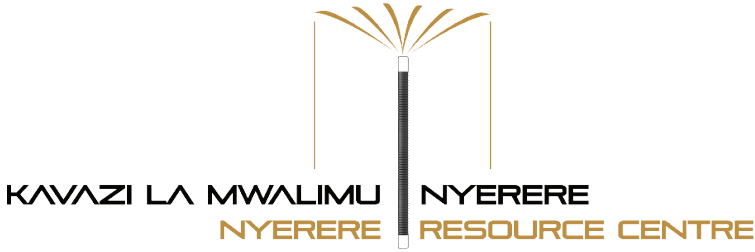
Ghettoisation of Basic Research in Higher Education



Ghettoisation of Basic Research in Higher Education

Chachage Seithy L. Chachage

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“*For I believe that society is served by truth. I believe that we need the universities, and their products, to stand up for truth as they see it, regardless of the personal consequences to themselves. ... ...And this may sometimes involve saying unpopular things if you believe them to be true.*”

Julius Nyerere

PREFACE

Ten years ago on 9th July 2016, Tanzania and the world lost a scholar of great depth, an astute researcher, and above all, a committed intellectual. This booklet brings together three of Chachage Seithy L. Chachage's papers that speak to a burning current question in higher education - that of basic research. Before the rude interruption of neo-liberalism in the 1980s, very few questioned basic research as a fundamental component of higher education. Basic research asks basic questions: What is the character of the social order? What is its direction? How does it affect the people living under it? Whatever they are researching on, explicitly or implicitly, serious scholars and researchers are concerned with these questions. This type of research and the intellectual debates surrounding it are signally the vocation of any University worth the name. But over the last three decades, the situation has changed radically. As Chachage and many others have observed, not only has basic research declined in our institutions of higher education but it has been completely ghettoised, its worth constantly challenged. Neo-liberalism vocationalised and de-intellectualised our Universities while turning many of our eminent academics into hired consultants doing the bidding of their clients. As neo-liberalism is breathing its last, we need to resuscitate the debate on basic research.

There cannot be a better institution to jump-start such a debate than the Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH). COSTECH houses the Nyerere Resource Centre under whose auspices occasional papers are published. COSTECH is the premier institution in the country that finances and sponsors research in our universities. The intention behind this publication is to contribute towards initiating debate on basic research, besides celebrating the life of a great Tanzanian intellectual. On behalf of NRC I would like to thank Chambi Chachage for helping us to locate Chachage's numerous writings from which we selected these essays relevant to our purpose.

The 1999 article is based on Chachage's personal experience at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He had gone to Cape Town with great expectations. After all, this was the country which had fought the longest liberation war in Africa, in which the whole continent was involved. He expected an intellectual atmosphere that would question everything in the process of building a humane post-apartheid future. He was disappointed. Typically of Chachage, he pulls no punches. In his strident Farewell Note he expresses his 'anger' with brutal bluntness.

When Chachage landed in South Africa, UCT had embarked on a transformation dictated from the top. And like many other transformation programmes at African Universities during this period, including our own University of Dar es Salaam, the philosophy underlying the transformation was derived from market pundits spearheaded by the World Bank and the international financial institutions (IFIs). Efficiency, measured by market criteria and the demands of the job-market, were the watchwords. Knowledge production, to expand social horizons and produce a wholesome person, was no longer seen as an end in itself; rather it was a commodity to be weighed on the scales of value and prices. 'Did university education pay?' was the primary question for WB economists. If not, why not invest in primary education and get higher returns? Indeed, at one time, the WB told African governments that Africa did not need Universities. They were white elephants. As the minister of education of The Gambia put it:

> A condition for qualifying for World Bank assistance in the education sector was for African countries to divert resources from higher education and channel them instead towards primary and basic education . . . African Governments protested that in the matter of providing education to their people, it was not a question of either primary or secondary, or indeed higher education . . . Needless to say, with the tremendous pressures that come along with World Bank and IMF conditionalities, they lost the battle, and higher education in Africa virtually

> went under. To this day, many countries have not been able to recover from that onslaught on African higher education. Some of our finest institutions have thus almost been destroyed, thanks to the imposition of bad policies from partners who, in the first place, came out professing to help us. What we received from them was the kiss of death![1]

African resistance preserved the University but in an emaciated form because it was starved of resources. Meanwhile, both to survive and conform, the University was 'transformed' from being a site of knowledge to a market place for exchanging commodities. Basic research was devalourised. Training in research methodologies and theoretical frameworks gave way to the imparting of skills. Managers took over University leadership, as scholars became scribes. No need to lament, for one does not mourn history; one learns from it. And the great lesson that the ignominious history of SAPs in education has taught us is that we must think our societies as we stand on our own feet. For that we need to produce knowledge. The means of producing knowledge is basic research conducted in the context of asking bigger questions of the social order.

It is our hope at NRC that Chachage's contribution will serve as a departure point for us to debate basic research and its vital role in producing knowledge.

Issa Shivji
Director, NRC
September, 2016

1 Statement by Hon. Mrs. Ann Therese Ndong-Jatta, Secretary of State for Education of the Republic of The Gambia (Economic and Social Council 2002 High-level Segment: The Contribution of Human Resources to Development, 2002) quoted in Joel Samoff and Bidemi Carrol (2004) *Conditions, Coalitions, and Influence: The World Bank and Higher Education in Africa,* Stanford University, Prepared for presentation at the Annual Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, Salt Lake City, 8–12 March 2004 at http://www.eldis.org/vfile/upload/1/document/0708/DOC17679.pdf, accessed 25/08/2016.

“ *3. Education shall prepare a person to strive for and participate fully in the emancipation of the human being and society from oppression, domination and subjugation.*

4. Education shall enable a person to overcome prejudices related to gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, culture and such like. Education shall inculcate in every person respect for all humane culture developed by humankind.

5. Education shall develop critical faculties, inculcate the spirit of scientific enquiryand encourage the pursuit of knowledge and the search for the whole truth in the interest of social transformation and human liberation. ”

The Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics, 1990, Chapter 1.

HIGHER EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION AND ACADEMIC EXTERMINISM: THE CASE OF SOUTH AFRICA♣

But you are Free to Teach the Determined Content!

This paper is centered on higher education policies, which are increasingly being implemented by many African governments, including South Africa. The focus will be on humanities and social sciences, and more specifically on Sociology. The reasons for doing so are related to matters of principle, as well as the personal experience I have undergone since my arrival in January 1999 in South Africa at the University of Cape Town, given the attempts to transform it. Now, raising issues on the educational policies which have been introduced from above by the government or the university administration, is not necessarily an imitation of the ancient malcontents who, being suspicious all the time, used to say: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes!* - I fear Greeks bearing gifts! I say so, because when I initially questioned the assumptions behind the 'transformations' in education soon after joining UCT, a 'colleague' cautioned that it was unwise to look negatively at the government's good intentions.

It all started sometime in January 1999, when a meeting of some members of staff (three from Sociology and one from Political Science) was held by the Head of Sociology. The aim of the meeting was to determine the content of an Honours course, which I was assigned to teach - Social Theory and Issues in South African Society. I was informed that the course would no longer deal with social science theories as had been previously the case: instead, I was to teach development theories, which in turn would enable students

♣ Department of Sociology, University of Dar es Salaam. This paper was first published in Tade Aina, Chachage Seithy L. Chachage & Elizabeth Annan-Yao (eds.), 2004, *Globalisation and Social Policy in Africa,* Dakar: CODESRIA Book Series.

to specialise in either the Development Studies and Transformation (DST) or the Industrial, Organisation and Labour Studies (IOLS) programmes. In other words, students at Honours Degree level were no longer supposed to be equipped with the fundamentals of Social Science, since the new programmes which had been introduced (as part of transformations) were geared towards responding to the 'job market'.

The whole exercise was definitely against one of the fundamental rights of academic freedom (the right to determine content and teach without any interference, subject to the generally accepted principles, standards and methods of teaching). I was to learn that the programmes had become a requirement of the university as part of the implementation of national policies. Arguing against this treatment proved futile, since the programmes had already been approved. This exercise to determine the content of the course I was to teach, as I was to interpret later (given the encounters), was an unconscious expression of what it means to join what they call in South Africa a 'historically White University', which still remains so.

The reasons for becoming an 'expatriate' may vary among those who become so. But for some, it is the excitement of the possibility to take a challenge of participating in the 'African Renaissance', which South Africa has taken the lead in championing. The reality is different: it simply knocks one down like the stone, which hit the biblical giant Goliath. Once in South Africa, an African 'expatriate' lives in a contradiction between the myth of a university as a centre of critical intellectual inquiry and the realities of conformism of those who have created programmes to safeguard their personal interests, rather than those of academia and human welfare in general. The threat of retrenchments, which hangs over some heads like the sword of Damocles, it seems, has given some 'academics' (who may be quite influential) an occasion to reassert their personal usefulness, regardless of the implications of their actions to the students and the world of knowledge in general.

Some may disagree with following observations as they lack the finesse of 'political correctness', which has become fashionable contemporarily.

Simply, an African 'expatriate' in the historical circumstances such as those pertaining to UCT suffers the indignities of always being regarded (by some of his or her colleagues) as having been recruited because of the policy of 'affirmative action' or 'employment equity', rather than being a genuine academic. He or she has little or nothing of substance to contribute. He or she is regarded as someone who has taken advantage of such policies to move to 'greener pastures', since she supposedly comes from a world 'rife with poverty and calamities'.[1]

When confronted with a situation which dictates the content of what to teach *a priori,* then you wonder whether you have become a show case for posterity to demonstrate that there are Africans who have been recruited in an attempt to implement the policies of 'positive affirmation'! It is these experiences which have compelled me to interrogate the nature of higher education institutional transformation taking place.

The Genealogy of Institutional Transformations

Now, there is no doubt that transformations in any scientific enterprise are historically imperative. The question, however, is, what is the basis of those transformations? What are they aimed at transforming? What do they aim to achieve as far as the issue of systematically ordered knowledge of social life is concerned? The 1996 National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) and the UCT Strategic Planning Framework of August 1997 provide the answers to these questions. I suggest that to make sense of those answers, it is best to start with an outline of the 'world agenda' in the past twenty years or so as far as education in Africa is concerned.

Public policy debates, which still continue today, started escalating in many African countries in the 1980s. These were sparked by the 'revolution' in policy preferences which had emerged by then with the emphasis on the elimination of government regulation; reduction of taxes; provision of

1 Paul T. Zeleza (1997) has noted similar experiences in some of the Atlantic world universities. See his *Manufacturing African Studies and Crises.*

tax incentives for business; and cutting of welfare and privatisation of the delivery of government services. These policies emerged in response to the world economic crisis that began in the early 1970s, and which had resulted in many African countries facing a balance of payments deficit, high inflation rates, shortage of consumer goods, decline in export of primary goods and agricultural goods, under-utilisation of industrial capacities, etc.

This situation was part of the global economic recession which was characterised by high interest rates, declining commodity prices and internal and external imbalances in the developed countries, which in turn created adverse conditions for the developing economies. For the developing countries, the result was endemic economic disruptions, which crippled production, distribution and financial systems. The 1980s, it was concluded, were a lost decade for African countries.

This crisis created a space for another model of development for these countries. A new turn in economic thinking and policy making began to take place in the late 1970s. When the crisis began to unfold, a number of analysts and decision makers, spearheaded by the IMF and the World Bank[2] attributed the recession to the *predominance of welfare-oriented* (basic needs) programmes pursued by various governments and the neglect of pure economic concerns. The perception that governments are the driving force of economic growth was increasingly being replaced by the perception of an increased role for market forces in the allocation of resources and a much enlarged role for the private sector in production and the management of the economy.

The model, which was being replaced, is what is popularly known as Keynesianism. The English economist, John Maynard Keynes from the late 1920s, developed it and British officials attempted to implement it during the Second World War and post-War reconstruction. The fundamental idea in Keynesian thought is that capitalist economies systematically fail

2 The discussion on IMF and World Bank policies is mainly based on the following: World Bank, 1986; Gibbon & Olukoshi, 1996; Gibbon, Havnevik & Hermele, 1993.

to generate stable growth or fully utilise human and physical resources because of reliance on market mechanisms of self regulation and adjustment. Accordingly, markets cannot eliminate economic crises, unemployment or even inflation. His thought validated the state taking a leading role in promoting material welfare and growth, and in regulating the civil society. Broadly, this thought inspired the macroeconomic policies, which were to be pursued by most independent governments in Africa, which advocated for state centrality in development processes. It was the same ideas which were central in modernisation thinking. It will be recalled that development plans in many of the colonies were introduced after the Second World War.

There was another historical event, which justified further the replacement of the statist model of development. The collapse of the bureaucratic socialist states and their evident incapacity to reform themselves also provided stronger evidence of the unworkability and unrealism of the state-led development model to these analysts. Inspired by the long periods of conservative governments of Reagan and Thatcher, Keynesian ideas were increasingly being replaced by neo-liberalism (the free market capitalism ideas) of what have become popularly known as the New Right. The new emphasis was on supply-side economics (as exemplified by what has become popularly known as Reaganomics and Thatcherism).

Consequently, the new model of development which emerged became popularly known as Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), which stressed the efficiency of free market allocation of resources and emphasised deregulation and export orientation so as to achieve international competitiveness based on comparative advantage. Thus, this model supported the notion of 'globalism' or 'one world', in which a single market for goods, capital, services, skills and technology prevailed. The new focus was on SAPs as the pre-condition for growth and implicitly for poverty reduction - since the benefits of growth would trickle down to the poor.

