THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY

By

KRISHNAVANI PILLAY

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor Educationis at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Faculty of Education

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Promoter: Professor S. Van Rensburg

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DEDICATION

THIS THESIS IS DEDICATED TO:

MY DAUGHTER KIASHA: MY GIFT, MY JOY, MY QUIET PLACE

MY BOYS: THARUSHAN & DISHANT WHO KEEP THE JOY

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

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DECLARATION:

In accordance with Rule G4.6.3, I hereby declare that the above-mentioned treatise/ dissertation/ thesis is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: **30 JANUARY 2009**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

The aim of this thesis evolves from the question, **what is the idea of the university in contemporary South Africa?**

This question evolves from my current experiences as an academic in a contemporary South African university. My colleagues and I are faced with many epistemological challenges on a daily basis as we try to teach our students, by providing them with both access to higher education as well as epistemological access, as we try and transform our curricula from an Apartheid determined one, to one that is more congruent with the values of our new dispensation, and which at the same time will contribute to the coherent development of both our universities and our country.

Central to these issues and practices is a particular understanding of a university in our context. This priority is very challenging in a context such as ours which has a rich history of a politically determined, highly differentiated university sector. A direct consequence of this legacy is an unclear and shared understanding of a university in our country at present. What is currently required in our university and broader context is more determined thinking about a concept of the university in this country.

In order to examine the concept of a university in contemporary South Africa, I engaged in a conceptual analysis. In so doing I divided my thesis into two parts, on the basis of the two conceptual analysis techniques which I used. In Part one I constructed a Model Example, and in the second part I applied this Model Example (scope of application) to different contexts.

My Model example of a concept of a university is predicated on a Theory of concepts; a Theory of institutions, a Theory of practices, a theory of Inquiry and a Theory of Higher Education.

I then examine the concept of a university in South Africa, by focusing on an examination of the concept of a university in different chronological and geographical contexts. In this part of my thesis I engage in examining the scope of applicability of a particular concept of a university. I examine the concept of a university firstly at a more historical level, by going back to Cardinal Newman, Von Humboldt and Jaspers. This examination is important to the contemporary concept of the university in South Africa, as our current concept of a university still attempts to hold onto the components that characterised the concept of the university that these historical figures were instrumental in developing. I then go on to examine a concept of a university in Germany and America, as contemporary South Africa has extended its borders to become part of a more globally competitive context. In so doing the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa is also at the same time, influenced by the kinds of developments in such countries. I then go on to examine a concept of a university during Apartheid South Africa, to provide a context for current change initiatives in this sector. The last two chapters focus on the post Apartheid university context. On the basis of two seminal higher education policy documents, I extrapolate a concept of a university in the contemporary South African policy context. I then go on to examine how this concept of a university is impacting on current transformatory initiatives in contemporary universities.

In attempting to examine an idea of a university in a contemporary South African context, I had to grapple with an array of issues. But the most fundamental challenge for me was trying to clarify an essentially contentious concept. What emerges continuously from an examination of a concept of a university is the tension that has existed and which continues to exist, between the social responsibilities of a public institution such as a university; and its traditionally established epistemological functions. Most conflicts and disillusionment regarding this concept and its use, is predicated on the challenge of trying to establish how a university can be both relevant and valuable to society and still maintain its epistemic authority and value.

The South African context further complicates this dilemma, because central to our transformatory goals is a particular world view that we as South Africans regard as valuable. Such a world view is based on the social epistemology and ontology of *Ubuntu*. This world view comes up constantly in policy documents and discourses that underpin the university terrain. I set out to examine the idea of the university in contemporary South Africa within the parameters of such a context and world view.

It is against such a backdrop that I construct a Model Example of a concept of a university. My model example acknowledges both the socio-political functions and identity of a university; as well as its constitutive epistemological functions and identity. Central to such an understanding is the imperative to maintain a dialogical balance between these two important functions.

Although this thesis goes into deep epistemological regions, it just skims the surface of such an exciting epistemological terrain. What it does do however, is open up an alternate perspective on how to try and understand a concept of a university and extend its scope of applicability in a variety of ways.

KEY CONCEPTS

Higher Education

University

Curriculum transformation

Constitutive epistemic practices

Conceptual analysis

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION CHAPTER

1.1. Aim

The aim of this thesis is to examine the concept of the university in South Africa today, not just at an abstract, semantic level, but more importantly, in terms of its scope of applicability within a transformatory context.

1.2. Rationale

The focus and aim of this thesis arises from my deep commitment to the transformation of South Africa in general, and more specifically to the transformation of universities in South Africa. The transformation of our universities is important to me, as I not only work at a university, but I have also been a university student in both the apartheid era and the current, democratic dispensation.

My need to examine the concept of the university in South Africa today arises from the difficulties both my colleagues and I experience on a continuous basis, as we try to change our curricula, engage with our students, and to choose the most relevant research topics: all this within the context of deep, political change. This change is characterised by the liberation of our people, but simultaneously it also pays homage to the many comrades who have died in the struggle for this liberty.

I have always been torn between my work, in developing a truly, epistemologically astute university, while remaining true to the ideals of the Liberation Struggle I believe in; and the need to reconcile these two.

As I face my students on a daily basis, reflect on my lectures and think about how I am going to change my modules, I am often faced with the question: What is the fundamental function of the university? In other words, is it a fundamentally social institution with core socio-political functions, or is it a fundamentally epistemological institution with epistemic functions? Or as I fight for the retention of epistemological

ideals, I feel anxious about betraying my socio-political ideals. This seems like a simplistic situation, but it is actually a very real and significant one, and that is because the way I conceptualise the concept of the university, impacts significantly on how I as an academic shape my experiences in the lecture room, what I chose to research and so on.

Alternatively, the way society conceptualises the university impacts on the kinds of expectations society has of this institution, and the subsequent dissatisfaction that occurs when those expectations are not fulfilled. So there is therefore a clear relationship between the way we define the concept of a university in South Africa and the way we are influenced by this conceptualisation at the level of praxis, particularly in terms of a university's epistemological and broader socio-political functions.

1.3. Research Context

1.3.1. National Context

Contemporary South Africa is critically influenced by a repressive apartheid system that was characterised by a highly differentiated South African society. Such a system was predicated on a social hierarchy in which 'White' privilege stood at the apex of the hierarchy and 'Black' needs, right at the bottom. The Apartheid Higher Education system was correspondingly modelled upon such an unequal differentiation. It is within the parameters of such a socio-political context that the transformation of our universities in a new dispensation should take note of this history and its impact on the current status quo in our universities.

The current university context is well summed up by Reddy (2004:6), when he argues that,

> …the intensely differentiated nature of Higher Education both in the past and present makes it difficult to speak about it as a "system" having coherence and an undifferentiated identity….

It is therefore argued that the transformation of contemporary South African universities has to take into account our apartheid history, as well as the broader, political changes that have evolved since the previous apartheid dispensation (Mabokela, 2000:2-4). Such

an initiative also has to take into account how these changes are impacting on the identity of universities in this country today, particularly in view of the kind of demands that are being made on universities currently.

It is clear that transformation is a key word and project regarding South African universities currently, yet this process is proving to be a very challenging task. Mabokela (2000:3) argues that this is because there is no 'conceptual consensus' regarding the nature of transformation in our universities. This lack of consensus, she argues, emerges from the conflicting ideas that South Africans have of the project of the university and its concomitant functions (2000: 3).

Yet, despite the challenges facing the transformation of our universities, it is clearly acknowledged that without transformation in our universities, these institutions run the risk of not being able to contribute to our new dispensation in a constructive way (Van Wyk, 2003: 14). It is within this context that Van Wyk conceptualises university 'transformation' in this country as more than just 'fundamental change'. For him it is also about 'democratic change' (2003: 1).

1.3.2. Broader context

The kind of uncertain climate in discourses that focus on the university is not uniquely, South African. The value of the university in other countries is a contentious issue for precisely that reason, as I will explain in more detail in Chapter Four. Simply put, uncertainty regarding what the university really stands for, what the concept of the university really means, and the manifestation of this understanding in terms of the university's core functions. This has placed the university as a key public institution in a very indefensible position, both at a global level and in South Africa specifically (Cf. Washburn, 2005; Reddy, 2004; Mabokela, 2000; Van Wyk, 2003; Readings, 1996; Gibbons, et al., 1994; Barnett, 1990).

Central to both these contexts is the strength (or lack thereof) of the concept of the university today. My attempt to examine the concept of the university in South Africa today evolves in such a context of transformation. For South Africa (as I have just discussed) the transformation of our universities is inextricably tied up with the socio-

political transformation of our new democracy. The broader context of transformation and the university foregrounds the deep complexity of the epistemological context that underpins the idea of the university in South Africa and the transformation of this sector.

This uncertain nature of the concept of the university, is characterised by a broader university context whose purposes and legitimacy are currently (and has been for some time now) walking the gauntlet in contemporary society. Indeed, as Barnett (2003:14) argues, the very institution whose *raison d'être* is reason itself is in trouble regarding a clear understanding of both its purpose and legitimacy in the 21st century.

Many others contribute to this status quo regarding the trouble contemporary universities are in. Rothblatt (2006) talks about the 'modern university and its discontents'; Readings (1996) sees 'the university in ruins', Altbach (2003) recognises the 'decline of the guru'; Ringer (1990) laments the 'decline of the mandarins'; and the Mode-Two Knowledge Production debate relocates knowledge production, which used to be the sole privilege of the university, to the *Agora* (public space) (Nowotny, Scott and Gibbons, 2001:184). Integral to these criticisms is the competing and conflicting meanings regarding what the concept of the university really is. In fact, Barnett (2003:14) expresses this dilemma very succinctly in the following statement,

> In the very institution that prides itself on its reasonableness, there is a continuing falling short of what it might be.

1.4. Research Methodology

Mouton defines a research methodology as the course of action that guides the research procedure and the types of tools that are employed in this process (2001:56). What follows is a description of how I came to choose an appropriate tool for this research project. I will substitute the term 'tool' for 'methodology' from here on.

My attempt to identify an appropriate methodology for this thesis has proved to be a mammoth challenge. I knew what I wanted to do and how to do it intuitively, but struggled to identify and articulate this process. The following description of a conceptual analysis describes my experience of writing this thesis very accurately,

> Usually this process occurs reasonably haphazardly, even intuitively, and it is directed by scientific feel and experience (Rossouw, 2005:23)

I started on this thesis with no clear methodology in mind, except that I wanted to examine the idea of the university in contemporary South Africa. The thesis thus evolved in a very interesting way, sometimes slowly; sometimes at a great momentum, sometimes with much difficulty, and at other times with much ease. But much of it was intuitive. At some point I needed more structure and that is when I tried to discern and set up a methodology. Trying to identify and describe this research methodology proved to be a real challenge.

In the end I realised that it is best to start at the very beginning, that is: **Where did I begin?** And: **How did this thesis and my understanding of it evolve from that point**?

1.4.1. Conceptual question

The aim of this thesis has evolved from my main research question that I kept asking myself as I reflected on my daily experiences as an academic within the aspirations of a more socially just dispensation: **What is the idea of the university in South Africa today?**

Although this question appears to be a fairly straightforward and simplistic one, I soon discovered that simplicity and clarity are not endemic to such a question. That is because in order to address this question, I would firstly need to clarify the meaning of the concept of the university upon which such an idea would be predicated. Only then could I set out to examine its application in the South African context. The need to clarify the meaning of this concept first, before I could answer this question, arises from the uncertain nature of the meaning and application of the concept of the university in contemporary society.

It is the very nature of the uncertainty regarding the meaning of the concept of the university in the above contexts, which necessitates that the methodology that I use to answer my main question and research aim, would be a conceptual analysis.

1.4.2. Conceptual Analysis

A conceptual analysis is a complex and messy task. As soon as you clarify one thing, you are faced with more uncertainty. What follows is an attempt at untangling through further concept clarification of the key concepts.

1.4.3. Defining a concept

I soon came to the conclusion that if I was to try and ascertain what is meant by the concept of a university, I would have to have some understanding of what a 'concept' is. I soon learnt that the very notion of a 'concept' itself, which is a concept of something, is a very complex and dynamic understanding of that something. Toulmin's (1972) description of the definition of a concept was not very encouraging either,

> The term *concept* is one that everybody uses and nobody explains - still less defines (p.x).

In fact the above definition actually scared me into thinking that I was going on a futile journey. I did how ever find another more promising definition. Mair's definition of a concept proved to be the simplest definition. He defined a concept in terms of being able to differentiate one thing from another by appealing to its core. A brief citation from his formulation illustrates this below,

> …a concept can be defined as 'the basic unit of thinking', such that "we have a concept of A (or of A-ness) when we are able to distinguish A from whatever is not-A (2007:1).

I soon learnt that the concept that I would be dealing with required something more than a definition that focused predominantly on identification. So I went a little further, and then I found a definition that went somewhat further than Mair's (2007:1) definition. I found the following definition by Hamlyn to be more insightful,

> To have a concept is to have a certain form of understanding; to have a concept of X is to understand or know what it is for something to be an X (in Mischel, 1971: 6).

Hamlyn's (in Mischel, 1971) definition is significant, as he links a concept up with the idea/process of understanding, which thus goes beyond mere recognition. Such a notion of a concept was important to my thesis, as I was not only trying to differentiate one university from another, but I was trying to understand the concept of the university in many and similar contexts. Hamlyn's (in Mischel, 1971) definition of a concept that goes beyond merely being able to identify one thing against another, and which focuses on understanding as well, conforms to Kovesi's (1967) formal element of a concept on which I elaborate further in Chapter Two.

Taking these definitions into account, I was able to conclude that a concept of something is then not just the way we identify one thing as opposed to another, but essentially how we understand that thing or constellation of things (Hamlyn in Mischel, 1971; Mair, 2007). Therefore pointing to the need to interrogate the concept of the university is a significantly serious imperative. And actually engaging addressing/responding to this imperative would be a mammoth challenge.

1.4.4. Defining a conceptual analysis

A conceptual analysis is a non-empirical methodology (Mouton, 2001:57). It involves a process of trying to derive more clarity and detail on a concept and the different elements of the concept in question. (Roussouw, 2005:23; Mouton, 2001:175). It falls beyond the ambit of this study to dwell in depth on the total spectrum of conceptual analysis. I chose two techniques of this methodology to guide my thesis. My application of these techniques divides my thesis into two parts. These techniques are:

- (Part One) Constructing a Model Example of a concept
- (Part Two) Implementing the scope of application of this Model Example

1.4.5.1. The significance of dividing the thesis

I felt the need to indicate that I see this thesis in two parts to address the perception that I have only allocated two chapters to the actual examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. The first part of this thesis focuses on constructing a Model Example of the concept of the university. The whole of the second part of the thesis actually focuses on an examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

In this part, I implement my Model Example of the concept of the university in a range of historical and geographical contexts. The effect of these different contexts on a contemporary South African one is very important, as they carry key lessons for this context. As I explain further on, (1.4.10) through Toulmin's (1972) description of the evolution of a concept, a concept does not evolve in a vacuum; since it comes from particular contexts which contribute to the richness of the concept in question and to the depth of its scope of applicability. Examining the concept of the university in

contemporary South Africa, entails an examination of the evolution of the concept of the university in these contexts as well.

