

**PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF TRANSFORMING
UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA, WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT TO BE AN AFRICAN
UNIVERSITY.**

By

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DECLARATION

I, TEBOHO JOSIAH LEBAKENG, declare that the thesis hereby submitted to the University of the North for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at any other university, that it is my own in design and execution, and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.



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Date 29/09/2004

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother, the late Masechaba Tsetso Josephine Lebakeng.

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The submission of this thesis is a culmination of years of personal involvement in the struggle of universities in Africa in general and South Africa in particular to realise their right to be African institutions. In the process, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to a number of individuals whose different roles in my life have contributed in no mean way towards the completion of this work.

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To my family: siblings and kids

Lastly, to my wife and colleague, Nosankoma, you are a true healer. When I was frustrated with my work it was your soothing fingers and mouth that kept me going. Thanks a million times.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This dissertation consists of five chapters with each self-contained with its own references. A total of 40 respondents from each of the focal universities, namely, University of the North, Vista University and University of Venda for Science and Technology were interviewed. The respondents ranged from support staff, academic staff, administrative staff, students, institutional planners, directors, deans and managers.

The first chapter, titled conceptualisation of the problems of universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa, critically examines the descriptors which currently dominate discourse on transformation of tertiary institutions. Essentially, it problematises the commonly held stratification of universities in South Africa as either of black/disadvantaged or white/advantaged.

The central argument advanced is that such descriptors emanate from an incorrect historical understanding of the development, nature and role of universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa. The chapter argues that the real problem of universities in South Africa is that of the right to be African. This right speaks to the problem that arises directly from the Western colonial epistemicide (the killing of the epistemology of others) of indigenous African ways of knowing and doing. In light of the need to reverse epistemicide and the fact that South Africa has inaugurated a new constitution that guarantees equality before the law, the thesis advanced in this chapter succinctly asserts that: The retention and dominance of epistemological paradigms that were imposed through unjust colonial wars is ethically unjust and politically untenable in the quest for the right to be an African university.

The second chapter, under the title epistemicide and the introduction of colonial-apartheid schooling, traces the emergence and development of Western schooling which was introduced through epistemicide in South Africa since colonisation. The chapter also examines how different education Acts, proposals and policies changed the complexion of education through the years.

The central argument in this chapter is that the sociological, historical and philosophical character of Western colonisation was the urge to impose the Western epistemological paradigm in South Africa. The chapter concludes that colonialism did a great disservice to the objective study of the African past and has, therefore, left an intellectual legacy to overcome. This is because the introduction of Western colonial schooling system and its practical implementation justified and sustained epistemicide.

The third chapter, the development of the university in colonial-apartheid South Africa: A socio-historical perspective, examines the development, nature and the role of the university in colonial-apartheid South Africa. It provides background knowledge in understanding the extent and severity of the legacy of colonial-apartheid in South African higher education landscape. Moreover, it serves as a backdrop for the appreciation of why there is a dire need for transforming South African universities through reversing epistemicide in the new constitutional dispensation.

Principally, the chapter points out that despite claims by colonial scholars and historians that the university is not indigenous to Africa, the existence of educational institutions of higher learning in various regions of the continent proves that the university tradition undoubtedly predates colonisation.

In chapter four, four broad theories of transformation of universities are identified. These are the protectionist, the institutional autonomist, the micro-level pro-change and the macro-level pro-change theories of transformation. What emerge are sharp divergencies and differences over the substance of the goals and necessary pace of the process and the nature of transformation strategies.

Having looked at how the different theories explain the transformation of education, these theories are compared for soundness of their assumptions, logical consistency and scope of explanation. The conclusion reached is that the macro-level pro-change theory allows one to locate the historical dynamics and processes of epistemicide within the broader context of the historicity, polity and sociality of the country. Moreover, it offers a more sophisticated historical understanding of fundamental issues.

Chapter five analyses data from respondents at the three universities constituting the focal point. The results of this study illustrate the different routes each institutions has taken in relation to the central issue informing this study, namely, the right to be an African university.

Chapter six discusses the findings of the research. It discusses whether the three focal universities are actually transforming with the aim to asserting and upholding their right to be an African university. The disturbing conclusion is that despite self-descriptions on the part of both the University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University suggesting transformation aimed at making them African universities, the reality is that the right to be an African university is at the crossroads. The chapter concludes that Africanisation poses what may well prove to be the greatest challenge to the renewal of South African education in general and curriculum policies in particular.

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CHAPTER 1

CONCEPTUALISING THE PROBLEMS OF UNIVERSITIES IN COLONIAL-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA.

1.1 Introduction

The chapter critically examines the descriptors which currently dominate discourse on transformation of tertiary institutions, in particular universities. It problematises the commonly held stratification of universities as either black/disadvantaged or white/advantaged. The argument advanced is that such descriptors emanate from an incorrect historical understanding of the development, nature and role of universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa. Alternative descriptors are suggested to overcome a diagnosis that could lead to a marginal tinkering with the problem of transforming universities. The chapter argues that the real problem of universities in South Africa is that of the right to be African. This problem arises directly from the Western colonial epistemicide (the killing of the epistemology of others) of indigenous African ways of knowing and doing.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Education as one of the basic social institutions and one of the main social agents of socialisation is deeply implicated in the forms of social formation that characterise any society. Education has always been one of the means of transmitting skills and

values required for the sustenance of societies (Musgrave, 1972; Shivji, 1993). Therefore, sociologically, philosophically and historically education cannot be treated as politically neutral. In the case of colonial-apartheid South Africa, education conformed to and reflected the colonial-settler ethical values, mode of production and reproduction. However, this relation was more complex and dialectical than presented in the analysis of Bowles and Gintis (1976). But more importantly, education also perpetuated and reinforced patterns of socio-economic inequality, ethnico-cultural differences and denial of rights of indigenous conquered African peoples and the Coloured and Indian population groups. Thus, education served as an instrument to ensure colonial-settler domination. Moreover, education served to falsify the history of the country (Cornevin, 1980). In his analysis of colonial racism, Memmi identifies four related strategies used to maintain colonial power over indigenous peoples: (1) stressing real or imaginary differences between the racist and the victim, (2) assigning values to these differences to the advantage of the racist and the detriment of the victim, (3) trying to make these values absolutes by generalising from them and claiming that they are final, and (4) using these values to justify any present or possible aggression or privileges (Memmi, 1969). In the case of colonial-apartheid South Africa, such representations allowed the colonial-settlers to rationalise their superciliousness and disregard for indigenous conquered African peoples.

The colonial-apartheid regime's philosophy of education - which replaced the liberal philosophy of education which held sway prior to the assumption of or accession to power by the National Party - was based along racial and ethnic lines and was intended to promote and enhance its apartheid policies (Mashego, 1997). The classic notion of colonial-apartheid education as articulated by leading Afrikaner intellectuals and politicians, in particular, Dr. Hendrik Frensch Verwoerd, the first South African professor of sociology and psychology who taught at the University of Stellenbosch in 1932 and prime minister from 1958 to 1966, was implemented with full force of the law (Peltzer, 1966). According to Verwoerd, 'education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life, according to the sphere in which they live' (Welsh, 1971). Their 'opportunities in life' and the 'sphere in which they live' was to be defined and determined, not by indigenous conquered Africans, but by white colonialists who were vested with this right by 'divine' authority.

Fundamentally authoritarian and subject to stringently arrogant bureaucratic control, such education was strongly influenced by a particular social and political ideology viz Christian National Education (CNE) and its offspring, fundamental pedagogics (Beard & Morrow, 1981; Eshack, 1987; Reagan, 1990; Higgs, 1994). Supporters of fundamental pedagogics claim that it recognises the fundamental objective of education,

namely, that education must take cognisance of the fact that different cultural communities make different demands on adulthood corresponding to the history of the community, its own ideals and prevailing social forms (Viljoen & Pienaar, 1971; Du Plooy, et al, 1988). However, its critics (Bauer, 1982; Enslin, 1988; Ashley, 1989) see it as encouraging and supporting social manipulation and, thus, responsible for reproducing and maintaining the ruling social and political ideology. For the critics, the expressed purpose of the CNE, of which Bantu Education was an important adjunct, was to produce a servile labour force. Taylor argues that there is a wide and enduring view that fundamental pedagogics was more about socialisation than philosophy, and more about instilling acceptance of authority than providing students with the conceptual tools necessary for creative and independent thought (Taylor, 1993). It is in this respect that there is no university in South Africa, despite claims to the contrary, which has escaped the scourge of colonial-apartheid (Manganyi, 1991).

According to Goldenberg, the university is the hand-maiden of the social, economic and political order from which it derives its resources (Goldenberg, 1978). The colonial-apartheid regime's position was that universities are no more than 'creatures of the state' in the sense that the government of the day can (1) prescribe by law what their functions must be, and (2) prescribe by law that universities exercise their functions within a specific population group's

cultural and value framework (Bunting, 1989). As such, from whatever angle one wishes to understand or classify them, South African universities are a product of colonial-apartheid (Makgoba, 1996; 1997). They collectively reflected and maintained the social contradictions based on inequalities and denial of rights, particularly for indigenous conquered African peoples. Historically, they were never insulated from such core requirements of colonial-apartheid. Nonetheless, South African universities were also modelled along Western, especially British universities (Jansen, 1991). The result was higher education rooted in Western philosophical traditions being substantially transplanted to colonial-apartheid South Africa. This was part of the broader colonial enterprise of epistemicide aimed at turning indigenous conquered Africans into mimetic philo-practitioners (Ramose, 1999) and their institutions of higher learning into copycats whose primary function was to serve and promote Western values (Mazrui, 1978; Makgoba, 1996; Lebakeng, 2002). Within the context of internal core-periphery relations, 'colonial-apartheid assumed epistemological dominance crystallising in the colonisers appropriating the right to determine and define the meaning of experience, knowledge and truth on behalf of indigenous conquered Africans' (Ramose, 1999).

The colonial-apartheid regime reproduced societal inequalities with devastating effects among tertiary institutions in South Africa. According to Boraine, the legacy of colonial-apartheid was cruellest in

education (Boraine, 1990). South African universities were housed in different education departments in line with the colonial-apartheid policies and, in addition, they were governed and funded on a different basis (Mashego, 1997). Funding for higher education was riddled with discrimination and disparities and was insensitive to the different institutional capacities (Whilston, 1993; Bunting, 1994; Vera, 1996). Universities for the indigenous conquered African peoples, Coloureds and Indians were run like government departments and were regarded as outposts of the National Department of Education (Dlamini, 1995). These universities received their funds from the colonial-apartheid regime and at the end of the financial year unused funds would revert to the Treasury. As such, these universities could not build up reserves and were not permitted to invest, have endowments or diversify their income base.

Even the different subsidy formula that was introduced in 1980, namely, the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) was based on norms generated to suit universities for white colonial-settlers. The new subsidy was explicitly intended to reward universities for postgraduate enrolment, stricter selection of students and research output. Because universities for the indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians had relatively high failure rates, low research output and fewer graduate students, this subsidy formula had negative effects on them. Added to this was the fact that the regime favoured the natural sciences and these fields were

the exclusive preserve of universities for white colonial-settlers (Abrahams, 1997). The funding formula turned universities for white colonial-settlers into social entities with concentrated resources. The disparities in funding are best illustrated by the regime allocation of 1991 to universities. Whereas universities for the indigenous conquered Africans, Coloured and Indians were allocated a paltry 2% of the total budget, 76% went to universities for white colonial-settlers (Bunting, 1994).

Although basic and applied research is one of the key functions of institutions of higher learning, universities for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians were not meant to be research institutions. They were denied the infrastructural capacity to conduct research (Masenya, 1996). Facilities for conducting research were not provided and the teaching of research methodology was not encouraged. This denial was designed to defend and sustain the baseless colonial claim that indigenous conquered Africans were incapable of producing knowledge. Both research and publication were the preserve and privilege of universities for white colonial-settlers. The regime was aware that research is the chief activity that distinguishes the university from other tertiary institutions and that teaching is intimately related to the quality, range and focus of the research carried out within institutions. Moreover, the quality of research products determines the university's status in the

world of learning. Universities for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians were actually not meant to be full-fledged institutions that offered the whole gamut of academic and professional programmes. They were to be institutions for higher grade teachers, nurses, social workers, language teachers, theologians and general arts graduates.

Yet, part of the transformation of higher education in post April 27, 1994 South Africa is to crown this deliberate unfairness with the title 'research universities'. The effect of this conferment of title is to downgrade even further those universities which right from the beginning were never intended to acquire the status of a 'research university'. In addition, the current National Research Foundation (NRF) rating of scientists - a rather questionable idea whose obvious virtue is to institute academic/scientific elitism - inevitably accords A status to academics from unfairly privileged institutions. These developments pose once again the question: What is the meaning and intent of the transformation of higher education in South Africa?

An understanding of the motivating factor for the colonial-apartheid regime for providing indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians with schooling for servitude meant that to provide their universities with the same infrastructure, research opportunities and to allow them to root education in

African epistemology would be a contradiction in terms. It is noteworthy that the thrust of colonial-apartheid domination was to undermine the humanity of indigenous conquered Africans in particular. That colonial education has not been benign for indigenous peoples in general (Memmi, 1963; 1969; Freire, 1973) was not accidental. As an instrument of colonial incursions and domination, education perpetuated the resilient conviction on the part of colonialists that civilisation was peculiarly Western and indigenous peoples were not rational animals.

1.3 Problem definition.

With the demise of the unjust system of colonial-apartheid and the dawn of the new democratic dispensation, a number of issues regarding the transformation of tertiary institutions have been placed on the agenda by the new government. This is so because the enormous legacy of colonial-apartheid has left the new dispensation in South Africa with a multitude of challenges in the tertiary educational sector (Ngara, 1995; Lebakeng, 1997). Although the new socio-political order has spawned a transformation process, its conceptualisation, pace and manifestations at various institutions vary greatly. The problem of the transformation project at several institutions as a result of deep divisions on its moral purpose, vision and objectives demands what we may call a holistic approach. Essentially, this is an approach that takes into account historical injustices and denial of rights of indigenous conquered African

peoples arising from the unjust colonial wars of conquest. Such an approach is necessitated by the fact that the net impact on colonial-apartheid higher education was not just stratification of the universities into what is colloquially called white/advantaged or black/disadvantaged in terms of the concentration of resources and power in the former. Through epistemicide, the cultural and philosophical foundations of these institutions were not located within the African experience, values, aspirations and inspirations. As such, a more serious consequence was that of denial of the right of these universities to be African. In light of the above contestation, the right to be an African university needs to be placed within the broader context of socio-political rights and prospects for its realisation. In this case, the right to be an African university is not an esoteric academic activity but a matter of survival for indigenous Africans.

It is against this background that we find the traditional descriptors of white/advantage or black/disadvantage to be highlighting appearances but concealing the essence that colonial-apartheid imposed a Western colonial epistemology to inform schooling in South Africa. Despite concealing the critical dimension of epistemological (cognitive) justice, such descriptors have not been called into question by those involved in the transformation of universities. Although the white/advantage or black/disadvantage descriptors are a product of the history of contestation on higher education transformation, they

owe their origin to an incorrect historical understanding. Framing or perceiving the problem of transformation in such an uncritical manner leads to an explicit conclusion that redress (supposedly leading to equalising of universities) is the solution. The appropriate and urgent solution is transformation that leads to the reversal of epistemicide through reclamation of an indigenous African epistemology. Based on the above, we wish to drop such descriptors and depart from popular wisdom and uncritical academic permissiveness. Instead, we will stick to the usage; universities for indigenous conquered African peoples and Coloured and Indian population groups and universities for white colonial-settlers. We believe that it is by unveiling the truth and steadfastly confronting the history and legacy of colonial-apartheid, however unpalatable that may be, rather than concealing and denying it, that a true and lasting groundwork for reversing epistemicide can be laid. In this sense, we retain the need for a decolonising paradigm rather than a struggle against the immediacy of 'anti-apartheidism'.

Historical experience shows that because of a proper historical understanding of the colonial problem, the post-independence experience of sub-Saharan Africa went through various reclamation processes whose origin is found in the Ethiopianist (religious), Pan-Africanist (political) and Negritude (cultural) socio-cultural movements of the 1950s and whose aim was to counter the colonisation of the African personality. These were multiple and, sometimes concurrent

manifestations of the struggle for the decolonisation of the African mind. The historical force that propelled the trajectory of these movements was anti-colonialism. Considerable discussion was devoted to Africanisation of education, narrowly defined as the replacement of foreign (European) personnel with local (indigenous African) personnel to administer and teach at universities (Yesufu, 1973). Progress towards replacing foreign administrative and teaching staff was rapid and widespread. Only later were there attempts to Africanise the established curricula (particularly history, social studies and literature). The philosophy to underpin both praxis and discourse under changed conditions was not prioritised. In other words, that Africa as a continent suffered from epistemicide during unjust colonial wars of conquest was not taken seriously into consideration.

With the wisdom of hindsight, the discourse on Africanisation in South Africa has been subjected to scrutiny and the need for a reconceptualisation and, as such, a call for an African philosophy of education has thus been made (Makgoba, 1996; Seepe and Lebakeng, 1998). For these scholars, the concept of Africanisation refers to a process of a conscious re-appropriation and re-affirmation of indigenous African epistemology into the debates and practices on tertiary institutional transformation by Africans with the purpose of reversing epistemicide. An indigenous African university will thus be one that has been transformed in its structures, processes and, through a philosophical break, assuming a new character. It

is in this sense that we wish to conceptualise Africanisation in this study.

Implicit in this position is that there are other senses in which the term 'African' is used. In this case we have not generated an impression that there is a consensus on who is an African and what is Africa. Etymologically, the term Africa does not arise from indigenous African people who are the original inhabitants of the continent now called Africa. Rather, its origins are colonial and its speaks more to the historical experiences of the West, specifically the Greeks and Romans in their interactions with the peoples of the Northern region of the continent (Ramose, 2003). In the Western use the term did not immediately refer to the self-understanding of the inhabitants of the region and their philosophy and epistemology. For decades, the term 'Africa' spoke to the Western European experience with the climate of the continent as a hot one. After all, in the perceptions of Western Europeans the peoples of the continent were merely nonentities without civilisation, rationality and history. This, despite the acknowledgement, by among others Aristotle that some of his philosophy was influenced by his contact with ancient Egypt (Osuagwu, 1999). Inheriting the term 'African' is, therefore, problematic al in ethical and political terms.