The World Bank published a number of studies since the mid-1980s, which have become the 'philosophical' basis for the so-called transformations

of universities, which are being imposed by many African governments.[3] Fundamentally, these studies called for a restructuring of education, so that there can be a public cost recovery and reallocation of government spending towards levels with highest social returns. This, according to these studies, would promote higher efficiency and egalitarian distribution of education resources. They were of the view that higher education system should be made to operate at the lowest possible public cost. Accordingly, these institutions should exist by virtue of their being 'viable' and 'efficient'. By viability, it meant that they must be made to produce for the 'market' and pay for themselves. Thus, the introduction of cost-sharing. By efficiency, it simply meant that these institutions must be made to revise their syllabi to suit the 'products' for the market.

This was essentially an attack on higher forms of knowledge and research - specifically, theoretical knowledge. It was a call for the 'market' to dictate biases in universities. Thus, there would be preference for professional as opposed to liberal faculties, and within faculties a bias towards imparting technical 'skills' rather than critical analytical ones. In other words, universities were to be reduced to the task of supply of the 'labour force'. The World Bank envisioned a stage whereby 'programs or centres of excellence' would replace the present university systems. Rhetoric aside, this was an expression in a subtle way of the fact that universities should be turned to vocational schools in all but name!

Transformations as Celebration of 'Globalisation'

The immediate question that comes to mind when one looks for the answers of the questions I posed above is, what are the historical circumstances of the transformations that have been proposed in South Africa? NCHE answers

3 Among these are: Financing Education in Developing Countries, 1986*;* Education and Adjustment: A Review of the Literature, 1991; Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalisation, and Expansion, 1988; Issues Related to Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1985; Why Educational Policies can Fail: An Overview of Selected African Experiences, 1990.

this in terms of the transition of South Africa to democracy, 'which has interlocking socio-economic, political and educational components (NCHE 1996: 27)[4]. What is to be transformed is the apartheid legacy of education, which had discriminatory, unequal and inefficient allocation of resources and undemocratic governance structures. This education system restricted access to Africans and Coloured. It was 'unplanned and uncoordinated with no national goals, common qualifications structure' and unresponsive to the 'economic and social needs of the majority (27).

In this regard, the premises are that the development of higher education is bound up with the development of the overall economy. The crucial and determining factor is the question of employment and unemployment, since educational levels have an effect on employability. Thus, it would appear, the restructuring of the economy to promote economic growth would allow even redistributive programmes (such as job creation, housing, training schemes, etc) for marginalised communities to take place. This growth is supposed to be taking place within 'the dominant feature of the late twentieth century modernisation, what has been termed 'globalisation'', and its 'multiple changes in economy, culture and communication in advanced economies' (27). The effect of this, according to NCHE is:

> [G]reater flexibility in production design to meet increasingly diverse global consumer needs obtained by using new computer-led technologies and employing more educated labour force in more participatory forms of work organisation. These include teamwork, multi-skilling, flattening management structures and quality circles. Micro-economic strategies today are concerned primarily with adding value in production through innovation, by so-called 'smart' workers, new technologies, participatory work and continuous deployment of new knowledge (29).

4 [The page citations that follow are from the same source]

The above has implications as far as the question of social organisation of knowledge is concerned. As 'a form of symbolic capital', productivity has increasingly become 'dependent on knowledge and information applied to productivity - and knowledge is increasingly science based.' The 'Knowledge society' is the characteristic of 'modern life'. It is in this regard that higher education institutions are supposed to play a central role, since they are the habitat of 'specialised knowledge' (NCHE 1996). Thus:

> If South Africa is to compete economically on the world stage, it will need increasing numbers of skilled professionals and knowledge workers with world-class skills to strengthen the enterprises. If South Africa is to build the necessary skills base many thousands of new or retrained professionals in the next generation must come from the black community (31).

Beyond this, higher learning institutions in this era are supposed to 'play a special role in creating national cohesion around citizenship. This role goes beyond the role of producing skilled workers and new knowledge' (33). Humanities and social sciences will have to make 'a major contribution to social problem-solving and socialisation of new citizens with high-level social problem solving skills.'

The 'learning society' has implications as far as higher education and its role is concerned. Taking its lead from an European Union 1994 White Paper, the Commission points out that there is an increased shift from the kind of society where formal learning occurs once-off. With globalisation, someone's education does not stop after one has obtained a qualification. Moreover, public and private organisations are increasingly taking on continuing education of their members as a major responsibility.

> This means that higher education institutions will no longer have a monopoly on the transmission of knowledge, which will become increasingly diversified, with higher education institution being only one of many

> organisations competing for the education/training market (39).

If the higher education institutions are not to be marginalised, then the only alternative for them is to 'develop a wide range of partnerships with organisations in private and public sectors.' This depends on the extent to which these institutions become learning organisations (39).

The framework for transformation being proposed entails a movement away from academic insularity with governance structures and day-to-day operations. The government will have to become a very powerful partner 'which involves, through regulation arrangements, other institutions, bodies and agencies in governing.' Thus what is involved in these transformations are:

1. New state-higher education linkages, whereby 'the former should adopt a steering or co-ordinating role, the latter is more answerable to the demands of the treasury and civil society for accountable management and more efficient, client-sensitive educational delivery' (48).
2. New higher education-civil society relations, whereby these institutions 'adapt to the array of new demands for more recurrent, continuing and adult education, and more flexible modes of delivery (contact as well as distance and open learning)' (48).

Other issues are:

3. New higher education-economy linkages. This is related to the global economic changes and the new forms of knowledge production which require formal partnership between higher education institutions, state parastatals and private enterprises.
4. New inter-and intra-institutional partnerships. This is related to the question of 'more rational use of resources, while for teaching and research it could mean the establishment of schools - which could be transdisciplinary, interfaculty or transinstitutional. It could also

> entail reorganizing disciplines and faculties within institutions into programmes and schools, rather than departments and faculties' (49).

Beyond the above, some of the other significant features in the transformation of higher education is the question of 'increased responsiveness in mass higher education systems, the shift from closed to open intellectual systems in the academic arena. Increased responsiveness entails an epistemological transition away from closed knowledge systems managed only by canonical norms and collegial authority to open systems which are dynamically interactive with outside social interests and knowledge systems' (49). In real terms, this has meant increased enrolment from a wider array of social classes and a shift in the learning function of the higher learning institutions. 'There has been a move away from the elite cultures of privileged middle classes (the traditional constituency of elite institutions) to incorporate the values of non-elite communities. Higher education institutions are now offering a greater mix of programmes, some based strictly on disciplinary knowledge and canonical norms, others emphasizing the development of professional competence in the workplace' (49).

Related to the above question of responsiveness, is the need to change the traditional role of higher learning institutions - that of the generation and dissemination of knowledge, so that the 'provision of learning programmes that lead to the award of qualifications becomes the major function' (58). Accordingly:

> The Commission proposes a programme based definition of higher education as a key method of delimiting the boundary between higher and other forms of post-compulsory education. Higher education programmes consist of focused sets of learning units/courses that lead to the award of a formal qualification at certificate, diploma or degree level. Programmes are by implication transdisciplinary and can be transfaculty and

> transinstitutional. (All programmes have a broad area of specialisation and it is possible to use wider or narrower definitions of programmes for specific purposes, for example, first degrees and diplomas in engineering, bachelors degrees in engineering, B.Sc (eng) in electrical engineering, or the light or heavy current streams within the latter) (58).

Thus, the role of the higher learning institutions was redefined.

As far as the research component of the same institutions is concerned, the Commission is of the view that given the 'globalizing' trends, these can no longer claim to be the 'leading sites of knowledge production'. Their pre-eminent role has been 'eroded by the development of multiple role of research and knowledge production outside the higher education system' (58). Their role has been eroded by multinational and private sector research laboratories, scientific and cultural councils, research councils and agencies and a plethora of individual and commercial organisations. In sum there are many other organisations, other than higher learning institutions, which are 'active in the research and knowledge business' (58).

Thus, separation between what the Commission terms 'theoretical (basic) and applied knowledge, according to its view, is being contested by both the new forms of knowledge production and by new management models of research. The major change is that knowledge is not only generated in its traditional basic and discipline-driven manner in the academy, but in new forms in the market and community, and crucially in the interface between higher education and society'. (77)

Related to all the above, is what are mentioned as changing education realities. It is here that the assumptions underlying this education framework and the orthodoxy of the World Bank are clearly articulated. The NCHE states that, the new vision, according to the government White Paper on education stressed 'lifelong education and training, opening access and improving equity, democratic processes, accountability, efficiency and

productivity' (34). While it agrees with this vision, it is of the opinion that the implementation phase of the policies may generate 'tensions and priorities'. These are basically related to the question of public expenditure on education. According to the Commission, expenditure on education was expected to be 9% of GDP in 1995/96. This it considers being already substantial by international standards. 'In 1992, for example, the total public expenditure in North America was 7.2% and in the European Community the average was 6%' (34). The amount of 1.1 of GDP, which was planned to be spent on higher education in 1995/96 was already substantial by international standards. Conclusion:

> …South African higher education, with less than 70% of its higher education budget coming from government funding, it is considered by the World Bank to be among those countries with a low level dependence on government funding.
>
> World Bank-led human capital theory posited that raising literacy provides a better return on investments, and indirectly productivity, than investing in higher education. Recent assessment of this policy and the new demands of the 'information' economy dictate that both are important.
>
> It does not help to raise literacy levels if this is not linked to economic growth, which in a modern economy requires high-level person-power skills (34).

In South Africa, increasing numbers of students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds will add pressure on a scale hitherto unknown. Tension between rising social and economic demands and finite pool of public resources is experienced in every higher education system. A South African problem is that personal contributions to the costs of higher education have reached the ceiling for most. Response to these multiple demands will require various forms of public and private enterprise in higher education

and possibly higher fees for those who can afford them. It will also require a reduction in unit costs through greater efficiency and more cost-effective methods of delivery. Increased participation and diversity inexorably raise questions about, and set up tensions between quality, efficiency and resources (38).

What I have attempted to do here is to merely point out what I consider to be the salient features of the National Framework. Some debates have taken place around these issues.[5] It seems that there are some that even sounded the warning that a slip 'into a generalist curriculum and research paradigm' is not necessarily the route to coherence (Bawa 1997: 49). However, the question is to what extent were such suggestions or issues taken into consideration in the implementation of such policies. My experiences at the University of Cape Town show that major efforts have been towards implementation. The University of Cape Town's Strategic Planning Framework, as demonstrated by its conceptual framework, clearly accepts with very minor modifications the National framework. Its starting point is the 'global' changes. In the spirit of the National Framework, the UCT Framework reasserts the position that,

> Universities can no longer be seen as privileged points of access to knowledge, nor can a University be seen as just a repository of knowledge, nor has a university graduate any longer an automatic expectation of a single job lasting a lifetime. More and more, graduates' careers will involve many changes, including changes of direction. 'Knowledge workers' will prosper according to the extent to which they continue to learn and put their knowledge to work; they will be rewarded not for owning a static corpus of knowledge, but for problem-solving skills, creative thinking, and adaptability. (Strategic Planning Committee 1997: 1)[6]

5 See, for example, N. Cloite, et al, (eds.), 1997.

6 [The page citations that follow are from the same source]

The University of Cape Town is even able to predict about the future by the use of impressionistic indicators, which lack a solid foundation of a sociology of knowledge.

The basic point of departure for UCT was encapsulated in the Mission Statement of the broad institutional goals: 'to be an outstanding teaching and research university, educating for life and addressing the challenges facing our society' (1). Thus the vision is to be 'a world-class African University.' The university is to be a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary institution, an institution of excellence and relevance, which is responsive to regional and national issues, etc. The document stated that this process of change, besides making information available, would be consultative and a subject of 'rigorous debates'. One of the major goals was to make UCT a multi-disciplinary institution without necessarily 'on *a priori* grounds alone eliminating any field of scholarship from consideration as a possible degree programme or project' (1).

In meeting the national and institutional goals, besides merging some faculties, programmes were also introduced in 1999. The Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences became the Faculty of Humanities and 21 programmes were introduced to meet the requirements of a programme-based education.

What is the Big Deal in these Transformations?

There is nothing heretic in summing up the results of the above by stating boldly that the higher education policies fit squarely in those of the World Bank, even though they were tailored for Sub-Saharan Africa. Many governments in Sub-Saharan Africa seem to have accepted this position, and have been busy attempting to implement them with varying degrees. The World Bank/IMF policies, for many of these governments, have provided a justification to deal with the so-called 'armchair' or 'ivory tower' academics (often branded as elite-type). That is, essentially a war against

those academics that question the crust of post-independence privileges - those who try to raise questions that seek to transcend the existing arbitrary relationships. It is an attack on those who attempt to give their societies their images, by both reflecting upon and crystallizing the woes and concerns of their people - those who are marginalised, exploited and oppressed.

These 'institutional transformations' have introduced notions of 'viability', 'relevance', 'equity' (couched in the language of trade-off between investment in literacy and that in research and development!) and 'efficiency' The tying of education to the apron strings of the 'market' is essentially an imposition of restrictions on those forms of knowledge that aim at raising larger social and political issues. These 'transformations' demand that higher learning institutions must work with the governments to produce 'person power' for the economy—an essentially technicist conception of education. The fundamental objectives of the university - scientific inquiry, pursuit of knowledge and the search for the whole truth in the interest of social transformation and human emancipation - are increasingly being relegated to the position of what cynics of institutions of higher learning consider to be mere 'ivory tower' ('elite', 'luxury' and 'esoteric') activities.

