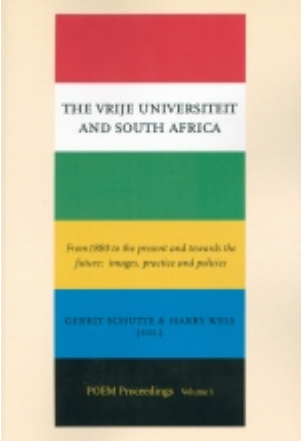
POEM: The Vrije Universiteit And South Africa: 125 Years Of Sentiments And Good Faith



This academic year (2005), the *Vrije Universiteit* enjoys its 125th anniversary.**[1]** In 1879, a handful of orthodox reformed Dutch gentlemen founded an Association for the advancement of Christian Higher Education, and on 20 October 1880, Abraham Kuyper inaugurated the Vrije Universiteit, *Academia libera reformata,* by delivering his famous lecture on Sphere Sovereignty, *Soevereiniteit in eigen kring.*

Kuyper was never a very modest man, and he certainly was not inclined to be modest at that moment. The credits of the university he opened, were three faculties, five professors and five students. As an accomplished rhetorician he described it as *onze kleine School, met den Universiteitsnaam zelve tot blozens toe verlegen* (our small school, blushing to be called a university). This was not meant as an apology, but rather to make a Hegelian turn: the real credits of the VU were written in the Synod of Dordt, its claim to nobility was the courage and moral dedication of its supporters, and its worldwide value and importance (Kuyper 1880). In the Kuyperian world panorama, his University would become the intellectual centre of the international Calvinist world – the academic power-house for all the reformed churches, nations and societies in Europe, America, and the Dutch colonies in the East. And for South Africa, of course.

October 1880: this is also the month in which Piet Cronjé, on behalf of 127 Transvaler *burghers*, declared to the Landdrost of Potchefstroom that they would no longer pay any taxes to the British government, as that government had illegally annexed and stolen their country (Van Oordt 1898). His language was quite akin to what Abraham Kuyper had written as a commentary on Shepstone's annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, when he stated in his daily *De Standaard*: robbery is a sin to the eyes of the Lord, even by a crowned robber.

As a journalist and politician, Kuyper followed the South African developments on

a daily basis. He was well-informed about the South African situation. He had met personally with the rising star of the Afrikaner Movement, editor of *Die Patriot*, chairman of the *Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners* and founder of the *Afrikaner Bond*, the Revd. S.J. du Toit. And he was regularly informed by the Revd. Frans Lion Cachet, back in the Netherlands after a stay in South Africa for more than thirty years. Kuyper welcomed Paardekraal and the declaration of independence of the Transvaal *Volk*. He was very active in the Amsterdam Transvaal Committee and, in May 1881, became one of the founders of a countrywide, lasting pro-Boer organisation, the *Nederlands-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging* (NZAV). The members of the NZAV consisted mainly of liberals and conservatives and some radicals, such as social-democrats and antirevolutionaries. In close cooperation with S.J. du Toit, now Superintendent of Education in the Transvaal, Kuyper tried to dominate the cooperation with the Transvaal (material aid, advice on the development of the new Afrikaner Republic, emigration), to protect the good orthodoxy of the Transvaalers against the ungodly Dutch liberals – as had happened in the 1870s, when President Burgers – a defrocked liberal DRC (NGK) *dominee*! – with the help of his liberal Dutch friends had tried to modernise the education and had - made a mess of the Transvaal, only to prepare it for annexation by Shepstone!

Kuyper had a real interest in South Africa, both as a Dutch nationalist and as a Calvinist. According to him – and to every Dutchman at that time! – the Afrikaners were fellow descendants of the *Geuzen*, stock of the pious heroes from the Golden Age of the Netherlands, kinsmen (*stamverwanten*) and co-believers; brethren (*geestverwanten*). In early 1882 Kuyper seriously planned a trip to the Transvaal. Formally as a tourist and journalist, a member of the Board of the NZAV, a friend and admirer – but of course also as a consultant, giving advice on how to organise a Christian-national, antirevolutionary, reformed South African Republic. The Board of the VU would not permit its Rector Magnificus a leave for half a year – and thereby decidedly denied South Africa a chance to turn its history!

In 1883-84 Kuyper was active as an advisor and PR-man to the Deputation of S.J.P. Kruger, Genl. N.J. Smit and S.J. du Toit, negotiating the Convention of London. Kuyper also organised the welcome reception of the Deputation in the Netherlands afterwards, in 1884. And in 1900 he wrote *La crise sud-africaine*, the most influential pro-Boer pamphlet of the Anglo-Boer War next to Smuts' *A Century of Wrong*. The role of Kuyper, by then Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1901-1905), in ending the Anglo-Boer War is well-known, as well as his fine 1904

farewell tribute to the deceased President Kruger: 'This Moyse … that fighter for his nation, united, in its language and its free fatherland … in God's time to be we will see him succeeded by a Joshua'.

The Dutch view of South Africa was dominated for much more than half a century by these pro-Boer sympathies, the feelings of kinship and national pride, fostered by the British atrocities during the Anglo-Boer War. South African history and Afrikaans literature were part of the curriculum of the Dutch High Schools and the Government stimulated public attention for Afrikaner events, for example in 1925 (100th anniversary of Paul Kruger), 1938 and 1949 (Great Trek, *Voortrekker* monument), and 1952 (Van Riebeeck Festival).
At the Vrije Universiteit, the general Dutch pro-Boer sympathies were enlarged by a strong consciousness of the common religion between Afrikaner and Protestant Dutchmen. They shared the same religious and ecclesiastical tradition, read the same *Statenbijbel* and sang the same 18th century Dutch edition of the Psalms. Both were part of the international Calvinist movement, *burghers* of the worldwide Calvinist Empire. In this virtual Calvinist realm, the VU was considered as its intellectual capital, the first and only Calvinist university in the world. Its professors, therefore, taught in Germany, Hungary, Scotland, Huguenot France, the United States, and from 1924 onwards even in South Africa (H.H. Kuyper, C. van Gelderen, V. Hepp, A.A. van Schelven). And, of course, the 1935 publication *Koers in die Krisis* did contain not only chapters written by VU professors, but also a welcome by the leader of the Dutch Reformed movement, and the Prime Minister of the Netherlands (1925-1926, 1933-1939), Hendrikus Colijn.

The contacts of the VU with South Africa date from its earliest days. In his congratulatory letter from 1880, S.J. du Toit solemnly promised Kuyper to send Afrikaner students. Du Toit was impressed by Kuyper and was glad to cooperate. But in time, Du Toit estranged himself from the Kuyperian dominance and extended his Dutch contacts, supported by Paul Kruger. Their friendship broke down. Finding funds and cooperation at all Dutch universities, Du Toit opted in 1884 for a South African Academy in the Netherlands (proposed by the Leiden liberal historian Fruin), thereby denying the unique role of the VU as sole destination for Transvaal students in the Netherlands. By doing this, Du Toit chose to cooperate with liberals, heathens and Jews, according to Kuyper.

So in the first twenty years, 1880-1900, the Vrije Universiteit had much to do with

South Africa, but not by means of educating young South Africans. As a fine example of the irony of history, the first South African student at the VU – except for a Van der Spuy who, in 1882, read theology there for only a couple of months – was, between 1900 and 1903, Japie du Toit, the Cape rebel and beloved son of the loyalist S.J. du Toit. Japie du Toit was sent to the VU by *Gereformeerde* admirers and followers of Kuyper in Pretoria, more or less against the wishes of his father. He was accompanied by two other Burgersdorp students, the law student Koos Pretorius and Japie's friend and lifelong colleague, Ferdinand Postma.

J.D. du Toit and F. Postma were *Doppers*; both got their doctorate from the VU, in 1903 and 1917 respectively, and both became well-known academics, leaders of their church and the Afrikaner nation. Within 50 years, they transformed the Burgersdorp Theological School into the *Potchefstroomse Universiteitskollege* and then the *Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir Christelike Hoër Onderwys*: the South African 'Vrije Universiteit' and the second Calvinist university in the entire world.

The history of the long relationship between the VU and Potchefstroom is well-known. According to many people and even some historians – in our countries and elsewhere – this relation bore fruit in the ideology of Christian-national Apartheid. For them, Kuyper was the father of *Soevereiniteit in eigen kring* and therefore of Apartheid, and Herman Dooyeweerd, with his *Wetskringen* and *scheppingsordinanties*, was his prophet. All of this is more or less pitiable nonsense, the result of much misunderstanding or at best of poor scholarship (Schutte 1987).

After the Peace of Vereeniging, South Africa embarked into the Age of the Generals and, even more important, the Age of the Ethnic Mobilisation of the Afrikaner *volk*. It was sympathetically supported by the Netherlands, which lavishly funded the movement for CNO (*Christelijk-Nationaal Onderwijs*), the first Afrikaner resistance movement, and welcomed Afrikaner students at the Dutch universities.

In 1905 a young Stellenbosch theologian, W.A. (Willie) Joubert, arrived to study theology at Utrecht, as Stellenbosch alumni did for half a century. Within a couple of months he changed Utrecht for the VU. Kuyper and his *Gereformeerde kerken* had not been very popular in the DRC (NGK) in South Africa, to say the least. But by now, the NGK was tired of theological liberalism and was also turning away from Scottish theology and English Methodism; it was looking for its continental

roots and theological scholarship. It is obvious that awakening Afrikaner nationalism had much to do with this: a stay in the Netherlands could and would strengthen one's Afrikaner identity and culture. According to Joubert, the Utrecht *Hervormde* theology was outdated. The real answers to today's questions were given by Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. Their theology was orthodox as well as modern, radical even. And it was also very successful; it activated church and society, the emancipation of the orthodox protestants and even facilitated Kuyper's career up to Prime Minister. Moreover: the VU was a haven of Humboldtian scholarship – Japie du Toit and Ferdinand Postma unsuccessfully opposed the strict rules of the VU, that since 1880 requested a *propaedeuse*, whereas at the same time the Dutch government dismissed the *propaedeuse* for the state universities. A thorough knowledge of the Bible, Latin, Greek and Hebrew was required, which was an indication of the fundaments of the VU-theology: the Bible and the 16th/17th century theology. At the same time, the VU was the university of the *kleine luyden*, the poor and the non-privileged people, for whose emancipation it had been founded. A *propaedeuse*, therefore, had to be strict, to be able to win the competition with the liberal theologians. But at the time, the VU accommodated for those without a high school classicist training, aspiring to real scholarship.

From 1906 to 1940, some 80 South Africans studied at the VU. Theologians, mostly: 64 out of 80. Over time they put their stamp on their church and their country, as *predikant*, professor, *kultuur-* and *volksleier.* Let me give you some examples.

Willie Joubert got a VU-doctorate in theology (1910), and afterwards worked at Stellenbosch University; at first as a professor in Dutch language and literature, later as a PR-officer and administrator. He was a fiery Nationalist and became a member of the *Ossewa Brandwag* in the 1940s.
B.B. (Bennie) Keet also got a VU doctorate (in 1913), to become a well-known professor in theology at Stellenbosch. There he introduced the teachings of his VU masters: the ethics of W. Geesink, and the ecclesiastical law of F.L. Rutgers and H.H. Kuyper; and over time he became a well-known opponent of apartheid.
Keet did not join in the attack by another VU alumnus and colleague, Prof. E.E. van Rooyen, against their Stellenbosch colleague J. du Plessis, in the late 1920s. Traditionally, this conflict is said to have been inspired by American fundamentalism against the theological liberalism of Du Plessis, who tried to reconcile the Bible and modern science and taught evolution. According to me, the histo-

riography certainly underrates the role of VU theology and theologians in this conflict. Opposition to the philosophy of evolution was one of the pillars of Kuyperian theology, with the Bible as its authority; the conflict, moreover, was as much about Dutch confessional piety as opposed to Scottish-British Methodism.

Even more underestimated is the influence of the Dutch Christian social movement on these South African students. The concept of a church that is not only spiritually but also socially relevant, tackling the daily socio-political problems, had a strong impact on them. Not less than three of the early Afrikaner theology students at the VU went into politics: N.J. van der Merwe, H.A. Lamprecht and W.P. Steenkamp, as well as L.J. (Wikus) du Plessis, classicist, philosopher, economist, and what more. All of them, appalled by the pitiable plight of the poor whites (in the first place: poor Afrikaners) rejected the *laissez faire* of Botha and Smuts and requested active action and Christian-social policies. N.J. van der Merwe, a son-in-law to the former Free State President M.T. Steyn, and H.A. Lamprecht were Nationalists, followers of Hertzog – but Van der Merwe was no *Smelter*: no fusion with the rand bosses and capitalists for him!

W.P. Steenkamp was an Afrikaner as good as one could want one. His 1910 VU-doctorate could be called a global scoop: his theological dissertation *Die agnosticisme van Herbert Spencer* was the first one worldwide that was written in Afrikaans! (By the way: much against the will of the majority of the VU Senate: 'Afrikaans is no language, VU dissertations have to be written in Standard Dutch, *Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands* – Afrikaans is at best a degenerated Dutch' – with the next VU-dissertation in Afrikaans being Van der Merwe's of 1921!) Steenkamp also entered the South African Parliament, as the representative of his Namaqualand parish and constituency; in later years he became a medical doctor, founder and representative of a Christian Farmers' and Workers' Party, and Senator for the United Party.

According to the international historiography, the VU also taught these South African students Kuyper's Christian national worldview. That is to say: apartheid. It is a pity to say, but reality was different. Race was not a real problem in that time. The European superiority and colonial domination were not questioned, neither in the Netherlands, nor in South Africa. A liberal and a professor in missiology such as J. du Plessis welcomed the segregation of the church, due to the vast difference in evolution of the white and black races (Du Plessis 1921; 1926).

Dr. Wm. Nicol, later on an influential DRC *predikant* at the Witwatersrand, an Afrikaner nationalist and in 1948 appointed as Provincial Administrator of the Transvaal, tells an interesting story in his memoirs, *Met toga en troffel* (Nicol n.d.). Around 1912, he and his South African friends were impressed by Herman Bavinck, his personality, his theology and psychology. But they did not give a dime for his sociology, writes Nicol. Once they confronted Bavinck with a racially mixed couple (a Dutch woman married to a Javanese man), whom they had spotted walking in Amsterdam. If that Javanese man is an educated Christian, I would allow him to marry my own daughter, was Bavinck's answer, puzzling his South African audience. Bavinck's view of the brotherhood of all mankind – also the starting point of A.W.F. Idenburg, former Minister of the Colonies and Governor General of the Dutch East Indies, Member of the Board of the VU – did not really change their opinion. In 1939, one South African tried in his VU doctorate to base the Apartheid on the Creation and Common Grace, referring to Kuyper's beloved themes of pluriformity, diversity and hierarchy, saying that white supremacy is the gift and therefore the wish of the Creator (Badenhorst 1939). A very biased reading of Kuyper!

In the first half of the 20th century, therefore, the Dutch and Afrikaners shared the idea of *stamverwantschap*, as a common myth or dream. This dream was strong enough to survive World War II. The Dutch and the South Africans experienced that dark period in a rather different way. The Dutch were shocked by the stories about Pirow's New Order, the Greyshirts and the semi-fascist *Ossewa Brandwag*; they did not understand the anti-British, neutralist position of the National Party. Pro-Boer friends at the VU could not understand the participation of Calvinists such as H.G. Stoker, L.J. du Plessis and others in the *Ossewa Brandwag*. But in time, by correspondence and personal discussions, they learned these situations to interpret, not as pro-fascist but as anti-British; as examples of radical Calvinist nationalism, not as signs of nazi-sympathies, and the apartheid as a serious endeavour to stimulate the culture of both white and black, separate but equivalent. Berkouwer, Waterink, Dooyeweerd, J.H. Bavinck: all of them made post-war visits to South Africa (1949-1952) and all of them gave the Afrikaners the benefit of the doubt. Notwithstanding serious questions about his past and views, the VU Senate in 1952 unanimously voted in favour of a honorary doctorate for the Potchefstroom *Rektor* Prof. dr. Joon van Rooy, and for the Cape DRC moderator Dr. A.J. van der Merwe. And the same traditional pro-Boer sympathies led the Senate to vote in favour of the formal exchange programme between the VU and its sister

university at Potchefstroom in 1958. In the meantime, increasing amounts of South African students had arrived at the VU: 69 in the years 1945-1960, and some 50 in the 1960s, many of them accompanied by their partners, staying and studying at the VU for a couple of years.

For many of them, it was an eye-opening experience. 'My years of studying in the Netherlands made me conscious of the moral problems of apartheid', wrote VU alumnus Willie Jonker (Jonker 1998). Discussions with South Africans in exile in the Netherlands taught me to reject apartheid, wrote another former VU student, Lina Spies. **[2]** Regularly Potchefstroom professors and others, invited within the framework of the Cultural Agreement, came and lectured at the VU, as VU professors did in South Africa.
Gradually, however, more and more people got doubts about the academic connections with South Africa. Weren't these legitimising apartheid? Already in the late 1950s the VU-students had said good-bye to the 'Penning myth', as their magazine *Pharetra* had called the traditional pro-Boer sentiments. **[3]** Many students and staff members were active members of anti-apartheid movements. The exchange with Potchefstroom was subject of debate at staff meetings from 1969 onwards. In April 1971, Rector Magnificus De Gaay Fortman signed a formal letter to his Potchefstroom colleague, expressing the 'serious problem we have with the race relationships in your country' and thereby starting a discussion about the position of Potchefstroom, which would dominate and in the end terminate their relationship.**[4]** At the same time, the VU was clearly stating its own position: on 20 October 1972 the Revd. C.F. Beyers Naudé was given an honorary degree.