In order to correct the myths and stereotypes of Western European colonisers on Africa and the Africans and free themselves from the social subjugation that

went with it, Africans initiated a counter-discourse which was aimed at reclaiming African humanity (Oladipo, 1995). Thus, despite its initial reference to a particular region and silence on the identity and epistemology of indigenous Africans, the term Africa was retained, adopted and extended as a political move towards self-definition and self-identity. Writings of Aime Cesaire, William E. Dubois, Leopold Senghor, Edward Blyden, Frantz Fanon and Cheikh Anta Diop demonstrated efforts towards African self-definition and self-identity. However, most of these earlier writings were political, historical and sociological (Olagoke, 1995). From these writings Mazrui (1986) identifies two main schools of African reaffirmation. The first one is the school of romantic gloriana which emphasises the glorious moments in Africa's history defined in measurements such as material monuments and is represented by Cheikh Anta Diop. However, such a presentation of Cheikh Anta Diop is unfair since his works take cognisance of cultural aspects. The second one is the school of romantic primitivism which does not emphasise past grandeur but validates simplicity and non-technical traditions as represented by Aime Cesaire. Mazrui's juxtaposition of the two positions does not seem to provide a better option. His concept of triple heritage condones classical colonisation of indigenous Africans by both Europeans and Arabs.

However, through colonisation by both Western Europeans and the Arabs, contemporary African culture is a product of the interplay between traditional modes of life and thought, Christian and Islamic

customs. Such a triple heritage has become a social reality of contemporary African culture (Mazrui, 1986). Therefore, it is an imperative of practical realism to situate the two alien cultures of Western European and Arab conquerors in fundamental dialogue with indigenous African cultures. The purpose of this dialogue is to liberate and resurrect indigenous African epistemology from decades of epistemicide. By this, I do not mean to espouse either 'romantic gloriana' or 'romantic primitivism'. On the contrary, reaffirm Africanness in its own right.

1.4 Thesis, hypotheses and research questions for the study

In light of the above, the thesis we wish to argue is that: The retention and dominance of epistemological paradigms that were imposed through unjust colonial wars is ethically unjust and politically untenable in the quest for the right to be an African university. Indigenous knowledge systems of the conquered peoples of South Africa must be placed on the level of parity with all other epistemological paradigms in order to achieve both formal and substantive equality.

The following hypotheses inform the study;

1. The difficulty with the Africanisation of epistemological paradigms lies in the dearth of philosophically grounded core scholars capable of shaping the contours of an indigenous African university.

2. Transformation that leads to the decolonisation of epistemological paradigms in higher education is a **sine qua non** for the right of universities in South Africa to be African.

3. Transformation of universities in South Africa is not underpinned by a distinct African philosophical tradition and culture and this undermines the prospects of these institutions to be African by right.

4. Justice in the educational system can only be achieved through a reclamation of an indigenous African epistemology.

5. The viability of the transformation of higher education in South Africa must be assessed on the basis of the constitution of the country, specifically on the significance of the transition from parliamentary to constitutional supremacy.

The following are the research questions guiding the study;

1. What is the previous and current mission statement of your university?

2. During the colonial-apartheid era it was impractical for universities to strive for the right to be African, what are the prospects and problems at play in the new dispensation at your university?

3. What are central issues being contested in the realm of education at your university?

4. What philosophy underpins transformation at your university?

5. Are there social forces driving or impeding the Africanisation project at your university?

1.5 Rationale for the study

Although the rationale for the study is already implicitly present in the statement of the problem, it could be summarily articulated as follows. Over the years education became a site of considerable contestation and bitter social struggles between the liberation movement on one hand and the colonial-apartheid regime on the other. The regime used universities for its intellectual/ideological justification of racism, ethnicity and racial practices (Behr, 1987). For the liberation movement education constituted an important integral arena of the struggle for national liberation and self-determination. Although resistance to colonial-apartheid spawned a rich history of ideas and approaches on transformation of education, a notable feature of oppositional politics was the silence on the concrete specification of the means by which transformation of colonial-apartheid education was to be effected and a lack of transformatory vision and

philosophy of education (Badat, 1997). The critical issue of how to reverse epistemicide in order to accomplish epistemological justice has not been featured prominently as a critical component for educational transformation. This is the ground for our urging for a correct historical understanding of the problem of higher education in South Africa.

The importance of this study lies in that it will provide a critical theoretical input to inform institutions of higher learning with regard to how best to transform. Thus the study has serious policy implications for higher learning. Moreover, the results of the study will become part of the resource material that might guide key stakeholders in tertiary institutions in their endeavours to transform. Lastly, it is anticipated that the possible implementation of recommendations arising from the study will benefit the broader society in its betterment as a result of tertiary education that is consistent with the core requirements of rights and justice for all in a decolonising South Africa.

1.6 Research methodology

The arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data was done in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure and techniques. Structured and open-ended interviews were conducted. The following were particularly considered to be relevant stakeholders; (1) senior management, (2) deans of faculties, (3)

directors of schools, (4) heads of departments/discipline managers, (5) executives of student representative councils and (6) academic staff. Both the primary as well as secondary sources are used. The secondary sources are documented material on the subject and universities' policies, vision and mission statements and strategic planning documents. The primary sources are first hand information from respondents i.e. major stakeholders of tertiary institutions. Discussions and interviews were taped and transcribed and analysis of their content done. Taping and transcribing are absolutely essential to narrative analysis (Mishler, 1986, 1991; Riessman, 1993). Finally, a qualitative analysis of the information was done. Since the predominant mode of analysis and presentation of qualitative data is textual, the results are logically presented in the form of explanation and narration (Neuman, 1997).

1.7 Delimitation of the study

To keep the scope of the research within manageable bounds, and to avoid running into undue practical constraints, the study excluded colleges and technikons i.e. post-secondary technical and vocational institutions where they exist separately from universities. This is not because the researcher subscribes to the view that there is a hierarchy of post secondary education in South Africa, with universities occupying the top rung and technikons a rung below universities. It is noteworthy that all categories of tertiary institutions are very important

as the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) has proposed their articulation with universities (NCHE, 1996; Donn, 1997). The study is focused on universities, in particular universities for indigenous conquered African peoples. The purpose of confining the study area to this category of tertiary educational institutions is to accomplish an in-depth analysis. The researcher appropriated Gwala's (1988) classification of universities for indigenous conquered Africans. According to this classification, three types of universities for indigenous conquered Africans exist, namely, 'autonomous', 'homeland' and 'urban'. Thus this research focuses on the University of the North, University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University respectively.

1.8 Significance of the study

The study is significant at two fundamental levels, namely, the level of theoretical contribution to existing sociological knowledge and the level of practical utility. Regarding the former, the contribution of this study will fit into the broader picture and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the imperatives of transformation and problems and prospects facing the process. Specifically, first the study will illustrate the myopia of theories of transformation of universities. Second, it will deepen and sharpen the understanding of the transformation process.

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CHAPTER 2

EPISTEMICIDE AND THE INTRODUCTION OF COLONIAL-APARTHEID SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA.

2. 1 Introduction

This chapter traces the emergence and development of Western schooling which was introduced through epistemicide in South Africa since colonisation. Only significant contours of this long history will be highlighted here to the extent that they are relevant to the theme of transformation. The chapter also examines how the different education Acts, proposals and policies changed the complexion of education through the years. Educational reforms and preferences are located within the context of the colonial-apartheid political economy. In this context the successors in title to the benefits of the unjust wars of colonisation continue to make a sustained effort to reaffirm, defend and perpetuate epistemicide.

Our central argument is that the sociological, historical and philosophical character of Western colonisation was the urge to impose the Western epistemological paradigm in South Africa. Therefore, any attempt to understand the history and dynamics of Western schooling in South Africa must be located within the context of Western colonial and imperialist

expansion. This history can be traced back to the seventeenth century and has been chronicled by, among others, Loram, 1917; Behr & MacMillan, 1971; Malherbe, 1976.

The schooling of indigenous conquered African peoples, whether conducted by missionaries or by agents of the colonial-settler regime, was part of the process of calling into question the very humanity of indigenous peoples. The point of departure in the teaching of subjects such as history was always Europe as the existence of indigenous peoples was considered to be rather insignificant. This was informed by the questionable and false colonial thesis that 'man is a rational animal' which was not spoken of the African. As part of this, the type of schooling that emerged in colonial South Africa was not based on the epistemology of the indigenous conquered African peoples (Molteno, 1984). Rather, the introduction of the Western colonial schooling system and its practical implementation justified and sustained epistemicide.

In this chapter we take special note that Western colonial historians were wedded to perpetuating the myth that the indigenous conquered Africans were a philosophical, sociological and historical nonentity (Fage, 1981; Curtin, 1981; Obenga, 1981; Boubou Hama & Ki-Zerbo, 1981), and that colonialism did a great disservice to the objective study of the African past (M'Bow, 1981) and has left an intellectual legacy to overcome (Curtin, 1981).

2.2 Development of colonial-apartheid schooling in South Africa.

According to colonial historiography organised schooling in South Africa is a product of the Western world. Prior to the intrusion of Western colonialists in South Africa in 1652, the country was inhabited by 'heathen' tribes whose lives were dominated by witchcraft and superstition (Marquard, 1969). During these pre-colonial times, Khoi hunters and San herders lived around the Cape. Their economy was based on what they could hunt and gather from the environment. In the Eastern Cape there were Xhosa-speaking people. Other Nguni-speakers lived to the North, in the present-day Natal. The Sotho-speakers lived in the interior. Indigenous African peoples were subsistence farmers, grew certain crops, kept cattle and other livestock. According to Marquard, who represents conventional Western historiography on Africa, Western colonialists brought with them the spiritual and intellectual equipment of Western civilisation and they imparted this to the 'heathens' with whom they came into contact. In so doing the Western colonialists began to free the spirit and mind of {South} Africa (Marquard, 1969). According to Ashley, 'a useful way to view historically, in particular, the British influence on schooling in South Africa is to see it as a factor which has worked towards aligning the country with the ideas and practices of the Western world' (Ashley, 1976).

Obviously, even by Western accounts, it is difficult to sustain the anachronistic colonial doctrines of the continent being **terra nullius** prior to colonisation (Ramose, 1999). It is noteworthy that there is a long-standing tradition of historiography in South Africa which suggests that white colonial-settlers actually reached South Africa at the same time as indigenous conquered Africans (Geen, 1971). However, archaeologists have been able to lay to rest the myth of the empty land prior to colonisation (Maylam, 1986). Rather than finding empty lands, the colonisers depopulated South Africa through decimation of the indigenous African peoples. Thus, at colonisation indigenous African peoples lost their land and sovereignty to the Western colonisers.

Clearly, from the perspective of colonial historiography, there is deliberate silence on and denial of the existence of the indigenous African peoples' institutions such as education prior to colonisation. To acknowledge indigenous African social institutions such as education would posit them as alternative to Western ones and would undermine the colonial claim for the universality of the Western worldview. The Western proposition that sub-Saharan Africa could neither be the source nor the agent of knowledge was widely acknowledged. Sub-Saharan Africa was regarded as a continent without intellectual creativity and spiritual values. The continent was described by the Western colonialists as an area without 'rationality'. This was the motivating factor as well as a justification for Western colonisation

and epistemicide. Hence the Western colonisers claimed exclusive entitlement to reason and conceded only mythos and irrationality to the indigenous African peoples (Ramose, 2002).

Despite Bernal's (1987) convincing demonstration of the influences of Afroasiatic cultures on classical civilisation, Western thought and practices, through 'ontological imperialism' (Levinas, 1969) or 'cognitive imperialism' (Battiste, 1986), only recognised confirming evidence of its traditions as valid. Consequently, the historical, philosophical and sociological nature of indigenous societies were systematically ignored and denied. According to Nabudere, epistemologically Western intellectual traditions are insensitive to different epistemological foundations within which methodologies, paradigms, methods, theories and techniques are formed for the creation of knowledge in particular epistemes (Nabudere, 2002).

However, as Boubou Hama & Ki-Zerbo argue 'Through all the centuries since man first appeared, Africans have shaped an independent society which by its vitality alone bears witness to their historical genius' (Boubou Hama & Ki-Zerbo, 1981). Therefore, despite the silence and denial of colonial historians on indigenous African education, Rinsum argues that education is not a Western invention but has always been an inherent component of societies all over the world, including Africa (Rinsum, 2002). Indigenous African education was not systematic in the sense of

Western schooling. It was dispensed throughout life and life itself was considered to be an education process (Hampate' Ba', 1981). However, teaching was restricted to certain periods in the life of every individual, for example, the period of initiation or 'coming of age.' Indigenous African education was a holistic system that was appropriate for pre-colonial African societies (Keto cited in Ntuli, 1999). In many respects, indigenous African education was very effective in its day in as much as the instruction flowed directly from everyday needs of communal life (Loram, 1935; Scanlon, 1966). As Kenyatta observed, the idea of education for the indigenous African peoples was not merely an abstract activity but active participation in the life of the community (Kenyatta, 1938).

A critical component of pre-colonial indigenous African education is that it was rooted in the indigenous African condition and relevant to the indigenous African peoples. The general content (substance) and orientation of pre-colonial indigenous African education were informed by the culture, experience and values of indigenous African peoples. Moreover, it was based on fundamental linkages, for instance, social life was linked with production, general life with practical life, and cultural games, sports, music, dance and art were, as such, educational activities. Indigenous African education was also linked with moral and ethical values and these were imparted through the medium of stories, fables, legends, maxims, adages and so on. According

to Rodney, the following features of indigenous African education can be considered to be prominent:- its close links to social life, both in a material and spiritual sense; its collective nature; its many-sidedness; and its progressive development in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child (Rodney, 1972). There was no separation of education and productive activity or any division between manual and intellectual education. The aim of indigenous African education was also to mould good citizens with moral character.

Education was not introduced into Africa by the Western colonialists. Rather, Western colonisers' epistemicide inaugurated and established a 'new' epistemological paradigm. Distinctively, this Western colonial epistemological paradigm did not grow out of the African environment and neither was it designed to promote the most rational use of material and social resources of Africa for the development and benefit of Africans. According to Rodney, there is a strong correlation between epistemicide and the underdevelopment of Africa (Rodney, 1972). This is because the unjustified and illegal extension of Western colonial jurisdiction over indigenous conquered Africans was aimed at expanding and protecting Western colonial interests (Hailey, 1946) and undermining indigenous African ones. Colonial conquest and the subsequent enculturation abruptly cut short the historical development and civilisation of indigenous Africans, which in many respects had

reached a highly advanced state. This discontinuity meant that indigenous African technology, culture, philosophy atrophied and were rendered marginal (Magubane, 1979).

The great problem of traditional Africa is in fact the partial break in transmission. This is because the major preoccupation of the colonial conquerors was to destroy autochthonous traditions of oral tradition and values as far as possible and superimpose Western ones. Schools, secular or religious, were the essential instruments of this destructive process (Hampate' Ba', 1981). Western schooling was based on unsound educational principles because of its subject-centredness rather than child and community orientation (Loram, 1917). The difference between Western colonial schooling and indigenous African education lies in that what is learned at the former, although useful as it may be, is not always lived; whereas the inherited knowledge of oral tradition is understood and lived in the multifarious contexts of everyday life.

2. 3 The development of colonial schooling in South Africa.

Historically, the Western colonial schooling system in South Africa has been controlled by the different ethnic groups of white colonial-settlers, namely, the Afrikaners on the one hand, and the English-descendants on the other. The former were the first to conquer indigenous Africans through their unjust

colonial wars of conquest. In their wars of conquest, which did not meet the requirements of both **jus ad bellum** (the right to wage war) and **jus in bello** (the ethico-legal imperatives in the conduct of war), the invading colonialists destroyed indigenous African educational systems and processes and other social institutions.

Although the Afrikaners were the first to crush indigenous African educational systems and processes, the situation changed in 1815 when the British took over the Cape. The British occupation of the Cape marked the beginning of two opposing schools of thought in the history of Western colonial schooling in South Africa. The Afrikaner had a traditional Protestant-Christian life-view, and the British had a more liberal philosophy of life. Unlike the Afrikaners who totally neglected the schooling of indigenous Africans, the British colonial authorities paid more attention to the schooling of indigenous conquered Africans. They used education to spread their language and promote British traditions and values in South Africa - and also as a means of social control and breaking Afrikaner nationalism. The Dutch language, which later developed into a vulgarity called Afrikaans, was given less prominence in the school system, the church and political offices. A number of schools were set up following the British tradition, and teachers were brought from Britain. In 1839 the British colonialists set up a proper department of education and began to give financial assistance to

schools. It was at that time that Western colonial schooling system gradually became organised. There were a few public schools, a number of state-aided schools and a great number of mission schools. In particular, missionaries believed that the cure for indigenous conquered Africans' barbarism was through christianising and civilising them on the basis of the Western epistemological paradigm (Tabata, 1960). Missionaries were agents of ideological and cultural diffusion and this was accomplished by completely uncivilised methods (Fanon, 1967; Rodney, 1972). They condemned indigenous African institutions and customs and taught the social norms of Western civilisation as if they comprised a universal moral and intellectual code (Anderson, 1962). According to Mudimbe, missionaries were, through all the 'new worlds' part of the political process of creating and extending the putative right of European sovereignty over 'newly discovered' lands (Mudimbe, 1988).

Despite the above, the Dutch remained opposed to the schooling system that the British introduced. They opened their own alternative schools based on Christian-National principles. This was followed by the formation of the Commission for Christian National Education (CNE) in 1902. The Commission consisted of Afrikaner teachers, military leaders and church people. As a result, about two hundred (200) private CNE schools were established, with financial assistance from Holland. Thus reflecting the competing interests and need for sphere of influence between the British and Dutch colonialists in South Africa.

During the 1930s and 1940s Afrikaner nationalism grew, and the CNE was a large part of this growth. At the Afrikaner Volkskongres in 1939 an Institute for CNE was founded. The defining time came in 1948 when the Institute published a notorious pamphlet setting out CNE policy. This pamphlet was one of the six commission reports that offered practical suggestions about the direction apartheid society should take. It clearly and forth-rightly stated that "We want no mixing of languages, no mixing of cultures, no mixing of religions, and no mixing of races. The struggle for the Christian and National schools still lies before us" (Randall, 1972). Although the pamphlet was silent on the quality of schooling, it became clear when the National Party came to power that there was to be 'separate but equal' schooling. The doctrine of colonial-apartheid postulates the perpetual overlordship of white colonial-settlers over other population groups and the schooling theory based on that doctrine had to differentiate sharply between mainly white colonial-settlers and indigenous conquered Africans. The accession to political power by the National Party in 1948 introduced significant changes that constitutionally entrenched such separation. Fundamentally, the National Party's social and economic policy involved a renewed, overt commitment to white colonial-settler supremacy (National Party Race Relations Policy Document, 1947). As alluded to earlier, for leading colonial-apartheid ideologues such as Verwoerd, in order to maintain white colonial-settler supremacy and provide the

prerequisites that accompany a privileged status, schooling had to be qualitatively differentiated such that white colonial-settlers obtained quality schooling. This was meant to facilitate their dominant position in the society's social and racial stratification.