The African intellectuals and academics reacted to this situation by producing 'The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility' in November 1990.[7] This Declaration started by affirming the rights of the people; basically taking into consideration the fact that African states are parties to international and regional human rights instruments. The first and foremost to be proclaimed was the right of people to wholesome education.[8] Some of the other rights were those of freedom of movement

7 Reproduced in Diouf and Mamdani (eds.), 1994.

8 Earlier (April 1990) the higher learning institutions in Tanzania had produced the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (also reproduced in Diouf and Mamdani (eds.), 1994). This Declaration is more explicit as far as rights to education and the basic principles are concerned. Some of the basic principles of this Declaration stated:

- Every human being has a right to wholesome education. Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality.
- Access to education shall be equal and equitable.

for intellectuals, the right to pursue intellectual activity 'subject only to universally recognised principles of scientific inquiry and ethical professional standards of education', the right to security of tenure of the intellectual community, etc.

Beyond this, the Declaration reaffirmed the independence and autonomy of the higher learning institutions from the state or any other public authority 'in conducting their affairs, including administration, and setting up their academic, teaching, research and other related programmes'. It also set out the obligations of the State, one of them being 'to continuously ensure adequate funding for research institutions and higher education'. The intellectuals also set out in clear terms the social responsibilities of intellectuals. To quote some:

> Article 19: Members of the intellectual community are obliged to discharge their roles and functions with competence, integrity and to the best of their abilities. They should perform their duties in accordance with ethical and highest scientific standards.
>
> Article 22: The intellectual community has the responsibility to struggle for and participate in the struggle of popular forces for their rights and emancipation.

- Education shall prepare a person to strive for and participate fully in the emancipation of the human being and society from oppression, domination and subjugation.
- Education shall prepare a person to strive to overcome prejudices related to gender, race, nation, ethnicity, religion, class, culture and such like. Education shall inculcate in every person respect for all humane culture developed by humankind.
- Education shall develop critical faculties, inculcate the spirit of scientific enquiry and encourage the pursuit of knowledge and the search for the whole truth in the interest of social transformation and human liberation.
- Education shall be secular. Religious instruction shall be separate from secular education and imparted to those wanting to partake of it voluntarily.
- Education shall make every person conscious of ecology and the need to protect the environment.

> Article 23: No member of the intellectual community shall participate in or be party to any endeavor which may work to the detriment of the people or the intellectual community or compromise scientific, ethical and professional principles and standards.

The concern of the African intellectuals, as the world enters the twenty first century, is how to transform African social formations and transcend the historically (national and international) formed arbitrary social relations. This is a very different starting point from those of governments, development organisations such as the World Bank, IMF, and the United Nations institutions which were more concerned with the fetishism of 'globalizing' developments—global communication industry, multinational enterprises and global financial markets. The African intellectuals were expressing those more significant 'globalizing trends' which were being silenced or marginalised by those tendencies so dear to the hearts of governments and 'development' organisations. These were in the form of increased awareness of planetary social problems such as, individual and human rights (expanded from legal to the political to the economic - the latter incorporating the question of minimum material standards of living); environmental destruction and global warming, issues of inequality (gender, class, race, ethnic, cultural, national, economic, social, political, etc.); and peace and security.

What was this, if not a response to human needs and sensitivity to the human predicament? But, of course, whether in Africa or the world all over, not all intellectuals shared such concerns. There are some, in the Atlantic world, for example, who have been enjoying affluent styles of living from grants of so-called 'applied' branches of science and research, which are claimed to be an application and development of 'pure' knowledge of the academy.[9] There are those who are even employed by branches of the state and industry, thus

9 Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind,* (1987) is one of those books which document how higher education has failed democracy and impoverished the souls of students in America. It points out some of the things I mention here. As far as Britain is concerned, see E.P. Thompson (ed.), 1970.

making research a big business. This tendency for 'academic entrepreneurs' to emerge has over the years been accompanied by the prominence of centres, bureaus, institutes, programme based teaching, etc.

In those countries, a successful academic, naturally, is not one whose research is 'acceptable' to his or her profession or relevant to human needs, but one whose research is capable of attracting the greatest funds or controls a research institution capable of distancing itself from the purely teaching structure of the faculties and departments. Financial sponsors are the ones who determine the form of knowledge, and accepted knowledge, in turn is increasingly that of 'research technicians' or 'professional researchers' rather than scientists. For these 'academic entrepreneurs', the definition of knowledge has increasingly been restricted to the so-called 'pragmatic' teaching disciplines/programmes and research of 'specific practical concern'.

It is in this way that they have been able to proclaim loudly and proudly that 'in such a worldwide informational economy…investment in what is called 'human capital' becomes strategic … [and] universities…become fundamental tools for development' (Castells 1993: 66). They have further proclaimed that, as we approach the millennium, knowledge is increasingly no longer a cognitive appropriation of socially determined material transformations for life processes. Instead, it has become simply a post-industrial force of production, since the real substance of knowledge is informed by the so–called developments in science (global cyberspace, theories of everything and progress in genetics and its aims), and the triumph of liberal democracy and a free market economy. The world is entering an era whereby cosmologies of the human subject are not the real thing, since technology and economics have fused/merged, appearing under labels such as computer economy, electronic, services, information, etc. In sum, it is an era of celebration of the end of history (as Francis Fukuyama would put it), even though all other histories are excluded.

Popular, academic and political thinking in Africa has increasingly ceased to debate on emancipatory politics - those politics which would lead to the

transformation of societies so that we reach a stage where one's humanity is not contested. Permanent critique of the reality from the point of view of liberation from domination and exploitation in all their forms has become less fashionable. The most fashionable debates are those around issues on how our African countries are being 'globalised'. It is more the dominance of a universalistic cult of a programme of desired goals (simply right wing utopianism) than an empirically supported understanding of more general trends with regard to the various activities regionally and internationally.

Simply, our knowledge can only be as good as the questions we ask. 'Globalisation', as a central concept in contemporary thinking, has a pedigree traceable to the 'civilisation analysts'—'modernisation' and 'post-modernist' analyses of the transition of human societies. It is those theories which almost always implied the universalisation process they explain. It is supposed to be a process which is directly a consequence of the expansion of the Atlantic culture, within particular patterns of capitalist accumulation/expansion. Globalisation is simply an answer to welfarism, nationalism, socialism, and so on.

It is this euphoria of post-this–and-that and globalisation, which is ahistorical, reifies facts and fetishizes systems of empiricism; a euphoria celebrating the dehumanisation and desocialisation of relationships which some academics in Africa have also internalised. This 'fine' tradition was already becoming dominant by the 1980s. Increasingly, meritocracy was becoming dominant in the 1980s rather than a search for knowledge and truth - among both students and academics. This was a time when even the concept of a University as faculty was being transformed to that of the administration being the university and faculties becoming mere subsidiaries, à la business organisations! Traditionally, the faculty has always been the university, while the administration has played a supportive role.

With meritocracy, it became a matter of the pursuit and provision of degrees and certificates. Career advancement became the norm to the extent that it was even possible to marginalise good scholarship and research. This

opportunity thus provided some academics an excuse for pursuing private interests to the neglect of public and social responsibilities. Increasingly there arose a category of academics who began to live off the academy rather than for it. The university had become a way of getting ahead in the world economically or otherwise, since there is a market of donors, NGOs, international donor organisations, local and international consulting firms, etc to which one can vend his or her skills. Exploiting the human predicament has become the norm among these. In the name of responding to international imperatives, these academicians have accepted the transformation of education from outside the academia (given the 'findings' of some consultants - including themselves or some 'international' organisations).

The National Framework itself does not conceptualise the problems facing the education sector in terms of the problems facing South Africa, including their history of emergence and becoming; but with what it considers to be a transition which is in turn posing new challenges as far as participation in the global economy is concerned (termed new technologies and expanding opportunities). It is a question of how to prescribe educational policies that will make it possible to have a curriculum which will enable the country participate in such an economy. Nothing is said in terms of the forms of knowledge, for example, which had been predominant during apartheid, and the actual role that the education and higher learning institutions played. What type of education existed then? What type of history, sociology, economics, psychology, biology, etc. was being taught? To what extent did these reinforce the social, economic and political relations? There is a resounding silence with regard to these questions. There is also hardly anything said about how higher education is supposed to contribute to dealing with problems related to health and sanitation, disease, misery, unemployment, displacement, landlessness, shelterlessness, social exclusion, alienation, violence, coercion, domination, injustice, delinquency, corruption in public authorities and among the rich, racism and prejudices, imbalances and inequalities (related to gender, class, age, ethnicity, power and distribution, etc.), misinformation (so-called news management as a

result of the information revolution), environmental degradation, conflicts, and so forth.

The fact is, constant changes/transformations are not only necessary but also imperative, especially in the education sector. The issue is, if the conceptualisation of changes in the education sector was to start from the point of view of the problems facing people and their history, the questions posed would have related to how to make it effective in improving the human condition. That is, how to bring about forms of knowledge that enhance the chances of mutual survival by dealing with the problems just mentioned. To pose questions from that point of view is in essence to take account of the fact that the revolution in communication (so beloved by the 'market fundamentalists' in justifying their arguments on alternative forms of knowledge) is the one that has ignited the awareness of the planetary problems. Therefore, the fundamental issue would have been to what extent is the education system playing its role in dealing with societal problems?

From this point of view, the search would be for an education system that equips people with the necessary tools to master/mistress knowledge and concepts necessary for the survival of the human race in this rapidly changing world; in other words, those that enhance an emancipatory and transformational mode of social activity. Such forms of knowledge and concepts definitely go above and beyond the 'job market' or 'person power requirements'. 'Job markets' as a conventional assumption underlying the role of education are a constriction on creativity, scientific inquiry, and fidelity to the pursuit of truth and intellectual freedom in general.

Important to note here is the fact that the so-called response to the 'market forces' and 'global forces' for some of the academia is nothing more than an ideologically determined position, which would like to turn the university into a supermarket without any long-term considerations of the national and societal needs in general. The historical condition in Africa and South Africa in particular require unhampered greater ferment of ideas and a sense of commitment to the interest of social transformation and human

emancipation today than ever before.

Taking such a position as far as education transformations are concerned means viewing education from the point of view of fundamental human rights. An equitable provision of education can not be guaranteed if the link of the education institutions and the society is simply a matter of finance. There is nothing like 'free' education or social services in the world, as those who advocate the commercialisation or privatisation of social services want the world to believe. All governments in the world derive their revenue from taxation. It is for this reason that they are supposed to be responsible for the provision of social services and infrastructure. In other words, it is society and not governments, which finances social services. Therefore, to talk of free services is to mask the truth. To talk about government assistance (or so-called cost-sharing) to those who cannot afford, is a mystification since those who cannot pay are the majority, to the extent that it makes no difference if the minority who can pay does not pay. Simply, an education system, which treats knowledge production an as industry, tends to reinforce inequalities and hierarchisation.

Transformations and Sociology at UCT

There were 26 programme proposals by May 1998 for the Faculty of Humanities, of which 21 were established by early 1999. All the programmes which were established had seemingly fulfilled the conditions set by the University Framework - educational objectives, outcomes, quality assurance, streams, marketability, etc. These were supposed to be linked to high-level and budget planning based on student demand, planned enrolment, etc. What does the actual reality show? The first thing to note is that there has generally been a shift in the student profile, in that the number of black students has dropped (of course, there has been a drop in enrolment of students in the country in general). What is characteristic about the enrolment in the Faculty of Humanities at UCT, is the fact that there are fewer students from what are termed 'disadvantaged' groups, but their 'preparedness' is higher than

that of the white students. There is to some extent a number of students from outside South Africa (especially Zimbabwe). It is further reported that about 90 percent of the students are concentrated in five 'programmes'. The Table below shows the distribution among those programmes.

TABLE 1: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES 1999 - STREAM+PROGRAMME ENROLLMENT (22/03/99)

Programme	**Stream**
Cultural & Literary Studies	178
English Studies	33
African, Colonial & Postcolonial Literature and Culture	2
European and Mediterranean Studies	6
Film, Media and Visual Studies	137
Law and Humanities	149
Law, Politics and History	72
Law and Psychology	26
Law, Psychology and Economics	16
Law, Philosophy and Language	35
Industrial, Organisation & Labour Studies	119
Labour, Industry and Management	7
Labour, Industry and Management Extended	29
Industrial Restructuring and Industrial Policy	1
Industrial Organisation, Psychology and Industrial Relations	43
Human Resource Management	39
Economics (BsocSc)	96
General Economics	21
General Economics Extended	52
Philosophy, Politics and Economics	22
Labour and Development	1
Psychological Studies	96

Source: Minutes of Faculty of Humanities Board, 25 March 1999

There are other programmes that did not fare badly, such as B.A Fine Art (68 students), Music and Social Work (separate figures for first years were not available by then), according to one of the participants in the enrolment exercise. There is a dramatic drop of figures of students in the rest of the programmes, to the extent that some have almost no students at all.

The same academic, who participated in the enrolment exercise, reported in a Meeting of the Sociology Department that most students had two concerns as far as choice of their programmes was concerned. One was whether the degree was transferable to Europe, which is why most of the students desire to have a degree which would enable them to work outside South Africa. Put crudely, what it means is whether the degree was responding to the needs of Europe and not South Africa! The other was whether it would lead to public or private sector employment. According to him, many students did not want to have anything to do with the public sector. He also noted that in some ways, students were concerned with keeping some of the traditional 'specialisations'. One could interpret this to mean that students chose courses that had more relevance for Europe and were anti-public service! (those that did not have anything to do with working for the public).