Joon van Rooy, A.J. van der Merwe and Beyers Naudé: three VU *doctores honoris causa*. Only twenty years had passed since 1952, but they had been revolutionary ones. The Netherlands had changed fundamentally, due to developments and processes such as industrialisation and urbanisation, the decolonisation of the Dutch Indies, the impact of the feminist movement and democratisation, the broad secularisation and the depillarisation, the breaking down of the traditional religious and socio-political barriers; an immensely popular a-historical trend, progressive and optimistic at the same time, of which people were convinced it could build a New Babylon (Kennedy 1995).
The VU had changed even more, whereas South Africa was in a paralysing state, rigidly trying to stifle the motion of history, deaf to the ever stronger winds of change. The Netherlands and South Africa were drifting away from each other at

high speed. 1972 was a turning point in the relationship of the VU with South Africa, the end of an era and the beginning of a new one, connected by the continuation of its Kuyperian background and character.

Around 1950 the VU was a small, traditional, conservative, even narrow-minded institution; somewhat conceited and intensely Reformed. It denied Totius, poet and Bible translator, a former student, a fellow Calvinist and influential ecclesiastical figure in South Africa, an Honorary Doctorate, for rhyming the Psalms of David is no work of scholarship and therefore could not earn a degree of *doctor litterae* – not even *honoris causa*, as the VU professor in Dutch Linguistics and Literature wrote in 1951. The VU still functioned only as academy for the Reformed people. It protected the students against undesirable ideas: when in 1950 the liberal N.P. van Wyk Louw was nominated Professor in Afrikaans Language and Culture at the University of Amsterdam, the VU seriously considered establishing its own chair with a Reformed nominee (Schutte 2004). But by then the Dutch Reformed world was in the process of a revolutionary evolution. Internal cohesion diminished and boundaries were opened. In 1961, staff members of the VU were still seriously lectured by *Curatoren* about socialist leanings; but in 1964, the Synod of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* accepted membership of the social-democrat party (PvdA) for its *predikants*. Kuyperian theology was declared outdated and the traditional *Gereformeerde* way of life disappeared. Not theological orthodoxy but solidarity with the poor and oppressed qualifies a church; today's Christianity has to be ecumenical and socially relevant, politically progressive and an ally of all those who fight for a better world – a *verantwoorde revolutie* ('a just revolution'), as two VU professors called it in 1968 (Verkuyl and Schulte Nordholt 1968). In 1972, the VU got a new, democratic administration and a new objective, replacing the Kuyperian Calvinist Principled Basis (*Gereformeerde Beginselen*). At the VU, as explained by a *Memorandum*, published by the *College van Bestuur* in 1975, there was a 'growing awareness of the relevance of Christian faith and action for situations of inequality and social injustice, especially in connection with the so called 'Third World' [and a new consciousness of] the responsibility of universities and members of academic communities with regard to the national and internationally society in which they function'.**[5]**

The sociologist of religion Gerard Dekker has labelled the period between 1960 and 1990 in the history of the *Gereformeerde Kerken* as a silent revolution. A contemporary critic and opponent called it 'a silent death' (Dekker 1992; Jongeling

n.d.). Orthodox South African Calvinists, bewildered by the headlines of the news from the Netherlands and the stories of the revolutionary students, irritated by the constant '*parmantige*' and '*betweterige*' *Hollanders*, concluded: the VU is lost and no place for god-fearing, orthodox Afrikaner students (INEG 1964).

Indeed, the rapidly growing numbers of students at the VU were no longer god-fearing Calvinists (*Rector Magnificus* I.A. Diepenhorst once publicly warned for the Marxist undermining of the VU via the student population). And their professors denied the historicity of Adam and Eve, the whale of Jona and the donkey of Bileam. This deep gap between Amsterdam and South Africa also can be demonstrated by the honorary degree, conferred on Martin Luther King by the VU in 1965. King is a fighter for justice, walking in the steps of Jesus, according to his promotor Gijs Kuijpers (who, only two years before, had warned the *Kongres teen Kommunisme* at Pretoria against the irresistible revolt against apartheid and had applauded Mandela for his speech at the Rivonia Trial **[6]**). But the South African reaction was rather sceptic: we have never heard that King is a Calvinist, by honouring him, the VU has sided for his Marxist revolutionary ideology.

That same year 1965, Prof. dr. W.F. de Gaay Fortman (1911-1997) became *Rector Magnificus* (1965-1972) of the Vrije Universiteit as well as chairman of the official Dutch Committee for the Cultural Agreement between the Netherlands and South Africa, as successor to VU *President-Curator* dr. J. Donner (1891-1981). De Gaay Fortman, a soft-spoken typical Dutch *regent* and influential anti-revolutionary politician, was born in a pro-Boer family, and he was not ashamed of these sympathies and sentiments (Bak 2004). At the same time, he detested the South African racial policy. For some years, he had – as the spokesman of a group of influential Dutch Members of Parliament – tried to organise a visit to South Africa, in order to start an official dialogue. But Verwoerd had not given permission for a meeting with Albert Luthulu (1963-1965).

De Gaay Fortman was aware of the fact that a cultural agreement, and academic and cultural relations in general, were no direct political instruments. Nevertheless, De Gaay Fortman used them as instruments to start a critical dialogue with South Africa. His South African counterparts and Potchefstroom colleagues soon discovered that De Gaay Fortman had indeed drawn the agenda for that critical dialogue, in order to demonstrate to them the un-Christian, inhumane and dangerous character of apartheid. Doing so, De Gaay Fortman asked his South African counterparts to accept a broad, general concept of culture, in order to send,

under the Cultural Agreement, more black, academically inexperienced South Africans to the Netherlands to enrol in the more general, technical, professional types of education in the Netherlands. And he gave them a pragmatic lesson: the VU solidarity with the chairman of the Christian Institute, the Revd. C.F. Beyers Naudé.

In the years 1973-1977, De Gaay Fortman functioned as Secretary of Home Affairs in the Cabinet of the social-democrat Joop den Uyl. He stipulated, that the Dutch Government continued a critical dialogue with the South African government, at the same giving priority to black South African students. But his policy of dialogue was made out of date by the Soweto uprisings (1976), and so the Government ended the Cultural Agreement.

In that same period, the VU strengthened its contacts with the Christian Institute and built up assistance programme's for academic institutions for black people in southern Africa. And the debate on the Exchange Programme between the VU and the Potchefstroom University was intensified. Anti-apartheid elements at the VU wanted a boycott. The Board and the University Council wanted to discuss with Potchefstroom the role of Christianity in modern society and the contribution of Christian higher education: to strengthen the human rights, democracy, emancipation. There was too much politics and misunderstanding in their discussions, with participants clinging to unbridgeable paradigms, in spite of *stamverwantschap* and *geestverwantschap*. By the end of 1976, the VU formally ended the Potchefstroom cooperation. The old sentiments had faded away, a new good faith was required.

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Notes

1 This essay summarises the chapters 1-6 of my De Vrije Universiteit en Zuid-Afrika, 1880-2005 (Schutte 2005). I have published on the history of Dutch-South African relationships earlier in Schutte 1986 and Schutte 1993.

2 Lina Spies to the author, 2004.

3 Pharetra 20.6.1957 en 27.1.1960. The Dutch pro-Boer Louwrens Penning (1854-1927) was the author of many novels on the Boer War.

4 Archives VU: Senate VU to Registrateur Potchefstroomse Universiteit vir CHO, Amsterdam 5.4.1971.

5 [College van Bestuur Vrije Universiteit] Memorandum [Amsterdam, August 1975], pp. i-ii. The Memorandum was written to inform the participants of the

Internal Conference of Reformed Institutions for Higher Education, Potchefstroom, 1975.
6.Prof.dr. G. Kuijpers to the author, 3.3.2003; see also Kuijpers n.d.: 141-66.

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POEM: ‘New’ Scientific Practice In South Africa With Special Reference To Land Reform

..training new generations of scientists and technologists oriented towards the solving of real problems (White Paper on Science and Technology 1996).
The SandT capacity of the country is running as fast as it can, but is still losing ground (National Research and Development Strategy 2000).

Introduction

(2005) The landscape of scientific practice and higher education in South Africa has changed drastically since 2 February 1990. The changes that occurred in these fields during the last decade of the 20th century were probably the most incisive in the history of science and higher education in South Africa.
When the democratically elected government came into power in 1994, science was confronted with two main challenges, namely to transform the system so that the welfare of all the inhabitants could be promoted and to make South Africa competitive in a globalising world.

The new government inherited a sound science infrastructure. It was a widely dispersed and uncoordinated system in which scientists enjoyed international recognition for transplanting hearts and for enabling the deepest exploitation of mines in the world. However, the system was mainly directed at the promotion of the welfare of the white community and was strongly focussed on military defence; the provision of energy and food; and the combating of diseases.**[1]**
In this transformation process, South Africa was very receptive to theories, models and schools of thought. Expertise from abroad was not provided in all instances without direct or subtle influence. There are already indications that certain models, that were applied successfully elsewhere, cannot be transferred without adaptations to the South African situation, where complex issues have to be addressed. The question that arises is whether the government implements the policy documents that were designed by intellectuals who are not part of the bureaucracy.

Two examples are applicable to the aims of this paper. Firstly, the work by Gibbons et al. (1994) entitled The new production of knowledge: The dynamics of science and research in contemporary societies and also Scott et al.'s (1995) The

meaning of mass higher education have had a strong influence on policy formulation regarding science and regarding higher education (Kraak 2000). Secondly, the World Bank has made significant inputs to the establishment of the policy on land reform. There is at present a widespread debate on whether a shift of emphasis from Gibbons' Mode 1 (basic) to Mode 2 (interdisciplinary or applied research) has had a beneficial effect on teaching and research in higher education in particular and on science in general. Older academics and researchers find it difficult to switch from Mode 1 to Mode 2. Younger researchers and some faculties at universities have probably embraced this new paradigm and the pursuit of relevance so strongly that it now threatens to smother them. In this regard there appears to be a great deal of validity in Sheila Slaughter's statement, as quoted by Kraak (2000: 33): *... that the commercialization of the academy will lead to a decline of the canonical tradition itself, the weakening of the professorate and scholarly research and the triumph of a managerial mode of control in the university not unlike that of corporate capitalism.*

The new way of creating and disseminating knowledge is an indisputable feature across the world and a new social organisation of knowledge and learning is emerging. In South Africa it has occurred very rapidly and with strong government interference, and therefore it is inevitable that there will be some distortion. *Part I* of this paper summarises the strengths and weaknesses of science and of higher education over the past ten years. *Part II* focuses on the complexity of land reform, which is one of the most important political and socio-economic issues that faces the country en route to ensuring that its society is fair and peaceful to a greater extent than before. This issue can only be resolved by *new generation* researchers who use a combination of basic and interdisciplinary applied research.

Part I

Strengths and weaknesses of science and higher education

Throughout the struggle years, the ANC accorded a high priority to the role that science and technology should fulfil in the reconstruction of the country. After coming to power in 1994, they maintained the science infrastructure to a large extent and approached it with circumspection. The expenditure on military research **[2]** and on energy independence was reduced. This reduction partly explains why the expenditure on RandD declined from 1,19 per cent of the GDP in 1990 to 0,79 per cent in 2002 (National Research and Development Strategy 2002). It is probable that more expertise could have been retained to convert

'swords into ploughshares'. Some knowledge used in the production of weapons has been applied in industry, while some of the expertise of the former Atomic Energy Corporation is currently being used in amongst other things the new Pebble Bed Modular Reactor at Koeberg in the Western Cape. The establishment of a new ministry for science and technology in 2004 underlines the importance that the government attributes to science and technology

Some building blocks in the establishment of a new framework for science and higher education

Large-scale restructuring of the science system was required to achieve the main goals of transformation, a better quality of life for all inhabitants and international competitiveness. This discussion is limited to only some of the important building blocks of the process.

The Green Paper and the White Paper on science and technology: Preparing for the 21st century (1996) provided a new framework for scientific practice. It evaluated the existing system and created structures to develop, implement and monitor the policy framework (Bawa and Mouton 2003: 300). The aim was to make South Africa more responsive to restructuring and development needs. Of particular importance was the establishment of a National System of Innovation (NSI). A National System of Innovation can be thought of as a set of functioning institutions, organisations and politics that interact constructively in the pursuit of a common set of social and economic goals or objectives.

The funding of research and postgraduate training in the human and the natural sciences, **[3]** which was previously managed by two institutions, was integrated upon the establishment of the National Research Foundation (Act 23 of 1998). It benefited the human sciences, because more funds became available and a system of peer evaluation now identifies top researchers and funds them as generously as in the natural sciences. The total amount of funding has been increased, especially for high-level human resources development. In 2003, '*...a total of 5442 students received bursaries, of which 3309 were awarded to black students. It was also the first year in which the NRF supported more than 1000 PhD students...*' (Von Gruenewaldt 2004).

The National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) was founded and began functioning in November 1998. The institution, which in essence replaced the former Science Advisory Council, advises the Minister of Science and Technology on science and technology, innovation and competitiveness. It is an important guiding mechanism in the establishment of the NSI.

An innovation fund was established in 1998 to promote technological innovation and competitiveness. Up to 2004 the fund has spend R665 million on 106 projects (Von Gruenewaldt 2004). In order to direct the research of the science councils, government grants were pruned so that income has to be augmented by means of contract research. These councils can also apply to the Innovation Fund for funds to do directed research. Thus far the science councils have benefited more from the fund than the universities have. The greater teaching load that lecturers have as a result of a larger number of ill-prepared students is one of the reasons why the universities have been poorer competitors for the funds.

Technological innovation and competitiveness have been strongly promoted by the establishment of the Technology for Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP). This programme is the result of a joint initiative undertaken by industry, the Department of Trade and Industry, research and education institutions, the Innovation Fund, and the Department of Science and Technology. From 1992 to September 2004, the fund spent R1,8 billion on research and development projects (Von Gruenewaldt 2004). This is one of the success stories of the past number of years.

An important milestone in the development of the research system was the National Research and Technology Audit (NRTA), which was undertaken in 1997/98. All research councils and national institutes were evaluated. Important weaknesses and strengths were identified. Science councils are evaluated annually to determine whether stated objectives have been achieved.

The National Research and Technology Foresight Exercise (1998/2000) did planning for long-term research on the technological needs of South Africa (Bawa and Mouton 2002: 302). Thirteen focal areas were identified. To a large extent, the NRF's nine focal areas accommodate the focal areas identified by the National Research and Technology Foresight Exercise. **[4]** The establishment of Centres of Excellence (COE) rewards excellent researchers and enables them to co-operate across disciplinary boundaries and institutions in respect of projects that are locally relevant and internationally competitive. Some examples are: biomedical TB research; excellence in strong materials; invasion biology etc.

The research system in higher education, which is an important part of the national research system, was even more unequal and uncoordinated than the science system. In many respects, the higher education system experienced a revolution since 1994. Only some relevant aspects are identified in this context.

The *Report of the National Commission on Higher Education* (1996) and the *White Paper* (1997) emphasised the importance of research and the development of high-level human resources. The restructuring of curricula, to convert courses into programmes that have clear outcomes, has had a far-reaching impact on higher education. Many of the consequences of this process will only be felt after a number of years. The experience in many countries has revealed that the transformation of higher education always has some unexpected consequences. A number of universities went overboard by instituting programmes that are mainly directed at occupational training and the needs of the market. It was particularly the universities at which student numbers were increasing slowly and which were experiencing financial crises that saw these courses as a means to attract more students. For example, technikons began to offer MBA programmes without having the required human resources, experience and infrastructure. A recent evaluation of the programmes did not accord full accreditation to a number of these programmes.

In my opinion, it was especially the human sciences that considered this programme approach to be an opportunity to stop and reverse the decline in student numbers. The decline in student numbers had a particularly severe effect on the black universities and Cloete (2003: 422) justifiably remarks that '*for historically black universities the new South Africa was a disaster*'. In the fields of the human sciences and education, the universities and technikons produce more than 50 per cent of all graduates. Just above one-quarter of all graduates qualify in the fields of the natural sciences and engineering.
The conversion of courses to programmes caused a large number of departments to close, while other departments were consolidated and new faculties were established. In many cases, imaginative new programmes were instituted, but it is clear that the traditional formative courses have lost ground. The pursuit of relevance eroded the traditional disciplinary boundaries. Outcome became more important than content. The energy that was put into these exercises, together with an increased teaching load, caused many academics to become disheartened and it has had negative consequences for teaching and especially for research. It is also doubtful whether students are better prepared for the workplace. The number of unemployed graduates, especially blacks, continues to increase.

The student numbers at universities and technikons increased at a relatively fast pace. The percentage of black students at universities increased from 32 per cent

in 1990 to 60 per cent in 2000. In the same period, the increase at technikons was from 32 per cent tot 72 per cent. However, the number of white students at Universities declined (Cloete 2003: 415). The high growth projections of the National Commission for Higher Education did not materialise. At the historically disadvantaged institutions in particular there were relatively small increases and even decreases in the student numbers. This phenomenon, together with maladministration at a number of institutions, led to financial crises.

Graduation trends were not reflected in the rapid increase in the number of students. **[5]** Therefore the Treasury was no longer prepared to fund ineffectiveness. Mass higher education (that is, the model of mass higher education as advocated by Scott) did not materialise. The consequence was that it was announced in 2004 that student numbers would be restricted. Preliminary indications are that students at several of the larger universities will be restricted and that a quota system will be introduced. Some experts are of the opinion that the universities have been deprived of their autonomy. Programmes dictate what may be taught and now quotas are being introduced that dictate who may be taught.**[6]**
The merger of the 21 universities and 15 technikons into 22 institutions of higher education is a far-reaching intervention. In 2000, the Minister of Education requested the Council on Higher Education to make concrete proposals on the size and shape of the higher education system. When he received the report, the Minister indicated that the government would respond to it with a national plan. The National Plan for Higher Education was released in 2001.

Although there is general consensus that there are too many universities and technikons and that a number of the institutions can probably not continue to exist independently, there are serious debates on the way in which institutions are being compelled to merge. There are large inequalities between the various universities as well as between the technikons. Many of the historically disadvantaged universities are no more than teaching institutions that have almost no research output or research culture. In this regard, two universities, namely the University of the Western Cape and the University of Durban-Westville are exceptions as they have made great strides in respect of their research output.
The merging of universities and technikons will require much energy and an enormous amount of money. Only R3,2 billion has been set aside for the purpose,

but a large portion of these funds will be used to cover the current debt of the institutions. It is quite clear that the cost has been underestimated. It is nevertheless heartening that many academic leaders, who initially raised objections to the process of merging, are now dedicated in their endeavours to make a success of the mergers.

