. The recapitalisation of the FET sector will not, in the short term, provide the sufficient work-ready medium and the required high-level skills. The Social Enterprise Training and Support (SETAs) mechanisms are also, in the main, not achieving their potential. These two problems may appear tangential to higher education, but if we read these challenges from a hypertextual point of view, we could well see the Universities of Technology assisting in solving both of these issues. Educating diplomats ready for immediate induction into work and running refresher courses for lifelong learners while accessing the substantial revenues of the SETAs are possibilities of addressing the multiple and/and challenges in South Africa.

In universities with little research capacity, there is a perpetual concern about building capacity in this regard. These universities work on the traditional idea that the university needs to be balanced between teaching, research, community outreach and information storage. But what if a university specialised in attracting the best lecturers and dedicated itself, as does the college system in the U.S., solely to providing undergraduate teaching excellence?

Or, what if universities re-conceptualised themselves around a consolidating idea? Imagine, a university organising itself around the idea of the 'environment' and specialising in all related activities from the study of grasslands and viniculture to environmental impact studies and the anthropology of place.

Four; more institutions, not less. It may sound ludicrous after the mergers, but it is my strong sense that we will see more higher education institutions emerging. However, these new institutions will not be more of the same, but could be niche-focussed universities directed to research, built with the vision of becoming leaders in specific areas (like nanotechnology) and funded by discretionary funding from the state.

In summary, I do not foresee an either/or proposition for the South African university. It will not remain either a cloistered ivory tower or become a callous entrepreneurial establishment. Our institutions, in responding to our developmental status, may well splinter around compelling projects and programmes; and, they may cohere around transdisciplinary ideas to spawn new niche universities that are born out of academic expertise across universities, both in South Africa and throughout the SADC region.

We in higher education are immensely privileged. We have the chance of being able to contribute to many of the diverse needs of a developing country. What is crucial is that all of us—from academics to administration to leadership—realise the opportunities, not only for financial gain, but also for the ethical, intellectual and innovative contributions that we can and must make to our society.

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Higher Education in South Africa: Market Mill or Public Good?[1]

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Abstract

This paper argues that current trends in higher education entail a disincentive for universities to enrol students from poor backgrounds and the continuing reproduction of a highly elitist system. The perception of success in the marketplace, shrinking allocations to education, and a discourse of efficiency and competitiveness have sidelined previous commitments to access, equity and genuine transformation. These developments follow a global market utopia which sees higher education as a commodity, emphasising a new managerialism spurred on by 'by market-driven notions of competition, privatisation and consumption that adopt corporate models of management in order to reduce costs and maximise profits' (Baatjes 2005:29). I draw our attention to the urgency of tasks necessary to prevent the further corporatisation of higher education institutions. Unfulfilled promises by the state and the enormity of tasks ahead can result in a temptation to despair on the part of those who perceive of a different higher education system. The inroads of neo-liberalism, of markets and individualism over social justice, community and solidarity, create new moral imperatives. It is 'part of a more general re-working of education as a sphere of ethical practice – a commodification of education and values which allows us to systematically neglect the outcomes of policy and practices – a demoralisation of society' (Ball 2003:25). In this situation, education degenerates into a lucrative market opportunity for capital. However, drawing on my keynote address to the 12th World Congress on Comparative Education in Havana, Cuba, I argue for the cultivation of hope in conjunction with the conviction that there is space for social action. I conclude by arguing that this is essential, since education for the commonweal is too important to be left in the hands of business, and the whims and vicissitudes of the market place.

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Résumé

Cette étude soutient que les tendances actuelles de l'enseignement supérieur n'incitent pas les universités à inscrire les étudiants issus des milieux pauvres et entraînent la reproduction continuelle d'un système très élitiste. La perception de la réussite sur le marché, l'amenuisement des fonds alloués à l'enseignement et le discours sur l'efficience et la compétitivité ont mis sur la touche les engagements antérieurs pris en faveur de l'accès, de l'équité et d'une véritable transformation. Ces évolutions suivent une utopie du marché mondial qui considère l'enseignement supérieur comme une marchandise, en insistant sur un nouveau modèle de gestion encouragé par «les notions de concurrence, de privatisation et de consommation imposées par le marché qui adoptent les modèles de gestion des entreprises afin de réduire les coûts et de maximiser les profits» (Baatjes 2005:29). L'attention est attirée sur l'urgence des tâches nécessaires pour empêcher une transformation plus poussée des établissements d'enseignement supérieur en entreprises. Les promesses non tenues de la part de l'État et l'importance des tâches en perspective peuvent se traduire par une tentation au désespoir de la part de ceux qui conçoivent un système d'enseignement supérieur différent. L'empiètement du néo-libéralisme, des marchés et de l'individualisme sur la justice sociale, la communauté et la solidarité engendre de nouveaux impératifs sur le plan moral. Cela rentre dans le «cadre d'une reconsidération plus générale de l'enseignement en tant que domaine de pratique éthique – une marchandisation de l'enseignement et des valeurs, ce qui nous permet de négliger systématiquement les résultats de la politique et des pratiques – une démoralisation de la société» (Ball 2003:25). Dans cette situation, l'enseignement se transforme en une possibilité lucrative pour le capital offerte par le marché. Toutefois, s'inspirant de son discours-programme prononcé lors du 12ème Congrès mondial sur l'Enseignement comparé à la Havane, à Cuba, l'auteur plaide en faveur de la culture de l'espoir conjointement avec la conviction selon laquelle il y a de la place pour l'action sociale. Il conclut en affirmant que ceci est fondamental, puisque l'éducation pour le bien de tous est trop importante pour être laissée entre les mains des entreprises, et soumise aux caprices et aux vicissitudes du marché.

In the face of recent high profile developments in South Africa's higher education institutions, Davies' (2005) evocative essay titled 'The (Im)possibility of Intellectual Work in Neoliberal Regimes' has special resonance. She challenges the dry discourse of managerialism in higher education. It is a language that 'kills off conscience'. It is a jargon to which universities in South Africa have increasingly succumbed. They are dangerously accommodating a practice that demonises social responsibility where critique has become a risky endeavour. Davies concurs with the view that you cannot 'tell a joke in this language, or write a poem, or sing a song. It is a language without human provenance or

possibility' (2005:1). More concretely, academics, particularly those who dissent, are constantly surveyed. It is a surveillance premised on distrust, individual advancement and the devaluing of a commitment to the public good. It is also a climate where rampant individualism and competitiveness are encouraged for the sake of economic survival. Monitoring mechanisms for producing 'appropriate' behaviour are vigorously adhered to and consume limited funds. Some of the starker, recent headlines in newspapers underline a clear trend in this direction. For example, an article titled 'New Probe into Negative Media Publicity' comments on developments at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (*Sunday Tribune*, November 19, 2006). Another article, 'Private Investigators Fingerprint Staff and Take Computer' tries to 'find out who circulated an internal document revealing vast salary discrepancies among staff' at the University of Fort Hare (*Daily Dispatch*, November 17, 2006).

Piqued by one of those perennial memos that exhort cost-cutting measures, in this case impacting on his assistance to students from poor communities, a colleague at the University of KwaZulu-Natal wrote sardonically:

> Let's simply and more profitably replace our Deans and Heads of Schools with business consultants and our vice-chancellors with CEOs (not much of an adjustment considering the millions they already earn as well as how some of them singularly and embarrassingly show scant intellectual leadership). Let's embrace the language from higher up suffused with phrases such as efficiency, cost effectiveness, cost-benefit analyses, numerically epigraphic 'streams of funding', and supply and demand. We really cannot afford collegiality or 'ornamental' research discussing critical theory, ethics, feminism and racism. Let's dispense with participatory action research and epistemological questioning, it's too expensive. Let's pursue distance learning and all become technicised (I. G. Baatjies, email comm., September 20, 2005)!

Individual and social agency in our universities, as well as access to institutions, are defined largely through market-driven notions, fiscal parsimony, corporate values and corporate planning frameworks. There exists a rarely questioned assumption that the market is an appropriate model for education. In the face of mass unemployment, aligning skills to the competitive global 'new knowledge economy', as ASGISA (Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative – South Africa) and JIPSA (Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Acquisition) attempt to do, is compellingly seductive and has become the obsession of our national education department. Learning that addresses the self in relation to public life, social responsibility and democratic citizenship is marginalised and ridiculed in favour of a culture of crass commercialisation.

In the interim, a 'death sentence' is passed on most historically black institutions, and as Koen, Cele and Libhaber (2006) have shown, a sizeable number of students are annually pushed out of higher education through financial exclusions and lack of academic support, while courses and whole departments are summarily shut down largely because they are not profitable. In a written reply to a parliamentary question, the National Education Minister conceded that half the country's undergraduates drop out without completing their degrees and diplomas (*Campus Times* supplement to *Mail & Guardian*, November 17, 2006). This alarming situation is not limited to 'historically disadvantaged institutions'. The University of the Witwatersrand, for instance, admits that 33 percent of students drop out (ibid.).

When former Minister Kader Asmal described the landscape of higher education in 1999 as one which was largely dictated by the geo-political imagination of apartheid planners, many academics and students eagerly anticipated a new imagination upon which the academy would be reconfigured, one which, some ambitiously proclaimed, would even inspire a continental renewal (Chisholm, Motala and Vally 2003:623). Changing the 'institutional landscape' was widely perceived as promoting the regional sharing of resources including academic staff and libraries, eliminating duplication and encouraging synergies between disciplines, universities and communities. Some did express disquiet when the erstwhile Minister's 'tirisano' or 'call to action' list of priorities did not adequately deal with the predicament of dwindling resources, the projected costs of reconfiguring higher education, cuts in state subsidies, and escalating student debt (Chisholm, Motala and Vally 2003:623).

Despite the concerns of the earlier National Commission on Higher Education, higher education is increasingly placed beyond the reach of students from poor backgrounds. The financial aid loan scheme is inadequate, retrenchment of staff continues, and bridging courses as well as support for students have largely ended. Innovative aspects of the National Qualifications Framework such as the Recognition of Prior Learning, which held much promise for trade unions and aimed at challenging exclusionary practices of formal institutions by breaking down barriers to access and routes of progress, were not extensively implemented.

Today, on the back of ongoing technocratic reform and the impact of corporate globalisation, changes are best described as desultory and ordinary. South Africa has not escaped the debasement of higher education, a process which recasts public space as a commodified sphere with students as consumers and staff as sales consultants. Seasoned academics and student activists now highlight the rapid moves to make universities into 'assembly lines for production'

and 'lean but very mean' institutions. Decades ago, Ernest Mandel referred to the danger of *Fachidiotismus* or 'professional cretinism' (1972:23). At the behest of the accountants of education, this has now given way to organised incompetence. Observers of higher education planning in South Africa over the past decade should be forgiven their bewilderment, numerous White Papers, commissions and committees notwithstanding. Higher education policy has failed, often on its own terms, as bureaucrats renege on the lofty ideals of numerous discussion papers and scramble to reconfigure the landscape—now suggesting a cap on student numbers, then revising this proposal, then suggesting a 'differentiated' university system.

The book edited by Richard Pithouse (2006), *Asinamali: University Struggles in Post-Apartheid South Africa*, is one of the few attempts at examining recent events by reclaiming an independent critical discourse in higher education. Many of the essays in this book speak to how the university in South Africa is transformed 'from ivory tower to market place' in the words of the symposium organised by UNISA's College of Human Sciences and currently hosted in this issue of the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*. The corporate model, contrary to the hegemonic discourse, is neither efficient nor effective and, most importantly, has little to do with sound pedagogical practice. The *Asinamali* essays in various ways call for a defence of higher education as a public good and an autonomous sphere of critical and productive democratic citizenry, as well as resistance to the imposition of commercial values to subvert the purpose and mission of our institutions.

A number of essays in Pithouse's book relate specifically to the themes discussed in this article, namely, the transition from autonomy to managerialism and the marketisation of the university. In his article 'Restructuring South African Universities', Andrew Nash (2006), for example, studies class re-alignment in the transition from apartheid to democracy. He argues that we should not assume that a restructured university system will be more coherent than the apartheid one it displaced. In his article 'Accounting for Autonomy', Jonathan Jansen (2006) employs the taxonomy formulated by T. B. Davie—who shall teach; what should be taught; how this is done; who should be taught—and succinctly describes nine ways in which the state since 1994 has made significant inroads into institutional autonomy through funding formulae and legislative intervention. This loss of autonomy, for Jansen, needs to be contextualised in the new state's subservience to the diktats of the global economy. Jansen believes a 'university ceases to exist when the intellectual project no longer defines its identity, infuses its curriculum, energises its scholars, and inspires its students' (2006:19). Academic freedom and institutional autonomy can only

be defended and secured when the intellectual project defines a university's identity. Jansen examines when the university ceases to exist:

> [It] has been transformed into a commercial centre … in which every 'management' meeting is consumed with balancing the budget in the light of impending subsidy cuts… [T]he response to external intervention is one of compliance… [T]he accumulation of larger and larger *numbers* of accredited publications is pursued with relentless vigour… Just about everyone in such a place is in the business of (ac)counting (Jansen 2006:19).

Roger Southall and Julian Cobbing (2006) extend Andre du Toit's critique of the T. B. Davie formula by focussing on the threats to academic freedom as internal to universities, in a chapter entitled, 'From Racial Liberalism to Corporate Authoritarianism'. These threats, they believe, are on the rise in a situation where the university is run like a corporation whose managers 'are becoming increasingly intolerant of robust internal dissent' (Southall and Cobbing 2006:23-4). In an article entitled 'Neoliberalism, Bureaucracy and Resistance at Wits University', James Pendlebury and Lucien van der Walt (2006) analyse the deleterious effects of restructuring Wits into a 'market university' for support service workers, students from working class backgrounds, and a significant section of academic and administrative staff. They show how centralisation of power and cost-centering are linked to an increase in surveillance where collegial governance is replaced by managerialism based on business models. In his piece, 'World Bank Thinking, World Class Institutions, Denigrated Workers', Jonathan Grossman (2006) points to continuities with the politics and economics of the restyled World Bank in the way its thinking is translated into specific attacks on workers at the University of Cape Town (UCT). By examining the effects of, and responses to, Mamphela Ramphele's reign as UCT Vice-Chancellor (later a senior manager of the World Bank), Grossman shows how UCT as an intellectual project has become poorer. The question he poses is apposite: 'When the textbook Economics 101 package of retrenchment, outsourcing, and marketisation has itself become a sacred cow of the university, not just of the broader society, then what scope are academics leaving for vigorous critical social engagement?' (Grossman 2006:102).

Higher education has to be understood and situated in the context of global processes. Stromquist (2002) argues that we need to develop wider and deeper understandings of the processes of globalisation and of the full reach it is attaining through both the market and the state. She argues that private firms and international financial institutions are now the key players, and that their influence on education policies is maintained through 'persistent circulation of ideas, provision of and promises to fund reforms that move in desired directions'

(2002:1). Individualism, competition and consumption are the dominant values within academe as elsewhere. Stromquist laments the fact that in this situation there is 'little space left for contestatory and liberatory thought' (ibid.). The challenge for us is to expand the space that exists. Some suggestions toward this end will be made later in this article, but first a few points on the impact of corporate globalisation on education, or rather the insidious war on public education. Educators and students are cajoled 'to ultimately see all meaning in terms of what can be bought, sold or made profitable' (Shumar 1997:5). Meanwhile socially constituted and produced educational processes are reified as measurable things (Canaan 2002:4). Writing on the global homogenisation of education, Maude Barlow and Heather-Jane Robertson argue, '[The] corporate model of education based on head-to-head competition and survival of the fittest has become the prototype for most governments and education institutions' (1996:61).

Institutions submit to government funding formulas that penalise students from less affluent backgrounds, cut academic support programmes, and privilege programmes that have greater purchase in the marketplace while many arts and humanities courses are being phased out. Lack of state support drives institutions to seek corporate sponsorship with all the negative consequences that adhere to this. Barlow and Robertson quote an extract from an article entitled 'Universities for Sale' in *This Magazine* that captures this transmutation:

> Knowledge that was free, open and for the benefit of society is now proprietary, confidential and for the benefit of business. Educators who once jealously guarded their autonomy now negotiate curriculum planning with corporate sponsors…. Professors who once taught are now on company payrolls churning out marketable research in the campus lab, while universities pay the cut-rate fee for replacement teaching assistants… University presidents, once the intellectual leaders of their institutions, are now accomplished bagmen. In exchange for free merchandise, universities offer exclusive access to students for corporate sponsors. A professor's ability to attract private investment is now often more important than academic qualifications or teaching ability (Barlow and Robertson 1996:67).

In the university where I work, to add insult to injury, my staff card was embossed with the Coca-Cola logo, and this after more than 600 support staff were retrenched or outsourced to private companies. I assure you, 'things did not go better' with Coca-Cola. Financial exclusions of poor students and other cuts continue.

As funds for public services are generally becoming scarcer, the commer-cialisation, capitalisation and privatisation of education gains momentum, aided and abetted by the corporate lobbying machinery. The World Trade Organisa-tion (WTO) facilitates this process by insisting on the opening up of 'educa-tion markets' to international capital and foreign service providers. Govern-ments are pressurised to loosen constraints in the 'trade' by lifting subsidies and grants, labour and consumer protection laws, qualifications and local con-tent provisions. The key WTO agreement for this purpose is the General Agree-ment on Trade in Services (GATS) (see GATS Watch 2002; Rikowski 2002). GATS covers every service imaginable, including sectors that affect the envi-ronment, culture, natural resources, water, health care, education and social services. The chief beneficiaries of this new GATS regime are companies who are determined to expand their global reach and to turn public services into public markets globally. According to the organisation GATS Watch, 'Not only are the service industries the fastest growing sector of the new global economy but also health, education and water are shaping up to be the most lucrative of all services' (2002). Healthcare is considered to be a roughly U.S. $3 trillion market worldwide, while education is a $2.2 trillion market annually (Sinclair and Grieshaber-Otto 2002:74).

Rikowski writes, '[G]overnments attempt to justify opening up education to corporate capital on the grounds that private sector management methods are best, and that business people are needed to "modernise" education for a "knowledge economy" based on information technologies' (2002:1). There is widespread concern that this justification begins with companies' involvement in commercial, accounting and information technology courses, and then fans out to encroach on the education sector as a whole. For example:

> It was reassuring that former Education Minister Asmal asserted that he would continue to oppose such commodification of higher education in forums such as the World Trade Organisation, where some member states are promoting the notion of 'education and training as a service' to be bought and sold across national boundaries. One of the potentially serious threats to transformation is the unfettered growth of transnational higher education institutions which have little regard for national and regional needs and priorities (*Sowetan*, November 11, 2002).

Whether the Ministries of Finance and Trade and Industry, which have to date surpassed the expectations of the Washington-based institutions, share Minis-ter Asmal's views, remains to be seen. Minister Trevor Manuel was the Chair of the IMF/World Bank Board of Governors in 1999–2000, and Minister Alec Erwin brokered the November 2001 WTO deal in Doha, Gulf State of Qatar,

opening the way for privatisation. For public services such as education, the Doha Summit was a stepping-stone towards the consolidation of the trade that opens up public services to corporate capital.

So how do we intervene? Dave Hill implies that the influence of 'big business and their governments' has already compromised university research (2004:14). There is a paradox: the funding of research is often linked to commercial interests; therefore, the potential for critical pedagogy, or for alternative perspectives in official spaces as a bulwark against these times, is severely constrained. I am more sanguine about the spaces and possibilities that exist in formal institutions. Once again, these relate to strategies involving issues of contestation, of agency, of 'whose knowledge counts', and of resistance. These issues confront us more starkly than before, and areas of intervention are certainly possible, in fact necessary, if comparative education is to be effective in these times.

Hill (2004), interpreting Paulo Freire, correctly claims that not enough academics are working as critical pedagogues who orient themselves toward concrete struggles in the public and political domains. Even among those educators who want to transform education to serve democratic ends, reservations abound concerning the importance of going beyond institutional spaces. Hill argues, 'To engage as critical cultural workers would require academics to politicize their research by becoming social actors who mobilize, develop political clarity, establish strategic alliances…' (2004:16).

Academics must lead the defence of higher education as a public good and an autonomous sphere of critical democratic citizenry, and resist commercial and corporate values to shape the purpose and mission of our institutions. The emphasis on technical rationality, simplistic pragmatism and undemocratic managerial imperatives must be countered. Proactively, initiatives should include linking programmes and projects to community needs and struggles, as well as preventing the exclusion of poor students.

A priority for us should be a comparative investigation of neoliberal projects and the inequalities that arise out of these projects in different parts of our country and of the world. Genuinely collaborative teams of researchers linking the North and South have a role to play here. Culture and context do have particular provenance in these joint initiatives and should not be ignored (see Crossley and Jarvis 2001). Areas requiring much more work include environmental justice, the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, indigenous knowledge and collective human rights. Much research and activism is required to illuminate not only the ideology and symbols of discrimination but also the structural inequalities that are perpetuated. Crucially, an interdisciplinary approach

that recognises the contributions of history, politics and economics as well as art, literature and drama should be pursued.

Methodologies of research that embrace participatory action and popular education can become a 'transformative endeavour unembarrassed by the label "political" and unafraid to consummate a relationship with an emancipatory consciousness' (Kincheloe and McLaren 1998:264). Burbules and Torres comment that from 'these critical perspectives might emerge new educational models … including education in the context of new popular cultures and non-traditional social movements; new models of rural education for marginalized areas and the education of the poor; new models for migrant education, for the education of street children' (2000:19).

Upon being awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1993, Toni Morrison presciently warned, 'There will be more of the language of surveillance disguised as research; of politics and history calculated to render the suffering of millions mute; language glamorized to thrill the dissatisfied and bereft into assaulting their neighbors; arrogant pseudo-empirical language crafted to lock creative people into cages of inferiority and hopelessness' (quoted in Davies 2005:7). These iron cages can be dismantled, collectively and cooperatively. There are alternatives to the current dystopia which can be re-imagined.

The veteran Tanzanian academic-activist, Issa Shivji wistfully recalls how the university, once an essential core of the right to self-determination, has been undermined by the neoliberal offensive:

> Universities were dubbed white elephants. We did not need thinkers, asserted our erstwhile benefactors. We only needed storekeepers and bank tellers and computer operators and marketing managers…Universities are not cost-effective, decreed the World Bank. Education, knowledge must be sold and bought on the world market. The idea of providing free education, which really meant using citizens' money to educate their children rather than to buy guns to suppress them, was Nyerere's bad joke (Shivji 2005:35).

Shivji does believe that the gains of the past must be reclaimed and transcended, so that 'we should not lose the centrality of the struggle of ideas and the university as the centre of ideas of struggle' (2005:35).

Note

1.   A short section of this article appeared as a review in 'Beyond Matric', a supplement to the *Mail and Guardian* on September 14, 2006.

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The Role of African Universities in the Intellectualisation of African Languages[1]

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Abstract

Neo-colonial language policies deriving from decolonisation have entrenched not merely the dominance but, fatefully, the hegemony of the languages of the European colonial powers, especially that of English, which is also driven by contemporary globalisation processes. The intellectual and political leadership of the continent has succumbed, with very few exceptions, to the forces that prevail in the linguistic markets and is reaping what Bourdieu (1984) refers to as 'the profits of distinction'. African poverty and economic inequality are to be eradicated, or even reduced, during the twenty-first century. One of the central but least discussed issues that have to be addressed is the language question which is linked to the imperatives of the democratisation of modern African states, of increasing efficiency and labour productivity for economic development, and of promoting individual and social equilibrium, including the enhancement of self-confidence and creativity. A general policy of promoting language equity in multilingual African societies and of developing ('modernising' or elaborating) African languages in the context of overall national development policies will have to be followed systematically over a period of at least two generations. In this paper, the author considers the historical and social dynamics of African languages in high status functions and proposes a series of steps that will facilitate the realisation for the updated and revised Language Plan of Action for Africa, formulated and adopted by the OAU almost twenty years ago. The essay gives pride of place in this process to the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), which is fast becoming the major point of reference in the domain of language policies for the continent.

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Résumé

Les politiques linguistiques néocoloniales découlant de la décolonisation ont enra-ciné non seulement la prédominance, mais, de façon fatidique, l'hégémonie des langues des puissances coloniales européennes, notamment celle de l'anglais, qui est également poussé par les processus contemporains de mondialisation. Le lea-dership intellectuel et politique du continent a succombé, à quelques exceptions près, aux forces qui dominent les marchés linguistiques et est en train de récolter ce que Bourdieu (1984) appelle « les avantages de la distinction ». La pauvreté et l'inégalité économique en Afrique doivent être éradiquées, ou réduites, au cours du 21e siècle. Un des problèmes fondamentaux mais les moins discutés devant être abordé est la question linguistique. Celle-ci est liée aux impératifs de démocratisa-tion des États africains modernes, à l'accroissement de l'efficience et de la produc-tivité du travail pour le développement économique, ainsi qu'à la promotion de l'équilibre individuel et social, y compris le renforcement de la confiance en soi et de la créativité. Une politique générale de promotion de l'équité linguistique dans les sociétés africaines multilingues et de développement (modernisation ou perfec-tionnement) des langues africaines dans le contexte des politiques de développe-ment nationales d'ensemble devra être suivie de manière systématique sur une pé-riode de deux générations au moins. Dans cette étude, l'auteur considère la dynamique historique et sociale des langues africaines dans des fonctions à statut élevé et propose une série de mesures qui faciliteront la réalisation du Plan d'Ac-tion Linguistique pour l'Afrique revu et corrigé, qui a été formulé et adopté il y a de cela presque vingt ans par l'OUA. L'étude réserve la place d'honneur, dans ce pro-cessus, à l'Académie Africaine des Langues (ACALAN), qui est en train de devenir rapidement la référence principale en matière de politiques linguistiques pour le continent.

> An intellectualised language is [one] … which can be used for educating a
> person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and be-
> yond (Sibayan 1999:229).

Why African languages of tuition? The development argument

At the outset, it is essential to raise the crucial question that is only now begin-ning to be discussed openly in South Africa: why bother to 'develop' African languages as media of instruction or languages of tuition at tertiary educa-tional institutions, given that we have English (and, decreasingly, Afrikaans) as perfectly useable formal academic language(s)? For many, including spe-cialists in African linguistics, the provision of African languages would be nothing less than a quixotic waste of money in the cause of an anachronistic and even embarrassing African nationalism. If we are unable to give a compel-ling answer to this question, therefore, we are unlikely to persuade anyone,

least of all those whom we expect to put money on the table in order to get things moving forward, that this is one of the central questions that have to be addressed, especially by the university, if President Mbeki's 'African century' is ever to become a meaningful notion.

Usually, what came to be the university begins in the image and likeness of a dominating political or cultural authority. Or, to put it differently, in most cases, it is the language of the imperial or colonial power that prevails as both the medium of instruction and the standard for the subsequent development and use of one or more of the languages of the emergent national states. In the European context, we can trace this pattern from the time of the Roman Empire when Latin became the *lingua franca* of the intellectual elite.[2] The evolution of the university in Europe shows that in virtually all cases, 'higher' education was initially conducted in the language of the relevant imperial or other dominant power. Once the elite in any given territory began to turn its back on the imperial or international interests that had sustained it and orientated itself to national interests as the result of capitalist development in the relevant territories, the question of the national language(s) invariably became politicised and the universities became hotbeds of agitation for the displacement of the imperial ('foreign') languages by the local varieties.[3] Whereas this process became ever faster as one moved from western towards eastern Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it has been an exceptionally slow one in the overseas colonies of modern Europe, specifically in the colonies of Great Britain and France. With the exception of those territories where the native population was systematically exterminated, i.e., in much of the 'old colonial empire' (Canada, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, the Caribbean islands and parts of the Cape Colony), where English 'naturally' became the dominant and mostly the only language, the languages of the native population were never considered worthy or even capable of being used in prestigious functions such as languages of tuition in higher education.[4]

The diversity argument

Put simply, the diversity argument refers to the fact that is becoming increasingly accepted among social as well as natural scientists that cultural diversity is as essential to the survival of the human species on planet earth as is biodiversity. 'Biocultural diversity' is one of the great discoveries of the late twentieth century and it is self-evident that linguistic diversity, which is one of the core elements of cultural diversity, is *ipso facto* integral to this concept. Tové Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) and other scholars have been probing the hypothesis that there is a causal, that is, more than a mere correlative, relationship between the fact of the density of species and 'languages' respectively

that one can observe along the equatorial belt. While the diversity argument does not depend on the proof of this hypothesis, it would, of course, be immensely strengthened by it. Suffice it to say that it is fast becoming common sense that the death of any language is akin to the disappearance of a species, since with the former we lose an entire library of information about large segments of the earth and perspectives on the world(s) we live in. Indeed, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization has for a long time now funded a programme dedicated to the preservation of endangered languages and, more controversially perhaps, to the restoration of extinct languages. We know that on the continent of Africa, 2000-odd languages, however defined, are subject to the same pressures that are rendering one such language extinct somewhere in the world every two weeks or so (Ministerial Committee 2004:4, citing Crystal 2000).