1.4.5.2. The significance of this combination

Usually only one of the above techniques is used in a thesis, simply because it is believed that a conceptual analysis is about clarifying the meaning of a concept. But I have used an interpretation of a conceptual analysis in which the meaning of a concept also includes its applicability (Roussouw, 2005: 25; Toulmin, 1972: 168; Flew, 1956:2-4). This combination has enabled me to engage in an examination of the concept of the university in South Africa today, in a more comprehensive and constructive way. My Model Example of the university takes full account of my personal issues regarding the ability to reconcile the socio-political and epistemological functions in a more coherent way.

Implementing my Model Example of the concept of the university serves two crucial purposes for this thesis, namely that:

- It verifies its scope of application,
- It enables me to engage in a comprehensive examination of the concept of the university in South Africa today. I do this through a chronological examination of this concept both in and out of the immediate South African context.

I shall now describe these features of a conceptual analysis and explain when and why I used them in my thesis.

1.4.6. Model Example

Identifying the core concepts of a concept is crucial to a conceptual analysis. These concepts form the concept's conceptual core. What complicates this task is the fact that it not only requires identifying various elements of the concept, but also needs to identify the most appropriate ones. The clarity of a concept also entails showing how these elements relate to each other; how they contribute to the meaning of the concept as a whole; and how this particular constellation of core elements responds to the problems that are associated with the application of the concept in question (Mouton, 2001: 175).

According to Roussouw, these core elements of a concept lie in, what he refers to as, the "heart of a word's landscape' (2005: 29). This technique focuses on categorising the

‘essential’ elements from the ‘non-essential’ ones. The outcome of this technique proved to be valuable to me, when I began to realise that some of the confusion regarding the concept of the university was the lack of prudence in distinguishing which elements of this concept were integral to its understanding, and which were interesting, but largely peripheral. For Roussouw (2005: 26), the aim of this technique is to arrive at a constellation of core elements which make this particular concept a ‘Model Example’.

The aim of Chapter Two of this thesis was to arrive at a Model Example of the concept of the university. In this chapter, I used this technique to arrive at a Model Example of the concept of the university that I could use in a coherent and consistent way to examine the concept of the university in apartheid and contemporary South Africa and other contexts.

The significance of my Model Example of the concept of the university is that:

- it enables an understanding of the concept of the university that is able to reconcile the constitutive epistemological and socio-political functions of the university as an institution in a coherent and constructive way, and
- It entails the kinds of elements and properties that ensure a rich and coherent scope of application.

I was able to do this through my interpretation and application of Taylor’s (1993) theory of institutions, Kovesi’s (1967) theory of concepts, MacIntyre’s (1981) theory of practices, Haack’s (1998) theory of inquiry and Barnett’s (1990) theory of Higher Education.

1.4.7. The scope of application

According to Roussouw, a conceptual analysis also requires, ‘…clarity and closure about the scope of application of a particular concept’ (2005: 24). The scope of application of a concept thus focuses on the extent to which a concept can be used. This can be at the level of the kinds of implications it generates, or it can be in terms of how it provides guidelines for conduct or practices, and so on.

This technique of a conceptual analysis, helped me to derive the meaning of this concept, not just in terms of isolated meaning as such, but also in terms of its applicability to different contexts in which this concept emerged, such as in debates, policy documents,

reports, transformatory initiatives, and suchlike. I soon realised that central to engaging with the meaning of the concept of the university, was its usefulness in terms of praxis, which is its applicability.

The key challenge with trying to derive clarity on the concept of the university is that it is an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie in Mair, 2007: 21). Mair describes an essentially contested concept as follows,

> These were concepts whose operational meaning had been subject to continuous debate and dispute… (2007: 21).

The crux of the problems regarding the status quo of the university in contemporary contexts is that there seems to be very little consensus regarding the application of the concept of the university to real contexts, that is: to real universities, policy documents and other different kinds of initiatives associated with this concept in an institutional or social context. When I look back on how my thesis evolved, I remember people often asking me why I focused so much on the 'application of my model example of the concept of the university'. In fact Chapters Two through Seven focus on the application of my model example to different social contexts. The reason for this is because any clarification of the concept of the university and an examination thereof, necessitate a significant focus on the applicability of this concept, both chronologically and historically.

1.4.8. The practical significance of a conceptual analysis

The scope of application of a concept, which is being able to apply the concept in question to different contexts, is central to any understanding of a concept (Roussouw, 2005: 25; Toulmin, 1972: 168; Flew, 1956:2-4).

This technique of a conceptual analysis formed an integral part of my methodology, as it evokes two very crucial questions, which are,

- Can a conceptual analysis have any practical implications, significance or social relevance? If so, to what extent?
- Or more importantly, can the implementation of this methodology and its outcome in this thesis, have any practical significance for the contemporary South African university context? If so, to what extent?

According to Roussouw (2005: 25), the practical import of a conceptual analysis depends on the concept in question. He does not think it would be substantial in the case of thinking about a whale as a fish. But he does consider it to be substantial in the case of whether or not a doctor should be held accountable for murder, if he practises euthanasia on a terminally ill patient, in contrast to a person who 'puts' a seriously injured dog 'to sleep'.

According to Roussouw (2005:25), even a dictionary definition would not be able to throw much light on the matter, because according to him a dictionary does not clarify and delineate the scope of application of a concept explicitly.

For Roussouw (2005: 25), what is required in the enterprise of determining whether or not the doctor in question is guilty of murder or not, is to analyse the meaning of the word and how it is applied. In other words, what Roussouw (2005: 25) is saying here is that the meaning and clarity of a concept, are inextricably tied up with or entailed in the way it is used.

Flew, makes the same point when he argues that a conceptual analysis is not just about words or grammar, it is also about the practical implications. He expresses this quality of a conceptual analysis very well in the following excerpt,

> Rather they are about the *uses* of certain words, the *jobs* they do, the *point* of employing them: their *meaning*, and the *implications* which they carry (1956:3).

Clearly then, integral to a conceptual analysis and to the aim of this thesis specifically, is the strong link between clarifying the meaning of a concept and its practical implications/uses.

Within the context of this thesis, which focuses on the context of the university, the concept of the university that we as academics conceive plays a crucial role in determining how we engage in our constitutive practices. Furthermore, clarifying the concept of the university and setting up the parameters of its scope of application in South Africa today are both crucial in contributing to the transformation of our universities.

The impetus of this significance is foregrounded in a complex, social and university context, which is caught between national and more global contexts. The latter context had been historically characterised by a highly segregated university system, which was

based on socio-political goals. These aims used the competing epistemological goals in universities to advance a minority white population to the disadvantage of a majority black population.

The difficulty of constructing a coherent concept of the university in the face of such a history is aggravated by a broader global university context, which is grappling with the concept of the university, since universities are caught between more market functions and fewer epistemological ones.

Such a context requires a concept of the university that can guide universities in this country towards the kind of 'democratic transformation' that Van Wyk (2003:1) refers to.

The practical significance of my model example to the South African context evolves in all the chapters, but more specifically in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. In Chapter Five, I show how the way the apartheid state defined the university impacted on key epistemologically constitutive practices and functions in these universities. In Chapter Six I examine the concept of the university in South African Higher Education documents. In Chapter Seven I illustrate how South African Higher Education policy documents have impacted on current, transformatory initiatives in the South African university context.

1.4.9. Expanding the scope of application

The social dimension of concepts and a conceptual analysis are what make a concept a multi-dimensional constellation of meanings that both define and contribute to human understanding. It is within this context of the social dimension of concepts and its implications for praxis that I now refer to Toulmin's (1972) interpretation of concepts.

Toulmin's (1972) insight into the social character of a concept within the context of praxis, proved to be very valuable to the conceptual development of my thesis, because it provided me with a lens which I could use to interpret the dynamic yet stable nature of the concept of the university over time and geographical boundaries.

1.4.10. The evolution of a concept

Toulmin's (1972) work on the development of scientific thought remains one of the most significant contributions to the explication of concepts and their relationship to human understanding. It is Toulmin's explanation of the social character of a concept that makes it particularly significant to this study. He (1972) foregrounds the social dimensions of a concept, and hence the difficulty in trying to obtain a clear understanding of a concept easily.

According to him, (1972:122), human understanding by virtue of its rational foundations, is a dynamic process. It thus follows that concepts which form the basis of human understanding can be neither static not rigid. In this regard he refers to Kierkegard's notion of concepts to underpin his argument regarding the temporality of concepts,

> Concepts, like individuals, have their histories, and are just as incapable of withstanding the ravages of time as are individuals (1972: VI).

Toulmin's (1972: vi) insight into the link between time and change enabled me to develop a more optimistic conceptual analysis of the concept of the university in South Africa today. It enabled this level of engagement, as it takes into account how changes in society over time impact on the meaning of a concept, and how these changes can build towards the enrichment of the meaning of the concept in question.

This proved to be significant in my thesis, as it provided me with explanatory power regarding the implications of the dynamic nature of the idea of the university at a chronological level; particularly how the university as a concept has changed from its medieval and 19th century conceptualisations; how it has continued to be reinterpreted in an apartheid South Africa; and how it continues to be redefined in contemporary America, Germany and South Africa.

At first I struggled with the dynamic nature of the concept of the university, as it manifested itself in different social and chronological contexts. I began to think that my project was going to be a futile one, in the face of such historical dynamicism, but after

engaging with Toulmin's (1972) interpretation of the dynamic applicability of a concept, I was able to identify key lessons from each context, that would help me to examine the concept of the university in South Africa today, in a new and richer way.

In his explication of the dynamic character of a concept, Toulmin (1972) does not posit a relativist understanding of a concept; in fact he takes great pains to argue against Kuhn's revolutionary explication of paradigm changes. According to Kuhn, when a paradigm changes, there is no connection between the past and any new understandings. The implication of such a position is incommensurability and the subsequent break in communication between the different paradigms (1972:126).

For Toulmin (1972), this dimension of incommensurability lies in a revolutionary account of human understanding and the ensuing lack of a shared purpose and vision. He posits instead the evolutionary development of human understanding and concepts. He continues to argue that the depth of concepts is enriched by the different situations that arise from the use of that concept, and how this scope of application contributes to a more comprehensive and valuable understanding of that concept. So for him, if a concept evolves, it contributes to greater understanding and should not be abandoned as being useless or incomprehensible within a new mode of thinking.

Toulmin's (1972) interpretation of the evolutionary nature of a concept enabled me to clarify the concept of the university in terms of how the university and its functions have changed over time. Instead of lamenting this change and interpreting it as the end of the concept of the university that Newman, Von Humboldt and Jaspers grappled with, as well as protagonists, such as Readings and Rothblath, I was able to show in Chapters Three, Four and Five that these changes were in fact necessary and inevitable as society, and its needs progressed (except in Apartheid South Africa of course).

I could furthermore also indicate how, in each case, the needs of society, and the State impacted on the concept of the university. Beyond this, I was able to elucidate that these changes were not about the concept of the university undergoing discrete and abrupt

changes, but were about how the different uses of this concept have extended its scope of application to cope with a more complex and dynamic social context each time.

Toulmin (1972) provides us with an illuminating example of the development of a legal concept in society. This could shed some light on my strong focus on the scope of application of the concept of the university over time. In studying the history of a legal concept, he argues, we do not focus exclusively on the formal definition and logical requirements of the concept in 'successive juridical codes and decisions'. But he argues, we must also pay attention to the way the concept in question applies to new situations, and the way that this dynamic application relates to the original meaning (Toulmin, 1972: 167-168). He puts this very aptly,

> No one would imagine that a technical term of common law can be fully explained by a simple verbal definition alone; rather, its legal significance develops progressively, as the accumulation of new cases gradually creates meaning for it. As a result, legal concepts have to be defined, not merely in verbal terms, but in terms of their institutional consequences. Similarly with social and political concepts: a history of political or social thought written entirely in terms of verbal definitions and entailments would be a mockery. When divorced from institutional expression in men's lives and affairs, phrases such as 'democracy', 'freedom of assembly', or 'equality before the law' express nothing more than abstract virtues and aspirations.
>
> The true measure of men's social and political thought lies not in the formal definitions of their political terms, but in the significance they develop as institutionalized elements in social and political practice. Indeed, the only thing that redeems a social doctrine or a political concept from being a mere slogan, or a dead letter, is the existence of regular procedures by which it acquires some application in social and political practice. Such procedures create the institutions for which the concepts themselves serve as symbols, and through which they find significant expression (Toulmin, 1972:167-168).

This aspect of the applicability of a concept enabled me to engage in a conceptual analysis of the concept of the university that goes beyond any abstract, semantic analysis to one which enabled me to engage with this concept at the level of praxis. It thus enabled me to examine the way that South African Higher Education policy documents have

conceptualised the concept of the university, and how this conceptualisation is institutionalised in key transformatory initiatives in some of our universities.

I took Toulmin's interpretation of concepts further, endeavouring to explain that the kinds of changes that: Readings (1996) *(the University in ruins)*, Altbach (2003) (*warns about the decline of traditional scholarship*), Ringer (1990) (*laments the emergence and decline of the traditional scholar*) and Gibbons et al. (1994) (*challenge the traditional role the university and its link to knowledge production*) refer to, are all integral to a comprehensive understanding of the concept of a university in general, and to its application in the South African context .

The implications of Toulmin's (1972) interpretation are that these changes are inevitable, and they should not point to the obsoleteness of this concept and its institutional form, but should be seen as a necessary dimension of this concept and its institutional form. The changes that critics note should not render this concept unusable but should rather be seen as a necessary contribution to a more comprehensive and fuller understanding of this concept. In other words, what we should look at is not a concept of the university in an abstracted and static form, but the scope of applicability of this concept in these changing contexts.

It is within such a complex, epistemological context that this thesis aims to examine the concept of *the idea of the university in South Africa today*, not just at an abstract, semantic level, but more importantly, in terms of its scope of applicability.

1.5. The **layout of the study**

This thesis is divided into two parts in terms of its overall aim and the selected methodology used to achieve this aim. The first part of my conceptual analysis is setting up the Model Example of a concept of a university. The second part focuses on the scope of application of this Model Example of a concept of a university. It is important to note that the entire second part of this thesis is an examination of the concept of a university in South Africa today.

1.5.1. Part One: Setting up the Model Example of the Concept of the University

I construct a Model Example of a concept of a university in Chapter Two of my thesis. In order to accomplish this task I refer to and apply the following theories:

Kovesi: **A theory of Concepts**

Material elements of a concept

Formal elements of a concept

Taylor: **A theory of Institutions**

Service and Constitutive institutional types

MacIntyre : **A theory of Practices**

A distinction between practices and institutions

Goods internal to a practice

Goods external to a practice

Haack: **A theory of inquiry**

Warrant and acceptance

Barnett: **A theory of higher education**

Process: quantitative

Process: qualitative - according to criteria

In order to fulfil the aims of this chapter, I engage in the following steps:

- Analyse the meaning of the concept of the university, by specifically:
- Identifying the key areas of concern regarding the use of this concept, and
- Endeavouring to address these concerns through:
    - Selecting elements that will contribute to a richer understanding of this concept in contemporary society;
    - Showing how these elements relate to each other;
    - Showing how they contribute to the meaning of this concept as a whole;
    - Showing how this particular constellation of elements addresses identified problems;
    - Showing how the concept of the university can be conceptualised in terms of both its epistemological and political functions in a coherent way that can be used in the South African context.