There has been a significant drop of enrolment from 'disadvantaged' groups. This is a very significant phenomenon, observable in virtually all universities. It simply demonstrates the fact that marketisation of university education and issues of equity are incompatible. Higher education is very expensive anywhere in the world. It is only the minorities who are rich and can pay who can afford it. The majorities who are below the 'poverty line' cannot afford it! Moreover, the preference for a degree that leads one to go to Europe, implies that 'programmes' which are marketable are those which are preferred by the 'advantaged'.

What is more significant in virtually all the programmes is the fact that they do not necessarily meet the requirements of transdisplinarity or transfaculty. What the designers of the programmes have done is to selectively put together two or more disciplines and close all possibilities of students

crossing those boundaries. Thus, a student who is doing Law and Psychology, for example, cannot have the option to take a course in sociology or gender studies. Rather than open up for more options, these programmes narrowed the choices! Then, of course, the programmes are designed in the same manner as discipline based departments, with all the streams. One wonders why are departments (with Heads) and programmes (with Co-ordinators) operating simultaneously? Isn't this a contradiction in terms?

As a result of the establishment of these programmes, the discipline of Sociology is supposed to be among the main losers as far as enrolment of students is concerned. Sociology courses appear under two programmes - Industrial Organisation and Labour Studies (IOLS, with 119) and Development and Social Transformation (DST, which got a total of 29 students). In the former, it is offering only courses that have traditionally been taught as part of industrial sociology. In the latter, it is courses dealing with development theories.

Thus, with the establishment of these programmes, all courses dealing with social issues in general and social problems in particular have been abolished. Not only that, even those courses which used to deal with social science theories have virtually been scrapped. In reality, *the establishment of programmes has meant the abolition of sociology as a discipline.* This is not accidental at all. One of the things I have come to learn is the fact that those who participated in the establishment of those programmes which are supposed to have a 'sociological component' from the Sociology Department, do not have a sociological background as such. They have a background in economics and development studies respectively![10] More interesting is the

10 Some may want to retort that Max Weber was trained as a lawyer and contributed to economics, history and sociology - especially in the establishment of the latter. Or that Durkheim's background was in psychology and not in sociology. That is precisely the point. These did not remain grounded in their backgrounds. They transcended them and became preoccupied with the study of *social life* as an objective reality, in all aspects, amenable to a sociological mode of enquiry. What I see as the determining factor in the two programmes from 'sociology' here is the stamp of those individuals' background. Development Theories are only a small part of social science or social theories; even industrial restructuring and management is not necessarily the same as those sociological studies which deal with industrial relations, labour relations,

fact that a sociology-based programme by one who has such a background was rejected for not having strong justification!

Sociology departments in other higher institutions of learning of South Africa have remained with a substantial number of enrolments (within the general trend of drops in enrolment). Now, I am not trying to suggest that sociology would have been more 'marketable' for UCT than these programmes. Nor am I necessarily advocating for narrow disciplinary specialisations or defence of the status quo. My concern is with the implications of abolishing a discipline without regard to its societal relevance and the social epistemological issues of science in general. For the novices and those who are unacquainted with issues of social sciences, let them be reminded that it is simply unimaginable to talk about the so-called 'knowledge society' without a sociology of knowledge and historical sociology! It is sociology which has historically been influential in social thought, because of its preoccupation with the nature and first principles of social sciences (philosophies, theories and methodological issues in general), and thus being the focal point of debates. It has also been central in conveying into more specialised disciplines a sense of social context. In many ways, it has been traditionally working with other disciplines, and thus the existence of spheres (not in UCT, of course!) such as 'economic sociology', 'political sociology', 'development sociology', 'social policy and welfare', 'rural sociology', 'urban sociology', 'sociology of crime and deviance', 'industrial sociology', 'environmental sociology', 'social psychology',…the list goes on.

Therefore, any transformation process of a discipline would need to be done from the point of view of its development as historically occurring practices within societal and scientific contexts. For sociology, the pertinent question would be: what does it actually mean to transform a discipline, which ranges over a vast field - from philosophy of science to the microscopic investigation of bizarre forms of human activity - in order to shed light on the general human conditions and forms of social life? To what extent is the structure of the discipline limiting as far as the new pathways of

workers' participation, labour movements, etc.

production of knowledge are concerned? If the structure is limiting, could an 'interdisciplinary' or 'multidisciplinary' mode assist in smashing those limits? In this case, what does a 'interdisciplinary' or 'multidisciplinary' programme mean for sociology? Does it mean that one cannot have a discipline? Does that mean a possibility of one being a Jack/Jane or Juma/Mwajuma of all trades and master/mistress of none?

History has never been kind to idlers! In case there are those who are unaware, these issues of 'interdisciplinarity' and 'multidisciplinarity' have been raised before in an attempt to develop alternative modes of perceiving reality through science. In the West, multidisciplinarity ended up by bundling together 'haphazardly several present disciplines that have congealed as particular responses to the West's historical development', as was noted by Susantha Goonatilake way back in the 1980s The result of this was that the constituent disciplines (with their existing channels of perception) ended up leaving many areas of the physical reality unexplored. Thus, multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity do not necessary lead to a breakthrough or new structured knowledge:

> We know that unlike the assumptions of a conventional mechanistic view of science, cross flows of metaphors had occurred often in creative situations. Thus, especially at paradigm breaks, the intellectual elements that nourish a discipline constitute a surprising collection. These elements include a-priori orientations of scientists which encompass also mystical and 'extra-scientific' beliefs, modes, metaphors and orientations from other often unrelated disciplines and perspectives, as well as beliefs drawn from social ideas of every day.
>
> Displacement of ideas across disciplines have been recorded by many. Thus, the impact of Malthus on Darwin and Darwin on Social Darwinism, social ideas on organic chemistry (?) are few. However, it should

> be noted that although science in its growth takes its external elements outside a discipline, it is structured socially and a social perspective governs implicitly the process of discovery.
>
> Drift of metaphors from one discipline to another, a very fruitful source of new ideas should not be confused with conventional multidisciplinary and inter-disciplinary studies. Drifts of metaphors where it is valid could be a source of creativity. (Goonatilake 1987: 21-22).

What then, it may be asked, are multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary programmes/studies? In my understanding, each of the disciplines involved in a multi-disciplinary programme uses its own concepts and methods. It is only the general subject or question involved which remains the same. The philosophical or theoretical backgrounds of those involved and their conceptions about society may be quite different. Therefore, the outcomes of such a programme involve an interpretation on levels of each separate discipline. This is very complex in terms of comparison, since it is practically impossible to have a synthetic point of view, and even if one is achieved, it will be only superficial.

An interdisciplinary study/programme involves an attempt to deal with a given issue simultaneously from different angles to take into account diverse aspects of the subject matter at the same time. This is more united and more concentrated than multidisciplinary work. Here, it is possible to even formulate or share a theoretical edifice. This kind of programme enables a holistic, sythensised understanding of the issue being dealt with. What is needed in this type of a programme is some kind of a 'meta-language', a language based on a shared perspective on people, society (and its basic essence) and the question at hand, which will express the holistic view. In other words, a close relationship is required between the philosophical background of the disciplines and their ways of formulating scientific questions and hypotheses.

Being part of multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary study/programme/research presupposes that one already belongs to a discipline, thus contributing to dealing with an issue (in many cases practical) from different angles. In which case, such studies/programmes/researches may be possible only at a higher level when one is already grounded in a discipline. In the case of universities, this implies the post-graduate level. In this case, they usually aim at the application of knowledge, rather than production of new knowledge. The history of programmes where research has become an industry demonstrates this fact. Programmes in many European countries have always been at the postgraduate level. I believe that if programmes must be established, then it should be on the basis of long-term national and societal needs, the intrinsic scientific value of the branches of knowledge in question, and the programmes' expected contribution to the intellectual stature of the university, before anything.

Were the above aspects taken into consideration in the formulation and introduction of programmes at UCT? As will be demonstrated by the manner in which the exercise was implemented in the Sociology Department, the answer is no. Those who formulated the programmes in Sociology simply took what is popularly known as a 'human capital investment approach' à la World Bank, uncritically. They were simply following the lead of the University executive and the Academic Planning Committee who initiated the move to programmes. This approach assumes that students enrol in courses that are in demand and are rewarded by the market. Therefore, students' choices should be the strategy for establishing programmes. But again, even in this regard, no research was conducted to determine what students wanted, or what the market needed or wanted. Unfortunately, experience in many universities all over the world demonstrates that students and parents seek degrees less for any additional skills or the actual content and standards than an entitlement of entry to higher status jobs. There is ample evidence from many universities which demonstrates that at times students simply choose the easiest route to degrees. Thus more often than not, they pressurise academic members of staff to become lax in their grading.

In which case, students' choice based planning in many cases encourages fadism. This in the long run is very costly, inefficient and detrimental to the whole enterprise of knowledge production.[11]

It is certainly very important to produce graduates who are employable. This is one of the fundamental roles of any university in the world. Universities should seek to impart skills which are usable in the labour market. However, unlike in the vocational training schools or polytechnic tradition, which produce operatives, universities are primarily charged with the task of cultivating analytic skills and developing critical faculties/thinking in the students. In other words, training in professional skills goes hand in hand with the development of students' ability to generate ideas and engage in critical analysis. Once this is successfully done, then the rest falls in place.

It is with the necessary analytic tools that students are able to refine their skills and acquire new ones with a measure of resourcefulness, originality and creativity. In this regard, there are disciplines such as philosophy which may appear unusable to the superficial, but which are very critical to the students in all fields of specialisation for development of critical and analytical skills. It is inconceivable to imagine of an environment with a

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11 In an article forwarded to me by a colleague, Jon Ternin, a 3rd year student at Swarthmore College, Philadelphia, USA, who spent a semester at UCT in 1998, published an article in the *Boston Globe* (01 17 199) titled: 'This is Africa' (College student finds Cape Town eye-opening). Here are some of his observations: 'What seems strange in retrospect, though, is that almost everything I learned was derived by simply living in South Africa, and not from my experience at UCT. The university itself was perhaps the only disappointing part of my time there. UCT is not shy about its ambition to become 'a world-class African university,' but it seems far from realising its goal. I enrolled in three classes there, in Archaeology, History and Political Studies departments. The classes ranged in size from roughly sixty to one hundred and twenty people, although those are hard estimate to make because attendance never approached full capacity. Simply put, many UCT students never go to class - Of course this happens at any university, and I am not one to preach the virtues of perfect attendance, but I was struck by the frequency with which some students skipped entire weeks of classes, not to mention individual days. What's worse, though, is that some professors seem to have come to accept this behaviour. I had a fifteen-person tutorial with my history professor once a week. The first week we had almost a full attendance, but each week thereafter fewer and fewer students 'pitched up'…. In the final week I was the first person in the classroom, the professor entered a minute later, and that was the extent of the attendance.'

vibrant intellectual life, for example, in a situation where poetry, philosophy, literature, aesthetics, etc. are simply viewed from the point of view of their connection to a 'national framework' or their 'marketability'.

A look at the way programmes were formulated leads to one conclusion: some individuals, without necessarily involving other members in the debates, have established them. These individuals have done so, not in response to changes, but to the preservation of their own narrow specialisations, in the course forcing other people to be subject to their narrow dictates. The programmes have been set up without regard to what it actually means to be multi-disciplinary or inter-disciplinary and the implications, as far as knowledge dissemination and production is concerned. The names of the programmes are quite attractive, and they are seemingly 'practically oriented'. In reality, they are a death knell for the basics of the scientific enterprise.

This is clearly demonstrated by the way the programmes were established --throwing away all the fundamental issues relating to problems of knowledge, philosophies and theories of social sciences, etc. What the Department of Sociology has done is to relegate the fundamental objectives of knowledge production to the background in favour of certain restrictions, without involving all academic members in the debates. No democratic debates and principles were employed in establishing these programmes. I think academicians have no right to preach democracy to others if they cannot practice it themselves. In the academia, undemocratic practices tend to breed petty antipathies, bad conscience and brutal mediocrity.

As I stated above, transformations in any scientific enterprise are necessary. To repeat what I pointed out earlier, the questions, however, are: What is the basis of those transformations? What are they aimed at transforming? What do they aim to achieve as far as the issue of systematically ordered knowledge of social life is concerned? What does such a process entail for a discipline which ranges over a vast field from the philosophy of science to detailed minute investigation of human activities? These are

not bizarre questions, since at stake in any discipline is an account of the transformations in methods, problematics and subject matter practices - including the socio-scientific transformation of concepts. Science is historically occurring practices before anything. In which case, one-sidedness cannot be entertained, since specific methods are required for dealing with specific contradictions. It is in this regard that it is necessary to sustain a pluralist conception of science, which takes into account the question of unity in diversity in both method and subject matter.

Being part of a historically white university, the Sociology Department at UCT has since 1974 confined itself to teaching what is called general and industrial sociology, in response to the dictates of narrow technocratic, social, economic and political circumstances prevailing then. In this case, transformations should have, in the first instance, re-examined and summed up this past history (including the type of knowledge which was being imparted) and subjected it to a critique. The next move would have been to consider the historical trajectory/context in which it is operating.

