

Whither the Humanities? Censorship, Academic Freedom and South African Universities



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Introduction

The recent removal of the statue of Cecil John Rhodes from the University of Cape Town campus, the student protests that preceded it, and related developments at other universities,¹ have caused some observers to question the viability of the humanities at the 'traditionally liberal' South African universities.¹ Prior to the recent events, the most noted student protest on a traditionally liberal university campus was probably the flag burning at the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) in 1981. Students gathered to protest against the orchestrated nation-wide 'celebration' of the 20th anniversary of the Republic of South Africa, as there was 'nothing to celebrate' given the prevailing social order.

... at Wits...the most dramatic developments occurred when taunts by right wingers led to the flag-burning incident, so adeptly exploited by the SABC and its talented propogandist-in-chief, Cliff Saunders. Campus conflict escalated, bringing the riot police of Brig. Theuns 'Rooi Rus' Swanepoel onto campus.²

Student leaders, including Nusas (National Union of South African Students) President Andrew Borraine, who was not involved in the flag incident, were detained without trial for months.³

'[That] Sunday night the regular television newscast was extended to nearly twice its normal length for a special report in which campus activism, flag burning and terrorism were presented as different aspects of a single menacing phenomenon. To illustrate the thesis the television reporter read quotations from past presidents of the student movement now headed by Andrew Borraine.⁴'

In 2015 a student took umbrage at the pride of place given to the imposing statue of Cecil John Rhodes on the University of Cape Town campus to the extent that he flung human faeces at it. Within weeks, pressure from the *Rhodes must fall* movement led to the UCT council voting to remove the offensive statue. Besides the dramatic difference in the immediate results of the 1981 and the 2015 protests – the Republic stood, Rhodes fell – what's the big deal? There have been many protests on South African University campuses and there will be more. Is it the symbolism? The flag was a symbol of the Republic, whereas Rhodes, for all his sins,

imperial attitudes, and pale skin, was the founding father of UCT. Could it be that observers fear that, having disposed of its founding father, the UCT council is in the process of blinding itself to the requirements of a traditional 'liberal education'? One suggestion is that 'transformation' and the attendant culture clashes have been, and will be, destructive of academic freedom in a context in which the African National Congress (ANC) government has shown itself to be authoritarian, defensive, cronyist, prone to corruption, and inclined to regard legislation, including the Constitution, as malleable to its needs, be they real, pragmatic, or imagined.

Other contributors to this issue will discuss 'transformation', the attendant culture clashes, and the autonomy of South African universities. This contribution will, first, locate the present crisis of academic freedom at the traditionally liberal universities in South Africa within the international context, and second, explore South Africa's specific threats to academic freedom (other than the immediate issues surrounding transformation etc.).

The most important of these threats is legislated state censorship in that it imposes formal limits on intellectual freedom and carries the threat of punishment by law.

However, one might value the humanities, either in theory or with regard to any particular university, an unprecedented international crisis of the humanities is unfolding.

The Humanities in the twenty-first century

The association of the humanities with a 'liberal education' and 'academic freedom' is not absolute. It was not the case in 1873 when John Henry Newman published his seminal work on the subject, *The Idea of a University*.

Historically [liberal education] was connected to the seven liberal arts of the Middle Ages: astronomy, geometry, logic, mathematics, music, and rhetoric. Today a liberal education might omit any of these disciplines and substitute others. Whatever the specifics of liberal education might be, there is a broad consensus that it is concerned with the pursuit of truth. But what constitutes 'truth' has varied with time and place. From its origins in the Greek philosophical tradition, which assumes truth is universal, all the way through to the postmodern era, which questions the very possibility of truth, the project of liberal education has gone many challenges and revisions.⁵

Moreover, there is a rich tradition of questioning the extent to which the humanities can, or even ought to, provide a 'liberal education'.⁶ And it goes without saying that academic freedom issues in modern universities are not confined to the humanities, though it has been suggested that in the absence of flourishing humanities departments, universities cannot be 'academies' as traditionally conceived.⁷

However, one might value the humanities, either in theory or with regard to any particular university, an unprecedented international crisis of the humanities is unfolding. In his forward to Professor John Hughes's *Academic Freedom in a Democratic South Africa*, JM Coetzee posits:

'But South African universities are by no means in a unique position. All over the world, as governments retreat from their traditional duty to foster the common good and reconceive of themselves as mere managers of national economies, universities have been coming under pressure to turn themselves into training schools equipping young people with the skills required by a modern economy. ...