1.5.3. Part Two: The scope of application (applying my model concept)

In this part of my thesis I **apply my Model Example of a concept of a university** to examine the concept of a university in contemporary South Africa. I do this by interpreting the concept of a university in different historical and chronological contexts, as well as in different geographical contexts. This interpretation is based on the idea that these contexts are part of the contemporary concept of a university in South Africa today. This choice of chronological and geographical parameters is predicated on Toulmin's (1972) theory of the evolution of a concept (refer to 1.4.10) which argues that the meaning of a concept deepens through its use in society.

Therefore it makes sense to say that an analysis of a concept also means an analysis of the contexts from and in which this concept has evolved and is still evolving. It is for this reason that I applied my Model example of a concept of a university to examine the concept of a university in two pasts that I believe do and have affected the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. These are the emergence of the modern concept of the university and the concept of the apartheid university in South Africa. The value of examining past contexts to provide insight into current ones, is well summed up in the following comment,

> The appeal to heritage is partly to the authority, partly to the clarification of the past on what is important in the present (Smith and Bender, 2008: 14).

I also refer to the university context in contemporary America and Germany, because we live in a context that is characterised by internationalisation and globalisation. Within such a context, boundaries are often blurred. This means that contemporary South Africa is very much influenced by the way these and other countries are conceptualising their universities.

1.5.3.1. Chapter Three

In this chapter I provide a critical interpretation of how the concept of the university has evolved from its 19th century conception. In order to do this, I take a look at the following protagonists specifically,

- Newman's Idea of the University
- Von Humboldt's Idea of the University
- Jaspers' Idea of the University

1.5.3.2. Chapter Four

Here I provide a critical interpretation of current trends in American and German universities.

1.5.3.3. Chapter Five

In this chapter I present a description of the concept of the university during Apartheid South Africa. I then provide a critical analysis of how 'a' concept of the university was shaped by the Apartheid State during this period.

1.5.3.4. Chapter Six

Here I provide a critical examination of how a concept of the university is conceptualised in contemporary South Africa, specifically at the level of Higher Education policy documents. I accomplish this task by:

- Examining how key Higher Education policy documents define the concept of the university within a Post-apartheid Higher Education Policy terrain.
- Using the definition of the concept of the university as expounded in two specific policy documents, as my frame of reference. These are:
    - The National Commission on Higher Education Report (NCHER, 1996);
    - The Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997 (Republic of South Africa, 1997).

1.5.3.5. Chapter Seven

Here I undertake a critical examination of the scope of applicability of the concept of the university as it is currently conceptualised in South Africa. I examine the implementation of this concept within the following contexts:

- Debates regarding the transformation of curricula in merging institutions.
- Debates regarding the transformation of curricula in South African universities in general.
- The fulfilment of institutional autonomy in South African universities.

1.5.3.6. Chapter Eight

In this chapter I draw the study to a conclusion and make some recommendations.

1.6. The **delimitations of the study**

Examining the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa proved to be a mammoth task, not just in terms of difficulty, but also in terms of the wealth of information and discourses on the concept of the university in general. It is for this

reason that I had to set up very rigid boundaries to prevent myself from moving further and further away from the core of my research aim.

It is within such an epistemological and practical context (which I was capable of doing); I decided to focus on certain key issues only.

The focus of this thesis is public universities only.

Given the scope of the approximate length requirements of a project of this nature, I have not included the process that I engaged in, to come to my final selection of the core/essential elements of my Model Example. However the justifications for each of the conceptual distinctions are clarified through out chapter two, but more specifically in the following sub/sections:

1. The material and formal elements of a concept of a university (2.7.2; 2.7.4.2).
2. A concept of a university as an institutional ideal which is based on a continuum of constitutive and service institutional types, with respective functions and practices (2.8).
3. Constitutive epistemological/epistemic practices (2.9.1).
4. Constitutive epistemic forms of inquiry (2.10; 2.10.1).
5. A distinctive kind of Higher Education (2.10.2).

I also do not set out to provide a critique of the theories that I use to underpin these core elements. My level of critical engagement is demonstrated through my application of these theories to my Model Example.

In Chapter Four the German Higher Education system is explained and discussed. I only indicate that the German university context is characterised by two major contextual developments. The one is the unification of East and West Germany and the second is the signing of the Bologna Agreement. These developments have influenced German

universities in significant ways. The first is the unification of German universities and the other is the internationalisation of German universities.

This chapter focuses on general trends in this country; and I have decided not to focus specifically on the implications of these developments on the German Higher Education system. As interesting and as significant as such an exploration might be, it would over-extend the scope of this chapter which aims to look at general trends only.

Although the my examination of the contemporary South African university focuses on Higher Education Policy, this project is not a policy analysis, and does not conform to the requirements of such an undertaking.

The context of this thesis stems from my desire and commitment to the transformation of South Africa in general and to higher education specifically. However it should be noted that this thesis is not underpinned by a formal application of Critical Theory.

Although I would have liked to have provided some engagement on the character of possible socio-political functions that our universities (post-apartheid) could take responsibility for, the scope of this thesis became too overwhelming. What I have done instead, is to provide a conceptual framework for further reflection on the character of the socio-political functions and practices of the service dimensions of a university as an institutional type.

1.7. Difficulties with the study

I would like to acknowledge at the onset that this thesis proved to be an immensely challenging and messy task. The aim of a conceptual analysis is to derive clarity, yet I found that the one thing that eluded me throughout this thesis was distinct clarity. My struggle is well demonstrated by my tendency to over-explain myself, and I fear that this technique will lead the reader to confusion. One source of this dilemma is that although the theories that I used were very apt to the context, they were very difficult to

understand, and even more difficult to apply. I had also never engaged in a conceptual analysis before. It also did not help that my supervisor became terminally ill at a crucial time during the writing process.

In addition to the aforementioned, I also found that using key concepts in a consistent manner became increasingly difficult. Although I managed to use my core elements in a consistent way, I do use certain words interchangeably. Here is a selection of some of these words:

- Rothblatt (2006: 1-5), for example, takes pains to distinguish between a concept of a university and an idea of a university; I have however use the terms almost interchangeably.
- I use the terms ‘epistemically’ and ‘epistemologically’ interchangeably.
- I also found that I sometimes referred to ‘a’ university and other times I would refer to ‘the’ university. It should be noted that this distinction does not imply different ideals of a university; it is simply a linguistic technique, which I hope does not lead to confusion.

Conclusion

Despite the challenges that I faced, I found this project to be a very illuminating and exciting experience.

In the next chapter, I will focus on constructing my Model Example of a concept of a university.

PART ONE

CHAPTER TWO

MODEL EXAMPLE OF A CONCEPT OF A UNIVERSITY

2.1. Previous chapter

In the previous chapter, I used Hamlyn (in Mischel, 1971), Mair (2007), Mouton (2001), Rossouw (2005) and Toulmin (1972) to explore and describe the methodology of a conceptual analysis. From that brief exploration the following conclusions can be extrapolated:

- The clarification of a concept leads to a better understanding of that particular concept, particularly within the context of the implementation of the concept in question.
- A concept of something is a very complex comprehension of that thing that goes beyond the criteria that enable us to identify one thing in contradistinction from another.
- To have a concept of something is to have a deeper understanding of that particular thing.
- A concept also has a dynamic and historical character; in other words, concepts are influenced by time and society.
- A crucial part of this dynamic is the epistemological process of criticism and change of which a concept is a part. This is what Toulmin (1972) refers to as the institutionalisation of a concept.
- This historical dimension of a concept emerges from its scope of application over time. This dimension of a concept is what contributes to its value in society. In other words the greater the scope of application the more comprehensive and valuable it is to its users.

It is within such a context that I have come to the conclusion that in trying to gain a clearer and deeper understanding of a concept, and specifically within the ambits of this thesis, for an understanding of the university as a concept, one has to recognise the dynamic, socio-historical, practical and institutional character of this concept.

2.2. The aim of this chapter

The aim of this chapter is to construct a Model Example of a concept of the university. This chapter encapsulates the outcome of my search for the essential elements that contribute towards a clear, deeper and more useful (in terms of its application) understanding of the concept of the university. I will be able to use these elements to fulfil the purpose of this thesis. Rossouw describes this journey as the 'process of sifting for essential elements'… 'These lie in the heart of the word's landscape' (2005:29).

In this chapter I will be constructing a Model Example of a concept of a university as underpinned by five essential/core elements. These core elements will be identified, clarified and interpreted. Each of these elements has its own conceptual background. Each will be modified by and reinterpreted in terms of the others in the light of a coherent Model Example of the concept of a university. These five core elements will thus form the basis of my examination of the concept of the university in South Africa today.

The five core elements that constitute my Model Example of the concept of a university are:

1. ***The material and formal elements of a concept of a university.***
2. ***A concept of a university as an institutional ideal which is based on a continuum of constitutive and service institutional types, with respective functions and practices.***

The service functions can be political or economic, and are/can be formulated by negotiations with the external stakeholders.

The constitutive functions are predicated upon the following core elements of the concept of a university:

3. ***Constitutive epistemological/epistemic practices***
4. ***Constitutive epistemic forms of inquiry***
5. ***A distinctive kind of Higher Education***

2.3. The general development of the chapter

I begin this chapter with Kovesi's (1967) interpretation of a concept; following from this understanding of a concept, I then go on to interpret and describe each of the following theories: Taylor's (1993) theory of institutional types; MacIntyre's (1981) theory of 'practices'; Haack's (1998) theory of inquiry and Barnett's (1990) theory of Higher Education. Central to the interpretation and description of each of these theories is also my application of each of these theories to my Model Example of a concept of the university. My interpretation and application of these respective theories thus entail an extrapolation of the core elements that will constitute my Model Example of the concept of a university.

2.4. The significance of this chapter

This chapter provides me with a Model example of the concept of the university that will enable me to engage with this concept in several contexts that span both chronological and geographical boundaries and problems, in a clear and consistent way, and which will enable me to examine the idea of the university in the South African context in a constructive way.

2.5. The subjectivity of the chapter

Amidst criticisms of the functions and value of the university in contemporary society and the uncertainties regarding whether a university refers to, inter alia, more market-oriented curricula or research, or more liberal ideas of knowledge production or political ones, my Model Example of a concept of the university selects one set of core elements amongst several others. Although my Model Example runs the risk of excluding other distinctions that some might regard as more significant, or that enables one to look at this concept from another perspective, for me, this particular conceptualisation of a concept of

the university enables me to fulfil the aims of this thesis. This is to examine the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

2.6. Conceptual distinctions

The 'concept of the university' can, as a notion, be very confusing, in the sense that when we refer to this concept we are often unsure about whether we are referring to the university as an institution, or whether we are speaking about some metaphysical entity that has its roots in medieval history and can therefore not have a place in contemporary society.

There is also uncertainty regarding the extent to which a 'concept of the university' can be distinguished from the 'university as an institution'. It is my contention that the university is an institution, but a particular kind of public institution, and that the 'concept of the university' is distinctly different from, although inherently part of, the university as an institution. The development of this chapter is, inter alia, a demonstration of this distinction and embeddedness. It is in answering questions such as these and others that the complex, historical, multi-layered character of the core concept of the university evolves.

I have sequenced my selection of core concepts for the sake of logical coherence.

The five core elements and their conceptual distinctions that I will be describing, interpreting and clarifying in this chapter are:

1. ***The material and formal elements of a concept of a university.***

Kovesi (1967): **A theory of concepts**

Material elements of a concept

Formal elements of a concept

2. ***A concept of a university as an institutional ideal which is based on a continuum of constitutive and service institutional types, with respective functions and practices.***

The service functions can be political or economic, and are/can be formulated by negotiations with the external stakeholders.

Taylor (1993): **Two ideal types of institutions**

Service and constitutive institutional types

The constitutive functions are predicated upon the following core elements of the concept of a university:

3. ***Constitutive epistemological/epistemic practices***

MacIntyre (1981): **A theory of practices**

The institutionalised nature of practices

Practices as constitutive

Goods internal to a practice

Goods external to a practice

4. ***Constitutive epistemic forms of inquiry***

Haack (1998): **A theory of Inquiry**

Warrant and acceptance

Provisionally warranted truths

5. ***A distinctive kind of Higher Education***

Barnett (1990): **A theory of higher education**

A special kind of education

2.7. The formal and material elements of a concept: Kovesi's theory of concepts

I needed a theory of concepts that could guide my concept of a university in a deliberate and constructive way.

2.7.1. Dilemma: core concept or defining principle?

I struggled to determine whether the material and formal elements of a concept are actually one of the core elements of my Model Example of the concept of a university, or whether or not they were just a defining principle. My dilemma arose from the nature of the conclusion that comes at the end of the description of this theory. The conclusion is that, central to any concept of the university in South Africa, would be a set of material elements and a strong formal element. But at this stage I am not able to provide the formal element of the concept of the university; I am only going to be able to do so in the light of the other core elements that I identify. The dependent nature (on each other) of these elements is what characterises my Model Example, as I pointed out earlier. In the end I decided to leave it, for the sake of (my) clarity, as one of the core elements of my Model Example.

2.7.2. The significance of Kovesi's theory of concepts

I chose Kovesi's theory of concepts because unlike other theories of concepts which focus on how meaning is embedded within the range of traits that enable us to recognise one thing from another. Kovesi's theory of concepts is underpinned by a deeper understanding of a particular thing that goes beyond just recognition according to a set of fixed traits.

Kovesi's theory of concepts also enables one to make a crucial distinction between the elements of a concept that help one to describe certain properties of the concept in question and those that enable a deeper understanding and thus have a wider scope of applicability. In so doing Kovesi's theory of concepts demonstrates the multi-dimensional nature of concepts, which inter alia, focus on a deeper understanding of a concept and which provide a foundation for the scope of applicability of a concept.

2.7.3. Introducing Kovesi's formal and material elements of a concept

In his book '*Moral Notions*', Kovesi (1967) provides a theory of concepts, which is predicated on not only a distinction between, but also a logical ensconcement within, the material and formal elements of what, according to him, a concept constitutes. He uses this distinction in his analysis of certain concepts as well as in his analysis of human actions (Kovesi, 1967:4). Since I will apply Kovesi's theory of concepts in my Model Example of a concept of the university it merits further clarification.

Kovesi's material elements of a concept provide a list of the properties that would enable us to recognise a particular concept. To limit our understanding of a concept to these material elements would be constraining on the applicability of the concept, especially where mutations of the traits connected with the concept occur. So much so, that if a concept is linked to specific traits/properties that do not occur on its list, that concept would not apply in that conceptual context.