A further drastic step was taken when technikons were granted the status of being a technological university. The important place and role that the technikons fulfil cannot be denied. However, several of these institutions still have a long way to go in terms of performance and the pursuit of excellence before they are worthy of the status of a technical university. Being appointed to a chair has traditionally been associated with postgraduate qualifications, experience in the training of students up to the doctoral level and specialised research that is published in recognised science journals. A great deal of erosion has taken place in the application of these criteria.

Right-minded South Africans agree that it was necessary to restructure higher education for the purposes of fairness and accessibility, and to direct it to a greater extent at the need for high-level human resources. The tempo at which the restructuring is occurring, could be debated, and there are real dangers that incalculable harm is being done. The fact that the goalposts are often shifted has a demoralising effect on the staff concerned. The new Minister of Education has a record of success and pragmatism and is prepared to consult widely.

The *National Research and Development Strategy*, which was published in 2002, provides, in some respects, a new direction for the implementation of the science policy. It sets out a strategy in terms of which science and technology should achieve the objectives of increasing the quality of life of all inhabitants and of increasing the country's competitiveness with the rest of the world. The strategy presupposes amongst other things *'…doubling government investment in Science and Technology over the next three years…'* (p. 17).

Have the stated objectives been achieved?

The policy documents that have been produced to establish a framework for science and technology have generally been acclaimed in the national and international arenas. In answering the question whether the stated objectives have been achieved, two provisions should be applied. Firstly, it is probably too soon to evaluate the results critically. Secondly, the statistical basis available for an analysis has serious shortcomings.

There can be no doubt that a new science landscape is developing, both nationally and within institutions (Bawa and Mouton 2002: 323). However, at this stage, some of the contours are still too feint or too vague.
Although a great deal has been achieved, many of the objectives have not been achieved. When the effectiveness of higher education is assessed in terms of the number of graduates and research outputs, it appears that it has not increased. The *National Research and Development Strategy* (2002: 73) states that *'the system is working hard … but is going backwards*'. And furthermore, *'… the total capacity of the system is about one-third to one-half the size that it should be to form the basis of a competitive knowledge-based economy for South Africa in the medium and long term*'. There is serious concern that basic research and teaching, which are preconditions for interdisciplinary teaching and research, are being weakened by policy and market forces.

The expenditure on RandD, which represents 0,79 per cent of the GDP, is low in comparison with the 2,15 per cent of GDP of the OECD countries. It should be doubled in the next three to four years. The fact that the universities in South Africa are not adequately equipped and that some equipment is obsolete was stated as far back as 1992 and again highlighted in the National Research and Technology Audit in 1998. The audit emphasised that *'… only 10 per cent of the country's equipment base at the time could be considered as state-of-the-art, i.e. less than five years old'* (*A National Key Research and Technology Infrastructure Strategy* July 2004). The replacement value of the equipment is R3.7 billion. According to some experts, the new subsidy formula for 2004 provides even less funds for the purchase of research equipment.
The number of subsidised research outputs is diminishing. Large inequalities exist between ethnic groups and institutions in higher education. There are indications that the differences between universities are increasing rather than decreasing. By the year 2000, whites still produced 91,9 per cent of all outputs, Africans 2,6 per cent, coloureds 1,19 per cent, and Asians 4,4 per cent. (Boshoff and Mouton 2003: 220). Five universities produce 60 per cent of the total research output in the sector. Contract research has increased rapidly. However, the quality of the contract work is often suspect. Some historically disadvantaged universities produce hardly any output at all. The new subsidy formula will encourage all universities, including the new universities of technology, to strive to become research universities. An investigation undertaken in 1997 indicated that *'… academic science in South Africa … was conducted within rather confined*

disciplinary and institutional enclaves' (Mouton 2004).

The ageing of the science population and the fact that there is an inadequate inflow to the system are probably the greatest threats. The research output in the age group above 50 years is increasing, while the output of the age group below 50 years is decreasing (Boshoff and Mouton 2003: 221). Affirmative action is having the effect that some white academics do not see a future for themselves in academia. The composition of the staff has not changed dramatically over a decade. From 1988 to 1998 the percentage of Africans increased from 30 per cent to 38 per cent and that of whites decreased from 55 per cent to 47 per cent (Cloete *et al.* 2003: 200). Salaries in the higher education sector have fallen significantly behind that of the public and private sectors. It will be indicated in a later section that there is a strong mobility of blacks in the academic sector as a result of shortages and promotions. It is difficult to calculate the extent of the effect of HIV/AIDS, but statistics indicate that it could be extensive.

There is an ongoing debate on the extent and influence of the so-called brain drain. The reason is that statistics on emigration are unreliable and that many highly trained individuals do not leave the country permanently. A recent (2004) investigation, which was undertaken for the National Council on Innovation and entitled *Flight of the Flamingos*, found that 'South Africa is faced with a strong resource constraint surrounding highly skilled individuals', but that there is no proof of a brain drain crisis (p. xvii). **[7]** It is also not certain how many of the highly trained individuals will return. An important statement that is made is that if there is a perception that the research system is weak or that it erodes because there are few posts or sources available, an even larger number of individuals will attempt to find opportunities in other countries. As already indicated, there is a large measure of mobility of black scientists between sectors before they make a significant contribution in certain posts. It is especially disconcerting that top scientists leave the higher education and research institutions for managerial posts in the public and private sectors. Research funding from abroad has increased rapidly since 1994. One research university already receives 20 per cent of its research expenditure from abroad.

In summary it can be said that South Africa may eventually have sufficient financial resources for its scientific practice and higher education, but that the human resources may be insufficient.
There is a marked decline in RandD in the private sector. In the four years to

2002, the number of researchers declined by 16 per cent (National Research and Development Strategy 2002: 54).
As far as the science councils are concerned, the Human Sciences Research Council and the Agricultural Research Council should be highlighted. Human sciences research has never figured relatively strongly in the research system. Poor methodology, insufficient statistical grounding, a variety of schools of thought, ideological differences and divides (English, Africans, black, white) together with the academic boycott in the apartheid years had a detrimental effect on the system for several decades. Nevertheless there can be no doubt regarding the important role that research in the human sciences can fulfil by analysing changes in the socio-economic and political fields and by communicating relevant knowledge efficiently through information and communication systems. **[8]**

There has been an ongoing debate on whether the Human Sciences Research Council should continue to exist (Bawa and Mouton 2003: 325). Its personnel complement has been reduced and significant changes have been made to the course that it was taking. Certain research divisions were closed down or transferred to universities. It could be accused of too much direct competition with universities and technikons for research funds. However, the universities do not have the infrastructure to do the national surveys that the Human Sciences Research Council undertakes successfully. My personal observation is that a new generation of human science researchers is emerging who analyse issues fearlessly, objectively and critically.
The Agricultural Research Council (ARC), which was established in 1992, has undergone major changes and crises (Liebenberg *et al.* 2004; Thirtle, Van Zyl and Vink 2000). The focus has been shifted from large commercial agriculture to emerging black farming units; and from highly subsidised agriculture and price protection by marketing councils to competition within world markets. A combination of factors, including the lack of leadership, has had the effect that the number of research personnel at the ARC decreased from 761 in 1996 to 634 fte researchers in 2000. The number decreased further to 400 by April 2003. Large numbers of highly qualified researchers left the ARC precisely during a period when research could have contributed in respect of the structural problems in agriculture and the land reform process.
Finally, some international benchmarks could be considered. Bundlender (2003: 257) says that *'Given its relative wealth, South Africa performs less well in HRD*

indicators, education, health and labour'. According to the World Competitiveness Index (2001), South Africa holds the 42nd position among 49 countries.

It is in the fields of Mathematics and Science that the performance at the school level is especially poor. Of the 440,267 candidates that wrote the school-leavers examination (grade 12) in 2003, only 82,010 (18.7 per cent) passed with exemption to enrol for higher education. The number of candidates that obtain exemption has remained reasonably constant over the past few years. Of the candidates that obtained exemption, only 23,088 (28 per cent) passed Mathematics and 25,972 (31 per cent) passed Science on the higher grade. Many experts are of the opinion that the large increase from 1999 to 2003 in the number of grade 12 candidates that passed, ostensibly without a drop in standards, is simply too good to be true. The pass rate of grade 12 pupils was 48.9 per cent in 1999 and it increased to 73 per cent in 2003. The number of poorly prepared candidates that enter the tertiary institutions is increasing. In 2004 it was announced that 40 per cent of students fail their first year.

Part II
Land reform: a complex issue that requires interdisciplinary, applied research

Few topics in these countries (South Africa and Zimbabwe) have been more widely discussed but less understood than land reform (International Crisis Group 2004)

Introduction

Land reform has been chosen as a focal area because it has far-reaching consequences. These consequences encompass the following crucial areas: Political (race restructuring), economic (alleviation of poverty and job creation in rural areas) and social (change in the communal land ownership system that has a radical effect on the social order of traditional communities, as well as the moving of millions of people, which may be even more extensive than the social engineering of the apartheid years). Furthermore, more than 20.4 million people (46.3 per cent of the total population) live in the rural areas (Strategic Plan for the Department of Agriculture 2004: 11). More than 70 per cent of the rural population is poor and approximately 27 per cent live below the bread line.
In a broader African context, it is said that NEPAD (New Partnership for Africa's Development) '*... believes that agriculture will provide the engine of growth in*

Africa' (Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme 2003). Land reform may have major national and international consequences and it may influence the food security of the poorest of the poor in Southern Africa.

Contextualising the place and role of agriculture

In order to gain a clear understanding of the land reform process, it is necessary to put into perspective the place and role of agriculture in the South African economy. Although agriculture contributes just more than 3.9 per cent to the GDP, it has important backward and forward links with the national economy. As a consequence of low rainfall and relatively poor soil, only 13 per cent of the surface of the country can be used for crop production and of this area only one-fifth is high-potential arable land. A little more than 1.3 million hectare (1.19 per cent) are under irrigation (Strategic Plan for Agriculture). Between 50,000 and 60,000 commercial (mainly white) farmers farm on 87 per cent of the total agricultural land, which is highly developed, and they account for more than 95 per cent of the total agricultural production. As in many countries, agriculture is not very kind to farmers. Since 1965, commercial agricultural production increased slower than the national economy with the result that the 9.129 per cent contribution to the GDP in 1965 decreased to 3.2 per cent in 2002. Various structural changes in agriculture and globalisation have been the cause that many farmers have lost their farms and that the agricultural debt increased by more than 3 per cent per annum from 1991 to reach R31 billion in 2003.

Events preceding the land reform programme

Land occupation by indigenous groups in southern Africa occurred over many centuries. With the arrival of white settlers, the conflict intensified. In 1655 the indigenous people had already built their huts near the Fort at Table Bay and were requested by the colonists *'... to go a little further away*' (Davenport and Hunt 1974: 11). The first division of land occurred in the Western Cape when the Salt River and the Liesbeek River were accepted as the dividing line between the indigenous people and the colonists (Davies 1971: 5). Over a period of 300 years it eventually lead to South Africa having *'... one of the most unequal land distributions in the world*' (Binswanger and Deiniger 1993: 451). The problem of land reform is currently a topical issue in virtually all the countries in Southern Africa.

Both the previous government and the ANC paid a great deal of attention to land reform during the struggle. After 2 February 1990 various national and

international conferences were held on this issue.
The current land reform process commenced with the acceptance of the Interim Constitution in 1993. It was essentially aimed at correcting the wrongs that were brought about by the Natives Land Act of 1913 and the Natives Land and Trust Act of 1936 in terms of which blacks' land rights were limited to approximately 13 per cent **[9]** of the country. Besides these two acts, a host of other laws were also promulgated over the years, which lead to the blacks being dispossessed of their land rights and to population shifts. It is estimated that *'… 3,5 million people were forcibly removed from their land between 1960 and 1982'* (Aliber and Mokoena 2004: 330). The limitation of blacks' land rights and subsidies granted to commercial farmers supplied labour to the mines and lead to large-scale distortion in agriculture (Thirtle, Van Zyl and Vink 2000: 6-21).

The intricate legislation passed to set the land reform programmes in motion, such as the Restitution of Land Rights Act No. *22* of 1994, and the Land Claims Court that was established, are not discussed in this context. (In this regard see *The Law of S.A.* Vol. 14 1999). Land reform comprises three basic processes, namely:
– Restitution or return of land that was expropriated and that led to, for example, large-scale removal of people or communities;
– Redistribution of land directed at assisting the poor, farm workers and especially black women to obtain land; and
– Changing the land ownership system, mainly in the former homelands where communal land ownership is the most general form of land ownership.
Land claims could be instituted from 1994 to 31 December 1998. In total, 79,649 claims were registered. It is a comprehensive task to evaluate the validity of the claims, identity documents, title deeds etc. Corruption is also inherent in the process.
Of the more than 55,000 claims that have already been concluded, approximately 80 per cent concerned urban areas. By March 2004, 2.9 per cent of the agricultural land (former homelands excluded) was transferred to blacks at a total cost of R4.6 billion (Hall and Laliff 2004: 1). Thus far restitution has received the greatest attention. Although a great deal of land in urban areas has been returned to former owners, criticism has been expressed that the easy route was taken by giving the claimants cash instead of land (*Business Day* 18 August 2003). Land reform on farms is more complex. Changing the communal land ownership system has vast political and social implications.

Land reform, which is protected by the Constitution, is one of the great achievements of the government. Thus far the process has proceeded very slowly. Research is revealing how complex the issue is. Much criticism has been expressed, especially of the unrealistic expectations that are being created (Walker 2004). Researchers do, however, agree on one matter, namely that those countries that do not undertake land reform successfully, run the risk of paralysing civil unrest and violence.

The land reform process gained new momentum in July 2004 when the Department of Agriculture released a document entitled AgriBEE, Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Framework for Agriculture. The most important aims of the document are summarised below.
The Established Industry (Agriculture) undertakes to:
– Contribute to the realisation of country's objective of ensuring that 30 per cent of agricultural land is owned by Black South Africans by the year 2014;
– Contribute to an additional target to make available (20 per cent) of own existing high potential and unique agricultural land for lease by Black South Africans by year 2014;
– Make available 15 per cent of existing high potential and unique agricultural land for acquisition or lease by 2010;
– Support legislative and development initiatives intended to secure tenure rights to agricultural land in all areas;
– Make available 10 per cent of own agricultural land to farm workers for their own animal and plant production activities.

The Sector undertakes to:
– Eliminate by 75 per cent the rate of illiteracy within farming communities by year 2008;
– Eliminate completely the rate of illiteracy within farming communities by year 2010;
– Ensure that all workers in the secondary and tertiary level of the sector are functionally literate and numerate by year 2010;
– Establish training programmes for farm and enterprise workers in appropriate technical and management skills by July 2005;
– Collaborate in ensuring maximum use of resources of the relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (PAETA), Food and Beverage Sector and SETAs to achieve the above targets;

– Institute a sector-wide young professionals employment and mentoring programme, which targets 5,000 black unemployed and underemployed graduates per annum for the next five years in all disciplines, starting in 2005 financial year. Mentorship programmes shall be accredited by the relevant SETA or other agreed authority.

The way in which this framework was released, elicited a great deal of criticism. It was said that there had been a breach of trust, because organised agriculture, which had cooperated in the establishment of a new framework, had not been consulted in regard to the final edition of the document. Furthermore, it was pointed out that unrealistic expectations were being created and that there were neither the funds nor the infrastructure to achieve the stated aims. Thereafter the Minister of Agriculture did a great deal to effect damage control and invited institutions to make inputs towards a final framework by the end of 2004. Is it a symbolic policy that is not really intended for implementation? The most important preliminary findings have been indicated. Although this is a critical analysis, an attempt has been made to avoid value judgements. Furthermore the analysis does not question the necessity of land reform.

Schools of thought, models and expectations

As in the case of science and higher education, in many cases policy formulation on land reform has been strongly influenced by experts from abroad. The assistance that has been received has also often been accompanied by particular inputs and conditions. For example, land rights are based on Roman Dutch Law and elements of English Law, with some accommodation of the customary law of Africans, and it is susceptible to differing interpretations.

Hereafter a number of the relevant aspects are highlighted:

– There is a fundamental difference between the value that the most Westerners attach to land and the value that Africans attach to it. This aspect probably underlies the problems that are experienced in respect of land reform. Westerners view land as a means of production that has a market value. The black man has never been a crop farmer and farmed with cattle in a context in which numbers were more important than quality. In many traditional communities the woman was and still is the crop farmer. It is for this very reason that the criticism is expressed that black women are not given sufficient assistance to obtain land.

Davidson and other researchers (London Review of Books 1994b) shed light on the metaphysical considerations in respect of ancestral land that motivated the Mau Mau murders in Kenya. He points out the differences between *'them'* and

'us'. The Kikuyu did not lose a large area of land. *'But what they crucially did lose was all assurance of control over ancestral forest and fields that had been theirs from "time out of mind", they lost, it could be said, their environment*', and as a result a '*Land and Freedom Army*' was established '*… In line with Kukuyu ancestral concepts of the difference between good and evil, between success and failure, eventually between life and death*'. After many years it now becomes clear what the underlying reason for the murders was. In South Africa, the whites are particularly ignorant about the meaning that land has for blacks, i.e. the homes and graves of their ancestors.