Special laws were legislated to ensure that indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians received schooling that trained them for subaltern skills as 'hewers of wood and drawers of water'. Despite claims of providing separate but equal education, the colonial-apartheid regime's per capita income on the education of the different racial groups differed significantly thus entrenching **inter alia** unequal schooling. For instance, a white colonial-settler parliament could find it easy to agree to the expenditure of R252 million on 750, 000 white colonial-settler students but reluctantly approve of spending R29 million on 2,000,000 indigenous conquered African students. The difference between R325 and R14 per white colonial-settler student and indigenous conquered African student respectively illustrates the measure of the attention paid to the schooling of the former and the total neglect of the latter.

Thus, at the core of the South African schooling system was the racist political philosophy of colonial-apartheid. This does not imply that segregated education coincided with apartheid. Rather, apartheid marked the deepening and finalisation of institutionalised segregated and racist schooling in

colonial-apartheid South Africa. As demonstrated by Collins (1980), segregationist schooling patterns were not introduced in 1948 but had already been established by the 1930s. In fact, throughout the 1930s and 1940s they operated to reproduce racial inequality even in the period of missionary predominance. Far from being an irrational interlude, segregated schooling had been the common feature of the South African schooling system prior to the legal institutionalisation of apartheid (Marquard, 1969; Ashley, 1976; Nkomo, 1981)

In January 1949 the National Party appointed a Commission on Native Education to make plans for "the education of the natives as an independent race." The Commission, which was chaired by Dr. W.W.M. Eiselen, was highly critical of mission schooling in particular and argued that the aims of indigenous African schooling were vague and poorly formulated. Furthermore, it argued that schools did not realistically prepare indigenous conquered African students for the positions they could hold in society. As a result, the Commission recommended a fundamental re-organisation of the colonial-apartheid schooling for indigenous conquered Africans in two ways - (1) by bringing it under total colonial-apartheid regime's control and, (2) by making it a tool of rebuilding and extending African culture. The Eiselen Commission reported in 1951, and pursuant to its recommendations, the Bantu Education Act was drawn and passed in 1953.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 provided for the transfer of control of schooling for indigenous conquered Africans as of 1st January 1954 from the provincial administrations and other non-state bodies to the Department of Native Affairs. This included teacher training but not higher education. Three types of schools existed. The first were indigenous conquered African community schools, which were established or maintained by indigenous conquered African authorities or communities and, in approved cases, subsidised by the regime. The second type were schools aided by the regime (including mission schools). The third type were all existing provincial schools as they came under the ambit of the colonial-apartheid regime.

The consequences were far-reaching because of the seven thousand (7000) schools over five thousand (5000) were missionary-run prior to the introduction of Bantu Education. By 1959, virtually all schools for indigenous conquered Africans except, seven hundred (700) Catholic ones had been brought under the Department of Native Affairs. Despite schooling for indigenous conquered Africans being under the Department of Native Affairs, 'education' and history of South Africa were still presented from a Western epistemological paradigm. The traditions of pedagogy became even more antithetical to the development of strong, independent-minded, creative young men and women who could think independently and pride themselves about their indigenous African civilisation. In many histories of South Africa, with

some recent exceptions, indigenous conquered Africans appeared as shadowy figures in the background of white historical experiences (Maylam, 1986). Rote learning, dictatorial discipline, memorisation and regurgitation reinforced the authoritarian tendencies of the colonial-apartheid regime and ensured that the knowledge imparted to students did not controvert the canons of colonial-apartheid. The employment of teachers and admission of pupils, like other matters over which schools themselves had a degree of autonomy in decision-making, were now subject to central colonial-apartheid authority.

The colonial-apartheid regime's policy of Bantu Education was part of the general strategy aimed at creating the appropriate conditions for the reproduction of capital, production and maintenance of certain regimes of truth at a particular phase of political developments in the country. Specifically, this was under the hegemony of Afrikaner nationalist ideology in the 1950s and 1960s. Previously there had not been a coherently formulated 'educational' policy integrated into overall regime strategy. In 1954 Verwoerd, then Minister of Native Affairs, quite explicitly summed up the economic and vocational aspects of this policy as follows: "The Bantu must be guided to serve his own community in all respects. There is no place for him in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour...For that reason it is of no avail for him to receive a training which has as its aim absorption in European community,

where he cannot be absorbed" (Peltzer, 1966; Nyaggah, 1980).

After 1959, Bantu Education also provided a means of ideological incorporation into the homeland system and ensured the hegemony of the ruling class by entrenching a sense of national consciousness based on ethnicity and the illusion of self-determination. It prepared indigenous conquered African youth psycho-ideologically for the position in which the homeland system was to relocate them politically, economically, culturally and physically. Both politically and economically, the homelands were expected to provide a focus for indigenous conquered African aspirations outside of a common framework of white colonial-settler South Africa (Christie & Collins, 1982). The homeland policy, which rested upon an assumed historical model of static, exclusivist tribalism, was an important part of the National Party's plan for South African development, and its accompanying ideology of segregation. The 1959 Promotion of Self-government Act provided for the establishment of separate self-governing entities in geographically fragmented homelands. However, these were to remain under the influence of the white colonial-apartheid regime. The homelands were to reduce the number of indigenous conquered Africans who were permanently settled in urban areas, and provide an alternative basis for the supply and control of labour. In order to achieve the grandiose aims of separate development, schooling became one of the principal instruments.

Under colonial-apartheid rule, many other different laws were passed to provide separate schooling for the different population groups. A commission on Coloured Education was set up in 1953. However, it was only in 1963 that the Coloured Persons Education Act (Act 47 of 1963) was passed. This meant the transfer of control of schooling for Coloured children from the provinces to a Division of Education within the Department of Coloured Affairs. Similarly, the Indian Education Act of 1965 (Act 61 of 1965) provided for the transfer of the control of schooling for Indians from the provinces to the Department of Indian Affairs. The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) (Act 39 of 1967) of 1967, laid down the broad guiding principles for all subsequent schooling for white colonial-settlers. However, the English and the Afrikaner groups each had their own interpretation of NEPA. These various enactments were made to bring the colonial-apartheid schooling system close to the policy of separate development.

Such schooling system comprised three facets, namely, National, Christian and Educational. In 1971 the Minister of Education gave official definitions of these broad concepts. The National facet implied that 'education' in schools shall have a broad national character which shall be imprinted (1) through the conscious expansion of every child's knowledge of the fatherland, embracing language and cultural heritage, history and traditions, national symbols, diversity of the population, social and economic conditions, geographic diversity and national achievements; and

(2) by developing this knowledge in each pupil into understanding and appreciating it by presenting it in a meaningful way where appropriate (Malherbe, 1977). The Christian facet implied that 'education' in schools shall have a Christian character founded on the Bible and imprinted (1) through religious instruction as a compulsory non-examination subject; and (2) through the spirit and manner in which all teaching and 'education', as well as administration and organisation, were conducted (Malherbe, 1976). The Educational facet implied that South Africans will be satisfied with nothing less than their children being moulded as future citizens.

Notwithstanding such lofty pronouncements, The notion of racial superiority was essential to the function of the Christian National Education ideology. The aim of this 'education for barbarism' (Tabata, 1960) was to indoctrinate children into the Christian National ideology of the National Party. According to Nkomo (1981), as a general rule the colonial-apartheid education aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. Production of semi-skilled indigenous conquered African labour force to meet the needs of colonial-apartheid capitalism cost-effectively.
2. Blunt competition with white colonial-settler workers by providing only elementary skills for indigenous conquered Africans and other population groups.

3. Socialise indigenous conquered African students so as to accept the social relations of colonial-apartheid as natural.
4. Forge a consciousness and identity accompanied by a sense of "superiority" among white colonial-settlers.
5. Promote the acceptance of racial and ethnic separation as the "natural order of things" or as an arrangement better suited for "South Africa's complex problems of national minorities that can be solved through the separation of races or ethnic groups."
6. Promote indigenous conquered African intellectual underdevelopment by minimising their resources while maximising them for white colonial-settlers.
7. Promote white colonial-settler consciousness and identity for the purpose of forging solidarity between white colonial-settler labour and white colonial-settler capital.

However, these objectives of colonial-apartheid education did not go unchallenged. The colonial-apartheid regime could not effect epistemicide and then impose colonial-apartheid policies as if pre-colonial indigenous African society were a **tabula**

rasa. As such, the history of the imposition of Western colonial schooling was **paru passu** a history of resistance representing attempts by various groups to break with Western colonial schooling and to set up alternative schools reflecting their particular interests, values, culture and sensibilities, that is, to reverse epistemicide. Historically, indigenous conquered African protest is not a recent phenomenon since there is a rich history spanning decades of sporadic opposition to inequalities and other societal aberrations in the colonial schooling system (Molteno, 1984). Nonetheless, this history of opposition to epistemicide, especially the earlier one, remains largely unrecorded in South Africa (Kallaway, 1984). School boycotts which were organised shortly after the passage of the Act and the setting of alternative schools as a result of the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was an example of the long history of resistance and opposition. However, these were short-lived as they were dismantled as a result of harsh repression by the colonial-apartheid regime. Many indigenous conquered African teachers resigned in protest as a result of the implementation of Bantu Education Act, notably, Professor Eskia Mphahlele.

To a great degree, relative political calm was achieved in the country in the mid-sixties through the colonial-apartheid regime's repressive draconian measures such as the Terrorism Act (Act of 1967) which legalised indefinite detention without trial. In spite of these repressive measures, in the late sixties resistance resurfaced in the form of the Black

Consciousness Movement (BCM). The movement began in 1968 on the university campuses of indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians (groups which, for political reasons, were lumped together under the BCM tradition as 'blacks') under the auspices of the South African Student Organisation (SASO). SASO originated among these students as they were disillusioned with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) which was dominated by liberal white colonial-settlers. SASO had great influence on the South African Students' Movement (SASM), a body that represented students at various schools and led to the Soweto Uprisings in 1976 under the leadership of Tsietsi Mashinini.

While student politics intensified in South Africa, a number of critical changes were taking place in the neighbouring countries such as Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. These countries were being liberated from white colonial-minority rule. Prior to 1974 South Africa had a buffer-zone between itself and the surrounding African countries. These events threatened that set-up and influenced the political dynamics in South Africa by radicalising student politics.

The crisis of the 1976 Soweto Uprisings and the school boycotts of the 1980's focussed attention on the youth and demonstrated the extent to which educational institutions had become sites of struggle in South Africa. What started as opposition to the Afrikaans language issue and then inferior colonial-apartheid schooling became a generalised expression of

opposition to colonial-apartheid and increased in scope, frequency and intensity (Hirson, 1979; Brooks & Brickhill, 1980). This is so because students, especially indigenous conquered African students, understood that at the core of the crisis of colonial-apartheid schooling was the socio-economic system based on exploitation, oppression and denial of rights. Although there are very few reports of overt resistance in Coloured and Indian schools, these schools were also affected.

Schools became sites where the colonial-apartheid official ideology was challenged and where critical consciousness that undermined the official curriculum was produced. Prior to 1976, there is little evidence to indicate as to whether students were conscious of any connection between their own actions and the political activities transpiring in the broader society. This is so because the only political issues students were directly involved in were when they protested the establishment of the Republic of South Africa in 1961 and during the country's expulsion from the British Commonwealth. Otherwise the most common issues of student politics revolved around conditions and facilities relating to hostel accommodation, poor food quality and the forms of punishment teachers employed. The response of the colonial-apartheid regime to students' resistance was usually repressive. In particular, the brutality that followed the Soweto uprisings left several hundred school children dead, maimed and orphaned. However, unlike the previous demonstrations, this particular demonstration spread

even further to include Coloured schools (Kane-Berman, 1978; Molteno, 1984). Schooling for indigenous conquered African peoples, Indian and Coloured population groups reached a point of profound crisis. Schools turned into armed garrisons as confrontation after confrontation was matched with excessive force by the regime.

In June 1980, the colonial-apartheid regime mandated the independent but state-funded Human Science Research Council (HSRC) to carry out a one-year comprehensive study of all levels of the South African education and to recommend on the following: (1) policies that could enable all South Africans to realise their individual potential, achieve economic growth, and improve the quality of their lives, (2) policies to match organisation, control, finance and decision-making processes and manpower training priorities to the above goals, and (3) programmes designed to achieve 'education of equal quality' for all population groups.

The investigating committee was led by Professor J. P. de Lange, Rector of the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), a former schoolteacher and prominent Afrikaner academic. The report was delivered to the regime in July, just one year after its commission. It ranged in scope from prescriptive studies of how to foster preschool learning at home to recommendations concerning special bridging programmes to enable more students to pursue university work in science and mathematics. The Committee came to the conclusion that

there was a need for a more open educational system. They recommended the creation of a single department of education, compulsory primary education and parity of expenditure on all schoolchildren and administrative decentralisation with school admissions open on a basis of local or regional option (de Lange' Report, 1981).

However, this referred simply to the administrative arrangements with respect to curriculum, teachers' pay scales and finance. It is noteworthy that the core tenets of colonial-apartheid schooling were not to be tempered with. For instance, the regime's control was to be strengthened regarding private schools and the races were to remain attending separate schools. Given the limits of educational reform as articulated by Carnoy and Levin (1976), it did not come as a surprise that educational reforms initiated by the colonial-apartheid regime never challenged the fundamental policy of colonial-apartheid schooling, namely, epistemicide. That the colonial-apartheid regime was not going to reform in any serious manner became clear from its provisional response to the report of the de Lange Commission. In that response, the colonial-apartheid regime endorsed a list of general, hortatory principles for educational policy set forth by the committee. However, it also re-affirmed the Nationalist commitment to the 'Christian and national character' of education, the 'principle of mother tongue' instruction and the policy of separate schools and departments of education for 'each population

group' (Provisional response to the de Lange Commission Report, (1981).

The period 1980-1985 was characterised by the heightening and deepening of student protests accompanied by greater efforts to make powerful coalitions with trade unions, parents and teachers. Radicalised leaders of the indigenous conquered African communities began to give coherent form to the challenges students had posed to the colonial-apartheid regime. (Lebakeng, 1991). They demanded that the colonial-apartheid regime should initiate or implement the following changes: the repeal of Bantu Education Act, the establishment of a single national department of education, equal per capita expenditure on the education of all children, compulsory education for all not only white colonial-settler children and equal salaries for all teachers. As a result, the breakdown in the authority of the Department of Education school boards and committees reached a new level in the 1984-1986 period. The police and the army had to literally march students to school at gunpoint, to issue identity cards to students and to fence in as well as to patrol school grounds. It was within this context of a pervasive culture of resistance that the goals of promoting indigenous conquered African and Coloured and Indian submissiveness to white colonial-settler authority, by and large, failed to materialise. In short, the ideological function that education was supposed to play, to a great extent, failed to accomplish its task

of legitimating the colonial-apartheid regime and inculcating subservience.

The crisis in colonial-apartheid education, which essentially reflected stresses in society as a whole, forced the colonial-apartheid regime to respond periodically. In the light of fundamental challenges posed to the regime as articulated in student politics and struggles, the older and cruder educational policies were revised and reformulated. New educational policies were explored to meet the imperatives of the post-Soweto Uprisings historical conjunctures. Although the student protests were the key to the schooling reform in South Africa, two other factors came into play. First, there was a dire need to assuage the almost unbearable universal condemnation of the racist colonial-apartheid policies and practices. Second, the specific criticism of the education system from the business sector on account of its shortcomings in producing adequate supplies of appropriately trained personnel for industry. Despite some resistance from the colonial-apartheid regime, major organs of the bourgeoisie - such as the Chamber of Mines, the Association of Chambers of Commerce and the Federated Chamber of Industries - re-emphasised the dire need for schooling reforms. Although the business sector had derived enormous benefits from the close relationship between capitalism and colonial-apartheid, such marriage contained a fundamental contradiction. This is so because of the natural tendency of capital to treat all labour power as a pure commodity (Davies, 1984). Colonial-apartheid

policies of job reservation hampered that.

The original stimulus was narrowly economic, that is, labour needs. However, with the rise of the mass democratic movement political considerations became increasingly important as big business placed its hopes on socio-economic reforms as a means to reestablish political stability. In putting pressure on the colonial-apartheid regime to reform schooling, the business sector wanted a more differentiated labour force in terms of both skills and race. The centrality of education to South Africa's future had been stressed repeatedly by the country's economic leaders, notable is the Anglo-American chairman Harry F. Oppenheimer. In a statement to his corporation in 1981, he affirmed the view that 'the gap between black education and white remains the most serious obstacle to economic growth and better race relations in South Africa' (Oppenheimer, 1981).

The need for educational reform had previously been made by the business sector following the political and economic dislocations surrounding the Sharpeville massacre of 1960. Although the Sharpeville massacre marked a transition from passive resistance to rebellion (Jaspen, 1961; Reeves, 1969), following the subsequent conditions of political and economic stabilisation big business was satisfied with the deployment of repressive apparatus (Greenberg, 1980). It was within the context of resurgence of the onslaught against the colonial-apartheid system that the regime adopted the so-called "total strategy".

This strategy, coupled military measures aimed at ensuring a better defense capability with a programme of social reform (Davies, 1984). Central to this social reform was the school reform that would facilitate in producing the indigenous conquered African middle class in order to satisfy their 'aspirations'. What the colonial-apartheid regime failed to appreciate was the fact that any remedies or reforms of the school system unaccompanied by a radical transformation of the political economy with its super-structural dimensions would not succeed. In true educational terms what was needed was not curriculum reform but curriculum change. One that was formulated on the basis of a new philosophy of education with the aim of challenging and being an alternative to the Christian National Education of the colonial-apartheid regime.

In the light of the foregoing, it is evident that the educational, political and economic gains arising from epistemicide continued to accrue largely to the progeny of the colonialists. Also, the core epistemological paradigm established by epistemicide remained unscathed and retained its undeserved predominance.

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CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY IN COLONIAL-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA: A SOCIO-HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

3.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the development, nature and role of the university in colonial-apartheid South Africa. The chapter provides background knowledge as a **sine qua non** in understanding the extent and severity of the legacy of colonial-apartheid in the South African higher education landscape. Moreover, it serves as a backdrop for the appreciation of why there is a dire need for transforming, in particular Africanising South African universities through reversing epistemicide in the new constitutional dispensation. The political economy of colonial-apartheid strongly shaped the development, nature and role of the university system in South Africa. This system was characterised by fragmentation, undemocratic governance structures, unequal and inefficient allocation of resources, discriminatory policies and practices and exhibition of cultural and epistemological dependency.