Kovesi's formal element of a concept, on the other hand, goes beyond description to understanding and providing us with the basic principles for using the word. It involves

certain practices that adhere to certain self-regulating standards/principles of excellence that act on a norm to guide application.

Kovesi (1967) begins by demonstrating the substantive difference between the material elements of a concept and the formal elements of a concept, and in so doing he foregrounds the deep and multi- dimensional nature of a concept and its scope of applicability.

2.7.4. The material elements of a concept

The material elements of a concept, according to Kovesi (1967), enable one to obtain only a limited description of an object or action that can only be recognised in terms of its material traits. According to him, the material elements of a concept are a necessary but not sufficient condition for a full understanding of an object or action. He explains his material sense of a concept in terms of the characteristic features/properties of an object or action. A person could thus be described in this sense in terms of having two arms, two legs, a head, and so on.

Within such a conception, if one were to come across a person who had one leg and one arm one might have doubts about whether or not this person could be characterised as a person. What is also significant about this definition is that it's meaning lies only within its identifiable/recognisable properties, and not beyond. Both the meaning and the functions of a concept are in this sense limited.

2.7.4.1. The scope of application of the material elements of a concept

In order to foreground this sense of a definition, he invokes Aristotle's notion of 'matter' in the following way,

> By *matter* I do not mean simply the tangible material of the object, nor by *form* its shape or appearance. In the case of tables, I call the *matter* not only the various materials out of which we may construct tables but any characteristics in which the object may vary without ceasing to be a table. So the shape of the table, far from being its *form* will be part of its matter, since it may change - a table may be oblong, round or square - while the object remains a table. Similarly, whether the object has four legs or three, whether it

> is made of wood or iron, are questions about the material elements of tables (Kovesi, 1967: 4).

This distinction between identifying something according to its material elements only, as opposed to how it can be identified by its formal elements, is very well illustrated by the use of Kovesi's (1967) 'tak' example. This example clearly demonstrates the limitations of a material definition.

He describes a situation in which a philosophy teacher decides to coin a nonsensical word, 'tak' in his classroom. The teacher draws various figure shapes on the board; some of these shapes however have pointed projections. The teacher then points to the figures with the pointed projections and says, "These are 'taks'" (Kovesi, 1967: 39). The teacher then points to the other figure shapes and says, "These are not 'taks'" (Kovesi, 1967: 39).

Kovesi (1967: 39) explains that, provided that the teacher drew a great variety of figures to illustrate that it was the projections that were integral in identifying these figures as 'taks', students would eventually be able to identify whether a figure that he draws would be a 'tak' or not. He clarifies this process as follows, "The impression we get from this example is that we can follow a rule by observing empirical similarities only" (Kovesi, 1967:39).

The limitations of what took place in this classroom are significant if we ask the question: What can the students do with what they have learnt, especially since they may never see 'taks' outside their classroom? If they were to see one, though, what would they be able to do beyond pointing out that that is a 'tak' and there is another one? They would not be able to do much else. The reason being that the teacher did not provide them with or lead them to a meaning/s of 'taks' or the significance of the concept.

In Kovesi's (1967) words,

> The occurrence of these phenomena is only one special opportunity to speak of them, if what we want to do is to announce their arrival or occurrence, but we do not even necessarily need to take these opportunities. The features enable us to recognize the phenomena but they enable us only to do this; they are passive, they do not tell us: 'whenever my features appear use the word *x*', let alone tell us what else we can or

> should do with a word. The features do not provide us with the rules for the use of a word and so it is misleading to think that they are the criteria for the proper use of the word. For the rules we have to look elsewhere. So in order to avoid confusion, I shall call these features not 'criteria' as they are so often called but 'recognitors'. Roughly speaking, 'recognitors' are the defining characteristics of the material elements of a thing or act or situation or any phenomenon (1967:40-41).

By showing his students how to recognise a "tak" (figures with projections) and by supplying a word for these figures, the teacher only, according to Kovesi (1967), imparted the first step towards providing the rules for the proper use of the word, but did not give the rules themselves.

What is of further significance in this particular sense of a concept is that the word 'tak' will continue to be meaningless because apart from its naming function, it does not perform any other function in life circumstances. Its scope of application is thus severely limited.

2.7.4.2. Implications for the South African context

It would not be very useful to adhere to a concept of the university which is limited to its material elements only. Such a concept would only enable us to recognise a university wherever we saw one. Such a concept would not be able to guide new practices that would lead to the development and transformation of this important institution.

The value of such a concept in a context such as South Africa, which is premised upon transformation, would thus be useless. In other words how will we be able to transform our universities from being apartheid tools to institutions that are based on more democratic epistemological ideals?

Or, if we identify a university solely in terms of a huge building with libraries, young students and lectures, can we still speak of a university education that entails teaching adult students in a bungalow in remote rural areas in South Africa? Surely not, as this would not entail one of the traits of a university in terms of its material elements.

In other words, by restricting the concept of the university to its material elements one would not be able to accommodate the different mutations of the manifestation of this concept in different contexts.

These issues manifest very strongly in the conceptualisation of the comprehensive university as a mutation of a university in contemporary South Africa (discussed in Chapters Six and Seven). Apart from this aspect, such a definition would also be unable to provide guidelines for progress or change, as would be the requirement in the new South Africa.

2.7.4.3. Justifying the need to extend this definition

Taking situations of this nature into account, Kovesi goes on to argue that we use words in language for more than just naming or identifying things. We also use words for understanding and for engaging others in conduct,

> People use language as part of all sorts of activities. …Language games are not word-games; they are activities of which language is part (1967:42).

He then goes on to argue that the material sense of a concept on its own is not enough, as this sense of a concept is to a large extent indefinite, and one would thus have to ensure that each and every trait were included in the list of properties, such that unless one included some idea of a person who could still be a person even if he/she could not walk, that concept would exclude someone who had no legs, or someone who was born with three legs. (Kovesi, 1967: 42).

In the same way, the concept of the university would then have to include different venues, such as a rented property, bungalow, or a school classroom, and suchlike.

It is within this context that Kovesi (1967) justifies his second element of a concept, namely the formal element.

2.7.5. The formal element of a concept

What Kovesi's (1967) argument illustrates so far is that the material elements of a concept only enable the recognition of something, and what is needed is a definition that not only goes beyond naming criteria, but is also able to provide the rationale for why this set of naming criteria (recognitors) have been chosen. Kovesi (1967) thus sets the conditions for a more comprehensive understanding of a concept,

> There is of course a more respectable sense of definition, when, without reference to material elements, we give what I call the formal element of a notion, when we say what makes a thing what it is. A definition in this sense will determine what material elements we can or cannot accept as constituting the thing. In this sense a definition also functions somewhat like a standard or a norm.
>
> The reasons why we cannot define what a thing or act is in terms of their material elements, or why we cannot make valid deductive arguments where the premises contain only material elements and the conclusion tells what the thing or act is, is not a special characteristic of evaluative arguments. It has to do with the fact that the sort of things that can constitute a thing or act, their material elements, cannot be enumerated in a final list. It is their formal element which will determine what they are, not a list of their material elements (1967: 8).

Once having set up the material elements as necessary but not sufficient conditions for the understanding of a concept, he then introduces the formal element and argues that these provide the foundation for the former. The trajectory of his description of the material and formal elements of a concept then leads us to the point that makes his conceptualisation of a concept significant; and that is that the formal element of a concept is logically necessary for the identification of the material elements of a concept. In other words, the material elements of a concept cannot be identified except in terms of the formal elements of the concept,

> …the material and formal elements of a notion are inseparable. …Matter and form are *one pair* of concepts. Without the formal element there is just no sense in selecting, out of many others, those features of a thing or an act that constitutes that thing or act (Kovesi, 1967: 23-24).

For Kovesi (1967), the embeddedness of these two elements is so crucial to the understanding of a concept, that if you don't have a formal element then you cannot identify the material element. In other words it would be difficult to identify a scenario that entails several tables and chairs, unless we had an idea of what brings this set of objects together.

Such a scenario could be a classroom, it could be a meeting venue, or it could be a room for lecturing university students. But apart from being able to identify this scenario as a particular lecture or school teaching or meeting venue, the formal element would be able to provide guidance on how to conduct ourselves in the appropriate context.

For Kovesi (1967), this sense of a concept is distinctive in the sense that it provides us with a comprehensive understanding of a subject/ concept. But what also adds to its value is the fact that it functions as a standard /touchstone for the subject/concept in which it works/plays itself out.

In so doing it extends our taken-for-granted understanding of the function of a concept, which merely describes/names, to a more active notion that sets the norm or standard for that which it describes. It extends the functions of a concept to include its range of applicability. In other words it provides the standard for practices that are underpinned by this concept. In doing this the function of a concept extends from understanding to praxis. The stronger the formal element is, the deeper is the scope of applicability of a concept.

It is the aforementioned two conditions that make this notion very pertinent for my analysis of how the concept of the university has been conceptualised in South Africa.

Any concept of the university in the South African context must therefore have a set of material elements and a set of clear formal elements.

2.8. A concept of a university as an institutional ideal which is predicated upon an epistemologically constitutive institutional type and a service institutional type

Although the subsequent core elements are integral to my Model Example of the concept of a university, this particular element is important because it is predicated upon a particular understanding or conceptualisation of the concept of the university in contemporary society. There is thus a sense in which like the previous core element, it also assumes the role of a defining principle that brings the other core elements together in a particular way.

What is crucial to this core element is the way it enabled me to reconcile the epistemological and socio-political functions of a university in a coherent way. This is also why in the subsequent chapters this particular core element of my Model Example of the concept of a university is used more predominantly than the rest; but that does not mean that the others are less important. They are important but are operationalized at a more implicit level sometimes.

In order to clarify this distinctive notion of the formal element of a definition within the context of a university, and in so doing to move closer to a coherent Model Example of the concept of the university, I now refer to Taylor's (1993) theory of institutions. It gives a deeper understanding of this dimension of the concept of the university. This will lead us to a more formal idea of the university, and will form the basis for an understanding of this concept that can work towards transforming universities in South Africa.

In this section a distinction is drawn between the different kinds of institutional ideals and functions of a university as a public institution, and how these institutional ideals and functions impact on a more coherent and optimistic understanding of the university as a special kind of public institution.

2.8.1. A concept of the university as an institution

Several problems plague the concept of the university and the idea that is underpinned by such a concept, namely, the distinction between the concept of the university as an esoteric abstract ideal and practice; and the university as an administrative institution (Barnett, 1990; Jaspers, 1960); and the extent to which the concept of the university is defined in terms of its social functions (Readings, 1996).

Both these kinds of issues are significant, as they impact on current concerns regarding the credibility of the university in contemporary society. Whilst these problems might appear to be separate, they are actually part of the same dilemma. This is a clarification of the epistemological functions of a university and its obligations to society; and how these functions manifest themselves at a practical level in terms of the university as an institution which people inhabit and support.

This problem has led me to identify the institutional dimensions of the concept of the university as a core element of this concept. In order to get to the heart of this important element of the concept of the university, I will briefly elaborate on the problems that I have just outlined. Such an elaboration will provide insight into how I came to identify this component as being integral to the concept of a university.

2.8.1.1. Separating the concept of a university from its institutional manifestation

Contemporary experts, who write prolifically on the idea of the university, such as Ronald Barnett (1990:29), and the more historical proponents of the idea of the university, such as Jaspers (1960:83), differentiate between the concept of the university and the institutional dimensions of the university. Both argue that although they are dependent on each other, we have to focus more on the concept of the university itself and not on the institution that houses it.

Whilst there is merit in the distinction that they identify, such a distinction enables a conceptualisation of the concept of the university that recognises the complex and multi-layered nature of this concept; it still does not, however, address current concerns regarding its range of applicability. In other words it does not explain how to reconcile

the myriad and often-conflicting purposes of contemporary universities. That is, it still leaves us in a quandary as to what the purpose of a university really is.

Is it purely epistemological, or is it also political and economical? Or to what extent can it be both? If it does encapsulate both can it still be called a university? Or if it can entail both, is it possible to prevent the epistemological from being subsumed by the political, as has been done in the past (Napoleon's Prussia, Nazi Germany, Apartheid South Africa, and suchlike.).

Can it be subsumed by the market, as is the case currently in America and Germany? To what extent does such a conceptualisation entail a gate-keeping role that will keep the epistemological core untainted by the political and economic context, without the university, in the process becoming a white elephant?

It is my contention that both Barnett's (1990) and Jaspers' (1960) interpretation of the concept of the university and their ensuing ideas need to be further extended.

It is my contention that if we examine this historical concept and its manifestation in contemporary society further, we will be able to conclude the following:

The concept of a university should not make any differentiation between the idea of the university as an abstract scientific practice and the administrative component as its institutional dimension that enables the former. Such a conceptualisation neglects to explain how the socio-political dimensions (purposes, values and ideals) of society are represented in this fundamentally social institution.

In the absence of such a representation, the epistemological practices, aims and values of a university become blurred by the socio-political ideals of society, as universities weaken under increasing criticism and pressure from the public that supports them. The question that thus rears its head again is: How do we facilitate a concept of the university that reconciles its institutional identity (as a public institution and an administrative one) with its epistemological one?

The outcome of such a challenge is to facilitate the concept of a university that becomes neither an ivory tower nor a political tool or market pawn.

2.8.1.2. Linking the identity of the concept of a university with its social responsibilities/obligations

Reading (1996) complicates this issue further by linking the institutional identity of the concept of the university with its social functions.

In his acclaimed book titled, "The University in ruins", Bill Reading goes to the heart of the current dilemma universities are facing. Here is a short extract from his book,

> Jeremiads abound concerning the "betrayal" and "bankruptcy" of the project of liberal education. Teaching, we are told, is undervalued in favour of research, while research is less and less in touch with the demands of the real world, or with the comprehension of the "common reader". Nor is this - as some academics seem to believe - just the lament of the middlebrow media, motivated by media commentators' resentment at their failure to gain access to the hallowed groves of academe. Forever deprived of the chance to sit on the Faculty Promotions' Committees, such pundits, it is claimed, take out their frustrations on the University, constrained as they are to content themselves with huge salaries and comfortable working conditions. The causes of the media's sniping at the University are not individual resentments, but a more general uncertainty as to the role of the University and the very nature of the standards by which it should be judged as an institution. It is no coincidence that such attacks are intensifying in North America at the same time as the structure of the academic institution is shifting.
>
> It is not merely that the professoriat is being proletarianized as a body and the number of short-term or part-time contracts at major institutions increased (with the concomitant precipitation of a handful of highly paid stars). The production of knowledge within the university is equally uncertain. An internal legitimation struggle concerning the nature of the knowledge produced in the humanities, for example, would not take on crisis proportions were it not accompanied by an external legitimation crisis. Disputes within individual disciplines as to methods and theories of research would not hit the headlines, were it not that the very notion of a research project is now a troubled one. Thus, the impulse behind this book is not simply to argue that the University needs to recognize that new theoretical advances in particle physics or literary studies render old paradigms of study and teaching obsolete. Nor is this book simply another attempt to engage with the web of conflicting and often contradictory sentiments that currently surround the

> University. Rather, I want to perform a structural diagnosis of contemporary shifts in the Universities function as an institution, in order to argue that the wider social role of the University as an institution is now up for grabs. It is no longer clear what the place of the University is within society or what the exact nature of that society is, and the changing institutional form of the University is something that intellectuals cannot afford to ignore (Readings, 1996: 1-2).