An important dimension of the diversity argument relates to the question of individual and social identity. Although language is neither the only, nor for many people the main, element in the formation of individual and social identities, there is no doubt at all that for most people it seems to be the defining element of their identities, that which makes them feel both unique and at home in the company of people, usually a specific group, that speak their language. This is the essential reason why language rights such as the right to mother-tongue education or the right to be tried in a language that one understands well, are now considered to be linguistic human rights, even though universal agreement on all aspects of such rights is extremely difficult to attain precisely because of the situational, or contextual, roots of the value of language for specific communities.

The democracy argument

The most immediate argument for the urgent and active intellectualisation of the African languages can be dubbed the democracy argument. I use this term in order both to point in the direction of language as a human right and, more pertinently, to language as a socio-political and socio-economic resource. In the words of Coulmas, written with reference to Meiji, Japan:

> It was imperative that the new knowledge and enlightenment was spread as widely as possible throughout society. This could only be achieved if Western theories and technologies could be made available for mass consumption in the native language of the land (1990:71).[5]

This statement goes to the heart of the matter. The elites who inherited the political kingdom from the ostensibly departing colonial overlords, with the exception only of Tanzania and Mozambique, continued to govern within the

parameters set by the *ancièn régime*, largely because they had no option, and because it suited their immediate interests. The colonial state was not fundamentally altered even if the colour (religion, language, etc.) of those who now seemed to make the decisions differed from those who had passed on the baton of rule. What was true of other policy domains was equally applicable in the domain of language policy (see Alexander 2000; Bamgbose 2000; Heine 1990; Laitin 1990). A gratuitous distinction was made between 'official', that is, European, and 'national', that is, African, languages, since some concession had to be made to anti-colonial sentiment among the masses of the people. In an unintended manner, this distinction in fact captured discursively the social, economic and political distance that separated the African citizens (workers, peasants and traditional petty bourgeoisie) from the elite, outwardly-orientated middle classes. There is no need to belabour the point. Profound and incisive analyses of post-colonial sociolinguistics in Africa have been made by numerous scholars (Alexandre 1972; Bamgbose 2000; Heine 1990; Prah 1995). The hegemonic status of English and French in particular occasioned what I have called a static maintenance syndrome. Although I am not aware of any African intellectual having gone as far as some Meiji Japanese intellectuals, who wanted to replace Japanese with English, there can be no doubt that most members of the post- and neo-colonial elites, in spite of all protestations to the contrary, believed, and, sadly, continue to believe, that preference given to English would be the best option.[6]

This ideology, clearly, reflects the dependency relationship that shackles the African elites to their former colonial and imperial overlords. It cannot, and does not, reflect the interests of the masses of the African people, for whom English, French and Portuguese, in whatever variety they attempt to speak them, remain essentially foreign languages. The democracy argument, which is also an argument for social equity, as opposed to the deep inequalities that characterise the neo-colonial state, demands, as I have written elsewhere, that the African middle classes commit class suicide. In terms of language policy, this means that policy has to be viewed from the perspectives of the urban and the rural poor, that is, it implies a shift from the dominance of the languages of the former colonial powers to the indigenous languages of Africa. Lest there be any misunderstanding, let me state clearly that the democracy argument is based on the assumption that the political and cultural leadership of the continent are genuinely committed to the eradication of poverty, disease, ignorance and all forms of discrimination. If that is the case, then the development of the languages of the people is a precondition;[7] it is in fact no less than the litmus test for determining the democratic credentials of the regime or government in

question. At the moment, sadly, most African governments fail this elementary test.

A programme of action: Advocacy

On the occasion of the second World Congress of African Linguistics, held in Leipzig, Germany in 1997, Mohamed Abdulaziz of the University of Nairobi stated in a nutshell what the African university has to do in respect of the promotion and development of African languages. I take the liberty of citing him in his own words at length:

> [Scholars] in the linguistics of African languages have a great task in securing and preserving the linguistic heritage of Africa. Special attention needs to be focused on small-group and dying languages that have so far not been described. Equally crucial is to develop to the maximum those languages that could be used as vehicles of communication and knowledge in all spheres of modern life. These include the languages that are now functioning very well as national or official languages at the national and regional levels. For there is need to reduce and where possible eliminate the diglossia prevailing with the use of European languages as languages of education, technology and modernisation. If efforts are not directed towards achieving this goal, then African languages will remain forever underdeveloped. The present European languages could be taught well to serve as second and foreign languages since they are languages in which there is an enormous literature in all spheres of human endeavour (Abdulaziz 2000:15).

In a nutshell, we need to develop African languages to the highest possible levels in all sectors of society.

It is essential that we begin advocating in all our countries the rehabilitation of mother tongue education within the context of a bilingual educational system where the other language in most cases will be English or French. In other words, mother tongue education from the pre-school right through to the university with English or French as a supportive medium, or in some cases, certainly at university level for a long time probably, also as a formative medium. This is the fundamental conclusion that we have to come to. Every African language department at every university or college would need to propagate and support this particular demand. Everywhere in the world people use the mother tongue to teach their children. It is only in post-colonial Africa and a few other countries in south-east Asia and eastern Europe that people use a foreign language to teach their children, and as a result we have the terrible drop-out rates, repeater rates and failure rates that we know so well. This paralysing practice, more than any other, explains the fundamental mediocrity of intellectual production on the continent of Africa. We have to persuade our

communities about the potential of African languages as languages of power and languages of high status. It is our task as language activists and professionals to do this, and it is the task of the political, educational and cultural leadership of the country to do this and to be role models in this regard. We have to persuade people to understand that mother tongue education is in fact the doorway to success, not only in general terms but also the doorway to the learning of English, French, or any other language as a second language. Everybody who has studied language education knows that this is true, that the sounder your foundation in a mother tongue, the more easily you learn a foreign language or a second language.

Political will, leadership and vision

The argument about lack of resources as a cover for lack of commitment can be shown very clearly in many different ways. The best example in Africa is Somalia, where a poor country, admittedly under the authoritarian government of Siad Barré, made Somali into a language of tuition and of training from the cradle to the university without resorting to English or to any other foreign language. It is still the case to a very large extent in a country like Ethiopia where Amharic used to play a similar role in some disciplines. Of course, there are other problems in Ethiopia, but that it is not necessarily the case that we must use English or, for that matter, French is very clear from these, and other, examples. Ultimately, it is a question of commitment, of the willingness to view things from the perspective of the urban and the rural poor rather than from the convenient vantage point of the middle classes.

Language planning strategy

According to Sibayan, a *popularly* modernised language, used, for example, in the electronic media and tabloid papers, is not intellectualised (1999:449). In order for it to become *intellectually* modernised, such that it can be used in the 'controlling domains of language' including higher education, much work (corpus development) has to be done by the universities and colleges. Sibayan (1999) suggests that it is easier to begin with L1-medium education in the primary schools, since the young in the schools are the most receptive. Whereas adults, who in the controlling domains already use the former colonial language more or less proficiently, tend to be extremely resistant to a changeover towards the local language(s). He states:

> The schools and universities play a very crucial role in the process of popular and intellectual modernization: the primary and lower secondary schools for PML development, the upper secondary schools for beginning IML develop-

ment and the colleges and universities for IML development (Sibayan 1999:456).

It ought to be obvious that some, or all, of these conditions already exist in organised and institutionalised form in some, but not all, African states. One of the main tasks of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is precisely to bring about this state of affairs in all African states. In South Africa, we are very fortunate in that there are the beginnings of an adequate language infrastructure, enabling legislation, some budgetary provision for the programme of modernisation of indigenous African languages and for related purposes. Much more can and should be done in respect of the financing of indispensable programmes and of the training of the necessary language professionals who have to run the multilingual system. In so far as South Africa is seen by many, including some of the best known African linguists and applied linguists, as an evolving model in respect of language planning, language policy formulation and policy realisation, these are important starting points, even if too many of them are, as yet, of no more than symbolic import.

Immediate steps: ACALAN and ILPAA

Under the joint aegis of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), the Association of African Universities (AAU) and CODESRIA detailed implementation plans should be drawn up. These should take as their point of departure the experience of the post-colonial attempts at language planning, especially of corpus development, in the relevant African states. In this regard, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania and, most recently, South Africa, among others, have much by way of invaluable data. Post-graduate students in the area of Applied Language Studies could be mobilised to collate, analyse and render useable all of this information within a period of two years or shorter. In my view, the guiding document should be the updated version of the 1986 OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa, which Maurice Tadadjeu (Cameroon) and Salam Diakité (Mali) revised in late 2004 at the request of ACALAN and of the Steering Committee of its project for the Implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa (ILPAA).

Outside of the immediate purview of any specific university community, the five core projects of ACALAN-ILPAA need to be promoted and with the full support of the heads of state of the African Union. Taken together, these are essentially large-scale language planning projects, calculated in principle to enhance the status, expand the corpus and facilitate the acquisition of all African languages. These core projects are the Year of African Languages (2006), the Translation Programme, the closely related Terminology

Development project, the Panafrican Joint Masters and Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics and, last but not least, the Stories Across Africa project[8] . The promotion and gradual realisation of these projects will assist in creating a climate favourable to the micro-planning and implementation of specific language development projects at specific universities in given countries. The synergies and economies of scale that can be anticipated will have both an exhilarating and accelerating effect on those who have to do the actual work of translating, developing specialised registers, creating innovative literature, training language professionals, and so forth. For each of these constituencies, the meaningfulness of what they will be, and are already, doing will be amplified in ways that very few of them can at present anticipate. Panafricanism, in the context of the cultural revolutionary dimension of the African Renaissance, will assume a new significance.[9]

The importance of translation

Scholars who have focused on the issue of intellectualisation or modernisation of local languages are agreed that one of the main mechanisms for bringing about and driving this process is translation of major works of literary and scientific creation that exist in the more 'developed' languages. With regard to Filipino, for example, Sibayan states unequivocally, 'Translation of important publications now available in English (the chief source language of intellectualisation) is the single most important way of intellectualising Filipino for a long time to come' (1999:464).

In an epigrammatic reference to this complex, Newald states that the German humanists of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were forced through the contemplation of Latin and Greek languages to reflect on the German language, and this facilitated the development of German grammar (1960:4). Most recently, Umberto Eco (2003) has written what is going to become an indispensable text of translation studies in which he shows by means of practical examples how 'translation as negotiation' impacts on the target language. Citing Friedrich Schleiermacher, Eco refers to the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, according to which one's native language determines one's perceptual and conceptual possibilities, but points out that Schleiermacher himself accepted that thinking people 'play their part in shaping their language' (2003:81), and that Wilhelm von Humboldt had been the first to remark on the fact that translations 'can augment the significance and the expressivity of the native language' (2003:81-82).

It is precisely what Eco calls 'this dynamic capacity of languages to evolve when exposed to a foreign challenge' (2003:82),[10] that African university

programmes in applied language studies are going to have to explore and use in innovative ways in order to initiate and sustain the rapid intellectualisation of certain—in principle, all—languages of the people by agreement in the appropriate forums and constituencies. Just how difficult this task can and will be can be inferred from the tremendous investments that the Japanese intelligentsia was called upon to make over many generations. Like the Japanese and the followers of Kemal Ata Turk in the 1920s and 1930s, we will have to find the most cost-efficient ways of increasing rapidly the corpus of great works of world literature and science in the relevant African languages. It is my view that one of the most appropriate and acceptable ways of doing this is to ask all universities to consider introducing as an elective component of post-graduate assessment of course work in each discipline, the translation into a relevant African language of a key text or part thereof. Very few exercises could vie with this practice in respect of gauging the grasp of a subject by an examination candidate.

The practical implementation of this crucial strategic move is completely manageable. We would need a few focus groups of people consisting of linguists, translators and subject specialists in each of the relevant languages to decide whether the document is an acceptable translation. However, above all, we need people who have the vision, the courage and the energy to do it. In this regard, the stated intention of ACALAN to launch a large-scale translation programme in tandem with the appropriate terminology development project(s) is of the utmost significance, since it will serve as a compass for the individual institutions and translators of texts.

Inferences from the South African case

There can be no doubt that the South African authorities and a decisive component of the intelligentsia have committed themselves with varying degrees of passion to the furthest possible development of the indigenous African languages.[11] Let us, therefore, consider the November 2002 Language Policy for Higher Education.

To begin, all higher education institutions should participate in facilitating and promoting the goal of the National Language Policy to develop all South African languages in such a manner that they can be used in all high status functions, especially as formal academic languages at higher education level. In the same way that English and Afrikaans are used as formal academic languages at higher education institutions, every official language of this country should be developed towards that position. Secondly, in terms of this policy framework, the research and development work required in the case of each of

the marginalised official and endangered South African languages will be concentrated in centres for language development which will be located in designated higher education institutions. The basic idea[12] is that a university or a group of universities would be given the task of developing specific languages such as isiZulu, or isiXhosa, or Sesotho, or Setswana and, over a period of 10 to 15 years, steps would be taken to ensure that each of the languages concerned is developed in that particular manner. A step-by-step development and implementation plan should be formulated for each of the relevant languages, such that, among other things, it will be clear when they will be able to be used as languages of tuition in specific disciplines. The decision about when to begin using the languages for specific functions, however, will be the prerogative of the relevant institutional community. In other words, if we take the University of Cape Town as an example, the university authorities will retain the autonomy to decide when exactly, for example, to use isiXhosa to teach history or to teach geography in tutorials or in lectures.

Each higher education institution will need to formulate and publish its language policy so that the extent to which they are in compliance with the legislation can be determined at a glance. Of course, much subsequent sparring and gesturing in this area has been of a ritualistic character, and although this is a dampening element, the economic need of the majority of the people have rendered these inhibiting factors irrelevant. ACALAN, the AAU and CODESRIA, acting in concert, could within a short space of time get every single African university to undertake this task as a necessary precursor to everything else.

The other important task is the standardisation of orthography in all the languages so that we have the same orthographic convention for all the languages, especially for cross-border languages. We still have the situation in Sesotho, for example, where spelling in South Africa is very different from that in Lesotho itself. Very often, people are unable to read text emanating from the neighbouring country. I have been impressed with the beginnings of a very important project undertaken by Kwesi Prah of the Centre for the Advanced Study of African Societies (CASAS) at Rondebosch, Cape Town. Beyond the harmonisation of orthographies lies the controversial issue of language harmonisation itself. Whether we like it or not, this is an *African* issue, the time for which will come sooner rather than later.

The promotion of print and electronic media in African languages on a large scale, as happens in some West and East African countries, is urgently necessary. At this level of popular modernisation of the languages, the culture of reading can be effectively established and thus the basis for the intellectual

modernisation of the relevant languages. As is always the case in language planning, all these strategic moves are integrally related, and it is important that initiatives in the extra-linguistic sectors be synchronised with what the language professionals and scholars are doing for the intellectualisation process.

In South Africa, universities and other higher education institutions have begun formulating their language policies in respect of which languages are taught as subjects, which are used as languages of tuition, which of the African languages should be 'adopted' for modernisation purposes, and which languages should be encouraged among the youth because of investment and tourism considerations, and so forth. Some universities, Stellenbosch being one of the foremost, are taking these tasks very seriously and have designed hands-on mechanisms for addressing or implementing the plans that have been formulated and agreed upon by all the stakeholders. On the other hand, the Ministerial Committee understandably refers to the 'crisis' of African languages in the universities and the schools, deriving from the pressure for English (2004:4). Enrolments in both first- and second-language courses, with some exceptions, have dropped catastrophically over the past ten years. While matters can be expected to stabilise and improve, there is no doubt that concerted counter-measures have to be worked out. With reference to the threat posed by globalisation and the hegemony of English, the Ministerial Committee states:

> [It is] incumbent on South Africa to do its best to ensure, in terms of our Constitution, the continued existence of all the languages that form part and parcel of its full heritage. … The committee members would like to reiterate that, unless urgent measures are taken, South Africa's indigenous languages are under serious threat. In this regard, recent policy advances in South Africa present a historic opportunity to restore enduring legitimacy and dignity to our indigenous languages. Sustained commitment to sound policy implementation over the next two to three decades should ensure success (Ministerial Committee 2004:5).

I have no doubt at all that if this kind of spirit can become generalised among the intelligentsia of the continent, specifically among language professionals and university academics, the secular project of intellectualising the languages of Africa can be initiated successfully and, in the case of at least some of the languages, taken to its logical conclusion. Paulin Hountondji of Benin, one of the most incisive philosophers on the continent, has spoken up for the increasing number of intellectuals who realise that the present situation is untenable: 'This is the only continent or subcontinent where all the teaching and research are done in non-indigenous languages. No doubt something also has to be done here' (Hountondji 2002:34; see also Samassekou 2002).

Writing about the achievements of the Meiji generation in Japan, Coulmas states with enviable realism:

> If it is kept in mind that in many parts of the world a foreign rather than a native language is used for purposes of higher communication such as commerce, administration, and higher education, the fact that the Japanese language can fulfil all functions of modern communication emerges as an essential part of this achievement. Like modernization of society, the adaptation of language could, however, not be accomplished without much effort and hardship (Coulmas 1990:70).

Viewed against this background, the initiation by ACALAN of the Panafrican Joint Masters and Doctoral Programme in Applied Linguistics (MAPAL) represents a bold attempt to begin the process of intellectualising the languages of the African continent. If we bear in mind the caveat implicit in Coulmas' words, I believe it will be possible to tap into the sources of determination and creative passion which alone can guarantee the success of such a vast project.

Conclusion

In conclusion, let me state clearly that the choice we face is one between elitism and middle-class convenience (with the corollary of a probable state of permanent mediocrity as our destiny) and a democratic language policy which might, among other things, uncover the hidden layers of creativity and self-confidence that are the real basis of artistic, scientific and entrepreneurial achievement. We have to consider all the hype about 'modern' U.S.-style discourses and fashions from within this perspective and reflect on the fact that we are in the midst of what can be said to be a global contest between increasing homogenisation and hegemonisation on the one hand, and cultural diversity and multilingualism on the other hand. As African language scholars who are inevitably caught up in this global contest, we have very strong reasons for wanting to promote the African languages as languages of empowerment and as languages of high status. If one looks at the African continent in this global context, one realises that because of the history of our countries and of our continent, we naturally fall on the side of the multilingual perspective. Our societies are multilingual, the states that were formed as a result of colonial conquest were necessarily multilingual, and therefore we have every reason to want to promote the continuation of our own languages, not against, but alongside, English. Because of the much greater degree of self-understanding that human beings have acquired at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it would be nothing less than reactionary to want to promote and facilitate the disappearance of the languages of Africa assuming this were possible. Under

the guidance of ACALAN, the preservation, promotion and intellectualisation of the languages of the continent will keep in step with the progressive realisation of another Africa where all people will have the real chance of developing their potential to the full extent.

Notes

1. Paper originally prepared for the conference of the South African Association for Research and Development in Higher Education, Durban, 27-29 June 2005.
2. In medieval West Africa, Arabic had a similar status, because of the expansion of Islam from the north. One of the most celebrated examples is, of course, Timbuktu (see Ki-Zerbo 1979:152-153).
3. It could be argued that the reverse process is now taking place because of globalisation, but this is a superficial view of the matter. The comprehensive integration of national and regional economies into the world capitalist system sets up counter-hegemonic forces that resist cultural and other dimensions of homogenization. The AU and the 'African Renaissance' are direct evidence of this tendency (see Castells 1997).
4. Colonial powers have ever followed the dictum: 'the natives should learn our languages, rather than we theirs' (Wilson and Thompson 1969:66).
5. He adds significantly: 'There was a great demand, in other words, for translation' (Coulmas 1990:71), a proposition to which I shall return in detail presently.
6. Coulmas refers to 'Mori Arinori's rather startling suggestion to abolish the Japanese language and adopt English instead' because he believed, among other things, that ' … our meager language, which can never be of any use outside of our islands, is doomed to yield to the domination of the English tongue … Our intelligent race, eager in the pursuit of knowledge, cannot depend upon a weak and uncertain medium of communication in its endeavor to grasp the principal truths from the precious treasury of Western science and art and religion' (1990:72).
7. Prah (1995) examines this argument in some detail from the point of view of development theory.
8. These projects are dealt with in some detail in a forthcoming publication (see also Alexander 2005).
9. For a more detailed discussion of this train of thought, see Alexander 2004.
10. Eco refers to the fact that Martin Luther used the verbs 'to translate' and 'to Germanise' as synonyms, thereby 'making evident the importance of translation as cultural assimilation', and that he answered the critics of his Bible translation by asserting that ' … they are learning to speak and write German from my translation, and so in a sense stealing my language, which they hardly knew a word of before' (2003:89).

11. The most recent, and an excellent, manifestation of this statement is the Report compiled by the Ministerial Committee appointed by the Ministry of Education in September 2003.
12. Since the policy framework was published, nine Language Research and Development Centres have been set up by the Department of Arts and Culture, one in each of the provinces of the country.

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Apartheid's University: Notes on the Renewal of the Enlightenment

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Abstract

This paper sets to work on strategies for forging new and critical humanities at the institutional site of the university that appears to be trapped in the legacies of apartheid. The paper suggests that the university's responses to apartheid might hold the key for the realignment of its critical commitments in the post-apartheid present. Rather than merely invoking the Enlightenment traditions of the modern university as sufficient grounds for proclaiming a post-apartheid reorientation, I track the career of notions of academic freedom and university autonomy in the outlines of complicity. I show how the concepts of academic freedom and autonomy obscured a prior contract with the state and how that complicity extended a process of subjection. By deploying the postcolonial strategy of *ab-using* the Enlightenment, the paper outlines the failure of opposing apartheid in the name of academic freedom and autonomy.

That failure, I argue, resulted in an inability to investigate the relationship between the university and the state and blinded the university to its role in the creation of racial subjects. Rather than merely casting the university in terms of the foundational concepts of academic freedom and university autonomy, I suggest that it might be more productive to consider the epistemological and political potential of a renewed reference to the Enlightenment. Apartheid's University, cast as continuity of the Enlightenment legacy, might allow us to rewrite its abject script in the direction of resisting the forms of subjection supported by that process of normalisation.

Résumé

Cette étude se propose d'élaborer des stratégies afin de forger d'importantes nouvelles humanités au plan institutionnel de l'université qui semble être prise au

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piège de l'héritage de l'apartheid. L'étude pense que les réponses de l'université à l'apartheid pourraient détenir la clé du réalignement de ses engagements importants dans la période post-apartheid. Plutôt que d'invoquer tout simplement les traditions de lumières (Enlightenment) de l'université moderne comme des raisons suffisantes pour proclamer une réorientation post-apartheid, l'auteur analyse l'évolution des notions de libertés académiques et d'autonomie de l'université en soulignant la complicité. Il montre comment les concepts de libertés académiques et d'autonomie de l'université ont embrouillé un contrat antérieur passé avec l'État et comment cette complicité a prolongé un processus de soumission. En déployant la stratégie post-coloniale *d'attaque* des lumières, l'étude souligne l'échec que connaît l'opposition à l'apartheid au nom des libertés académiques et de l'autonomie de l'université.

> One speaks often…of the "cutting edge." We should never forget, however, that to cut, that edge must cut in more than one direction: not merely into the unknown, but into established knowledge as well. Herein, if anywhere, lies a possible future for universities that can neither entirely dismiss the exigencies of "globalisation" nor fully accept its logic of appropriation. Such a university must keep itself open to the cutting edge of the future even if it means collecting a few scars along the way (Weber 2001:235).

As South African universities are faced with the corollaries of structural adjustment in higher education, with institutional mergers and with outcomes-based education, they will have to consider what has become of the Enlightenment foundations of the university (see Readings 1996). Integral to anticipating such an inquiry is a latent question of how the humanities specifically may be harnessed to a critique of normalisation processes in education. In this article, I want to argue that reformulated humanities may seek to inhabit the foundational narrative of the Enlightenment anew. But this would require a shift from a mere defence of the Enlightenment that was undertaken against the onslaught of apartheid, to one that does not necessarily succumb to that which Foucault once called the blackmail of the Enlightenment. What Foucault (1984) finds in Kant's famous response to the question posed by the *Berlinische Monatschrift* is an *Ausgang,* an 'exit', a 'way out' from 'self-imposed immaturity'. Foucault sees in Kant's elaboration of the private and public use of reason the outlines of a contract with the state. Yet, the entanglement in such a contract is also what the Enlightenment seeks to escape. For the purposes of this article, I am using the term Enlightenment as shorthand to designate how the exercise of power is ultimately the very condition for knowledge, even when such knowledge, by virtue of its immanence, is not reducible to power. As Horkheimer and Adorno suggest, the Enlightenment in the twentieth century, notwithstand-

ing its initial promise, tended towards instrumental reason, and *ipso facto*, to domination (cited in Jay 1973:261). Apartheid's University, I will argue similarly, is not antithetical to the Enlightenment or its liberal precedents, but symptomatic of its inner logic.

What I see in this brief outline of an otherwise complex philosophical problem is a demand for renewal of the practice of Enlightenment and a refusal to see it as a static inheritance. More specifically, I want to call attention to the aporia that Foucault recognises in Kant's exposition of 'Enlightenment'. This aporia can be tracked in what I will call Apartheid's University. In slightly altered Foucauldian terms, we may say that Apartheid's University allows us to explore elements of the history of the Enlightenment under conditions of apartheid, while developing an attitude towards the story of resistance and complicity that that history records. In deliberately adopting the phrase 'University of Apartheid' as an inaugural point of my argument, I am making explicit my opposition to a return to the foundations of the University for the mere sake of defending traditions while also stating my preference to operate on the horizon of a contingent future, in the wake of apartheid.

Institutional taxonomies

South African universities were arranged according to a perplexing racial and ethnic taxonomy under apartheid. The English, liberal university was accordingly distinguished from the *volks universiteite*, and these were further distinguished from a convoluted hierarchy of racially and ethnically designated universities. In a purely taxonomic sense, which, I will argue shortly, we would do better to dispense with, the notion of a University of Apartheid often refers almost exclusively to those institutions that were the subject of the Extension of Universities Act of 1959. The result of this legislation was the development of separate ethnically and racially defined institutions, some in the so-called Bantustans and others on the urban periphery of the major cities of South Africa. To comprehend fully the sinister meaning upon which the taxonomy of separate education was founded, we might consider the public radio announcement of the founding of one such institution, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in 1960. The South African Broadcasting Corporation's report began at what it called the newly formed 'coloured university' with excerpts from a biology lecture on the formation of a zygote through the union of two cells.[1] The decision to begin with a biology lesson on cell formation was not entirely coincidental. It replayed a significant strand in the logic of apartheid as a supposedly naturalised and normative discourse.

The paternalistic undertone of these and other pronouncements conveyed a sense of UWC as a logical outcome of the pseudo-rationalist discourse that

treated race as yet another fact of biological science. The first vice chancellor, J.P. Meiring, offered a justification for the establishment of UWC that made it hard to discern whether he was speaking in the voice of order or reason, or perhaps both. Meiring argued that the creation of UWC was both a logical and rational process. He pointed out that it was a natural outcome of the ways in which schooling was organised in South Africa and flowed from the fact that 'coloured students were excluded from participating in the life of the open universities such as UCT [University of Cape Town]'.[2] Furthermore, Meiring claimed that a focused education devised especially for 'coloured students' would enable them to 'better deal with the upliftment of their own communities'.[3] These racial precedents are not entirely inconsequential. A normative concept of race would follow a much more circuitous route, one that raises the question of how universities mediate the relationship between the state and its biopolitical premises.