Following from the preceding discussion, there is an open debate on whether blacks, especially the younger generation, are interested in becoming farmers. My research in the 1980s indicated that young black men who do not have a regular job in urban areas, earn more money than their brothers who till the soil in the African sun. The aspirations and expectations of the youth are more prevalent amongst urban blacks than in amongst rural blacks.
Surveys reveal that the majority of blacks have a desire for a relatively small area of land on which they can live and can farm to provide in their own needs. A broad-based attitude survey found that one-third of the respondents indicated '*… no interest in additional farm land, and another third wanted one hectare or less*' (Zimmerman 2000: 16). This is clearly an area in need of further research.
– It is clear what the political objectives of land reform are, namely the correction of inequalities by means of race restructuring. Some researchers believe that politics is the main driving force. It is for this reasons that high expectations are created by urban politicians who do not grasp the complexity of farming. Others believe that economic objectives – alleviation of rural poverty, work creation and general economic growth – should be the main driving forces.
-There are two strongly divergent schools of thoughts on how land should be divided and rural poverty alleviated. A school of thought of the World Bank, which is supported by prominent South Africans, states that '*… our research shows that efficiency and employment in South African agriculture would increase if average farm size were to decrease in the commercial farming sector and increase in the former homelands*' (Thirtle, van Zyl and Vink 2000: 303).
Another school of thought holds the view that the aforementioned opinion is ideologically driven. Only large commercial farms can afford new technology and negotiate prices. There are, however, many examples in the world in which agricultural production has been increased by the subdivision of land, but these

countries do not have the uncertain rainfall and poor soil that South Africa has. Sender and Johnston (2004: 144) say that there is no empirical proof of successful small farming in Africa and that *'… many economists arguments for land reform amount to an ideologically driven search for something that does not exist, namely efficient and egalitarian family-operated small farms that are likely to provide an escape from poverty for millions of the poorest rural Africans'*. Davidson (1994: 275) points out that neither capitalistic nor socialistic systems have been successful in Africa. Africa, like South Africa, requires its own unique solutions.

The school of thought that advocates an enlargement of the land of black households, bases its argument on surplus labour that is available. Empirical research indicates that this surplus does not exist. Productive men are away as migrant labourers. The women, children and elder persons that are left behind, spend most of their time fetching water and gathering firewood.

– Another aspect that still requires a great deal of research is the question whether blacks are willing or able to move to new land. Zimmerman (2000: 1) summarises a number of obstacles as follows: *'… the poor have less inclination to move the distance demanded by the redistribution, have less labour available for farming, are less able to afford the program's upfront costs, have fewer farming-specific skills, and have less capacity to cope with agricultural risk'*. The question is also asked regarding where poor black people will find the funds for transport to a new home where basic infrastructure has to be created. Many are unwilling to exchange their social networks for new homes where they face an uncertain future.

If the objective is achieved of having 30 per cent of agricultural land in black ownership by 2015, it will involve social engineering that will probably exceed that of the apartheid years.

– It is probably too early to make a final judgement on the influence of the alleviation of poverty in rural areas. One group points to the marginal success, the other highlights failure (Neto 2004). There is no proof of job creation on the new land. Statements made by the government have led to approximately 200,000 farm workers losing their jobs on commercial farms. Sender and Johnston (2004: 158) conclude that '… over the last decade, redistribute land reform in South Africa has had adverse effects on the standard of living of very large numbers of the poorest rural people. They did not require any land and suffer from declines in the rural wage earning opportunities that are crucial for their survival'.**[12]** Land reform should be part of a wider rural economic restructuring process.

– Changing the communal land ownership system is a complex and a politically highly explosive enterprise. Communal land ownership, in which the power of the traditional leaders is largely vested, is the cornerstone of the social system in many African countries. On this issue, too, there are different schools of thought. One school of thought believes that communal ownership does not permit any individual initiative and does not offer access to credit. Another school of thought stresses the utility value of communal ownership and the safety net that it offers many poor black people (Hall, Jacobs and Lahiff 2003: 22). Research reveals that chiefs' power over land is rejected in some areas and applauded in other areas. The Communal Land Rights Act (2004) is intended to give title deeds to the inhabitants of tribal or trust lands. It will have a far-reaching effect on the lives of more than 7 million people in the former homelands.
– There is a variety of other aspects that should be taken into account and that cannot be discussed in any detail. One such aspect is that the current approach departs from the point of view that black communities are homogeneous, while there are large differences between ethnic groups and between various areas. Research indicates that the demand-driven approach can lead to the establishment of a black elite of owners to the detriment of the poor. Thus far the process has been driven by some (urban) elite with little input from rural communities (Levin and Weiner 1997: 4). Some observers say that the process is being retarded because it has become '*… over-centralised and bureaucratic*' and the state '*… tries to do everything*' (Kirsten *et al.* 2000). Lastly, researchers refer to the fact that land reform could have far-reaching implications for sustained development, biodiversity and the preservation of, amongst other things, national parks (De Villiers 1999).
– Research indicates that the HIV/AIDS pandemic may have a major influence on land reform. One aspect is particularly important, namely that the law of inheritance should give ownership to the women whose husbands die of AIDS.
– A shortage of funding is one of the strongest reasons why only 2.9 per cent of the agricultural land has been transferred to blacks. Funding for land reform has never yet exceeded 0.5 per cent of the national budget (Hall and Lahiff 2004: 1). It is being asked whether the funding is in line with the expectation that has been created that 30 per cent of the agricultural land should be in black hands by 2015.
The Landless Peoples Movement and the South African Communist Party have already made threats. There are no comprehensive estimates of what the total cost will be. The 2004/5 allocations in the budget include R474 million for land

reform, but it is estimated that at least R1 billion will be needed. The implementation of the Communal Land Rights Act will amount to R1 billion per year over the next five years, *'... equivalent to over 70 per cent of its current budget for all aspects of land reform'* (Hall and Lahiff 2004: 3).

The preceding discussion gives rise to the question whether the government can continue with its current policy of 'demand driven and willing buyer, willing seller'. There have already been calls to farmers to reduce the price of land. A committee was appointed by the Minister Agriculture and Land Affairs in 2004 to investigate the purchasing of the land of foreigners and the increase in land prices.

A lack of funds, the inability of the government to conclude land claims speedily and to select and train black farmers, can lead to illegal land invasion. In fact, it has been pointed out that "the history of land reform around the world demonstrates that land invasions, which governments then normalize through legal processes of expropriation and allocation, have been the most common and effective processes of land reform (Van Zyl, Kirsten and Van Binswanger 1996: 10). A legal framework should attempt to reduce the probability of such action being taken. It is being asked whether the current legal framework is advantageous for land reform. Various cases have gone the long route through the high court and the appeal court to the constitutional court.

A possible strategy and the role of research

It is important not to be overwhelmed by the complexity of the problem. International donors have largely failed to form a coherent strategy and the complexity of land reform makes it difficult to justify aid. Research indicates that the process is proceeding too slowly and has failed in certain respects. Various researchers state that the entire programme should be reconsidered and that a new vision should be formulated. In the first instance, land reform should form part of a broad rural development programme. Secondly, experience in other countries indicates that centralised ministries or parastatal institutions do not always implement land reform successfully. The civil society (communities, farmers, organised agriculture, unions, NGOs, commercial banks, research institutions, traditional leaders etc.) should be involved. An information and communication system is a precondition for success. A foundation or forum for land reform is advocated where the best experts, nationally and internationally, can provide inputs, which involves the civil society and the private sector and

which can provide independent advice and assistance.

The aforementioned illustrates the necessity of research. The extent of the interest in land reform in South Africa is astounding. Commendable work has been produced by agronomists, land ownership specialists, economists, sociologists etc, but *'there has been little systematic effort to synthesise their findings and combine them with intensive field research to produce practical policy recommendations for both local actors and the international community'* (International Crisis Group 2004: v). In particular, there is a lack of fieldwork that indicates, among other things, the large spatial differences between heterogeneous groups. There is an urgent need in respect of the following fields: Historical research on the validity of land claims; the attitude of blacks towards land in general and towards farming in particular; the best way of selecting black farmers and providing them with training, mentorship, finance or agricultural extension in respect of crop varieties and the marketing of seed; an effective information and communication system; literacy programmes etc.
Universities in the Netherlands have, over a period of more than 100 years, made huge contributions to the training of South African academics and researchers. The Netherlands has had an immeasurable influence through constructive criticism and even an academic boycott to bring about a just and fair South African society. In the late eighties and nineties, I benefited a great deal from universities and academics in the Netherlands in my endeavour to establish a system of self-evaluation and quality promotion at the University of Pretoria.

In some respects the task of the Netherlands has been made easier by the fact that a democratic government was established in South Africa in 1994. In some other respect the task is more daunting, because the issues that face science and technology and higher education at present are even more challenging than in the past. The new generation of academics and researchers look forward to co-operating closely with the Netherlands in the future in the building of a just and better future for all inhabitants, not only in South Africa, but also in Southern Africa. In the fields of science and technology South and southern Africa cannot afford to fall farther and father behind the industrialised nations.

Notes:

1 Research on infectious diseases was neglected.
2 54,2 per cent of the total expenditure in 1987 to 12,4 per cent in 1997.
3 With the exclusion of the medical sciences.

4 The NRF (8 October 2004) states clearly that it '*…will support research only within these focus areas*'.
5 If reasonable throughtput rates of 20 per cent had been achieved 25,000 more graduates would have been produced.
6 '*… that the ministry will be able to plan the country's highly skilled human resource provision efficiently by determining how many students may be admitted to which programmes*' (SAUVCA April 2004).
7 Specific sectors, such as public health, were not investigated and it is precisely in these sectors that many medical doctors are leaving the country.
8 In 2003 the NRF commenced the development of a National Research Agenda for Social Sciences, Law and Humanities.
9 This percentage should be qualified. The western part of South Africa is a semi-desert with a sparse population. The eastern part of the country accommodates the majority of the population on relatively fertile land with a high rainfall. These facts do not, however, mean that the country is not unfairly divided.
10 *'41 per cent of the Africans in the agricultural section had no schooling'* (Strategic Plan for the Department of Agriculture 2004: 42).
11 Sector Education Training Authority.
12 Land claims on the largest tea plantation in South Africa near Tzaneen are the main reasons why production will be terminated. More than 10,000 workers will lose their jobs.

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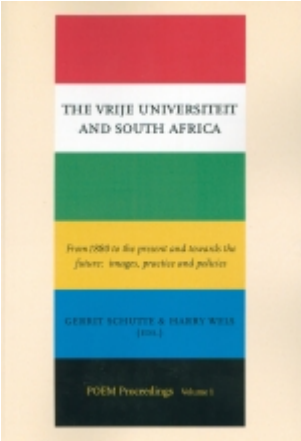
POEM: A 'New' Literature



Thank you for the invitation to speak at this important conference. I have been asked to tell you something about my own experience of teaching South African literature at Dutch universities, but also to give an indication of what South African literature departments might be expecting from the Vrije Universiteit (VU) and other Dutch universities at this point in time. This I do as someone who is South African born and bred and who taught at a South African university for 16 years. Every year I go back to South Africa at least once and I have many friends who are also colleagues in Afrikaans and Nederlands departments in South Africa. For various reasons they are suffering severe cutbacks. In the Humanities Faculties at Dutch universities a similar pinch is being felt.

What strategies should be developed in beleaguered times? In searching for an answer I would like to draw our attention for a minute to the rich tradition of so-called extra muros departments of Dutch all over the world: Barcelona, Budapest, Goa, Helsinki, Jakarta, Johannesburg, Jerusalem, London, Los Angeles, Münster, Oldenburg, Olomouc, Oporto, Oslo, Paris, Stellenbosch, Semarang, Strasburg, St Petersburg, Vienna – to name but a few cities where Dutch literature is taught. The differentiating terms *intra muros* (which refers to the universities in the '*centre*' – the Netherlands and Belgium) and *extra muros* (the term refers to the universities outside the walls of the centre; on the '*margins*') are soundly entrenched in the workings of the Society of Netherlandic Studies. The same has recently become true for the teaching of South African literature. English literature by authors such as Coetzee and Fugard has of course been part of English colonial curricula for many years and I will mainly focus on the new post-apartheid status of Afrikaans literature. It is taught intra muros at South African universities of course and since 1990 extra muros in many different countries all over the world: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the USA, Austria, Germany, Russia, Belgium and the Netherlands, to name but a few.

My reference to *muros*, to walls, has inspired my thinking along Trojan horse lines. I believe that we must be innovative in schemes to get inside the walls of learning but once we are there, to look out again, over the wall, to enable us to invite each other in, so that in the end there are no walls any more. Let me now say something about the linguistic and academic relationship between Afrikaans

and Dutch.

Afrikaans, as you know, is a maverick, a wayward daughter of 17th century Dutch. In South Africa the mother was held in high esteem during many years. When I was a student and lecturer at Stellenbosch and Wits, and even now still at many of the ten odd Afrikaans and Nederlands departments in South Africa, a fifty-fifty Dutch and Afrikaans literature course is offered. Afrikaans and Nederlands departments often advertise themselves as offering students a venster op Europa, a '*room with a view on Europe*'. The reverse situation never existed, and was practically unthinkable especially during the 1970s and 1980s. In the Netherlands of those years very few lecturers and even fewer students were interested in Afrikaans literature, or should I say, very few dared to be interested because of the cultural boycott against South Africa. There were a few exceptions. In some institutes of Comparative Literature, for example in Nijmegen, Hans Ester did his utmost to include Afrikaans literature in his courses. In Amsterdam a special chair of Afrikaans literature existed at the University of Amsterdam where professor N.P van Wyk Louw and his successors taught Afrikaans literature. These doctoraal lectures were, however, mainly attended by South Africans who came to study at the feet of the guru Louw. During the early 1980s the Dutch cultural and economic boycott of South Africa finally forced the Afrikaans section to close down.

The close linguistic relationship between Dutch and Afrikaans is of course the major reason why in the past many Afrikaans postgraduates, especially scholars of Afrikaans literature, came to study here in the Netherlands. My position today is that of someone who studied and then continued to live in the Netherlands for ten years before I went to teach Afrikaans literature at Wits. I was especially interested in teaching students more about the world outside by way of Dutch literature. Now that I have been appointed to teach Modern Dutch Literature at the VU I realise that I use all opportunities possible to teach South African literature. I need not sneak it into the curricula but am invited by colleagues to do this. This inside-out position suits me.

So, let me tell you something about the life and times of a Trojan horse. My surname is one of the most common in the Netherlands. This means that no student searching the VU website for Dutch literature courses would for a minute suspect that a lecturer by the name of Jansen who teaches Modern Dutch poetry or a Masters course on the role of Amsterdam in recent Dutch novels will not

herself be Dutch. The moment I start lecturing, however, I always notice some bewilderment. Even though I came to Holland for the first time thirty years ago to study in Utrecht and stayed there and here in Amsterdam for ten years before going back to South Africa in 1984, my accent still is a dead giveaway. Students suddenly wonder whether they are or whether I am in the wrong classroom. Instead of having another Dutch lecturer with the most boring name possible, they realize that I am an exotic Jansen from a far and distant world. This has its benefits.

It will cost me too much fancy footwork to maintain the Trojan horse metaphor I started off with. The metaphor was inspired by a complex history of exclusion and inclusion, also by the operative period of ten years of democratic freedom which is celebrated this year [2004]. What I want to say, in short, is that I can nowadays move around freely in two Dutch universities without the necessity of entering in devious Trojan horse style. That means that I have access to the hearts and minds of Dutch students via Afrikaans literature without any problem. At the VU it means that I have the freedom of adding Afrikaans literary texts to Dutch courses. I can for example read poems by Antjie Krog based on Marlene Dumas' paintings in the course on *beeldgedichten* which we offer as a minor in the faculty. In the series of lectures called *Leestafel* each of the Dutch literature lecturers lecture on a favourite book. My colleagues ask me to choose a novel by an Afrikaans author, someone such as Etienne van Heerden, Jeanne Goossen, Marlene van Niekerk or John Miles – a novel which can be read in Afrikaans or in Dutch translation. In the course on post-colonial literature I present a South African case study.

The chair which Louw held during the 1950s has recently been re-instated in the form of an '*endowed*' chair. I am honoured to be the first to hold this bijzondere leerstoel Zuid-Afrikaanse literatuur in post-apartheid times at the University of Amsterdam. I combine this part-time function with my full-time job at the VU and my main concern is to attract as many Dutch students as possible to my courses which focus on Afrikaans literature. I include some books by English authors as well, because to my mind the '*natural*' language link between the Netherlands and South Africa should not be used in an exclusive stamverwantschap way, but as one of the stepping stones between the two countries.

I have taught three semester courses since I started at the University of Amsterdam (UvA). The interest has grown tremendously. During the first year, that was 2002, I presented a short course on Boer War literature written both in

Afrikaans and Dutch, seeing that it was the 100 years' anniversary of the ending of the War. This lecture series was attended by six students. The next year I did a course which I called *Buitebeentjies ('mavericks') – famous South African novel characters'*. Twelve students attended. This past year my course was called *O wye en droewe land. Die belang van landskap in Suid-Afrikaanse letterkunde. ('O wide and tragic country. The importance of landscape in South African literature')*. Thirty students attended and I had to change the format from a tutorial to lectures. During this coming year the series is called *Totsiens Kaapstad ('Goodbye Cape Town')* – the title of a poem which Breyten Breytenbach wrote when he was an exile in Paris. I concentrate on migration stories: everything from the '*Jim comes to Jo'burg'*-stories to work by political exiles, poems by Louw, Eybers and Breytenbach, novels written by modern-day expat South Africans living in cities such as New York, Glasgow, Melbourne.

The interest in my courses at the VU and the UvA as well as the interest in courses offered by Dutch colleagues in Nijmegen or Leiden show a clear pattern: the position of *'classical'* Dutch literature can most definitely be enhanced by adding Afrikaans and also some English South African literature to the curriculum.

During the 1980s my presence in a classroom at the VU would have been cause for great alarm. The thought that a white Afrikaans-speaking South African from the barbarous margins of faraway apartheid land had entered the monolithic and politically correct safe centre of the faculty of arts of a Dutch university would have inspired legitimate protest. Nowadays Dutch students hardly know what apartheid was. Their parents during the 1970s and 1980s did not dare eat an Outspan orange or look at a protea. Nowadays South Africa has become a popular holiday destination. The students' grandparents might have said *'See Naples and die'*. They now say: *'See Cape Town and boogie'*. South Africa is cool. Dutch students are very much interested in going there. To travel but also to learn.

This travelling and learning can start in Dutch classrooms. And it can be even more interesting with not only the odd exotic Jansen teaching them, but also with some South African students in the class. In fact I want to make a request on behalf of South African universities: that as much financial opportunity as possible be created to enable South African students to do part of their Masters courses here.