In his book Readings (1996) comes to several conclusions regarding the status quo of the contemporary university, but the most significant for this thesis is his conclusion that given the decline of the nation-state, the university's function in terms of its production of national subjects is no longer necessary and tenable. Given this socio-political scenario, the overall function and value of the university in contemporary society becomes questionable (1996:46). This is at the heart of the legitimation crisis that he refers to above.

According to Readings (1996), since the university no longer conforms to the Humboldtian ideal of the development of the cultural subject through epistemological practices, it can no longer be called a university (1996:55). For Readings (1996), the replacement of this cultural social function with a more corporate one, is what has led to this loss of legitimacy of the university (1996:55) and its current recognition as a '*ruined institution*' (1996:169).

2.8.1.3. Working towards addressing these problems

What is significant and of concern to me is the extent to which Readings' (1996) concept of the university is in this instance inextricably dependent on its socio-historical functions, and the contingent nature of these functions. So much so, that when these functions cease to be tenable, the university as we have come to know it loses its credibility. The questions that arise are:

- To what extent should the socio-political functions of the university determine its value and existence in society?

- Should these functions serve a determining role in the identity of this key institution, and if such is the case, what is the status of a university's epistemological functions?
- And furthermore, what happens when the socio-political functions are no longer tenable in society, given the contingent nature of the aforementioned?

From Jaspers (1960), Barnett (1990) and Readings (1996), it is clear that central to any understanding of the concept of the university is its institutional nature; and linked to this is its socio-political and epistemological functions; and the extent to which the aforementioned determine the nature of this concept.

For me the solution lies not in a concept that differentiates between an epistemological and institutional dimension, but one which encapsulates both in a comprehensive and coherent manner. What I am proposing then, is a concept of the university that is based on two institutional ideals with distinct functions. For such an interpretation of the concept of the university, I rely on Taylor's theory of institutions. Such a theory reinforces Toulmin's (1972) principle of the evolution of a concept through his theory of how institutions are placed in society and the meaning and value they accrue as a result thereof.

Taylor's theory of institutions enables me to include both the epistemological and ontological dimensions of the concept of a university; and it also enables me to reconcile the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the concept of the university with its socio-political functions and practices. In so doing, such an interpretation of the concept of the university allows me to extend a rather unique reinterpretation of this historical concept.

2.8.2. The significance of Taylor's theory of institutions

Although Taylor's context was Quebec in 1988, and although he was not referring to the university as an example of any one of these institutions per se, I find his distinction very useful for my argument, because I think universities as public institutions in South Africa potentially run the same risks as institutions in Quebec were subjected to. In an attempt

to address the injustices of the past, repressive regimes, the new dispensation in South Africa, is using, inter alia, its public institutions to achieve its political goals of, inter alia, equity, integration and democracy.

Even though these are well respected and important values for our society, the extent to which South African public institutions, such as universities can lose their constitutive identities and purposes in this broader project, is a key area of concern to me. The potential value of Taylor's theoretical contribution is well presented in the following reflection of his work,

> Taylor's text presents the risks run by a society such as Quebec, when its public institutions are reduced to the level of instruments so that they lose their meaning in the construction of an individual and collective identity (Taylor, 1993: 120).

The nearer South African universities meander towards fulfilling our broader socio-political ideals, the closer they come to forging a distinct and strong identity.

Taylor's (1993) critique of the extent to which public institutions stand in danger of losing their identities in their instrumental appeal, is predicated upon a very interesting and crucial distinction that is based on the multidimensional functions of public institutions.

2.8.3. The social dimensions of public institutions

Taylor (1993) refers to two ideal types of institutions; in doing this he makes an important distinction between institutions that *provide a service* and institutions *that identify* or take on the role of identification. For the purposes of conceptual clarity within this thesis, I will use the term 'constitutive' to refer to Taylor's (1993) notion of 'identity', as he uses this notion in terms of an identity institution or an identity paradigm and its ensuing functions.

2.8.4. The identity of universities as products of social placement

Taylor (1993) attempts to contextualise the way institutions are placed in society, and the meanings that are attributed to these institutions on the basis of these particular placements. Such an interpretation of the concept of an institution specifically, and a

concept in general is significant, as it takes into account the social dimensions of the meaning of a concept and its evolutionary development that Toulmin (1972) referred to (described in the previous chapter).

From both a historical and contemporary perspective (Chapters Three and Four), it becomes clear that the concept of the university has evolved according to how society has positioned the university in terms of its functions and value. Whilst, as will be shown in Chapter Three, 18th century universities in Germany from Von Humboldt to Jaspers, attempted to rescue the university and its functions and practices from the clutches of repressive political regimes (Prussia – Napoleon; Germany – Hitler), by re-interpreting and reinforcing a deeply scientific and epistemological character; contemporary universities have replaced the political placement with economic ones.

However, what is of significance is that it appears that South Africa has not engaged in any kind of **re**-placement at all. The concept of the university in South Africa and its range of applicability in South African universities continue to be placed within the political arena and to derive its meaning, values and purposes from this context. During apartheid the concept of the South African university was derived from a deeply repressive political epistemology and functions, and subsequent to that context, the identity of the post-apartheid university seemed to have been determined by political goals again, albeit more democratic and socially just ones.

This historical evolution of the concept of the university as an institution in terms of how it is placed in society and the meaning and value it gains through such placements, necessitates that we take the social dimensions of this concept into account and try to make sense of it whilst simultaneously striving for clarity in a way that would provide us with a way forward.

According to Taylor (1993), the concept 'institution' operates in a continuum, and in so doing does not indicate a clear category of things, i.e. it does not have a clear boundary. He uses the distinction between the service and constitutive paradigms of institutions to demonstrate this blurring of boundaries within this domain.

2.8.5. Defining an institution

Taylor (1993:121) begins by defining an institution in terms of a set of activities – which he refers to as a 'practice', of a group of people, that (the practice) becomes configured in a particular way, and then becomes constant. This practice is then assumed as a norm, and in so doing it plays a regulative role in defining not only what is acceptable and what is not; but it also begins to construct the roles and ensuing responsibilities of those who participate in this practice.

The institution in this sense both defines and limits the roles of its participants (Taylor, 1993: 121). By defining institutions in terms of a set of practices within an institution, Taylor (1993) takes MacIntyre's (1981), conceptualisation of 'practices' (described later in this chapter) one step further. MacIntyre (1981) takes care to point out that practices are distinctive from institutions and that they should not be confused with each other. Yet he is unable to explain why we constantly do confuse them. Even when we refer to epistemic practices we still refer to them within the context of an institution.

As Jaspers (1960:83) argues, the idea cannot live without the institution, "The university exists only to the extent that it is institutionalized. The idea becomes concrete in the institution." How do we subtend the epistemic practices of the idea of the university in its institutional form from the corruptive tendencies of the university as an institution?

Even to articulate this question in a coherent way is problematic. However, through his conceptualisation of how institutions are placed in society, Taylor (1993) makes it possible for us to reconcile the university as an institution with the idea of the university and its practices. Here is his interpretation of public institutions in more detail.

2.8.6. Ideal institutional types

Taylor (1993:120-133) provides an illuminating exposition of the foundation of the concept 'institution'. In so doing he attempts to contextualise the way public institutions are placed in society, and the meanings that are attributed to these institutions on the basis of these particular placements.

Taylor distinguishes between two ideal institutional types; these are service institutions and constitutive institutions. He locates these institutional types within two distinct paradigms. These are the service paradigm and the constitutive paradigm. In so doing he makes a conceptual distinction between what he refers to as service and constitutive institutions, within which each of the aforementioned paradigms are located (Taylor, 1993: 123-126).

2.8.6.1. Service Institutions

On the basis of this conceptualisation of an institution, he describes 'service institutions' in terms of the kinds of service/s they provide. In this sense they serve a purely instrumental function. The service that is provided is externally validated and is defined by those who benefit from and pay for this service. In so doing the roles of those who participate in this service are defined externally (Taylor, 1993:124-125).

A clear link can be drawn between Taylor's idea of the service dimensions of an institution which relies on external validation, and MacIntyre's (1981) notion of goods that are external to practices, and which are also dependent on external validation, which I will refer to later in this chapter.

Like MacIntyre's (1981) description of practices, providing a good service in this sense is external to the epistemic practices of the idea of the university. The goals of service institutions are thus external to the institutional type that the idea of the university portrays. The role and obligations of service institutions are to provide a good service, and in so doing they assume the instrumental principles of a service paradigm,

> Let us take service stations... Ask anybody in our society to specify their meaning; it will always be defined in utilitarian and instrumental terms. These institutions have a well-defined function, namely, to provide a certain service… This is the paradigm of what I shall call service institutions (Taylor, 1993: 122).

Service institutions service needs and interests which are formed independently of these institutions.

2.8.6.2. Constitutive institutions

Taylor's (1993) notion of constitutive institutions, on the other hand, differs from his notion of service institutions in that they are predicated upon a constitutive paradigm. In other words, to be part of a constitutive institution is to accept and participate in a particular practice, which unlike the service institution is not dependent on external validation. In so doing it is the very institution itself which constitutes (identity) meaning and validation to its participants.

To participate in the practices of a constitutive institution, is to adhere to a set of historically and internally established norms and standards that are formulated within the institution itself. It is this formalised notion of these constitutive practices that forms the basis for this institutional type. In so doing the constitutive paradigm constitutes the identity of those who participate in it. In other words, within the constitutive paradigm, roles are constructed by engaging in the practices that are inherent to such institutional types (Taylor, 1993:122-123).

Taylor uses the analogy of a family to illustrate his description of a constitutive institutional type further,

> Let us now take the family. It is something completely different. We are acutely conscious of this, precisely because our family is subject to rapid and sometimes bewildering changes, and some of us experience these as crises. The reason for this is that the different roles and norms connected with the family do not define external behaviour only, as is the case with service stations. As the years go by, the identity of each of the participants crystallizes in the relationship between husband and wife, between parents and children. These are exchanges that shape each of those who enter into them. It follows that to accept a certain norm of family life is to recognize a certain form of identity as valid. If I consent to be a father, according to a certain model of family life, I take on by that very token a certain definition of myself… I live out a role within a practice; I share with others the sense of what is to be done and what is to be avoided. Things can remain thus, without our having to formulate rules or give a name to the different virtues and vices inherent in that practice. We would still have defined, on

> the very strength of that practice, a certain vision of life, with its implicit norms and morals (1993:122).

This description of the extent to which an institutional type and its ensuing practices constitute the identity of those who participate in them, is very much like MacIntyre's (1981) description of how practices constitute those who participate in them. I will refer to these practices later in this chapter.

2.8.7. A university as a constitutive institutional type

In other words, within the context of the university, professors and lecturers live out the roles of researchers and teachers, as they engage in these constitutive epistemological practices. By engaging in the practice of research, the professor or lecturer lives out this role, going out into the field, and in so doing becomes a researcher.

A constitutive institutional type thus shapes the identity of its participants with respect to who they are and how they define their purposes and functions, that is, in terms of their needs and interests. In other words, these needs and interests are created by this very constitutive institution. When someone works at a university and engages in constitutive epistemological practices, this person becomes shaped by the needs and interests of this constitutive institutional type. His/her research area would, for example, shape what he/she reads, what kinds of skills and knowledge he/she needs in order to perform certain research practices competently. In so doing, such a person's identity becomes constituted/shaped/formed by this constitutive institutional type.

Even though Taylor (1993) distinguishes between these two institutional types in his respective descriptions, he asserts that some public institutions may assume one paradigm exclusively, as in the case of a petrol station, and other public institutions may be predicated on both these paradigms. A university assumes the latter paradigmatic description, when it inculcates students into constitutive epistemological practices, but it also receives fees for enabling students to engage in such practices. In such instances what is of significance is the extent to which one particular paradigm becomes dominant/ superseded by the other.

Taylor (1993) provides further clarity on his interpretation of institutions; and this elaboration is crucial for the way I intend to reinterpret the historical distinction between the idea of the university as a founding idea and its institutional context,

> With its implicit normativity, a practice can thus embody a moral standard or an ideal. … What emerges from this discussion is the ideal type of an institution as the formalization of a practice that will be the site of such a primary definition. The institution is not the point of application of a morality defined elsewhere; rather, it is the primary environment in which this morality gets elaborated; and as the first vehicle of this vision of life, it constitutes an important pole of identification for those who participate in it (Taylor, 1993: 123).

The implication of this perspective for the university context is that the epistemological community needs to be more proactive in ensuring that the epistemological domain – the university itself, remains the site of definition for the idea of the university. In other words, defining what its purposes are in terms of its constitutive epistemological functions and its service functions.

Jansen's (2004: 4) critique, which I refer to in Chapter Seven, of how the State is eroding the academic autonomy of South African universities is a good case in point. In order to save the identity of the university from being eroded by external stakeholders, it becomes necessary for universities to fight for their institutional autonomy.

Many interpretations of the idea of the university make a clear distinction between the university as a founding idea or concept and the university as an institution (Barnett, 1990; Jaspers, 1960). It is my contention that it is this distinction that has contributed to the current disillusionment with the value of universities in society. Many see the most significant purpose of the university in terms of the kinds of social, economic or political purposes it should serve.

Using this as their frame of reference, it is then argued that if a university cannot predicate itself upon any one or a combination of these purposes it serves a useless function. Others feel again that in order to save the university from decline the foundational idea must be separated from its institutional form. The first interpretation

sees the university solely in terms of its instrumental value; such values are defined by civil society. The second interpretation sees the epistemological dimension of the university as crucial and separates it from the university as a public institution.

Now according to Taylor (1993), and in contradistinction to MacIntyre (1981), (whom I refer to later in this chapter), once a practice takes on a normative dimension it becomes formalised, and in so doing, by this formalised character, it then inherits an institutional character. So far from the founding idea of the university and its attendant epistemic practices being conceptually distinct from its institutional context, these epistemological practices, values and functions, by virtue of their formalisation, actually constitute an institutional type.

This conception of the idea of the university is predicated on his (Taylor's) special interpretation of what constitutes an 'institution' as an ideal type. According to him, it is when practices in public institutions becomes formalised that they become institutional types. From there he goes on to argue, that these types of practices will determine a particular institutional type.

Practices whose primary site of elaboration is within the practice itself adhere to internal and established standards and construct the identities of their participants. They belong to a constitutive institutional type. A constitutive institutional type thus takes on the identity of an ideal institutional type by virtue of the formalised and normative nature of the practices that underpin it.

Service institutional types, on the other hand, are defined purely in terms of their instrumental functions, since these are the kinds of services that they are able to offer. The functions and values of these service institutional types are defined outside of this institutional type, and are therefore contingent on the needs of those who construct such functions. The service functions of these institutional types, cannot lay claim to being formalised because of their contingent nature, unlike the established nature of constitutive practices that underpin the constitutive institutional type.