Below the veneer of a pseudo-scientific rationality, three decades of violent resistance threatened to erupt. And with its eruption the Universities proclaimed under the infamous apartheid legislation increasingly resembled spaces of confinement rather than the freedom commonly associated with the pursuits of knowledge. In an essay titled 'Herrenvolkism and Higher Education', A.C. Jordan, a leading South African intellectual, aptly caricatured the newly formed institutions based on his experience at the University of Fort Hare:

> Since the state of Emergency that was proclaimed after the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, the students in most institutions have found the situation intolerable. At the faintest rumour of a political disturbance of impending protest demonstration anywhere in the country, African institutions are immediately raided for "dangerous weapons" or for "subversive literature", floodlit and patrolled by armed police for weeks on end. At Fort Hare the Special Branch has virtually a permanent office. The rough handling of students, male and female, by raiding police, has led to positive rioting, and this, of course, has led to arrests and imprisonments. Students as well as suspect African teachers have been dismissed in large numbers since early 1960, and those of them who went to the cities after dismissal or imprisonment could neither work nor prosecute their studies because of the network of laws affecting the African section of the population in the country (Jordon n.d:20; see also Biko 1987; Matthews 1981).

The creation of institutions in the name of the Extension of Universities Act, however, carried a more sinister consequence. Far from following the supposedly biological course of nature or merely serving as a camp, the Extension of Universities Act had as its parallel justification the creation of homelands which required the formation of racialised and ethnicised subjects. If we were to use

Mamdani's framing, we might say that the Extension of Universities Act supported and perhaps sustained a mode of governmentality that he calls 'decentralised despotism' (Mamdani 1996:37). Only this time it was an attempt to enclose the university by making the pursuit of knowledge subject to the provisions of the law regulating admission to the University on racial and ethnic grounds.

The taxonomic ordering was seemingly further solidified by those institutions that laid claim to the inheritance of the Enlightenment, even when that inheritance ironically served as a statement of opposition to the policies of separate development. But before moving onto this argument, it is important to show why recourse to the Enlightenment tradition was an insufficient condition for overcoming the burdens of apartheid.

In 1989, when the Enlightenment inheritance of the liberal, English-speaking university in South Africa was faced with talk of applying a concept of 'Africanisation' to education, there was a concerted effort to argue against turning the University into a site of cultural (read political) affirmation (Goosen et al. 1989). Not only was this deemed damaging to the pursuit and defence of reason, it would also set back those institutions that had achieved a standing in the world on the basis of their commitment to the universal ideals of the Enlightenment. These institutions, it was thought, could play host to a range of competing positions, be it Marxist, liberal or Africanist. However, with the then pending demise of apartheid, the Enlightenment premises of democratic opposition needed to be acknowledged. Given the history of transformation of the University in postcolonial Africa, the concept of 'Africanisation' would, it was believed, not go far enough in ensuring that the traditional values of the Enlightenment would be preserved (Goosen et al. 1989:85). Implied in the notion of traditional values are the principles of academic freedom and intellectual autonomy. This sentiment formed the basis of a collection of essays on rethinking UCT, in which the authors argue that while the liberal university was in crisis as a result of the policies of apartheid, it would not be feasible to relinquish its traditional values as the foundation of the University. In distinguishing the 'English-speaking liberal university' from the 'ethnic universities' inaugurated under the Extensions of Universities Act and the Afrikaans-medium 'volks universiteite' promulgated under apartheid, the authors of *Rethinking UCT* note:

> [T]he third set of universities are the English medium, liberal, "open" universities. These institutions draw directly upon the traditions of the British and European universities. They, along with the *volks universiteite* enjoy a high degree of autonomy from direct state control in the administration of their affairs. But unlike the *volks universiteite* their central ethos is bound up with

an insistence on political neutrality in pursuit of higher goals of human rights. A further distinguishing feature is the extent of the liberal universities' integration into the international academic community. They enjoy a greater degree of international recognition and status than other universities in the country. This is based on an appreciation of their academic performance and their political position relative to the Apartheid state (Goosen et al. 1989:17).

At one level, the comparison between the two university systems merely results in the construction of the historically black university as an unfortunate aberration of apartheid's making. While the University that is the object of Jordan's criticism is rendered possible by the history of apartheid, it is worth noting that reflections of the liberal university in South Africa (cf. Goosen et al. 1989) are largely drawn from universal first principles. The rest, especially institutions created under the Extension of Universities Act, are left to disavow their apartheid foundations. Yet, the growth of the universities that now claim the tradition of liberalism trace their origins to both the universal precedents of the modern university and more recent post-World War II politics in South Africa. While millions of black workers were drawn into the bourgeoning secondary industries of the South African city, thousands of white war veterans found their way into institutions of higher learning after the Second World War.[4] Speaking at a graduation ceremony at the University of Witwatersrand in 1946, the chancellor and member of parliament, Jan Hofmeyr, proclaimed his gratitude to war veterans and state alike:

> I need not tell you of our appreciation of your service to your country in time of war, and of our desire to assist you to equip or re-equip yourselves for the tasks of peace. No one, I think, questions the generosity of the State's provision for University training, made as part of our demobilization plan, by way of the erection of buildings, teaching and residential premises, and award of loans and grants to individual students (quoted in Lewson 1988:190).

Hofmeyr's post-war reorientation of the university stressed the constraints that necessarily accompany the experience of freedom. In his address, he pointed out that the circumstances of post-war reconstruction required 'limiting freedom to save freedom' (quoted in Lewson 1988:192). In a rather ironic analogy, he pointed out that the planning that gave Nazism its strength 'had to be countered with planning in the countries opposed to Nazism' (191). Professing the virtues of a freedom bound to order, Hofmeyr added that 'the only freedom which humanity can hope to continue to enjoy is a disciplined freedom' (193). Disciplined freedom was merely a variation on the theme of the repression described by Jordan in which the university presumably placed knowledge in

the service of normalised and supposedly more rational forms of the exercise of power.

Race and the university

Claiming an Enlightenment inheritance arguably left the liberal English university blinded to its role in the formation of racialised subjects. The notions of academic freedom and university autonomy that were at the core of the liberal university proved ineffective in realising the critical potential that gave rise to the university in the first place. The idea of the University organised around the interplay of *wissenschaft* and *bildung* (Habermas 1989; Readings 1996) became, in the South African context, the premise to challenge state intervention in education, while the project of reorienting the university in its relation to the racial policies of the state, especially after 1948, proceeded apace. In his 1946 Hoernlé Memorial Lecture, E.G. Malherbe, principal of the University of Natal, anticipated that the critical popular attitudes about race that had developed in the course of the Second World War, could be a platform for challenging growing racial attitudes in state (Malherbe 1946). The war, he believed, produced modifications in racial attitudes amongst returning soldiers that could be harnessed by educators to effect changes to general racial attitudes in South Africa. This belief proved far too optimistic.

C.W. De Kiewiet's lecture on academic freedom delivered at the University of Natal in 1960 revealed a predicament of despair. Noting how the nineteenth century German University shattered the exclusivity that had defined it earlier, De Kiewiet argued:

> It was not until the nineteenth century that the German universities broadened their curricula through the progressive development of scientific subjects, and through applying scientific methods to the study of history and institutions. The new devotion to scientific method and the far more active role of the university in the life of society led the German universities to enunciate the principle of academic freedom with a clarity and an authority it had not had before (De Kiewiet 1960:4-5).

In keeping with this turn, De Kiewiet argues for a development of the concept of an open university as a condition for advancing the interests of academic freedom. He argues for sustaining academic freedom by three conditions. The first is the 'acceptance of research as a deliberate and planned method of discovering new knowledge and incorporating it in the body of existing knowledge, even though the result is a challenge of the conventional view of life' (De Kiewiet 1960:6). The second condition is the entry of the scholars

into 'problems that lie between nations, races, ideologies and cultures must not expose them to implicit or explicit charges of heresy or treason' (De Kiewiet 1960:6). If, thirdly, scholars should choose to be neutral or indifferent to the great issues of politics, diplomacy and economics, it must not be because they feel fear. But he also believed that for the university to be a countervailing force against nationalism, racialism and ideology one had to look to the development of the racially segregated institutions of higher learning. Using the example of the United States and the collapse of the idea that separate educational institutions can be equal, he nevertheless pointed to a critical element of dissent in these racially segregated institutions:

> The source of the revolt against the old timers and workhorses of negro [sic] leadership clearly comes from the negro colleges. One needs merely to spend a day inside a negro college [in the USA] to recognise the ferment, the impatience and the resentment that emerge in the rise of a new generation of negro leadership with new ideas and procedures. One can only ask what thought has been given to the possibility that the racial universities may become nurseries of a new generation of less tractable leaders (De Kiewiet 1960:11).

I find De Kiewiet's lecture instructive at several levels, even though the reflections on the racially segregated institution do little to unravel the taxonomy that orders universities in South Africa and perhaps elsewhere.[5] However, De Kiewiet does allow us to consider the limitations of solely appealing to academic freedom and the founding Enlightenment traditions in opposing apartheid. This, he seems to suggest, is a consequence of the initial contract that binds the liberal university to the state. Three examples from the University of Cape Town may reveal this connection more clearly and point the way to finding in the more general conception of Apartheid's University the potential for the renewal of the Enlightenment.

The first example relates to the university's contract with the state. To illustrate this point we might turn to Leslie Witz's *Apartheid's Festival* (2003) which details the circuits through which apartheid borrowed the premise of a liberal education as it narrated the foundational fictions of Afrikaner nationalism's tercentenary celebrations of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck. Witz argues that of all South Africa's universities, the one the festival organisers probably expected would offer the largest degree of participation was the University of Cape Town (Witz 2003:158). He adds that this was not only because of the setting of van Riebeeck's festival in Cape Town where he landed, but also because 'it represented an important element that had contributed to the development of what the festival defined as the English speaking race' (Witz: 2003:158). The principal of UCT, T.B. Davie was a member of the festival committee, and Witz tells us, the university presented the higher education float 'bearing the

"torch of knowledge" and "European Civilisation" through the offerings of different academic disciplines and faculties to the African continent' (Witz 2003:158).

UCT offered apartheid's festival an opportunity to access the discourse of Enlightenment, not only through the displays of scientific achievement that involved T.B.Davie, but also through the float of its Speech and Drama Department. This is how Witz describes the particular pageant which headed one of the processions:

> "Africa Dark and Unknown." Masked figures, attired in black robes and shackled in chains, marched alongside the scene of a despotic figure "who held them in mental and spiritual darkness." One and a half hours later, the same float reappeared but in a different guise. "Africa Awakes" contained a scene of figures dressed in white, symbolising "youth, strength and purity, the foundation on which rests the freedom of the individual and of Africa as a whole" (Witz 2003:138).

More intriguing, when compared to what might best be described as academic complicity, was the radio commentary that accompanied the procession:

> From a situation of fear, a period followed of struggle, change, tension, defeat and victory and slowly that character of darkest Africa changed and gave rise to a new nation with its own cultures, its own language, its own direction, its idealism and its own art (Witz 2003:138).

The full consequence of nationalist borrowings of liberal discourse became apparent in 1959 when the apartheid state introduced the Extension of Universities Act. Realising perhaps that the civilisational narrative at the core of the Enlightenment theme had been usurped by the apartheid state to argue for an institutionalisation of separate development, UCT countered by instituting the T.B. Davie Academic Freedom Lecture. The irony was not lost in the re-scripting of the Enlightenment project as a protected knowledge sphere that should be allowed to function beyond the prescriptions of the state.

Ultimately, it seems that concepts of academic freedom and university autonomy grounded the defence of the Enlightenment foundations of the university. The meanings ascribed to these notions became increasingly contested though.[6] We might, as a second example of the limits of the return to the Enlightenment tradition, consider the crisis that ensued over what became known as the Connor Cruise O'Brien Affair at UCT in 1986. O'Brien, a guest of the Political Science Department, had publicly denounced the academic boycott at the height of the State of Emergency. The protests that followed O'Brien's reaction to student criticism of his views generated an equally intense public debate on the question of academic freedom. John Higgins (1990) has

shown how in BBC and other media representations, O'Brien emerged as the embodiment of academic freedom, while the 'children of Mao' were increasingly castigated as the threat to the founding principles of the university (Higgins 1990:291-318). Through a series of strategic moves, Higgins carefully, and effectively in my view, unsettles the representational practices around the O'Brien affair. As a final salvo, he shows how in a *Cape Times* report of October 10, 1986, the representative of freedom of speech falls prey to the same 'trap' he sets for his detractors. O'Brien on that occasion claimed:

> Universities are about communication and freedom of intellectual communi-
> cation – not about having people shouted down. Those who do try and do this
> must be resisted and discouraged and I think in the end there should be no
> place for people who do that on a university campus if they persist (O'Brien
> quoted in Higgins 1990:312).

The prohibition at the end of this quotation invites a government inquiry into 'the breakdown of law and order on campuses', according to Higgins (1990:312). The embodiment of academic freedom thus becomes the rival of the very con-cept of academic freedom. If the concept of academic freedom was in trouble after the O'Brien affair, it was because no meaning of academic freedom could be derived from within the concept. The overemphasis on the defence of aca-demic freedom would disable the renewal of practices of the Enlightenment, especially practices that encouraged taking up an attitude to power, as an effec-tive critique of apartheid.

The third example perhaps gives us a better understanding of the limits of the liberal defence of academic freedom and university autonomy. Gayatri Spivak, who was invited to deliver the T.B. Davie Lecture in 1992 on the eve of the repeal of legislation governing apartheid education, would have been well aware of the crisis of the concept of academic freedom at UCT. She, after all, had contributed an article to the volume in which Higgins' account of the O'Brien affair appears. Rather than simply accepting the invitation to celebrate aca-demic freedom, she chose to relate the troubled concept of academic freedom at UCT to the philosophical foundations of the T.B. Davie Lecture. And for doing so, in the published version of the Academic Freedom Lecture, she of-fers an apology for disappointing the audience at UCT, noting further that she continues to regret it.

Spivak, for her part, was clearly seeking to contribute to a programme of a postcolonial academe by demanding that it must learn to use the Enlighten-ment from below, strictly speaking, in her terms, ab-use it (Spivak 1995:119). Rather than serving as a call to action, she opted for discerning the subject of academic freedom in a more general effort of comprehending the situation that

arises with apartheid. Generally, she argues, 'No justification of the *exercise* of academic freedom can be drawn from within academic freedom' (Spivak 1995:141). In other words, because academic freedom is not its own cause, but is rather the effect of a prior political contract, a contract with the state, it cannot be the ground of its own law to itself. University autonomy is not in any literal sense of the word 'autonomy'. On the contrary, it is not literal but figural; the academic freedom it permits is likewise an institutional fiction of freedom. It is a *trope* of freedom to which no academic subject can afford not to subscribe. But to think about the university requires not only insisting again and again on the necessity of this fiction but also in stopping to soberly grasp the implications of its fictive status. It is for this reason that Spivak asks whether it is even possible for academically constituted subjects to learn anything from those who seem not to know how to use the structures [of academic freedom] (Spivak 1995:118). In framing her inquiry in this manner, Spivak finds provocation in a 'troubling' and 'enigmatic' sentence from Marx's *Eighteenth Brumaire*. Since the sentence is so consequential for what I too wish to argue in this paper, let me quote more extensively from the text:

> The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped off all the superstition in regard to the past. Earlier revolutions required recollections of past world history in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its own content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury the dead. *There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase* (Marx 1994:18, emphasis by Spivak).[7]

The strictures of apartheid planning in higher education were resisted in the name of a foundational Enlightenment discourse that served as a prerequisite for intellectual work and a form of opposition to segregated education. Over the next thirty years, the chief phrases of this discourse—academic freedom and university autonomy—predominated in the critique of apartheid and were eloquently articulated in such notions as history from below, social anthropology, human geography and community archaeology. The supplement that, in each case, modified without displacing the substance of disciplinary inquiry was not coincidental, but respected the architecture already implied in existing concepts of academic freedom and autonomy. By this I mean that any effort at inclusion would have to consider the effects of a prior exclusion. Each of the latter principles of inclusion and exclusion were founded on the tacit agreement, perhaps presumption, that neither would undercut the law that called them into being in the first place.

What happens, however, when one subjects this defence of Enlightenment traditions to critique in the interests of renewing, even diversifying, the practices of Enlightenment? What happens when one asks, like Spivak, what the first twelve T.B. Davie Memorial Lectures were performing (Spivak 1995:130)? One suggestion may be that the line of inquiry leads to a defence of the foundations of a liberal humanities education in which the Enlightenment casting of the humanities is destined to extend beyond the content of apartheid planning. This was at least what seemed to be at stake in one particular objection to Spivak's discourse on academic freedom at UCT by Paul Taylor, a philosopher who is named by Spivak as having radical inclinations:

> When I say that we were not doing the best for ourselves, and in fact were doing some harm, by getting a speaker with Gayatri Spivak's particular focus and theoretical orientation to give the annual lecture on academic freedom, this is not, of course, because I think deconstructionists and those broadly under its influence shouldn't be heard at UCT. After all, it is as a defender of academic freedom that I am making an issue of Spivak's lecture. My complaint, rather, is that deconstruction is not an appropriate basis for social criticism or for commentary on practical issues such as the debate about the nature and importance of academic freedom (Taylor 1995:158).

While some, like John Higgins, preferred to see Taylor's response as a mere reversal of the claims of academic freedom, I would argue that it is better to read Taylor's concerns in terms of a double bind that haunts UCT where the figure of academic freedom itself *destines* the phrase to go beyond the content. When Taylor charges Spivak with obscurity, he is of course recalling an all-encompassing phrase, or in his terms philosophical language, that he feels is appropriate for consideration of the question of academic freedom (Taylor 1995). And it is on the grounds of philosophical language that Deconstruction is disqualified from speaking about academic freedom in the example cited. Taylor here fabricates Deconstruction's encounter with language so as to reclaim academic freedom as a specifically philosophical project. He then goes on to criticise Deconstruction for supposedly conflating, even confusing, philosophical inquiry with poetry. At this point Taylor offers us a segue into the philosophical insistence on a language that 'sees clearly' as the very condition for checking authority.

This is precisely where one might begin to locate the *aporia* in Taylor's fabricated history of academic freedom's philosophical roots. Stipulating the use of a language that 'sees clearly' is to demand a concept of language that is precisely communicative, even functional. Caught in the double bind, and refusing to acknowledge the creativity of the philosophical concept for fear of

admitting poetry to infect the sacred domains of philosophical reason, Taylor calls into play the exceptionality of the South African situation for dispatching Deconstruction. This, he hopes, will serve to protect the concept of academic freedom from the unsettling consequences of the deconstructive work proposed by Gayatri Spivak.

Ultimately, Taylor seeks implicitly to remind us of the Enlightenment heritage of the University and Philosophy's specific contribution to arranging the University's opposition to apartheid. Effectively this leads him to disqualify Deconstruction from partaking in a discussion about academic freedom. Perhaps, one sees in this rather awkward moment the very blackmail of the Enlightenment: academic freedom is possible as long as one does not question its premises and political conditions.

At the institutional site of the liberal university, resistance to apartheid took the form of proclaiming Enlightenment principles as a general critique of the racialisation of institutions of higher learning. But this is where a certain paradox presents itself. While the Enlightenment was understood in terms of traditions of knowledge upon which the idea of the university is founded, it is also the basis for setting apart those universities specifically founded in the name of apartheid. The prohibition, not unlike O'Brien's, is only possible if accompanied by an appeal to the higher authority of Enlightenment reason, if not as a tradition then at least as a form of 'practical life' as opposed to academicism and scholasticism (Taylor 1995:169). If at one level it reveals traits of what might be called instrumental reason it also necessarily bypasses the obligation to call into question a prior contract that the university has with the state (Jay 1973:156). It seems that the contract with the state is far more binding than we initially assumed.

The conditions that enabled the rethinking of the liberal English and supposedly open university in 1989 related, in some respects, to the pressures to redefine that university in anticipation of the pending demise of apartheid. In some sense, the uncompromising refusal of 'Africanisation' was also the opportunity to investigate the crisis of the liberal university and its futures. One way to proceed, judging from the argument for re-evaluating the liberal, English and open university, was to proclaim the Enlightenment foundations as sufficient for the pursuit of knowledge.

Increasingly, Apartheid's University is entirely known in terms of the law that founds it. This, I want to argue, is the limit of the taxonomic sense by which Apartheid's University has become known because it relies on the very mechanism that acts as its constraint. I want to argue that we may have to consider a different register for understanding Apartheid's University, one that

necessarily finds in the encroaching contract with the state the desire to find a way out. Such a register, I believe, not only holds out the possibility for a renewal of the Enlightenment, but also allows us to develop a critical intellectual attitude that seeks to disavow the racial foundations at the core of the emergence of the University in South Africa.

Rather than seeing Apartheid's University taxonomically, we may opt to think of it as the predicament from which we need to think our way out. Such a move holds out the promise of distributing the burden of apartheid and not seeing it as the sole preserve of the historically black university. Perhaps we should opt for a strategy that examines the compulsion to inhabit the institutional site of Apartheid's University only to gnaw away at an apparatus that finds in knowledge a correlate for the exercise of power. In the process, it may be possible not only to reestablish the significance of the Enlightenment for the humanities but also offer, I believe, an opening for walking out of the legacies of authoritarianism.

Conclusion

Apartheid's University has increasingly become the taxonomic attribute of those universities created under the Extension of Universities Act. In that same taxonomic ordering, the liberal university is seen as a bearer of the Enlightenment tradition, as protector and defender of academic freedom and university autonomy. At one level, that claim could not be sustained without apartheid's institutional creations serving as a silent referent. At another, the taxonomic ordering of universities in South Africa remains blinded in its role in producing racialised subjects.

The argument of this article opposes the taxonomic ordering as a basis for critiquing the legacies of apartheid. Rather, we have to investigate further how the liberal university, in claiming custodianship of the Enlightenment, is blinded to its role in fostering racialised taxonomies. I find that such an investigation would benefit from a reconceptualisation of Apartheid's University and contribute to forging a renewal of the Enlightenment. Mostly, such a renewal will depend on taking up an attitude towards the taxonomic order of the university which in my argument, amounts to inviting a deconstruction of the racialised subjective premises upon which the apparatus of the university persists. Perhaps, it will chart a way out of our inheritance, if only with the promise of the unforeseen.

Notes

1.   Suid Afrikanse Uitsaai Korporasie, Hoorbeeld oor Universiteits Kollege van
      Weskaapland, 1969, CHR Archives, University of the Western Cape.

2. *Ibid*.
3. *Ibid*.
4. This notwithstanding the claim by E.G. Malherbe that the returning soldiers had adopted an altered attitude towards the 'Native Question' (see Malherbe 1946:12-13).
5. I am, however, weary of glib declarations of having overcome the taxonomic structure, as proclaimed by Reingard Nethersole. She argues, erroneously I might add, that

   > Asmal's Ministry managed to not only eradicate the historical fissure between English- and Afrikaans-medium universities but also brought into the fold of higher education the Historically Black Universities, as the formerly segregated universities are called, which used to be harbingers of a Black Consciousness that foregrounded African cultural values, albeit strongly influenced by the American Civil Rights Movement (Nethersole 2001:46).

6. An earlier example is the case of the attempt to appoint Archie Mafeje to the post of senior lecturer in Social Anthropology which was blocked by the apartheid state and the University Council in 1968. The controversy generated extensive student protests at University of Cape Town (see *Varsity* August 7, 1968; *The Cape Argus* August 22, 1968).
7. The italicised excerpt is emphasised by Spivak although the translation she uses is slightly different to the one cited here.

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Vying for Legitimacy:
Academic vs. Corporate Culture

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Abstract

Following the general trend already existing in the Western world, state universities in South Africa, in seeking other sources of income and in meeting policy demands for transformation, have embraced the corporate model as the most efficient system of organising education today, thus opening the door to activities and processes such as commercialisation, applied and contract research, and the development of stronger links with external stakeholders. This paper questions the legitimacy of the commodification of intellectual enquiry. Do financial or ideological considerations justify the adoption of a corporate system in education? Can cost efficiency, which is global in nature and which is accelerating social change, legitimise corporate practices in the university in South Africa without affecting a) its character as a public institution, and b) the role of each individual member? The author argues that claims for legitimacy of the present form of rationalisation of the university serve to institutionalise corporate power in educational institutions, making it appear valid and acceptable. Complex though the term may be, however, the generic meaning of 'legitimacy' refers to 'rights': the right to claim, the right to question whether correct procedures have been followed, and, ultimately, the right to assess whether a policy or a system serves the good of all concerned. In this sense, in determining the notion of the 'right thing to do', any discourse on legitimacy, by taking into account a wide diversity of viewpoints, will deal primarily with values and the recognition of human aspirations.

Résumé

Suivant la tendance générale déjà en vigueur dans le monde occidental, les universités publiques d'Afrique du Sud, en recherchant d'autres sources de revenus et en faisant face aux exigences de la politique d'orientation pour la transformation, ont

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adopté le modèle de gestion de l'entreprise comme étant le système d'organisation de l'enseignement le plus efficient aujourd'hui. Elles ouvrent ainsi la porte aux activités et aux processus tels que la commercialisation, la recherche appliquée et la recherche de contrats ainsi que le développement de liens plus solides avec les parties prenantes extérieures. Cette étude s'interroge sur la légitimité de la marchandisation de la recherche intellectuelle. Les considérations d'ordre financier et idéologique justifient-elles l'adoption d'un système de gestion de l'entreprise dans l'enseignement ? La rentabilité, qui est un phénomène mondial par nature, et qui est en train d'accélérer la mutation sociale, peut-elle légitimer au sein de l'université en Afrique du Sud les pratiques propres à l'entreprise sans affecter son caractère d'établissement public, et le rôle de chaque membre ? L'auteur soutient que les revendications en faveur de la légitimité de la forme actuelle de la rationalisation de l'université servent à institutionnaliser le pouvoir de l'entreprise dans les établissements d'enseignement en le faisant apparaître comme valable et acceptable. Bien que le terme puisse être complexe, le sens générique de « légitimité » se réfère toutefois aux « droits » : le droit de revendiquer, le droit de s'interroger pour savoir si les procédures correctes ont été suivies, et enfin, le droit d'évaluer pour savoir si une politique ou un système sert l'intérêt de toutes les personnes concernées. Ainsi, en définissant la notion « d'agir dans le bon sens », n'importe quel discours sur la légitimité, en tenant compte d'une grande diversité d'opinions, traitera d'abord des valeurs et de la reconnaissance des aspirations humaines.

Following general international trends, there has been a rapid growth in South Africa over the last ten years of private tertiary education providers, enhancing the notion that corporate culture in these institutions is the most efficient system of organising education today. With reduced government funding, state universities, in seeking other sources of income, are also embracing the corporate model, based on strict business and managerial principles, thus opening the door to activities such as commercialisation, applied and contract research, and the development of stronger links with external stakeholders. The growth of industries based on digital communications technology and media, moreover, has created a market for on-line courses and degrees which, by relying primarily on training (Noble 2002), favour the 'delivery' of skills-oriented 'products' much sought after in the new South Africa where, for historical reasons, a backlog of specialised labour exists.

    In a press release in May 2004, the Minister of Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, announced the government's intention of recruiting some 20,000 professionals from other countries in order to meet present requirements, while remaining committed to a programme of re-skilling and re-deploying existing staff (Emdon 2004:13). Since then there have been repeated calls to this effect by authoritative ANC politicians, culminating in

President Thabo Mbeki's speech during his annual opening of Parliament in Cape Town in February 2006. President Mbeki reiterates the urgency of the matter:

> Everything we have said so far [...] points to the inescapable conclusion that, to meet our objectives, we will have to pay particular attention to the issue of scarce skills that will […] negatively affect the capacity of both the public and the private sectors to meet the goals set by Asgisa [Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa]. In this regard [...] we have agreed to a vigorous and wide-ranging skills development and acquisition programme to meet any shortfalls we may experience (Mbeki 2006).[1]

The implementation by the Ministry of an outcomes-based education beginning from primary school, the timely and efficient provision of knowledge to meet market demand, and the outsourcing of course content to make it more cost effective, add further impetus to the corporatisation of higher education in South Africa. Bantu education, as the schooling system for blacks under apartheid was known, adhering to the Verwoerdian model, was designed to produce inadequate results, leaving the great majority of pupils bereft of academic qualifications and the opportunity of finding suitable employment outside the sphere of menial labour. Sipho Seepe explains the historical motives behind the restriction:

> In South Africa, as in the rest of the continent, education was used to legitimize unequal social, economic and political power relations. Central to apartheid-colonial education was the production of Africans who would remain forever subservient and subordinate to white South Africa and western interests. Apartheid ideology permeated the entire system including the higher education sector (Seepe 2004: 11).

It is worth noting that Seepe calls for the overhaul of the system not solely for the purpose of inclusion of African students into the existing structure to meet practical demands, but for much loftier goals. Seepe questions, 'How do we now make education a force for transformation of our continent? How can Higher Education Institutions contribute to education as the practice of freedom?' (2004:11). In the meantime, and in order to close the educational gap, universities have been asked to accommodate African school leavers by accelerating the training process, thus providing greater access to tertiary institutions. Recognition of prior learning has further aided this process of integration and admission at university level.