Within the above context, another question that should have been dealt with is that of what distinguishes one discipline from another. That is: What is the subject matter of a discipline that makes it distinguishable from another, and how does it relate to those others. For sociology, for example, it is social problems and social movements, which have historically been of prime significance in stimulating sociological imagination. It is social issues, which are of central concern. And these cannot be addressed from the simplistic point of empiricism and the logic of the market.

By following orders from above, the formulators of the programmes in the Sociology Department violated this fundamental point of departure. They have taken that the point of departure is the question of industrial and economic development in general. They have done so in response to development organisations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, United Nations Development Programme, etc. These organisations, Governments and Development Studies *per se* have mainly concerned

themselves with economic development. Thus, globalizing developments - global communication industry, multinational enterprises and global financial markets have been the defining sources of the programmes. This has been done to the detriment of social issues. They have ignored or forgotten the fact that even those organisations have over the years come to acknowledge the importance of taking into account issues such as the social impact of economic, industrial and development policies in general.

More serious is the fact that they have ignored the real tendencies and issues in that 'globalisation'. That is the tendency towards an increased awareness of planetary social problems, which I pointed out in the preceding section. A programme which claims to be incorporating sociological aspects and does not take into account these historical circumstances signals academic exterminism. Transformation of programmes in this regard *must* start from conceptualisation of problems facing Africa and South Africa in particular, without on any account losing sight of their global context. To formulate a programme in response to the so-called global dictates is to ignore completely issues of societal relevance. Aimé Cesaire rightly stated in the 1950s that 'there are two ways of losing oneself: through fragmentation in the particular or dilution in the 'universal.'' The starting point should be the numerous social problems facing South Africa and African countries in general. To mention some: civil strife, ethnicity, racism, corruption, terrorist governments (both civilian and military), unemployment and labour exploitation, landlessness and environmental destruction, rural/ urban migration, homelessness and displacement, crime and violence, sexual harassment, sexual abuse and rape, abuse and violation of children, alcoholism and drug abuse, etc.

All the above processes entail possession of adequate knowledge about social relationships and other factors, given the societal goals or partial ones. This means that those involved in dealing with social problems must be well-trained researchers and analysts. They must be equipped with a systematically ordered knowledge of social life, which can provide an empirical and rational basis for social policy-making. The conceptualisation of modes of politics

and social life which would lead to more humane organisation of societies is more wanting now than ever, given the generalised crisis (social, cultural, political, economic, etc). Such conditions necessitate the formulation of a programme which is strong theoretically (within a local and international context), rich in fundamentals (from textbooks) and concrete research in response to societal problems.

Such a programme would have to provide skills and critical faculties among students so that they are sensitive to the human predicament and able to work in communities and organisations, while remaining committed to the pursuit of truth and redressing historical and contemporary social imbalances (inequalities and distribution of power). It would have to produce students who, besides being able to gather facts and establish the basis for policy formulation, will be in a position to put together patterns of action that have occurred with some regularity and construct explanations to help in the understanding of social relations and social behaviour. At the individual level, it would have to give them a wider consciousness of human society.

Within this context, a programme which can provide an objective analysis of the dimensions of social problems, assess their potential consequences for individuals, communities and societies in general, which can suggest strategies for dealing with them, and show the possible side effects of reducing the damage, requires an approach from four angles. The first is one based on a sociology of knowledge. What is implied here is that one has to know the processes by which reality is socially constructed. That is, one has to grasp how and why one rather than the other harmful condition is thought to be a social problem. Related to this is a social anthropological angle. Important here is the one which has practical applications, mainly focusing on the links between cultural processes and economic, political and sociological ones. It mainly emphasises cultural aspects of cognition.

Another angle is social psychological. This takes into consideration the ways in which people interact with one another, how they influence their groups and how others influence them. This angle, for example, should be

able to help one specify how individuals' parents and friends, etc. influence them to be poor, drug abusers, gangsters, or in any action identified as a social problem. Finally, the social structural angle. The focus in this angle is on the way organisations influence behaviour. Examples here are such as: the impact of industrial and agrarian or land policies, urban policies, the electoral process, welfare policies and other factors which may explain why the individual becomes poor. Often, such factors seem to have very little to do with the particular individual. The structural angle makes one grasp the manner in which the social structures influence the rates of those things which are defined as social problems. It helps one to uncover the hidden/essential dimensions of society, related to distribution of conflicting interests and benefits.

Thus, such a programme would have to provide a comprehensive knowledge of how to study emerging social problems in contemporary society. The focus would have to be on basic concepts, methods, and theories for studying social problems and approaches to social problems from global, regional, national and local perspectives. Moreover, it would have to provide a comprehensive social theory/analysis knowledge which provides an introduction and overview of the full spectrum of social theory and concentrates on teaching students how to apply theory to make sense of social problems and to offer practical suggestions for the improvement of social life. Other issues involved would be a comprehensive provision of historical, economic, and political background for analyzing emerging social problems in South Africa and other African contexts; and a comprehensive social policy education which covers the full range of practical and substantive issues linked to policy formulation, implementation, evaluation and analysis.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

What I have done in this paper is to try and show the problems of transformation of higher education, as far as the question of production of knowledge is concerned. I have not taken to task the government's position on the role and mode of financing higher education. I do not intend to do so, since I fear that the so-called practical people will claim that I am being impractical. Therefore, I chose to hide behind the words of a former teacher (by profession) and President of Tanzania up to 1985, Mwalimu Julius K. Nyerere, which he pronounced in the commemoration of the 25th Anniversary of the University of Dar es Salaam in 1995. I feel tempted to quote in extenso in lieu of a conclusion:

> Yet, whatever the national difficulties, and whatever ideologies or policies have been adopted by current governments on behalf of the people who elected them, some things remain constant. A nation finances a university for its own national purposes. In doing so it expects that university to fulfil three functions - to transmit advanced (and advancing) knowledge from one generation of mankind to the citizens of another generation; to provide the educated and trained high-level manpower needed by that society; and to be the centre for the national endeavour to advance knowledge.
>
> This means that a University - any University - has to be relevant to the society within which it exists; further, it must be seen to be relevant. It must relate its thinking and its teaching to the needs, the aspirations, and the problems of that society. This is a difficult thing to do at any time, for the international environment is constantly changing the needs and problems of every developing country. Nor is 'planning' ever perfect! But at times of 'transition' towards a more 'laissez faire' economy

the difficulties of forecasting future needs multiply. This does account for the fact that even now some graduates from this university are finding it difficult to get employment. If it stopped trying to be relevant to the society the position would be worse!

In choosing to have one or more Universities, a nation and its governments have accepted commitments. At the minimum it has undertaken to provide sufficient resources for the universities to function effectively. So what happens if, as things change, a government finds it absolutely impossible to do that?

…[N]o government is completely free in its choices. Within the education sector, a government cannot decide to close down primary and secondary schools so as to make money available for the University, because the latter needs qualified entrants as well as money! Nor can it decide to privatise Universities (that is, to leave the provision of tertiary education to 'the market') without abandoning even the shadow of a commitment both to equal opportunity for all its citizens, and even to genuine university education. An understanding of 'the market'—and indeed usefulness in 'the market'—may well be aspects of relevance in the determination of University courses or teaching; but I fail to see how the prime purpose of making a profit is consistent with the academic freedom and excellence which is an intrinsic part of being a university.

In a real financial crisis, where public revenue is insufficient to meet the minimum requirements of the existing Universities, what could - or should - the government do? Should it decide to close one or all of

> them? Or should it cut University budget allocations below the minimum….?
>
> Yet it can be argued that there is another possible response to such a crisis. It is that the government should look again at its priorities and the possibility of extending the range of its possible choices. In other words, a government in this position should re-examine the priorities which have determined budgetary allocations, and should also re-examine the balance between the nation's private and public expenditure. The latter point is really a euphemistic way of asking whether the government is raising - and collecting - as much revenue in taxation as it needs to do or could do!
>
> For in considering the problem of financing universities, a related argument is that the bulk of a university's unavoidably heavy recurrent costs is really an investment in the future. It is an investment in people and knowledge, and thus in the creation of a resource essential for overcoming the national economic and financial crisis (Nyerere 1996: 4-7).

He is from a poor country. Those who think wisdom can not be drawn from those who are poorer than they are should remember that it took a child to remind the king that he was naked! Grownups kept pretending that the king was dressed.

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“It is certainly not our task to build up the future in advance and to settle all problems for all time, but it is just as certainly our task to criticise the existing world ruthlessly. I mean ruthlessly in the sense that we must not be afraid of our own conclusions and equally unafraid of coming into conflict with the prevailing powers.”

Karl Marx

THE UNIVERSITY AS A SITE OF KNOWLEDGE: THE ROLE OF BASIC RESEARCH*

Abstract

This paper extrapolates from the tensions between the University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA) and the university administration to make a case for academic freedom in Tanzania in particular and Africa in general. It draws on two key statements on academic freedom in Africa – the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (1990) and the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1991), to discuss the role of basic research in the university as a site for knowledge production. The paper argues that the quest for academic freedom is only meaningful if universities renew their commitment to the public good. Only by fulfilling the public trust as weavers of the social fabric and upholders of the highest ethical dimensions of human life can universities reclaim their position in society and the world at large.

Introduction

On the 30th April 2003, the then United States Ambassador to Tanzania, Mr. Robert V. Royall, was scheduled to inaugurate a USAID funded modern transportation engineering laboratory on the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) Main Campus ('The Hill'). This was at a time when the United States and Britain were pouring thousands of pounds of bombs in Iraq. On 29 April 2003, the University of Dar es Salaam Academic Staff Assembly (UDASA) strongly and unreservedly protested at the presence of the

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Ambassador on the Main Campus and called upon its members and the university community to boycott the event. UDASA stated that the American and British bombing campaign was

> reducing... [Iraq] to rubble, and literally disarming children, as the likes of Ali losing their limbs [had] shown. It also complained that as a result of the bombing the great libraries and museums of Iraq went up in flames, destroying the record of over ten centuries of Arab, Islamic and human civilisation.

The UDASA protest did not go down well with the University Administration, even though the government was also opposed to the invasion of Iraq, as Parliament had been informed in the same month. The vice-chancellor responded to the UDASA statement through a letter to the chairperson on 9 May 2003. Among other things the letter questioned whether the statement was not contrary to the right to academic freedom. The vice-chancellor argued:

> A university is a free market of ideas. One would, therefore, have thought that 'un-embedded' intellectuals would have asked, not for a boycott of Ambassador Royall's visit, but for an invitation to him to a discussion/ debate/panel discussion with others holding views from those of UDASA.

The letter continued: 'Why was this option not exercised? By condemning the US unheard as is done in the statement, will an invitation to US government representative to the UDSM for a debate/discussion stand any chance of success?' The letter went on to question even the calibre of the academic members of staff, claiming they were not aware of the implications of their actions. 'Has UDASA reflected', the vice-chancellor asked, 'on what intellectuals elsewhere in the world who read the UDASA statement will conclude about the calibre and quality of intellectuals at UDSM?' Then came the real crunch:

> Would any of the un-embedded intellectuals have their sons, daughters or relatives studying or living in the US or UK? Would one meet any of them standing in queue for a visa to the US or UK? Will any of them neither seek nor accept funding for research, sabbaticals, and other academic pursuits from any of the two countries?

The following year UDASA and the university administration clashed again, after the administration, on 21 April 2004, suspended all students for 'security' reasons. This followed a two-day boycott of classes in protest at the Student Loans Bill, aimed at introducing the last phase of so-called cost sharing in higher education. On 20 April students had demonstrated against the Bill, only to meet the wrath of the state in the form of police and paramilitary, who broke up demonstration using excessive force. Many students were wounded or jailed. When UDASA protested against this shabby treatment of the students, the administration questioned its legitimacy as an organisation and the manner in which it conducted itself as far as decision making was concerned. The administration even challenged UDASA to conduct an opinion poll to ascertain whether members truly agreed with the positions taken by the organisation, arguing that UDASA lacked even the basic rudiments of strategic planning.

Under such circumstances can the university be considered a site of knowledge? Is it possible to undertake basic research in a situation where donors and international financial institutions (IFIs) dominate in every sphere of society and the academia? What all the above demonstrates is the fact that there is nothing like academic freedom in the abstract. In the case of our countries, it 'exists fully and concretely for those who control the means of production and circulation of knowledge, whether as a private or state capital; they can decide what to produce and how to produce it' (Ake 1994:17). The dictum that knowledge is power is not a new one since the times of Francis Bacon, but with rapid advances in information technology in the North, it is said increasingly that knowledge and the capacity to produce it are becoming key economic inputs which at the extreme supersedes land,

capital and labour.

The 1990 and 1991 Declarations on Academic Freedom

To discuss meaningfully the topic at hand, it is necessary to revisit the context under which two key statements on academic freedom in Africa were produced- the Dar es Salaam Declaration on Academic Freedom and Social Responsibility of Academics (1990) and the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility (1991). The budgetary crises in African states during the late 1970s and 1980s had resulted in governments bowing to the dictates of international financial institutions by liberalising their economies and introducing anti-welfare policies as part of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). Currency devaluations and sky-rocketing inflation rates had eroded the earnings of the people in general, including academics. Institutions of higher learning had become characterised by the collapse of infrastructure such as libraries, bookstores and research facilities, serious shortage of books, laboratory equipment and research funds, inadequate teaching personnel, poor staff development and motivation..