Readings (1996) critique of the contemporary university is predicated on a concept of the university whose service functions supersede its epistemological functions. The

weakness of such an interpretation of the concept of the university emerges when the nature of these needs change, as they invariably do. Unlike the historically established and more formalised nature of its epistemologically constitutive functions, the service functions of an institution, such as a university are contingent by nature, as they are the products of a social dynamic.

Hence, concerns have arisen regarding the lack of both the internal and external legitimacy of the university in contemporary society since the demise of the nation-state and its relationship with public institutions like the university. It is because of its contingent nature that the nature of the service functions of a university cannot fulfil the task of being constitutive.

But then again, neither can the constitutive functions of a university supersede its service functions, because a university should not be an ivory tower. It is a social institution, and by virtue of this characteristic it has to embrace certain social functions as well.

Such an interpretation allows one to see the university as an epistemologically constitutive institutional type and as a service institutional type, rather than as mutually exclusive types locked in destructive tension. This also allows one to see the two as part of one coherent whole existing in a dialogical tension.

The word dialogical refers to communication. It also allows one to differentiate between the different functions of a university more clearly, and indicates how these functions impact on the multidimensional identity of the university. Such an interpretation allows more clarity for the idea of the university and its place and functions in society.

Taylor's interpretation of public institutions does this by interpreting two kinds of institutional types on the same continuum. The one he refers to as a constitutive institutional type and the other as a service institutional type. Such an interpretation of public institutions enables one to reinterpret the university as a public institution, in a manner that is distinctive to its historical interpretation. This I contend is more useful for the purposes of clarity and praxis.

The idea of the university is no longer just a separate abstract idea that is distinctive yet crucially embedded within the university as an institution. The idea of the university is now represented by one institutional continuum, upon which the epistemologically constitutive institutional type and its respective purposes and functions; as well as the service institutional type and its respective purposes and functions can be represented.

This coherent idea of the university also helps one to locate the various functions and purposes of a university in a more coherent way.

The service institutional type awards qualifications provides employment for various 'non-academic staff' such as electricians, gardeners, and suchlike. These individuals run a sophisticated administration that provides a particular service to the public who support it. It is this kind of service that can be judged externally, that is by those who support it.

But very importantly, this institutional type also serves political, social, cultural and economic functions which are formed by civil society, and which are susceptible to change: hence, its contingent nature.

On the other hand, universities are also constitutive institutional types in that within the constitutive paradigm, there is an implicit epistemic identity that shapes those who participate in this kind of epistemic practice. Engaging in such constitutive epistemic practices is to accept and to adhere to certain formalised epistemic standards and obligations, and to also assume certain attendant epistemic responsibilities that are defined by the academic community. These constitutive epistemic standards and obligations are defined within the university as an institution, and are thus internally validated.

By virtue of this historically formalised nature the epistemic principles that underpin such an institutional type and its epistemically constitutive practices, this institutional type is not contingent on the demands of the external stakeholders. The transformatory potential of such an interpretation lies in the balance that is held between these two institutional types.

According to Taylor, the one institutional type should not dominate the other, but they should keep each other in balance. For the context of the university, the transformatory potential of this interpretation of the university lies in the nature of the dialogical tension between these two institutional types. Ideally, the service institutional type of the university should not dominate its epistemologically constitutive partner. If this happens the kind of coherent contribution that the idea of the university as a whole can make to any country/nation will be limited.

This context will be elaborated on further in the chapter which describes how some historically Afrikaner universities in South Africa were used by the apartheid State to address political (service) functions. Ideally, universities should not be dominated by constitutive epistemological functions, since this puts them at risk of ignoring their service functions.

Such a context is described in the chapter which describes historically English-speaking universities in South Africa during the apartheid regime, and the extent to which these universities, according to some critics, remained largely oblivious to what was happening around them at social and political levels.

When any one of these institutional types becomes dominant, and erodes the other, then that university loses its value. Any transformatory concept of a university in a new dispensation in South Africa has to take note of this interpretation of the concept of a university and the attendant warnings.

2.8.8. Summarising key points from Taylor's (1993) theory of institutions

- The identity of public institutions is significantly influenced by how they are 'placed' in society.
- In any public institution there are two ideal institutional types, a service type and a constitutive institutional type, with different functions.
- These ideal institutional types operate on a continuum.
- Even though not all institutions need to adhere to both institutional types, in some institutions which are ideally predicated upon a combination of these institutional

> types, certain conditions can result with one of these functions repressing and superseding the other.

The university as an institution is ideally predicated upon a combination of these two institutional types, and runs the risk of its service function superseding and repressing its constitutive function. How is this possible? Even though in the context of a university this combination is essential, the constitutive function of a university is predicated upon the ideals of epistemic practices. These have the potential to be corrupted by the competitive, corporate or political goals of the service paradigm of the university as an institution.

The next section will focus on the kinds of practices that characterise the university as an institution, and the constitutive epistemological practices in particular.

MacIntyre's (1981) theory of practices provides us with a unique interpretation of the concept 'practice'. It is a deeper understanding of these practices that will also contribute to the more formal idea of the university, which will form the basis for an understanding of this concept that we can use to work towards transforming universities in South Africa.

2.9. The concept of a university with constitutive epistemic practices

Constitutive epistemological/epistemic practices form the core element of my Model Example of the concept of a university.

2.9.1. MacIntyre's theory of practices

MacIntyre (1981) makes a key distinction (embeddedness) between institutions and practices, in which he describes practices in a particular way. It is this key differentiation between a university as an institution, and a university as a set of distinctive practices that is at the very heart of the conceptual clarification of the concept of the university.

MacIntyre uses the word 'practice' in this sense, in a very specific way that is different from its everyday usage,

> By 'practice' I am going to mean any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are

> realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended. … Bricklaying is not a practice; architecture is (1981:187).

MacIntyre (1981), uses the concept 'practice' in a broad sense to describe a whole range of established activities. However, for the purposes of this thesis I will only focus on one class of practices, which I will call epistemic/epistemological practices. In so doing I will try and delineate an over-generalisation of what we mean when we refer to the concept of the university.

A practice, according to MacIntyre (1981), is characterised by a form of social activity with well-established norms and standards which are inherent to the participation in this activity. He distinguishes the following traits of a practice (MacIntyre, 1981: 187-191):

- Standards of excellence acquired and developed historically
- These standards are not without their inherent weaknesses
- Adherence to rules
- Attainment of goals
- The sharing of standards and purposes within the practice define the relationships with the participants

It is these standards of excellence, and their concomitant established norms that characterise the formal elements of a practice. These formal elements thus constitute those who participate in this practice, in a particular way.

To enter into a practice, is to:

- Accept the authority of those standards
- Accept one's own incompetence according to those standards
- To exclude any emotive analysis of judgements
- Subject personal attitudes, choices, preferences and tastes to these standards

These historically developed standards of excellence and the way these practices constitute those who participate in such practices, conform to the formalised nature of the constitutive institutional ideal and the way this institutional dimension constitutes its participants. An application of MacIntyre's theory of practices to the concept of the university provides a rationale for how this can be accomplished.

2.9.2. The constitutive nature of epistemic practices

There are many different kinds of practices of the kind that MacIntyre (1981) refers to, and they are distinguished by the aforementioned traits. Being inducted into the practice entails becoming committed to the standards and norms of this practice. Studying at a university is an example of this kind of practice. Within a university context, this special kind of practice can be called an epistemic practice.

By engaging in epistemic practices university students become constituted by it. Their needs and interests become constituted by these epistemic practices. Students complain that even though they like to have fun and be free, since they have become students their priorities have changed. They can no longer party seven days a week, or get up in the middle of the day; they now have to engage in epistemic practices such as, attending lectures, doing research at a library, studying, doing assignments, doing experiments, and suchlike.

Becoming a university student changes a person's life. Suddenly the first priority is to be a successful student. Being a successful student also entails holding on to particular epistemic values like, honesty (as opposed to plagiarism), objectivity, respect and tolerance for the views of others, respect for certain epistemic rules, having a work ethic, and more. By engaging in the epistemic practice of studying at a university the identity of a student is constituted in order for him/her to be a competent and successful graduate.

No one wants to be a partially competent student and only finish part of his/her course; all students want to be completely competent in the practice of studying. In this sense the student's identity is constituted with and by his engagement with constitutive epistemic practices, such as the relationship with one's study programme, lectures, peers, theories, and more.

This brings one to a further elaboration of the practice through the conceptual distinction MacIntyre (1981) made between, what he refers to as, goods external to the 'practice' and goods internal to the 'practice'. This distinction demonstrates the complexity and multidimensional nature of a practice.

2.9.2. Goods external to a practice

MacIntyre (1981) describes goods external to the practice as those products that are not an intrinsic part of the practice itself, but are only 'contingently attached to it'. In other words these kinds of goods do not define or set the standards for the practice itself. By their very nature these kinds of goods can be obtained in other contexts as well. They usually take the form of some material product like money, status and suchlike.

Student fees are a good example of goods that are external to the constitutive epistemological practices of a university, such as studying. MacIntyre thus describes this intrinsic nature of goods external in the following way: "External goods are therefore characteristically objects of competition in which there must be losers as well as winners" (1981:190).

But that not withstanding, within such a context, external goods by their very nature have the power to corrupt institutions, and practices that are housed by institutions (MacIntyre, 1981:194). And that is why the constitutive epistemological institutional type of a university has to be careful not to become corrupted by the pursuit of financial gain.

This becomes possible when epistemic values are superseded by financial concerns, this can happen when fewer academic staff are retained, and more students are enrolled, so that the university can make a profit. What then happens is that lecturers struggle to engage in both teaching and research, as they struggle to provide a quality education to their students.

In the end one or more of these constitutive epistemic practices are compromised. And that is why a distinction between these two kinds of 'goods' is crucial to any understanding of the concept of the university.

2.9.3. Goods internal to a practice

According to MacIntyre (1981:187-191), goods internal to a practice on the other hand, are internal in the sense that they:

- Can only be described in terms of the practice in question.
- Can only be identified and recognised by the experience of participating in the particular practice.
- Can be learnt systematically from a practitioner.
- Lack of relevant experience is equivalent to incompetence.
- Achievement of goods internal to the practice benefits the whole participating community.
- Can only be obtained by participating in the practice and through relationships with fellow practitioners.

MacIntyre (1981) is also careful to point out that practices and institutions are two distinct entities. According to him, practices typically need an institutional form to sustain them. Institutions and practices are thus inextricably linked to each other.

2.9.4. Goods internal to an epistemic practice

I will now use the analogy of a teaching student at a university to clarify these internal standards more explicitly. Goods internal to the practice of teaching are internal in the sense that they can only be described within the practice of teaching. Being a teacher on the other hand can only be conceptualised by engaging in the practice of being a teacher. No one is born with teaching skills, unless we are referring to simple ones like modelling, but more specialised skills like transferring specialised mathematical knowledge to young learners, or explaining very abstract mathematical concepts, or evaluating an essay, have to be acquired.

This is usually done through continued practice and through induction by more experienced teachers and lecturers. As long as the student teacher lacks experience and the relevant skills and knowledge, he/she is incompetent. The other key characteristic of goods internal to the practice is that the goal for procuring such goods can only be done

in the specific practice itself, and is always aimed at contributing to the progress of this practice, that is trying to achieve the standards of excellence that are endemic to this type of practice.

Within the context of being a student teacher delivering a successful lesson would be an example of a good internal to the practice of teaching. A successful lesson cannot be bought at a store, nor can it be packaged; it can only be procured within good teaching practices. Ideally, no-one should strive to be a good teacher in order to achieve external goods, such as money or political clout.

A practice like teaching is (should be) self-rewarding and it would be a sad or disillusioned teacher who understood being a teacher as a way of acquiring external goods.

2.9.5. Goods external to university practices

According to MacIntyre (1981) institutions deal with external goods, such as money and other resources, and they are 'structured' within the context of status and power; and this enables them to use this money and status as remuneration and incentives. But this is a necessary element of an institution, in order to maintain and sustain both itself and the practices it houses.

In the case of a university good students and good academics are drawn to universities that have a high status amongst other universities; but in order to keep these good academics they should be able to pay them competitive salaries. Epistemic practices also need certain resources available to be able to function at the optimal level.

The key point that MacIntyre (1981) makes is that despite this symbiotic relationship, institutions have the potential to corrupt practices. He locates this inherent potential within the ambits of the external goods that are linked to and are part of an institution.

This is an important point to note in any understanding of practices and the institutions that sustain them, and foregrounds the complexity of trying to understand a concept that is predicated upon such an epistemic context.

MacIntyre's (1981) interpretation of the concept 'practice' could be used in any context in which the practice as a form of specialised social activity forms the constituting identity for that context, and in which the practices are distinctive from the institution that houses them. This form of specialised 'practice' in other words, constitutes the identity of a particular context, and constitutes meaning for those involved in the very practice itself.

The question that now surfaces is: What is the nature of the 'practice', as espoused by MacIntyre (1981) that justifies it to become one of the core concepts of a university, and which will also allow an understanding of a university which permits it to differentiate itself from other social institutions?

The university is an epistemologically constitutive institutional type that is characterised by housing a specific set of constitutive epistemic practices. The university in its institutional form provides a 'home' for these constitutive epistemic practices. These constitutive epistemic practices must not be conflated with the material elements of the university as an institution. The kinds of practices that are characteristic of the university as an institution are constitutive epistemic practices that are sustained and maintained by an epistemic community.

These epistemic practices are constituted by and are also maintained and sustained by a set of internal standards of epistemic excellence, and in so doing they constitute the formal elements of the concept of the university, as they go beyond being just recognitors to a standards-generating dimension.

They are thus able to guide conduct. These constitutive epistemic practices also form the epistemologically constitutive functions of the epistemologically constitutive institutional ideal of a university as a public institution.

2.9.6. Bringing Taylor (1993) and MacIntyre (1981) together

In order to get a better understanding of the corruptive tendencies of the service functions of a university as an institution, it now becomes necessary to draw a parallel between

MacIntyre's (1981) goods that are internal to and external to practices. The following account does two things:

- It tries to indicate the kinds of conditions that can lead to the tendency of service functions to corrupt constitutive practices;
- And, in doing so it also shows how such institutions can provide a richer understanding of the context in which they can corrupt practices.

In order to understand the context in which institutions can corrupt practices, it becomes necessary to take MacIntyre's (1981) description of institutions further. MacIntyre (1981) refers to institutions per se. In the case of a university this can become a cause for concern. How does one prevent or try and overcome these tendencies? After all, as MacIntyre (1981) points out, practices and institutions are mutually dependent. Within Taylor's (1993) interpretation of institutional types, the formalised nature of MacIntyre's (1981) practices, form the constitutive institutional type.

Within the context of the university, it would be the formalised nature of constitutive epistemic practices that form the epistemologically constitutive institutional ideal of a university. These stand in a dialogical tension with the service institutional ideal of a university. Together these two institutional ideals and their respective functions represent the university as a special kind of public institution.

Taylor's (1993) distinction between the service function and the constitutive function of an institution enables a more optimistic account of the link between practices and institutions, and shows how the corruptive tendency of institutions can be held at bay.