Faced with an official unemployment figure between 27 and 28 percent[2] in a population of about 47 million, and the fact that many are unemployable because of the high rate of illiteracy and/or lack of formal training, the present

government's insistence on structural change at tertiary level of education seems more than justified, thus lending legitimacy to the establishment of institutions which can function successfully as 'education providers'. There are, however, other considerations which have impacted strongly on the need to view education as a source of skilled personnel, and to view the university as a corporation governed by managerial expertise rather than by collegial authority. The following, in my view, are a number of important initiatives, not unrelated to each other, which have been undertaken by government since South Africa's first democratic elections held in 1994, and which have given shape to the process of transformation at universities (see Habib and Morrow, this volume).

'Representivity'

The general drive towards the restructuring and transforming of society in order to redress the imbalances created by South Africa's colonial past is premised on the notion of what government calls 'represensentivity', a notion which envisages that all social activities must reflect proportionally the various ethnic groups comprising the present population. Legislation related to 'affirmative action' and 'employment equity' provides specific guidelines for both government institutions and private enterprises with the aim of giving precedence to previously disadvantaged black South Africans. There is, however, a shortage of skilled black candidates to fill the required quotas at all levels of competency, hence the urgency not only of training promising students for specific ends, but of fast-tracking their upward mobility.

Within the university itself the demographic equation according to Barney Pityana (2004), the vice-chancellor of the University of South Africa (UNISA), is far from satisfactory:

> It appears that with so much change occasioned by the democratic dispensation, [...] universities in South Africa remain largely untouched by the winds of change sweeping through every other aspect of South African life. Although there is much improvement in the admission of black students, among academics the representation of black scholars remains very poor (Pityana 2004).

Pityana's statement is indicative of the pressure facing university authorities to comply with government directives. Various methods have been used to achieve this end, entrenching a managerial style of governance. Prior to Pityana's speech, for example, UNISA management took a unilateral decision to embark on a bid to upgrade all potentially deserving black academics to more senior positions, while a moratorium was placed on promotions for white staff. In so doing, management not only circumvented regular procedures for promotion, but they also waived all financial considerations, which are linked to the availability of

internal posts in each department. To cite another example of managerial control, in 2005, all positions of heads/chairs of departments, deputy and executive deans, etc. were declared administrative posts subject to contractual agreement, and hence within the brief of management itself and not of academic staff.

Globalisation

Since the demise of apartheid, South Africa has regained its place in the international arena and can ill afford to stay out of touch with the tenets of globalisation: the revolutionary changes in technology and communications; the ubiquitous presence of multinationals; the increasingly integrated cross-border organisation of economic and financial activity. As a player in the new economy, it cannot ignore the importance of foreign investments, considered by many as the mainstay for economic growth and the alleviation of poverty. Nor can it disregard the dictates of the multinationals, the IMF and the World Bank, which call for the training of individuals to meet specific economic goals, for research to be benchmarked and for the deregulation and privatisation of public services such as health, welfare and education. The curtailing of public spending leaves the university with little alternative but to generate its own income by commercialising its 'products', thus adopting, in line with global trends, the prevalent Western model of a corporate university for what is historically a uniquely South African situation.

Competitiveness in world markets and the logic of supply and demand calculated in relation to the 'market share' of students have further coerced the university, in the name of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, to give priority to those faculties which can deliver the desired results. Indeed, at UNISA, a plan has been drawn up to phase out (rationalise) all disciplines which have no strategic value as corporate assets. A steady shift in the status of knowledge has taken place, says Akilagpa Sawyerr, chairperson of the Association of African Universities (AAU):

> [...] from the importance of acquiring a particular body of knowledge to developing skills for acquiring new knowledge and the capacity of using knowledge as a resource in   addressing societal needs. These developments have brought demands for new kinds of knowledge, new modes of knowledge production and dissemination, and thus a complete transformation of the environment of knowledge institutions such as universities and higher education organizations (Sawyerr n.d.).

That knowledge acquisition can be so narrowly goal-directed, so associated with utility and not with the 'life of the mind which has for decades defined

and sustained academic communities everywhere in the world', as Sawyerr reiterates, is evidenced in the downscaling of the role played by the liberal arts in forging the critical consciousness of students.[3] Equally diminished is the right of students and staffs to engage with the life of the imagination: the right 'to think the unthinkable, discuss the unmentionable, and challenge the un-challengeable', says Seepe (2005), quoting not from the country's new dispensation as it may seem, but from Yale University's policy on 'Free Expression, Peaceful Dissent, and Demonstrations'. Clearly, Seepe's vision of the Africanisation of the university does take into account its commercialisation and its present mode of governance.

Mergers

Economic rationalism also envisages the elimination of duplication and inequity of services created by apartheid ideology which saw a proliferation of institutions of higher learning, each with its own identity and objectives: from universities catering for Afrikaans- and English-speaking students respectively, to those logistically situated in apartheid's 'homelands' destined to serve only black students. Not only could the government no longer sustain full funding of these institutions, but their dismantling or amalgamation was a necessary political step to undo the pattern of discrimination that had defined them until recently. Thami Mseleku gives voice to this aspiration:

> While institutional sub-groups, based on histories, were a feature of higher education in South Africa, the merger process seeks to blur such distinctions by bringing together historically white and black institutions and nurture truly South African institutions that are not historically black nor historically white. With that objective comes a greater responsibility on merged and merging institutions to create new identities (Mseleku 2004:2).

Besides the avoidance of duplication, other reasons advanced for mergers are increased efficiency, enhanced status, innovation, better academic offerings, and plainly and simply survival. However, where they have occurred in South Africa, mergers have not been voluntary and have been piloted chiefly by government policy on transformation of higher education. Since an institutional merger can be defined as an amalgamation in which two or more institutions give up their legally independent status in favour of a new joint authority, it stands to reason that the 'new joint authority' has fallen into the hands of administrators and managers, rather than of academics, particularly if the emphasis in these new institutions falls on productivity and performance. C. L. S. Chachage, a professor at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania, deplores this state of affairs since, in his view:

> [E]ven the concept of a university [is] transformed to that of the administration, being the university and faculties [...] mere subsidiaries[...] Traditionally, the faculty has always been the University, while the administration has played a supportive role (Chachage 2001:9).

Though certainly not simply the outcome of mergers, there has been a 'usurpation of traditional areas of academic authority by an expansive and increasingly powerful administration through the application of private sector management models', says Lucien van der Walt, a lecturer at the University of the Witwatersrand. To mark the importance of their function within the new structure, there has also been 'a growing salary gap between academics and management' (2004). Ironically, according to Johnson and Cross (2004) who draw on empirical data concerning the restructuring process at the University of the Witwatersrand, the passage from academic to executive deanship, for example, has not resulted in greater efficiency but rather in increased bureaucracy as well as in the demise of academic and intellectual leadership.

By the beginning of 2004, the merging of a great many of these institutions has taken effect.[4] There is still much debate and contestation on whether the fusion has achieved its goals. The naked reality, however, remains that these sweeping reforms have done away with the traditional binary system in higher education by breaking down the division between academic and vocational institutions. Colleges of Advanced Education and Technikons have been reined in with universities and made to serve the state in its drive for the most basic and urgent utilitarian needs. With the distinction between university and technikon obliterated, greater demands have been made on the lecturers at the newly forged universities to increase their teaching and administrative load at the expense of time devoted to research. In an overview of the new university model, Jonathan Jansen, dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Pretoria, describes how easily the intellectual status of an institution, and hence its autonomy, could be irrevocably compromised by the downscaling of the function of critical inquiry of which the professoriate are the custodians:

> A university ceases to exist when the intellectual project no longer defines its identity, infuses its curriculum, energises its scholars, and inspires its students. It ceases to exist when state [...] interference closes down the space within which academic discourse and imagination can flourish without constraint. The university ceases to exist when it imposes on itself narrowing views of the future based on ethnic or linguistic chauvinism, and denies the multiplicity of voices and visions that grant [such] institutions their distinctive character. And the university ceases to exist when it represents nothing other than an empty shell of racial representivity at the cost of academic substance and intellectual imagination (Jansen 2005).

Africanisation

Black empowerment, both economically and intellectually, is perhaps the most notable feature of Thabo Mbeki's presidency since taking over from Nelson Mandela in 1999. His formulation of an African Renaissance as a developmental model for the purpose of promoting self-affirmation and agency among South Africa's previously oppressed black majority (Nethersole 2001:34) has provided a framework for the deracialisation and restructuring of society that also encompasses the university (see Education White Paper 3 1997). The vision of a rebirth of an African university much acclaimed by Malegapuru Makgoba, vice-chancellor at the University of KwaZulu Natal and author of numerous articles on the subject, rests on the assumption that the university's primary objective, 'the pursuit of knowledge, scholarship and excellence in teaching, research and community service', must be put in context and rendered relevant, that is, it must serve primarily African interests (Makgoba 2004:11; see also Makgoba 1999).

The Africanisation of the university is not only firmly on the agenda of the Ministry of Education, but it is increasingly gathering support among academics who view the process as a means to restore a legitimate identity to historically disenfranchised black South Africans and to refocus academic discourse on matters that affect African societal realities.[5] Milton Molebatsi Nkoane, a lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, makes this objective clear:

> I want to start from the premise that the majority of people on this continent are Africans. As such universities should be reflective and be informed by the culture, experiences, aspirations of this majority as well as addressing itself to continental objectives. Africanisation refers to a process of placing the African world-view at the centre of analysis [resulting in] a perspective which allows Africans to be subjects of historical experiences rather than objects on the fringes of Europe. It is not a matter of colour but an orientation to data. [...] it is about the grounds for knowledge, about epistemology, about objects of our intellectual aspiration (Nkoane 2005: 4).

Progressively, Nkoane's argument discloses a will to act 'in the face of the [Western] dominant discourse' which, he claims, has monopolised the parameters for the interpretation of realities, and to 'decolonize our institutions' (2005:12). The process of Africanisation, in Seepe's view, should also envisage a new curriculum based on indigenous knowledge systems:

> If anything, modern day universities are the inheritors of this vicious virus [dominant discourse] that erodes the very nature of our seeing, our explanations, our method of inquiry, our conclusions. Afrocentrists do not claim that

western oriented historians, sociologists, literary critics, philosophers do not make valuable contributions, but rather that by using the Eurocentric approach they often ignore an important interpretative key to the African experience (Seepe [quoting Asante] 2004:12).

In advancing their proposals, however, Africanists have failed to address the influence of the digital revolution on the learning experience itself. The means of reconciling the indigenous knowledge systems with the new communications and information technologies (CIT) have challenged the models of traditional epistemology on which formal education is based worldwide.

With the new rationale for Africanisation, an ever-increasing stratum of management with a top-down chain of command has been established at tertiary institutions. This management can functionally take control of the transformation process by the renaming of faculties, by restructuring curriculum contents, by taking over most of the non-didactic functions of Senate and by forming centres of applied African Studies with the aim of reaching out to the rest of the continent. The creation of this managerial apparatus with little or no commitment to collegiality, to replace the role occupied by former academic administrators goes hand in hand with the corporatist mission of the new university. Most noticeable is how executive deans and directors have largely excluded academic teachers and researchers in the traditional structures from making any policy decisions. At the University of South Africa, full professors are no longer automatically members of Senate by virtue of their seniority and expertise as scholars. Participation is limited to the heads of department and only one additional full professor for each department. Departments, moreover, have become giant units through merging, often comprising more than two or three disciplines. Senate, therefore, can no longer exercise its function as ultimate arbiter of academic standards. Roger Southall and Julian Cobbing endorse this view when they argue:

> [Administrative authoritarianism] which is inherent to the new managerialism, represents a major attack upon academic freedom in that it aspires to subject individual academics to centralized control, and interprets dissent and criticism as insubordination, whilst itself remaining largely unaccountable (2006:35).

Ironically, calling this type of transformation towards corporatism the 'ruling ideology', Seepe, a convinced Africanist by all accounts, believes that the entire higher education system has become a 'function of specific psychological and material interests' which further undermine academic freedom:

> Unfortunately, and owing to the fractious history and intolerance, transformation has become a self-legitimating ideology. Officially sanctioned

> [...] pronouncement and process are justified and are gradually presented as non-negotiable imperatives of transformation. Invoking transformation renders all discussion irrelevant (Seepe 2005; see also Makgoba and Seepe 2004).

There are few in South Africa today who would object to the process of transformation of society, few indeed, who would question its legitimacy in the light of the dehumanising legacy of apartheid, and even fewer who would not acknowledge the need for the redistribution of wealth and for rebuilding the confidence of a citizenry who for so long have been disenfranchised by a racial past. It is evident from the above discussion, however, that if historical, social and educational considerations have necessitated a change in the structures and missions of the universities, the restructuring process has also taken a distinctly managerial hue, creating new hierarchies and outcomes. The resultant configuration emanating from the general reform is a unique South African solution for higher education, as will be shown, one which will have to come to terms with conflicting interests and objectives.

Presently, as I have implied, the goal of the government is twofold: to find a common African identity among the country's multi-ethnic population with distinct language groups (there are eleven recognised official languages in South Africa) and a dignified path towards common citizenship. When it comes to the restructuring of the university, however, the government's imperatives seem at odds with each other. On the one hand, because of a shortage of skills, the university is being reshaped along the corporate lines of a 'service provider', as an institution in the service of vocationalism and the formation of competent labour to meet market demands. On the other hand, the university is viewed as a site for meeting developmental goals and for creating a national culture. One should bear in mind that while the process of globalisation (and corporatisation), as expressed by contemporary neoliberalism, is transnational in character and reliant on differentiation, nation building, on the contrary, gives emphasis to social coherence. According to David Pick, globalisation, though a complex process, is 'allowing new links to be established across social, political, cultural, and economic boundaries that do not correspond to the old hierarchies' (2004:102).

The creation of a national identity through the retrieval and reconstitution of traditional cultures via centralised control of the social sphere, relates in education to what Bill Readings in his now famous book, *The University in Ruins* (1996), calls the University of Culture, that is, to an institution which owes its roots, via the University of Ideas or Reason, to the age of Enlightenment and to the fostering of relations between the individual and the social, between the disciple and the university, and between the university and the

nation state. Historically, therefore, the university was ideally understood as having a distinct public role, that is, for Kant, a critical role, while engaging in disinterested research and in the pursuit of knowledge (Calhoun 2002:1; see also Kant 1992[1798]; Newman 1996). Scholars (Redfield 2001) have discussed at length whether unity of purpose ever existed in the university since, from the outset, it was founded on tensions between the idea of scholarship (cultivation of accumulated knowledge) and education (teaching students), between elitism (mastery for only a few) and democracy (formation of informed citizens), between independence (production of knowledge as its main rationale) and association with the state (serving national interests). Until recently, however, unity of purpose was preserved thanks to the very concept of nationhood, a concept in which national literatures and the liberal arts, seen by and large as the repository of the 'soul' of 'a people', played an important part. Such is the belief in the acculturating power of the humanities that, in calling for the government to sort out the present education system, prominent South African teacher, scholar and writer, Es'kia Mphahlele claims:

> Without an education system, writing dies. When literature dies, a nation is no longer a nation. South Africa is failing to describe itself as a nation for a number of reasons - most of them stemming from education (quoted in Khumalo 2004:7).

In the face of empirical evidence, Mphahlele's appeal for the preservation of literature as part of the learning process can be viewed as a nostalgic yearning for a system which has undergone considerable and irreversible changes in the last decade in South Africa, changes which have radically redefined the nature and purpose of higher education. Indeed, by submitting education to the dictates of deregulation which is based solely on market forces and the practice of free enterprise, the government has yielded to global trends. The university, in this case, has become one of 'excellence', says Readings (1996), where the previous connotation of 'excellence' as the highest conceivable standard of scholarship and research has been displaced by a notion of 'excellence' that shows assiduous regard for evaluative devices and machineries rather than the didactic component of course content. Excellence, in other words, is defined in business terms, not in academic terms. And there is a convergence between globalisation and higher education policies which, as previously discussed, is best reflected in 'a growing relaxation of government control, emphasis on economic competitiveness, the channeling of resources into curriculum areas that meet the needs of the global marketplace, a focus on preparing students for being part of a global workforce, and creating efficiencies in the management of the universities' (Pick 2004:100).

If the present state of the university in South Africa reflects this conflict between two viable but incompatible systems, the university of 'culture' vs. the university of 'excellence' as Readings would have it, then the question arises as to which is the more legitimate. Complex though the term may be, it is useful to note that the generic meaning of legitimacy refers to 'rights': the right to claim, the right to question whether correct procedures have been followed, and, ultimately, the right to assess whether a policy or a system serves the good of all concerned. In this sense, in determining the notion of the 'right thing to do', any discourse on legitimacy, by taking into account a wide diversity of viewpoints, should deal primarily with values and recognition of human needs such as the right to education which is entrenched in the Constitution.

With a view to prioritising these 'needs' on its own terms, the South African government has deemed the commodification of education and the application of business practices as the most rational way of repositioning the university according to the demands of globalised late capitalism, that is, as the most efficient methods of achieving ends. And by adopting this form of rationalisation, government wants it to be seen as the most legitimate and therefore the most undisputable choice for the good of all. 'Legitimation', in Weber's view, is 'a process by which power is not only institutionalized but more importantly is given moral grounding' (quoted in Allan 2005:152). 'Legitimations', Weber continues, 'contain discourses or stories that we tell ourselves that make a social structure appear valid and acceptable' (ibid.). The new government can, according to Jansen:

> claim legitimacy for its intervention on the basis of an outright electoral victory. It [can] also, as guardian of the crusade against apartheid, mobilize strong moral arguments for bringing the higher education system under greater centralized control through appeals to politically loaded commitments like equity, access and redress (Jansen 2006:15-16).

As a result of its intervention in the structural reorganisation of the education sector, it is, therefore, necessary to assess the government's legitimation of its policies against the changes that these policies have brought to the role and function of the university.

There is ample documentation today which comments on the marketisation of the university. Perhaps the most penetrating vision of this new dispensation was advanced more than two decades ago by Lyotard (1984) who, in his concise account of the changing nature of the epistemological model in late capitalist societies, dwells on the effects of the commodification of knowledge, the logic of performativity and the impact of computerisation on teaching and learning, and concludes that knowledge will increasingly be translated into quantities of

information with a corresponding reorientation in the process of research. Moreover, since knowledge in computerised societies is becoming exteriorised from the knowers, there will no longer be a need for the professoriate. The learning process as we know it can no longer be the same (Lankshear 1999).

The redefinition of knowledge as a quantity of information brings with it a redefinition of the role of all the players within higher education restructured as a competitive enterprise. Not only has the rise of managerialism downgraded the status of teachers, their input being quantified and measured as units of labour, but branding and advertising have effectively emptied courses of their use, instead, valorising their profitability, their exchange value as products to be sold and consumed. Students are 'clients', and contents of courses are to be suitably packaged and promoted. However, because education presents itself as a product and not as an experience, and because it conceals the power relationships involved in its transmission, its value must perforce be relativised in terms of what the market has to offer. In this case, according to Hannah Arendt, anticipating Lyotard's observations, the term *value* has lost its meaning for 'values are social commodities that have no significance of their own but, like other commodities, exist only in the ever changing relativity of social linkages and commerce' (1977:32). Moreover, since the commercialisation of a product depends on the laws of endless reproduction, advertising is the key to its success, achieved by differentiating the sign of the commodity in order for the product to stand out in the market place, thereby making it more attractive to the buyer. The system of producing sign values, therefore, aims effectively at modifying the sign of the commodity rather than the commodity itself.

The corporatised university cannot escape the logic of commerce and the dominant discourse of the day if it has to compete with other institutions, both public and private, in order to be economically viable; but, the question to ask is whether students will buy into the image to the detriment of the course contents. Inevitably, the more successful the promotion of a product, the more that product will be in demand and the more it will survive the accounting mentality of the bottom line. Curriculum choice, in this instance, results mainly from extensive manipulation of the consumer's desires rather than from practical or intellectual needs. Jean Baudrillard (1998) has admirably exposed the consequence of the relentless hyperreal encoding prompted by the collapse of a sustainable distinction between the real and the simulated in the world of representation. Taking the logic of consumption to its very end, Baudrillard (1983) envisages the progressive abstraction of commodities from any human context. Since our relationship with objects will always be mediated by the sign, our desire for any specific object is no longer informed by its use or exchange value, but by its symbolic value as mediated by such things as status, prestige,

aspirations and so forth which, in turn, shape and define the consumer's subjectivity.

What then, of the university as one of the appointed sites for nation building and for the promotion of an African Renaissance? What of culture as a regulatory or communal ideal? In other words, can the University of Excellence meet the requirements of the University of Culture's emancipatory project, and progress through reason, as Makgoba seems to imply it will? Transformation of South African universities, according to him, should aim to deconstruct the 'geopolitical imagination of apartheid engineers' and to replace it with a system that is 'more rational, more equitable and that will meet the knowledge demands of a developing African country in a highly competitive global environment' (Makgoba 2004:11). Fort Hare academic, Fhulu Nekhwevha echoes this sentiment in more radical terms. His 'liberatory pedagogy' advocates the elimination of 'the hegemony of the alien Western experience' in education in order to develop 'authentic African epistemological paradigms' (Nekhwevha 2004:2-3). Predictably, by wishing to retain both systems simultaneously, that is the university of culture and the university of excellence, or by assuming that the one will be naturally fostered by the other, the university in South Africa finds itself in a time warp. These two models, it is obvious, cannot co-exist without contradicting each other.

If the concept of nationhood can no longer be accommodated, least of all within the confines of the changing nature of knowledge and the legitimacy of the market, a vision of an African Renaissance based on the nationalised role of culture in identity formation must of necessity depend on strong state intervention for implementation. The Africanist project to create tradition, to found mythologies and to form a democratic subject, therefore, can be viewed as an ideology that requires imposition and that demands obedience. For the project to succeed, it will have to be beyond questioning and beyond the critical challenge of academic inquiry. More poignantly, however, since culture, and African culture at that, in the University of Excellence can only be offered as a commodified product, it, too, will be treated as a quantity of information subject to the laws of simulation. What then, of academic culture and the space for thought in a corporatised university? Forced to operate from the margin, will there be any room left for 'dissensus', as Readings (1996) asks, and for the concomitant recognition of difference, of the other, and disputation without end?

Notes

1. As a matter of interest, President Mbeki's speech continues with an appeal to expatriates to return to South Africa. He states, 'I would like to extend the sincere thanks [to those] who have responded to our appeal for South Africans

with the necessary skills to make themselves available to provide the required expertise in project management and other areas' (Mbeki 2006). The ANC leadership's call has generated a number of critical reactions centering on the appropriateness of the legislation on affirmative action since 1994. The Afrikaaner led Freedom Front party feels vindicated that the legislation has been discriminatory against whites and that the exodus of many highly qualified individuals may in part be the reason for the skills crisis in the country. Others, like Vuyo Mvoko (2006), an independent media and political consultant, resent this stance by government in that it undermines the just cause of the law in redressing the imbalances of the past.

2. The unofficial figure, on the other hand, is believed to stand close to 40 percent.

3. There seems to be a growing awareness among educators of the potential deleterious effect for society at large of a single-minded utilitarian view of education despite the need for skills' development in South Africa. In a telling article, 'Unpractical Graduates Wanted', Glen Mills (2006), a former dean, explains how the cultivation of the so-called 'unpractical' wisdom in students, that is, the acquisition of critical thought and creative practice offered by the liberal arts, is necessary for problem solving even in a vocationally oriented system of higher education.

4. Charlton Koen outlines the Ministry of Education's plan to streamline the apartheid-created system by 'reducing the 21 universities and 15 technikons by January 2005 to 11 universities, 5 technikons, 6 comprehensive institutions, and 2 national institutes in provinces where no higher education institutions exist' (Koen 2003:12).

5. In 2003, a meeting was held between President Mbeki and Vice-Chancellors of universities to discuss transformation and African identity in higher education. As a consequence, the Minister of Education asked Makgoba and Seepe to prepare an initial document entitled 'Knowledge and Identity: an African Vision of Higher Education'. The ensuing publication (Makgoba and Seepe 2004) also contains the response from a number of scholars.

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Excess Beyond Excellence:
The University Beyond the Balance Sheet

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Abstract

This paper argues that there is an excess beyond the talk of excellence, that the University in its present drive for commodification and corporatisation cannot comprehend. In outlining the conditions and effects of this excess, I will look at the non-symmetrical relation that plays itself out in teaching and learning as one of the sites of ethical practices. The notions adduced to analyse this core relation are those of charisma, transference and sublimation. I will outline the forms of exchange at work in the sites of this relation and analyse their differentiations and transformations. In as much as the teaching–learning relation encapsulates what is demanded psychologically and politically of a modern subject in a democratic order, jeopardising it in the name of efficiency, cost-cutting and an instrumentalised relationship to labour and commodity markets, means striking not only at the core of university education, but at the psychic and political foundations of a democratic order itself.

Résumé

Cette étude soutient qu'il existe un certain excès au-delà de la question de l'excellence que l'université, dans sa campagne actuelle en faveur de sa marchandisation et de sa transformation en entreprise, ne peut comprendre. En soulignant les conditions et les conséquences de cet excès, l'auteur examinera la relation asymétrique qui existe dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage comme un des lieux des pratiques éthiques. Les notions invoquées pour analyser cette relation fondamentale sont le charisme, le transfert et la sublimation. Il montrera les formes d'échange en présence dans cette relation et analysera les différenciations entre elles et les transformations subies. Dans la mesure où la relation enseignement–apprentissage renferme ce que l'on exige psychologiquement et politiquement d'un sujet moderne dans un ordre démocratique, la compromettre au nom de l'efficience, de la réduction des

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coûts et d'une relation instrumentalisée par rapport aux marchés du travail et à la bourse des marchandises, signifie porter atteinte non seulement au cœur de l'enseignement universitaire mais également aux fondements psychiques et politiques d'un ordre démocratique lui-même.

Tutelage as core academic relation

In critically addressing the attempts to bring the University in line with market forces, Robert Young carves out a critical role of the University in its capacity of generating an 'excess'—'a surplus that that economy cannot comprehend' (1992:122).

Having chosen this as an introductory statement, I am not closing my eyes to the fact that the University has undergone drastic changes in the last two or three decades, as liberal education, being unmoored from national culture and the nation state, has lost its organising centre. The University has become a 'bureaucratically organized … consumer-oriented corporation' (Readings 1996:11) within a transnational global economy. This change, Readings avers, is expressed in the way in which the University states its mission: from the University of Culture to the University of Excellence (1996:13). At the endpoint of Readings' historical typology of the University, it would seem, the University stands emptied of any content, reduced to delivering knowledge-products, accompanied by services to fee-paying clients who provide its market-shares. This would condemn us to wondering how, today, we can still talk of the University.

To this, I would want to respond, with Jacques Derrida, 'how can we *not* talk of the University?' (1983:3). I would challenge Readings' conclusion: for all the reasons adduced in his historical outline, the University has *not* lost its raison d'être. Furthermore, I would want to question whether Readings' historical typology is the only ground on which we can make pronouncements about the state of the University. Instead of locating my analysis within the particular historical trajectory of the University outlined by Readings, I would like to take up Young's idea of university education as 'surplus'. What is this surplus/excess that the economy, with its imperatives for the University—job training, vocationalism, outcomes-specification, balance sheets of income and expenditure, teaching as fee-for-service contractual activity, report-backs to 'stakeholders' and 'responsiveness to the market'—cannot comprehend?

To be able to answer this question, I would like to look at some old-fashioned notions from early sociology and psychoanalysis that have attempted to define a peculiar relation at work in magic, artistic creativity and scientific

inquiry. It is a privileged relation that plays itself out in the fields of religious devotion, in the art of healing, and in teaching and learning. This privileged relation, I would argue, is also what has been for centuries at stake in university education for centuries.

It is a very peculiar relation, this. We might ask ourselves why it has withstood democratisation processes. For good reason, I would say, the teaching relation has not come within the ambit of democratic reformers, who have targeted access to higher education for democratisation by demanding increased intake of students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds; class and gender sensitivity and considerations of redress in admission criteria, study conditions, language policy and medium of instruction; financial aid to students from disadvantaged backgrounds; accommodation for students; and demographic representivity within the student and broader academic constituency. Demands for democratisation of the universities have extended to the establishment of more representative structures of university governance, and to accountability of the university to whoever its 'stakeholders' are defined to be.