During August I attended the Family Meeting of the International Office at the Stellenbosch University on behalf of the VU. It was a most hospitable and generous invitation. We met many Dutch students loving their time in Stellenbosch. But Stellenbosch urgently requested all representatives from Dutch universities to make it easier for South African students to also attend Dutch universities for a semester. They ask for more generosity with regards to the waiving of not only class fees but a part of accommodation costs. They ask for pressure on the authorities organising student visas. This is urgently needed to enable student exchange and learning processes between South Africa and the Netherlands to be mutual.

To sum up the present situation, here are a few bottom-lines:

1. During the pre-1994 period all literature written by any other white Afrikaans author besides political figures such as Breytenbach and Brink and the grand old lady Elisabeth Eybers (she has lived in Amsterdam since 1961) was a no-go area for Dutch readers and academics.
2. The reason for this was of course South Africa's atrocious apartheid system and the Dutch cultural and academic boycott of South Africa which led to the fear of being ostracised when seen even looking at books by Afrikaans authors besides Brink, Breytenbach and Eybers.
3. Just as abruptly as most white South Africans seem to have forgotten that they ever supported apartheid, Dutch academics have rushed to fraternise with their long lost cousins in South Africa. In the same way as we speak of a New South Africa, a New Holland with regards to South Africa is clearly discernible.
4. The tremendous academic interest in South African literature was made comfortably possible very soon after 1990 thanks to generous funding by the Nederlandse Taalunie ('Dutch Language Union'). Officially practitioners of Netherlandic Studies in South Africa are the beneficiaries of this generosity, but in fact everybody interested in both Afrikaans and Dutch literature benefits. Numerous conferences, language courses and workshops have been held during the past ten to twelve years – in South Africa, in the Netherlands and in Belgium. Not a single South African academic in Afrikaans and Nederlands departments can therefore claim not to have had ample opportunity to travel to the Low Countries and to participate in these events. The same applies to Dutch academics who have eagerly been visiting similar events in South Africa. These trips should and have in most cases been more than just *snoepreisjes*.

5. In spite of these conferences and perks Afrikaans and Dutch departments in South Africa have suffered huge losses in student numbers, major cutbacks and staff retrenchments since 1990. I myself remember very well that for many years immediately before and after 1990 there were close to 500 students in our first year course at Wits University. When I left Wits at the end of 2000 there was only one first year student writing the exam. I was the last member of a once famous department to leave.
6. Until very recently Dutch language departments were flourishing. Recently, however, many faculties of arts are struggling to make ends meet. Inevitably this has to do with fewer students which results in cutbacks and retrenchments. If you've ever been a crew member on a sinking ship you detect and recognize treacherous waves long before they actually crash down on you. The situation in the Dutch language departments at Dutch universities is therefore starting to look awesomely familiar to me.

In conclusion

What's to be done? Can Dutch universities help South African universities whilst moving into dire financial straits themselves? I believe they can, that it is warranted for South African universities to ask the VU for strong and beneficial contracts of exchange which will enable South African students to come here. There should be no need for '*Trojan horses*' – they must be able to enter coolly by the front door with enough money and affordable visas. The present mutual goodwill between the two countries should be *'exploited'*. We should seriously take note of what the two countries and literatures can learn from each other. Multicultural Netherlands where religious intolerance is becoming a serious '*racial*' problem might even learn from post-apartheid South Africa where the heritage of racism is however still a serious class and social-economic problem.

The '*natural*' language link between the Netherlands and South Africa should be an important stepping stone between the two countries, but it is not the only one. I believe that one should always be careful of exploiting old stamverwantschap ties. The Dutch, realizing that their language is a small one in the context of the European Union, have displayed and created a bigger awareness of and eagerness to enable communication by way of English when they fear that Dutch won't suffice. The greater use of English in Dutch universities will therefore enable all South Africans to come here, not only those who speak Afrikaans and therefore have easy access to Dutch.

My take on what South African literature departments might be asking from the VU is that we create and encourage interest amongst Dutch students for South African literature, that we keep up the funding and that we invite as many South African students here as possible. The mutual BA/MA system should make this even easier than in the past. It is important to make hay while the sun shines. We must remember that literature students become teachers, journalists, publishers, authors and artists. In short, they will become highly vocal people with much public influence. Take good care of them.

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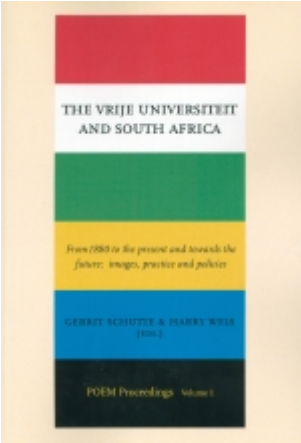
POEM: Political Studies In South Africa. A Personal Perspective.



2005. First, let us consider the discipline's demography in South Africa. Over the last ten years political studies or political science has been taught in each of the country's 21 universities. Aspects of the discipline were also taught in public administration courses at polytechnics; several of these institutions are now being amalgamated with universities. Historically, as with other areas of social science, politics as an academic community was sharply divided, socially and intellectually between the English language universities and the Afrikaans medium institutions. Within Afrikaner departments, traditionally, the discipline was influenced quite heavily by American behaviouralist and quantitative social science models and methods and researchers tended to focus their work within the confines of the formal political system (including the structures of ethnic homeland government). At the segregated black universities, departments were often led and staffed by graduates from Afrikaans institutions as well as from UNISA.

In English speaking departments, by the 1980s, Marxist approaches had

supplanted traditionally liberal ideas about politics and leading researchers concentrated their attention on popular political movements, emphasising those dimensions of their activities and ideas that corresponded most closely with expressions of class consciousness. In this context, the study of the discipline had a strong historical dimension: indeed at institutions such as Wits and Cape Town the boundaries between a '*revisionist*' history grounded in Marxist conceptions of political economy and the discipline of politics became very blurred indeed. Today, though legacies of these differences between Afrikaans and '*English*' institutions remain, the distinctions between Afrikaans-speakers and English language practitioners of the discipline in South African are less important, particularly since the introduction of English language courses at Afrikaans universities.

South African politics departments are small – between five and ten full time staff is normal, though Wits with its separate establishments for political studies and international relations employs more than twenty political scientists. Overall at the universities there are around 200 or so politics lecturers teaching about 10,000 students enrolled in undergraduate courses. This has been an expanding student population: in the aftermath of the ANC's accession to government politics classes grew swiftly, contracted slightly in the late 1990s and once again grew, a reflection of trends in secondary school matriculation as well as optimistic perceptions among students about the subject's vocational utility. Most first year politics classes (including those at former elite institutions such as Wits and Pretoria) are now recruited mainly from working class districts in African townships, though Cape Town and Stellenbosch represent exceptions to this generalization.

Traditionally, South African universities undertook very little post graduate teaching in political studies – more in Afrikaans than in English – but essentially politics departments directed their teaching at undergraduates. At Wits, for example, between the Department's establishment in 1955 and 1990, four students completed PhDs, though a rather larger number undertook the traditional entirely research based Masters degree. This has changed: all universities offer coursework masters programmes in politics and related fields and several have succeeded in registering substantial PhD-enrolments, drawing significant numbers of their post-graduates from SADC countries and elsewhere in Africa. A growing proportion of the post-graduates are black South Africans but

in most institutions this is quite a recent trend: the first black South African to obtain a doctorate in politics at Wits graduated in 2000. At the former homeland universities (which remain more or less exclusively black in their intake) their own graduates today predominate among staff in politics departments though their leadership was augmented in the 1990s by senior appointments from universities in other African countries.

Research in politics remains concentrated in the historically white universities. A rough tracery of its intellectual preoccupations and of the distribution between institutions of the most active researchers can be obtained through looking at the contents pages of *Politikon*, the biannual journal of the South African Political Science Association.

Between 1994 and 2004, and including the first issue this year, 100 articles appeared in *Politikon*. Not surprisingly, South African politics predominates within the content of these articles. The work on South Africa has three major focuses. Nineteen of the articles concern democratisation and South African progress in the consolidation or deepening of democratic institutions. A second area that has attracted vigorous research is elections: 14 articles explore various recent South African elections and the behaviour of voters, parties and officials during them. Finally, ten articles address different dimensions of foreign policy; these divide equally between those premised on conventional theoretical presumptions in international relations and advocates of '*critical theory*' who seek a paradigmatic shift away from state centred notions of bilateral or multilateral relations in favour of more emancipatory notions of international citizenship. We will consider briefly, in a moment, some of the key debates in these three areas, democratisation, electoral behaviour, and foreign policy. We can note, now, though, certain key omissions from the topics addressed by *Politikon*'s authors. Not a single article addresses protest politics nor a specific instance of insurgent collective action, though one theoretically oriented discussion of social movement theory by a Swedish PhD-student appeared in 2000. We know from the longitudinal survey and press data bases compiled by the Wits/HSRC/Vrije Universiteit that popular propensities to participate in peaceful kinds of '*direct action*' (strikes, demonstrations, land invasions, etc.) did not decline significantly, at least during the Mandela administration, though the geographic distribution of such activity became more dispersed, a consequence of the new sites of political power that were established after 1994. The Durban Centre for Civil Society has

emerged as the main centre for serious research on so called new social movements, but its findings have yet to make a major impact in the discipline. Another striking silence in the *Politikon* research concerns the state and the social relationships surrounding it. Instrumentalist notions of the state as an agency of various combinations of class interest were a major theme in English language South African political studies through the late 1970s and 1980s though approaches that emphasised the state's degree of social autonomy and the political predispositions of different bureaucratic factions within it (including the army) were beginning to shape political analysis by 1990: even so the completeness of the apparent abandonment by South African political science of class analysis is somewhat startling. In fact, here *Politikon*'s titles pages misrepresent rather the overall state of the discipline; South African critics of the government's 'neo-liberal' economic policies who assign to the Mbeki administration a comprador role as agents primarily of international capital prefer to publish in *Review of African Political Economy*, *Monthly Review*, and, locally, in *Dissent*. Even in this work though, the local sociology of political power and wealth remains surprisingly under-explored.

Scanning ten years of *Politikon* suggests that research is quite unevenly distributed among universities. Twenty-one of the articles are from the University of Stellenbosch and Wits staff or students contribute another 18. Cape Town and Western Cape political scientists are also quite frequent contributors. During the period under review the journal published only one article from one of the former homeland universities, by the Nigerian head of politics at Transkei. Only three contributions are from black (African) South Africans, each of them Wits post graduates. Of course *Politikon* is not an altogether reliable base from which to make generalizations: several other locally edited journals attract a slightly different range of contributors and both the (Pretoria) Africa Institute and the Harare-based *African Political Science Review* make a point of publishing work by black South African political scientists, much of directed at understanding and promoting African regionalism and pan-African institution building. It is also the case that much of the best local scholarship is published in European and North American journals However, even if this wider range of publication was also to be taken into consideration, the trends in the discipline's development over the last ten years would not look very different from an overview of the content of *Politikon*.

So, what are the key issues for South African political scientists in their evaluations of democratisation, in their analysis of elections, and in their considerations of foreign policy, especially with respect to South Africa's role in Africa?

What claims can be made for South African democracy since 1994? Much of the academic commentary has been negative. UCT's Bob Mattes notes the failure of the economy to expand at the rate needed to create jobs, persistent social inequalities, a constitution that reinforces executive control over the legislature and hence accentuates centralising tendencies in a one party dominant system. Within the ANC itself, Mattes perceives an '*increasing tendency*' for '*party bosses*' to stifle dissent. Alarming constitutional amendments and the use by ANC leaders of state agencies in investigations directed at their rivals in the party round off a prognosis of early '*institutional decay*'. Trends observable in public opinion indicate at best lukewarm support for democracy, especially among the racial minorities and declining trust in political leaders and state institutions. South Africans, pollsters suggest, have highly substantive understandings of democracy, that is they are more likely to view socio-economic benefits as essential components of democracy rather than civil liberties. Compared to citizens in neighbouring countries, South Africans are least predisposed to active forms of civic participation. Such evidence suggests that of democracy's prospects in South Africa are fragile to the extent that its survival is a function of the popularity of its core values (Mattes 2002).

More in the same vein is widely available and there is no need to relay such arguments in detail here.**[1]** Among the pessimistic assessments of South African democratic performance and likely future trajectories there are different explanations for why the outcomes of political transition have been so disappointing. One line of argument is to locate the reasons for democratic shortcomings in the deficiencies of the constitutional system, and in particular in the electoral system which provides no incentives for representatives to make themselves accountable to citizens. Another quite widely held view is that neither of the two main players during the negotiations, the ANC and the National Party government, were profoundly committed to democracy and, to cite Pierre du Toit, the ANC in particular was negotiating in '*bad faith*': assured by their own opinion polls of electoral victory, a temporary embrace by its authoritarian leaders of liberal values was merely a means to the realisation of an ultimately anti liberal

transformative project (Du Toit 2001; 2003). In this reading, the '*progressive colonization*' by the centre of '*independent checks on executive power*' (Butler 2003: 111) offers increasing confirmation of the ruling party's '*hegemonic*' aspirations.

Left wing as opposed to liberal commentaries offer equally gloomy diagnosis of the ANC's performance in office. Here the ANC's failings are not so much the consequence of its Leninist heritage but rather the effect of the bad bargain it sealed with multinational capital in the run-up to constitutional negotiations in which leadership supposedly committed itself to accepting the constraints of a globalised market economy and to confining social reforms within the fierce restrictions of a neo-liberal growth strategy. In this view the ANC's centralisation of power in the executive is a defensive reaction to the growing threat posed by the social movements of the very poor whose expanding constituency is responsible for the withering of the ANC's own popular base and the general reluctance of citizens to participate in whatever consultative procedures remain within the formal political framework.**[2]** From this perspective, the local social group most likely in the future to exercise decisive influence on pubic policy is composed of the beneficiaries of black economic empowerment, many of them former ANC office-holders.

My own work offers rather more complicated readings of South African democratic performance. In contrast to the evaluations just cited, I find that with respect to social delivery, the government has generally met citizen expectations. In fact the expanded provision of public goods – including grants and pensions, subsidised housing, clean water in the countryside, primary health care facilities, and so on – has been on a scale that makes the characterisation of government strategy as '*neo liberal*' fairly implausible. This is an administration that has significantly, since 1994, increased the '*social wage*' since 1994 and in so doing has impacted significantly on inequality statistics, for state expenditure has been substantially redirected at especially the rural poor.**[3]** One reason for this is that in 1994, an already quite substantial base for a welfare state was in place; as Jeremy Seekings has noted, from the 1960s onwards the apartheid state provided an expanding range of entitlements to both citizens and subjects (Seekings 2002). These were racially calibrated to be sure, but on a scale that made South African rather unusual in the developing world and which may help explain the pro-active (to cite Charles Tilly) nature of the political claims that black South Africans

began to assert from the mid 1970s onwards. The state has expanded, not shrunk, and successful deficit reduction (from in any case a relatively low degree of indebtedness in 1994) makes it likely that its welfare capacity will maintain itself.

Nor do I find the emphasis in some liberal as well as certain feminist analyses of the South African state as '*patrimonial*' especially persuasive. This is despite the increasingly abundant evidence of venality and rent-seeking among officeholders and officials. In fact it is quite difficult to find conclusive signals as to whether corruption in any sphere is waning or expanding though public perceptions suggest the latter. The apartheid state as it became increasingly demoralised was progressively affected by dishonest misappropriations of public goods and certain patterns of behaviour have persisted; after all in many areas the same officials are in place. My own research suggests, though, that much of the corruption is new, and that it flourishes in precisely those areas in which the state is undertaking fresh obligations to citizens, in housing for example, and that it may be the consequence of changed systems of management rather than inherited traditions, patrimonial or otherwise (Lodge 2002b). It does not exist on a scale that is sufficient to seriously negate any claims about the state's expanded capacity to meet basic needs: this expansion of the state is, I would maintain, one of the most important political developments since 1994. This is not a system in decay.

I think there are strong grounds for proposing a more optimistic scenario for the survival of the procedural aspects of democracy – generalising from the behaviour of parliamentarians, in opposition and otherwise, the record of the judiciary, and the general vigour of the media. My own recent research preoccupation has been with the development of the party system, surely an indispensable component of a healthy and participatory liberal democracy. So far my data collection and analysis has concentrated on the ANC. I have interviewed at length a range of senior officeholders, but more importantly, with a team of student fieldworkers we have questioned nearly 500 rank and file branch members, mainly in the Gauteng. What have been, so far, our most important findings?

This is not a movement in decline. At the time of our research, at the beginning of 2003, membership was booming at around 400,000 – and the trend continued. Our interest was in kinds of commitments that are required of members. A call by leadership for branches to undertake various kinds of community development work evidently elicited a ready response: about three quarters of the people we had interviewed had been involved in such activities as tree planting or hospital

visiting, many several times. A large majority attended monthly branch meetings and about a quarter had been involved in fundraising projects. About a third said they read regularly the ANC's newsletter. Such data suggested a relatively activated membership and a movement with quite a vigorous local life. Cross tabulating demographic data with branch positions suggested, moreover, a movement that at this level is quite egalitarian: about a third of the women we interviewed held positions on the executive as did a similar proportions of the members who were unemployed. In their responses to open-ended questions we did collect sentiments that suggest that ANC members may be motivated by a mixture of concerns – self interested as well as idealistic – but generally it does appear that the ANC has remained a mass party, and that its activist support remains enthusiastic, not just dutiful. Meanwhile, secret ballots supply a degree of opportunity for members to exercise leverage over leaders at party conferences despite strongly consensual mechanisms in which the crucial electoral dynamic is the bargaining between provincial nomination leaders and national notables. Internal conflicts within the organisation over the government's reluctance to provide anti-retroviral medication to HIV-AIDS patients supplies one key instance in which leadership found itself compelled to defer to pressure from within (as well as outside of) the organisation. My guarded conclusion from the evidence that I collected was that so far the ANC has managed to hold back the symptoms of organisational degeneration that often characterise dominant parties that face no serious electoral challenge. In so far that strong parties can benefit democracies, my work on the ANC represents a positive finding: South Africa's party system includes a least one robust organisation.