3.2 The development of universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa

Despite claims by colonial scholars and historians that the university is not indigenous to Africa as it was transplanted on the continent as a central feature of Western tradition of education (Atkinson, 1973),

the existence of educational institutions of higher learning in various regions of the continent proves that the university tradition undoubtedly predates colonisation (Mazrui, 1984; Ramose, 2002). That such university tradition is not known to have extended to South Africa, as we know it today, cannot justify the claim that the university tradition is; (1) the invention of Western colonisers, (2) brought into the African continent by the colonisers (3) as part of their 'civilising mission' and (4) necessitated by their right to conquest. The existence of educational institutions and traditions in pre-colonial Africa, particularly in the universities of Djenne, Timbouctou (Curtin, 1964; Hagberg, 2002), Djami al-Karawiyyin in Fez and al-Azhar in Cairo (Cissoko, 1984), represent examples of a long tradition of higher education that preceded the colonisation of the continent.

Until the early nineteenth century, there were no university institutions in colonial-apartheid South Africa. South African students who pursued university education received it in the United States of America and Europe, particularly England. University education in colonial-apartheid South Africa started on a humble scale, even then with the establishment of university colleges for whites in 1828. From that time on until 1874 a series of colleges, most of them under the aegis of either the Dutch Reformed Church or the Church of England, were set up in the Western and Eastern Cape, one in Bloemfontein and one in Pietermaritzburg. Colonial-apartheid universities eventually developed out of such colleges. For

instance, the University of Cape Town out of the South African College, the University of Stellenbosch out of the Gymnasium College, Rhodes University out of St Andrews College, and the University of Orange Free State out of Grey College at Bloemfontein. Many other original colleges still exist today as well-known high schools. Among these are the following, the South African College School in Cape Town, Diocesan College in Rondebosch, the Paul Roos Gymnasium in Stellenbosch, Gill College School.

Fully-fledged universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa developed following the University Act of 1918 when the South African College became the University of Cape Town and the Victoria College became the University of Stellenbosch. In 1921, the Potchestroom University College was incorporated by the University of South Africa and in the same year the South African School of Mines and Technology became autonomous as the University of the Witwatersrand. The Transvaal University College became the University of Pretoria in 1930 and the Natal University College became the University of Natal in 1948. By 1951 South Africa had eight residential universities, four for English colonial-settlers, namely, the University of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University, and University of Natal, and four for Afrikaner colonial-settlers, namely, University of Stellenbosch, University of Orange Free State, University of Pretoria and University of Potchestroom. The University of Port Elizabeth was established in 1965 and the Rand Afrikaans University in 1967.

Until the early 1920s the majority of the teaching staff at South African universities came from overseas, chiefly from England, and, to a lesser extent, from Holland and Germany. As representatives of Western civilisation, they perpetuated epistemicide. Despite being under relatively less rigorous control, these universities were not immune from the pressures of the colonial-apartheid regime.

Up to the time when university facilities were created for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians, these ethnic groups did not attend university in any significant numbers. For instance, in 1954 only about two thousand and four hundred students from these ethnic groups were studying at the four universities for English colonial-settlers and the distance education facility of the University of South Africa. In addition, in the same year, there were under four hundred (400) students enrolled at the South African Native College (renamed the University College of Fort Hare in 1946). From 1916 until 1959, this was the only University College specifically established for indigenous conquered Africans. The founding of Fort Hare University was merely an attempt by Christian missionaries to offer parallel university education for indigenous conquered Africans.

However, with time and against the intentions of the colonial regime, Fort Hare developed a great political and intellectual tradition. The institution became alma mater to many luminary African leaders and distinguished intellectuals. Among them could be

mentioned, the African National Congress stalwart Oliver Tambo, the late founder and first president of the Pan Africanist Congress Mangaliso Sobukwe, the first president of a democratic South Africa Rolihlahla Mandela, president of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe, former prime minister of Lesotho Ntsu Mokhehle, the late former president of Botswana, Tshekedi Khama, former vice-principal of Fort Hare, former employee of the Council of Churches in Geneva and former Botswana's permanent representative at the United Nations Professor Z.K. Matthews, former ministers of Zambia Fwanyanga Mulikita and Elijah Mudenda.

Although Fort Hare was intended to be for the indigenous conquered Africans, it also admitted the Coloured and Indian population groups. There were also many students from many parts of Africa such as Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, the existence of Fort Hare University College as an exclusive institution for indigenous conquered Africans is further indication that, contrary to common assumptions, the policy of segregation did not start when apartheid was institutionalised by the National Party. Although until 1959 there was not legal segregation in the various Acts establishing universities in colonial South Africa, only two universities admitted students other than white colonial-settlers to the same lecture rooms, namely, the so-called open universities of Cape Town and Witwatersrand. Like the rest of colonial Africa, racial segregation in colonial South Africa had

already taken root and formed the underlying philosophy guiding British colonial rule. As alluded to earlier, the National Party merely refined this policy and institutionalised it as an instrument of attaining complete white colonial-settler supremacy, racial segregation and epistemicide.

In the 1950s the National Party exerted strong pressure to impose colonial-apartheid on the universities and compelled particularly the 'open' universities to conform to the pattern of legalised or institutionalised colonial-apartheid. In pursuit of its segregationist policies the Extension of Universities Education Act (Act 45 of 1959) was effected in 1959. The 1959 Act led to the establishment of separate ethnic universities in order to give expression to the Verwoerdian concept of 'self-determination for each population group within its own sphere'. The Act introduced two new principles into the established university practice in South Africa, namely, (1) it created state-owned universities alongside the state-aided universities; (2) deprived the universities of the right to accept or reject students for admission regardless of race (Behr, 1987). The University of South Africa, which operated as a distance teaching institution offering dual medium of instruction, was an exception to these principles as its **modus operandi** could not be inconsistent with the regime's policy of racial segregation.

Consequently, indigenous conquered African, Coloured and Indian students could only register at universities for white colonial-settlers with the permission from the Minister of Education, which was usually granted only where the particular courses a student wished to take were not offered at the University College of Fort Hare. The 1959 Act also established two new university colleges for indigenous conquered Africans, the University Colleges of the North and of Zululand. They were later renamed the University of the North and the University of Zululand respectively. The University of Western Cape was established in 1960 as a college exclusively for the Coloured population group and the University College for Indians became the University of Durban-Westville. For ten years these colleges were under the aegis of the University of South Africa, which acted as guardian for curricula, examinations, degrees and general academic standards (Coetzee and Geggus, 1980).

It is noteworthy that the general purpose of establishing these ethnic institutions was not benevolence on the part of the colonial-apartheid regime but was aimed at practically implementing and sustaining epistemicide by further dividing and ruling over indigenous conquered African people and the Coloured and Indian minority groups. Around the same time that the Extension of University Education Act was proclaimed, the colonial-apartheid regime callously massacred more than sixty-nine indigenous conquered Africans in Sharpeville during the anti-pass campaign led by the Pan Africanist Congress under the

leadership of Mangaliso Sobukwe (Mahomo, 1968; Reeves, 1969; Lebakeng, 1991). This pattern of appearing to reform and at the same time brutalising and humiliating indigenous conquered African peoples became commonplace.

In 1969 these ethnic institutions, except for Fort Hare University which had been affiliated to Rhodes University for degree granting purposes, were formally granted autonomy and elevated to full university status. This was in similar ways that colonial universities in other parts of the African continent passed through a period of apprenticeship, for instance, in Special Relationship with London University as Ibadan University did from 1948 - 1962 and University of Dar as Salaam from 1961 - 1963. However, in view of the retention of extensive ministerial powers, universities for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians in colonial-apartheid South Africa had less autonomy and were under rigid regime control than those belonging to their white colonial-settler counter-parts.

With persistent and growing pressures and demands by civil society and political organisations, the colonial-apartheid regime was faced with a deepening economic, political and ideological crisis after the middle 1970s. As a result, the South African colonial-apartheid regime embarked on a strategy of reform in various spheres of life including education. The regime's reforms were to be within the broader framework of colonial-apartheid, and not aimed at

eradicating the colonial-apartheid **status quo** with the primary purpose of reversing epistemicide. Hence the regime's 'response was a pendulum-like swing between intensified repression and a recognition of basic realities' (Mamdani, 1992) as seen in the repressive strategies which included the banning of eighteen Black Consciousness organisations in 1977 and, at the same time, the establishment of more universities as demanded by the corporate sector.

For the corporate sector, the regime's policy of not training and educating indigenous conquered Africans and the Coloured and Indian population groups was insufficient in dealing with the increasingly acute shortage of skilled labour (Graham-Brown, 1991) and ineffective in arresting the development of radical and anti-capitalist sentiments among youth from these population groups (Davies, 1994). This point is critical in understanding that changes in higher education were not just propelled by the political struggle but also changes in the economic, technological and information spheres (Samuels, 1992). Consequently, the corporate sector began to stimulate and encourage investment in the education and training of indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians. The great concern, though, was in how to provide education for indigenous conquered Africans in the urban areas and at the same time to control their influx to universities formerly for white colonial-settlers. This resulted in the establishment of the Medical University of Southern Africa (Medunsa) in Ga-Rankuwa near Pretoria in 1976 to provide training in

the areas of medicine, dentistry and veterinary science.

Such developments were followed by the establishment of Vista University in 1981 (in terms of the Act 106 of 1981). Vista University was a multi-campus institution with satellite campuses located on the peripheries of townships for indigenous conquered Africans across the country where white colonial-settler lecturers and administrative staff could safely enter and sneak out without traversing the townships (Wanda, 2000). Almost all the campuses of Vista University were close to well-established universities for white colonial-settlers, for example, Soweto Campus is close to the University of Witwatersrand and Rand Afrikaans University, the Mamelodi Campus is close to the University of Pretoria and the University of South Africa, the Zwide and Bloemfontein Campuses are within reach of the University of Port Elizabeth and Orange Free State respectively. From purely economic and academic standpoints, the establishment of these campuses close to universities for white colonial-settlers made no sense. However, within the political economy of colonial-apartheid, the determining factors for the establishment of these satellite campuses were epistemicide, racial segregation and white colonial-settler supremacy.

Other campuses are in Daveyton, Sebokeng, Thabong (Welkom), as well as a Vista University Distance Education Centre (VUDEC) in Pretoria. Its

administrative headquarters were situated in Pretoria. The establishment of both Medunsa and Vista University was a measure of the extent to which the regime was still determined to pursue colonial-apartheid policies of epistemicide and undermine its own declared policies of 'separate but equal' education and reform intentions. In physical structure, financial and material resources, and scholarship endowment these institutions were poorly equipped. In this sense,, these universities displayed similarities with other universities for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloured and Indian population groups. Commenting on the origins of Vista University, the former Minister of Education, Professor S. Bengu writes that, like all colonial-apartheid institutions meant to serve indigenous conquered Africans, Coloured and Indian population groups, Vista had to be conceptualised, managed and controlled by whites, mainly Afrikaner males (Bengu, Vista Voice 1982).

In tandem with these developments, the colonial-apartheid regime encouraged and assisted homelands to establish their own universities. Thus, the University of Transkei came into existence in 1976 (Act No. 23 of 1976), and the University of Venda in 1981 (Act No. 19 of 1981) and the University of Bophuthatswana was established in 1988 (Act No. 33 of 1988) (and renamed the University of North West in 1996 Act No. 17 of 1996). The University of Fort Hare, which had been in existence since 1916, was transferred to the Ciskei homeland. It is important to note that while the University of Fort Hare predates 1948, the general

restructuring that took place within that institution since the Act of 1959 made it qualitatively similar to the other universities of indigenous conquered Africans and the Coloured and Indian population groups in terms of being essentially (intended as) an instrument of the policy of colonial-apartheid regime.

The establishment of ethnic universities through the Extension of University Education Act of 1959 represented a step further in the implementation of the policy of colonial-apartheid in the field of education. The essence of the Act was to further fragment indigenous conquered African peoples, and the Coloured and Indian population groups and thus weaken their collective resistance to the colonial-apartheid mode of production (Balintulo, 1981) by creating a sense of pseudo-nationalism based on tribal or ethnic identity and allegiance (Wanda, 2000). In this sense, the colonial-apartheid policy makers did not implement ethnicisation of universities because they thought indigenous conquered Africans were sufficiently capable of managing their own affairs but did so **mala fide**. It should be remembered that Western colonisers justified the right to conquest on grounds that it was its moral duty to 'uplift' indigenous conquered Africans from their barbaric state.

Ample evidence suggests that despite different assumptions underlying their 'civilising mission' and styles of administration employed, all colonialists had contempt for indigenous African culture, values and history (Khapaya, 1994). This point is critical

because rather than being an aberration, colonial-apartheid South Africa, with its sizeable white colonial-settler population, was the most extreme crystallisation of the colonial experience (Mamdani, 1992). In establishing ethnic universities, the colonial-apartheid regime wanted to render indigenous conquered Africans and the Coloured and Indian population groups permanently inferior, incapable, self-loathing and requiring the long-term tutelage of white colonial-settlers.

3. 3 The nature of universities in colonial-apartheid South Africa.

A contextual analysis indicates that colonial-apartheid South Africa's university education system was a diversified one with multiple vertical and horizontal divisions. Horizontal divisions differentiated the tertiary education system along the lines of colleges, technikons and universities, each of which was intended to provide a particular level of training. Vertical divisions took a racial/ethnic form and split all three horizontal sectors so that different institutions within each sector serviced a particular ethnic and racial group (National Commission on Higher Education, 1996). The result was a stratification of South Africa's university system along racial and ethnic lines (AIPA, n.d.). Fundamentally, this stratification of higher education into what was colloquially called historically black/disadvantaged or white/advantaged, although commonly and uncritically used, conceals and simplifies the true nature of and challenges faced by

universities in South Africa, namely, the problem of epistemicide.

All colonial-apartheid universities in South Africa had very distinct histories and purposes but all were constituted as ethnic institutions. Universities for Afrikaner colonial-settlers generally had a close relationship with the colonial-apartheid regime. Established as full-fledged universities after the National Party took over the reigns of government in 1948, these universities, with an Afrikaner student and staff base, benefited from preferential funding from the colonial-apartheid regime. More than any other universities they were the breeding ground for colonial-apartheid ideology (Wanda, 2000) and openly supported the colonial-apartheid system by providing the intellectual justification for racism, ethnicity and racial practices (Behr, 1987). These universities espoused a European outlook and influence by drawing their inspiration from the ancient universities of Holland, Germany and other European countries with which they felt a great sense of cultural, racial and linguistic affinity.

Universities for English colonial-settlers were founded on English cultural and intellectual traditions and were essentially cast in the Anglo-American mould. Their concepts of what constituted 'international standards' and excellence were largely dictated by their understanding and perceptions of British and North American standards. This was because these universities aspired to be accepted by British

and North American institutions. They were financially endowed, in particular because of their ability to supplement the regime's funding with alumni support from the English speaking community (File, 1986).

The universities for English colonial-settlers were characterised by a liberal institutional ethos that appeared critical of the cruder features of colonial-apartheid and a relatively more international outlook compared to their parochial and inward-looking Afrikaner institutional counter-parts. Despite the different philosophical origins, seemingly conflicting ideological orientations, uncommon cultural origins, both sets of universities nevertheless remained complicit in perpetuating and sustaining epistemicide.

Given the history of their development within the context of the political economy of colonial-apartheid, these universities were historically, philosophically and sociologically products of the pursuance of the policy of colonial-apartheid by the South African regime, in the field of education. To argue that only universities for indigenous conquered Africans and the Coloured and Indian population groups were the archetypical institutions of higher learning for segregation serving distinct ethnic and racial groups is to woefully misunderstand their dialectical relationship with universities for white colonial-settlers. Under colonial-apartheid conditions in South Africa, the university landscape was a microscopic representation of the National Party's aspirations, ideals and values (Adam, 1971).

Since colonial expansion was profoundly conditioned by ethnocentrism, and ethnocentrism is, in the final analysis a cultural phenomenon (Mazrui, 1984), the university tradition that emerged in colonial-apartheid South Africa became a clearest manifestation of cultural domination as a result of epistemicide. As such, university education in colonial-apartheid South Africa, like all other levels of schooling, was dominated by the epistemological paradigms of the Western colonial conquerors.

The fundamental difference between these categories of universities lies in that universities for indigenous conquered African peoples and the Coloured and Indian population groups lacked infrastructure for any form of meaningful research, teaching and learning to take place. According to Balintulo, 'the existence of such an infrastructure and its utilisation for the purpose of meaningful social research would, by definition, represent a negation of the fundamental principles of the theory and practice of colonial-apartheid as a system of minority race rule' (Balintulo, 1981). After all, universities for the indigenous conquered African peoples and the Coloured and Indian population groups were not established for educational purposes but primarily for political expedience (White, 1997). These institutions were only important to the extent that they enhanced the socio-economic and political supremacy of white colonial-settlers (Nkomo, 1981) through sustaining epistemicide as a critical means of perpetuating colonial-apartheid rule. Clearly, the

regime's position that 'the main aim of universities is that of widening the cultural and intellectual horizons of students, and of promoting in them honest scholarly thought and inquiry' (Bunting, 1989) was not spoken of indigenous conquered African, Coloured and Indian students.

The reasons for the establishment of separate universities for indigenous conquered African peoples and the Coloured and Indian population groups can thus only be understood within the context of political restructuring that took place in the 1950s and 1960s in South Africa (Gwala, 1988). South Africa, having historically created a source of cheap labour power as a result of the oppression and exploitation of indigenous conquered African peoples, Coloureds and Indians population groups, became a major beneficiary of foreign investment. This new investment, coupled with the massive growth of imperial backed mining industry, led to a rapid diversification of the economic activity into manufacturing and consequently the reproduction within the South African industrial sector of the monopoly capitalist relationship of production of the imperialist metropolis.

However, the opportunity provided by the growth of the manufacturing sector was threatened by a growing and politicised urban indigenous conquered African working class and mass mobilisation of indigenous conquered African population under the leadership of the Africa National Congress (ANC) and, later, the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). The colonial-apartheid regime, as the

ultimate guarantor of the necessary conditions for capital accumulation, took measures aimed at finding a permanent solution to the 'problem' of indigenous conquered African resistance and opposition. This solution came in the form of the system of the so-called homelands. This was a system of indirect rule and control that sought to permanently locate indigenous conquered African urban workers in the rural areas in terms of familial, cultural and political ties, while continuing to reproduce its economic dependence in urban wage labour.