Such demands for democratisation formed an integral part of the anti-apartheid struggle. In the immediate post-apartheid period, they were the subject of higher education reform, in tandem with the drive to commodification and market-orientation of the University. In strangely twisted responses to such paradoxical demands and directives, academics have had to bow to these pressures by ostensibly becoming more 'professional' as employees of 'the university of excellence' (Readings 1995), that is to say, more client- and service-oriented, outcomes-directed, administratively and technologically competent, and pedagogically attuned and responsive to student needs and demands. In some respects, the modelling of the new academic in South Africa is comparable to the directives of higher education policy in the aftermath of the 1968 student protests in France and Germany, of which Jacques Rancière writes retrospectively:

> In the immediate post-'68 period in France, our politicians, with the aid of an army of sociologists and educational theorists, finally discovered that the best means of reducing inequalities in the face of formally transmitted knowledge was to cut back on this knowledge itself (Rancière 1985:101).

This remark is instructive in several respects. It comes close to stating that where the democratisation of higher education touches the core relation entrusted with the transmission of formally organised knowledge; it tends to annihilate that knowledge itself.

That core relation between teaching and learning, while embattled, is still today one of fundamental inequality. I would call it tutelage, a non-symmetrical

relation of obligation that becomes the site, or rather, a network, of ethical practices (Readings 1996:154).[1]

Tutelage involves a complex inequality. The asymmetrical obligation in the teaching, helping, and caring professions—those professions that distantly echo a 'calling' as one of their admission criteria—has been a carefully guarded social value over the last two and a half thousand years at least. It is so strongly held a value that the constituency 'served' by these 'vocations' responds with vehemence to any perceived threat to the 'ethos' of these 'vocations'. For centuries, the question of remuneration or fees for services rendered in these 'vocations' has been a thorny issue. Not only have the rights to free health care and free education been vociferously proclaimed and/or upheld as social rights; they are often held to be as sacrosanct as the essentially 'free' participation in religious worship. Perceived racketeering in health and education is subject not only to legal sanction, but also to moral opprobrium; and today, professional councils regulate the conduct, workload, types and modes of monetary exchanges, and interactions of professionals in these fields. Dedication 'beyond the call of duty' is a professional virtue. Health and education are the sectors where unionisation is notoriously difficult. In many countries' legislations, people working in these sectors have no or only a limited right to strike.

I am listing these generalised attributions to the highly socially valued 'vocations' for purposes of exploring the distinguishing features of what I call the 'core relation' in university education. This core relation has variously been analysed through the concepts of charisma, transference and sublimation, which I will unravel here, in turn.

Charisma

Charisma is 'the authority of the extraordinary and personal *gift of grace*, the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership' (Weber 1967a[1919]:79). Derived from St. Paul's epistles to the Corinthians, charisma features as a theological concept in Lutheran jurist Rudolf Sohm's *Kirchenrecht*, Bd. 1: *Die Geschichtlichen Grundlagen* (1892). While Max Weber takes over the term, he transforms it in his account of forms of political domination. Where the theological concept designates charisma as a gift of grace that gives an individual otherworldly power to perform exceptional tasks, making for leaders with quasi-divine authority (Lepsius 1986:53), Weber emphasises charisma as an extraordinary quality attributed to an individual by his followers, that elevates him to the role of a leader with a mission, a calling, a task, thought to be bestowed on him by God through revelation. For the devout, obedience to

charismatic leadership is non-negotiable. But it is not a matter of force. Obedience is determined by the belief in the leader's special personal qualities, by fear of vengeance of magical powers or the power-holder, and by hope for reward in this world or in the beyond (Weber 1967a[1919]:79). However, the personalised attributions of specialness that define charisma are not confined to the realm of magic and religion. Charisma, according to Weber, is 'entirely heterogeneous' (1978[1922]:1111). To account for a variety of contexts within which devotion to charismatic leadership can emerge and constitute the social bond, we would have to look at a genealogy of charisma and its designated bearers.

In Weber's genealogy, charisma emerges with the figures of the magician and the prophet on the one hand, and the elected war lord, the gang leader and the *condottiere* on the other hand (Weber 1967a[1919]:80). The qualities imputed to the prophet and to the warrior are transferred respectively to the priest, and to the king as leader of the army in conditions of a chronic state of war (or to the war hero). Charismatic education was classically carried out by the priest or the warrior. It came to be monopolised by wealthy, economically inactive educators, indicating a transformation from a charismatic into a plutocratic elite. Charismatic communities sprung up around a prophet, an artist, a philosopher or a scientific innovator to form a church, a sect, an academy, or a school. While some non-modern societies were characterised by ideal-typical conditions of charismatic leadership, devotion and community, charisma finds its political role also in parliamentary democracies, where parliamentary party leaders command devotion and loyalty from followers on the basis of a sense of 'calling' tied to their personalities. For 'politics as vocation', the pre-eminent qualities are 'passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion' (Weber 1967b[1919]:115). Even for the modern politician, this means 'passionate devotion to a cause', and Weber is quick to tell us the not-so-distant sources of that 'cause': 'the god or demon who is its overlord' (115). 'Living for' politics as an internal calling, which is the definition of politics as vocation proper (as opposed to 'living off' politics), entails the pursuit of meaning in the search of a cause (Weber 1967a[1919]:84).

Charismatic leadership is opposed to bureaucracy, and traditional, patriarchal privileges, rules and regulations, rank and titles. The charismatic leader is not chosen according to traditional determinants of social standing, but according to his personal qualities. The 'calling' rules out other paraphernalia of leadership. Thus, the charismatic leader typically does not pursue a career, salary, privileges, or promotion. His conduct is not governed by a job description. The charismatic leader and his disciples typically abdicate all bonds of family, profession, and friendship. New commandments and norms are derived ultimately from divine

judgement, by appeal to revelation, intuition, and oracle. It is thus no co-incidence that charisma potentially evinces revolutionary effects, toppling dearly held values, custom, law, tradition, family ties and piety (Weber 1980[1922]:141, 145, 658).

Charismatic leadership is opposed to economic principles and monetary exchanges, which are rejected as being undignified. Magicians, diviners, prophets or in any other sense charismatic leaders are inclined to dispense their gifts of prophecy, teaching, divining and healing free of charge. Rejecting equivalent exchanges, they scorn the ethos of contract and fee-for-service interactions. In the same vein, they also frown upon a regular and regulated income, promoting donations, endowments, bribery, theft, gift or begging instead.

Charisma's opposition to money also becomes explicable if we consider that money, as universal equivalent, has a levelling function. It dissolves differentiated qualities into quantities. Monetary transactions produce impersonality and anonymity in the transactions involved, wiping out any trace of personalised character (see Simmel 2003[1889]:274).

This explains why a professionalised bureaucracy and equivalent exchanges are anathema to charisma. It also explains the waning and transformations of charismatic leadership and devout discipleship under conditions of economic rationalisation and disciplinarisation, that is, under conditions captured in Weber's famous phrase of 'the disenchantment of the world' (see e.g. 1967b[1919]:155). Rationalisation and modernity have transformed societies, undermined the sacred sources of charisma and dispelled ethical qualities of honour and obligation.

Nevertheless, while charisma is more 'at home' in certain non-modern social formations in so far as charisma is integral to their structures, it is also transhistorical.[2] As Weber notes, 'Charismatic leadership has emerged in all places and in all historical epochs' (Weber 1967a[1919]:80). And even in its transformations, it has indelibly left its mark on social relations and symbolic transactions, especially in those normative spheres that have remained unevenly intransigent or resistant to the economic and cultural logic of the market. It is the spheres of teaching and healing that have remained least differentiated and detached from the sacred sources of charisma, insofar as they are entailed in the very definition of charisma *ab initio*.

Charisma in teaching, in science and in art

Weber hints at the transhistorical persistence of charisma when he points out that prophets and priests are the ancestors of philosophy without priests (1980[1922]:275). The most extraordinary and rare gifts that define the divine grace of charisma are prophecy and teaching (see Smith 1998:37). Weber

remains close to his source on this point. Rudolf Sohm, from whom Weber took over the notion of charisma, stresses

> … that charismatic "rulers" are, in fact, above all teachers. Teachers convey a truth they have not invented, and they lead without being elected; this is why, for Sohm, the charisma of the follower is the charisma of the disciple, the pupil who embraces the "discipline" demanded by a master […] (cited in Smith 1998:46).

Weber insists that even in modernity, teaching and learning at tertiary level require a sense of 'calling'—a 'personal experience' of science (*Wissenschaft*):

> Without this strange intoxication, ridiculed by every outsider; without this passion, this 'thousands of years must pass before you enter into life and thousands more wait in silence' – … without this, you have no calling for science and you should do something else. For nothing is worthy of a man unless he can pursue it with passionate devotion (Weber 1967b[1919]:135).

In this respect, there is no difference between science (*Wissenschaft*) and art; in both, inspiration plays a central role. While the orientation and the result are different,

> the psychological processes do not differ. Both are frenzy (in the sense of Plato's 'mania') and 'inspiration'. … whether we have scientific inspiration depends upon destinies that are hidden from us, and besides upon 'gifts' (Weber 1967b[1919]:136).

Weber's elaboration of the concept of charisma and its genealogy has suggested its close association with teaching and learning at tertiary level. Its incommensurability with bureaucracy and monetary transactions explain much of the resistance of academics defending their cause against incursions of the state and the market. The transhistorical nature of charisma tells us that it is not about to go away. In as much as it is closely tied up with teaching, its resilience will mean that it will continue to pervade the core relation that defines teaching and learning. Upholding 'science (*Wissenschaft*) as vocation' would then necessarily entail protecting that core relation.

Charisma differentiated

This core relation enabling the symbolic exchanges that we call teaching and learning, however, demands closer scrutiny and differentiation. After having emphasised the indispensability of charisma for the establishment of that core relation, there are also important senses in which charisma demanding obedience is not the ideal teaching frame. There is an important sense in which teaching is not and should not be prophecy, and less still, demagoguery. In

keeping with his repeated call for a distinction between fact and value, Weber insists, '... the prophet and the demagogue do not belong on the academic platform' (1967b[1919]:146). Posturing in the manner of a prophet or a demagogue in the academy is proscribed not only in the name of an ethical relation between teaching and learning; it is proscribed also because it is deemed detrimental to the pursuit of knowledge and truth. In a move that initially opposes Kant's idea of the place of the scholarly in the public sphere, in order then to return to Kant's fundamentals of the 'conflict of the faculties', Weber elaborates:

> To the prophet and the demagogue, it is said: 'go your ways out into the streets and speak openly to the world', that is, speak where criticism is possible. In the lecture room we stand opposite our audience, and it has to remain silent. … The task of the teacher is to serve the students with his knowledge and scientific experience and not to imprint upon them his personal political views. It is certainly possible that the individual teacher will not entirely succeed in eliminating his personal sympathies. He is then exposed to the sharpest criticism in the forum of his own conscience. … whenever the man of science introduces his personal value judgment, a full understanding of the facts *ceases* (Weber 1967b[1919]:146).

> The primary task of a useful teacher is to teach his students to recognize 'inconvenient' facts – I mean facts that are inconvenient for their party opinions (147).

Looking for leaders in teachers is misguided, as the two roles are distinct (Weber 1967b[1919]:149). Weber states, '... the qualities that make a man an excellent scholar and academic teacher are not the qualities that make him a leader to give directions in practical life, or, more specifically, in politics' (149-150). Weber is adamant about this distinction: academic teachers have a 'vocation' different from that of 'seers and prophets'. Academic teachers should pursue their respective disciplines 'in the service of self-clarification and knowledge of interrelated facts', and refrain from 'dispensing sacred values and revelations' (152). The reverse is true as well: devotion in the sphere of religion demands intellectual sacrifice (to the prophet or to the church) (154).

A practical ethics of teaching, in contrast, would aim to assist the student in the process of self-clarification and lead him/her to develop a sense of responsibility.

Transformations of/in charisma

What Weber provides here, is an account of the transformations of charisma, structured by the 'disenchantment of the world', which differentiates normative

spheres to the effect of allocating different roles to the charismatic leader and the charismatic teacher, respectively. Consequently, he has to rigorously delineate the distinction between 'politics as vocation' and 'science as vocation'.

Exceeding his own stated aims and theses, Weber provides much more than that, though. He inadvertently provides the ingredients of an internal differentiation and transformation which teaching, derived from grace-inspired leadership, has to undergo on the path which transforms love into, and connects love to, the ethical injunction that governs the relation between teaching and learning at its best.[3] In this transformation, the affective structure of charisma is maintained, but it is channelled toward a different aim.

There are two psychoanalytic concepts that allow us to theorise these transformations and differentiation: transference and sublimation. In drawing out the relationship between charisma on the one hand, and the psychoanalytic transference and the process of sublimation on the other hand, I am taking some liberties—though liberties not unmotivated by Weber's own gestures in that direction. Charisma is closely linked to a psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious. According to his sister Marianne, after reading Freud, Weber stressed the 'altogether unconscious and seldom fully conscious' sources of charisma (quoted in Camic 1980:24). Weber became ever more convinced of this link. 'There can be no doubt', he is reported to have stated, 'that Freud's thought *can* become a very significant source for the interpretation of a whole series of phenomena in cultural history' (Marianne Weber quoted in Camic 1980:6).[4]

Charisma and transference

In the psychoanalytic transference, unconscious wishes and psychically experienced childhood conflicts are actualised in the relations with specific persons encountered later in life, who are construed in analogy to infantile prototypes. Such persons are typically charismatic leaders, teachers, and most importantly for psychoanalysis, the analyst him/herself. The analysand, disciple or student tends to transfer unconscious wishes and ideas onto the analyst, healer, leader or teacher, respectively. Psychoanalysis works with precisely this 'false connection'. It reproduces the same affect of the original unconscious wish, thus re-editing the former conflict. Freud talks in no uncertain terms about this 'battle between doctor and patient, intellect and drive, recognition and wanting to act out' (Freud 1958[1912]:108). The task for both analysand and analyst then becomes invoking, and ideally working through this 'other scene' in the process of the analysis, overcoming resistances (Freud 1958[1915]:159-168; see also Laplanche and Pontalis 1973[1967]: 455, 458).

The task of the teacher, and especially the charismatic teacher, I would argue, is a similar one. S/he would have to draw the strong affect that characterises charisma through the ways in which s/he is being construed by the student in analogy to the latter's infantile prototypes, often stylised through the idealised hero of the family romance. But the teacher must know that the affect evoked concerns him/her only vicariously; s/he has no reason or right to be proud of such 'conquests' (see Freud 1958[1915]:166). S/he must invoke the affect of charisma, for a negative transference means the end of the possibility of psychoanalytic/intellectual work; but s/he cannot rest content with that, however personally gratifying it might be.[5] The responsibility of the teacher or analyst/healer is to maintain the charisma or transference in the interests of analytical work (see Freud 1975[1915]:166). This involves redirecting the affect from the personalised figure to the work of (re)cognition, a daunting task.[6]

While the analysis of the transference and of resistances is embedded within particular psychoanalytic techniques mediating between love and an ethical relation, the analogy between the transference in the analytic situation and the transference in the teaching relation on a more general level is so close that Freud views them as 'not differing in nature' (quoted in Laplanche and Pontalis 1973[1967]:458). Both are indispensable to cognition.

The regulation of charisma

To maintain the force of love and charisma and, at the same time, to allow it a formative role in an ethical relation enabling the work of cognition, certain techniques (analytic techniques and regulations of exchanges) come into play. The transference involves a criss-crossing between two different forms of exchange, those of bond and those of contract. In as much as it re-edits the Oedipal situation and elicits transference love, the transference activates bond relations, that is, primary relations that are characterised by hierarchy and dependence. But ultimately, it has to rely on mechanisms to structure and direct these exchanges in the mode of contract. A determinate sum of money and a strictly delimited psychoanalytic hour (50 minutes) supervenes upon the gift of love in the psychoanalytic transference, to force the exchanges initiated in the structure of bond relations into the logic of exchanges in the contract, thereby creating and maintaining the distinction between contract and bond: money cannot buy love.

Similarly regulated exchanges also operate in medical and educational practice, albeit less rigorously delimited. Although there is no requirement, for the sake of the definition of the educational relation, for money to pass hands in order to enforce the boundary between bond and contract, the regulation of exchanges in these fields is expressed in the statutes of professional councils

in codes of ethics and codes of conduct. This 'internal bureaucracy', if we want to call it that, is part of the process that Weber designated as 'rationalisation', which, I would argue, derives its motivation in relation to the professions from the conditions of modern power. The subject in premodern social formations remains within the hierarchically structured relations of bond for the duration of his/her life. The socialisation of the modern subject, in contrast, demands a double and discontinuous procedure: the modern subject has to differentially negotiate the relations of bond and contract. S/he has to transfer and transsubstantiate his/her earliest identifications, to cathect impersonal relations of formal equality, in the process of his/her socialisation. S/he has to sustain both the direct and unequal exchanges of bond (love, obedience and honour), and the idealised, formalised exchanges of contract (making and keeping promises and agreements; treating others as equals), but in different places (see van Zyl 1990:9). This outcome of the socialisation process is ideally achieved in teaching at secondary level. It has to be re-edited, maintained and its capacity extended at tertiary level. In Weber's terms, the operations taking place at these two levels would involve a combination of charisma and responsibility. In Freud's terms, the combined effect would be the formation of the Ego in conformity with the reality principle, rendering it capable of operating in the present with a rational relation to the past and an orientation toward the future. It would equip the young adult with the capability of judging, and of entering into and honouring promises and agreements.

'Internal' and 'external' rationalisation and bureaucratisation

The bureaucratisation and rationalisation internal to the genealogy of charisma is not to be confused with the bureaucratisation and managerialising of higher education that we have seen over the last twenty years. While the first is deemed a necessary ingredient in the enculturation and education of the modern subject, that harnesses the indispensable primary affective ties, the latter is intent on stripping the teaching relation of any personalised, charismatic, transferential qualities and hence of any psychological dimension of power, in the name of (vocational) training, (manpower) development, skills acquisition, serving the labour market, etc. Weber does not as yet fully distinguish 'internal bureaucracy' from externally imposed bureaucracy and managerialism; in fact, he ropes the 'American model' into his schema in order to explain the 'internal bureaucracy' that arises in the process of rationalisation, which he accords some legitimacy in differentiating the roles of academic scholar and political leader.[7] He does not see in what he describes as the 'American model' an externally imposed process of rationalisation and managerialism that threatens the very teaching relation.

If higher education policy today does indeed not show any regard either for the core teaching relation sublating a reference to a transcendental source revealed in charisma, or to the process of sublimation, the commercialisation, market-orientation, and training-focus of current higher education does indeed strike at the core of university education. In as much as the teaching-learning relation encapsulates what is demanded psychologically and politically of a modern subject in a democratic order, jeopardising it in the name of efficiency, cost-cutting, and an instrumentalised relationship to labour and commodity markets, means striking at the psychic and political foundations of a democratic order itself.

Charisma and 'social value'

However, the commercialisation of higher education has opponents other than old-fashioned academics fighting it, opponents whose force it has not reckoned with. One of its strongest and most militant opponents is the unconsciously held idea of social value that remains relatively immune to 'external' rationalisation, 'streamlining', cost-cutting, and managerialisation in the higher education system.[8] It is an unconsciously held notion of social value that lies at the heart of both sublimation[9] and charisma and that has secured their longevity. Both derive their force from the conviction of the import and value of religious, ethical, artistic, scientific, political inspiration emanating from heroes, from revelation, wisdom or grace. This conviction, Weber stipulates, revolutionises society 'from within', as opposed to the relatively ephemeral effect of 'external' bureaucratisation and managerialism. It draws its revolutionary force from what Weber terms 'a central *metanoia*', exemplified in St. Paul's letter to the Philippians by the statement, 'Whatever was valuable to me, I now consider them rubbish for the sake of Christ' (Philippians 3:7). *Metanoia* is defined by Weber as the complete reversal of the individual's central attitude toward the value and meaning of life and the world (1978:1117).

There is a hint in Weber's account, to the effect that this 'internal force' is all the more powerful, as it is radically out of synch with the 'external' realm; furthermore, Weber implies, it asserts itself all the more forcefully, as the bureaucratised order closes in on it. However, it is not simply a re-orientation toward a past order that demanded pious deference to the holy. The intuition of the Divine arises without precedent:

> The bureaucratic order merely replaces the belief in the sanctity of traditional norms with rationally determined rules and by the knowledge that these rules can be superseded by others, if one has the necessary power, and hence are not sacred.

> ... whereas charisma ... manifests its revolutionary power from within, from a
> central *metanoia* [change] of the followers' attitudes. ... charisma, in its most
> potent forms, disrupts rational rule as well as tradition altogether, and over-
> turns all notions of sanctity. Instead of reverence for customs that are ancient
> and hence sacred, it enforces inner subjection to the unprecedented and abso-
> lutely unique and therefore Divine. ... charisma is indeed the specifically crea-
> tive and revolutionary force of history (Weber 1978[1922]:117).

A curious statement by Weber. Having insisted on the necessity of taming and
tempering charisma with responsibility and regulation, he elevates charisma to
an innovative force in history. It is innovative and revolutionary in so far as it
brushes the Divine, the unique and unprecedented, against the Holy, hallowed
tradition and custom.

The transformative power of charisma and, in a derivative sense, of the
transference and sublimation serve as a reminder that there cannot be a self-
instituting social order. Its manifestation in artistic creativity and in scientific
inquiry pursued in university teaching are its prime exemplars in the realm of
social practice, working as they do, to keep the system from closing in on
itself, and from dying from its own consequences.

Notes

1. While I disagree with Readings' postulate of de-centering the teaching rela-
    tion, freeing it from the task of the transmission of knowledge, I would like to
    hold onto his notion of teaching and learning as sites of obligation (1996:154).
2. This much is conceded even by sociologists critical of Weber's notion of 'cha-
    risma' as being too diffuse, ill-defined, and non-specific to serve as an ex-
    planatory concept. The residual element of charisma that is adduced to ac-
    count for its re-surfacing in social orders that have structurally and historically
    superseded it, poses particular problems for sociologists. But it turns out that
    in mounting this critique, sociology hits and hints at its own disciplinary bounda-
    ries and limits.
3. Love is and remains fundamental in this transformation, which introduces an
    inhibition and redirection of its initial aim (see Freud 1958[1915]).
4. In this respect, it is also interesting to note that Weber turned his attention to
    the phenomenon of charisma (1918, 1919) at more or less the same time that
    Freud began to articulate his innovative stance on group psychology (1919),
    later to be published under the title 'Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse'
    (1921).
5. The history of psychoanalysis prior to the theorisation of the transference in
    the analytic situation is pervaded with anecdotes of analysands falling in love
    with analysts, placing the analyst before three impossible choices: marriage, a
    casual affair, or the termination of the analysis. It turns out—in retrospect, we

can say, predictably—that termination will only induce a repeat: s/he will fall in love with the next analyst with whom she seeks treatment. Freud does not promote this solution. Instead, he advocates invoking the affect of love, as a condition for the possibility of analytic work. But in the interests of the psychoanalytic cure, the analyst would have to refuse the desired satisfactions – both to him/herself and the analysand. He cautions against a countertransference (Freud 1958[1915]).

6.   Freud talks about the dangers of working with 'the most explosive forces', which demands extreme caution and conscientiousness (Freud 1958[1915]:171). The corresponding term in Weber, invoked to check charisma, would be 'responsibility' (Weber 1967a[1919]:115).

7.   Weber imputes to 'The American model', 'a grain of salt' to illuminate his postulate of mitigating charisma through responsibility and 'self-clarification'. 'The American model' is personified in 'the American boy', who envisages a commercial transaction between teacher and student: 'he sells me his knowledge and his methods for my father's money, just as the greengrocer sells my mother cabbage … And no young American would think of having the teacher sell him a Weltanschauung or a code of conduct' (Weber 1967b[1919]:149-150)

8.   This kind of 'external' rationalization, imposed from without by technical means, solicits only relatively superficial adaptations, geared to practical interests, from those subjected to it (see Weber 1978[1922]:117).

9.   Sublimation is defined by Freud as the process which inhibits the aim of the sexual instinct, and redirects it to figures, activities, and processes endowed with higher social value.

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'It's Literacy, Stupid!': Declining the Humanities in National Research Foundation (NRF) Research Policy

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Abstract

This article examines the role and place of the skills of advanced cultural literacy in NRF policy and argues that there is no role or place for them in current policy formulations. Through a brief analysis of the work of Goody and Gellner, the paper argues that this gap in policy ignores the necessary and crucial force that the skills of advanced literacy are widely acknowledged to have in the function and constitution of modern states and their economies. Ignoring this, the NRF jeopardises its mission to support social development and economic growth in South Africa. The paper further argues that the current structure of selective support for research in the humanities is likely to have the perhaps unintended consequence of their destruction in global competitive terms due to the penalisation of core disciplinary research activity and the consequent erosion of disciplinary reproduction. All in all, current NRF policy towards the humanities appears as a declining of the humanities, in all senses of the term. To which this paper responds, troping Bill Clinton's favoured slogan, 'It's literacy, stupid!'

Résumé

Dans cet article, on examine le rôle et la place des compétences en connaissances culturelles poussées dans la politique de la NRF et on soutient qu'il n'existe ni rôle ni place pour elles dans les politiques actuelles formulées. Par le biais d'une brève analyse des travaux de Goody et Gellner, cette étude soutient que ce vide en matière d'orientation ignore la force nécessaire et fondamentale que l'on reconnaît largement aux compétences en connaissances poussées dans la fonction et la constitution des

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États modernes et de leur économie. En ignorant cela, la NRF compromet sa mission d'appui au développement social et à la croissance économique en Afrique du Sud. L'étude soutient par ailleurs que la structure actuelle de l'appui sélectif à la recherche dans le domaine des humanités est susceptible d'avoir pour conséquence peut-être involontaire leur destruction sur le plan de la concurrence mondiale en raison de la pénalisation de l'activité de recherche fondamentale et de l'érosion de la reproduction qui en résulte. Tout compte fait, la politique actuelle de la NRF à l'égard des humanités apparaît comme un affaiblissement, dans toute l'acception du terme. Une situation à laquelle l'étude répond en utilisant le slogan préféré de Bill Clinton, «C'est de l'instruction, idiot».

This paper is given in memory of Bill Readings, an old friend and colleague from days in Geneva, who died tragically young in a freak airplane accident in 1994. It is intended as a reminder of his impressive work, *The University in Ruins* (1996), one to which this collection of essays, partly emanating from a workshop in October 2005 on 'The Future of the University in South Africa' at the University of South Africa (UNISA), is surely indebted. At the same time, and since the first parts of Readings' book appeared in the *Oxford Literary Review* (Readings 1995) just a decade ago, I would also like to take the opportunity to honour the work of that journal, as it brought the neoliberal assault on higher education into focus at a relatively early stage in its development. That the terms of this assault now pass as common sense in higher education policy around the world is, I believe, something to be both deplored and actively resisted.[1] It may be that the ending of apartheid in South Africa gives some material ground for successful resistance to this new common sense. Certainly, as shall be discussed below, higher education policy in South Africa since 1994 does appear to be divided between the purely instrumental goals increasingly being defined globally as the be-all and end-all of education, and the broader emancipatory goals which make their formal appearance in local policy, as if the idea of democracy in South Africa has yet to be quite as fully emptied of its participatory elements as elsewhere.

The title of the essay, 'It's literacy, stupid!', is intended to convey some of the frustration that the humanities community—all those working in the disciplines of the arts and humanities from art history to philosophy, through classics to modern languages—in South Africa feels in relation to current funding structures at the National Research Foundation (NRF). At the same time, its textual or intertextual purpose is to refer back to, revisit and revise, Bill Clinton's highly successful sound-bite slogan, 'It's the economy, stupid!'[2]

Clinton's point was that the Republican Party was taking for granted something that the Democrats would foreground and pay closer attention to if elected, i.e. the performance of the U.S. economy. The economy was central to the

lives of ordinary U.S. citizens in ways that Republicans had lost touch with. The republicans were complacent about the economy not because they thought it unimportant, but rather because they took its performance, or what they could get out of it for themselves, for granted.[3] It is the fact of taking something for granted precisely because it is so fundamental that interests me here, and my argument starts by substituting 'literacy' for the 'economy' of Clinton's formulation.