Is it likely to develop any more? The more obvious trends from a succession of elections that have resulted in ever increasing majorities for the ANC and persistently fragmented opposition might suggest not, at least not in the predictable future. Popular commentaries often echo the predominant academic evaluation of the 'founding' 1994 poll as a '*racial census*' in which, for African voters particularly '*the charismatic factor appeared the be the single most important motivation*'. African voters supported the ANC then largely because of emotional considerations rather than '*calculations of interests, benefits and costs*' (Johnson and Schlemmer 1996). As Jeremy Seekings has suggested, though, such findings were comparatively uninformed by opinion polling evidence concerning the motivations of individual voter behavior.

Traditionally South African electoral studies tended to assume that voters made their choices largely as a consequence of the collective predispositions of the communities within which they lived with ethnic and (more occasionally) class membership as the principal determinants of electoral decisions. More complicated sentiments that may have prompted voter identification with particular parties were neglected in studies of pre-1994 elections (Seekings 1997). Evaluations of the 1994 poll as a '*uhuru*' election are reinforced by references to the International Electorate Commision (IEC)'s inefficiency as well as territorially possessive behaviour by parties whose exclusion from their home bases of rival activists apparently enjoyed general support from intolerant voters. The persistence of evident '*political intolerance*' among citizens as documented in opinion surveys, the ANC's willingness to use the advantages of incumbency when contesting successor elections, and its success in mobilising almost universal support amongst voters in most African neighbourhoods have helped to maintain convictions that the outcomes of South African elections are largely predetermined by the solidarities and ascriptive identities that arise from historic social conflicts, solidarities that are reinforced by the ruling party's adroit deployment of patronage.

These sorts of assumptions are at odds with the findings that emerge from opinion polling, which suggested, for instance, sharp declines in party identification across a set of intervals between 1994 and 1998 (when identification with the ANC was down to 38 per cent). The gap between the proportions of polling respondents willing to identify themselves with parties and the persistence up to polling day of sizeable shares of the African voting population suggesting to pollsters that they had not made up their mind about who to vote for have suggested to certain analysts that South African voter behaviour is considerably conditioned by performance and campaigning. '*Discriminate analysis*' of a range of responses concerning economic trends and political performance collected in a 1998 poll enabled a correct prediction of party preferences without knowledge of the respondents' races, language or classes. To be sure, South African voters are influenced in their evaluations of party performance to a degree by the communal context in which they live, but this does not predetermine their choices: these are the consequence of judgement and to an increasing extent support for the ruling party is conditional (Mattes, Taylor and Africa 1999).

My own work on elections tends to confirm these suppositions, despite its intellectual base in the traditional preoccupation of South African electoral analysis with the behaviour of parties during campaigning. Both in 1999 and more recently this year, parties tended to emphasise *'policy and performance rather than identity in their electoral appeals'* (Lodge 1999: 208) with the ANC developing especially sophisticated campaigning strategies with respect to those segments of the electorate perceived to be 'swing' voters, especially within the racial minorities. The ANC's emphasis on door to door canvassing in its traditional base communities also indicate a leadership that did not take loyalty as the guaranteed outcome of ascriptive identities. And with good reason: in my research on the 2000 local elections I used more than 5,000 reports of electoral meetings compiled by a national network of election monitors. Here I found ANC candidates confronted with critical and assertive audiences even in small rural settlements: in the conduct of these meetings there was no indication whatsoever of the deferential style one might expect from the dynamics of patronage *'big man'* politics; electoral support was quite obviously seen as contractual and conditional on performance. Indeed in these local elections historically white parties were able to make significant inroads into previous ANC strongholds, provided that is that they already had a local organisational presence (Lodge 2001). A huge expansion of welfare entitlements during the course of 2003 was one key to ANC gains in poor communities in 2004, especially in the IFP (Inkatha Freedom Party) heartlands of northern KwaZulu Natal. Facilitating apparent shifts in African voting choices in the 2000 local elections and in the general election this year were improvements in electoral administration (especially with respect to voter registration) and expanded electoral monitoring as well as a more relaxed local political climate. This year simultaneous canvassing of African neighbourhood by rival teams of activists, impossible in1994, was both routine and tranquil, accepted apparently by residents as legitimate. The Democratic Alliance, the runner-up in the 2004 poll, nearly doubled its support, largely due to new allegiances among Indian and Coloured voters and probably from a few hundred thousand Africans as well. No longer an overwhelmingly white supported party, it faces a formidable task in consolidating it's very dispersed and socially heterodox electoral base. If we are correct, though, that South African voter behaviour is predicated on judgement and choice, rather than the compulsions of history and communal identity, the DA's mission to become an African party is by no means quixotic. Much will depend, though, on the success of its efforts to establish a living presence in African communities.

As with evaluations of democratic performance, the academic community that focuses on South African foreign policy is sharply divided. Two interpretations reflect conventional approaches in international relations. In one view, South African policy shifted abruptly in 1994, and since then has been prompted generally by idealist efforts to promote new kinds of democratically-oriented institutional architecture in both continental and global governance and to further a collective search for global re-distributive justice. An opposed understanding is to view South Africa's external relations as motivated chiefly by realist concerns arising from acknowledgement among policy makers of the instability of the international order and recognition of South Africa's marginal status within it. From this perspective, South Africa's priorities should be to align herself with powerful industrial countries and exploit her own status as a sub-hegemonic power on the continent.

Advocates of both realist and idealist prescriptions disagree among themselves about the degree to which an ANC governed South Africa has conformed with one other of these policy prescriptions. Generally speaking, though, the trend among analysts working with these concepts is to suggest that South Africa's foreign affairs is governed by quite skilful exploitation of its role as a *'middle power'*. Here it joins a group of medium sized regionally dominant states that attempt to enhance their international standing by endorsing 'multilateral solutions to international problems' and adhering to conventions of good international citizenship. In Africa this has meant, during the Mbeki presidency, adopting a fairly self effacing position on the continent, to the despair of President Mbeki's realist critics. The rewards for sensitivity to continental protocols are now evident in the major role South Africa has played in designing successor institutions to the OAU as well as the progress in brokering political settlements in Congo and elsewhere.**[4]**

This perspective of South African foreign policy as characterised by essentially benevolent principles conflicts with another set of views that stress continuities rather than ruptures with the apartheid era. This view maintains that policy remains bound up with crudely realist conceptions of national interest. In this vein, Thabo Mbeki's claims to *'put people first'* in his conduct of foreign policy are only rhetorical. South African democracy is barely procedural and hence to expect a foreign policy that is either formed in a consultative way or informed by people's needs is naive.**[5]** The most important social influences on policy makers

are conservative and historically entrenched. In a critical appraisal of '*South Africa's post apartheid security system*', Peter Vale has noted that too often, South Africa's relationships with its African hinterland are still influenced by '*old security habits*', and by its predispositions for '*constructing southern Africa as an eschatological threat*'. This is especially obvious in South Africa's harsh treatment of African immigrants (Vale 2003). For Vale and other adherents of the '*critical reflexive*' school in South African international relations scholarship conceptions of national interest, realist or idealist, remain undemocratic and conservative, constrained as they are by international and domestic hierarchies of power and wealth and wedded as they remain to an oppressive matrix of colonially created states and boundaries.

I am not so sure. I am not an international relations expert and have done relatively little work in this area. I have looked recently in some detail at South Africa's constructive engagement with Zimbabwe and certainly in as much as we can make sensible judgements about its motivations these do seem to accord with a perception of its own role as a middle power that can best exercise leverage on Harare through multilateral continental institutions. However it is also likely that different and conflicting norms or values – informing for example, efforts to promote human rights – may shape policy in ways that make the definition of interests very difficult to fit comfortably into one or other of the dichotomous categories supplied by realist or idealist notions of state behaviour.**[6]**

My main reservations concerning the new '*critical theory*' based approaches to South African foreign policy studies are to do with their grounding assumptions about the world we live in. As I hope I have shown, South Africa's new democracy can make stronger claims for itself than merely conformity with its procedural formula. To a remarkable extent the South African state has retained its vigour, in defiance of prescriptions that allegedly arise from global capital movements. In general, democracy's critics in South Africa, both conservative and radical, have been too ready to write off the prospects for the liberatory fulfilment of a politics of modernity. Certainly apartheid was a modernising project and it failed but that failure was despite a degree of societal and economic and cultural transformation undergone by very few other countries in the colonial world. We should not be so surprised if the inheritors of the state created to administer such a complex and sophisticated system of coercive modernization can continue to change people's lives – for better and for worse. Nor should we be so eager to dismiss the

likelihood that political leaders that command such formidable bureaucratic power can free themselves to an extent from the constraining compulsions of global markets and domestic sectional interest to pursue emancipatory goals.

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Notes

1 For an especially useful review see Butler 2003.
2 See for a good example of this genre Bond 2000.
3 See Chapter Three in Lodge 2002a.
4 For a strongly argued idealist projections of South Africa's role as a middle power see Landsberg (2000).
5 See especially Ian Taylor's contribution to Nel and Van der Westhuizen (2004).
6 See for an intelligent development of this argument Black and Wilson (2004).

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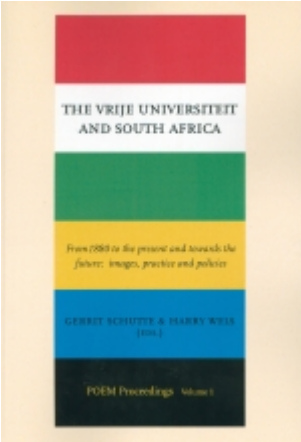
POEM: Some Trends In South African Academic History:

Changing Contexts And Challenges



Seismographic social and political shifts introduced the 1990s: the end of the Cold War, the demise of communism abroad, and in South Africa the official end of apartheid and the subsequent instalment of a new democratic government. Given these developments it is reasonable to expect that historians, who construct their versions of the past in the present, and are at least to some degree influenced by that present, should, in the light of wider contextual changes, re-evaluate their approaches and revise their interpretations. The relationship between societal change and historical production is, however, not a simple one-to-one function.

It is against this background that this paper seeks to identify and briefly explore selective developments pertaining to the dynamics of the historical profession in South Africa and the intellectual correlates that help to define the current nature of the enterprise. The paper focuses only on certain aspects and makes no claim to have covered the vast and treacherous area exhaustively.

Academic historians and the question of growth

The 1990s were not the most auspicious of times for the profession. Instead of bewailing this fact, it may be more profitable to apply historical insights to the phenomenon and to ask what are the conditions that are particularly conducive for the expansion of the historical enterprise as practiced professionally? This necessitates a brief look at the contextual forces that helped to shape the profession in South Africa.

The profession reached its high point during the 1980s. It was a period when the History Department at the University of South Africa could boast with a staff of 35 historians; today (*2005, ed.*) it is halved. The University of Stellenbosch had a staff of eight; today it is almost half that number. Staffing figures at some other universities in the country would tell very much the same story.

To explain the growth up to the 1980s, one has to bear in mind that structurally job opportunities were limited for black people and given the lack of options many gravitated towards teaching (Crankshaw 1997: 23). This helped to swell the

number of teachers and of those who included history as a subject in their courses. Moreover, since the 1960s the educational system rewarded teachers who obtained degrees financially and also those who sought to improve their qualifications. This served as a powerful incentive to engage with the discipline. Of course the system was skewed as it was largely whites (because of their higher participation rate in tertiary education) that benefited most, but black people were not excluded. Many teachers used the opportunities to gain higher degree qualifications in a teaching subject such as history. To oversimplify matters slightly – interest in history could be bought. But there were always those individuals who may have enrolled initially for pecuniary reasons, but for whom it also turned out to be an occasion to engage meaningfully with material that otherwise might have remained outside their ken.

The system almost inadvertently provided the opportunity for what can be called 'creative misuse', in that educators who were on top of their subject could introduce critical material that ran against the apartheid grain. In this way a mustard seed of doubt could be disseminated far and wide, undermining the spurious historical legitimacy for apartheid. The Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, has recently singled out for acknowledgement *'the role of many courageous historians, educators and practitioners who refused to abide by the official line at the time …'* (The South African History Project Progress Report 2001-2003: 20).

Ideologically circumstances in SA since 1948 favoured the development of the historical profession as so much of what happened in the country since 1948 laid claims to a justificatory and legitimising historical base. Of course, in the process historians discovered much more than apartheid related matters and also cast their findings in a form which did not necessarily dovetail neatly with narrow political programmes of particular groupings. But by and large the politics and conditions in the country acted as a powerful dynamo for historical research. Peter Kallaway has highlighted the centrality of history from the late 1970s onwards: *'In the struggle for liberation from apartheid, history was an extremely important tool for critical debate. It was a tool that empowered those who ruled and those who resisted. As a young teacher, history provided me with a fascinating and dynamic set of tools for engaging young people with the awful dilemmas of our nation'* (Kallaway 2002: 28). It was a period which saw the academic eclipse of the Afrikaner nationalist school, and in its wake followed

debates between liberal and radical historians as to what constituted the main driving forces in South African history. The intellectual fermentation was marked by the expansion of several history departments.

In the 1990s, at a time when a significant number of black scholars could have been expected to enter the fold, a complex set of pressures impacted on the profession to undercut potential growth. One set was the immediate and institutional forces that bore directly on the circumstances and practices of historians and their discipline, and another was the pressure exerted on by historians by events and processes originating in their society but *'outside'* their workplace. **[1]**

These two categories can be briefly explicated. South African universities were late but zealous converts to the creed of affordability, efficiency and rational resource allocation. These were often market driven and history departments had to restructure and downsize as they could not offer any immediate market-related product. In addition school curriculum design in the 1990s did not favour history which had a knock-on effect on the supply of history teachers and hence also history lecturers at university. Right up until 2001 there was sufficient reason to be concerned about the impact of outcomes based education on history teaching as the subject ran the real risk of being marginalized (Grundlingh 2001: 315). There was also a growing gap between what the academy had to offer and what the state required. The discourses of the market and macro-economic policy did not dovetail with the language of historians and the general thrust of their work.

However, as far as policy is concerned, wiser counsels prevailed in the corridors of power and the curriculum was adjusted to allow sufficient room for history and new history syllabuses were drafted accordingly. Through the South African History Project, initiated by Asmal, a concerted effort has also been made since 2002 to re-invigorate the study of history in South African schools. **[2]**

At societal level the profession was affected by developments in the public/ political realm. Anti-apartheid white academic historians found that with the dissolution of apartheid they were stranded in some ways, bereft of a persuasive political purpose and oppositional cachet they had previously enjoyed. Historians who were neutral about apartheid or pro-apartheid in their political outlook could hardly in a new context flaunt their earlier disquisitions with any manner of conviction, so they retreated into safe and rather pedestrian topics outside the

mainstream of historical debate.

In addition, in wider society with the rapid rise of a black middle class there was, with a greater variety as well as better remunerated employment opportunities available than ever before, a greater emphasis on material consumption. Without wishing to imply that this class has become a-political, overt politics and the past have now come to matter somewhat less. One scholar has observed that *… the black South African subject of the 1990s bears very little resemblance to the feted 'revolutionary worker of the struggle' as she/he hurries home fitted out by Sales House, in an entrepreneurial taxi, to watch The bold and beautiful on television* (Bertelson 1998: 240).

Their children joined the *'Nike generation'* and share the obsession with fashion and culture common to young people. The world view of some members of a new generation of post-apartheid young black people does not appear to be infused and directed by an acute sense of past grievances.**[3]**

Having outlined and contrasted the contextual factors that impacted on the profession, we are faced with the question whether these will continue to have an adverse effect or whether it will be possible to allow for the emergence of a new generation of historians who will be predominantly black.

A return to the 1980s is of course neither possible nor desirable. The growth during this period can be seen as quite artificial as so much depended on apartheid; structurally in terms of lack of open-ended career opportunities for black people and ideologically as an issue that by force of circumstance informed much of academic debate and historical writing. In a new context it will perhaps be possible to discern a less spectacular but more steady growth based on more realistic premises than the unsound fundamentals which buttressed the spectacular growth in the 1980s. In addition, while the country moves further into a post-apartheid future and the current present becomes the past, South African history may incrementally acquire a semblance of normality as it edges towards more inclusive narrative of events which despite possible different emphases will at least pertain to all groups as fully fledged South African citizens.

To accommodate and ensure that such a scenario can develop, it is, however, necessary for the foundations to be laid in the present. In terms of tertiary education it implies that institutions should be alive to the impact of market

related measures on the humanities and the attenuating effects it can have on subjects such as history. For the discipline to renew itself and to create the space for the nurturing of new talent, a measure of institutional financial support is essential.

Currently (2004, ed.) approximately 27 per cent of university staff members involved with the study of history are black (other than white) (South African History Project 2003).**[4]** Given this percentage much is made in the report of the South African History Project of the necessity for a 'strong study of history in school' as the 'essential bedrock for producing new generations of black and female historians to supplant the current white and largely male domination of the South African historical profession' (The South African History Project Progress Report 2001-2003: 40). Those classified along these lines and earmarked for extinction may perhaps take umbrage at such a summary dismissal, but it should be read as a policy comment and not necessarily as an indictment of their intellectual contribution. Given the state's equity policy and the aging profile of the predominantly white academic community as a whole (Mouton 2002: 7; Mail and Guardian 31 July 2003), it would be make little sense to predict anything else.

Within the next five to ten years a whole range of historians at South African universities will have reached retirement age and in terms of equity policy their replacements will then have to come mainly from the designated groups. The professional outlook for young white male historians is exceptionally bleak in the short term, though it may perhaps improve in the medium to long term. Given these policy determinants and the structural position of white male historians who lived through a period of extraordinary growth in the profession, it is probably, if not superfluous, certainly less than fruitful on their part to agonize about their own historicity.**[5]** Structurally in terms of policy the prospects for black graduates will remain favourable.

This is not to imply that there is a phalanx of young potential historians eagerly waiting in the wings. There are valid reasons to be concerned about the number of black potential academics who prefer the boardroom to the lecture room as it creates a situation that militates against a new and intellectually vibrant cohort making their mark (Grundlingh 2001: 314-5; Mail and Guardian 2 July 1999; Saunders 1999: 50). In the highest government circles there is also a measure of concern about what students expect to gain from a university education (Ryklief 2002: 116-7; see also Daily News 16 April 1999). As far the history field is

concerned, there are currently 86 doctoral students registered for history and history education (The South African History Project Progress Report 2001-2003: 11). The total falls broadly within the band for other social science subjects, but the number of black students remains relatively small. If not addressed, a disjuncture between policy aims and actual implementation is likely to arise in the not too distant future.