There are two main reasons for my pessimism. The first is that you somewhat underestimate, in my opinion, the ideological force driving the assault on the independence of universities in the (broadly conceived) West. This assault commenced in the 1980s as a reaction to what universities were doing in the 1960s and 1970s, namely, encouraging masses of young people in the view that there was something badly wrong with the way the world was being run and supplying them with the intellectual fodder for a critique of Western civilisation as a whole. ... The fact is that the record of universities, over the past 30 years, in defending themselves against pressure from the state has not been a proud one. ...

Universities, in turn, have come to value especially those programmes that can generate revenue through alumni donations, external grants, or tuition. Under this new business model, humanities programmes suffer in general and small departments, like classics and philosophy, find themselves perpetually under threat, no matter what their historical significance to higher learning.

[the] second reason why I fail to share your optimistic faith that the tide may yet be turned. A certain phase in the history of the university, a phase taking its inspiration from the German Romantic revival of humanism, is now, I believe, pretty much at its end. It has come to an end not just because the neoliberal enemies of the university have succeeded in their aims, but because there are too few people left who really believe in the humanities and in the university built on humanistic grounds, with philosophical, historical and philological studies as its pillars.⁸

South Africans might suspect that JM Coetzee, having relocated to Australia and writing the introduction to a book on academic freedom in South Africa, might be a little jaundiced. Here are American academics Gordon Hutner and Feisal G. Mohamed:

‘Public universities have undergone a sea change in the past quarter century, as state funding has been steadily, and at times precipitously, withdrawn. Universities, in turn, have come to value especially those programmes that can generate revenue through alumni donations, external grants, or tuition. Under this new business model, humanities programmes suffer in general and small departments, like classics and philosophy, find themselves perpetually under threat, no matter what their historical significance to higher learning. Indeed several campuses have closed the doors on entire programmes. In 2010, SUNY Albany threatened to end programmes in French, Italian, Russian, classics, and theater, though later retreated from the plan. Two years later, the University of Pittsburgh suspended graduate admissions to German, classics, and religious studies. These are two prominent examples of a national trend stealthily proceeding apace. The crisis is also international: U.K. universities have faced steep funding cuts leading, for example, to the closure of Middlesex University’s philosophy department; and just this year Canada’s University of Alberta suspended admission to 20 humanities programmes.

At present, university bureaucracies don’t have mechanisms for valuing the humanities.⁹

It goes without saying that South African universities, even the traditionally liberal institutions, are more vulnerable than the foreign institutions discussed above. South Africa is a (struggling) emerging economy, the society is in transition, and a narrow African Nationalism is ascendant. South African society and South African

universities also face the prospect of state censorship exceeding the standards of a contemporary constitutional democracy.

Censorship in South Africa

The persistence of state censorship as a threat to academic freedom is unfortunate. In the early 1980s, when a liberalisation of censorship under Publications Appeal Board Chairman Prof JCW van Rooyen was noted by observers as credible as Professor John Dugard,¹⁰ a number of commentators, including Nadine Gordimer, asserted the radical position:

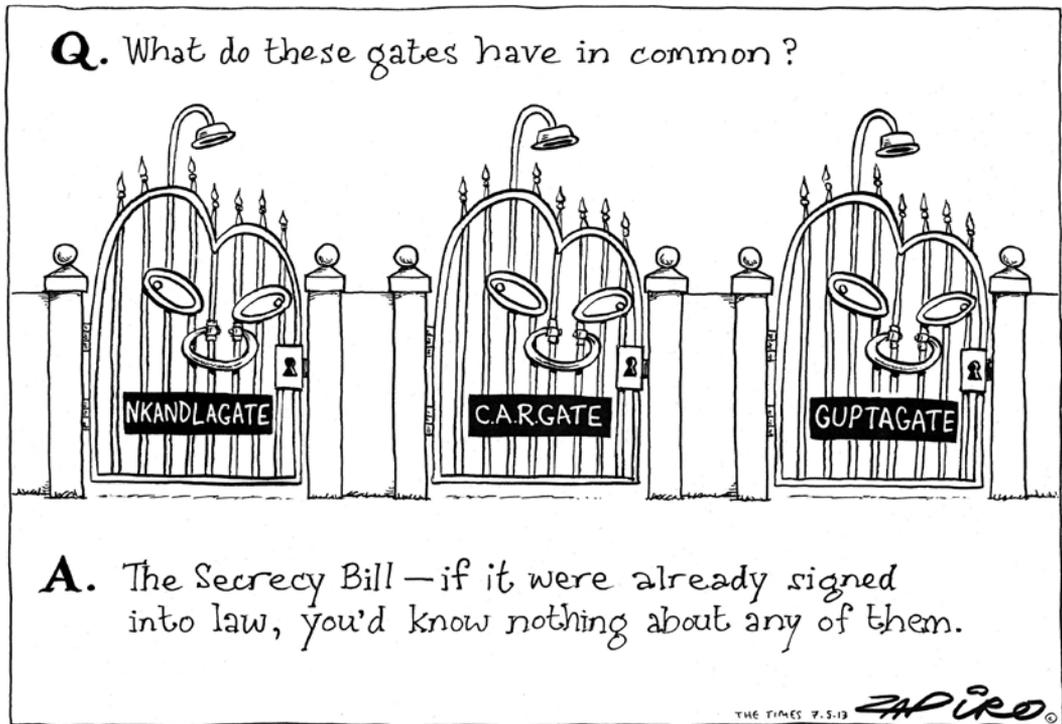
'I am one who has always believed and still believes we shall never be rid of censorship until we are rid of apartheid. Personally, I find it necessary to preface with this blunt statement any comment I have about the effects of censorship, the possible changes in its scope, degree, and methodology. ... Today as always, the invisible banner is behind me, the decisive chalked text on the blackboard, against whose background I say what I have to say. *We shall not be rid of censorship until we are rid of apartheid.* Censorship is the arm of mind-control and as necessary to maintain a racist regime as that other arm of internal repression, the secret police. Over every apparent victory we may gain against the censorship powers hangs the question of whether that victory is in fact contained by apartheid, or can be claimed to erode it from within.¹¹ (emphasis added)

This begs the question: 'apartheid' has gone, why do we still have censorship? The answer may have more to do with what the radical position reveals about the ANC in the 1980s than about censorship in South Africa. The 'radical' position was a speaking position adopted by academics inclined towards the policies of the ANC. The insistence on censorship being an intrinsic aspect of the 'system' of apartheid corresponded to pragmatic decisions by the ANC to a) allow for the killing of civilians going about their daily business ('soft targets' for propaganda purposes), and b) the intensification of the economic, sport, academic and cultural boycotts. If censorship was easing, if the control of the state was not all encompassing, such illiberal measures might have lost their veneer of apparent morality. For there to be 'no normal', South Africa had to remain abnormal.¹² As many theorists, including the ANC-aligned Harold Wolpe have argued,¹³ the theoretical position that the state was a whole (necessitating attack from without) was dependent on a reductionist Leninist view of the State and society in South Africa. Be that as may, in 1988, Nadine Gordimer, after regular articles to the contrary, conceded that censorship had eased substantially.¹⁴

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Such was the respect that Prof. Van Rooyen earned by the end of his two terms as head of the Publications Appeal Board (1980-1990), that he presided over the task group that drafted the new Film and Publications Act of 1996.¹⁵ This draft was progressive and lucid, and was passed into law with only one change. As summarised by Van Rooyen, the report stated:

'We have reached the conclusion that a new Publications Act is necessary. The present Act intrudes upon the freedom of choice of adults in an unreasonable manner by making bans widely possible; employs vague terminology ('offensive,



indecent, obscene, harmful to morals’); generally regulates the private domain of an adult too strenuously; gives preference to the Christian religion, which is in conflict with the equal protection clause; provides for political intervention by the minister in certain instances; and does not place sufficient emphasis on the freedoms of artistic expression and of scientific research which are guaranteed by the Constitution.