Teachers and researchers in the humanities at South African universities now find themselves in a situation in which the fundamental social force of literacy has somehow become invisible, and literacy is ruled *hors de calcul* by policy makers and their apparatchiks in the structures of higher education. If, in the terminology of orthodox Marxism, it is the economic base that works as the fundamental structuring agent of the social totality, then for academics in the humanities and the social sciences, it is the literacy base that acts as the structuring agent of the educational totality. Literacy, and perhaps above all, the advanced forms of literacy made available in the humanities, constitutes the very ground of educational possibility, the substance of both efficient and reflexive communication as well as a significant element in critical and creative thinking.[4]

Of course, it is surely not the case that literacy is actually considered unimportant in South Africa. Indeed, there are several government campaigns under way for improving basic literacy. But what it is sadly true to say is that the social force of literacy—what it does in and for a society—seems to have become invisible as far as policy makers in higher education are concerned, and as far as NRF research support goes. Let me be clear: it is not that literacy is considered unimportant, in some argued and coherent fashion; it is rather that it is not considered at all. It is at some level taken for granted, just as we tend to take for granted the air that we breathe, and just as Clinton believed the Republicans were taking the economy for granted.

Before proceeding, let me clarify that the literacy in my title is intended to have a narrower sense than the usual one. The aim of this essay is not to address the very serious issues arising what we might call primary literacy, the acquisition of the ability to read and write at basic levels of communicative competence, literacy as it is or should be taught at primary and secondary school levels. That is a topic better addressed by others, alongside the important question and implications of national language policies (see Alexander this volume). The literacy in my title is shorthand for what I refer to elsewhere as advanced or critical literacy.[5] This is a literacy that, to borrow Raymond Williams's terms, 'calls the bluff of authority, since it is a condition of all its practical work that it questions sources, closely examines offered authenticities,

reads contextually and comparatively, identifies conventions to determine meanings' (Williams 1984:276).

It is surely in terms of this 'calling the bluff of authority' that the different disciplines in the humanities have something in common with each other, despite the differences in the bodies of knowledge and scholarship they draw upon, and the respective focal points of their mode of enquiry.

For each discipline in the humanities tends to privilege one or more of the three essential dimensions of humanist enquiry: the theoretical, the historical, and the textual. Philosophy, for instance, privileges theoretical and conceptual understanding, tending in general to an extraordinarily detailed logical assessment of the arguments of philosophers, though often at the expense of the historical understanding of embodied argument. History, in turn, places its emphasis on the subtleties of historical and contextual understanding, though sometimes at the expense of detailed theoretical and textual analysis. While the disciplines of language and literary studies, in their precise attention, tended in their foundational moments to ignore historical and theoretical questions.[6] Each discipline pays attention, with its specific gravity of emphasis, to the depth, complexity and richness of human sense-making, but for each discipline it is that sense-making—the understanding and representation of the world, the understanding through representation of the world—that is central.

In terms of skills rather than contents, the different disciplines in the humanities place different emphases on the arts of decoding or interpreting human communications in historical, theoretical and textual terms. Yet, it may well be that the real impact of the great wave of theory that hit the humanities in the seventies has meant, even in and through the polarisations it created, far greater attention to the common ground beneath the often opposing standpoints of theory, history and textuality. Critical literacy is the name I give to the general project standing as it were behind or within the different disciplines as their common ground. I believe that this common ground forms the best basis for a defence of the humanities in the situation of their active decline, by which I mean the decline imposed by higher education policy in general, and the support policy of the NRF in particular.

This may sound somewhat abstract; so I want to give this idea of critical literacy some definition through the practical consideration of a particular example. What is critical literacy like in practice? What can it yield? What it can add to our understanding of, and practice in, the world?

Not surprisingly, the example I wish to use, and whose analysis will provide a guiding thread for this essay, is a single statement regarding the role and function of the NRF. I select it because it is in a simple and obvious sense a

founding formulation, and one that contains or expresses that 'declining of the humanities' that forms the theme of this article. Through a process of critical analysis, my aim is to analyze the received ideas that are, in my view, distorting the mission of the NRF, and leading to a consequent attitude of disdain towards the humanities in general.

I choose a founding formulation in a literal sense.[7] The statement is taken from the Bill for the Establishment of a National Research Foundation promulgated in 1997. The importance of a founding formulation is to be understood rather like taking the first step with your partner in a formal dance routine: if you get the first step wrong, it is difficult to ever recover your balance. The formulation reads as follows: 'It is generally accepted that the capacity of a country in science and technology is directly related to its potential for development and progress and for promoting the quality of life of its people' (quoted in Higgins 2000:117).

An active reading of this statement, one that 'calls the bluff' of its authoritativeness, necessarily engages the three dimensions of textuality, theory and history that together constitute the practice of critical literacy and of a critical literacy in action.

Textual matters

First, the textual level. On the closer examination that textual analysis allows, a whole range of questions begins to undermine or unthread what on the surface and at first reading may appear (and that is the point of all representation) a relatively unproblematic statement. The textual surface becomes a screen whose surface conceals—but the wager of textual analysis is that the subsequent contours and unevenness of the textual surface then draw attention to—the problems and contradictions animating that surface. At every moment, in such formulations as this one from the NRF founding statement, what is absent can still be perceived as a pressure that makes the apparently solid surface of the statement shimmer and, on close analysis, lose its apparent substantiality. The textual matters because of its inescapable interweaving of presence and absence, of representation and elision.

For the textual analyst, adverbs are always important.[8] To write that something is 'generally accepted' has a very different dynamic to the idea that something is unanimously accepted. For the adjective 'generally' works in reality to signal though elide the existence of a body of particular opinion that does not share the general view, even though that particular opinion may not be represented in the presentation of what is 'generally accepted'. Though wishing to give the impression of consensus, the phrase in fact points to or indicates an underlying concern about a lack of unanimity around the central assertion, the

concern that generates the use of 'generally'. On closer reading, in other words, the suspicion is raised that for something to be generally accepted means that what is generally accepted by some is specifically rejected by others, though these others are absented and silenced in and by the formulation.

The point of such nitpicking at the textual level, even operating through the analysis of just this one phrase, is that it then opens up the given text to extra-textual considerations, and in this case, asking just what disagreements are being covered over in the phrase 'generally accepted'. The phrase points in fact to the existence of some central contradictions that were at work in the formation of higher education policy in the post-1994 period. These contradictions came through in what was generally regarded as the uneasy marriage of two vocabularies and ideas of the social uses of higher education. The clash was between a narrowly instrumental view, emphasizing the 'potential for development and progress' in terms of the economy, and the broader culturalist view, emphasizing the need for the building of critical intellectual skills, particularly in a society still marked by the divisions of decades of apartheid (Gumport 2000; Higgins 1998).

In the instrumentalist view, which on the balance and in practice tends to dominate the implementation of policy, higher education, according to the *Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, needs to, 'address the development needs of society and provide the labour market, in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy' (Department of Education 1997:1). From this perspective, education and higher education needs to be carefully controlled and directed, and tailored to the dynamics of the economy. Education is seen as playing a largely instrumental role, one subordinated to the state's interpretation of economic needs. Yet, at the same time and differing in this from the dominant neoliberal view of higher education across most of the world, South African policy also placed significant emphasis on the importance of critical and analytical skills to a healthy society.[9] This comes through in higher education policy as a repeated acknowledgement of the values of 'critical citizenship', described in the *Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* as 'the socialization of enlightened, responsive and constructively critical citizens' (Department of Education 1997:1). As I argue elsewhere, the *Programme* as a whole simply juxtaposes these two elements without acknowledging that there might be a strain or tension between them, much less admitting that they may well be incommensurate (Higgins 1998). How have these strains worked in practice?

In a recent survey of the implementation of this policy, Gibbon and Kabaki note, 'By 1998, the emphasis had decisively shifted from demands for

democratization to demands for efficiency and effectiveness' (2002:217). All in all, they conclude that the 'democratic phase' has been superseded by the 'managerial phase' (216). It is the consequent emphasis on the instrumental definition of higher educational goals that then leads to a focus on science and technology that marginalizes the humanities and makes for the virtual invisibility of literacy and high literacy that we have seen.[10]

What is missing from the rhetorical consensus generated by the NRF's 'generally accepted' is then precisely the voicing of the cultural that would insist on the cultural as a constitutive force in any reasonable account of social development and progress. What is absent from or made invisible by this formulation is, of course, the role and function of literacy in helping to constitute and sustain the workings and exchanges of any complex society.

At this point, textual analysis calls for some consideration, necessarily both historical and theoretical, of the role and function of literacies in the formation and development of complex societies. Any such consideration suggests the real strangeness and short-sightedness of this taking-for-granted of literacy in any higher education policy concerned with the promotion of social and economic development. For, even at the most basic level, is it not overwhelmingly obvious that the general ability to read and write is the *sine qua non* of any form of education, and even education in any particular branch of 'science and technology'? Indeed, it should not be forgotten that the invention of writing, the currency of literacy, deserves credit as one of the primary technological inventions of the human species, perhaps surpassing in its far-reaching effects that of any other single invention. Writing, in cultural historian Jack Goody's words, is the 'technology of the intellect' *par excellence* (1986:167).

The social force of literacy

Goody's *The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society* (1986) is just one of a whole block of work that argues for the recognition of the constitutive force of writing on the emergence of modern societies.[11] In a striking study that succinctly examines comparative European and African data from ancient Egypt to the present day, Goody argues, 'Whatever form one chooses [and the study deals with religion, the economy, law and the state] organization and behaviour are significantly influenced by the use of writing' (1986:119-20).

Writing for Goody is a 'technology of the intellect', a primal technology in the sense that it both enables and compels new forms of social co-operation and productivity. For Goody, the fact that the emergence of the single state and an overall pantheon of Gods in pre-Christian Egypt coincides with the appearance of writing is no accident. Only the forms of social collaboration

and documentation that writing allows permit such unitary formations, bringing together large groups of people into a single state and faith, as well as an organised system of economic exchange (Goody 1986:65).

Writing also provides the central force and substance of the administrative, that constitutive element in state formation so privileged in Max Weber's account of modern society. All in all, as Goody emphasizes, and interestingly in line with some of Michel Foucault's analyses,[12] that the 'increase in knowledge by the state represented an increase in the power to govern; as in both India and Africa knowledge meant governability; and both entailed the extensive use of the written word (Goody 1986:116).

In conclusion, Goody argues for fuller recognition of the social force of literacy, and how it took 'some 5000 years to expand the ability to read and write throughout the social system, to make it an instrument of democracy, of popular power, of the masses' (1986: 121).[13]

At the very least, we can say that an awareness of this long history of the social force of literacy appears to be entirely absent from the NRF's perspectives on the humanities (Pattison 1982). If the theoretical place of literacy is, as Goody suggests, so important as the 'technology of the intellect', what can account for its absence in policy and research support initiatives? How can such monumental blindness or oversight be possible?

Some explanation may be found through an engagement with the historical dimension of these arguments and in an analysis of the received ideas and formulations which appear to be behind or at work in NRF thinking. My suggestion here is that much of current South African policy regarding the humanities appears to be in thrall to a phrase, and that phrase is C.P. Snow's coinage in the late 1950s, the 'two cultures'.[14]

The history of a received idea

Let us begin with a quotation or call to order from a scholarly book called *Crisis in the Humanities* (1965). The humanities, writes their editor, need very urgently to 'adapt themselves to the needs of a society dominated by science and technology' (Plumb 1965:5). Familiar enough? The quotation might well serve as the *mot d'ordre* of very many discussions of higher education policy in present day South Africa. Yet, the quotation comes from a book published all of forty years ago, and edited by the historian J.H. Plumb from the papers presented at a conference of the same name. The conference was called in response to, and in amplification of, a lecture given in Cambridge on May 7, 1959, where novelist, former scientist and political administrator Snow launched a phrase and an argument that continues to resound today: 'two cultures'. The lecture seemed to identify a crisis around directions in higher education and

research that we are repeating, in the full sense of the phrase that those who do not know their history are always in danger of repeating it.

The common pressure is that behind the desire to change and adapt the structures of education and higher education in such as way as to recognize the fact that future economic power and development are largely in the hands of science and technology. Snow was very worried, in his own time, by the fact that Britain was in danger of falling behind in the struggle to develop the economy through science and technology, and that the education system was doing little to train the scientists and technologists who would be the source of future economic development and social well-being. 'Our population is small', he writes, 'by the side of either the USA or the USSR. Roughly if we compare like with like, and put scientists and engineers together, we are training at a professional level per head of the population one Englishman to every one and half Americans to every two and a half Russians' (Snow 2000:36).

As with policy makers in South Africa today, Snow was motivated by a powerful sense of urgency regarding the shape and structure of education and higher education in the country. Like most thinking in South Africa today, Snow saw education in science and technology as providing the key to the economic development and well-being of the nation, and urged the need for a conversation between two cultures—the scientific and the humanist—which had so given up the habit of conversation that the gap between them seemed to threaten to become unbridgeable. Snow writes, 'Closing the gap between our cultures is a necessity in the most abstract intellectual sense, as well as in the most practical' (2000:50). He urges, 'When the two senses have grown apart, then no society is going to be able to think with wisdom' (ibid.).

Despite all his emphasis on the need for conversation and exchange, even a cursory reading shows how Snow now represented the two sides in this potential conversation in ways that made true conversation, an exchange and discussion between equals, all but impossible. Consciously or unconsciously, Snow revealed himself a prey to his own received ideas in ways that precluded a truly critical frame of mind.

In brief, for Snow, science good while humanities bad. Snow's scientists have a lot to pat themselves on the back for, while humanists would be better off staying entirely silent in the conversation. Scientists are represented as natural optimists, and this is the product of their almost always successful problem-solving and the natural linkage between theory and practice. Scientists are less complacent than other social groups, and in the face of social problems they 'are inclined to be impatient to see if something can be done; and inclined to think that it can be done, until it's proved otherwise. That is their real optimism, and it's an optimism that the rest of us badly need' (Snow 2000:7). All in

all, scientists have their own culture, their characteristic ways of thinking, ana-
lysing and acting, and scientific culture 'contains a great deal of argument,
usually much more rigorous, and almost always at a higher conceptual level,
than literary persons' arguments – even though the scientists do cheerfully use
words in sense which literary persons don't recognize, the senses are exact
ones…' (Snow 2000:12). And of particular though belated interest to South
Africa, scientists 'are [even] freer than most people from racial feeling; their
own culture is in its human relations a democratic one' (48).

On the other side stand, or perhaps 'squirm' would be a better descriptive
term, from Snow's point of view, the humanists and intellectuals, with the 'lit-
erary intellectuals' coming under particular attack. For Snow, as one section
heading has it, intellectuals are 'natural Luddites', looking back to a Golden
Age before industry with longing, and ignoring the bitter realities of a world
without science. Discretely, in an interesting rhetorical tactic which seeks to
preserve the reader's sense of Snow's lack of bias, the most savage characteri-
sation is delegated to an unknown fellow scientist, a 'scientist of distinction',
who simply asks: '[W]eren't they [the literary intellectuals] not only politically
silly, but politically wicked? Didn't the influence of all they represent bring
Auschwitz that much nearer?' (Snow 2000:7). Damaging words, and perhaps
especially so in the immediate post-war period. Snow gives no counter-re-
sponse, stating that he won't attempt to 'defend the indefensible' (7). Despite
Snow's attempts at maintaining some sort of balance, his hostility and aggres-
sion towards humanist culture comes through very strongly indeed. He states
that 'the highly-educated members of the non-scientific culture couldn't cope
with the simplest concepts of pure science: it is unexpected, but they would be
even less happy with applied science' (30); 'I would bet that out of men getting
firsts in arts subjects at Cambridge this year, not one in ten could give the
loosest analysis of the human organization which it [button making] needs'
(30). The famous equation of having read a Shakespeare play or Dickens
novel with knowing and understanding the second law of thermodynamics just
about sums it up: a more or less total contempt for the professional knowledge
and understanding of non-scientific disciplines. Commenting from the cultural
distance of New York on the heat that characterised the Cambridge debate
between Snow and Leavis, Lionel Trilling politely remarked that Snow's writ-
ing revealed an 'extreme antagonism' towards literature, despite his claims,
which help to authorise his lecture as a whole, to have a foot in both camps
(Trilling 1967[1962]:138; see also Leavis 1972).

All in all, as Snow had put it, even more directly, in an article published
prior to *Two Cultures*, scientists enjoy a 'greater "moral health" than "literary

intellectuals'" (quoted in Collini 2000:xxvi). From opposing positions like this, the essence of the science or humanities stance, the only dialogue possible is a *dialogue des sourds*, a dialogue of the deaf.

The point of this brief discussion of the damaging dynamics of Snow's presentation of the 'two cultures' is to ask whether or not there exists a similarly (parallel, but not exact) damaging set of oppositions and assumptions at work in our contemporary thinking about 'science or humanities' in South Africa. Is such antagonistic opposition what characterizes the current state of things?

My suspicion is that this damaging stereotype of 'two cultures' may, like all received ideas, run very deep indeed, and form part and parcel of the common sense or pre-conceptual thinking informing current discussion, specifically in the National Research Foundation and more generally in South African policy.[15]

Obviously, much has changed in the state of knowledge and practice since the time of Snow's lecture. Yet it is the presumption of this paper that one thing that hasn't changed is the vocabulary – and with that the built-in common sense which informs and indeed precludes discussion.

Why say this? Because the resurgence of the 'two cultures' vocabulary in recent discussions and debates centred on some genuine changes and advances in scholarly knowledge and informed public opinion since Snow's time. While this is not the place or occasion to rehearse the detail of the Sokal Affair, it is perhaps worthwhile to at least point to a number of books which attempt to unwrite some of the changes and developments that have taken place Snow's *The Two Cultures* argument, largely under the impetus of Thomas Kuhn's remarkable study, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1970). This study did much, as it were, to level the playing field between the sciences and humanities. A spate of recent studies seem to wish to return us to Snow's time and to be invested heavily in the kind of narcissistic self-image of the scientist indulged in with such complaisance by Snow himself (see Gross and Levitt 1994; Sokal and Bricmont 1998; Weinberg 1994).

Stefan Collini, in his fine 'Introduction' to the latest edition of Snow's *The Two Cultures* (2000), has summarised much of the distance between Snow and ourselves. While the history and philosophy of science was a minor area of study within philosophy in the 'fifties, it has since become a substantial discipline in its own right. At the same time, the real practice of science has itself undergone a significant shift away from its old academic definition and location as disinterested enquiry to a place and position in the 'commercial strategies of drug companies, aerospace industries, and the like' (Collini 2000: lvi). Indeed, argues Collini, the experience of recent decades has shown that

improving the standards of living in third-world countries rests more on un-
derstanding the very complex operation of political and cultural forces at work
than on understanding the science involved in the latest technological ad-
vance (Collini 2000:lxix).

All in all, he concludes, the 'notion of the "two cultures" [may be] at best, an
irrelevant anachronism' (liv). Yet, as we have tried to show, an irrelevant
anachronism that may still manage, in the form of a received idea, to influence
our contemporary analyses and discussions.

My feeling is that only something as large but invisible as a significant
preconception or received idea can be behind such a blind spot in current policy.

Conclusion

These are just a few of the textual, theoretical and historical considerations
that arise from a careful reading of the National Research Foundation's found-
ing statement. In conclusion, it is perhaps worth amplifying the central theme
of this essay: the constitutive importance of literacy and advanced literacy for
the functioning of modern and contemporary societies. I turn to Ernest Gellner's
important work, *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), to help frame and present
my concluding remarks. 'The major part of training in industrial society is
generic training', he argued,

> *generic* training, not specifically connected with the highly specialized pro-
> fessional activity of the person in question, and *preceding* it. Industrial soci-
> ety may by most criteria be the most highly specialized society ever; but its
> education system is unquestionably the least specialized, the most universally
> standardized, that has ever existed (Gellner 1997:60).

At the centre of this education is literacy, both in its basic and advanced forms.
For the 'paradigm of work', observed Gellner in 1983, 'is no longer plough-
ing, reaping, thrashing' (Gellner 1997:64). He states:

> Work, in the main, is no longer the manipulation of things, but of meanings. It
> generally involves exchanging communications with other people… For the
> first time in human history, *explicit and reasonably precise communication*
> becomes generally, pervasively used and important (Gellner 1997:64, my
> emphasis).

Perhaps now, some twenty years after Gellner's original arguments and at a
moment when the information economy is more visible than ever, this empha-
sis on the social force of communication is all the more true. Certainly, for
contemporary political thinkers such as Hardt and Negri (2005), forms of com-
munication stand as a constitutive element of the 'biopolitical' in their pro-
vocative analysis of emerging global society.[16]

And surely it is by now widely accepted that one of the greatest challenges facing any economy in the twenty-first century is the worldwide information explosion. For business and government to cope with these demands, we will need citizens who are highly skilled and competent in not just paraphrasing and passing on, but in assessing and interpreting vast quantities of information. No parliamentarian, no business person, no administrator needs to be told just how important it is not only to read documentation quickly and to summarize it accurately, but also to assess the information and arguments presented, and then to be able to communicate these to others with appropriate comments. Similarly, no one who practices these skills needs to be told how much value they add (to use the current phrase, itself worthy of analysis). The skills needed to achieve this are those of a critical literacy. The capacity of a country in its critical literacy skills is as directly related to its potential for development and progress as its capacity in science and technology.

All in all, NRF policy with regard to research funding in the humanities has as its perhaps unintentional effect the declining rather than the supporting of the humanities. I make an awkward play on the word declining for two reasons. The first is to refer to the simple fact that most requests for research support from the NRF for the humanities are routinely declined, to such an extent that many colleagues now refuse to take the time necessary to seek NRF support. The NRF does not have the support of the humanities community in South Africa because the humanities community does not feel it has the support of the NRF.

The second reason refers to the funding that may be available in terms of the current policies of selective research support, organised around the exclusionary modes of key themes and areas quite contrary to the substance of academic freedom. Such selective policy must, in the long term, lead to the decline of the humanities, as selective support ultimately leads to the erosion of disciplinary reproduction. In a situation in which only certain aspects of a discipline may attract funding, the discipline as a whole will inevitably crumble.

Current NRF policy towards the humanities takes on the form of a declining of the humanities, in all senses of the term. To which this paper responds, troping Bill Clinton's favoured slogan, 'It's literacy, stupid!'

Notes

1. In that sense, this paper endorses Miyoshi's recognition that 'administrators seem eager to write off the humanities', and his call for 'a new interventional project with which to combat the corporatization of the university and the

mind' (Miyoshi 2000:50). For a useful survey of policy in the USA, see Miyoshi 1999 and 2000.

2. The slogan was first recommended by Bill Clinton's aide, James Carville, and figured as one of three focus points on a blackboard in the 1992 campaign headquarters.

3. The growing awareness of the Republican Party's state of denial with regard to the economy forms a repeated theme in Clinton's own account of the formation of his own key policies. See Clinton 2005.

4. For a useful general survey, see Barton 1994, while for some interesting and valuable counters to an over-emphasis on traditional forms of literacy, see Street 1993 and, with special reference to South Africa, Prinsloo and Breier 1996.

5. My own sense of the term is specifically developed around the three dimensions of interpretation: the textual, the historical and the theoretical. See also Freire 1970; Higgins 1992.

6. With particular regard to the tensions between the analytic and the contextual assessments of political philosophy, see the work of Cambridge school writers such as Skinner 2002 and Forbes 1975; for a classic statement of the usual blindness of historians to textual matters, see White 1973; while for classic statements of the blindness of several generations of literary critics to historical and theoretical questions, see Said 1983; Williams 1975.

7. For a useful and provocative examination of the structure of founding statements in general, see Derrida 1984.

8. Not only adverbs, of course. Further critical attention could also be fruitfully paid to the question of the causal direction of the direct relation between science and technology and progress and development; does progress and development enable investment in science and technology, or does investment in science and technology enable progress and development; somewhere, the whole question of the prior 'primitive accumulation' of cultural capital disappears from view, as if the playing fields between first and third world countries were equal; to the question of how much sense it makes for the relations between science and technology and development and progress to be treated as if they were factors that work in isolation from, say questions of biopolitics (the health of a country's citizens and workforce), and politics *tout court* (the political stability of a country, its levels of corruption and nepotism); and the questions raised by the use of 'and' in 'science and technology', is it exclusive, i.e. restricting the field to only those branches of science and technology which work in direct relation to each other, or inclusive, open to all sciences and all technologies, including, according to the definitions of science and technology the humanities and literacy, the 'technology of the intellect', as discussed below.

9. For some usefully brief surveys of global trends in this regard, see Maasen and Cloete (2002), who, in somewhat guarded terms, note that 'the traditional pact between society and higher education has become problematic' (2000:16).

10. Thus, for example, the annual HSRC survey of government policy for 2005-2006 has a chapter, 'The State of Mathematics and Science Education: Schools are not equal' (Reddy 2006). As Reddy puts it, 'Mathematics and science are key areas of knowledge and competence for the development of an individual and the social and economic development of South Africa in a globalising world' (2006:392). Neither the essay nor the volume as a whole had any indexed reference to literacy.

11. Barton sums up the argument succinctly, 'Literacy arose with the coming of urbanization and more complex forms of social organization' (Barton 1994:116). See also Goody and Watt 1968; Havelock 1982; McLuhan 1962; Olsen 1988; Ong 1982. And, for a succinct characterization of the political binding force of literacy, see Anderson 1983.

12. See, for instance, Foucault's definition of his later work as characterised by an interest in 'govermentality' meaning 'the formation of a whole series of specific government apparatuses, and…the development of a whole complex of knowledges' (Foucault 2002:220).

13. Compare to Williams's statement that 'the struggle for literacy was as real a social struggle as any struggle for subsistence or food or shelter' (Williams 1989:154). See also Higgins (1999: 174-77).

14. The following section draws on material developed for an NRF workshop, 'The Shifting Boundaries of Knowledge' held in Cape Town in 2004.

15. For it is certainly correct to say, in terms of more global discussions, that the antagonistic opposition has returned with a vengeance in recent responses to the efforts made since Snow's time (i.e. post Kuhn through Harding 1993; Latour 2000; and Haraway 1992) to bridge the gaps between the 'two cultures' of science and the humanities. As one wounded anthropologist put it, in the wake of the Sokal Affair, 'Scientists always stomp around meetings talking about "bridging the two-culture gap", but when scores of people from outside the sciences begin to build just that bridge, they recoil in horror' (Latour 2000:17).

17. Hardt and Negri present this in terms of a new vocabulary of 'biopolitical production'. See for instance their statement that 'we will quickly find today in many respects economic production is at the same time cultural and political. We will argue that the dominant form of contemporary production, which exerts its hegemony over the others, creates "immaterial goods" such as ideas, knowledge, forms of communication, and relationships. In such immaterial labour, production spills over beyond the bounds of the economy traditionally conceived to engage culture, society and politics directly. What is produced in

this case is not just material goods but actual social relationships and forms of life. We will call this kind of production "biopolitical" to highlight how general its products are and how directly it engages social life in its entirety' (Hardt and Negri 2005:94).

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Research, Research Productivity and the State in South Africa[*]

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Abstract

Taking the plan of action adopted at the June 2005 Department of Science and Technology conference on 'Human Resources for Knowledge Production in South Africa' as its starting-point, the authors of this article discuss four separate but related barriers to research productivity in South Africa: inadequate academic remuneration and onerous working conditions; the tension that seems to have emerged between advancing equity and realising academic excellence; obstacles that undermine institutional collaboration within the higher education and science council sectors, and the poor quality of senior managers in the knowledge system. In each case, the authors indicate the difficulties that lie in the way of reform and suggest how nevertheless the challenges can be met in contemporary South African conditions. They conclude that social wellbeing in general as well as the health of the research system depends on facing up to and solving these difficult and sometimes controversial issues.

Résumé

En prenant comme point de départ le plan d'action adopté lors de la conférence sur les «Ressources humaines pour la production des connaissances en Afrique du Sud» organisée en juin 2005 par le Département de Sciences et Technologie, les auteurs de cet article examinent quatre barrières, distinctes mais liées, à la productivité de la recherche en Afrique du Sud : l'insuffisance de la rémunération des universitaires et les conditions de travail difficiles ; la tension qui semble être apparue entre la promotion de l'équité et la réalisation de l'excellence sur le plan universitaire ; les

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obstacles qui compromettent la collaboration institutionnelle dans les secteurs de l'enseignement supérieur et du conseil scientifique, et la faiblesse de la qualité des cadres supérieurs dans le système des connaissances. Dans chaque cas, les auteurs indiquent les difficultés qui existent sur la voie de la réforme et suggèrent la façon dont néanmoins les défis peuvent être relevés dans la situation de l'Afrique du Sud contemporaine. En conclusion, ils soutiennent que le bien-être social en général ainsi que la santé du système de recherche sont tributaires de la capacité à affronter et à résoudre ces problèmes difficiles et quelquefois controversés.