Such colonial-apartheid measures and the 'ethnification' of the indigenous conquered African population were originally formulated in the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951 and refined through the Promotion of Bantu Self-Government Act of 1959. In terms of the latter Act, eight indigenous conquered African ethnic groups were recognised as 'national units' which were to be given self-government and ultimately 'independence'. It was within this context that separate universities for indigenous conquered Africans were also established. The establishment of these universities concretely articulated the ideology of separate development as they were meant to ensure conformity with the social order and submissiveness to white colonial-settler employers, territorial authority and the central government. It is a major irony that after years of the disruption and distortion of indigenous conquered African modes of production and social organisation premised on the logic of colonial-apartheid through violent means, the

cornerstone of colonial-apartheid educational policy became ethnicisation of universities.

3. 4 The regime's control over universities

The nature of the syllabi, geographic location, staff composition and bureaucratic style and ideological orientation were the major control mechanisms that existed over these universities. These factors enabled colonial-apartheid South Africa to create, at universities for indigenous conquered Africans, repressive educational institutions that became powerful, authoritarian monoliths designed not only to shape the preferences but also the actual sensibilities and avenues of possibilities for indigenous conquered African peoples. The tightest control over the educational process was in the control over syllabi. In terms of what was taught, ideological indoctrination took precedence over intellectual and academic rigour. Not only was the social, political, economic and other infrastructural bases affected in South Africa, but also the very substance of what passed for knowledge itself.

Overall pedagogy was essentially domesticating rather than generating critical consciousness as learners had to revere and regurgitate what instructors taught and had to extol the **status quo** and (ethnicisation notwithstanding) Western civilisation. The active negation, by means of education, of indigenous African culture and history remained a dangerous weapon used by white colonial-settlers (Ngcongco & Vansina, 1984). Departments such as political science and history

became notoriously vacuous as they were expunged of theoretical aspects and excluded 'controversial' issues, particularly those relating to colonisation, exploitation, oppression, dehumanisation and the political resistance by indigenous conquered Africans as these could potentially prod students to critically evaluate their social conditions (Ralekhetho, 1981; Gwala, 1988). Searching questions usually invited the wrath of the regime. As far as research was concerned, disciplines such as anthropology conducted descriptive and empirical studies that centred around such trivialities as Xhosa cosmetics rather than political issues such as land dispossession, while social work projects were based on a 'blaming the victim' theoretical framework (Balintulo, 1981). This theoretical framework urges the poor, disadvantaged or dispossessed to look within themselves for their problems (Ryan, 1971). They are discouraged from locating such problems within the context of the political economy of colonial-apartheid.

As a result of epistemicide, the social sciences and humanities remained supremely indifferent to critical aspects of indigenous conquered African experience. This was primarily because the theoretical frameworks, basic methodologies, under-girding philosophies, core postulates and cultural prisms used were drawn from and essentially represented extrapolates of discrete Western socio-historical experiences and cultural specificities (Lebakeng, 2000; Lebakeng & Phalane, 2001). Epistemicide ensured that colonial-apartheid universities were not only a reflection but, more

importantly, a product of this particular Western experience in the ethnocentric sense.

The geographic location of most universities for indigenous conquered Africans deprived academics and students of constant interface with scholars from other institutions. Moreover, since invited speakers to these universities needed approval from university authorities, usually the invited guest's academic, social and political backgrounds were submitted to the authorities for scrutiny before permission could be granted. The control of invited speakers and of the intellectual exposure of academics and learners was best illustrated by the types of guest speakers invited to graduation ceremonies. The most commonly invited guest speakers were conservative academics, state functionaries, homeland bureaucrats or representatives of the corporate sector.

Though the colonial-apartheid regime professed self-rule for these universities, only the departments of education and African languages were not preponderantly staffed by white colonial-settlers. In 1971, a decade after the establishment of these universities, the racial composition still reflected the above assertion. For instance, at universities for indigenous conquered Africans during the same time there were 235 white colonial-settler staff compared to 57 indigenous conquered Africans, in the Coloured universities, 72 white colonial-settlers and 2 Coloureds. Such gross racial imbalances and discrimination laid the basis over calls for Africanisation at universities for

indigenous conquered Africans such as the University of the North (White, 1997).

All appointments of staff, senate and councils were under ministerial control. The Minister of Education had far-reaching powers including the powers of dismissal of anyone deemed subversive to the regime. The Minister also had the final word about who was appointed to teach. A case in point was when the University of Cape Town, on the recommendations of the university senate, appointed an indigenous conquered African in the person of Mr. Archie Boyce Mafeje (now a professor and senior researcher) to the position of lectureship. Under the direct threat from the Minister of Education the university council rescinded its decision (Personal discussion with Professor A.B. Mafeje, 1987 at the American University in Cairo; Marquard, 1969; Hendricks, 2002). Stringent regulations were laid down for the conduct of staff and students by which they were, among others, forbidden to take any part whatsoever in politics or to criticise the regime. While a few academics and scholars working in South Africa confronted the regime both politically and in academic work, the overwhelming majority acquiesced.

The colonial-apartheid regime also ensured that in practice, control of these universities was strictly maintained through authoritarian principles by university principals or rectors. Moreover, university councils, the highest decision-making bodies which were recognised by law as the governing bodies of each university consisted of the principal or rector, vice-

principals or vice-rectors, members elected by senate, members appointed by the National President. Through majority control of councils by members of the Broederbond, especially Afrikaner academics and business personalities who were appointed by the regime, these structures reflected the ideology and policy of colonial-apartheid. The Broederbond, was a secret, oath-governed society of upper-class male Afrikaners that penetrated and shaped political and social life in colonial-apartheid South Africa. It was established in 1918 and became Afrikanerdom's political organisation consisting of the clergy, farmers, academics and politicians (Serfontein, 1979).

Advisory black councils, which were part of these universities, consisted of not more than eight members. Dlamini has deridingly referred to the advisory black councils as 'dummy structures' because they could not influence any policy decisions (Dlamini, 1995). The senate, a body with responsibility chiefly for the academic affairs of the universities is constituted, by and large, by heads of departments and professors. Many of these professors were graduates of the repressive and racist universities for Afrikaner colonial-settlers (Gwala, 1988). For the most part there was a great overlap of membership of influential representatives in the core structures such as council, senate and campus management. In this regard, the consistency in the kind of perspectives that were required to sustain colonial-apartheid was ensured.

Under Prime Ministers H.F. Verwoerd and J. Vorster, priority of the National Party was given to the political development of homelands. Partly as a response to external pressure and partly as a means of diffusing internal pressures for inclusion, independent homelands were supposed to develop self-governing political structures. Homeland administrations relieved the strained white colonial-apartheid bureaucracy by enticing rural indigenous conquered Africans to administer their own poverty and to police themselves. The grand colonial-apartheid strategy of 'independent' homelands also provided the legal framework for denationalising the citizens in the central areas which were considered to be for 'whites only'.

Within this context, the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement, with its stringent race-conscious pronouncements such as 'we are Black students, not black Student' was initially welcomed by the colonial-apartheid regime. The colonial-apartheid regime initially embraced the Black Consciousness Movement as its philosophy was seen to be supportive of the regime's ethnicisation of South African politics. Ironically, although the Black Consciousness Movement sought to revitalise resistance to colonial-apartheid as a result of the temporary lull in internal political opposition existing at the time, most of the harshest critics of its philosophy were the leadership of the established liberation movement as they considered its basic political premise as fundamentally naïve. Partly, this position on the part of the established liberation movement was the need to preserve their privileged

status as the true representatives of the struggling people of South Africa. This struggle for ascendancy and power was common even within the established liberation movement.

In essence, the central contention of the Black Consciousness philosophy was that resignation to racial domination was rooted in self-hatred and this had major political implications. Among these implications they included the fact that the black person's low sense of self-esteem fostered political disunity, allowed ethnic leaders and moderates to usurp the role of spokespersons for the black masses and encourage dependence on white leadership. Conversely, a heightened sense of racial awareness would encourage greater solidarity and mobilise mass commitment to the process of liberation. In this sense, the Black Consciousness Movement aimed at destroying the very central policy of colonial-apartheid, namely, the homeland programme (Halisi, 1992; Buthelezi, 1991). This was made clear by the rhetorical question that was asked by the late Onkgopotse Ramothibi Tiro, a former President of the Student Representative Council (SRC) during an address at the graduation ceremony at the University of the North. He asked 'Do you think that the white minority can willingly commit political suicide by creating numerous states which might turn to be hostile in future?' (Tiro, 1976).

By initially supporting the Black Consciousness Movement the regime undermined its own foundation of ethnicity. The Black Consciousness Movement left a

legacy of defiance in action and inspired a culture of fearlessness which was carried forward by the June 1976 youth and sustained throughout the 1980s. As a result, the colonial-apartheid regime failed to ethnicise the indigenous conquered African intelligentsia's political consciousness and to divert its energy into ethnic-based developments. For indigenous conquered African university students, colonial-apartheid especially as these policies expressed themselves directly to them through ethnic exclusivism, were deliberate efforts to deny them a role in the meaningful exercise of political power through ethnic fragmentation. As a consequence, the students opposed colonial-apartheid in general (Beard, 1972; Nkondo, 1976; van Wyk, 1978; Mafeje, 1978; Lebakeng, 1991).

3. 5 The new dispensation and changing university environment.

While over the years student struggles put great pressure and caused distress within universities for indigenous conquered Africans and the Coloured and Indian minority groups, only cosmetic changes occurred in some of the universities as part of 'management crisis' tactics. This was particularly so in the appointment of rectors, the disbanding of nominated councils and their replacement with elected councils, increase in indigenous conquered African, Coloured and Indian staff and improvement in salaries and, more importantly, student representation in university committees at these universities. It is important to note that student struggles centred around issues of their representation and participation in all

structures that took decisions that affected them such as physical planning, councils, senates and hostel management committees. They demanded accountability and transparency from management committees.

It is in this sense that the educational struggle in colonial-apartheid South Africa remained essentially political. An overview of student struggles at universities shows that they have largely been confined to issues of political repression and undemocratic governance and that substantive issues relating to the contents (what was taught) and processes (how it was taught) of education were overlooked. In fact, debates on transformation have predominantly focussed on structural aspects of these institutions (Kgaphola, 1995; Seepe & Lebakeng, 1998) and this has had serious implications for the culture of teaching and learning (Dlamini, 1995). Initially it was the intra-institutional micro-aspects such as university councils, senates and hostel management. The result is that today the racial composition of councils and senates has changed and higher education governance and responsibility for academic affairs has also increased levels of involvement by stakeholders, especially students.

Currently transformation revolves around macro-aspects such as institutional mergers. The very idea of merging gained currency in different countries following the Second World War when higher education institutions either voluntarily or involuntarily decided to pool together and utilise their shared resources. The term

mergers, according to Skodvin, refers to the joining of two or more separate institutions into one new single institution (Skodvin, 1999). The value of mergers is recognised and acknowledged as a grand strategy to exploit individual institution's strengths and advantages, building on these to grow the individual capacities of the different institutions into even more powerful entities.

However, there is concurrence that processes of merging seldom take place without disruptions (Skodvin, 1999; Grant, 2000). Some of these disruptions include; (1) a clash of institutional cultures, (2) different educational philosophies and priorities, (3) poor quality of the junior partner's academic programmes and staff (Fielden & Markham, 1997).

Mergers, as the National Working Group's latest proposals, seem to close the consultative and policy formulation on higher education transformation and restructuring that started since the assumption to power by the African National Congress in 1994. The proposed mergers have a great potential to perpetuate epistemicide since weaker institutions for indigenous Africans, Coloureds and Indians have mostly been incorporated into stronger institutions formerly for white colonial-settlers. This will be the case for as long as the question of the inscription of the African experience into the curricula and syllabi remains unanswered.

In this regard, institutional mergers, like all other policy documents and Acts formulated since the new dispensation, do not address the central issue of epistemicide. Among these policy documents and Acts may be included: A Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994), Implementation Plan for Education and Training (1994), Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa (1994), White Paper on Education and Training (1995), The National Commission on Higher Education (1996), the White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (1997), The Higher Education Act (1997) and the National Plan for Higher Education (2001).

This is because institutional mergers obscure the nature and essence of education and intellectual production at colonial-apartheid universities. As such, universities for indigenous conquered African peoples, the Coloured and Indian population groups which are essentially carbon copies of institutions for white colonial-settlers. They will continue to function as the transmission belt of studies and programmes designed primarily to satisfy the needs of the posterity of the conquerors of (South) Africa). The problem with the current mergers is that they focus exclusively on governance and structures and are not based on a comprehensive curriculum audit, nor are they informed by a guiding educational philosophy deriving from indigenous African epistemology. During the debates on restructuring higher education organised by the Centre for Development and Enterprises, Reddy, pointed out that 'the National Working Group's terms

of reference were concerned with institutional restructuring and did not include curriculum issues.'

The transformation of universities will have to go beyond mere mergers to reclaiming indigenous African epistemology as a precondition for a truly sustainable transformation that recognises the exigency for natural and historical justice. What theories of transformation were born in this situation? Do these theories have the potential to bring the exigency, in actuality, to reclaim and reaffirm the right to have an African university? We now turn to the next chapter to consider answers to these questions.

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CHAPTER 4

THEORIES OF TRANSFORMATION OF UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter four broad theories on transformation of universities in South Africa are identified, namely, the protectionist, the institutional autonomist, the micro-level pro-change and the macro-level pro-change. These theories, marked by dissensus as to what transformation should entail, are discussed and critiqued. What emerge are sharp divisions over the substance of the goals and pace of the process and the nature of transformation strategies.

For some theories of transformation imply striving to be like universities for white colonial-settlers, for others it means achieving equity through redressing the past. Redressing the imbalances of the past simply means that universities for indigenous conquered Africans, Coloureds and Indians need to be assisted to improve their facilities and resources, their staffing and their leadership and management skills. Yet for others, it means that universities in South Africa should strive for the right to be African through the reclamation of the indigenous African epistemology.

4.2 The protectionist theory on transformation of universities.

The protectionists have cast the issue of transformation in terms of standards and epistemology. The core of their argument is that standards will be lowered as universities redefine their priorities to accommodate the rising numbers of indigenous African, Coloured and Indian students who are joining universities formerly for white colonial-settlers. It is a tendency that argues that quantity as a result of massification, that is, the broadening of gender, age and racial social base inevitably undermines quality. Three aspects of the use of standards have been prominent, namely, standards of entry, engagement and exit (Jansen, 1995). Initially, standards of entry were used as a mechanism of denying these students to study at universities for white colonial-settlers. With the realisation of the inevitability of rising enrolments on the part of indigenous African, Coloured and Indian students at these universities, the focus then shifted from standards of entry to both standards of engagement and exit. Whereas the arguments of standards of entry were used to keep indigenous African, Coloured and Indian students out of these institutions, those of engagement and exit have guaranteed that very few of those students who succeed to enter do actually exit successfully.

The protectionists also argue that academic standards will deteriorate if a large number of indigenous African, Coloured and Indian are included as part of

the lecturing staff because of serious deficiencies in their educational background (Vera, 1996). In this sense, the South African educational establishment has seemingly barricaded itself in an iron fortress of "high standards" (Vilakazi and Tema, 1991). However, as Nzimande points out, one is not arguing against being judged internationally, but that this cannot be the sole criterion for South African education policy (Nzimande, 1997).

The other component characterising the protectionist theory is its fierce opposition to any theoretical/philosophical pronouncements that suggest or recommend abandoning the elitist Western nature of schooling in South Africa. For them, Western traditions have benefited South Africa by taking it out of darkness. The elusive justification for holding these assumptions emanates from vacuous notions of the superiority of colonial conquerors. In particular, the protectionists are firmly opposed to the Africanisation of scholarship in terms of teaching, research and publication. For the protectionists, Africanisation only has the potential to lower standards, encourage poor scholarship, campus trashing, looting and intellectual anarchy (Makgoba, 1996) since these are common features of universities for indigenous Africans, Coloureds and Indians. The notion that Africanisation and high standards are incompatible, or are inherently in tension has led the protectionist theorists to perceive the challenge facing universities as one of maintaining standards, rather than improving them (Kgaphola, 1995).

Two fundamental critiques can be levelled against the protectionist theory. First, the protectionist critique of Africanisation is based on doom-laden assumptions and narrow reasoning that fails to take into account the bigger historical picture namely, that of epistemicide. Their apprehension to abandon Western traditions and embrace Africanisation in the South African education is because they want to thrive on the historical injustices and denial of rights for indigenous peoples stemming from colonial-apartheid epistemicide. Essentially, the protectionists perpetuate the notion of indigenous Africans as being incapable of handling the responsibility for determining the direction, scope and nature of transformation as required by the new constitutional dispensation in South Africa. The core philosophy underlying this attitude is the colonial-settlers' postulates that indigenous Africans in South Africa, as elsewhere in the continent, are irrational sub-human beings. Hence the colonial-settlers in South Africa, as elsewhere in the colonies, 'appropriated the sole, unilateral right to define and delimit the meaning of experience, knowledge and truth for {South} Africans' (Ramose, 2002). It is noteworthy that the colonisation of South Africa was founded and continued to thrive on the false claim that only Western colonisers had the prior, superior and exclusive right to reason (Ramose, 1999; Payle and Lebakeng, 2001).

Second, the protectionist theory seems to be developing as an anti-transformation tradition that

has come to cohere around a discourse on maintaining standards. According to Vera, an evaluation of the intellectual thinking behind the standards argument is the fear that most white colonial-apartheid intellectuals and academics will experience erosion of their power base (Vera, 1996). This "fear factor" has led to the determination to dress up self-interest in the guise of noble ideals. This could spawn a "law of inertia of privilege" that guarantees that there is no reversal of epistemicide and reclamation of indigenous African epistemology. The core of Western thought is its claim to be universal and this includes its standards. However, from the perspective of the sociology of indigenous knowledge, the assumptions which constructed Western thought and traditions are not universal, but are derived from specific and discreet Western experiences. Implicit in this perspective is that standards are not universal but contextual. In fact, Western claims of universalism, including universalism of its standards are being exposed as false (Amin, 1988; Rosaldo, 1989; Coombe, 1991; Said, 1992; Blaut, 1993, Noel, 1994; Ramose, 1999; Nabudere, 2002). For Nabudere, standards that are partial and located in one or a few epistemologies of knowledge cannot be said to be universal. Such standards can only be ethnocentric, biased in favour of a particular culture or civilisation, such as Western traditions, which privilege Western-based epistemologies and 'scientific' system of knowledge built on them (Nabudere, 2002).

Jansen takes issue with the idea of decontextualising the notion of academic standards (Jansen, 1995). According to him, standards are tentative, constructed, historical and contextual and certainly not universal, permanent, objective, neutral or invariant. He further argues that standards are myths constructed by human beings, not because they are accurate, but because they serve a useful social purpose. There is no single fixed, absolute or universal definition of standards that may be applied and upheld regardless of context. Clearly the notion of standards must be subjected to a careful, specific and historically sensitive analysis. Ramose advises that rather than maintaining and applying academic and educational standards, we need to continually create and redefine them (Ramose, 1997). This is more so because the indigenous Africans in colonial-apartheid South Africa had no part in the conceptualisation, construction, design and application of such academic standards (anonymous, 1981{as in original text}).