The ideal was to employ language which would be as clear as possible. ... By exempting art, drama, the products of scientific research and documentaries from the Act we would ensure that such works would not, once again, be banned and have to be unbanned by a progressive Appeal Board as in the past ... [my emphasis].

However, art could not save child pornography. The Home Affairs Portfolio Committee was not prepared to exempt art which depicted what was defined as prohibited child sex or nudity at the time. In all other respects the report was accepted by the Portfolio Committee. ... [the] Constitutional Court has, commendably, held in 2003 that the art exemption was applicable in this case as well and that works of art would not be subject to a ban.

There would be no pre-censorship on publications. In the case of films the distributors agreed to pre-classification for practical reasons. The words ‘judged within context’ were dominant in the definition section. The isolated-passage approach would amount to an irregular form of consideration of a publication or film. ... Only hard pornography (XX) would be prohibited for distribution and, in that category, only child pornography would be prohibited for possession. Child pornography was the only material that was also subjected to an automatic ban on importation, production and possession. Other forms of XX and X18

material could be possessed and even be imported. ... Of course, if [Hard pornography (XX)] elements were justified by drama, scientific research or art, they would ... be subjected only to an age restriction and classification; the latter informing viewers of the possible risqué content of the film.^{16,17}

Acts of Parliament are not cast in stone, nor should they be. Nonetheless the amendments to the 1996 Act in 1999, 2004 and in 2009 are ham-fisted. Again in the words of Van Rooyen:

‘... the Act runs a real risk of constitutional challenge insofar as the amendments returned to vague language in the definition section and insofar as pre-classification of some publications has been introduced. Although the basic principles protecting drama, and the products of science and art are still included in the Act, it is profoundly sad for me to see how the Act has been amended in the past eleven years.

The Act, which was a product of the freedom-seeking 1994 government, has now been stacked with all kinds of limiting provisions. The worst ones are probably a duty to pre-clear certain materials, the extension of the Act to South Africans who are in a foreign country, the inclusion of the written word when it applies to child pornography and the ban on the possession of such works even if they are justified by art, products of science, drama and documentaries. These provisions are clearly unconstitutional. I am, however, not arguing that the production of films and photographs featuring or showing children should ever be placed beyond the reach of the law. Children under 18 should be and are still protected ...^{18,19}

The Viscera exhibition by Mark Hipper at the Festival was held by the Board and Review Board to have not amounted to child pornography when judged in context. The exhibition – restricted to adults – illustrated the perversity of child sexual abuse.

Surely the minutiae of the censorship with regard to child pornography have no bearing on academic freedom? The first amendment to the Act (1999) was a direct response to an art exhibition of charcoal portraits of a baby’s face and line studies of nude children by Rhodes University lecturer Mark Hipper in the Rhodes University art gallery. The exhibition had previously traveled to Germany, Poland and France.

The new Films and Publications Act had hardly been put into operation in 1998 when the Grahamstown Arts Festival tested the new Board and controversy followed. The *Viscera* exhibition by Mark Hipper at the Festival was held by the Board and Review Board to have not amounted to child pornography when judged in context. The exhibition – restricted to adults – illustrated the perversity of child sexual abuse. The Deputy Minister of Home Affairs disagreed and her view was reported in the media. The Deputy Minister, in obvious reaction to the Board’s decision, appointed a Task Team.

The Task Team advised that the original section 27 ... was not comprehensive enough to counter child pornography. ... the Task Team argued that the reference to context provided a ‘loophole’ for child pornographers, as happened at the *Viscera* exhibition. Accordingly, the original definition was repealed by Parliament and substituted by what may only be regarded as a too wide and in other words it included areas that were not in need of regulation by law, e.g. art and scientific publications.²⁰



The Act also makes provision for the home affairs minister to appoint the Film and Publications Board and review board members whose task it will be to determine what is an offence under the Act. ...

The Amendment, 'which passed virtually unnoticed'²¹ through Parliament and the National Council of Provinces on March 25 1999, re-introduced features from the (pre-democracy) Publications Act. In addition to the constitutional issues listed by Van Rooyen, above, the Act also interfered with the principles underlying the autonomy of both the Film and Publications Board (FPB) and the appeal body.