Academic, scholarly and applied social research is in crisis in South Africa. As the Department of Science and Technology's (DST's) *National Research and Development Strategy* (R&D Strategy) indicates, spending on research and development declined from 1.1 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1990 to 0.7 percent in 1994, though South Africa's scientific system now had to support the political and socio-economic aspirations of 40 rather than 5-6 million people (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2002:15).[1] This percentage is particularly low considering that the OECD countries spend on average 2.15 percent of GDP across the public and private sectors, with countries like Finland and Korea approaching the 3.5 percent level. As DST's R&D strategy document concludes, this is disastrous, since 'South Africa's current expenditure is significantly lower than it should be to ensure national competitiveness in years to come' (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2002:17).

But the problem is more profound than aggregate research spending. South Africa's share of global research output has been declining for over a decade, from 0.8 percent in 1990 to 0.5 percent by 2001. Independent assessments of South Africa's public research sector publications suggest that scientific output has been stagnating for the last decade and a half (Kahn and Blankley 2005; Pouris 2003). Moreover, for some years researchers have been ageing without adequate renewal. This is graphically demonstrated in figures from the R&D strategy that indicate that whereas researchers over fifty years of age produced only 18 percent of publications in 1990, their contribution to total output had increased to 45 percent by 1998. Moreover, black scientists accounted for only 8 percent of total scientific publications at this stage (Government of the Republic of South Africa 2002:21). In short, South Africa's scientific personnel are mainly white, male and ageing. If this is not addressed urgently, it will result in the decline of the country's scientific profile and infrastructure in coming decades.

In recent years, this crisis has galvanised government into action. Not only are there a number of initiatives under way to re-organise funding and direct it to the scientific establishment, but also conversations are increasingly being facilitated between various stakeholders aimed at understanding and solving the problems at hand. There have, for instance, been four meetings of the Higher Education Working Group, which comprises the President of the country and the vice chancellors of all higher education institutions. Signifying the urgency of the matter, President Mbeki, and Ministers of Science and Technology, and Public Enterprises, Mosibudi Mangena and Alec Erwin respectively, have co-authored a paper intended to spark a national dialogue on the role and purpose of higher education institutions in contemporary South Africa (Erwin, Mangena and Mbeki 2005).

Another notable initiative was the 'Human Resources for Knowledge Production in South Africa' conference in June 2005, organised for the DST by the Africa Institute and the Human Sciences Research Council. The conference focused on how to revitalise research in South Africa. It took place as a result of recognition by government and other entities that South Africa's share of global research output has steadily declined for over fifteen years. Government is increasingly worried about the implications for economic development, political democracy and higher education.[2]

Representatives of various stakeholders participated in the conference, including state officials, higher education and science council managers, private sector and civil society leaders, researchers and international experts. Almost all were decision-makers within different institutional settings, and as a result, were collectively in a position to put a negotiated national strategy into effect. The conference adopted a multi-faceted resolution involving action by all stakeholders.

This article reflects critically on this resolution. It considers its viability against the backdrop of existing research on the academy and the production of knowledge in South Africa. It focuses on state spending patterns and institutional linkages in the knowledge sector, higher education and other policies, university reforms, and how these facilitate or undermine research productivity. Thus, the article speaks to possible futures for the knowledge system in South Africa.

The conference agenda and plan of action

The conference was designed as a summit where conversations happened among diverse stakeholders, firstly, to articulate what they saw as the main obstacles to enhancing research productivity, and secondly, to negotiate a strategic plan

with sufficient consensus to ensure its viability and facilitate its implementation.

The conference agenda was organised to facilitate action. After a welcome by the Minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, Dr. Mashelkar, president of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in India, delivered a keynote address on his country's experience in developing its research environment and enhancing its intellectual productivity.[3] This was followed by South African institutional leaders' presentations on several topics including: the relationship of education, training and employment; existing and potential linkages between knowledge development and the South African economy; the impact of globalisation on research; research funding; the state of public research infrastructure; and the continental dynamics required by and for a redeveloped science and technology strategy.

In summary, the plan of action adopted at the conference on 24 June 2005 advocates:

- Recruitment and retention of high-level scientific and technological personnel, and the promotion of partnerships between universities, research councils and industry in support of this agenda.
- Careful attention to the support of advanced study, to its form and content, and appropriate incentives.
- Linking the research agenda to national priorities, and allocating funding accordingly.
- Increasing national investment in research in ways that also leverage quality overseas and domestic involvement.
- Promoting South Africa's role in Africa as a leader in scientific research for continental development.
- Engaging with scientific globalisation so that South Africa becomes a hub in appropriate research areas, and attracts talented researchers (Department of Science and Technology and Department of Education 2005b:2-3).

This plan of action is predicated on retaining good academics and scholars within the knowledge system, attracting a new generation of students to the research professions, encouraging research in areas with beneficial impacts on the economy and society, and finally promoting institutional collaborations within and across national boundaries. Its viability depends on solutions to four distinct, but related problems: inadequate academic remuneration and onerous working conditions; the tension that seems to have emerged between advancing equity and realising academic excellence; obstacles that undermine

institutional collaboration within the higher education and science council sectors; and the poor quality of senior managers in the knowledge system.

Research funding, academic remuneration and working conditions in the higher education sector

How is a quality workforce to be developed and retained within the knowledge system? First, academics, researchers and other knowledge workers need to be adequately remunerated. Second, the institutional environment, defined by the availability of financial resources and appropriate working conditions, must enable knowledge workers to undertake one of their core functions, namely research. Should such an environment not prevail, systemic incentives are unlikely to be sufficient to retain good academics and researchers. Both elements need to be disaggregated and require further clarification.

Three sets of reforms in remuneration are urgently required. First, remuneration scales in the academy as a whole have to be raised significantly. Academic salary scales have fallen in relative terms for over two decades. A study that attempts to estimate the real purchasing power of academic salaries between six Commonwealth countries puts South African academic salaries slightly ahead of those in Malaysia, and behind those of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Kubler and Roberts 2005). They have declined even more steeply in relation to other South African professional salaries. A South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors Association (SAUVCA) report notes that 'it has been evident for a long time that academic salaries are not comparable to private sector salaries and … have been increasing at a slower rate than salaries offered to professionals in other fields' (SAUVCA 2004). It is common to hear of masters graduates with no substantial working experience being employed as deputy directors in the public service, and at the bottom of that scale receiving remuneration packages equivalent to those of professors with twenty years experience. The effect of such situations is that the academy has become an unattractive career option. Not only has this resulted in top graduates shying away from research careers in the academy, but it has also resulted in the senior researchers and established scientists required for the reproduction of a new generation of scholars engaging extensively in commissioned research and consultancy to augment their inadequate salaries (Department of Science and Technology and Department of Education 2005a, citing Kraak 2003). University managements have ensured that their salaries are market-related, without paying concomitant attention to the salaries of established scientists.[4] Unless this is urgently addressed, research productivity is likely to continue to decline.

However, an overall increase in academic salaries is not in itself going to address the problem. This is because sufficient resources are not available to lift these remuneration scales to levels equivalent to those of two decades ago. This raises the issue of differential academic remuneration. The South African academy, based as it is on the British system, has for long been defined by relatively standardised and egalitarian patterns of remuneration within the different research hierarchies. This comes at the cost of the more productive researchers who are not rewarded monetarily to any great degree for their hard work and prolific output. For a system needing to retain good researchers and encourage further output, is it not mandatory that remuneration be tied to productivity?

There are precedents. In the American academy, senior professors are able to negotiate their salaries on an individual basis, which leads to a system that is more unequal but more productive. There are also South African precedents. Two of the more notable cases in recent years have been the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In the former case, a new HSRC management attracted social scientists of quality by offering higher salaries than those of the universities. The result was that the institution's productivity, as measured by peer reviewed journal publications, jumped from 0.18 per researcher in 1997 to 0.8 units per researcher in 2004, or 0.67 adjusted for multiple authorship (Human Sciences Research Council 2005:5, 9; see also Orkin 2005). In 2002 the University of KwaZulu-Natal implemented a different reward system tied to academics' research codes. As a result, the productivity of the University of Natal component of the now-merged institution jumped from 448 to 582 SAPSE units between 2001 and 2003 (University of KwaZulu-Natal 2004). These examples suggest that the research outputs of institutions can be dramatically improved when research productivity is rewarded monetarily.

But is increased remuneration for productive researchers affordable? Studies indicate that globally the distribution of scientific production is not a normal one. As Huber reminds us, 'the distribution of productivity does not follow the normal (i.e., bell curve) distribution, but rather follows the exponential distribution. Thus, most authors produce at the lowest rate and very few authors produce at the higher rates' (2001:1089). This means that in any given field in a given period 60 percent of researchers will have one publication, 15 percent two, 7 percent three and so on (ibid.). Thus, if remuneration is tied to productivity, it is likely to reward small numbers of researchers within the academy, thereby making it more affordable. Moreover, while more resources would be directed to a limited pool of researchers, it would nevertheless have beneficial systemic effects by encouraging others, including younger researchers, to be-

come more productive. The consequence is likely to be greater aggregate output from the nation's knowledge system.

Finally, a transformation in the architecture of academic remuneration is warranted. Presently, salary scales are structured to reward managerial more than core research and teaching positions, as recent revelations on the salaries of some top managers have shown (Macfarlane 2004). This tells academics that should they want to earn more, they need to consider becoming academic managers. A dynamic has therefore been created where productive researchers, black and white, tend to move into management because that is where monetary rewards are highest. Not only does this undermine the retention of high calibre senior black academics within research and teaching, but it also prejudices research productivity. The result is catastrophic. It becomes almost impossible to progress adequately towards a demographically representative academy.[5] And, the nation's research output falls, with serious consequences not only for its intellectual reputation, but also for economic growth and development.

However, reform of academic remuneration is, on its own, unlikely to enhance research productivity. Working conditions must also be structured appropriately if a vibrant research culture is to emerge. Studies have indicated that South Africa's academic workplace has become more onerous and stressful in the last decade. In one such study, Eddie Webster and Sarah Mosoetsa (2002) demonstrated that academics have to teach and mark more, and that a more commercial managerial logic in the universities has produced demoralisation, stress and decline in productivity. This leads to the inevitable conclusion that working conditions in the academy have to be radically reformed if research output is to increase.

This must not be interpreted to mean that teaching and marking, and in general educating a new generation of high-level workers, are not important. These functions are crucial to the nation's development, stability and future prosperity. But if the demand to educate a new generation is to be coupled with generating more research, then the institutional environment has to empower researchers and research activities more. Not only would this involve employing more academics with a resultant decrease in staff-student ratios, but more support for marking and other teaching functions would also be required (Webster and Mosoetsa 2002). Again, lessons can be learnt from other experiences including those of the American academy. The net effect of these reforms would be greater expenditure on the university system from the public purse and a more entrepreneurial approach from higher education managers.

Better remuneration and more enabling working conditions are indispensable for a productive knowledge system. Without these, the top end of the graduate

pool is unlikely to be attracted to academic research as a profession. Moreover, for the foreseeable future the academy would haemorrhage its most capable researchers, especially in an environment where there are skills shortages in many areas. If South Africa's political elites are serious about enhancing the country's research productivity, and if they understand this as necessary for realising greater growth and development, then they must seriously consider the reforms of academic remuneration and working conditions detailed above.

Equity and excellence

The search for equity is a key theme in contemporary South Africa. Equity has many dimensions, in South Africa the most sensitive being that of race. Arguments for racial equity also saturate the universities and research councils, posing interesting and difficult problems, amongst them that of maintaining institutions' research profiles.

It should be noted that two separate discourses—that of racial empowerment and that of research quality—are at play in the debate on the transformation of South Africa's knowledge system. Before exploring the contours of this debate, it is worth stating that excellence in research has nothing to do with race. Moreover, redress as defined in the Constitution and legislation explicitly states that the search for racial equity should not be at the expense of quality. However, the real world is not as neat as that of theory, and as a result of the racialised legacy there is in fact a real tension between the two imperatives. While the emphasis has tended to change in key documents from equity to quality and efficiency (Cloete 2005), there are strong, even increasing, pressures towards racial redress in higher education and research, now articulated more in terms of black empowerment than egalitarianism. The challenge currently confronting leaders and managers of South Africa's higher education and research institutions is to manage the tension and advance towards a more racially representative knowledge system without irreparably damaging research productivity.

Excellence in research also has nothing to do with democracy, except in the sense that democratic policies that widen access to education and information increase the population from which talented researchers will emerge, and that democratic environments are more likely to assure researchers the tolerance they require to flourish, especially in the social sciences. Research however depends on merit, not representivity. Merit in research is composed of various things, including intelligence, imagination, experience and judgement. The excellent researcher will evolve over time. However intelligent, researchers are unlikely to be at their peak immediately after being awarded their Ph.D. Meritorious research does not, however, imply one specific approach. It can

involve the use of differing evidence, methodologies, judgements and conclusions, even when it pertains to similar areas.

If these propositions are accepted, some worrying issues arise in the context of contemporary approaches to research equity in South Africa. The institutional and personal profile of research in South Africa, and no doubt the intellectual orientation of many researchers, was and is deeply marked by racial origins and social class, though this is not necessarily directly reflected in the academic approach of all researchers from such backgrounds. This environment, for good or ill, largely defines the country's contemporary research profile, with, as noted earlier, a preponderance of white, male, and now ageing, academics and researchers. This cannot be rapidly reversed, since education, particularly higher education, evolves gradually. This research structure can be dismantled, and incrementally modified, especially through the mechanisms outlined in the previous section. But it is not possible to immediately replace it with an alternative, equally robust research system.

If these are the lineaments of research in South Africa, how do they relate to the current situation in universities and research councils? There is pressure to achieve a more balanced racial profile amongst researchers as rapidly as possible. Quantitative targets have been set which departments and faculties struggle to meet. The retirement of researchers has often been encouraged and sometimes enforced. Almost all universities shifted their retirement ages from 65 to 60 in the last decade in the hope of creating space for a more representative demographic profile.[6] Staffing gaps are often not filled and are left vacant because no suitable black candidate can be found. Premature promotions are common, leading to a lowering of the status of academic titles. Talented and highly qualified black researchers find themselves courted from all sides, and, as noted above, often have well-rewarded options, which many exercise, outside research. In short, as Jonathan Jansen argues, 'The university ceases to exist when it represents nothing other than an empty shell of racial representivity at the cost of academic substance and intellectual imagination' (Jansen 2004:11).

This situation involves various dangers. It could be said that in time a type of normality will establish itself. Larger numbers of black researchers will be produced, and the pressures to appoint black candidates at all costs will ease. Ultimately, there will be an approximately normal distribution of the races in research as in other jobs, and the need for affirmative action will fall away.

However, this perspective is too long to be truly helpful. Research is vital in so many spheres, and the possibility of falling behind world developments is so great, that South Africa cannot wait for the problem to resolve itself over time. There is a real danger that South Africa could casually marginalise its existing research talent while not being in a position to replace it. And while it

can and does draw on the talents of other countries, especially African countries (incidentally to the peril of the research infrastructure of these neighbours), South Africa is not in a position to import and pay for such talent on a large scale, as is, for example, the United States (Kahn et al. 2004).

There is, therefore, an uneasy balance between equity and excellence in contemporary South African research. It is crucial that the country gets this balance right. It will not help the cause of equity in the long run if research is so badly damaged that it enters a downward spiral. It is particularly important to maintain existing expertise for its own sake and for the training and support it enables for upcoming researchers. A parallel situation was that of the school teaching force in the mid-1990s, when experienced and well-qualified teachers were offered the chance, which many took, to retire on favourable terms, to the lasting damage of the school system and the interests of pupils (Fiske and Ladd 2004:106). A similar danger exists in this case.

Institutional collaboration

It is generally agreed, and the 'Human Resources for Knowledge Production in South Africa' conference emphasised, that in modern conditions in many crucial research spheres, collaboration in substantial focussed groups is essential. It is unlikely that such groups can always be constituted from within a single institution. In many cases, they will have to transcend institutional boundaries. This leads to the many forms collaboration can take. It can consist of networks that evolve purely from the logic of a particular research enterprise, without necessarily being predicated on the formal alignment of institutions. In other cases, however, institutional collaboration is important in facilitating research and making best use of the expertise and facilities available nationally, regionally and even internationally.

In South Africa, some barriers to institutional collaboration have been partially eliminated in recent years. The mergers and realignments in higher education of the past few years have begun to clear away some obstacles to such collaboration, in research as in other areas. Though undoubtedly the fundamental motivating factor in the mergers was an attempt to reduce costs, they cut through the racial categorisations that had previously divided the sector, and began to clear away this pernicious legacy of educational apartheid (Gibbon et al. 2001a, 2001b; Habib and Parekh 2000).

Nevertheless, despite the many positive outcomes, the process of merger and realignment was difficult in many ways, and its repercussions are still being felt (Hall, Symes and Luescher 2004; Jansen et al. 2003). Third-level institutions are complex entities, and the shocks they received in the course of institutional realignment have often left them reeling, at least for the moment. The

introspection and scrambling for certainty in an uncertain environment that they have experienced and continue to experience tends to divert attention from core activities, research included. Also, with internal bureaucratic and academic structures still unsettled, they often find it difficult to embark successfully on programmes of research collaboration with external partners, even fellow-universities.

This tendency towards introspection and self-absorption is also a reason, it seems, for the low level of collaboration between universities and science councils. However, there are also other reasons. While the move towards financial self-reliance and cost recovery is near-universal in the contemporary academic world, it is particularly marked in the science councils, where subventions from their home ministries remain static or increase very little, and where they are required to raise ever-greater proportions of their revenue from research entre-preneurship. This in turn means that the councils can afford to devote little if any of their employees' time to research activities that do not earn substantial revenue. This economic model does not rule out collaboration with universi-ties, but it makes it difficult. It puts a premium on rapid results, on adequate as opposed to excellent research, and on a breadth of area sometimes amounting to dilettantism as opposed to rigorous investigation and specialisation. Also, as researchers' time is rigidly costed, it makes it virtually impossible to create space for a mentoring relationship with the postgraduate students who are at the heart of university research.

Institutional collaboration goes beyond national boundaries. South Africa stands at an intersection. On the one hand, it is a substantial regional and per-haps continental power, whose weight is felt, in research as in other spheres, far into Africa. On the other hand, it is, in relation to the economically highly developed 'northern' societies, relatively insignificant and vulnerable, produc-ing a small and declining proportion of the world's research output. As a 2004 Council on Higher Education report aptly commented, 'South Africa has the best developed and capacitated national research and innovation system on the African continent, although its standing in the wider international research ar-ray has weakened' (Council on Higher Education 2004:124). This wider world is often seen as 'globalised' with the implication that it has entered a com-pletely new stage. Though this may not be as unprecedented as is often im-plied, research in South Africa has to operate in a context where knowledge is fluid and instantly communicable, yet also subject to power relations that tend to benefit those most able to utilise the immense power and sweep of contem-porary technology.

The 'Human Resources for Knowledge Production in South Africa' con-ference spoke of collaborating with the rest of Africa towards the development

of the continent, and of South Africa's 'vanguard role'. For such aspirations to make sense, there should be a realistic assessment of the regional and continental situation. While there are islands of excellence, in general, universities over most of sub-Saharan Africa are grossly under-resourced and out of touch with the latest research. Academics are usually paid extremely low salaries, and many of the best African academics and researchers leave their home institutions for appointments abroad, some coming to South Africa. Most research work at African universities is carried out for consultancies, to earn a living for the researcher, with all the limitations of this genre. Sometimes academics spend much of their time working at occupations and on projects without any research content at all. As in South Africa but even more disproportionately, managers of academic institutions are paid more and have more prestige than academics and researchers (see Lebeau and Ogunsanya 2000).

What might institutional collaboration mean in these domestic, regional and international contexts? In all of them, resources are crucial, but the question takes different forms in the three environments. In South Africa itself, the declining rate of state support, particularly in the science councils but also in the universities, tends to move research in directions favoured by the remaining funders such as domestic or international donors, or industry and commerce. Research funding has never been a neutral or a simple process, and the argument here is not that there is always and in every case an automatic correspondence between the public interest and the state. However, it can be argued that the state's partial retreat from direct funding of research, particularly in the science councils whose remit is applied science, has tended to limit the available options and has opened the way for research agendas not always or primarily aligned to the interests of the South African public. Collaboration between research bodies is to be encouraged; it enables large projects to be undertaken, makes good use of skilled researchers and saves in personnel and other costs. However, it is more questionable if it masks the decline in state support and provides a channel for the elaboration of research agendas over which South Africans have little control.

The question of resources applies even more starkly to collaboration between South African and regional and continental researchers. Here, power is wielded in South Africa. With generally a very limited research base, it is difficult for African research organisations to negotiate as equals, and the tendency is for South African researchers (like South African business) to be able to dictate the terms of the relationship. South Africans should be aware of this, and try to ensure that the research relationship, in spite of political and economic realities, is as even-handed as possible. This is an essentially and perhaps unsatisfactorily

moral and ideological approach, but it is difficult to see what else is possible in the circumstances. In facing the 'globalised' world, the situation is reversed, and South Africa, in research terms, tends not to hold the trump cards. However, in some research areas this may not be the case. South Africa thus needs a clear research focus, and a keen appreciation of what it can and cannot do, and where its comparative advantages lie. South African researchers are in a better position to enter collaborative international agreements on a basis of approximate equality than are other African research communities, and they need rapidly, though prudently, to develop collaborative international networks of this kind. To do this, however, the level of support in South Africa itself will need to be maintained and increased.

Management of higher education and research

Many of the issues we raise come into sharp focus when the management of higher education and research is considered, because this is the point of delivery. Questions of academic remuneration referred to above affect research management. Glaring salary inequalities between researchers and administrators demotivate researchers and sap their productivity. The South African system to some extent rewards researchers financially for success in their fields, though this varies from institution to institution. However, these rewards are inconsiderable, and the way to advance in the system is in essence not to succeed in it, but rather to leave its crucial, research aspect. This is not a recipe for a vibrant research sector.

Management of South African higher education and research is problematic.[7] The shocks and adjustments that have affected the whole of the society have not spared universities and other research institutions. However, even within a system that appears to be undergoing substantial change, there are also forces of inertia and conservatism that influence, not always for the best, how research is managed. Instability and conservatism sometimes unite in a malign combination.

Policies of empowerment can have unexpected results in the context of universities and research councils. Programmes, faculties and departments aim to balance their racial and gender composition, which normally means appointing more black candidates. Though policies in this area spell out that this process should work in conjunction with the maintenance of quality, in fact targets tend to be interpreted in terms of a crude racial headcount. This has a number of effects, given the historical realities of educational privilege. One is that posts can go unfilled for lengthy periods for want of adequate black candidates. Another is that there tends to be an influx of young and inexperienced

black academics, which leads to the unfortunate situation, with many possibilities for misunderstanding and conflict, of a cohort of older mainly white academics in authority over young and mainly black junior colleagues.

In forming the merged third-level institutions the posts of vice-chancellor were publicly advertised, though of course at this level there are many influences at play in such appointments. However the practice with second-tier management has in general been to allocate positions to the personnel of the old institutions with an eye to the careful division of posts rather than to the creation of dynamic and innovative research administrations. These processes have various effects. Firstly, management quality is deficient. Research managers, it is generally agreed, ought to know what the world of research consists of. Yet top managers frequently have very few academic publications. A few have or, where no longer in office, have had none. Given that peer-reviewed publication is, rightly, the touchstone of academic competence and achievement, particularly in the field of research this is a worrying tendency. Arguably, opportunities were missed during the merger process to look carefully and critically at research administration in its totality.

There appears also to be little sense of history or context. The ubiquitous strategic visions intended to guide institutions tend to be much the same, from wherever they emanate, uttering the same ambitious but decontextualised and unspecific mantras of quality, relevance and the like (Habib 2001). They pay little attention to the difficult historical legacies and current problems of South Africa's varied and unequal higher educational and research environment. Without greater clarity of vision, it is difficult to believe that mergers of institutions will in themselves resolve these questions.

At the centre of the academic system are deans. Always powerful, their bureaucratic position has in one sense been strengthened in recent years by the tendency to appoint 'executive deans' who are line managers directly answerable to the vice-chancellor. Previously, faculty members elected deans who were more directly responsible, and therefore generally responsive, to the academic community.

Yet the way in which the power of deans has tended at present to express itself has been through an elaboration of and concentration on administrative processes rather than on critical engagement with research and teaching. Thus formal power does not always go with the real power, for example, to influence research and help to create imaginative research agendas. Academic systems have become more bureaucratic, even authoritarian, yet also less responsive and nuanced in their approach to the core responsibilities of higher education institutions. To what extent this is a structural issue, with academic and research influence perhaps inevitably seeping away in a welter of meetings and

form-filling, and to what extent it is a product of the appointment of often inadequate deans, servants of central administrations that increasingly engross power without always being able to exercise it in creative ways, is difficult to determine. The effect, at any rate, is that, typically, deans do not play their expected role in high-level strategic decision-making and management.

A further weakness in academic management is the council system that is meant to oversee the activities, including research, of universities and research councils. In many cases, councils have frittered away their time on micro-management and in partisan involvement in the quarrels that tend to afflict academic life, or have hung back from decisive action on gross mismanagement. Of twelve councils surveyed in a CHE report in 2002, half had serious problems, three of which 'were either deadlocked by endemic crises … or have collapsed as a result of such crises' (Hall, Symes and Luescher 2002:75; see also Habib 2001). In an attempt to preclude immersion in these institutional politics, the Higher Education Act of 1997 laid down that sixty percent of council members must now be from outside the institution. However, vice-chancellors nominate potential council members to the Department of Education, and this tends to lead to councils packed with their allies, a situation that makes real oversight impossible.

In short, the research system has emerged from, and still bears the marks of, deliberately imposed inequality. Though it is difficult to generalise about the quality of research management, which differs from institution to institution, large swathes of the system are badly administered. The 'managerialism' said to characterise the sector should not necessarily be taken as implying bureaucratic efficiency in a context where high-level bureaucratic and administrative skills are at a premium.

Conclusion

South Africa in the 1980s was characterised by isolation. There was the basic fact of politico-geographical isolation. The electronic revolution that has in some senses eroded the isolation of particular societies was still in its infancy as a mass phenomenon. South Africa was at the southern extremity of a poor and scientifically underdeveloped continent with which it was tacitly or overtly at war, yet with its ostensible loyalties to the western world and the western values that it claimed to represent only reciprocated in part, contingently, and with many reservations.

There was also the more subtle isolation engendered by the harsh and intractable issues that characterised South African society and politics. A country that once, albeit in the context of colonialism, had been linked in many ways to the rest of Africa, found itself isolated from the continent as a whole, or joined

only in the tense embrace of mutual hostility. This engendered introspection and parochialism in research as in many other fields. This was not confined to the then establishment. Even the academic left paid remarkably little attention to Africa north of South Africa. History, sociology and other disciplines focussed almost entirely on South Africa itself, and whole historiographical and other intellectual movements in Africa in the forty or so years from the mid-twentieth century passed South Africa by (Mamdani 1996). The intellectual scene was set by an intolerant and racist orthodoxy, and even the radical and liberal players, protest as they might, had to perform on this stage.

It is therefore ironic that contemporary South Africa, open to and engaged with the world, is less productive in research terms than the isolated and provincial country of the apartheid era. This is not a trivial question: social wellbeing is bound up with the ability to face and solve the questions that challenge it. A robust, well-supported, critical research system is the lynchpin of this process. The June 2005 'Human Resources for Knowledge Production in South Africa' conference was perhaps a hopeful beginning in that it indicated problems and began to suggest ways of confronting them. However, the real challenge lies in facing up squarely to the many difficult and sometimes controversial issues that this confrontation will involve.

Notes

1.   This figure has increased to 0.8 percent of GDP amounting to R10.1 billion spent on R&D in the 2003/2004 financial year. Just above half was spent in the business sector, while 22 percent and 21 percent were directed to the higher education sector and science councils respectively.

2.   Studies indicate that there is a strong correlation between research, innovation, and economic development and prosperity (Mouton, Boshoff and Bailey 2002).

3.   India is seen as successful because of its economic growth and especially the development of its information technology sector. This is integrated into and has successfully competed with the corporations of the developed world.