Because calls for the maintenance and application of academic standards turn out to be no more than a ruse to retain epistemicide, there is a need to distinguish between a socially responsible notion of pursuing excellence from one that seeks to reproduce past inequalities. At the core of such distinction is the understanding that whereas research is a universal criterion for academic excellence, the agenda of research, as of teaching, needs to be highly contextualised with a view to addressing issues of social relevance. The protectionists have responded by

metaphorically 'depoliticising' the relevancy debate and claiming to adopt an elusive and fictitious scientific neutralist position. It has been said - perhaps apocryphally - that there are two ways of losing oneself: either in the universal or in the particular.

Regarding universities which have suffered from epistemicide, there is a need to play a delicate balancing act by avoiding dispersion in universalism (blindly adoring mythical international standards which may cast a shadow on national development objectives) and immurement in particularism (coercing national universities to be inward-looking and isolating them from the global context) (Nyerere, 1970). Any attempt to resolve the tensions between universalising and particularising imperatives by establishing a hierarchy by positing that the latter merely functions to confirm the former impoverishes rather than enriches their dialectical relationship.

4.3 The institutional autonomist theory on transformation of universities.

The history of education policy debates in Africa has been an enervating dilemma between two starkly opposite and seemingly incompatible positions. The first position in the debate is well expressed by the statement at the end of the Accra workshop in 1972 on "Creating the African University". The Association of African Universities declared that "the university in Africa occupies too critical a position of importance

to be left alone to determine its own priorities" and that it should therefore "accept the hegemony of government" (Yesufu, 1973).

The second and opposing position vociferously asserts the autonomy of higher education institutions against any form of state 'interference', and is embodied in the recommendations of the Ashby Commission which in the 1960's stated that "a university has to be insulated from the hot and cold wind of politics". In this vision of higher educational governance, states should simply fund the higher education institutions who would then exercise complete discretion in the allocation and spending of these funds, as well as in appointments, decisions on the curriculum, access and promotions. The Ashby Report, which was recognisably the idealised picture of the traditional British university/state relationship, was universally acclaimed as a masterpiece on education in developing countries. Essentially, it was a quantitative report that dealt with the quick production of human power to man governments and industries.

The latter position, which we will refer to as the institutional autonomists, was profoundly informed by the Ashby Commission report. Its defining characteristic is the core argument that universities are entitled to and should enjoy autonomy and academic freedom. Accordingly, universities should be insulated from politics, that is, they must have the right to determine for themselves, through their ruling bodies i.e. the Council, as to who may teach, the contents of

what is taught, the method of how to teach and choice of who may study. Thus, 'outside' interests or stakeholders, including the government, have no right to interfere with the supposed autonomy and 'reasoning mind' of the universities. Such reification of universities, that is, objectifying such institutions to the extent of denying their cultural and social influences, renders them extra-societal. However, universities are part of societies and cannot be extricated even for purposes of analysis.

The fundamental assumption of the institutional autonomists is that reflective and rational individuals in positions of power and academics in these institutions can identify imperfections, such as racism, of such institutions and logically come up with appropriate mechanisms to address them. For instance, though not believing in the inherent perfectibility of the system, the institutional autonomists think that indigenous African, Coloured and Indian students who have been accepted at universities formerly for white colonial-settlers can be uplifted through the educative efforts of the more selfless among those who possess the resources to change things.

Clearly this assumption needs to be rendered problematic if we are to gain adequate understanding of its implications. Historically, the single biggest influence in university reform or change in Africa has been the interventionist role of post-independence governments. At other times this happened as a

response to student demands. Given that those who are supposedly selfless are the same people thriving on epistemicide, the assumption of benevolence being a solution is naive. Given the highly entrenched nature of epistemicide in South Africa, there can be no meaningful transformation of universities without a distinct African scholarship and purposive objective on the part of government to reverse the epistemic **status quo**. It is noteworthy that the current government has only insisted that universities formerly for white colonial-settlers should accept and reflect the ethos of multiculturalism, and move rapidly in the direction of reflecting the racial demography of the country (Hugo, 1998). This is certainly a far cry from the restoration and reassertion of the indigenous African paradigm of knowledge.

Essentially, institutional autonomist theory functions as a guardian of the **status quo ante** by tinkering rather superficially with the problems facing universities. It still identifies strongly with the values of the colonial-apartheid system and sees little need for any profound change. It encourages the adaptation or compliance of members to the needs of the system through the application of various techniques and tactics. For instance, the universities for Afrikaner colonial-settlers, such as the University of Stellenbosch, have championed a position of assertive insistence on defending the right to maintain their Afrikaner character (Hugo, 1998). The results of their work generally show up as system's

maintenance rather than system's change as they mute discontent, cool the situation or otherwise inhibit the transfer of power and resources from those who control them to those who are controlled by them. This is regardless of the progressive and pro-change rhetoric that usually accompanies their pronouncements. The institutional autonomists are afraid of even the slightest government intervention, mainly because of the potential for government intervention that could help to overcome conditions of epistemicide. Change, after all, is a painful process (Toffler, 1985; Handy, 1989), especially for those whose interests are threatened by changing the conditions that preserve and privilege them.

4.4 The micro-level pro-change theories on transformation of universities.

The proponents of micro-level pro-change conceptualise change in a piece-meal, incremental and micro-level sense. Three factors are important in understanding the concept of change under which the proponents of micro-level pro-change operate. The first is that its time perspective on change is incredibly long. Thus, its proponents continually urge indigenous Africans, Coloureds and Indians to be elastically patient, accepting relatively small changes with the assumption that time and good will are the ultimate hand-maidens of an improved lot. Second, change is perceived as occurring most legitimately and effectively from the top down. Change is driven by the benevolence of the enlightened and not through popular social struggles.

Third, the theory focuses on few aspects of transformation such as access and governance and does not accord other aspects such as curriculum (the whole way in which teaching and learning is organised) and syllabus (the content of what is taught) priority status. The reason for incremental change is that while some people may be aware of the need for change, they may have difficulty in bringing it about and even be doubtful about which aspects of change to effect (Dlamini, 1995).

The assurance from the then Minister of Education, Professor Bengu is inconsistent with the actual transformation agenda of the government in practice: "Transformation is not about accommodation or inclusion of the newly enfranchised into the **status quo**. Rather, transformation must interrogate the programmes, qualification structures, articulation among institutions, languages of learning, financing, and access and success of all learners" (Bengu, 1996). The government, through its operational mechanism in education namely, the Ministry of Education, has come up with policy documents, education Acts and proposals which do not indicate a move towards a comprehensive and holistic change that takes into account and is sensitive to the exigency of historic and fundamental justice for the indigenous African peoples. A case in point is the National Working Group's report proposals for institutional mergers as a solution to the major challenges emanating from colonial-apartheid higher education system. The government has identified the major challenges facing higher education as follows:

* Redressing the historical racial, gender and class inequalities pertaining to access to the system.

* Aligning the outputs of the system with the strategic human resource needs of the country.

* Acting as a catalyst for nurturing a vibrant civil society.

* Fostering interdisciplinary scholarship and engendering relevance to social reality.

* Effecting accountability at a system-wide level and a democratic ethos at the level of institutional governance.

The micro-level pro-change theory easily lends itself to the criticism of failing to problematise the epistemological paradigm and pedagogical processes of what is taught and how it is taught. The main reason for this is that the proponents of micro-level pro-change are extremely superficial in their historical analysis as they speak to apartheid as the immediate problem, thereby pushing to the background the fundamental problem in the area of education, namely epistemicide. The theory leaves the field of education wide open for indigenous African, Coloured and Indian academics and students to remain perpetual slaves to Western epistemological paradigms. By failing to problematise epistemicide, the micro-level pro-change theory inadvertently forestalls and undermines the transformation process.

In essence, the micro-level pro-change theory is reformist, and reformist policies are by definition 'strategies designed to change and modify social conditions that have become widely regarded as unjust and unacceptable. However, the new formula for reform serves to strengthen and perpetuate the essential power relations embodied in the earlier social situation while offering relatively better conditions for a significant proportion of the intended group' (Kallaway, 1984). The micro-level pro-change theory has focussed exclusively on the structural aspects of the system without taking cognisance of the fact that not only the structure but also the culture and character of universities are highly problematic. The current focus on the socio-economic development should not be allowed to seduce policy-makers and the country to ignore culture and identity as essential components of transformation. A change in the structural aspects without an alteration of the character of universities implies no philosophical change. As such, the micro-level pro-change theory does not mark a decisive break with the past.

4.5 The macro-level pro-change theory on transformation of universities.

The macro-level pro-change theory is primarily concerned with a broader understanding of transformation, namely, a totalising, holistic, radical and comprehensive change. Accordingly, this theory does not view the transformation of tertiary educational institutions as an insular process

detached from similar processes in the society as a whole. In fact, education in general and higher education in particular, is seen as carrying the burden of providing the intellectual and cultural leadership to accomplish the transformation of South Africa (Kgaphola, 1999). According to the proponents of macro-level pro-change, the master narratives of the new educational dispensation must be framed by the desire for Africanisation. This means grounding the indigenous African university in African realities and experiences as part of rejecting the idea that Africa is the outpost of Western civilisation (Mamdani, 1994).

Some scholars (Seepe, 1996; Ramose, 1998; Nkondo, 1998; Kgaphola, 1999) have argued that the absence of a firm statement on curriculum on the part of the government ignores the fact that there is reciprocity between the political order and the orientation of the education system in any society. For Kgaphola, this disconcerting feature has actually created a philosophical ambiguity in the system with many higher education institutions merely refolding their old cloth to suit the sensual instincts of their customer (Kgaphola, 1999). These actions evidently fail to address the basic epistemological questions, namely; upon whose experience is the philosophy informing the new education system based? and what is the status of marginalised forms of knowledge drawn from the African experience? It is within this context that some scholars (Makgoba, 1996; 1997; Seepe, 1996; 1998; Lebakeng, 1998; Ramose, 1998) have called for the

Africanisation of universities in South Africa. Others (Moulder, 1991) have specifically called for the Africanisation of universities for white colonial-settlers (Moulder, 1991). The erroneous assumption in Moulder's thought is that universities for indigenous Africans, Coloureds and Indians are already Africanised. The reality is that these institutions are also products of epistemicide and should be subjected to the same move of reversing epistemicide and reclaiming an indigenous African epistemology.

The macro-level pro-change theory has been critiqued for its lack of coherence. Some are even of the opinion that Africanisation means different things to different people and are concerned that no fundamental analysis of the concept exists (McGill, 1993). Although McGill's article, contrary to his claims, is not comprehensive in reviewing articles on Africanisation, one important issue that he identifies is a lack of coherence in the many definitions of the concept. This is what led Vorster and Greenstein to conclude that Africanisation poses what may well prove to be the greatest challenge of the transformation of South African education in general and curriculum policies in particular (Voster, 1995; Greenstein, 1997). It is difficult to argue with both Vorster and Greenstein on this point since colonial-apartheid's epistemicide ensured that this is the case. This is more so because unlike in most countries of the African continent, in South Africa the process of de-Africanisation took a more acute and deepened form (Ntuli, 1999). Moreover, the theory has been critiqued

for being rather extremely radical. This critique is based on the irreconciliability of the macro-level pro-change theory's position and the fact that the country is going through a reconciliation process. But this critique, although still underdeveloped, is superficial and ahistorical as it fails to understand that the macro-level pro-change theory takes its point of departure as the unjust colonial wars of conquest.

Given the history of colonial-apartheid in South Africa, a more radical remedy would imply a thorough transformation of the educational system by inverting it and shaping it in the image of indigenous African people who are the overwhelming majority. In other words, the cultures, traditions, concerns, sensitivities and sensibilities of the indigenous African peoples should be the starting point for a new system that is valid not only for Africans but also for other South Africans (Greenstein, 1997). That the theory takes into consideration the existence of other epistemological paradigms is a critical factor in countering the claims that Africanisation is a substitution of one form of domination with another.

4.6 Evaluation of the four theories on transformation of education

Having looked at how the different theories, namely, the protectionist, institutional autonomist, micro-level pro-change and macro-level pro-change explain transformation of education, I have compared them for

the soundness of their assumptions, logical consistency and scope of explanation. In looking at the problems and prospects of the transformation of universities with particular reference to the right to be an African university, the researcher finds the macro-level pro-change theory to offer a more sophisticated historical understanding of fundamental issues. The theory allows one to locate the historical dynamics and processes of epistemicide within the broader context of the history, polity and sociality of the country. More importantly, it gives insights into the most important gaps in literature on South African society in general and education in particular.

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CHAPTER 5

PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF TRANSFORMATION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE RIGHT TO BE AN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY.

5.1 Introduction.

This chapter qualitatively analyses data from respondents at the three focal universities, namely, the University of the North, Vista University and the University of Venda for Science and Technology. A total of five questions were asked to forty respondents per institution who ranged from support staff, academic staff, administrative staff, students, institutional planners, directors, deans and managers. These questions were (1) What is the previous and current vision and mission statement of your university? (2) During the colonial-apartheid era it was impractical for universities to strive for the right to be African, what are the prospects and problems at play in the new dispensation at your university? (3) What are central issues being contested in the realm of education at your university? (4) What philosophy underpins transformation at your university? and (5) Are there intellectual forces driving or impeding the Africanisation agenda at your university?

The results of this study illustrate the different routes each institution has taken in relation to the right to be an African university. What comes out

clearly is that the University of the North has no Africanisation agenda and there is lack of consensus as to the current vision and mission statement of the institution. However, Vista University and the University of Venda for Science and Technology have Africanisation agendas although their understanding of such agendas differs. Moreover, at both universities there is consensus as to the current vision and mission statements of these institutions.

5.2 Question one. What is the previous and current vision and mission statement of your university?

This question was aimed at finding the vision and mission statement knowledge (the level of knowledge that exists among institutional members regarding the existence or lack thereof of vision and mission statements in their institutions).

It has been suggested that clearly defined missions are essential to the well-being of an institution (Drucker, 1973) and that those institutions without clear missions and visions may be more susceptible to external and internal pressures (Perrow, 1970). Most respondents at each university are not familiar with the previous vision and mission statements of their respective institutions. The main reason for this lack of knowledge seems to be the fact that such vision and mission statements, where they existed, were not a product of broad based stakeholders but were crafted by University Councils. This resulted not only in the low buy in process but general lack of knowledge about

such vision and mission statements. The lack of knowledge regarding previous vision and mission statements is demonstrated by the responses from even senior staff members at these institutions.

A registrar at one of the universities responded that *'If ever they existed they are now intellectual dinosaurs.'*

A member of management at Vista University simply said that *'There are no records of the previous vision and mission statement.'*

A senior lecturer and leading member of the Broad Transformation Forum at Venda University for Science and Technology responded that *'Previous ones unknown but they surely did not include science and technology focus nor were they problem-oriented and project-based.'*

An institutional planner at one of the universities responded that there were *'No records of the previous vision and mission statement.'*

A member of the support staff at the University of Venda for Science and Technology pointed out that she does not even think any of her colleagues are aware of such vision and mission statements.

Despite the general lack of knowledge, the researcher was able to locate some documents containing the previous vision and mission statement of the three universities.

For instance, the University of the North Council minutes of July 1996 indicate that in June 1995 the University Council, after in-depth discussions and debates, formulated the following vision and mission statement for the University:

Vision

The University of the North is to be a quality institution of higher learning and critical reflection which is innovative and responsive to change and which is rooted in the issues of the society in which it is located, and is recognised world-wide as being a centre for relevant theory and practice of people-centred development.

Mission statement

The Mission of the University of the North shall be to attain scholarship and professionalism among its staff and students and to improve the quality of life of the community in which it operates through:

- Good governance and effective management.
- Financial sustainability.
- Appropriate campuses and education policy and infrastructure.

- Creation of a culture of work, teaching, research and learning.
- A development orientation that is rooted in the community within which we operate and which emphasises adaptability and innovativeness.

Vista University's previous vision and mission statement were as follows:

Vision

Vista University aspires to provide innovative, affordable, values-based education with special focus on addressing the needs of the many communities it serves through its multi-campus structure.

Mission statement

Vista University, as a learner-centred, community-based institution, is repositioning itself to become a major player in selected niche areas of human resource development and national development by:

- The development and introduction of new and innovative programmes.
- The cultivation of a strong research ethos.

- Creating a culture of shared responsibility amongst all stakeholders.
- Promoting excellence as the yardstick for good practice in all areas of endeavour.

The strategic plan (1995 - 2000) of the University of Venda for Science and Technology contained the following previous vision and mission statement of the University:

Mission statement

The University of Venda together with its affiliated components, exists to build the region, the nation, the continent and the international community by providing appropriate knowledge and skills relevant to the needs of people at all levels through teaching, research and active participation in the community. The University strives to identify and use appropriate staff, infrastructure and technology to disseminate such knowledge and skills for the benefit of commerce, industry and the public sector, and for the overall empowerment of humanity.

Vision

The University will be a community of schools dedicated to inter-disciplinary activity which advances the cause of empowerment through:

- Innovative tertiary and supportive linkages with industry and commerce, the community and other institutions (nationally and internationally).
- Continuous proactive appraisal and development of staff as well as ongoing proactive organisational development.
- Continuous appropriate research and publications activity.
- Good teaching practices.
- Pedagogical excellence in the interests of empowerment.
- Addressing infrastructural, organisational and academic backlogs.
- Being a reservoir and custodian of knowledge accessible to both public and private consumers.
- Relentlessly upholding standards and the realisation of the University's scholarly function.

On the component of the question relating to the current vision and mission statement, respondents from the University of the North provided three different 'current' vision and mission statements. However, there is general knowledge on the part of respondents from both Vista University and the University of Venda

for Science and Technology. Such knowledge is accounted for by the fact that - unlike the previous vision and mission statements which were crafted by University Councils - the current vision and mission statements are the result of broad consultations of multiple stakeholders at the three institutions through strategic planning. Strategic planning is a concept that corporate business has developed in order to ensure effective competitiveness through rigorous process of self-analysis. Specifically, strategic planning asks questions such as where and what should our institution be in five years time by identifying strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats from the local, regional, national and international environments.

In developing their current vision and mission statements, the three universities shared the conviction that the departure from the colonial-apartheid objectives of these universities was non-negotiable and that such vision and mission statements should be informed by the imperatives of the new constitutional dispensation. None of the respondents problematised the current South African Constitution. Its existence is taken for granted to be facilitating rather than impeding transformation of higher education.