MacIntyre's (1981) distinction between goods internal to and goods external to these practices provides a deeper insight into how we might be able to identity the incursion of the service functions on the constitutive functions.

Within this context goods internal to the practice are the kinds of goods that can only be achieved by participating in the practice itself. According to the norms and standards that

govern a particular practice, goods internal to the practice are thus constitutive of the practice itself. Without engaging in these practices these goods cannot be procured.

External goods however are only contingently attached to the practice; they can be procured through other means, other than that particular practice. It is in this sense that we refer to such goods as being external to the practice, because these kinds of goods serve an instrumental function, and are therefore necessarily part of the service function of an institution such as a university.

These kinds of goods are not part of the constitutive practices of a university. Goods internal to the practice however, are the kinds of goods that are characteristic of the constitutive function of the university in that these kinds of goods are constitutive of a practice itself. In the case of the university, goods internal to the practice would be the kinds of epistemic goods that are part of the epistemic practices that constitute the university. The corruptive tendencies of the service function of a university have their roots in the procurement of goods external to the epistemic practices that constitute the 'concept of the university' as an institutional ideal.

Trying to procure funding for research is a good example of such a situation. The pursuit of truth through scholarly research is one of the ideals of the idea of the university, and is one of the constitutive practices of a university, but engaging in research, especially if it is a large-scale project is very expensive. This usually means that researchers have to source external funding. In many cases the sponsors are the industries from the private sector. In order to get the maximum amount, a researcher will try and lure such a sponsor with promises of market-related research.

In the case of autocratic States, research that is well-disposed to the policies and ideology of the government will ensure government support and funding. In this sense the purely epistemic pursuit of research with purely epistemic imperatives is compromised for what will more profitable in the long run. In this way, the need and sometimes the greed for more money or other material resources will impact on and erode the epistemic ideal of the university, and its search for truth.

The way out of this dilemma is to ensure that the service functions of an institution such as a university do not overwhelm the constitutive functions of an institution. It is the predilection towards the corruptive tendencies of the service paradigm which are usually deeply influenced by the greedy and needy tendencies that come with goods external to the practices of the university. As an institution, one has to be constantly vigilant if one wants to retain the ideal of the university in its entirety.

It is difficult to explain the tendency of the political functions of a progressive democracy within the context of corruption. I believe in our current political dispensation, but the point that I want to make is that if the epistemologically constitutive functions of our universities are superseded by our political responsibilities, which are just and fair ones (equity, equality, and suchlike), the possibility exists that the constitutive functions and practices of our universities in this dispensation will be eroded and diminished to a point where such institutions will not be able to make the necessary contributions.

The idea is not to dismiss the one in favour of the other, but to maintain a healthy tension between the two.

The next core element provides insight into the formalised nature and social dimensions of epistemic practices as they are housed within a university, and it also demonstrates the kind of contributions that these constitutive epistemic practices can make to our society.

2.10. Constitutive epistemic practices as constitutive forms of inquiry

This element constitutes another core element of my Model Example of a concept of a university. This element is central to the concept of a university in terms of characterising the epistemic authority of an epistemic community and the kinds of knowledge that characterise a university. It is also based on a key principle that both Von Humboldt and Jaspers argue is crucial to any democratic (as opposed to repressive) society (discussed in Chapter Three).

Epistemologically constitutive forms of inquiry are predicated on the principle of provisional truths, and the need to submit any claim (truth/knowledge proposition) to well-established criteria and procedures.

2.10.1. Haack's (1998) theory of inquiry

In order to illuminate the distinctive character of the kinds of constitutive epistemic practices that should constitute the concept of a university I will make use of Haack's (1998) theory of inquiry. Haack's (1998) contribution to the construction of my Model Example of the concept of a university in terms of the constitutive epistemic practices is her description of academic practices as forms of inquiry; this would include the social dimensions of these forms of inquiry. In her description of practices as forms of inquiry she makes a conceptual distinction between *warrant* and *acceptance* (Haack, 1998). Her distinction between *warrant* and *acceptance*, takes the following form,

> Warrant is a normative notion; the warrant-status of a proposition is a matter of how good or bad the evidence with respect to that proposition is. Acceptance is a descriptive notion; the acceptance status of a proposition is a matter of standing of the claim in the eyes of the scientific community or relevant sub-community: rejected as definitely false; regarded as a possible that may be worthy of further investigation; as a reasonable candidate among several rivals; as probable but not yet acceptable as definitely true; as established unless and until something unexpected turns up ; and so on. Ideally, the acceptance-status of a claim will vary concomitantly with its warrant-status. … And here is as good a place as any to mention how, besides combining cooperation with competition, science combines division of labour with overlap of competencies sufficient to permit justified mutual confidence, and the institutionalized authority of well-warranted results with institutionalized critical scrutiny (Haack, 1998:108).

The kinds of inquiry endemic to academic practices, namely, granting warrant status to propositions, is the institutionalisation of particular epistemic practices according to particular standards of epistemic excellence, which are determined by a particular community of epistemic specialists, according to certain determined epistemic principles and procedures.

This entire practice of granting warrant status is a meticulous and epistemologically distinctive one. This practice characterises the kinds of practices that are established and maintained at a university. It is this reliance on warrant that provides knowledge with a

special claim to epistemic authority, and which provide constitutive epistemic practices and functions with a distinctive quality and authority.

2.10.2. The social dimensions of epistemic inquiry

Granting 'warrant' is a very complex practice that requires a particular context, namely, an epistemic context, which is characterised by certain epistemic standards and values, which have been historically established and maintained by an epistemic community. It is this epistemic community that forms the social dimensions of inquiry, and which make it peculiar to MacIntyre's (1981) conceptualisation of the practice, in which his interpretation of the practice is predicated upon what he refers to as , '…any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity…(MacIntyre, 1981: 187).

The social dimensions of inquiry that Haack (1998) describes, which are endemic to practices that are constitutive of a concept of a university, is the way that the different members of the epistemic community engage in not only the construction of knowledge, but also the epistemic procedures of warrant that this community is involved in. She describes it thus,

> the favoured phrase is that scientific knowledge is "socially constructed"; but this exploits an ambiguity. In one sense, it is true that scientific knowledge is socially constructed. Science has been the work of many persons, within and across generations; the scientific knowledge we now possess has been achieved, in part, through institutionalized mutual checking and criticism.
>
> But what is at issue is a much more radical interpretation; that scientific knowledge is nothing more than the product of processes of social negotiation. This is doubly false. First, the processes through which scientific knowledge is achieved are not *merely* a matter of social negotiation; they are processes of seeking out, checking, and assessing the weight of *evidence*. Second, not everything that has thus far survived those processes is knowledge; what survives those processes is what *counts* as knowledge, what is *accepted* as knowledge – but not all of it *is*, necessarily, knowledge. Some may, despite surviving those processes, not be warranted; some may turn out to be false (Haack, 1998: 112).

Haack's description of this practice of granting warrant status which is characterised by an epistemological community, is reminiscent of Jasper's (1960) idea of scientific knowledge.

2.10.3. Current dilemmas regarding 'acceptance' and 'warrant' of university knowledge

It is this specialised constitutive epistemic practice of enquiry which clashes violently with contemporary notions of what constitutes 'knowledge'. If one were to take contemporary descriptions of what constitutes valid and valuable knowledge, it would seem as if the acceptance status of knowledge has superseded the warrant status of knowledge in a precarious way in contemporary societies.

The recognition and acceptance of what constitutes university knowledge has now moved from the university to the public sphere. There is thus cause for legitimate concern regarding the extent to which the market is determining which knowledge is more valuable than others. The pressure that universities are currently under is the product of the extent to which, not the university community but the broader community, is determining the descriptive notion of acceptance, without warrant, to knowledge.

In other words, it is not the epistemic practice of granting warrant-status to knowledge that is providing it with epistemic authority, but that which is publicly declared as valuable/useful, which is determining acceptance. Bereft of this key relationship (warrant) with knowledge propositions, the very concept of the university and the idea that is underpinned by it, as characterised by a set of unique constitutive epistemic practices is lost.

This blurring becomes very evident: in Chapter Four, where I describe the kinds of concerns being raised about the erosion of the core concept of the university in America and Germany, as the market authority supersedes that of the academic/epistemic community; and in Chapter Five, where I show how universities in Apartheid South Africa came to be based on epistemological practices that were limited to a repressive, political ideology.

In both the aforementioned contexts acceptance, that is market and political might, provided the acceptance status of knowledge, and in so doing repressed and endangered the very practice that epitomises the concept of the university.

The aforementioned context epitomises the social forms of inquiry that Haack is very wary of, and which she cautions us against. In such a context scientific knowledge is the outcome of public (economic and political) consensus. And what is missing from this context is the practice of '…seeking out, checking, and assessing the weight of *evidence* ' (Haack, 1998:112).

2.10.4. The nature of 'warrant' as a constitutive epistemic practice

Haack's (1998) description of the social forms of inquiry is a specialised epistemic activity that is characterised by the constellation of epistemic specialists whose sole purpose is to strive for epistemological excellence. This is how Haack describes this specialised activity,

> …also worth making explicit, is the thought that science is not only cooperative but also competitive – in virtue of competition between partisans of rival approaches or theories, and of competition between rival individuals or research teams hoping to be the first to solve this or that problem. And here is as good a place as any to mention how, besides combining cooperation with competition, science combines division of labour with overlap of competencies sufficient to permit justified and mutual confidence, and the institutionalized authority of well-warranted results with institutionalized critical scrutiny (1998: 108).

Therefore, when examining any concept of a university one has to be able to carefully discern the distinction between the kind of acceptance status that is determined by the non-epistemic community, and those that are characterised by the 'warrant status' of the scientific community.

It is this regulatory and distinctive nature of 'warrant' that characterises constitutive epistemic practices that contribute towards the constitutive nature of the formal element of the concept of the university. Warrant and acceptance and provisionally warranted

truths provide the epistemological basis for the range of epistemic practices, such as, inter alia, research, teaching and learning at a university.

The next section explicates this epistemological regulatory principle in more detail.

2.9.5. Epistemic inquiry as a constitutive epistemic practice

What trying to achieve warrant status means, is that one has to ensure that the evidence that supports a particular knowledge claim is good enough according to the internal standards of epistemic excellence that are sustained and maintained by an epistemic community. Processes of finding well-supported evidence and making certain knowledge claims and achieving 'warrant status' from a group of experts (both in terms of experience and in terms of scholarship) within an epistemic community, are what characterises the practices of inquiry which are distinctive of a university. All other epistemic practices that are definitive of a university, such as, inter alia, teaching and learning, depend on the veracity of warranted claims.

No student wants to learn lies; and the legitimacy of an academic professional at a university depends on, inter alia, the warrant status of the knowledge claims he/she disseminates.

2.9.6. Epistemic inquiry as internal or external goods to constitutive epistemic practices

It is important to note that these epistemic practices remain distinctive from MacIntyre's (1981) notion of external goods, as they are not dependent on extrinsic rewards like money. Although, money is needed in order to be able to provide good evidence, it is not money itself that constitutes good evidence. It is this very practice of providing good evidence, and achieving warrant status for knowledge claims that constitute this practice. It is the very 'practice' (the doing of what it is) of constituting and defining these knowledge claims according to the established norms and rules of an epistemic community that constitute such a 'practice'.

It is also the kind of knowledge claims which are granted warrant status that are characteristic of 'goods internal' to the practice, in that these goods are subject to certain

epistemic values, norms and standards that are endemic to the epistemic community and practices they develop and engender.

The distinction between epistemic principles, aims and values that underpin the practice of warrant, and that of social acceptance via business or political communities is simply one of contingency. The principles, aims and values that underpin the practice of granting warrant status have been historically established, and whilst certain techniques endemic to these practices might improve, the principles remain largely stable.

This status quo however, differs from the principles, aims and values that motivate/underpin a particular economic context (Fordism, Communism, Neo-liberalism) or what political system reigns at the time in question.

This very practice of granting 'warrant' status to knowledge is made possible by the epistemic community that constitutes the university, and which constitutes the social dimensions of the practice, as expounded by MacIntyre (1981). Nichols describes the complexity and cooperative nature of this social dimension very aptly,

> Finally, Pelikan judges Newman's "circle of the sciences" to be the third principle for the university in the chapter titled "The Mansion-House of the Goodly Family of the Sciences" (Pelikan, 1992, pp.57-67). Those expressions, however, are too abstract to adequately convey his point. What he really is talking about is community among *people*: "In the graduate context and perhaps even more in the undergraduate context, the community of teachers and students depends for its integrity also upon the community of teachers with one another" (60). The label "university" not only contains the reference to "all knowledge or all sciences," but it also connotes the coming together of this "all" in a *uni*-versity (2004: 267).

Barnett extrapolates the same theme in the following way,

> From where, then, does its 'universal validity' derive? Jaspers was clear that 'consensus is the mark of universal validity'. What counts as truth is therefore the present point in a dialogue intended to reach a consensus (1990: 21).

The practice of granting provisional warrant provides the constitutive identity of the university, without which the university becomes just another service institution like

many other social institutions. The goods that are produced by service institutions have an extrinsic marketable value, and are only useful insofar as they demonstrate their usefulness. It is these very processes of warrant and acceptance that are the defining practices of a university, and which occur in a university within a scientific community.

So the university is then not the place for the dissemination and production of knowledge alone. The university was never, even historically, recognised as the sole site of knowledge production. What has always been one of the distinguishing features of the university is the epistemic process of the 'warrant' and 'acceptance' of knowledge.

Yet to argue that these processes alone are the distinguishing features of the practices that constitute a concept of the university would be a mistake. Without the constitutive and regulatory dimensions of epistemic practices, as defined by the standards of epistemic excellence and the social dimensions of granting provisional warrant to these practices, key constitutive features of the idea of the university, such as research, academics and scholars, would merely have recognitor status as the material elements of the concept of a university.

2.9.7. Epistemic inquiry as a formal element in the concept of the university

The aforementioned regulatory epistemic practices and standards of excellence enable a richer formal element in the concept of a university that informs its material elements in a particular, epistemic way. Any reference to the concept of a university based on its material elements that are not underpinned by the aforementioned formal elements is a weak and inadequate conceptualisation of a university; and in so doing remains significant in my examination of the concept of the university in South Africa today.

Now having established the multidimensional nature of the kind of concept a university is, and having described the kinds of practices that are endemic to a university, the next section explains another distinctive feature of a university, and that is the kind of education that makes this institution unique and invaluable.

2.10. A concept of the university as higher education

This is the final core/essential element of my Model Example of the concept of a university. This core element should not be taken for granted, as it distinguishes a university education from other kinds of education, and is in so doing constitutive of the concept of a university.

2.10.1. Exploring the concept of 'higher'

Any reference to a university is also at the same time a reference to a distinctive type of institution. What then is this distinctive feature/s that distinguishes a university from any other institution, such as a school, a college, a court of law? Central to any understanding of the concept of a university is the idea of a 'higher education', which gives the university its distinctive character. The following comment sums this description up well,

> The elemental presupposition of a university is the concept of Higher Education (Fehl, 1962: 18).