The postmodernist and post-colonial challenge

Apart from staff developments within the profession, at the level of underlying and embedded change South African history as a scholarly pursuit also had to face the charges of post-modernism. Of particular importance here is the textual turn: evidence, truth, and the nature of historical enquiry itself came in the firing line. There are those scholars though who, slightly mockingly, invoke the postmodernist and post-colonial debates of the 1990s in the tones of a circus ringmaster: '*Welcome to postmodernism: world of the media spectacle, the disappearance of reality, the death of Marxism, and a host of other millenarian claims*' (Stabile 1995: 90).

In a broad sense postmodernism with no readily discernable centre can be seen as a cultural response to late 20th century capitalism a post-industrial West. In the South African context with its different historical trajectory, it would be more appropriate to employ the notion of post-coloniality. Whereas post-modernism in the West can vacillate from left to right, but mostly right, depending on the slippages underfoot, post-coloniality has a more firmly embedded political agenda in that it pays sustained attention to the imperial process in colonial and neo-colonial societies and is intent on subverting the actual material and discursive effects of that process (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffen 1995: 117-8). The thrust of post-coloniality is of particular concern to the historian as not only is the 'normal' methodological procedures of textual criticism of his material called into question, but the whole system of academic knowledge of which historical writing is a part, is regarded in itself as a western and colonial edifice outside of which no western scholar can stand (Vaughan 2002: 2-3).

Of considerable importance here is the issue of language, and the freight of often unsubstantiated assumptions that is '*inscribed*' in language. Leon de Kock, writing on missionaries and African converts in the 19th century eastern Cape, has emphasized the pervasive impact of English: The '*English*' of economic empowerment, or of social mobility and political influence within the revised

hierarchies of power, also carried in its very substance new narratives of personhood, of the proper presentation of the body, of the best moral choices, of the most suitable organisation of the land and the dwellings thereon, of a new cosmological scheme, of the very clothes one should wear, the thoughts one may think and the manner in which work – and rest – should be performed (De Kock 1986: 189).

Post-colonial theorists regard language as integral to social reality, if not in a deterministic way then at least in a constitutive manner. Historians have not been oblivious to language as a social agent, but post-colonialists go further in alerting us to the inescapable encodedness of language, the irreversible contamination of a language like English, which itself is rooted and embedded in the whole colonial process. Post-colonialism does not preclude some purchase on *'historical reality'* through the conventional historical interrogation of sources – a difficult enough process at the best of times – but it complicates access to that which historians regard as discernable fragments of the past. Although historians have long been aware of the instability of their sources and the contingent nature of the facts they uncover, they are now confronted with the additional and daunting prospect that their very medium of communication, instead of explaining things, has itself become an object that needs to be elucidated and indeed justified.

What is an appropriate response to this? Although there are no easy or definitive answers, historians are not helpless in defence. It can be pointed out that the critiques emanate primarily from the field of literary and cultural studies or anthropology and speak in the first place to practitioners in those fields, and only then to historians. Erecting disciplinary boundaries to ward off the challenges of post-coloniality may be seen as an evasive strategy, but it has to be recognized that historians themselves have not been inactive in subjecting their discipline to much the same criticisms. Within their own ranks historians have readily admitted that their practice is a discursive one, that truth-telling about the past is a variable which is dependent on a changing context and to some extent on the language employed, and that the notion of 'objective-scientific' history is often part of the seamless web of wider political projects. **[6]** These are conditions and imperfections historians have come to live with.

There are, however, those analysts who would argue that post-coloniality also calls into question the relationship between historical writing and power. Power in this sense does not only imply simple domination or repression, but refers to a

set of relationships or processes that produces and/or controls certain broadly determined outcomes. The production and acceptance of academic history as 'approved' knowledge are seen to be largely governed by specific conventions and rules. These criteria, such as standards of inclusion and exclusion, measures of importance and ways of evaluation, are not regarded as value-free but as bearing the stamp of a particular political environment with its own dimensions of power.**[7]** While such linkages can be readily acknowledged, the question can also be raised as to whether these are so limiting that there is no space for loosening the hold of the thought-context mode without implying that it can be completely severed.

Moreover, the over-emphasis of intellectuals as agents of power, is also problematical for another reason. Although such an analysis may at first appear radical, it can easily turn out to be self-serving. By elevating and emphasizing the position of the intellectual to the extent that it does, can be seen as potentially damaging to those who are not intellectuals. The supposed power of intellectuals as a conceptual tool per se is accentuated, and not that of class or other categories. In this sense then, the self-critique of historians and intellectuals can actually be regarded as 'a critique of intellectuals which has been transmogrified into a tool to confirm the centrality of intellectuals' (Scalmer 1996: 161).

Apart from the emphasis on the author, post-modernist thinking also tends to highlight '*difference*' and '*differences*'. It is an area in which neo-Marxian social history had somewhat of a blind spot as culture was underplayed in the more rigid class versions of this mode of analysis. At times tribesmen lost their cultural identity too readily to become peasants and Van der Merwe lost his red neck, Calvinist blinkers and holy covenants too easily to become a fully-fledged proletarian with little sense of culture. While this shortcoming has to be admitted and in some revisionist writing of the 1990s it has also been avoided (see for example Van Onselen 1996), one equally has to be aware of the negative side of an overemphasis on ethnic culture and cultivating '*difference*', particularly in South Africa. As Norman Etherington has explained: *Liberals and Marxists in their own peculiar ways purported to see through difference to a common human condition which anyone might articulate or understand. Some post-modern poses replace this with an opacity of otherness, whose corollary is that only the other may speak for herself/himself. When this opacity extends to ethnicity and culture the intellectual ghost of apartheid walks again* (Etherington 1996: 41).

These are intricate issues which cannot be fully explored within the confines of this paper. However, one can tentatively suggest that working with an either/or dichotomy is probably counterproductive. A re-configuration and extension of the boundaries of the ways in which we think about the past can be the first stepping stone in trying to incorporate '*difference*' without allowing it to dictate. Indian subaltern studies, though not without its own internal contradictions, have attempted to encapsulate such a broader sense of history.**[8]** Widening the historical lens, conceptually and methodologically, can create the opportunity to '*defamiliarise the familiar and to unfold the unfamiliar*' (Amin 2002: 38)**[9]** – a process through which '*difference*' may be problematised.

Heritage contexts

During the 1990s most South African university history departments developed courses which in one way or the other engaged with heritage matters. In part it picked up on an increasingly salient global trend, but it was more pertinently a pragmatic attempt to arrest falling student numbers, in that heritage, particularly if linked to tourism, appeared to have a marketable commercial edge to it. **[10]**

This development also correlates with wider trends. In the post-apartheid context the earlier radical social history perspective (developed mainly though not exclusively at former predominantly white universities) with its emphasis on the fault-lines in society and class in particular, appeared increasingly inappropriate as the new South Africa slipped into nation-building gear. The disaggregating imperatives of social history and the conforming impulses that guide nation-building make for a very grating gearshift, if at all.**[11]** What the marginalized in society – for example the black underclasses and '*poor whites*' which loomed large in social history analyses – represents, is too jarring or too ideological dissonant to be accommodated within the homogenizing fold of a new nation eager to display neat and tidy modernising African unity as opposed to ugly unravelling strands of a society frayed at more than just the capitalist edges. The time for a '*socially responsible past*' has arrived and heritage is very much part of it.**[12]**

The broader cultural purchase of new legacy and other heritage projects, however, cannot be automatically assumed and its hold on an audience at large appears to be uneven. While the appeal of the great and good will certainly have a certain resonance, such heritage can also be limiting. This is clear from experiences of a former history lecturer, Neil Roos, at the University of the North

West (UNW) in Mafikeng: *My teaching experience at UNW, where most of the students are from rural areas and country towns, has alerted me to the pitfalls of 'national' history, and suggests a need to move beyond the iconographic level, with its predictable focus on 'big' national events and figures … I teach a course in heritage studies, and my students have frequently expressed frustration at the tenuous connections between their own lives and the way in which the emerging national narrative (e.g. the Sharpeville massacre, the symbolism of Robben Island; Mandela-ism) is commemorated … I have tried … to [encourage them] to recall their own family and local stories of poverty, oppression and resistance … experienced mainly in the Bophuthatswana homeland*. **[13]**

Heritage is, moreover, important for economic reasons in being the object of what has been called '*the ultimate commodification of the tourist dollar*' (Cobley 2001: 618). Indeed, '*a heritage worth millions*', read the headlines in a recent South African newspaper (Mail and Guardian 31 January-6 February 2003: 4). It was not an exaggeration. André Odendaal, a former director of the Robben Island Museum, has provided valuable information on the financial scope of some of the undertakings of the heritage industry: Robben Island Museum (R200m), Freedom Park (R350m), the Gauteng '*Blue IQ*' projects (R750m) and the Apartheid Museum (R90m). These developments according to Odendaal will have important implications and he draws the conclusion that *[A]lmost as if by stealth, while complaints about the decline of history abound, a whole new billion rand heritage infrastructure is being out in place which will fundamentally reshape the heritage and public heritage environment in future, and create more opportunities for historians, educators and heritage practitioners* (Odendaal 2002: 9-10).

Coupled with this assertion is the belief that heritage will almost be a panacea, galvanising the study of history in general: *Heritage with its relatively accessible public, oral and 'living' history dimensions, political relevance and greater level of black leadership and involvement will play an important role in this. The growth of the heritage sector is a visible indication of the broadening of historical studies in general over the past decade* (ibid.: 33).

There is almost a kind of crusading edge to this emphasis as '*history*' and '*heritage*' are conflated seamlessly: *The claim of heritage to be 'history' can no longer be denied. In a real sense 'heritage' is the advance guard of post-colonial history in South Africa and developments there presage the changes to come in the professional history sphere at the universities* (ibid.).

Without wishing to deny the importance of the work that has been done in this area, such an assumption can do an injustice to both '*history*' and '*heritage*'. In his influential book on the heritage industry, David Lowenthal has drawn a nuanced distinction: *The historian, however blinkered and presentist and self-deceived, seeks to convey a past consensually known, open to inspection and proof, continually revised and eroded as time and hindsight outdate its truths. The heritage fashioner, however historically scrupulous, seeks to design a past that will fix the identity and enhance the well-being of some chosen individual or folk. History cannot be wholly dispassionate, or it will not be felt worth learning or conveying; heritage cannot totally disregard history, or it will seem too incredible to command fealty. But the aims that animate these two enterprises, and their modes of persuasion, are contrary to each other. To avoid confusion and unwarranted censure, it is vital to bear that opposition in mind* (Lowenthal 1998: xi).

In short, memory is not the same as history and memorialisation is not the same as historical writing. It is not necessarily a completely watertight division though. A particular framing of pastness can draw from a variety of historical dimensions; for example, from writing, visual imagery, oral traditions, memory and political perceptions of the past (or usually an amalgam of these) which in turn, if deemed worthy of memorialisation, can in a truncated form feed into and reinforce a more general historical consciousness.

It is furthermore conceptually important to distinguish between the terms '*heritage and/or the production of heritage*' on the one hand and the '*study of the making of heritage*' on the other. The terms cannot be used interchangeably as they deal with divergent activities. '*Heritage*' and the construction thereof can be viewed as the product while the '*study of the making of heritage*' is the disaggregation of that which is produced. This is of course not to imply that the production of heritage proceeds without substantial historical verification, but its ultimate aim differs from those who seek to interrogate the making of heritage from a variety of angles.

Nor, in an attempt to clear the conceptual undergrowth, is it the intention to convey the impression of a hierarchy of knowledge and that the writing of history is any way a superior zone to the unpacking of heritage. On the contrary, at times the latter can be analytical more challenging as several layers of understanding over time have to be unravelled. Writing on the dynamics of dealing analytical

with *'commemorative history'*, Peter Carrier has emphasised the kind of interpretative problems that arise as *'meaning derives from elements of both the original event and the new context within which the commemorative "event" takes place'* (Carrier 1996: 435). In South Africa a considerable amount of work of this kind has already been done most notably by some historians from the University of the Western Cape. By focusing on public pasts and the complex and often contradictory processes that impinge on the making of heritage, they have opened up a fruitful and multi-dimensional area of enquiry.**[14]**

A critical study of heritage may also allow some of the more intriguing counter ideas, relating to ways of remembering and/or non-remembering, to emerge. The questions asked by Shahid Amin in the context of India, can be equally relevant in South Africa: *'Can we at all remember without commemorating? Can we recollect without celebrating; recall without avenging? Why are national histories invariably encrusted in a lapidary mode?'* (Amin 2002: 36).

The contexts of an *'African voice'*

It is well known that Afrikanerdom used and shaped history to further its own political agendas. In general Afrikaner historical works, though often reflecting a great deal of archival research, were conceptually and interpretatively limited. Early and influential works by white English speakers displayed similar shortcomings and showed marked Eurocentric biases. Paul Maylam has made the salutary point that too often Afrikaner historians have become the only target: *This tendency to associate Eurocentric historical writing exclusively with Afrikaner nationalism is part and parcel of a larger tendency – to blame the apartheid system on Afrikaner nationalism. It has often been convenient for English speakers, conservative and liberal, to scapegoat Afrikaner nationalism. In the English quest for self-absolution, Englishness is separated from the harshness of the racial order: the blame for apartheid is cast on to others, while the fruits of the system are enjoyed* (Maylam 1993: 4).

Particularly during the 1970s and 1980s, substantial work has of course been done predominantly by a later generation of white English speaking historians of either the liberal or radical persuasion to correct this situation and to uncover large swathes of hidden black histories. The historical landscape has been altered well before major political shifts occurred. But it is true that even well into a decade of epoch making change in South Africa since 1994, a general and authoritative history of South Africa with a distinctly Africanist point of view is yet

to appear. Given the myriad of ways Africans have been excluded in the past from being accepted as full South African citizens, it is understandable that some academics have raised their concerns about the perceived absence of what can be termed an essentialist national *'African voice'*.**[15]**

It is common for new governments to recast history in terms which they regard as in keeping with their self-image and political programs. For example, with the introduction of communism in Eastern Europe after the Second World War intellectuals were implicitly or explicitly expected to help with the consolidation of a new order. The effect of this was that: While intellectuals were once distinguished by their ability to think independently, in the new philosophy, intellectuals were to be part of the stream of history, moved by its own dialectical laws, which were in turn supported by a new state machinery that guaranteed the success, or failure, of an intellectual career (Kennedy 1991: 98).

Closer to home, the passing of the colonial era in Africa paved the way for triumphalist nationalist forms of historical writing. Looking back on this, C. Neale has remarked: *To some [historians] it now seems regrettable, both from a political point of view in that it [nationalist history] served the interest of new regimes which in hindsight were not what historians hoped they would be, and from an intellectual point of view, in that historians concentrated on narrowly political themes at the expense of social and economic ones* (Neale 1986: 120-1).

And even closer to home, the notion of committed history happily resided in the home of Afrikaner nationalists. Here the 'main aim' in the 1940s was, as H.B. Thom, a foremost Afrikaner historian pointed out, *'to search for the truth in an honest way, and to keep that aim pure, but at the same time we had to do that in the midst of the volk'* (Grundlingh 1990: 7).

Of course, by drawing these comparisons one does not imply that Afrikaner nationalism was qualitatively the same as current black nationalist impulses in South Africa, nor that the way in which such developments in South Africa may play themselves out will necessarily have the same results as in the rest of Africa. But there remains a fine line between a history of nationalism and a nationalist history.

The notion of an authentic *'African voice'* may also turn out to be simply misleading. As the well-known historian, Eugene Genovese proclaimed at the

height of a similar debate in the United States of America: *'There is no such thing as a black theology, or a black point of view. Rather there are various black-nationalist biases, from leftwing versions such as that of the Panthers to rightwing — 'cultural nationalists'*. There are also authentic sections of the black community that retain conservative, liberal, or radical integrationist and antinationalist positions. Both integrationist and separatist tendencies can be militant or moderate, radical or conservative. All these elements have a right to participate in the exploration of black historical and cultural themes.[16]

Whether such a layered approach will prevail which will allow a multiplicity of '*African voices*' to speak, remains to be seen.

In essentialising the notion of an '*African voice*' in nationalist terms, a further possibility is that voices on the periphery may well be drowned out by the cacophony of such an overarching discourse. The importance of submerged voices has recently been illustrated by the micro-history of the trials and tribulations of Nontetha Nkwenkwe, a prophetess from the Eastern Cape during the 1920s and 1930s, and the way in which her religious visions and memories of her after she had been confined to a mental hospital in Pretoria, inspired rural followers for a considerable period of time (Edgar and Sapire 2000). Although some of the issues that she and her followers raised overlapped with those of nationalists, their movement was not cast in overtly political terms. Her story is one that shuns elite consciousness and she is unlikely to appear in the pantheon of nationalist heroes, but is not for that reason of lesser import.

What may turn out to be more challenging than grappling with a nationalist 'African voice' in future, is the issue of dealing with South Africa's history in the context of Africa. The question of South Africa's 'exceptionalism' on the continent has the potential to draw historians into a wider frame. It was Mahmood Mamdani who threw down the gauntlet to South African academics when he stated in 1996: Part of my argument is that apartheid, usually considered the exceptional feature in the South African experience, is actually its one aspect that is uniquely African. As a form of state, apartheid is neither self-evidently objectionable nor self-evidently identifiable. Usually understood as institutionalised racial domination, apartheid was actually an attempt to soften racial antagonism by mediating and thereby refracting the impact of racial domination through a range of Native Authorities. Not surprisingly, the discourse of apartheid – in both General Smuts, who anticipated it, and the Broederbond, which engineered it – idealized the

practice of indirect rule in British colonies to the north (Mamdani 1996: 27).