Respondents from both Vista University and the University of Venda for Science and Technology unanimously concurred as to the current vision and mission statements of the respective institutions. The

current vision and mission statement of Vista University is as follows:

Vision

Vista University as an African University for Social and Economic Development:

- Seeks excellence in learning, teaching, service and administration.
- Advances all forms of knowledge, especially the lived experiences of Africa.
- Promotes the effective and responsible use of knowledge; and
- Promotes the social and economic development interests of its feeder communities.

Mission statement

Vista University will be an advocate of a world that:

- Is free of social, racial and other prejudices.
- Has responsible, improved and equitable levels of economic and social development, and
- Enables individuals to realise their full potential.

Respondents from the University of Venda for Science and Technology all gave the same vision and mission statement as follows:

Mission statement

The University of Venda for Science and Technology provides, through a problem-oriented, project-designed curriculum, a science and technology education to which the human and social sciences provide a social context and an African perspective for the empowerment of the community it serves and for the cultivation of humanity in general.

Vision

The university is to be a community of schools dedicated to interdisciplinary activity which advances the cause of empowerment through:

- Becoming a fully-fledged Science and Technology University producing curriculum aimed at solving real-life problems.
- Innovative tertiary and supportive linkages with industry and commerce, the community and other institutions (nationally and internationally).
- Continuous proactive appraisal and development of staff as well as ongoing proactive organisational development.

- Continuous appropriate research and publication activity.
- Good teaching activity.
- Pedagogical excellence in the interest of empowerment.
- Addressing structural and academic backlogs.
- Being a reservoir and custodian of knowledge accessible to both public and private consumers.
- Relentlessly upholding standards, and the
- * Realisation of the university's Pan-African scholarly function.

Regarding the University of the North, respondents provided at least three different vision and mission statements. However, the most commonly given (by 25 of the 40 respondents) vision and mission statement was:

Mission statement

The University of the North is an innovative and responsive institution of higher learning dedicated to excellence in teaching, learning and research and to serving our changing society.

Vision

The University of the North strives to be a quality institution of higher learning and critical reflection, which is innovative, responsive to change, is rooted in the issues of the society in which it is located, and is recognised world-wide as the centre for relevant theory and practice of people-centred development.

According to a member of the interim management team, *'This low-level vision and mission knowledge is function of the ever changing management and instability at the institution since every man or woman at the top always tries to come up with something new'*

A senior lecturer in the Academic Development Unit explains the situation thus, *'The University has often altered its vision and mission statement over the last few years so that there are a number of them floating around which differs from one another.'*

The confusion at the University of the North is captured by a professor who responded, *'Which one among the many I have laid my eyes on is current?'*

5.3 Question two. During the colonial-apartheid era it was impractical for universities to strive for the right to be African, what are the prospects and problems at play in the new dispensation at your university?

Because of lack of explicit reference to the appellation African in all the 'current' vision and mission statements of the University of the North, a majority of the respondents are of the view that the institution has not consciously taken seriously the challenge to be African University.

According to a senior lecturer in the Academic Development Unit *'If the reference to its commitment to the community it serves and its rootedness to it is an indication of the University's intent to be African, then the reference is indeed vague and non-committal.'*

The same senior lecturer continued *'If the assumption is that we are already an African University by virtue of being a formerly black institution then we are totally misguided. We have to go beyond our obsession with racial demographic distribution as this relates to form and begin to engage the curriculum issue as this addresses the nature of institutions'*.

A member of the support staff at Vista University indicated that since they were not part of the university *'such issues do not concern them'*.

A professor in the School of Languages and Communication argues further that *'The University needs to understand that we have only been an 'African one' solely on the ground that the student body was African. I doubt whether the University of the North would deservedly qualify as an African institution on any other criteria, given that it had to forcibly think in the same way as other South African universities modelled on European ones.'*

'The problem' as a Director of one of the Schools in the Faculty of Humanities pointed out *'is that there is no common understanding of and active engagement with what an African University should be. Hence the transformation and restructuring processes were essentially structural rather than epistemological.'*

Despite this scenario, it was pointed out by most respondents that the prospects for striving for the right to be an African university are potentially bright. Two main reasons given to support this were that the new higher education landscape offers the opportunity for the University to be creative and display its unique African soul. The establishment of Folklore Studies was cited as a major example for this optimism. However, a visit to the Folklore Studies at the University shows that the programme is currently staffed by one senior lecturer. The second reason was that given the linkages with universities in the rest of the continent, this provides an opportunity for the University to learn from their experiences.

Having declared itself as an African University for Social and Economic Development, Vista University has consequently been repositioning itself and transforming curricula to address the national needs of the country through Africanisation and problem-based learning. As a result, flagship programmes in science education, social behavioural studies and health promotion have been implemented.

According to a registrar at one of the Vista campuses, *'Despite being a poetry without political content, without correct understanding of the history of colonisation and oblivious to racial power relations, the 'I am an African' parliamentary speech by President Thabo Mbeki has given the institution the necessary impetus to strive for the right to be an African University. Before then, the appellation African was like an anathema'*

A lecturer at the Soweto Campus of Vista University added that *'The transformation of tertiary institutions has also provided an opportunity for open expression of the Africanisation of universities. This is in spite of the fact that higher education policy has itself not placed curricula centre-stage in the ongoing struggle to transform'*

A law senior lecturer at the University of Venda for Science and Technology argued that *'It was never impractical for universities to strive for the right to be African since this was never a practicality issue but a political one. As such, the University of*

Venda for Science and Technology has taken the opportunity provided by the new constitutional dispensation to strive for the right to be an African University. As part of this, the University has introduced a University-wide core curricula that is compulsory for all first-entering students. This covers modules on African civilisation and scientific method and is designed to orient the student population to an Africanist perspective through education.

A senior manager at the University indicated that 'What the University is doing is to infuse the debate on transformation into the substance of pedagogy, curricula and assessment as a transformation project. For us at the University of Venda for Science and Technology, curriculum transformation has become the first line of the struggle for justice in recurriculation.'

Two main factors were implicated as great threat to the prospects of these universities striving for the right to be African. First is the internal factor of these universities having been denied the right to be African as a result of epistemicide. These institutions lack infrastructure intellectually, physically and in terms of personnel. Intellectually, texts that fill their libraries are bought from or donated by universities from Western countries. This has serious implications for intellectual representations developing from such situations. Consequently, they still rely on inherited curriculum

that was informed by the socio-cultural and philo-praxis imperatives of colonial-apartheid. In terms of the physical aspects the libraries are too small in size to accommodate a wide variety of reading texts and the personnel is mainly junior staff.

Second is the current wave of economic globalisation which is implicated as an external factor. The neo-liberal paradigm of globalisation is said to have occasioned pressure toward greater privatisation and marketisation of higher education thus affecting knowledge production. In this respect, alternative forms of knowledge are seen as a luxurious commodity in developing countries. Hence the impact of economic globalisation on higher education is that knowledge is being invariably turned into technical and pragmatic forms which must demonstrate utility and high economic returns. All aspects of knowledge, which did not fit into this technocratic and economistic project, are rendered irrelevant, invalid and useless.

A professor at Vista University's Sebokeng campus responded that *'The status of this university as disadvantaged and the global imperatives in knowledge production are compounding the peripheral role of these universities in scholarly production. As such, there has been no significant scholarship coming out of this institution, not to mention scholarship advocating for mainstreaming of indigenous knowledge.'*

A registrar at one of the campuses concluded that *'Given that the University has not ceased from*

structuring its syllabus as if we are still in the apartheid era, it is likely that the institution adopted its vision and mission statement simply for political correctness, and not because the general thinking on the campuses is that this is vital. Otherwise how is one to account for the inertia in transforming curricula in terms of content?'

The University of Venda for Science and Technology illustrates the problem created by the disadvantaged nature of this institution infrastructurally. Although the University has established a number of Centres such as the Centre for Indigenous Knowledge, Centre for African Studies, Centre for the African Renaissance which offer programmes which are aligned with the current vision and mission statement of the institution in terms of thrust and content, all these Centres are presently of less than 'critical size' i.e. they cannot offer enough options due to severe understaffing and logistical problems.

According to a senior lecturer in one of the Centres, *'Its not that the University is paying lip service by just having a good vision and mission statement, efforts at implementation are being pre-empted by lack of capacity. But we all agree on where we are going and how to get there.'*

Another senior lecturer in another Centre captures the situation thus *'At present a great deal of Africanisation of the curriculum, in line with the vision and mission statement of the University, is*

apparent in a diversity of modules. However, problems of human source and general infrastructure are undermining the process.'

5.4 Question three. What are central issues being contested in the realm of education at your university?

This question was designed to find out whether actual institutional practices are congruent with activities inherent in the vision and mission statements of the respective universities.

There is general agreement about what issues are central and constitute the realm of contestation in education at the University of the North. Of the forty (40) respondents, only six (6) did not mention the following 'central issues'

- Management inconsistency.
- Restructuring of the faculties.
- Establishment of new programmes.
- Responding to the prescriptions of the Department of Education on various issues.

The University of the North has been dominated by debates about management and restructuring and very little of curriculum issues have been on the institutional transformation agenda. Because there is low-level mission agreement (the level of consensus that exists among institutional members regarding their view of the purpose of their institution) the

issues that are being contested institutionally do not articulate and carry out the 'current' vision and mission statement of the University.

At Vista University four issues came to the fore. These are:

- Curriculum matters.
- Governance model.
- Role and responsibility of students.
- Addressing the pervasive issue of corruption and fraud.

Although respondents from Vista University showed vision and mission statement knowledge in terms of its existence and what it entails, there is low consensus (the extent to which members of the institution share a common definition of the vision and mission statement of the institution).

The University of Venda has been involved in administrative and educational activities aimed at accommodating the new direction of a comprehensive institution that offers university and technikon type degrees. These activities have centred on:

- To ensure that the curriculum reflects regional and international needs, issues and concerns.
- Quality assurance and enhancement across the board.
- Functional decentralisation.

- Performance management and evaluation system.
- Financial resources to implement the strategic plan.
- Sustaining and enhancing research capacity.
- Improving postgraduate training output.

* Developing mechanisms of attracting and retaining qualified staff and enhancing their commitment to the University.

- Repositioning the University as an African-centred institution whose responsibility would be to inculcate a pan-African sensibility and develop a strong African personality in students.

The University of Venda for Science and Technology, with its high level vision and mission statement agreement displays consistency i.e. the degree to which Centres, programmes, modules, administrative and management activities are in line with the stated and espoused current vision and mission statement of the university. These activities are articulated and maintained through self-conscious decisions throughout many levels of the institution.

5.5 Question four. What philosophy underpins transformation at your university?

The question is intended to explore the contents of the transformation agenda at the three universities.

A professor at the University of the North commented that *'There is no philosophy underpinning transformation at this institution: it is like candy floss, all sweet and fluffy and lovely with a spurious notion of moving away from the past.'*

This is supported by the views of many of the respondents who argue that the current process of transformation is driven by the need to be in line with government regulations ranging from mergers to programmes. In the absence of a clear and coherent philosophy of education the university has been like a rudderless ship that follows government prescriptions.

A professor in the discipline of English answered *'Transformation at the University of the North is more of a **passe-partout** or **cliché** term, almost devoid of real meaning than a shared reality.'*

At Vista University the issue of an underpinning philosophy has not been resolved. Although some respondents say that it is African-inspired values, it is not clear from their modules and programmes how this conclusion could be reached except that the University has declared itself the African University

for Social and Economic Development. Moreover, a more serious problem is that it is not clear in what sense the term Africa is being used. Despite its history and etymology and the various usages such as the political, racial and geographic by those who have engaged the term, here it is taken for granted. The diametrically opposed views and understandings from respondents at the various campuses of and within the same campuses at Vista University is indicative of an institution engaged in split-personality discourse. The problem seems to be how to reconcile the competing theoretical/philosophical positions and come up with a high level consensus.

There are fundamentally two positions held by Vista University members on Africanisation. The first position understands the process to mean a committed focus upon properly African problems and predicaments, but calling on the best expertise and knowledge globally available to solve them. For the proponents of this position, the concept of Africanisation is already incorporated in the broader and less contentious framework of 'responsiveness' to the social, political and economic context. Hence a representative of this position argued that:

'We have, in introducing flagship programmes, kept apace with Africanisation of our curriculum since we are responding to issues affecting the community around us.'

The second position understands Africanisation to mean a focus on African problems by reviving, developing and exploiting properly local and indigenous African knowledge traditions and developing these into viable solutions. But this position does not preclude dialogue with non-African traditions and cultures only that the latter will not be primary. Rather, they will be complementing aspects of the solutions.

A representative of this second position argued that *'Africanisation in the true sense of anchoring the university in the history, traditions, values, mythology of the continent and making it the repository and transmitter of indigenous African knowledge is what we are talking about. Anything else is a mockery.'*

The implication of the different understandings of Africanisation at Vista University on transformation is that the process seems to have been left to the whims of individual members with regard to what is taught.

A staff member at VUDEC distance education captures the situation thus *'The reality at Vista University is that education has been reformulated in vision and mission statement only but definitely not in common practice to fit in with the agenda of being an African university. Our point of departure is still not the African existential social reality both in terms of problems being addressed and how they are being addressed.'*

Relating to the University of Venda for Science and Technology there is a consensus that the philosophical underpinning of institutional transformation is a pan-Africanist philosophy and principles derived from the national aspirations of liberation and justice. According to many of the respondents, this is because the specific and unique objective situation in South Africa necessitates a need for an African university with a distinct African orientation in its philosophy of education and value systems.

A senior lecturer in law indicated that in keeping with the vision and mission statement of the University *'We try to develop an awareness of the socio-cultural reality and conscientise learners about African achievements, predicaments and dilemmas so that they can be inspired to see themselves as potential change agents and makers of their own social world.'*

The same senior lecturer continued *'The case for Africanisation has to do with usage of home base or indigenous resources in addressing development challenges.'*

5.6 Question five. Are there intellectual forces driving or impeding the Africanisation agenda at your university?

The question was aimed at the identification and description of potential and actual forces of

resistance based on factors such as their social provenance and self-interest and those forces facilitating the Africanisation agenda motivated by the need for epistemological redress and justice.

According to the respondents from the University of the North, the concept of an African university has not been well engaged within the institution and, as such, it is difficult to assess if there are forces driving or impeding the Africanisation agenda. A student leader attached to the South African Students Congress (SASCO) decried the state of affairs on campus in this way:

'The University is neither a cauldron of bubbling engagement nor a veritable site of robust and rigorous debate vis-a-vis the contentious issue of Africanisation.'

A senior lecturer in the Academic Development Unit pointed out that: *'There is no agenda of Africanisation. Even management hardly talk of Africanising the institution. This could be an indication that the institution lacks both the intellectual muscle and the will to drive the process of Africanisation.'*

The direction of the University of the North seems to be the need to make the institution marketable. In this sense, the institution would like to transform itself to be a flagship university in driving excellence in higher education. Hence excellence in

both practice and academic delivery is being emphasised.

However, in the area of research and publication there have been individual scholars and academics who have made 'timid' attempts by addressing issues relevant to Africanisation of universities in general. As a proponent of Africanisation at the University of the North lamented:

'There is no appreciation at the institution that excellence has to be contextualised and knowledge made relevant. The institution still parades the outmoded notion of universal excellence.'

The same proponent added: *'The real problem and source of reluctance has to do with the prevalent view that the idea of an African university goes contrary to the laudable concept of globalisation.'*

At Vista University there is no direct opposition to the Africanisation project. However, the differing understandings are perceived by many as a form of resistance by those who want Africanisation to be conceptualised in terms of responsiveness. The argument is the refusal to Africanise even solutions to problems perpetuates the idea that Africans have problems but no solutions to any problem.

A senior lecturer in education chastised them thus: *'The truth is that those who espouse Africanisation in the sense of mere responsiveness only do not want to*

institution. According to Chait (1979), the more one or an institution seeks specificity the more various constituencies resist. The first consists of those who are calling for the university to be the embodiment of Venda culture and civilisation. These social forces are mainly Venda academics who hold a perverted or narrow understanding of Africanisation that Manganyi (1981) warned against, namely, one conceived in ethnocentric particularism of the kind that was encouraged by colonial-apartheid South Africa.

A member of management at the institution pointed out that *'The primary principle guiding an African university should be to encapsulate the essence of Africa not ethnic interests. The latter affirms Africanisation in terms of a discourse inherited from colonial-apartheid.'*

Another member of management pointed out that the second resistance generally emanates from those trained in the natural sciences as most of them are still married to contrived universalism of science. *'There is a misconception among those teaching in the natural sciences that there is no place for culture and politics in these fields. Most of them still subscribe to the cliché of science presenting itself as intrinsically problem-solving activity, as a product of disinterested laity and pure 'rationality'.'*

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CHAPTER 6

THE RIGHT TO BE AN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY AT THE CROSSROADS.

6.1 Introduction.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of our research. We seek here to discuss whether the three focal universities, namely, the University of the North, the University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University are actually transforming with the aim to asserting and upholding their right to be an African university. The disturbing conclusion is that despite self-descriptions on the part of the latter two institutions suggesting transformation aimed at making them African universities, the reality is that the right to be an African university is at the crossroads.

6.2 Transformation of higher education institutions: rumours or reality?

The right of universities in South Africa to be African is a function of, and is linked to, the need to affirm indigenous African aspirations and to respond to the sensibilities of the indigenous African peoples conquered at colonisation. For higher education institutions in South Africa, the assertion and affirmation of the right to be an African

university is long overdue. The right to be an African university is no longer negotiable as part of transformation. As such, Africanisation is a conscious and deliberate reaffirmation and assertion of the right to be an African university.

The right to be an African university is not a position that seeks to derecognise, devalue or marginalise other epistemological paradigms, including colonial ones. Rather, in the post-1994 era, by asserting such right the aim is to dialogue with them. The purpose of such dialogue is to avoid infringing on their right to exist. This is despite their history of brutality against indigenous epistemological paradigms.

Although right is a language of making claims to justice, having a right to something does not necessarily imply having the ability to actually obtain, realise or make use of it. The term 'right' implies an acknowledged claim that society or a significant part of it supports - whether through law, custom or convention. Right is a prescriptive term and laws, customs and conventions are important in promoting rights in general. However, they are only as good as the conditions under which they are exercised.. Where such rights are not accompanied by the conditions that allow them to be exercised, they mean little in practice. For rights to translate into justice they must be substantive and not merely formal. This point is actually the crux of our thesis

on the final constitution of South Africa (Lebakeng & Ramose, 2003).