4.   Indeed, many believe that university management salary scales are too generous. There was an outcry when the *Mail & Guardian* published the salary packages of the country's vice-chancellors (see Macfarlane 2004).

5.   There is plentiful anecdotal evidence for this claim. For example, some time ago one of the authors asked a well-known black academic manager, a mathematician by training, why s/he left his/her field within twenty-four months of obtaining a Ph.D., even though s/he had clearly demonstrated potential to become a significant researcher. The response was that monetary pressures were too intense, and the quickest way to relieve this pressure was to earn a decent wage, only available within the academy in management.

6. This is apparent from university websites. See, for example, the University of
    the Witwatersrand, http://www.wits.ac.za/vacancies/condperm.htm
7. Jansen notes that leadership is the single most crucial variable determining the
    success or failure of mergers, yet that insufficient attention has been given to
    this in the far-reaching restructuring of South African higher education (Jansen
    et al. 2003)

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Re-envisioning the Academic Profession in the Shadow of Corporate Managerialism*

Peter Stewart**

Abstract

This article argues that global and South African changes to universities have resulted in change being led by corporate managerialism. This has created new roles and new difficulties for academics, who display signs of stress and low morale. The article examines the case of UNISA, together with international and South African evidence on academics. The changing class status of academics is also examined. The negative yet pervasive psychical consequences of intrusive bureaucracy are discussed. The concept of 'knowledge production' is then subjected to a critique to outline a core academic role involving, firstly, using disciplinary rigour to open up debates and facilitate openness to the density of the real world, and secondly, working through transferential dependences in teaching and research. It concludes by recommending the formation of a 'critical collegial movement' which will explore what new academic role is appropriate to the new situation, and which will take action to empower academics through increased collegiality.

Résumé

Dans cet article, on soutient que les mutations opérées dans les universités dans le monde et en Afrique du Sud se sont traduites par un changement dû à l'application des modèles de gestion des entreprises. Ceci a engendré de nouveaux rôles et de nouvelles difficultés pour les universitaires qui montrent des signes de stress et de démoralisation. L'article examine le cas de l'UNISA et les témoignages sur les universitaires faits au niveau international et en Afrique du Sud. Le changement de condition sociale des universitaires est également étudié. Les conséquences psychiques négatives, et pourtant omniprésentes, de la bureaucratie qui s'impose sont

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examinées. Ensuite, on passe à l'analyse critique du concept de « production de connaissances » pour souligner un rôle académique fondamental impliquant, premièrement, l'utilisation de la rigueur dans le domaine des disciplines pour ouvrir les débats et favoriser l'ouverture au monde, et deuxièmement, le travail par le biais des dépendances dans l'enseignement et l'apprentissage. En conclusion, l'article recommande la formation d'un « mouvement collégial important » qui étudiera le type de nouveau rôle académique approprié à la nouvelle situation, et qui agira afin de responsabiliser les universitaires par le biais d'une collégialité accrue.

Introduction

If we have irrevocably moved to an era of the knowledge-worker and the energetic domination of university affairs by management is there any sense in attempting to reconstruct a notion of academic professionalism? In the modern, neoliberal era, the academic role seems invisible to the corporate manager's eye.

In this paper, I engage with some of the debates on international processes which are changing the academic role and profession, and also with debates on changes in the South African context. This paper argues that the changes in the situation and function of universities have produced an environment in which evolving differential academic identities are constantly under pressure from managerial attempts to determine aspects of these identities. In this context, I believe, many academics have become increasingly passive and reactive, rather than engaged and creative.

This paper further points to the need for a review of the core of academic roles. This is not only because academic roles are changing, but also because previous imaginaries of academic professionalism were entangled with privilege and strategies of symbolic domination (cf. Bourdieu 1988; Robbins 1993).

Finally, I advocate the initiation of a 'critical collegial movement' among academics to address these issues.

In investigating this topic, I will not go into a number of crucial debates, such as those concerning institutional autonomy, reform of management, national policy as regards funding and mergers of tertiary institutions, curriculum and research funding. While these debates are central to the way forward for universities, they have tended to sideline and objectify the role of academics. The Council on Higher Education's (CHE's) website, for example, has some seventy publications listed, many of which deal with issues of tuition and research; but none of them is directly concerned with the changing academic role and working environment, nor with the politics of collegiality. Similarly, the University of South Africa's (UNISA's) *2015 Strategic Plan: An Agenda*

for Transformation (2005), which contains many salutary and necessary objectives, including those of service to students, reflects no concept of academic collegiality, other than a broadly-stated intention to 'create a culture of academic debate and interdisciplinary discourse' (University of South Africa 2005:23). The only admission of the pressures on academics comes in the form of a factor impeding research output. A physicalist approach to staff well-being predominates in formulated targets. Yet, academic work defines six of the seven characteristics listed under 'Our institutional type' (5). Academic concerns are the first two items of UNISA's self-perceived mission (7). In the strategic objectives of the Plan, the centrality of academic concerns is relegated to productivism in teaching and research in the form of expanding the 'academic product range' and 'addressing research strategic priorities' (15-16).

The case of UNISA

Inevitably, my experience of UNISA, as a distance-based mega-university with a particular institutional history, will colour my perspective on these issues.

When I came to the University in the late 1980s, several colleagues told me that most UNISA teaching staff were 'amptenaars', employees with a civil service mentality, good at running the system, bureaucratic, unimaginative. This was not entirely true: there was significant diversity in politics, involvement in research, commitment to teaching, and in the display of high or low cultures. But it was true that significant numbers had modest academic aspirations and fitted into the sturdy administrative culture of late-apartheid UNISA.

The academic staff was overwhelmingly white and Afrikaans-speaking; many lecturers had family members working in administrative jobs at UNISA. UNISA comprised a significant niche in the white, middle class economy of Pretoria for several decades. But even today, while there has been a deracialisation of top management and a significant growth in the appointment of black academics, academic staff are still mostly white (72%), especially at professorial level (over 80%), where white males strongly predominate (University of South Africa 2005).

Compared with other South African universities, UNISA is further down the road of massification, digitalisation and distance learning, factors which, in some visions, are characteristics of future higher education scenarios (Altbach 1999). For many years, UNISA staff has adapted, in a variety of ways, to an already bureaucratised institution of mass learning. Thus for many academics at UNISA, particularly older ones, the problem is not so much getting them to co-operate with technocratic administrative systems; they have done so for many years. In the face of mushrooming workloads and systems of monitoring, and in the face of vastly reduced discretionary power over the allocation of

time and the form of academic labour, the problem lies in getting them to recognise a more creative, autonomous and expansive academic role.

From about 1996 onwards, perennial paroxysms of change have been felt at UNISA. These waves of change included conformity to SAQA and employment equity; the merger of departments with perceived disciplinary affinities; the merger of small departments; modularisation and semesterisation; the implementation of research output obligations and National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings; an expansion of short learning courses and UNISA's enforced merger with Technikon South Africa (TSA); further rationalisation of departments, modules and qualifications; the advent of an Integrated Performance Management System; the beginning of a new digitalised interface with students and digitalised file movements. Further, UNISA plans to establish a vast tutor system which, while potentially of great benefit to students, will move academic labour at UNISA firmly towards a two-tier system. These changes are occurring in the context of a huge rise in student numbers, from some 131,000 students in 1995 to 244,000 students in 2006, while in the same period, teaching staff decreased by 5 percent from 1,410 to 1,339, the student/staff ratio rising from 93 to 182 (University of South Africa 2005). In 2006, this context and the merger contributed to dysfunction in assignments, despatch, printing and various other UNISA systems.

The merger of institutions was followed by an assault on conditions of service for UNISA staff. Management argues that a change in conditions of service is necessary for cost-saving and for securing the university's future viability; but this comes at the expense of the direct benefits accruing to academic and other staff members. First in line has been the payout (at a third to a half of its potential value) of post-retirement medical aid benefits, which is laid down in the contract of permanent employees. (This issue is still being contested.) Other proposed changes to conditions of service, currently being debated in the arguably co-opted new bargaining forum, include forced retirement for new staff at 60 rather than at 65, increased office working hours for academics, and the elimination of the previously granted fifty days of recess which allowed academics to work at home or elsewhere on research and related tasks.

The impact of changes felt by academics at UNISA has been varied. Some have performed very well in the new research regime; some have found creative roles in expanding academic management structures; others have had lucrative involvement in courses offered to private interests and to government. UNISA has reduced the number of people employed in temporary/contract positions over the last ten years. The imperative of deracialisation of the institution has

led to some deeply positive changes. UNISA has also managed, by and large, to preserve functional academic department units.

At the same time, certain academic functions have become grossly over-loaded. Chairs of department have a massive administrative overload, punctu-ated every few days by summary demands from above. This administrative overload also spills over to other academics involved in academic administra-tion. In many department, junior academic staff have tuition, academic admin-istration and even supervisory loads which greatly add to the difficulty of their completing degrees or publishing. In departments which attract masters and doctoral students in great numbers, there are excessive demands on staff to supervise large numbers of theses.

If these factors are added to the reality of the constant disruption of systems by change, and to the sense of a threat to working conditions, and to the trou-bled labour representation of a majority of academic staff, it is not surprising that there is a sense of malaise, stress and cynicism among many academic staff, and that new initiatives and directives by management are greeted with suspicion, disdain and exasperation.

These developments at UNISA mirror processes not only in other South African universities, but processes which started in the industrialised capitalist countries a decade earlier than here. What is happening to universities?

The university and mass education in the informational economy under neoliberalism

Our current world is dominated by informational capitalism (Castells 1996) and an ideology favouring corporate business above public interest. It is fur-ther characterised by a hierarchical global political economy in which the Lockean heartland controls and co-opts allies and contains and undermines Hobbesian contender states (van der Pijl 1998). These inequalities are histori-cally fused with inequalities of race, class and gender; and struggles over glo-bal and regional economic and political spoils reconfirm or contest these other hierarchies. Simultaneously, informational capitalism has a spatially deconcentrating and network-forming effect on business and other social proc-esses.

This has had a number of consequences for universities. The changes that have occurred in universities in countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States of America revolve around a rapid rise in student numbers and the retreat of states from underwriting this expansion, while making universities in large part pay their own way. In the neoliberal climate of the late 1980s and 1990s, which involved opening up previously protected and publicly owned areas of economies to the blast of global competition and

opportunity, universities turned to the corporate business model as the proven private sector means of managing cost-cutting and profit-making while externalising costs onto society at large. Institutions have diversified with different market strategies, pursuing students with diversified 'client needs', offering diversified training options and exploring diversified markets for research. Universities and their subunits are expected to become entrepreneurial. Corporate-style managements have attempted to instil business culture and ethos throughout university structures.

Yet it can be persuasively argued that universities as institutions rooted in society of necessity have a different logic to that of ersatz business organisations.

Many of the changes in the global north are now rampant in South African universities. The rapid expansion of part-time and informalised faculty in North America, the development of a two-tier academic labour system (Rajagopal and Farr 1992), and the full digitalisation of university processes (Hazemi, Hailes and Wilbur 1998) are examples of the shape of our university system to come, if an entrepreneurial model predominates.

Changes in universities have greatly affected the academic work environment. This is reflected in accounts of faculty in North America (Altbach 1999; Bennett 1998; Huber 2003; Rajagopal and Farr 1992), Britain (Ozga 1998; Preston 2002; Readings 1996) continental Europe (Enders 1999), and Australia (Churchman 2002, 2006; Marginson 2000).

The case of South Africa

African universities are compromised by deficient funding, difficulties related to language of instruction, low research outputs, and the brain drain, given an unequal international economy of higher education (Teferra and Altbach 2004; Zeleza and Olukoshi 2004). Academics have to contend with poor salaries, poor working conditions, weak institutional management and political interference (Altbach 2002:11–15). South Africa has the additional problem of a low skills base in an economy demanding high levels of skill, and specific issues of deracialisation and diversity (cf. Cross et al. 1998). Further, in the global context, South Africa has an intermediary position: it has to absorb economic and political injunctions from the North; but its intermediary position allows for some South-South 'loyal opposition' debate, and economic dominance over large zones of Africa.

As Jansen (2004) and Subotzky and Cele (2004) have outlined, while South African higher education has been under pressure from global forces within the educational field, tertiary educational policy here has allowed the play of market forces, which elsewhere in the world has led to corporate managerialism.

At the same time, it has imposed on universities a new set of regulatory imperatives and limits, reflecting the government's agenda of equity, redress and national development. Government intervention has created the conditions for corporate managerialism through constrained funding policy, a strong demand of institutional accountability, the rationalisation of higher institutions from 306 separate institutions to 72, the introduction of outcomes-based education and a focus on interdisciplinary, practice-oriented 'mode 2' knowledge (Martin and Etzkowitz 2000:11ff).

Amidst this heavy-handed steering, there are still spaces within government advocating autonomy, critical and integrative thinking, improvement of standards of teaching and research, and social relevance. This constructive role of government, manifest in many of the documents published by the CHE, derives from clusters and individuals within government who through engagement with the struggle and South Africa's political transformation, are committed to a transformative and critical view of society (Badat 1999, 2001). This takes effect together with other more ambiguous forces, particularly the exacerbation of a managerial model of education and the imposition of cost-cutting measures and rationalisation.

What then are the main changes to the academic work environment in South Africa? Jansen (2004) lists the following points which together, he says, have changed the lives of academics in a dramatic, disruptive and alienating way:

- There is a much increased sense of the need to compete, both inside universities and with regard to competing universities.
- Greater vulnerability from the erosion of job security, and fears of employment equity among some whites.
- An increased sense of having to perform, in the context of surveillance through performance management and quality assurance systems and the institutional benchmarking of a wide variety of outputs.
- There is more awareness of students as 'clients' and as resources to be pursued (Jansen 2004:309–310).

At the same time, Jansen highlights some constants in this turbulence. Academic staff has remained predominantly white; and professors and active researchers are predominantly white, male and aging. Further, the 'institutional cultures' of higher education 'still bear their racial birthmarks in terms of dominant traditions, symbols and behaviours' (Jansen 2004:311).

Other studies confirm the alienation and disruption found by Jansen. Writing on staff perceptions at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johnson (2006) notes the perception of having to do more work for less pay, of being forced to compete with colleagues, of the disintegrating 'fabric of the department', and

a deepening alienation from university management. Olivier et al. (2005), writing on the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, also mention 'dissatisfaction with the management system'; 'diminished job satisfaction'; 'low morale of employees'; and the recourse to coping strategies such as the use of tranquilisers. Webster and Mosoetsa (2001) find similar themes to those mentioned above, and also discuss the issue of the 'increase in emotional labour'. By this, the authors mean 'the management of human feeling, during social interaction within the workplace, as dictated by organisations' (16). In the new university context, this may involve academics changing their 'self-concepts as professional academics to 'units of resource … and ... auditable bodies' (ibid.).

One can rightly scrutinise the negative perceptions of academic staff as part of a process of institutional change. Fourie, for example, portrays the negative perceptions and behaviours of academic staff, such as denial, bargaining and depression, as phases analogous to those of terminal illness, which will be followed in time by acceptance (1999: 286). The objective negatives that beset academic jobs today are accompanied by continuing advantages of these jobs. However, these advantages, such as tenure, being able to structure work and time flexibly, and being able to pursue open-ended research, are all under threat. Furthermore, the new situation has brought new opportunities for engagement with the private sector (Webster and Mosoetsa 2001), for community work and research (Fourie 1999; Subotzsky 1999), for designing curricula to engage with current issues, for black and female academics, and for new avenues for engagement with students (Fourie 1999). But the problems academics face are real, and these issues cannot be merely medicalised, as Fourie (1999) and the University of South Africa's *2015 Strategic Plan* (2005) do.

The change in the academic profession: False status to white collar

The conception of the academic job as a profession, already compromised by the comparatively low salaries enjoyed by academics, is also thrown into question by current changes in academic working conditions. Nicholas Boyle (1999) and others have argued that most academic and other skilled jobs, which are not key to the new, globalised form of capitalism, have been subordinated to managerial surveillance and coercion of output, the leeching of benefits and the erosion of job security.

In reality, however, the changes to the academic profession effected in recent years cannot be seen as a move from appropriate professional status to blanket conditions of proletarianisation, though the casualisation of certain academic jobs, that strips them of benefits and burdens them with heavy teaching loads, comes close to proletarianisation. Firstly, the emerging situation will

create a new academic elite who will escape the currents of Taylorisation and informalisation faced by the rank and file. Secondly, the old status was in large part a false one, false both in that it did not reflect the mass of academics outside the financially and politically secure elite of the world's universities, and false in that it worked through the symbolic capital of the ones who know, whose knowledge is sealed and rarified by the academic gown and the inaugural lecture. A century ago, George Bernard Shaw was already of the opinion that professions were a 'conspiracy against the laity'.

The decline of an imaginary of inbuilt honour and the rise of a discourse of performance and compliance-based honour have bifurcated academic professionalism. On the one hand, it gets away from the false mystique of academic status residing in a position or post, and more justly depicts prestige as dependent on current outputs. On the other hand, it shores up the hierarchy from junior lecturer to full professor that still exists and is the object of competitive struggle. New hierarchies have emerged such as the enlarged gap between management and academics; the status of being rated as a researcher by the NRF, or not; and the government-created hierarchy of differential funding levels for different disciplines and institutions based on output levels.

Perverse investments in authoritarianism

Building on Webster and Mosoetsa's (2001) concept of 'emotional labour', on Huber's discussion of the 'audit culture' (2003:6), and Ozga's amplification of a British debate on 'colluded selves' (1998:150), I wish to advance further arguments on the pathologies that can be engendered by arbitrary and undialogic authority and management styles.

Eric Santner, in *The Psychotheology of Everyday Life* (2001), shows how modern authority and law, expressed through the state, institutions, policing and new forms of leadership, are linked with patterns of passivity in individuals which are sustained through superego-based phantasies of aggression towards or submission to authority. Such psychic processes, while producing some intense behaviours to try to instantiate authority or to resist it, are disconnected from the here and now of context, relationality and politics. This fantasy-based interaction with authority is exacerbated and put into crisis in massively organised systems, especially where actions have force but no coherent meaning, and where management enforces its own often arbitrary designs rather than articulating a common, meaningful project through dialogue. Kafka's fictional accounts of the terror of unavoidable bureaucratic entrapment provide an image of this (Santner 2001).

To the extent that staff are dependent on the authority of rules, management decisions and government policies—as opposed to playing an autonomous,

constructive-critical role—they are likely to engage in an economy of fantasy of the kind described by Santner. By the same token, if management pre-empts academic decisions and objectifies academics as dependent, obstructive, passive and ignorant (rather than as a differential field of agents with weaknesses and systematic potential), management is involved in the same institutional fantasy but as a 'Big Other' who exercises arbitrary authority and who through spectacular action carries out enjoyment on behalf of those who are dependent. This is the unfortunate outcome of university managerialism exerted over a professional or semi-professional class, many of whom look to authority to confirm their shaky status.

Mere knowledge of one's entanglement with arbitrary authority does not provide a way out. This situation is structured like the well-known joke beloved of Slavoj Zizek about a madman who thought he was a grain of corn; after being finally cured and sent home, he immediately returned to the mental institution in a panic. He explained to the doctor, 'On the road, I met a hen, and I was afraid it would eat me!' The doctor exclaimed, 'But what's the problem now? You know you're not a grain of corn – you're a man, who cannot be swallowed by a hen!' The madman answered, 'Yes, I know I am no longer a grain of corn, but does the hen know it?'

While there is fearful entrapment, there is also the option of collusion. From a scan of recent editions of the *South African Journal of Higher Education*, it would appear that many lecturers in education departments nationally have a strong tendency to side with managerial discourse, and make academics the passive object of the subjective dynamism of the new systems of managerial injunction. Indeed, one proposal from this stable views a renewed academic professionalism as consisting of mastery of the new systems regulating academics (Fransman 2001).

Good work, be it teaching, course development, research or supervision, can produce a positive academic ethos, even if it is governed by many rules and assessment procedures. Whether achievement feeds hierarchical struggle and envious mimesis, or whether it feeds synergetic and inclusive practice, depends on the degree of freedom from both connivance and *ressentiment* in relation to authority and the systems of rules. The negative dynamic created by an ecstasy of authority needs to be constructively resisted.

The academic profession as post-knowledge work and teaching

In the paragraphs that follow, I attempt to retrieve the argumentative and transferential aspects of the academic role, by mounting a critique of the concepts of knowledge production, knowledge producers and knowledge itself, understood in its commodified form. There are important and ongoing debates on

what constitutes valid knowledge. However, a proportion of debates on knowledge are overly influenced by the economic rationale of neoliberalism (Peters 2003:156ff). The World Bank has been one of the main culprits in spreading an objectivist and apolitical notion of 'knowledge production'. When applied to the university setting, this way of looking interpellates academics as productivist and individualist workers, who heroically add to national development and corporate value by producing a series of knowledge commodities, which, coincidentally, are easy to measure in performance appraisal.

The South African government's attempts to align the output of universities with national development goals have mixed unhappily with the dominant ideology of neoliberalism in defining the academic job, or at least a major component of it, as 'knowledge production' and academics as 'knowledge producers'. Bringing down academic work from a protected cultural niche to the level of knowledge production means swapping one alienation for another, tying us to the ungiving surfaces of a biopolitical order in which work, culture and pleasure are substantially commodified.

This process has shaped educational discourse in South Africa. Even otherwise excellent South African appraisals of the 'knowledge enterprise' (Muller 2005) and 'new models of alternative knowledge production' in universities (Subotzky 1999) are entrapped by the gravity of these massive political forces which obscure the transferential, dialogical and adventitious nature of teaching and research.

This jargon of 'knowledge production' utilises the current dominance of instrumental reason. Techniques, technologies, systems, high level handbooks and databases of 'how to do' tasks in a field—one might say the polytechnic/technikon and industry mode of know-how—are important in all disciplines, especially so in scientific and technical fields. However, when this jargon is wielded to define academic work, it subordinates the more characteristic university processes of debate, scientific research, the critique of knowledge-claims and the unfettered opening up of enquiry, whether in teaching or research. This is not to side with the 'canonical position' (Muller 2005) in which economic considerations have no role in interfering with pristine academic freedom. Rather, it is to say that good teaching and research require both individually autonomous and collegial processes, while the academic task at aggregate level should tie in with national objectives of skills development and research related to national development, in addition to the successful functioning of the university.

What is the core of academic work? It is surely teaching and research, and community service emanating from these activities. Teaching and research have

a common aim of fostering open understanding and of using and working through authoritative knowledge.

In the university system, both students and academic staff should be seen as engaged in long-term trajectories from matriculation to degree and doctorate, from beginning academic to generative mature scholar, in moving from the cacophony of ideology and ignorant discourse, through conceptual and disciplinary rigour and the rigour of the plain and the empirical, to the cacophony and cornucopia of the real and its unknowns. Though in our work, finite and authoritative knowledge is sometimes produced, it is subsidiary to the broader process of using academic discipline to unlock the amazing diversity and dynamism of real processes and to enter the openness of attendant debates, both in teaching and research.

Undergraduate modules should be seen as stepping stones along this trajectory, rather than as units of hard or terminal knowledge. Similarly, research articles are inserted into debates; only metaphorically can they be called 'knowledge products'. In our economy, knowledge and its production only take visible form in the light of profitability, cost-saving and the rationalisation of systems.

We open up and debate knowledge, knowledge-claims and discourse, and take this debate to conclusion in a variety of ways, few of which produce disparate items of knowledge.

While it is a minority of academic relationships that take the conventional form of transference, such as when students idealise lecturers or lecturers place themselves under the authoritative wing of another scholar, there are more diffuse, yet powerful, forms of transference which permeate the academic environment. These revolve around the judgements academics make of students, their charismatic role as 'the ones who are supposed to know', and the sombre authority of expert knowledges of various forms. Kistner, in an article in this journal, argues that any real learning in a student and teacher relationship requires a form of charisma that plays itself out in a transferential relation of a special kind. In a related process, some of the best academics start off by identifying strongly with certain schools of thought and authors, and place themselves filially under these horizons.

For both students and academics placing themselves in relations of tutelage, the university is the site for working through such 'transferences', most effectively through personal interaction and debate, to enable the scholar to encounter open questions, rather than deferring to an overbearing system of expertise.

Academics often do not adequately perform this core function of enabling themselves and students to face the myriad worlds in open and systematic inquiry. This core area is best reformed firstly through collegial relations and

individual academic learning. The state and institutional management must protect and nurture this process.

A critical collegial movement

A move towards a renewal of the ethos and purpose of academics must come from academics themselves. At the same time, academics are divided through apathy, mutual dislikes, and the like, which impede the formation of such renewal. I believe that, in order to address some of the issues raised in this article, some form of collegial movement should be formed.

Peter (2002) examines the Weberian notion of collegiality essentially as decentred power countering centralised bureaucratic power. He adds Veblen's view that collegiality also has a cultural dimension involving an environment of freedom which is 'incompatible with the business ethos' (Peter 2002:33). Peter argues that 'while Veblen acknowledges that business methods have their place in fiscal affairs and the care of material equipment, he firmly believes that they corrupt the higher learning when they turn to instruction and research, as they inevitably do' (Peter 2002:33–34). Thus, for Veblen, discussing American academic capitalism a century ago, 'collegial bodies, practices and attitudes should be responsible for protecting the academic sphere from the business ethos' (Peter 2002:35).

In a more lengthy text, Bennett (1998) provides an investigation of the notion of 'collegial professionalism'. He puts this forward as a counter to the individualist model of the academic role, which is rooted in a long history. Collegiality, in Bennett's conception, is relational, stressing intellectual community, working together and co-mentoring. Bennett advocates a systematic reworking of academic roles, through both convivial and coercive means, to a communitarian and collegial ideal.

I would wish to counterbalance Bennett's (1998) strong communitarianism with Bill Readings' notion of the contemporary university as 'a community of dissensus', a view of community 'that abandons either expressive identity or transactional consensus as a means to unity' (Readings 1996:192). Rather, the community is of people with different thoughts and strong irrational dependence on others, a community able to make productive use of differences.

Readings' conception locates community at a vulnerable level of unadorned relationality. The health of this level of community can be taken as a prerequisite for both creative autonomy and collegiality.

The general purpose of a critical collegial movement

A collegial movement could catalyse the empowerment of academics vis-à-vis managerialism exercised by university managements and government. This could inspire academics with a new sense of their role, not prescribed from above, such that they are able to intervene creatively in their university context—university politics, academic relationships, teaching and research—to re-establish an academic force in university politics, to promote collegial structures and debate, and to reach decisions on university policy.

A collegial movement could also re-instil in academics a sense of sanity and ethical connection in a workplace where positive and negative staff identities are all too often formed on the basis of a fantasy-based engagement with official injunction, and sometimes from the punitive *jouissance* of authorities entering the trade of fantasies.

A provisional agenda for a critical collegial movement could include some of the following:

- Reinstating fully collegial processes in the university, including reinstatement of academic decisions and debate at Senate and of voting for chairs of department; and including in collegial processes academic interest groupings, junior staff, doctoral students, and tutoring and temporary teaching staff. Having an academic principal alongside a financial affairs principal in each university could be seriously discussed.
- Educating academics about patterns of university change and their academic impact, especially the commodification of education and the uncritical use of business practices.
- Developing a new professionalism. This new professionalism could involve:

  - reworking our symbolic status beyond both old symbols and new performance ratings;
  - reinvesting teaching with practical and symbolic importance;
  - developing disciplinary expertise and research excellence;
  - cultivating a general academic expertise;
  - directing a professionalism towards creatively doing one's job, in a situation where academics neither connive with the excessive managerial injunctions nor resent this authority;
  - promoting a culture of honour and equality among different levels of academics, between lecturers and students and among academics, administrative and support workers in their institutions;

- promoting an 'Afropolitan' academic culture which is Africa-centered without ressentiment, aiming 'to redeem the breaches and terrors of a broken history' (Mbembe 2006:8). Afropolitanism may be taken as a cultural space which will be filled and developed, principally by Africans, in an academic commitment to the African context and to the openness of knowledge;
- promoting a gender-conscious academic culture;
- developing/ articulating a 'community of dissensus' (Readings 1996).

Conclusion

The re-envisioning of the field of academic roles should be led by academics, but should eventually involve government and university managements, acknowledging their incapacity to create an academic ethos from the top. Some academics may be slow to adapt and resistant to necessary changes. But these changes will have a low rate of success if academics are not energetically creative, if they do not enjoy respect from management, and if academic decisions are made without a collegial academic voice equal in power to the voice of financial management.

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