In this context working conditions and remuneration in institutions of higher learning verged on the catastrophic. Academic members of staff were migrating to 'greener pastures' , including apartheid South Africa, or resorting to outside work such as dubious donor-funded consultancies or even keeping poultry. Classrooms were overcrowded, students were becoming lecturer-dependent (relying on lecture notes and readers' notes) and lecturers were increasingly demoralised. In addition, there was a steady deterioration of social and cultural values on many campuses, with a resurgence of gender-based, racial, nationalist, religious and cultural prejudices, amidst an atmosphere of petty antipathies, bad conscience and brutal mediocrity. In the early 1990s, for example, a female student, Revina Mukasa, committed suicide as a result of gender harassment. There were more and more incidences of violence on campuses, along with a

marked tendency for students to regroup themselves in terms of ethnic affiliations. Ethnic affiliations, which were previously unheard of among students in Tanzania, had become necessary; it was claimed, to be a 'survival mechanism'. Students helped each other cope with the hardships resulting from 'cost-sharing' measures, but only within ethnic groupings.

On the other hand the deteriorating situation resulted in growing activism on campuses as a result of the growing demands by academics for a living wage and protests by students against the so-called cost-sharing measures. Usually governments in Africa have responded to this activism with the use of force, deploying military and security forces on campuses to 'restore law and order'. In several instances confrontations between these forces and students or academic staff have led to the closure of campuses. It was in this context that the questions of academic freedom, responsibilities of higher learning institutions and their autonomy were raised. The debates ranged from those focusing mainly on better living and working conditions to those 'concerned more directly with academic freedom and the relationship of the intellectual to society… [and] to those directly and centrally involved in broader democratic struggles' (Diouf and Mamdani 1994: 4)

The Dar es Salaam and Kampala declarations were not explicit on the role of the universities as sites of knowledge or even on the role of basic research. It seems that these issues were assumed to remain within the context of the traditional objectives of the university—scientific enquiry, pursuit of knowledge and the search for the whole truth in the interest of social transformation and human emancipation. The institutional transformations that were to be introduced in the universities in the 1990s and how these would impinge on knowledge production and research in general were hardly taken aboard even in subsequent follow-ups on academic freedom (see CODESRIA 1996 and Sall 2000, for example). The issues of vital importance in the discussions in the 1990s remained those of harassment, repression, intimidation, suspensions, remuneration and freedom of expression, association, demonstration and assembly.

Postmodernism, Knowledge, Research and Neo-liberalism

The French post-modernist Jean-François Lyotard, published a book in 1979 which was translated into English in 1984 as *The Post-Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Lyotard 1984). In this work Lyotard accounted for the changing nature of knowledge in the advanced capitalist societies and reassessed the role of the universities, given the computerisation process in those societies. His working hypothesis was that 'the status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the post-industrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age' (Lyotard 1984: 3). The term 'postmodern condition' was used to describe the state of knowledge and the problem of its legitimation, following what he considered to be the transformations that had been taking place in those countries since the 1950s.

According to Lyotard the Enlightenment project and its metanarratives concerning meaning, truth and emancipation, which had been used to legitimate both the rules of knowledge and the foundations of modern institutions, besides laying down the game rules for science, literature and the arts, had reached a crisis in the most highly developed societies. The 'postmodern condition' was defined by 'incredulity toward metanarratives' (Lyotard 1984: xxiv). By this phrase Lyotard meant to point to 'the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimation' to which corresponds 'the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution' (Lyotard 1984: xxiii).

Lyotard further claimed that knowledge was increasingly becoming the major force of production and was increasingly becoming translated into quantities of information, with a corresponding reorientation in the process of research. He claimed that 'the miniaturisation and commercialisation of machines is already changing the way in which learning is acquired, classified, made available, and exploited' (Lyotard 1984: 4). Knowledge in computerised societies was becoming 'exteriorised' from knowers; and the age-old notion of knowledge and pedagogy being inextricably linked was being replaced by a new view of knowledge as a commodity: 'Knowledge is

and will be produced in order to be sold, it is and will be consumed in order to be valourised in a new production: in both cases, the goal is exchange. Knowledge ceases to be an end in itself, it loses its ‘‘use- value’’... (Lyotard: 4-5).

According to Lyotard knowledge in the form of informational commodity had become indispensable to productive power: ‘It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control and access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labour’ (Lyotard 1984: 5). In this context, the idea that ‘learning falls within the purview of the State, as the mind or brain of society’ was giving way to the idea that ‘society exists and progresses only if messages circulating within it are rich in information and easy to decode’ (Lyotard 1984: 5). In sum:

> We may thus expect a thorough exteriorisation of knowledge with respect to the ‘knower,’ at whatever point he or she may occupy in the knowledge process. The old principle that the acquisition of knowledge is indissociable from the training *(Bildung)* of minds, or even of individuals, is becoming obsolete and will become ever more so. The relationships of the suppliers and users of knowledge to the knowledge they supply and use is now tending, and will increasingly tend, to assume the form already taken by the relationship of commodity producers and consumers to the commodities they produce and consume—that is, the form of value (Lyotard 1984: 4-5).

In the computer age, with the state playing more of a regulatory role, powers to make decisions will be determined by the question of access to information. Eventually academics will not be needed, since much of the work they undertake will be taken over by computerised data network systems. Lyotard was essentially acknowledging the omnipotence of the

free-market economy.

The university, with all its faculties and intellectual specialisations, becomes untenable because of the new nature of knowledge—cyberspace information processing which quantifies knowledge according to computer logic. For postmodernists the knower has been transformed to a consumer of knowledge. Perhaps these claims by Lyotard, which were celebrated in Europe and exerted profound influence among the post-modernists, could have remained a European academic fad, except for the fact they reinforced the ideas developed by the theorists of 'post-industrial society', such as Touraine (1971) and Bell (1974) on information/knowledge workers. These theorists argued that industrial society was moving from a good-producing to a service economy and was characterised by the pre-eminence of the professional and technical class and the widespread diffusion of 'intellectual technology'. After the 1968 student revolts in Europe Touraine predicted the possibility of deepening conflicts between students and teachers upholding the humanistic values of liberal education on the one hand, on the other hand, those who control the technocratic apparatuses and are dedicated to economic growth.

Above all Lyotard's claims were being given credence and substance by the developments in science—the new information technology (global cyberspace), the new cosmologies developed by conventionalists (the theory of everything) and the developments in genetic science (the human genome project). They also coincided with the rise of neo-liberal politics of the neo-conservatives with the ascendancy of Pope John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla in 1978), President Ronald Reagan (1980) and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (1981) and the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989, which signaled the complete triumph of the market economy. African and other developing countries were being forced to structurally adjust their economies, adopt market-oriented policies and privatise public enterprises. With the rise of computer technology, cellular phones, modems, and faxes, the world's financial markets became hooked up into a system of 24-hour non-stop trading. Take-over specialists bought and sold enterprises all over

the world, making tens of thousands of workers redundant and countless stockholders rich, regardless of the long-term economic goals of a country.

The determinists in genetic science, sponsored by the multibillion-dollar Human Genome Project, which aimed to map and analyse the complete genetic blueprint of human beings, lent weight to the idea that human beings are pre-determined, whether in terms of intelligence, free market entrepreneurship, sexuality, male dominance, etc. Thus the project worked to legitimise the status quo of existing inequalities and forms of domination. Meanwhile, as far as physics was concerned, theories of chaos and complexity demolished the notion of control and certainty in science. Conventionalists had claimed that scientific methods are just myths and that scientific knowledge is manufactured. Paul Feyerabend (1971: 5) had earlier explicitly argued that the 'only principle that does not exhibit progress is: anything goes…Without chaos, no knowledge. Without a frequent dismissal of reason, no progress.'

As a 1994 European Union White Paper pointed out, there has been an increasing shift from the kind of society where formal learning occurs once-off towards one in which education does not stop after one has obtained a qualification. Thus both public and private organisations are increasingly taking on the continuing education of their members as a major responsibility. The South African National Commission for Higher Education therefore concludes:

> This means that higher education institutions will no longer have a monopoly on the transmission of knowledge, which will become increasingly diversified, with the higher education institution being only one of many organisations competing for the education/training market (NCHE 1996: 39)

In such an environment, if higher education institutions are not to be marginalised, they are going to have to develop partnerships with both private and public sector organisations.

Neo-liberalism and Institutional Transformation in Tanzania

Broadly, whatever the misgivings some may have, the post-independence Tanzanian nation-building was based on welfare policies that assumed the public provision of health, education, water, etc. This was reflected even in the conception of what the university and other institutions of higher learning were all about. According to Nyerere (1973: 192-3) the university was an institution where people's minds should be 'trained for clear thinking, for independent thinking, for analysis and for problem solving at the highest level. This is the meaning of 'a university' anywhere in the world.' Thus the university's role was threefold: to transmit advanced knowledge from one generation to another 'so that this can serve either as a basis of action, or as a springboard for further research', to advance the frontiers of knowledge 'through its possession of good library and laboratory facilities'; and finally to provide high-level manpower to society. All three are necessary: 'a university which attempt to prohibit any one of [these functions] would die- it would cease to be a university' (Nyerere 1973:193). For Nyerere universities in developing countries have exactly the same high responsibility towards themselves and their societies:

> Thus our University, like all others worthy of the name, must provide the facilities and the opportunities for the highest intellectually enquiry. It must encourage and challenge its students to develop their powers of constructive thinking. It must encourage its academic staff to do original research and to play a full part in promoting intelligent discussion of issues of human concern. It must do all these things because they are part of being a university; they are part of its reason for existence (Nyerere 1973: 197).

In keeping with this vision post-independence policies in Tanzania were premised on the provision of education, especially higher education, as the basis for social and economic development, with the state playing the

central role.

However, the neo-liberal policies which were developed in the 1980s to cope with the crisis that had begun to face the African countries since 1970s argued that developing countries, with their abundant supply of unskilled labour, had a comparative advantage in the production of labour-intensive goods and services.[1] With increased free trade, this argument held, the wages of unskilled labour would increase in these countries, since goods produced by unskilled labour in the developed countries were facing competition from those of the developing countries, given the scarcity of unskilled labour in the former. Therefore free markets and competition would enhance technological progress and lead to high-quality, sustained growth in the developing countries. (Michalopoulos 1987: 24) Within this context the World Bank produced a number of studies on education in Africa from mid-1980s on (World Bank 1985, 1986, 1988, 1989, 1990a, 1991; Kelly 1991) calling for drastic reductions in state funding of higher education in Africa on the pretext of promoting higher efficiency and more egalitarian distribution of resources.

These studies claimed that social return on public investment in primary education was 28 per cent, while that on tertiary education was 13 per cent. They also argued that the return on private investment in higher education was as high as 32 per cent. The studies concluded that individual university graduates received about 2.5 times more income over outlay than the government but received 34 times more from the government than what primary level students received. Accordingly, they concluded, education financing was unbalanced and investment in higher education was inefficient. In the words of Michael Kelly (1991: 7), 'wastage, proliferation of small institutions, excessively large (especially non-teaching) staff and the nearly universal policy of charging no fees all contribute to high costs'.

1 Most of the argument is based on Chachage 2003, 'Social Policy and Development in East Africa: The Case of Education and Labour Markets' in *Social Policy in the Development Context: Africa and the Challenge of Social Policy*, UNRISD

The studies also argued that the distribution of education expenditure was very non-egalitarian. For example, they claimed that 40 percent of university students came from white-collar families (professionals, government employees and corporate employees). White-collar families represented only 6 per cent of the population but appropriated about 27 per cent of public education expenditure. Thus, rather than alleviating poverty, public expenditure in higher education, it was claimed, was increasing it. The World Development Report of 1990 identified the most critical elements of poverty reduction as labour-intensive growth, investment in human capital and safety nets for the poor. It emphasised the need for growth that is labour-intensive and removes distortions in labour markets. This was a time when many donor agencies had shifted their support to projects promising short-term pay-offs, which were mostly administered by NGOs whose success did not depend on high-level skills, such as technical skills or PhDs. This approach reinforced the shift away from higher education as a development priority (Doss et al. 2004: 2)

At a World Bank meeting of African vice-chancellors in Harare in 1988 it was even claimed that Africa's need for university education to fill white-collar jobs could be met by overseas education institutions, so that resources could be channelled to primary, tertiary and vocational education. The assumption was that African workers were destined for a long time to remain unskilled workers. This was the position of the World Bank's first Africa-specific education policy paper, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policies for Adjustment, Revitalisation and Expansion* (1988). The paper was produced at a time when the bank's lending for the social sector was constrained to make room for SAPs lending in what the bank considered to be productive sectors. The main thrust of this policy was that higher education was too expensive and mainly favoured better-off population groups at the expense of primary and secondary education for the majority.

Since there was resistance from the institutions of higher learning, the World Bank called for a restructuring of education, so that there could be public cost recovery and reallocation of government spending towards levels with

highest social returns. This, according to the World Bank, would promote higher efficiency and more egalitarian distribution of education resources. The bank was of the view that the higher education system should be made to operate at the lowest possible public cost and that higher-education institutions should exist by virtue of being 'viable' and 'efficient'. By viability was meant the institutions 'producing' for the 'market' and paying for themselves. The introduction of cost-sharing was part of this package. By efficiency was meant revising syllabi to ensure 'products' better suited for the market. The World Bank envisioned a network of market-oriented 'centers of excellence' replacing the present university systems. In the view of the World Bank education was bound up with the development of the overall economy. The crucial and determining factor was the question of employment (and unemployment), since educational levels have an effect on employability. Rhetoric aside, this was an expression in a subtle way of the view that universities should be turned to vocational schools in all but name!