Although such an exposition of apartheid as a form of rule might also have appealed to the architects of grand apartheid in the sixties, Mamdani's position is of course very different in that he tries to move away from South Africa's 'exceptionalism' and correlates aspects of South African history as reflecting developments elsewhere on the continent. While Mamdani's ideas fuelled considerable debate in the mid-nineties, particularly at the University of Cape Town, the issues have not been resurrected since then. There may be good reasons for this, but the question of the South African past in relation to the rest of Africa remains. This is in contrast to some analyses of African literatures where 'hidden discursive and historical links between African contexts' have been found (Kanneh 1998: 91). Admittedly in dealing with historical experiences such links may be harder to find, but conceptual exploration and comparative studies as well as a greater engagement with African historiographies may perhaps produce new insights.

Furthermore, for a critical historical culture to be maintained in a radical South African democracy, there is a case to be made for an emphasis on histories of relatively new constituencies. This will include for example gendered histories and re-assessments of ethnic minorities, historical analyses of emerging 'soft' industries such as leisure and tourism as well as ecological, gay and anti-institutional movements. To bring these constituencies into the main historical frame may yield few grand celebrations, but academic life may benefit from the ensuing antagonisms, contradictions and complexities.**[17]**

Such exhortations, however, may be regarded as gratuitous and prescriptive as a new generation of historians will set their own agendas. But then again historical writing will always be a contested terrain. South African historiography has never suffered from blandness and it is unlikely to do so when a fresh cohort of academics with different backgrounds and agendas start flexing their academic muscles.

Conclusion

This paper has tried to outline some emergent trends and dynamics in the South African historical profession. While the number of black historians currently involved in the tertiary profession is roughly in the region of 27 per cent, contingent upon some contextual factors the outlook is that this number will

increase over the next five to ten years. Intellectual trends such as post-modernism and the flowering of heritage have caused historians to look anew at their basic assumptions and to interrogate and reflect upon the nature of pastness. In much the same mode the vexed question of the implications of what an *'African voice'* may constitute, and in a wider sense the conceptual leap to move beyond South Africa's *'exceptionalism'* on the continent can be seen as future challenges.

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Notes

1 This analysis is indebted to Bundy (2002). See also Marks (2000: 225).

2 Details are to be found in The South African History Project Progress Report (2001-2003).

3 Cape Town 12 August 2002: 'Apartheid's legacy of apathy may not be a bad thing'.

4 I have made these rough calculations myself from a database which is by its own admission less than exhaustive.

5 For example H-South@H-Net.msu.edu, 'What is history doing?' (June 2001).

6 See for example Appleby, Hunt and Jacob (1994); Novick (1988); Maylam (2000: 134).

7 Compare Scott (1989: 680-1). For charges of this nature in the South African context see Maloka (1996), and Leroke (1996: 13-17).

8 For an extensive and critical review see Bahl (n.d.).

9 I am indebted to S. Jeppie for this reference.

10 See for example Carruthers (1998).

11 Some of these tensions are touched upon by Kros (2003: 326-36.)

12 Compare Cobley (2001: 618).

13 Quoted in Comoroff (2003: 21).

14 See for example Rassool (2000); Rassol and Witz (1993); Witz, Rassool and Minkley (2001); Witz (1998-1999). The history department at the University of Western Cape has also embarked on a large scale project on South Africa's public pasts. In addition, issues of heritage have also relatively early in the nineties found institutional niches at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand. See Hamilton (1993).

15 See for example Magubane (2002: 31, 36); Odendaal (2002: 30, 33).

16 Quoted in Meier and Rudwick (1986: 297).

17 Compare Cross (1999)

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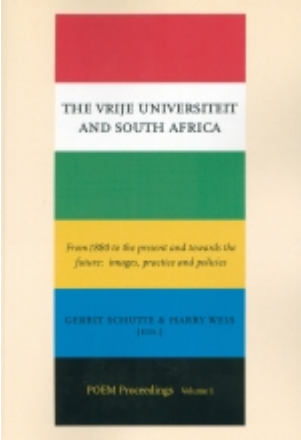
Introduction – Gerrit Schutte and Harry Wels



In 2005 the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) celebrates its 125th anniversary. It is a celebration in style: a yearlong programme which contains both scholarly elements – every faculty for instance has been asked to organise an international conference in a particular month of the lustrum year around a specific and fitting theme – and festive elements, like for instance an alumni-day ending with a concert of the world famous Portuguese singer Christina Branco. The celebrations are accompanied by the publication of a number of commissioned books about various historical aspects of 125 years of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. One of them is a study of the relations between the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and South Africa. This relationship dates back to the very beginning of the VU in 1880 – the year in which the First Anglo-Boer War started! The University History Committee asked historian Prof. G.J. Schutte to write this book, entitled *De VU en Zuid-Afrika, 1880-2005*. (*For the other commissioned books, see http://www.125jaarvu.nl/publicaties)*. The book will be launched on 23 December 2005.

In the book Prof. Schutte tells in detail the history of the relationship between the VU and South Africa. This relationship started 125 years ago, in 1880, as a result of the rediscovery by the Dutch of their Afrikaner broedervolk, and a kindred feeling of stamverwantschap (kinship) with the young nation of the Dutch Afrikaners, that was cherished for many decades. The Dutch ardently supported the Boer Republic's struggle against British imperialism during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902, and also the resulting movement for cultural, social and political emancipation of the Afrikaner people. For the VU academics, this affinity contained an extra value, that of sharing a common religion with the Afrikaners, a common Calvinist tradition and conviction. From 1900 onwards, the VU played an important role as alma mater for generations of Afrikaners, especially for theologians of the Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk and the Gereformeerde Kerk. The academic knowledge that was acquired at the VU, was used to develop the South African universities (Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom, and many more) and Afrikaner society and culture.

In about 1960, a new period in VU history was set in motion. A gradual movement away from Kuyperian tradition and the closed group of '*Calvinists*' could be observed. Critical remarks were made with regard to Kuyper's Encyclopedia, his philosophy of science, his political and social principles and practice ('pillarisation'). A new stance was taken on the role of the Christian in society, also in matters of colonialism, racism and the relationship between the First and the Third World. The general western urge for democratisation in those years triggered a change in the ideas on academic education, research and academic policy. The VU, though known for its classical and sometimes patriarchical education system, had since its founding been conscious of its being indebted to the emancipation of the kleine luyden ('*common people*') and considered social awareness as a principle.

In the turbulent debate on renewal and change that dominated most of the 1960s and 1970s, the traditional relationship between the VU and South Africa soon became subject of heated discussions. The apartheid policy, that had initially been accepted as the outcome of the specific South African historical context, called for a radical redefinition of viewpoints after the 1960 Sharpeville massacre. For some, this was a reason to immediately sever the ties with white South Africa, while others combined a critical debate with the Afrikaner counterparts on the true character of the Christian faith with the establishment of new connections

with the 'other' South Africa. The honorary degree awarded to Rev. Beyers Naudé in 1972 and the rupture in the special relationship with the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (PU for CHE) (1974-1976) marked the end of an era and of a tradition.

At the same time, the VU started cooperating with a number of 'black' universities in Southern Africa. These newly established contacts were not alternatives in a normal sense; they were rather unorthodox, seen through the lens of traditional Humboldtian academic criteria. Projects were adapted to Africa's social reality, and, in line with VU traditions, had an emancipatory purpose in the form of supporting academic development, embodied in the DOS (Dienst voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking, later renamed as CIS: Centrum voor Internationale Samenwerking, Centre for International Cooperation).

South Africa's change in 1990, leading to the democratic election of Nelson Mandela as the first black president in 1994, again marked the beginning of a new period in the relationship between the VU and South Africa. The restricted contacts of the previous decade have been replaced by the establishment of many new cooperative academic projects. In 2003 the Board of the VU decided that following the many contacts with South African colleagues on a faculty level, South Africa would be considered a target country in the internationalisation policy at the institutional level of the VU, with a strict academic mandate. Again, not primarily because of historical ties but mainly because almost all faculties at the VU are currently actively co-operating with South African colleagues. SAVUSA (South Africa-Vrije Universiteit-Strategic Alliances – *see for more information:* [*savusa.nl*](savusa.nl)) is the outcome of that decision of the VU Board. But what type of 'new' academic knowledge and cooperation is the '*new*' South Africa actually waiting for?

In an attempt to at least partially answer this question, Prof. Gerrit Schutte, supported by the Faculty of Arts, together with SAVUSA organised a mini-conference on 28 and 29 October 2004 (called a Publication Oriented Expert Meeting or '*POEM*' in SAVUSA jargon). The purpose of the POEM was to look at the future of the relationship between the VU and South Africa, to investigate whether further continuation would be in the interest of the South African academics and to hear from the South African colleagues that were present, both academics and policymakers, what they expect of the VU if it will continue and maybe even expand the academic cooperation. This POEM certainly was a unique

event in the cooperation between the VU and South Africa and also one of the very rare occasions on which a Dutch institution took up a primarily listening position. In order to cater for the broad spectrum of tertiary education in South Africa, South African academics and policymakers were invited, not only from the traditional partner institutions of the VU, (previously) Afrikaner institutions like Stellenbosch, Pretoria or Potchefstroom, but also from a (historically) English-speaking university (University of the Witwatersrand), a newly formed institution (Durban Institute of Technology) and South African policymakers in tertiary education from varying backgrounds (National Research Foundation (NRF) and National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI)). An important policy maker from the Netherlands in this regard, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), was also invited to share its ideas concerning academic cooperation with South Africa. It was a historic meeting at the VU, in the sense that for many, if not most participants, it was the first time that they saw so many different stakeholders in South African and Dutch tertiary education and academic cooperation gathering together to discuss the direction of an individual institution's policy with regard to cooperation with South African counterparts. The history of the relations between the VU and South Africa was of course an important ingredient in the various discussions: It is always crucial to know about traditions if you want to plan for and reflect on the future.

Policy processes are an ongoing thing, and policy formulation needs ongoing reflection. The proceedings of the POEM, published in this volume, are meant to offer just that: they hope to provide the reader with a sort of data-base to reflect academic policy formulation with regard to South Africa, both from South African and from Dutch viewpoints. Therefore the full texts of the various speakers are presented, in order to give every reader the opportunity to make up his or her own mind. This first volume in the SAVUSA POEM Proceedings aims to set the tone by providing readers with an interest in academic cooperation with South Africa with a type of 'raw output', which can be a source of inspiration when reflecting on the various issues regarding academic cooperation with South Africa.

Structure of the proceedings

The publication basically follows the programme of the POEM. The POEM consisted of three clusters that all touched the subject of 'academic policy', placed in the multiple social contexts of the relationship between the VU and

South Africa. The programme offered a retrospective as well as an overview of current academic projects developed in South Africa by VU academics from the fields of arts and social sciences. Finally, possible academic policy recommendations and the role of the VU in a 'new' South Africa were anticipated on. In view of a further reflection on the relationship between the VU and South Africa, this part of the programme received most attention.

The first part, therefore, offers an analysis of the history of the relationship between the VU and South Africa. The first period in this history runs from 1880 to about 1960, 1970, when an empathic feeling of (religious and cultural) connection characterised the relationship between the VU and several South African institutions. The turning point that ended these 80 years of family-like relationship was in October 1972, when Beyers Naudé received an honorary degree at the VU.

The second period describes the political separation between the VU and its traditional South African partners, the establishment of a relationship with diverse Southern African institutions, such as the Universities of Potswood, Lesotho and Swaziland, as well as the then-called 'black' universities in South Africa, and the restoration of the relationship after 1990. A special paper highlights the founding of the DOS (Centre for Developmental Cooperation) in 1976 and the attempts from within the VU to form ties with tertiary institutions for black Africans, not merely in South Africa, but within the whole region of southern Africa.

The second part of the proceedings contains short introductions of four current academic cooperation projects at the VU, as an illustration, and explains how these projects could meet South Africa's claim that academics need to help solving social problems in the country.
In other words: a '*new*' South Africa requires a 'new' science. A number of South African participants have given their views on the significance (or absence, for that matter) of VU-traditions for this 'new' science.

The third and final part of the proceedings looks at the future of academic policy in South Africa, and more specifically, at the (potential) role of the VU, and the Netherlands in general, in this respect, as highlighted by NWO's chairman Peter Nijkamp. Again, participants were sought from both South Africa and the Netherlands. They represent primary academic '*policy*' organisations.

The SAVUSA POEM Series would like to inspire and even generate discussion amongst academics and policymakers about issues relating to academic cooperation with South African colleagues and institutions.
Amsterdam, June 2005

Prof. Gerrit Schutte (Faculty of Arts)
Dr. Harry Wels (Director SAVUSA)

Governance and Development in Southern Africa – Development Policy Review Network

wiki common

On 13 November 2007, some thirty Dutch and South African practitioners, policy makers and academics, all working on the subject of governance and development in southern Africa, came together for a day of discussions. Although all grappling with similar subjects in their respective professional lives, these three groups of professionals seldom meet each other in forums that are explicitly designed to foster debates and cooperation across the professional boundary lines.

The Proceedings from the Third DPRN regional expert meeting on Southern Africa (2007 – published 2010) .

1. *John Belt and Marja Spierenburg – Public-private partnerships in rural development. Downplaying the role of politics and power relations*

2. *Henk Molenaar and Marjoke Oosterom – Negotiating knowledges for development*

3. *Anshu Padayachee and Ashwin Desai – Post-apartheid South Africa and the crisis of expectation*

4. *David Sogge, Bob van der Winden and René Roemersma – Civil domains and arenas in Zimbabwean settings. Democracy and responsiveness revisited.*

5. *Paul Hebinck, Derick Fay and Kwandiwe Kondlo – Land and agrarian reform in South Africa: Caught by continuities*

6. *Jan Kees van Donge and Melle Leenstra – Donors and governance in Southern Africa. The case of Zambia, with Zimbabwe as a counterpoint.*

Introduction:
Ton Dietz, the initiator of the Development Policy Review Network (DPRN), envisioned that bringing these professional groups together, with a focus on various regions in the world, would generate more lasting interaction and cooperation between them in the future. The DPRN therefore set out to coordinate a series of meetings, divided into 13 world regions, to bring together practitioners, policy makers and academics to discuss questions like: What kind of academic knowledge do practitioners need in the field? How can policy makers benefit from the practitioners' and academics' insights when it comes to formulating adequate policies? What policies facilitate the most appropriate conditions for academics to do relevant research, and how can policy makers stimulate and guide practitioners in the field? Highly relevant questions in a time when Dutch society increasingly seems to question the net results and relevance of money spent on development. Questions that are therefore of almost existential relevance for all three designated groups.
Harry Wels and his SAVUSA-team (South Africa – VU University Amsterdam – Strategic Alliances) were asked to organize the series of three meetings specifically geared towards southern Africa, together with the Dutch office of SANPAD (South Africa Netherlands research Programme for Alternatives in

Development). The first DPRN southern Africa day was held on 23 September 2005 under the provocative slogan 'Hug or hit' (see appendix II for the programme of the day). The second meeting in 2006 focused on '(De)mediatizing southern Africa: HIV, Poverty and the State' (see appendix III for the programme of the day). Both meetings were characterized by interesting discussions and promising new acquaintances. However, the organisers regretted the fact that apart from the yearly DPRN-report, there would be no tangible output of the meetings to reflect the problems and insights resulting from them.

With support from the DPRN, SAVUSA and SANPAD therefore decided to work towards publishing a volume of proceedings from the third and final DPRN meeting in 2007. The presenters of the day, combinations of people from the three designated groups, were asked to base their presentations on a pre-circulated written paper and then reconsider their work once more afterwards, in the light of the discussions and viewpoints that the presentations and papers would engender during the day. For an optimal result in terms of debates and input for the final papers, Adam Habib was willing to chair and facilitate the day.

We are happy to present you with the resulting proceedings in this book. We hope that they will provide the reader with an overview of the diversity in the southern African field, but that it will also offer best practices and ways in which professionals, whether they be academics, practitioners or policy makers, can work together and stimulate each other. All contributions cover themes that will appeal to academics, policy makers and practitioners alike.

The *first chapter* by Marja Spierenburg and John Belt provides a discussion of the power relations at play in private-public collaborations within the field of development cooperation.

Henk Molenaar and Marjoke Oosterom look at the debate about the potential of local knowledge (also referred to as 'indigenous' or 'traditional knowledge') for development in *chapter 2*. Their chapter analyses the role of various knowledges in development and reflects on the implications thereof for policy making.

In *chapter 3*, Anshu Padayachee and Ashwin Desai study the mechanisms underlying the 'crisis of expectation' that is arising in South Africa as critical questions are been asked about the country's transition and especially about the success of its own macro-economic programmes in terms of poverty and

inequality.

In *chapter 4*, Paul Hebinck, Derek Fay and Kwandile Kondlo contest the general idea that land reform in South Africa represents a break with the past by exploring a counterclaim that contemporary land reform policy and practices in fact represent continuities embedded in the practices of state institutions.

The *next chapter* has Jan Kees van Donge and Melle Leenstra disputing the criticism on governance as a development concern, which is often considered illegitimate, irrelevant or ineffective. To do this they make use of four narratives on the relationship between the recipient country and the donor community: election observation, concern with corruption and constitutional reform in Zambia, and a general overview of these relations in Zimbabwe.

In the *final chapter*, David Sogge, Bob van der Winden and René Roemersma employ a theoretical model based mainly on Habermas's idea of the public sphere, to portray civil society as a space, hence civil domain, rather than a set of organisations and actors, which is how donors and others conventionally see civil society. By means of this model the authors analyse some of the constraints and possibilities of political development, and the prospect for responsive governance, in Zimbabwe.

The publication of this book also gives us the opportunity to acknowledge the support and contributions of people in organizing the three DPRN meetings, and the final one in particular: Saskia Stehouwer and Henk Goede from SAVUSA and Nelke van der Lans and Colette Gerards from the Dutch office of SANPAD. Ultimate credits and thanks must naturally go to the DPRN, especially Mirjam Ros, for making these meetings possible and for their involvement and support, and to the various paper writers, presenters, discussants and participating audiences that made this series of three DPRN Meetings on southern Africa memorable. These proceedings are the tangible proof of that.

Amsterdam, February 2010