It is noteworthy that the right to be an African university is rooted in an African conceptualisation of the term rights. Implicit in this position is that the notion of right is indigenous to every culture and society. It is not exclusively Western European because its component ideas have deep roots in many traditions and cultures. Clearly, then the term rights is universal although the practice thereof is particular as it is rooted in the particularity of the ontology of different peoples. Whereas the Western European idea of right placed individual freedom at the heart of its analysis and is driven principally by commitment to free choice, in the African conceptualisation rights have a communal dimension, namely, a moral claim that fits or reflects the community's cultural ethos, narratives, settings, beliefs and common good. In this sense, Africans preserve a common bond with one another in a close-knit ontological relationship.

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In light of the above, the thesis we advanced and sought to defend is that: The retention and dominance of epistemological paradigms that were imposed through unjust colonial wars is ethically unjust and politically untenable in the quest for the right to be an African university. Indigenous knowledge systems of the conquered peoples of South Africa must be placed on the level of parity with all other epistemological paradigms in order to achieve both formal and

substantive equality. This thesis is premised on the need for indigenous African scholarship and the promotion of research and processes deriving from and relevant to South Africa as an African country.

The findings of the current study do support our first hypothesis that the difficulty with the Africanisation of epistemological paradigms lies in the dearth of philosophically grounded core scholars capable of shaping the contours of an African university. This is because overall, there is a lack of a community of intellectuals with the necessary philosophical orientation that is distinctly African that can facilitate the process of striving for the right of these universities to be African. If we go beyond the appreciation of individual capability and awareness because such individuals do not constitute a collective representation which could give them a structural/institutional impulse, scholarship in South Africa remains extroverted, that is, oriented towards problems and issues that are not African (Personal discussion with Professor Paulin Hountondji in October, 2003 at the University of South Africa). The discussion on Africanisation is still confined as a minority debate among academics and intellectuals.

Most academics and intellectuals are preoccupied by politics and dynamics of upward social mobility in the form of securing jobs that are paying high salaries and providing substantial car allowances and other benefits (Maseti, 2003). Only a few are engaged in philosophical endeavours and the pursuit of knowledge

aimed at reversing epistemicide. Miserable salaries and material hardship for academics have contributed in no mean way to this situation. The growing tendency in the country for academics to migrate to management, especially to positions of directorship, deanship and vice-chancellorship where salaries are by far better is attributable to low salaries of academics (Ramose, 2003). In the case of South Africa, most of the scholars who have contributed significantly to the debates on Africanisation are now in management positions. Prominent among them could be included Professors Malegapuru Makgoba, Siphon Seepe, Pitika Ntuli, Herbert Vilakazi, Lesiba Teffo, Thandwa Mthembu and Dr. Mashupye Kgaphola. This is not bad in itself and the issue is not raised to malign any one. The importance of this observation is a result of a worrying trend since after enhancing their prospects and securing high paying jobs many have stopped contributing to the debates on Africanisation..

Given the critical role of philosophical orientation in pursuit of the project of Africanisation, the solution does not lie in merely increasing the number of indigenous African academics and intellectuals within existing institutions. This is insufficient for emancipatory politics and practice. What is required is a sustained, serious and comprehensive engagement of Western intellectual traditions with the objective to reversing epistemicide.

Therein lies the relevance of our second hypothesis, namely, that transformation that leads to the

decolonisation of epistemological paradigms in higher education is a **sine qua non** for the right of universities in South Africa to be African. The necessity for decolonisation was brought upon indigenous African peoples in the first place by the historical superimposition of foreign categories of thought on African thought systems through colonisation (Wiredu, 1995). This superimposition led to the phenomenon of the 'captive mind' or 'mental captivity', that is, a way of thinking that is dominated by Western colonial thought in an imitative and uncritical manner. This echoes the point made by Bondy when writing with reference to the socio-political condition of Latin America. He points out that this condition is mainly a legacy of the colonisation of the region in the unjust wars of colonisation (Bondy, 1969). Among the characteristics of the captive mind are an uncritical approach to ideas and concepts from the West (Myrdal, 1957; Bondy, 1969; Alatas, 1972; Altbach, 1977), the inability to be creative and raise original problems, the inability to devise original analytical methods and alienation from the main issues of indigenous society (Bondy, 1969; Alatas, 1974) and failure to tap indigenous resources such as indigenous languages (Thiong'o; 1986; Wiredu, 1995).

This state of affairs has spawned various reactions from intellectuals in developing countries. The call for Africanisation in South Africa is essentially a call for decolonisation of the mind or what Wiredu calls 'conceptual decolonisation', that is, the

avoidance or reversal through a critical conceptual self-awareness of the uncritical assimilation of those categories of thought embedded in the foreign languages or philosophical traditions which have exercised considerable influence on African life and thought (Wiredu, 1995). In the sphere of education this refers to the need to base education on indigenous African philosophy, epistemology and history. In other words, the call for decolonisation of the mind does not simply suggest approaching specifically indigenous problems in a social and/or natural scientific manner with a view to developing suitable concepts and methods, and modifying what has been developed in the Western settings. Rather, it implies that social and natural scientific theories, concepts and methodologies can be derived from the histories and cultures of societies other than the Western one (Alatas, 1993).

Therefore, the foundation of decolonisation is the recognition and acceptance of the principle that the consequences of colonial conquest need to be reversed. This recognition includes the correlative principle that the process of reversal must be upon a just basis and that justice should be a manifest consequence in the new order brought about by decolonisation (Ramose, 1991). In this respect, the right to be an African university is a question of justice. It needs to be placed within the broader context of socio-economic and political rights.

Premised on the visions, mission statements and contested issues at the three universities, both the University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University have come up with poignant self-descriptions. However, from the respective respondents, it is not clear to what extent both institutions are sensitive to such self-descriptions. For instance, is the self-descriptor of Vista University as an African University for Social and Economic Development a negation which seeks to overcome the impasse of an imposed Western developmental orientation? The importance of this lies in that theories of development which overlooked indigenous knowledge have long been debunked (Mafeje, 1988; Odora-Hoppers, 2002).

Regarding the University of Venda for Science and Technology, what are the implications of not self-describing as the University of Venda for indigenous African Science and Technology? This is critical because debates in the sociology of science indicate that science in the colonial context was not an indigenous initiative (Payle and Lebakeng, 2001; Hountondji, 2002; Lebakeng and Payle, 2002). Rather, it was a systematic effort by the coloniser to study, understand and take advantage of, first the economic resources and potentialities of the colony, and the overall context in which these potentialities develop, including the human and cultural environs (Hountondji, 2002).

Instead of stimulating and developing existing indigenous African scientific and technological practices, colonisers set out to discourage and discredit them, while secretly appropriating some of these ideas and practices and developing them within Western science. For instance, principle of inoculation, metallurgy, fermentation that could compete with Western manufactures were decried, made illegal and persecuted (Mazrui & Ade Ajayi, 1993). Thus South Africa's indigenous scientific and technological backwardness is the outcome of the Western impact of inhibiting scientification in the continent in general. What the University of Venda for Science and Technology needs to do, if it is to assert its right to be an African institution in the field of science and technology, is to resuscitate indigenous African science and technology.

The findings regarding the University of the North confirm that any institution that does not decolonise its epistemological paradigms in the process of transformation cannot succeed in the assertion of its right to be an African university. Decolonisation should result in the abandoning of colonial-apartheid values and styles and striking a balance between some of the imposed values of the past and indigenous African epistemological values and styles. In effect a balanced typology of values shall emerge representing the unoffensive values of all the peoples in South Africa. Reversal of epistemicide through epistemological redress and the inscription of indigenous African experiences in the reconstruction

of higher education in South Africa is the only direction that can ensure that transformation of higher education leads to decolonisation of epistemological paradigms.

It is expected that the process of decolonising higher education and reversing epistemicide is likely to be resisted by those with vested interests. However, it is important to appreciate that the resistance that may ensue could be a mark of integrity: we must not assume that those who disagree with us are being necessarily anti-transformation. Rather, they may well be grappling with and thinking through the very concept to find deeper and more enduring meaning and sustained value. The production of knowledge thrives on the continuous questioning of the truth claims of any assertion.

Our third hypothesis, which asserts that transformation of South African universities is not underpinned by a distinct African philosophical tradition and scholarship and this undermines the prospects of these institutions to be African by right requires modification. Based on the findings of the three focal universities, it is clear that a generalisation in the form of our hypothesis fails to capture the internal dynamics of individual institutions. With regard to our findings at the three universities, it is clear that, on one hand, both the University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University have made bold pronouncements in their visions and mission statements regarding their

right to be an African university. On the other hand, the University of the North has not. However, such epithets purportedly seeking to capture the essence of these institutions were freely invented and deployed in what seemed like a frenzied race to look good in the eyes of the Ministry of Education and to lure students. As a result, these universities have been long on visions and mission statements but short on realistic transformation, with special reference to the right to be an African university.

A look at the visions and mission statements of the three institutions reveal a common denominator, namely, that they all invoke the terms 'community' and 'society' with ease. In fact, these institutions, without exception, contain the terms community and society as their leitmotif, that is, as their regulative idea. Paradoxically, no reference to support staff, especially cleaners is made. On the basis of striving for the right to be an African university, it is clear that these institutions use the terms community and society in a disturbingly narrow sense. In fact such use can be said to be elitist as the focus is exclusively on management, students, administrative and academic staff. By perceiving support staff as an appendage or a necessary evil rather than part of a close-knit ontological relationship reflecting the spirit of botho/ubuntu, these institutions fail to display a sensitivity of the ethics of belonging.

For instance, the University of Venda for Science and Technology is clearly engaged in the process of Africanisation and started problematising and devalorising Western traditions of academia that were imposed as a result of epistemicide. What is not clear is the extent to which the debates question the values, assumptions and ideologies embedded in the bodies of social knowledge at the institution. The self-description by the University of Venda for Science and Technology 'calls for the development of curriculum whose scientific and technological nature would be evident from the creative interaction of education with its physical and social environments' (Habte & Wagaw, 1993). However, by offering unusual modules and programmes the University of Venda for Science and Technology can claim distinctiveness (the degree to which an institution's purpose is perceived to be special, unique or at least differentiable from that of other institutions). According to Clark (1971), unusual courses, noteworthy degree requirements or special teaching practices can support an institution's claim to distinctiveness.

Partly as a result of ongoing onslaught on the campus body politic with the resultant institutional self-destruct, the University of the North presents a different scenario whereby there is lack of engagement with Africanisation of the institution. In fact, transformation at the University of the North is not underpinned by a distinct African philosophy of education. Clearly, this undermines the prospects of the university to be African by right. Vista

University presents an interesting case in that although there is engagement with the issue of Africanisation, it is difficult for the institution to move forward because of lack of clarity as to what Africanisation entails. Vista University demonstrates that crafting vision and mission statements is not sufficient. Attention should be given to the extent to which curricular offerings and strategic management practices are in alignment with beliefs and values embedded in shared perceptions of institutional vision and mission statements (Gumport, 1988).

A university has to make decisions which favour certain directions in terms of research and teaching thrust and philosophical orientation. In this respect, it is difficult to know whether the self-descriptions or self-definitions of both the University of Venda for Science and Technology and Vista University are informed by an epistemological paradigm that is consistent with that needed to be an African university. It would be interesting to know whether both universities are sensitive to their self-descriptions to the extent of not being trapped by the same epistemological paradigm they are supposed to be negating.

Our fourth hypothesis, namely, justice in the educational system can only be achieved through a reclamation of an indigenous African epistemology, is premised on the fact that the inauguration of epistemicide during unjust wars of colonisation represents a major historical, philosophical and

natural injustice against indigenous conquered peoples. Because of the imposed epistemology, curriculum and institutional cultures/values should be the terrain of the struggle for the transformation that allows for the reclamation of indigenous African epistemology. Clearly, both the ethics and epistemology reflected in the visions and mission statements of the three focal universities indicate that there is a need for these institutions to rethink their roles anew in line with the principles of reclamation. Only through such reclamation can these universities assume their new historic responsibilities. Central to the necessity for reclamation of indigenous epistemology is thus a determination to see that the transformation of universities responds to the exigency of fundamental justice in the educational sphere. Lack of reclamation as a key ingredient towards restorative justice in the sphere of education is tantamount to condoning the legacy of colonial-apartheid which is a form of injustice. The injustice is apparent in the recognition that there is neither a moral basis nor pedagogical justification for the Western epistemological paradigm to retain primacy and dominance in post-1994 South Africa.

The imperative reclamation of indigenous African traditions means that such traditions must function as a major source from which to extract elements that will help in the construction of an authentic and emancipative epistemological paradigm relevant to the conditions in South Africa at this historical

junction. Premised on the fundamentals of colonial-apartheid in South Africa, this is a question of restorative justice.

It is noteworthy that even the University of Venda for Science and Technology, despite its vision and mission statement has not contributed to the development of the very philosophy it purports to be espousing. Despite attracting scholars from other African countries in the last few years, the overall profile of the institution is very low. The observation by Ntuli (2002) that our education system seems to move further away from indigenous knowledge signifies the need for collective self-introspection and the reclamation of indigenous epistemological paradigm. In this regard, our fourth hypothesis is confirmed since lack of the reclamation of indigenous African epistemology means the perpetuation of epistemicide.

The critical question at this historical juncture is: To what extent does the new constitutional dispensation provide an opportunity to revisit and redirect scholarship and assert the right of universities in South Africa to be African? This takes us to our fifth hypothesis which asserts that: The viability of the transformation of higher education in South Africa must be assessed on the basis of the constitution of South Africa and, specifically on the significance of the transition from parliamentary to constitutional supremacy.

The optimism of respondents on the possible role of the constitution is a function of casual understanding of the implications of the nature of the South African constitution in the new dispensation. Such optimism as premised in the final constitution of South Africa is philosophically problematical. This is so because it overlooks the fact that the rules and limits prescribed and predetermined by such a constitution cannot lead to the exigency of historical and natural justice in the realm of higher education. The constitution of South Africa is simultaneously an emancipative and an oppressive instrument (Lebakeng and Ramose, 2003).

From historical, moral and political perspectives the constitution of South Africa is simultaneously an emancipative and an oppressive instrument (Lebakeng & Ramose, 2003). For instance, as an emancipative instrument it stands as the defender of the rights of all South Africans, especially those who had their rights violated during colonial-apartheid. As an oppressive instrument the constitution is fundamentally flawed because it is not the embodiment of the moral convictions and cultural values of all South Africans as it fails to reverse injustices arising out of epistemicide (Ramose, 2003). This means that the constitution is historically blind to the exigency of restorative and restitutive justice due to the indigenous peoples conquered in the unjust wars of colonisation. The constitution is at the same time ethically empty precisely because of its blindness to the exigencies of restoration and restitution. It is

in this sense that the new constitutional dispensation is an inadequate basis for the pursuit of educational transformation.

April 27 1994 was supposed to mark a period in which indigenous conquered peoples could reclaim their right to define experience, knowledge and truth in their own terms (Ramose, 2003, unpublished paper), this was pre-empted by what transpired at the Kempton Park talks between the then colonial-apartheid regime and certain sections of the liberation movement, specifically the African National Congress. Two developments signify victory for those social forces who represented colonial-apartheid. First was the abandonment of the principle of parliamentary supremacy and the option for constitutional supremacy. The essence of the latter is that the constitution is held to be the basic and supreme law. In this sense, parliament enacts only legislation which complies with and is consistent with the constitution. According to Ramose, the implications of this are that the powers of parliament are subordinate to and must be exercised only in the service of the constitution, and the principle of popular sovereignty, which is the reason for a representative parliament, was abandoned (Ramose, 2003).

The second development relates to the exclusion of the term ubuntu from the final constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996). It is noteworthy that the interim constitution (Act No. 200 Of 1993) contained the term ubuntu as a significant feature of the constitution.

Having ubuntu in the interim constitution was a tacit acceptance, affirmation and acknowledgement of the lived experiences of the indigenous African peoples. Excluding ubuntu meant that the final constitution, as a legal expression of the moral convictions and the cultural values of those it is intended to govern, represents a social, political and cultural reality that is alien to the conquered indigenous African peoples who constitute the overwhelming majority population.

The implications for higher education transformation are that the experiences of conquered indigenous African people can be inscribed in the construction of education only in the manner and to the extent that they are consistent with an arguably alien constitution. In this sense, the new constitutional dispensation is not an adequate basis for the pursuit of educational transformation, especially with regard to the right to be an African university. This is so despite the constitutionality of the right to cultural expression. The constitution seems to be conducive for the perpetuation of epistemicide. Given that what we hear are just poignant self-descriptions leading to rumours of transformation, the right to be an African university is at the crossroads. An African university will have to transcend self-descriptions that are inconsistent with the character of these institutions. An African university will have to be one transformed in its structures, processes and, through a philosophical break, one assuming a new African character. Given that it is in this sense that we have

conceptualised Africanisation in this study, we can conclude that the prospect of resurrection from epistemicide still remains a tantalising illusion. The right to be an African university is at the crossroads. It signifies the prolongation of the colonial-apartheid system in an epistemological sense.

6.3 Conclusion

In concluding, we cannot but concur with Greenstein that Africanisation poses what may well prove to be the greatest challenge to the renewal of South African education in general and curriculum policies in particular (Greenstein, 1997). The lack of serious discussion of its meanings and implications for social transformation, and the reasons why more attention has not been paid to the issue, must be addressed as a matter of urgency. The changes taking place in the higher education landscape through mergers and incorporations have not addressed the problem of Africanisation of universities. In epistemological paradigmatic terms the problem is that of 'old wine in new bottles.'

As a result of changes in the education landscape, only one of the three focal universities will neither be merged nor incorporated. The University of Venda for Science and Technology received a new mandate to operate autonomously as a comprehensive institution offering technikon-type programmes. The new mandate has widened the university's educational scope to include academic, vocational and professional

training. The University of the North is set to merge with the Medical University of Southern Africa into a new institution called the University of Limpopo. As a direct result of legislation from the Department of Education's National Plan on Higher education, the countrywide campuses of Vista University are being incorporated into various institutions since January 2004. The incorporation will be as follows:

* Sebokeng Campus has been incorporated into North West University, which resulted from the merger of the Universities of North West and Potchestroom;

* The Vista University Distance Education Centre (VUDEC) has been incorporated into the University of South Africa (Unisa), resulting from the merger of Unisa and Technikon South Africa;

* Vista University's Port Elizabeth campus has been incorporated into the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University which was formed from the merger of Port Elizabeth University and Port Elizabeth Technikon;

* The Soweto and Ekurhuleni campuses have been incorporated into the University of Johannesburg, which was formed from the merger of Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon Witwatersrand; and

* Mamelodi Vista was incorporated into Pretoria University, Bloemfontein Vista into Free State University and Vista Welkom into Technikon Free State.

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