According to the World Bank, the multiple changes in economies, cultures and communication systems under globalisation calls for greater flexibility in production to meet increasingly diverse global consumer needs. This flexibility can be attained by using new computer-led technologies and employing a more educated labour force in more participatory forms of work organisation. This had led to an increased need for a multi-skilled labour force that can adapt to new technologies and the continuous deployment of new knowledge. The world is entering a new stage— that of the 'knowledge society'— in which productivity is increasingly becoming dependent on knowledge as a form of symbolic capital. Since higher-learning institutions are the natural habitat of specialised knowledge, they should therefore play a central role. The role of higher-learning institutions in Africa becomes one of producing skilled professionals and knowledge workers who can compete internationally.

Within this context higher education, like other public services, was increasingly being drawn into the world market. For example it was claimed that students were becoming consumers free to choose the best courses and

that there was big money to be made by private firms. Higher education had therefore become a commodity. The income from foreign students in Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries topped USD 30 billion in 1999. Even the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has turned its attention to this sector; the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) has included higher education on the list of services to be privatised since 1994. The negotiations on facilitating the flow of students and educational resources and on establishing colleges and campuses in foreign countries were planned to be completed by 2005.

In terms of financial resources public universities now had to compete with many other institutions. The changing forms of knowledge dissemination, and the entry of a plethora of private and public institutions performing the same work, ended universities' knowledge 'monopoly'. As far as research component was concerned, it was claimed that, given the globalising trends, universities could no longer claim to be the leading sites of knowledge production. Their pre-eminent role had been eroded by multinational and private sector research laboratories, scientific and cultural councils, research councils and agencies and a host of individual and commercial organisations. Within this context the separation between theoretical (basic) and applied knowledge, it was claimed, was being contested both by the new forms of knowledge production and by new management models of research.

In light of these developments internationally, and the changing conception of the role of the university that they have given rise to, one can begin to make sense of the transformations that began to take place in the University of Dar es salaam in the 1990s. The University of Dar es Salaam started reviewing its mission, objectives and activities in 1991, given that donors had shown a willingness to fund those transformations. The *raison d'être* for the review, it was claimed, was the fact that since 1985 Tanzanian society had undergone major changes politically and economically. The economy had changed from centralised to market-oriented, and the political system had changed from a one party to multi-party. As the university administration concluded, 'the existing capacities of the University were seen

to be inadequate in meeting the increasing demand thus calling for new and more efficient modes of delivery and strategic thinking' (UDSM 2004: 2).

Basically the thinking behind the review was in line with the policies that were being pushed by the World Bank and that had already been accepted by the government of Tanzania. UDASA's critical appraisal of these ideas in 1993, and of the issue of cost-sharing proposed by the university administration, fell on deaf ears. The administration went ahead with launching the Institutional Transformation Programme (ITP) 1993-2008, which aimed to analyse institutional strengths and weaknesses, find ways to reduce the costs of training students, agitate for a 'flexible' University Act to improve the 'autonomy' of the institution and, finally, improve the working conditions and environment for staff and students.

With the implementation of the ITP over the years student enrolment increased from 2,898 in 1995 to 8,411 in 2002 and to almost 14,000 by 2004. The proportion of female students increased from 15.9 per cent in 1995 to 31 per cent in 2004. The increase in enrolment resulted from an increased number of private students rather than from more government sponsorship. At another level the university privatised and outsourced several functions and had reduced the number of support staff by 1,013 by June 2002. It increased to some extent the space for teaching and student accommodation and introduced new training programmes and new management units. ICT infrastructure and capacity were enhanced, as were awareness and utilisation of ICT resources. The university also hived off units involved in the provision of services such as catering, accommodation, cleaning, transportation, etc., created a 'conducive environment for outsiders to invest on University lands' and adopted contract employment as the norm instead of employment on permanent and pension able terms (UDSM 2004: 4-5). Over the past few years the university has also embarked on the introduction of 'programmes of excellence' that aim for multi-disciplinarity and that respond to job markets. A more corporate institutional culture has also been promoted.

All these transformations are aimed at responding both to global trends

and the national goals advocated in the Tanzania Vision 2025, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Higher education Sub-Master Plan, the Science and Technology Sub-Master Plan, the Civil Service Reform programme, the National ICT Policy, etc. The stakeholders in the implementation of the transformations are the government, the university management, the university council, the Programme Steering Committee, the major university offices, the boards of colleges, faculties, institutes and major departments, the private sector and the 'development partners' (donors). Staff and students are the 'principal beneficiaries'.

As a result of this process the University of Dar es Salaam has reached a stage whereby production of 'marketable goods' - works, courses and graduates - is given priority over academic excellence, and where academic excellence is defined, in the narrow terms of policy makers, as marketability of courses and 'outputs'. With these corporate strategic goals in place until at least 2013 it would seem that the University of Dar es Salaam is behaving like Rip Van Winkle. For example the University of Cape Town, which introduced similar institutional transformations in the mid-1990s, abandoned them in 2001 after recognising the dangers they posed as far as knowledge production and dissemination are concerned. More recently the World Bank itself has made an about-turn regarding its policies on higher education. Since 2000 the bank has produced reports which have suddenly rediscovered the centrality of education and, in particular tertiary education, for 'the creation of intellectual capacity on which knowledge production utilisation depend and to the promotion of lifelong-learning practices necessary for updating people's knowledge and skills' (cited in Sall 2004: 179). Moving away from the higher-education model of the 1980s and 1990s the bank has begun talking about alternative models with a re-emphasis on the traditional forms of public higher education and knowledge production (Sall 2004: 180). It is recognising that the public university as conceptualised in the 1960s provided the services it was expected of it, and that the social value of its degrees was quite high, even in times of crisis. It is recognising that, with the policies of the 1980s and 1990s, there was

hardly any basic research being undertaken and universities had ceased being sites of knowledge production in anything but name.

Conclusion

Under the present conditions academic freedom belongs to those who control and own the means of production of knowledge and its dissemination, not those who actually generate and disseminate the knowledge. With international financial institutions and donors playing a central role, the trend has been towards privatisation of the educational processes, programmes and responsibilities while at the same time strengthening state control. The language has changed: students have been redefined as 'consumers' or customers, and universities have become 'providers'. The officials and administrators use the language of 'inputs', 'outputs' and 'throughputs,' and any notion that education serves some form of collective public good has been removed.

Basic research, as traditionally defined, is a focused, systematic study undertaken to discover new knowledge or interpretations and establish facts or principles in a particular field. This has always been differentiated from applied research, which though also a focused, systematic study, is done in order to discover the problem-solving applications of the knowledge established by basic research. However, since the current transformations in higher education began, university staff members have either been engaged as 'counterparts' (spare parts) by researchers from Europe and the US, basically as enumerators, or at best they have survived on consultancies guided by external terms of reference. Even where it has been possible to undertake research independently, this has been possible mainly through new research centres or programmes such as the Research in Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) and the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) which have been established through donor funding to cater for the interests of the current economic dispensation.

At the University of Dar es Salaam no distinction is now made between consultancies and independent research; they are both 'research'. Moreover, as far as most are concerned, a research is only genuine when it involves field work and questionnaires. It is not surprising, therefore, that some lecturers teach focus group discussions (FGD) and rapid rural appraisals as research methods. These are eclectic methods that have been developed by donor agencies for purposes of collecting data in a short period in order to make quick decisions on a project. There are local academics that have learnt the same tricks of academic entrepreneurship as their colleagues of the Atlantic World and who have found a fertile ground for prospering in these circumstances of anti-foundationalism and sophistry expressed in the form of relativism. Some of them have been enjoying affluent styles of living using grants from so-called 'applied' branches of science and research, which are claimed to be applications and developments of 'pure' knowledge of the academy. There are those who have even been employed by branches of the state and industry, thus making 'research' a big business. This tendency for academic entrepreneurs to emerge has over the years been accompanied by the prominence of centers, bureaus, institutes, programme-based teaching, etc.

Under such circumstances a successful academic is not one whose research is acceptable to his or her discipline or relevant to human needs but one whose research is capable of attracting the greatest funds or who controls a research institution capable of distancing itself from the purely teaching structure of the faculties and departments. The most successful have been those employed to advise the government, the international financial institutions and other donors. Financial sponsors are the ones who determine the forms of knowledge, and accepted knowledge has over the years come to defined as knowledge produced by 'research technicians' or 'professional researchers' rather than genuine scientists. The academic entrepreneurs have reduced knowledge to 'pragmatic' teaching programmes and research on practical concerns.

In this way the 'stakeholders' have been able to proclaim that 'in such a

worldwide informational economy investment in what is called ''human capital'' becomes strategic [and] universities become fundamental tools for development' (Castells, 1993: 66). They have further proclaimed that knowledge is increasingly no longer a cognitive appropriation of socially determined material transformations for life processes, but instead has become simply a post-industrial force of production, since the real substance of knowledge is informed by developments in science (global cyberspace, theories of everything and progress in genetics and its aims) and the triumph of liberal democracy and a free- market economy. The world has entered an era in which cosmologies of human subject are not the real thing, since technology and economics have fused appearing under labels such as 'computer economy', electronic services and so on. In sum, it is an era of the celebration of the 'end of history' (as Fukuyama famously put it), even while all *other* histories are excluded.

Popular, academic and political thinking in Tanzania and Africa generally has increasingly ceased to debate emancipationist politics, politics which would lead to the transformation of societies and help people reach a stage where others' humanity is not contested. Any critique of social realities from the point of view of liberation has become less fashionable. The most fashionable debates are around issues of how African countries can best be 'globalised' as an answer to welfarism, nationalism, socialism and so on. This celebration of the dehumanisation and desocialisation of relationships has been internalised by some academics, so that the concept of the university as an institution in which the faculties are central and the administration plays a supportive role has been reversed. The administration is now the university and the faculties are mere subsidiaries, as in business organisations!

In such an environment education becomes only a matter of the pursuit and provision of degrees and certificates. Career advancement, not the production of knowledge, becomes the key academic goal, to the extent that it is even possible to marginalise good scholarship and research. This situation becomes an excuse for some academics to pursue private interests to the neglect of public and social responsibilities and, increasingly, there

arises a category of academics that live *off* the academy rather than *for* it. The university becomes just another way of getting ahead in the world, economically or otherwise, since there is a market of donors, NGOs, international donor organisations and consulting firms to which one can vend his or her 'research' skills. In the name of responding to international imperatives these academics accept the transformation of education from outside the academy based on the findings of consultants who may have little understanding of the difference between universities and corporations.

It is only with the recognition that universities can neither function like government departments nor like businesses that the central issues of knowledge production and basic research can be brought to the fore again. Mahmood Mamdani has pointed out that the reason universities cannot function like governments or businesses is because they are not limited by short-term considerations of winning votes or making profits. Universities therefore have a unique freedom which gives them the capacity for longer-term research. The value of such research is not measurable in monetary terms, but by its significance to society, if it expands options for a secure and independent future. It is for this reason that higher education has never been profitable anywhere in the world and it has always depended on heavy social subsidy (Sall 2004: 203-4).

If the value of higher education is indeed tied to the job market, then it would be logical to simply close universities in developing countries as there is too much unemployment! Why train more and more people who will only end up becoming unemployed? Moreover, to tie the whole question of education to the market is to go against the whole essence of human dignity, since what is disregarded here is the fact that education is a fundamental human right. Once upon a time slaves were denied the right to learn how to read and write on the pretext that plantation work did not require them to have such skills. When they were turned into workers, they were told that all they required was simply vocational or technical skills for particular utilitarian ends. They were not supposed to be trained so as to be able to think! That is how colonial education was modeled, and it is this type of

education which is being encouraged again today, training in skills but not in thinking. We have become colonial subjects again.

Because education is geared towards the market, students- and even lecturers, I would argue, do not have reading and writing habits, except for utilitarian or bread-and-butter questions, that is, to pass examinations, get a job or a promotion, etc. Nobody wants to go beyond the classroom materials. When it is then claimed that education standards are falling, because people are not able to speak or write properly in English, knowledge is being reduced to the question of language. But how does one master any language in this world without using it constantly in reading and writing? The question is pertinent for those of us who would like to consider ourselves 'knowledgeable' without ever visiting libraries or having a single book in our homes (although, of course, the TV or a copy of tabloids will definitely be there).

The issue is that conceptualisations of changes in the education sector today do not start from the point of view of the problems facing people and their history, or how to make education effective in improving the human condition, but how to create slaves for Mr. Money Bag. The debate is no longer about how to bring about forms of knowledge that enhance the chances of mutual survival by dealing with the problems facing humanity, but how our economies and societies can effectively compete and be integrated further in the global economy. It is hardly recognised that even the so-called revolution in communication so beloved by market fundamentalists has itself ignited an awareness of the problems facing humanity locally, regionally and internationally. The fundamental issues of transformation in education, therefore, need to deal with the extent to which the education system is playing its role in dealing with societal problems. This is the social responsibility of any education system worth the name, and it is only from this position that we can justify demands for academic freedom among students and lecturers.