It paves the way for complaints to be lodged by the minister of home affairs or the public ... Now, as in the dark days of apartheid, any person who is offended by a work of art can ask the state to censor it. The Act also makes provision for the home affairs minister to appoint the Film and Publications Board and review board members whose task it will be to determine what is an offence under the Act. ... this provision - which takes the appointments away from the president and his advisory panel - together with new requirements that the board members be judged 'fit and proper' and 'of good character', puts greater power in the hands of the minister to set the tone for government censorship policy...²²

Jumping to the present, the protection of children is again the pretext for extending censorship in South Africa. In this instance, it is the the FPB's new Draft Online Regulation Policy which has been published for public response. This document is badly drafted (despite plagiarising the Australian Law Reform Commission's 2012 report in the section 'Guiding principles for an online content regulation policy').²³

It is vague, unclear, and contains internal contradictions.

In its present form the Draft proposes a complex process of pre-publications censorship managed by the FPB for what appears to be anything (it is unclear) published by anyone online or digitally. Moreover, it appears that any such publication could be subject to an age restriction if the FPB is of the opinion that it might be perceived to adversely influence children in any way – we're not talking pornography here, the examples given by the FPB include news reports containing violence or reporting on eccentric behaviour.

The draft is unlikely to be accepted in its present form, and if it is, it is unlikely to satisfy the Constitutional Court if challenged. Nonetheless, the Draft, taken together with the amendments to the 1996 Film and Publications Act, confirms that the ANC government has an appetite for censorship. Even more alarmingly, the Draft shows that the FPB, a regulatory body under the Film and Publications Act, is presuming to extend its mandate. As Julie Reid explains:

'According to lawyers the FPB Act (which is the current law) allows the FPB to offer guidelines but not to legislate. The draft policy however does try to legislate because it imposes sanctions, and demands certain behaviour rather than offering mere guidelines. Additionally, the FPB does not have the authority to draft policies which effectively serve to legislate, meaning that the online policy is ultra vires and accordingly invalid: only Parliament can make laws.

[Lawyer Justine] Limpitlaw asked Risiba [Sipho, CEO of the FPB] whether the current document is in fact a regulation or a policy, since both terms are contained in its title. 'It's a policy', Risiba replied. Limpitlaw then pointed out that since it is only a policy, if we were to delete each and every provision within it which a policy cannot legally contain without running into trouble with the law, then only about four provisions within the 19 page document would remain.²⁴

The extension of censorship under the Film and Publications Act is not the only form of legislated censorship confronting South Africa. The Protection of State Information Bill, which was referred back to the National Assembly by President Zuma in September 2013 has not been resolved. As it stands, the Bill is

'...vague, irrational, overbroad, opens the path to inconsistency, opens a wide opportunity to classify material that could be politically embarrassing to the government of the day and even to classify that which is false and, ultimately, to withhold facts from the public which it is entitled to have access to.'²⁵

This is Nadine Gordimer on the subject, shortly before for her death at the age of 90.

The reintroduction of censorship is unthinkable when you think how people suffered to get rid of censorship in all its forms. ... And the fact that it's called the Protection of State Information Bill is very disquieting. State information belongs to all of us - this is our right under the constitution. This has got nothing to do with betraying the safety of the country.²⁶

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Clearly censorship in South Africa has not faded away in the 'new' South Africa and remains a threat to academic freedom. The defense of civil liberties remains an imperative under the African National Congress government.

Other issues

The brevity with which a few other issues relating to academic freedom in South Africa will be dispatched in no way reflects on their importance.

1. Lack of security on campus and in general, and the consequent erosion of public life and general freedom.²⁷
2. Lack of depth of quality in academic staff.²⁸ South African universities have

Since the early 1980s, administrative staff have outnumbered academics to an ever greater extent – despite the parallel withdrawal of support at the department level. Nonetheless, this trend has been particularly cruel in South Africa where university bureaucracies can be an unusual combination of spectacularly incompetent, ludicrously arcane, and zealously overreaching.