From this point of view the search should be for an education system that equips people with the necessary tools to create or acquire knowledge

and concepts necessary for the survival of the human race in this rapidly changing world. In other words it is the search for those concepts that enhance emancipationist and transformational modes of social activity. Such forms of knowledge and concepts definitely go beyond the job market's 'person power requirements'. Job markets and markets in general are a constraint on creativity, scientific inquiry, fidelity to the pursuit of truth and intellectual freedom in general. The academy's accommodation to market forces and global forces is nothing more than an ideologically determined position which would like to turn the university into a supermarket without any long-term consideration of the national and societal needs. The historical experience in Africa requires a greater ferment of ideas and a more intense sense of commitment to social transformation and human emancipation than ever before. Taking such a position means viewing education from the point of view of fundamental human and peoples' rights. An equitable provision of education cannot be guaranteed if the link between the education institutions and the society is simply a matter of finance. There is nothing like 'free' education or social services in the world, as those who advocate the commercialisation or privatisation of social services want the world to believe. All governments in the world derive their revenue from taxation. It is for this reason that they are supposed to be responsible for the provision of social services and infrastructure. In other words it is society, not governments, which finance social services. Therefore to talk of free services is to mask the truth. To talk about government assistance (or so-called cost-sharing) to those who cannot afford is a mystification, since those who cannot pay are the majority. Simply put, an education system that treats knowledge production as an industry tends to reinforce inequalities and hierarchisation.

What is important is to search for those responses that would define us in this world, where even our very humanity is questioned. In our situation (given the nature of the problems facing the mass of the people) an intellectual must have a social and historical context. He or she cannot be just a free floating agent but must be capable of reflecting upon and crystallising the woes and

concerns of the masses of Africa-those who are marginalised, exploited and oppressed. The social responsibility of intellectuals lies in the rehabilitation of those academic practices which are sensitive to human predicaments, committed to responding to societal needs by engaging in critical inquiry and analysis and dedicated to championing social forms and organisations capable of fulfilling the needs of the human community as a whole.

Any so-called intellectual who takes it for granted that there is no alternative to the dominant forms of thinking about how the world is, anyone who takes 'for granted that maximum growth, and therefore productivity and competitiveness, are the ultimate and sole goals of human action; or that economic forces cannot be resisted' (Bourdieu 1998: 30) should be called to account. We cannot accept as inevitable the reduction of the state, the removal of the notion of the public interests and the destruction of all philosophical foundations of welfarism and collective responsibility towards poverty, misery, sickness, misfortunes, etc. on the pretext of reducing the costs of investors and creating an 'enabling environment' for the market .

If universities and their intellectual communities are to remain relevant and socially responsible, they must take the lead in revolting against those notions that treat knowledge and education as private goods and that result in the perpetuation of abuse, prejudices, mediocrity and regressive and repressive interests wrapped in forms of 'universalism of the West'. The precondition for any meaningful renewal of a genuine search for authentic forms of knowledge is the existence of a body of critical intellectuals committed to being radical witnesses on behalf of those who sleep with empty bellies and children who have never experienced childhood because they have to wield guns at tender age. Such an intellectual body must avoid the unwitting pitfall of the demolition of 'metanarratives', as is the fashion now, or the simple application and use of models. It must win the intellectual high ground for theoretical independence. It is therefore necessary to take philosophy seriously, as the discipline that has traditionally underwritten what constitutes science (or knowledge in general) and determined which political practices are legitimate (Bhaskar 1989: 1). Such a community

must be in a position to interrogate the various ontologies in the world, the kind of accounts of the world they give and their status in Africa. For us it is those emancipatory forms of knowledge which should inform our practices, those forms of knowledge which are oriented to human well-being and environmentally sustainable ways of life. Against all the cynicism established by social Darwinism (the cult of the winner), we must stand against the destruction of those ideals associated with public service, equality of rights and equal access to education, health, culture, research, art, etc. This is the basis of any meaningful renewal of our universities as sites of knowledge and research.

In sum, under the present circumstances, the quest for academic freedom as a right for the producers of knowledge is only meaningful if the universities and their academic members renew their commitment to the public good, which has always been the bedrock of any public university worth the name. It is also in this way that public investments in higher education can be justified. It is by offering the best education, knowledge and research which address issues of public interest and the problems facing the people. Only by fulfilling the public trust as weavers of social fabric and upholders of the highest ethical dimensions of human life can institutions of higher learning reclaim their position in society and the world at large. Rather than supplant the traditional role of training minds and producing thinkers, the new technological revolutions should be made to enhance this role. If there are no thinkers and people who are innovative, creative and original, who is going to advance these technologies further and use them for human good?

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“*Article 14: The State shall not deploy any military, paramilitary, security, intelligence, or any like forces within the premises and grounds of institutions of education.*

Provided that such deployment is necessary in the interest of protecting life and property in which case the following conditions shall be satisfied:

(a) There is clear, present and imminent danger to life and property; and

(b) The head of the institution concerned has extended a written invitation to that effect; and

(c) Such invitation has been approved by an elected standing committee of the academic community set up in that behalf.”

The Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility, Chapter II, (1990)

FAREWELL NOTE *

I would like to say thank you very much to those who organised this tea party for me. I would also like to take this occasion to thank the many other people who made my stay in Cape Town, directly or indirectly, aflame with hope and zeal. I am indebted to all of them, but I will mention only a few by name. Some of them will remain anonymous. I wish to apologise to those whose names will not be mentioned, but feel that they should have been listed here. Those I would like to mention here are Prof. Ken Jubber and Mrs Daphne Jubber, Dr. Alicinda Honwana and Joao Honwana, Prof. Amina Mama and Nuruddin Farah, Prof. Mahmood Mamdani and Mira Nair, Dr. Owen Sichone, Ms. Rose Mwaipopo-Ako, Mr. Frank Molteno, Prof. Dan Ncayiyana, Ms. Kirsty Hunt, Ms. Bridgette da Gama, Prof. David Cooper, Dr. David Lincoln, Ms. Ramela Bhagha, Ms. Valerie Goodall, Ms. Jennifer Leclue, Ms. Vick Scholtz, Dr. Jonathan Grossman, Mr. Jacques de Wet, Ms. Thandoe Nkiwane, Dr. Lawrence Sakkarai, Dr. Thiven Reddy,… They are many, and I cherish them all!

I leave this university without regrets, since I have gained more experience and knowledge. I now understand better James Baldwin when he said the greatest danger facing humanity today is the tendency to forget what is humane in us. Some may wonder - Why am I leaving?. Since it is said that truth sets people free, I am personally against crocodile tears. Therefore, I ask for your indulgence if I will be compelled to pull the carpet under some people's feet. I plead that I be forgiven for that.

It was the excitement to participate in the African Renaissance and transformations that fired me to agree to join this university. My hope was that I would stay here for at least three to four years. For me it was a

* This talk was given at a farewell tea party organised by the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town on 28 June 2000.

challenge to be part of a body of critical intellectuals, socially responsible and competent besides being a moral authority given the anti-apartheid history of this university. I believed I was joining a community ready to defend the ideals of social justice. And of all the disciplines, sociology has always stood for that. To my chagrin, I found myself having to make a decision to pack my rucksack and go back to Tanzania within a few months: my camping here had become a nightmare for a few individuals.

If I had not come here at all, my knowledge of South Africa would have remained bookish, partly informed by the encounters I had with the ANC and PAC freedom fighters that were in Tanzania for many years. I still remember, for example, the talks given while I was at high school by the late Gora Ibrahim, Oliver Tambo, Joe Slovo, Govan Mbeki, and many others. In those years, we read Nelson Mandela's speech at the Rivonia Trial as part of our high school requirements. As high school kids, we also read Albert Sisuli, Mangolise Sobukwe, and others. Some of these were our supplementary material for anybody pursuing literature, even though these were not artistic pieces as such. But we also read Alex La Guma, Peter Abrahams and Lewis Nkosi. We learnt the social history of Africa (including South Africa). That was besides American and European history. That was in high school. We all became convinced then that Africa was one and the Internationale was the future of the human race! I will not say much more about that.

What I encountered after my arrival here is not what I had been made to believe earlier. Within less than a month, I discovered that what I thought was an inspiration in the beginning, was caused by a fleeting moment. The inspiration was a self-deception justified by the so-called vocational calling. My hope to contribute better than my best in the knowledge 'industry' was an illusion. My biggest folly was to raise queries on institutional and academic matters and specifically the so-called new programmes. Armed with hindsight, I can now state boldly that I was too old fashioned, wishing that transformations and the so-called 'new culture of knowledge' could be complemented by the old age culture of learning with humility.

After raising the queries I discovered that I was simply a 'development post' (for redressing the racial imbalance and not the intellectual one!), and therefore, not the right material for a 'World Class University' - the only one in the world which proclaims itself to be so. Not even Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, etc., do so. But then, those village philosophers have an adage that goes: 'It takes a fish out of water to make noise that it lives in water!' The first response I received on my queries about those institutional and academic matters in February 1999 was from my Head of Department. I have carefully kept the envelope which contained the letter, for it had the following words on top: 'Chachage: In the interest of peace'. The first issue the letter raised was: '…we have not talked about the issue of your condition of health. I have regarded this as a delicate matter. However, let us be straight about the matter. I am quite aware of the huge dilemmas which you face, and the struggle which you have been forced to pursue….' In other words, there was a biomedical condition, which made me raise those academic and institutional issues! I was shocked and enraged by this sociological (if one may say so) response to institutional and scientific matters!

Institutional issues had been reduced to banal personal issues. A ferocious battle was emerging, even though in my view the stakes were so paltry! I decided to be philosophical and asked him about this secret that he knew, which the university did not know (?) and which had become a weapon in his hands, in a bid to silence me. He told me that he had made inquiries and his friend—a doctor—had informed him about my condition! Rather than delve into the issues that I had raised, he had decided to inquire on my personal matters! I know that doctors take a Hippocratic Oath, and the university has my records. I decided that I could not be pulled down to that level of intrigue, since the issues I had raised were professional. I decided not to pursue this issue, despite it being unethical and to say the least illegal and shameful anywhere in the world.

My folly was not to have comprehended from the start that whatever issue I raised, I would be met with individualised insights - the personal attributes of person. Thus, my defence of scientific and ethical principles were

misconstrued as a defence of courses that I wanted to teach. I was not aware that courses, programmes, and even offices were privatised - individually owned. The conditions are in such a way that one has to be indispensable, in which case, if one is not present, then whatever he or she has been doing cannot be undertaken by anybody else! Programmes are introduced to suit the individual interests of the members rather that academic coherence, student needs and societal value. My defence of theoretically and methodologically informed programmes was taken amiss, given the practices here.

I am not a specialist of theory or methodology courses. But the view that I am a specialist in theories courses, despite the fact that my research and publications attest otherwise, has held sway. The fact that my fields of training are Industrial Sociology, Development Sociology, Historical Sociology, Sociology of Knowledge and Culture and Urban Sociology is irrelevant! If I accepted to teach theories, it is because anybody with a PhD in sociology must be versed in theories and methods (Here, I have learnt, theories are synonymous with names—Giddens, Foucault, Derrida, etc, or fashionable labels and quickly changing clichés and not dominant approaches (in the past and present) in the sciences!).

It is not surprising that I recently became an object of so-called self-participatory research (two people and their course being researched upon!), where some of the questions I am asked are: 'The philosophy/approach which drives your teaching; the models and mentors which you drew on as examples (did you have a guru or intellectual guiding light as a student and young lecturer?)…' 'Is there anything particular about teaching theory which makes it different from teaching other kinds of material…(I suspect that, given your background in the Philosophy of Social Sciences, you might want to refer to a particular author or school in this area.)' etc. It is the same old story! Simply, I cannot, and I am incapable of being what I am unless there is some guru, a model, etc. In the old days of apartheid or McCarthy in the US, they would claim it is the commies who might have been at work! Only an interrogator or gutter journalist who has not done his or her homework, but is bent on proving a point can pose such questions!

They are not research or academic questions at all!

When I found that my continued efforts to raise issues did not yield much by way of resolution, I finally remembered a poem that was quoted by Peter Abrahams in *A Wreath for Udomo:* 'Did you think victory is great? Yes it is. When it cannot be helped, defeat and dismay are great!' I decided to tender my resignation. Meanwhile, I decided to spend my time learning more about this country, and the other stuff that I had taken for granted previously, when I held the naive view that human nature cannot be so depraved. I now know very well the concept of *baaskap* and what it means in reality for 'expatriates' from 'Africa' or those from so-called historically disadvantaged backgrounds - to use a politically correct term.

I have been able to read about the Afrikaner Broederbond and its prominent academic members, such as Dr. D. F. Malan, Dr. H. F. Verwoed, Prof. E. J. Marais (who was Rector of the University of Port Elizabeth), Prof. B. Kok (who was Chancellor of Orange Free State University), Prof. C. J. Kroel (who was Rector of UWC), J. N. de Villiers (who was Rector of Stellenbosch), etc. I have read about Sanlam, Asokor, Kopersbond, Dagbreekpers, the press group of Perskor, etc. I have read and tried to understand General Bary Hertzog's philosophy of 'South Africa First' and General Louis Botha's 'forgive and forget'. I have finally accepted another adage from my village people: 'Habits are a skin; they are not easy to change.'

Beyond the history of Cecil Rhodes, I have also been able to learn about his adversaries, such as the novel woman Olive Shreiner, who never had a monument under the Devil's Peak, where this university is situated, and lies in a lonely grave on the hilltop outside Cradock: a neglected prophetess. I have also been able to read the *Mafeking Diaries of Sol T. Plaatje* on the 1899-1902 Anglo-Boer War, etc.

I leave the University of Cape Town enriched and more experienced. As the rural philosophers of my humble background say: 'To travel is to learn: no experience is ever useless'! I am going back to Tanzania to those people who taught me the virtues of all-sided knowledge; those who still hold the view

that knowledge is more important than wealth and power. To paraphrase the late President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania: better live in poverty with dignity than in wealth as a slave. Like Dorothy of the *Wizard of Oz,* I have also become convinced that 'Home is best: I will never leave my home again'.