outlasted Afrikaner Nationalism, survived the cultural boycott, endure a continuing 'brain drain',²⁹ and persist in circumstances which have never been optimal for their flourishing. Consequently, the international trend away from the history of ideas towards modules on theory and an identity studies³⁰ has not been kind. In many instances a post-graduate degree in the humanities has become an exercise in deploying 'theory', where theory is quoting from any three, four, or five articles by 'theorists'. At best these theorists might include McLuhan, Fanon, Kristeva, Althusser, Castells, Lacan, Manovitch, Foucault, Weber, Derrida, etc, and seemingly always poor old Walter Benjamin's 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'.³¹ Genuine learning and research are consequently marginalized.³²

3. The bureaucratization of universities is a global trend.³³ Since the early 1980s, administrative staff have outnumbered academics to an ever greater extent – despite the parallel withdrawal of support at the department level. Nonetheless, this trend has been particularly cruel in South Africa where university bureaucracies can be an unusual combination of spectacularly incompetent, ludicrously arcane, and zealously overreaching. Just don't call it Kafkaesque – no lesser person than a dean (since promoted) has taken this for an old-fashioned racial insult. The consequences are destructive.

The above, taken together with the issues around 'transformation' might suggest that it may be time to put the humanities in South Africa, and possibly the universities, out of their misery, if only out of respect for Walter Benjamin. Young people might find more fruitful ways of exploring intellectual life in the twenty-first century. Conversely, the next issue suggests an ongoing need for points of access to modernity.

The capacity of traditional leaders to exercise authority over students and lecturers from rural areas or from a particular background in violation of democratic norms.

Conclusion

I have concentrated on the humanities at the traditionally liberal universities in South Africa for ease of exposition. Many of the issues I have raised apply to all universities and faculties in South Africa.³⁴ Yet, for all their faults, and however less than optimal, the traditionally liberal universities in South Africa have a rare history of championing non-racism and academic freedom in this country. And while they

may have had their share of schmucks, charlatans, and refugees from justice³⁵, they have, on occasion, provided refuge for genuine scholars and intellectuals. In this context I present the following extract from an email from Vivienne Rowland 'on behalf of VCO News', May 20, 2015:

'Professor Adam Habib, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Wits University invites all White and Indian academic staff to a meeting to discuss transformation at Wits. This gathering follows meetings which he has already held in the Faculty of Humanities and with African and Coloured staff across the University regarding transformation'.

We're talking about Wits here. Wits, with its particularly proud history of non-racism. Does no one remember the flag burning? Does no one remember the size, significance, or impact of the Free Peoples' Concerts? NUSAS? The 'Quota Bill protests.' Anything? On this note, the first words of the afterward of eminent South African historian Charles van Onselen's most recent book, *Showdown at the Red Lion*:

'Since my liberation, in 1999 ...'³⁶

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Nowadays, the Humanities tend to be the subjects taught in 'Art' and Social Science faculties. The traditionally liberal universities are Cape Town, Wits, Rhodes, and the University of Natal. Now that UN has incorporated the University of Durban Westville (and become UKZN), its inclusion in the list is debatable.
- 2 National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) pamphlet, 1981-12-00 accessed at http://psimg.jstor.org/fsi/img/pdf/10.10.5555/al.sff.document.pam19811200.026.009.580_final.pdf.
- 3 'Son's jailing racks South African M.P.' JOSEPH LELWELD, The New York Times, June 10, 1981. Accessed at <http://www.nytimes.com/1981/06/10/world/son-s-jailing-racks-south-african-mp.html>
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Jones, S. 'The University a Bibliographic Essay'. Hedgehog Review Fall 00, pg 148. Accessed at <http://www.iasc-culture.org/THR/archives/University/2.3L.Bibliography.pdf>
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 'JM Coetzee: Universities head for extinction' Mail and Guardian, 01 November 2013. <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-11-01-universities-head-for-extinction>.
- 9 Hutner, G and Mohamed, FG. 'The real Humanities crisis is happening at public universities.' <http://www.newrepublic.com/article/114616/public-universities-hurt-humanities-crisis>. See also <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/mar/29/war-against-humanities-at-britains-universities>.
- 10 Dugard, J. Human Rights and the South African Order, Chapter Six. (Princeton, 1978)
- 11 Gordimer, N. 'New forms of strategy - no change of heart'. Critical Arts, Vol. 1 No. 2
- 12 Paraphrase of 'sport' boycott slogan: 'no normal sport in an abnormal society'
- 13 Wolpe, H. 'Towards and analysis of the South African State', International Journal of the Sociology of Law, No. 8. 1980.
- 14 Gordimer, N. 'Censorship and the artist', Staffrider, Vol. 7 No. 2, 1988, Page 15.
- 15 Van Rooyen was not re-appointed chairman of the Publications Appeal Board in 1990. This was as a result of the fall-out from the PAB allowing the screening of Cry Freedom during the state of emergency, causing a conflict between the police and censorship boards.
- 16 Van Rooyen, J.C.W., A South African Censors' Tale. Protea Boekhuis, South Africa, March 15, 2012. Page 145.
- 17 In passing, two observations: The act would be clearer if it explicitly stated that the 'art' exemption must logically include 'bad' etc. This might be a matter for the constitutional Court. Second, 'religion' remains a tricky issue. For instance, Salman Rushdie's The Satanic Verses can only be found at University Libraries.
- 18 Van Rooyen, op cit. Page 149.
- 19 It bears emphasizing that the constitutional court has re-instated the exclusion of art etc from child pornography (De Reuck v Director of Public Prosecution CCT 5/03). Moreover, this reading has been endorsed by the Prof K Govender Appeal Body in the the matter of 'Of Good Report', 2013.
- 20 Van Rooyen, op cit. Page 151.
- 21 Back to the dark days of state Mail and Guardian, 16 April 1999. <http://mg.co.za/article/1999-04-16-back-to-the-dark-days-of-state>
- 22 Ibid. (An interview with Laura Polecott of The Freedom of Expression Institute).
- 23 Reid, J. 'Africa's worst new Internet Censorship Law: Everything you don't want to know - but need to.' Daily Maverick, 10 June 2015. <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2015-06-10-africas-worst-new-internet-censorship-law-everything-you-dont-want-to-know-but-need-to/>
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Van Rooyen, J.C.W 'Info bill concessions not enough says lawyer'. The Times 30 June 2011. <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2011/06/30/info-bill-concessions-not-enough-lawyer>
- 26 'In one of her last interviews Nadine Gordimer lets loose at the secrecy bill'. The Times, 14 July, 2014. <http://www.timeslive.co.za/local/2014/07/14/in-one-of-her-last-interviews-nadine-gordimer-lets-loose-at-the-secrecy-bill>
- 27 Hobbes, T. The Leviathan.
- 28 This is a recurring theme in RW Johnson's The critical case of South Africa and the tragedy at the UKZN (Tafelberg Short, 2012).
- 29 Both through emigration and salary competition.
- 30 This trend has been well documented in the wake of Allan Bloom's The Closing of the American Mind (1987)
- 31 Benjamin had an unhappy experience of Universities. Moreover, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', is atypical of Benjamin's work in that it is the most orthodox Marxist. In some respects, it is best read as a coded love letter to Asja Lacia, the pretty Marxist who drove a one-way street through his heart.
- 32 The current post-graduate proposal process tend to require a student to decide on their theoretical approach before conducting a study. Such studies consequently predispose to what Michel Foucault has called the 'descending-type analysis', which is essentially an exercise in rhetoric.
- 33 'The corridors of our universities are stalked by soft-footed technocrats who draw down six-figure salaries in exchange for implementing 'right-sizing' exercises and 'internationalisation programmes', while harried academics are forced to deal with a wall of bureaucracy that is being constructed, form-by-form, between them and their students. Research is centrally mandated and programmatic; time - once the academic's greatest resource - must be accounted for in meticulous detail; and everywhere, and at all times, the onus is on academics to 'monetise' their activities, to establish financial values for their 'outputs,' and to justify their existence according to the remorseless and nightmarish logic of the markets.' Preston, J. The war against humanities at britains universities.
- 34 Merely for having survived the mad science of the Mbeki years (and the associated pressures), I owe anyone associated with science and medicine an explicit apology for having deployed this rhetorical device.
- 35 For example, James Kilgore.
- 36 Van Onselen, a Wits Professor of international repute, joined the University of Pretoria in 1999 following a 'transformation'-related dispute at Wits. For more background: <https://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/to-wit-a-culture-clash/92445.article> taken together with <http://www.up.ac.za/centre-for-the-advancement-of-scholarship/article/1929472/prof-charles-van-onselen>