What Fehl (1962) foregrounds is the concept of a university, in contradistinction to any other institution, that it is dependent upon the concept of 'higher education'. So in order for an institution to warrant the status of a university it has to have and be predicated upon a concept of 'higher education'. In the light of this qualification, when we speak of the 'essence' or 'whatness' of the concept of a university we are actually referring to the conceptual construct of something, which is 'higher education'. The concept of 'higher' within 'higher education' therefore assumes a pivotal role in deriving a clear understanding of 'higher education' as a concept, and in so doing forms one of the core elements of my Model Example of the concept of the university.

The common understanding of 'higher' is usually predicated upon linear dimensions, such as increasing levels of something which is beyond the merely elementary. So it is often taken for granted that by 'higher education' we refer to a type of education that is more advanced than that which is imparted at elementary and secondary school.

2.10.2. 'Higher education' as a formal element of the concept of a university

Barnett (1990) provides a very useful elucidation of what he argues explicates the distinctiveness of Higher Education. This clarification of the concept of higher education is imperative to the clarification of the concept of the university. It is imperative because it contributes to Kovesi's (1967) description of the formal element of a concept, and my application of this description to the concept of the university, in a very specific way.

This contribution is affirmed through the specific criteria that Barnett (1990) identifies. It is this particular contribution to the concept of the university that makes Barnett's (1990) definition of 'higher' within higher education very valuable to the conceptual clarification of the concept of a university. I use this as a core concept in my Model Example of the concept of a university.

Such criteria not only inform the material elements of the concept of a university, such as students, curricula, lectures, and so forth , in a richer way, but they also increase the scope of applicability of the concept of the university'. This makes it possible to describe a specific kind of education and its manner of conduct.

What follows next is his account of some of the criteria that contribute to the distinctiveness of higher education.

2.10.3. Higher education is special

For Barnett (1990), it is a mistake to conceptualise a university in terms of the type of education which is more advanced than secondary schooling. For him there is a clear distinction between the type of education one receives at a school and the type of 'higher education' that one receives at a university. Higher education, he argues, is different because of certain criteria and not merely because it follows secondary schooling.

He identifies these criteria in terms of the following categories: a specific kind of development of the student; certain practices that lead to this kind of development; particular symbolic traditions; certain values and aims; and some crucial social factors. What follows is a brief summary of each of these categories, to elucidate the

distinctiveness of this specific kind of institution and the kind of education it engages with.

2.10.4. The maturity of students

A key issue for Barnett (1990) is that the kind of student admitted into higher education is one who is an adult already, and unlike schooling which is compulsory, admission to higher education is based on choice, and is in this respect completely voluntary. This often-overlooked criterion according to Barnett (1990) has an impact on the kinds of expectations that are required of students pursuing/engaging in higher education.

It is this level of maturity that is required for the kinds of practices that Barnett (1990) goes on to describe below.

According to Barnett (1990), Higher Education is not about providing a student with 'more' of what he/she received before; but it is rather concerned with the supplementary processes that take place in higher education. This should enable the student to reach a particular level of development. In so doing higher education does not extend the school child/pupil in terms of what he has acquired through schooling but constitutes a particular adult who is able to interpret and evaluate the world in a particular way and at a particular level.

2.10.5. Higher education as a distinct set of practices

In order to reach this level of development the student has to engage in a particular set of practices which higher education endorses, and these are according to him,

1. A deep understanding, by the student, of some knowledge claims.
2. A radical critique, by the same student, of those knowledge claims.
3. A developing competence to conduct that critique in the company of others.
4. The student's involvement in determining the shape and direction of that critique (i.e. some form of independent inquiry).
5. The student's self-reflection, with the student developing the capacity critically to evaluate his or her own achievements, knowledge claims and performance.

6. The opportunity for the student to engage in that inquiry in a process of open dialogue and cooperation (freed from unnecessary direction; Barnett, 1990: 203).

He conceptualises these as the necessary conditions for any conceptualisation of the idea of the university, and for such an institution to warrant such a description it has to constitute/adhere to these criteria (Barnett, 1990: 203).

These criteria are significant in the sense that they not only show the relationship between independent inquiry and the student as inquirer, but they also illustrate what Haack (1998) refers to as the social dimension of epistemic practices. This social dimension is illustrated in his (Barnett, 1990) description of the student engaging in independent inquiry with an epistemic community of which the student is also part, in an open and consensual fashion.

2.10.6. Higher education has a history

Barnett (1990) remains cognisant of the history of the idea of the university and acknowledges the influence of the medieval conception of the university on the modern university as we know it today. He argues that despite the way that the modern university has evolved historically, there is still a significant degree of consensus over what this idea of the university entails/represents. This essence he claims is contained in the very language that is characteristic of the university. Words such as "student, lecture, tutorial, seminar, degree (bachelor, Masters, doctoral), course, interdisciplinary, academic freedom, research and academic community, are not merely limited to functions of denotation, but serve as symbols of the special nature and history of the university, he argues (Barnett, 1990: 6).

Referring to Kovesi's (1967) distinction between the material and the formal elements of a concept, it is my contention that Barnett (1990) characterises the concept of a university in terms of its material elements here. The point that he is making here is that the concept of 'higher education' has changed from its historical identity in such profound ways, that what remains is just a commonality in the use (not the meaning) of certain terms.

2.10.7. The general ideas, values, aims and ideas of a university

Barnett (1990) claims that a university is very distinctive by virtue of the kinds of epistemic ideas, values, aims and ideas that it upholds. According to him, the aforementioned also provide the university with its conceptual core, which he describes as follows,

> Simply as it stands, though, this list of ideas reminds us that Higher Education has been regarded as an institution with a particular set of linked and intrinsic aims, however indefinite and ill-defined they may be. Higher Education is not normally in the business of running casinos or selling soap-flakes. It has its own *raison d'etre* (Barnett, 1990:8-9).

In his explication of the distinctive nature of 'higher' within higher education and the epistemic ideas, aims and values that underpin this concept, he tries to provide a rationale for what makes the university distinctive.

2.10.8. Higher education and society

According to Barnett (1990), a university has a substantive and complex relationship with society. In contemporary society the function of universities is to produce particular cultural and economic citizens. But apart from that function he also adds that a university has another relationship with society.

On the one hand a university has a philosophical function towards society in that it is engaged in the practice of evaluating knowledge and judging what forms of knowledge are legitimate and which cannot be accepted as knowledge. The process that he is referring to here is the epistemic practice of granting warrant and acceptance to knowledge claims to which Haack (1998) refers.

Such functions conform to the epistemologically constitutive institutional ideal of the concept of the university and its manifestations thereof.

It is as a result of this practice that he argues that ideas predicated on witchcraft and astrology do not have a significant currency in our society today, and why some disciplines are at pains to prove their value. On the other hand he also argues that a

university also has a sociological function towards society, and that is to fulfil the task of protecting and developing the kinds of knowledge that such a society requires. This function conforms to the service functions of a university.

2.10.9. Higher education as a formal element in the concept of the university

It is the adherence to these criteria, functions and norms that Barnett (1990) conceptualises as the special and distinctive nature of 'higher' within a university. Such a conceptualisation is what constitutes the formal element of the idea of the university, and which provides the material elements that he refers to with a regulatory ideal.

Therefore when we speak about an academic within a university, we are not just referring to a recognitor, but to a particular epistemic role player within the university that is shaped and constituted by the distinctiveness of this type of public institution. This is what he argues is at the conceptual core of the university. It is this conceptual core, he argues, that we need to focus on if we want to save the university from its untimely demise (Barnett, 1990:17).

2.11. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to construct a Model Example of the concept of a university. This has entailed selecting the core elements that would constitute a set of 'essential elements' to form the conceptual core of my Model Example of the concept of a university. This Model Example of the concept of a university should enable me to fulfil the main aim of this thesis which is to examine the concept of a university in a Post-Apartheid South Africa.

Such a context thus necessitates that the concept that is finally constructed is one that is consistent and clear, one which is epistemologically sound, but which is also able to reflect the key function of demonstrating the extent to which such a concept can be implemented. Such a concept would have to possess a significant scope of application. A conceptual function is necessary in the South African context, as South Africa is on the threshold of a new socio-political dispensation, which requires significant change initiatives in all its key institutions.

The university is one such institution, and the best way to examine and evaluate the context of the change in its universities is to examine the way the concept of a university has been conceptualised in this country at the level of policy, and the efficacy of transformatory initiatives in universities based on these policies.

The selection of these core elements was thus drawn from an epistemological context which took into account the social dimensions of the concept and its subsequent evolutionary nature. It also had to take into account the key function of its usefulness (scope of application), and the necessity for conceptual clarity that would contribute to a deeper understanding of this contentious concept.

In addition to these conceptual features, these core elements also had to take into account some of the controversies that currently underpin the use of this concept.

2.11.1. The formal and material elements of a concept as the first core element of my Model Example

In order to work towards addressing the aims of this chapter, I selected a theory of concepts that differentiates between the material and formal elements of a concept. Such a theory enables the clarification of two key functions of a concept which are its functions as a recognitor, and its deeper function which recognises the need for a concept to also be able to contribute to a deeper understanding as well as contribute towards the praxis, i.e. guiding conduct.

Such a distinction facilitates the reconciliation of deep epistemological understanding with the more practical impetus. This theory thus lays the foundation for the other four elements that follow.

2.11.2. The concept of a university as an institution which is predicated upon a constitutive epistemological institutional ideal and a service institutional ideal

The evolutionary dimensions of a concept that led me to an interrogation regarding the key area of change within the evolutionary cycle of the concept of the university, is also a

dimension which lies at the heart of the current discontent with this key institution in contemporary society. This dimension then led me to another distinction which lies at the heart of the concept of the university. This is its institutional identity and its core functions and the relationship and tensions between these two key traits.

For this distinction I referred to Taylor's (1993) theory of concepts and applied that theory to the concept of the university. The outcome of this exercise was to come up with a core element that encapsulated the concept of a university on an epistemological continuum that is predicated on two institutional ideals.

These are the constitutive institutional ideal – which is characterised by the constitutive epistemological functions and practices of the concept of the university and the service institutional ideal of the university which is predicated on the complex social relations and obligations that the university has with society.

This service institutional ideal is characterised by the socio-political functions of the university. These two institutional ideals and their respective practices and functions operate in a dialogical tension with each other. Whilst the service functions of the university change over time, the formalised, and constitutive, constitutive epistemological functions of the university remain largely stable.

Therefore even though these two institutional ideals remain in a dialogical tension with each other, it is the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of a university that have the potential to be constitutive. This distinction facilitates an understanding of the concept of the university that encapsulates both its contingent nature as well as its foundational one, and enables a clearer understanding of this concept in a constantly changing global society.

2.11.3. The concept of a university as a set of constitutive epistemic/epistemological practices

In order to elaborate on these constitutive epistemological practices further and to illustrate how these practices can be corrupted by the service dimensions of the university, at the level of praxis, I refer to MacIntyre's (1981) theory of practices. By

applying his theory of practices to the concept of the university, I demonstrate the formalised nature of the practices that are constitutive of the university.

Such a description subscribes to my application of Kovesi's (1967) theory of concepts, which articulates a function of concepts based on internally established principles of excellence and which take on the function of shaping constitutive conduct.

2.11.4. The concept of the university as an epistemologically constitutive form of inquiry

I then apply Haack's (1998) theory of inquiry to demonstrate the epistemic authority of constitutive epistemic practices. Such a distinction also cautions us against the dangers of taking this authority for granted and conflating it with public acquiescence.

2.11.5. The concept of the university as (a distinctive kind of) higher education

Having selected the aforementioned core elements, I refer to Barnett's (1990) theory of higher education to demonstrate the necessity to recognise the distinctiveness and uniqueness of the kind of education as epitomised by the university.

These five core/essential elements will now form my Model Example of the concept of a university.

For any meaningful understanding of the idea of the university, it is necessary to distinguish between the university as an institution and the practices that are constitutive of such an institution. These practices are characterised by an idea of higher education, in which higher education refers to a set of epistemic practices that lead to the development of the individual to a higher level.

Ideally, the university as an institution is predicated upon two ideal institutional types and functions. These functions operate on a continuum, which are situated within a service and an epistemologically constitutive paradigm. The epistemic practices that are endemic to the concept of a university are fulfilled by the constitutive epistemological paradigm of the university as an institution.

The service functions of the university as an institution enable the sustenance and maintenance of the constitutive practices of the university; and they also fulfil the socio-political functions of the university. This is facilitated through, inter alia, the resources, such as money and the structures of power and status that are endemic of the kinds of external goods that the service function of a university is able to produce.

It is this predilection that makes the service functions of the service institutional type dangerous. The epistemologically constitutive function of the university always runs the risk of being corrupted by the service functions of the university. It is therefore necessary to be constantly vigilant to ensure that the service institutional type and its ensuing functions do not suppress the epistemologically constitutive institutional type of a university.

One of the ways of addressing this problem is to ensue that the constitutive epistemic forms of inquiry, as characterised by the practices of 'warrant' are not allowed to be repressed or eroded.

This account attests to my original assessment of the idea of the university as a multi-layered complex concept.

2.11.6. Questions to explore in the next chapter

In the light of the aforementioned conceptual context, the following questions emerge:

- To what extent can we derive more clarity on the idea of the university as it has evolved historically?
- To what extent has the history of the idea of the university impacted on the idea of the university as we understand it today?
- To what extent can my Model Example of a concept of a university, either as a whole or in terms of some of its core elements, enable an interpretation of this historical idea that will be illuminating for the future of universities in a democratic South Africa?

The next chapter provides an evaluative summary of the historical trajectory of the concept of the university as we understand it today. In so doing it attempts to address the above questions.

PART TWO

CHAPTER THREE

THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY AS IT HAS EVOLVED HISTORICALLY

3.1. The previous chapter

In the previous chapter I set out to clarify the core concept of the idea of the university. Using a theory of concepts, a theory of practices, a theory of inquiry, a theory of higher education and a theory of public institutions; I was able to distinguish a complex and multi-layered conceptualisation of the concept of the idea of the university. The idea of the university according to this interpretation is characterised by the distinction between two ideal institutional types: a service institutional type and a constitutive institutional type.

The service institutional type provides the constitutive institutional type with, inter alia, the kinds of material resources that it needs to sustain itself; this also serves its more socio-political functions. The epistemological constitutive institutional type is based on a regulative idea. This regulative idea is based on the idea of a particular type of educational experience that is of such a nature that it is distinctly different from all other kinds of education.

This epistemological constitutive institutional type is characterised by constitutive epistemic practices and functions that are predicated on the systematic search for provisionally warranted truth claims. This epistemological constitutive institutional type and its attendant constitutive epistemic practices are sustained by their own internal standards of epistemic excellence that are facilitated through the social dimensions of these constitutive epistemic practices.

These epistemic standards of excellence which have been developed over the years provide the constitutive idea of the university with an epistemic authority, and in this way

form the core concept of the idea of the university. The established and formalised nature of these epistemic practices situates these constitutive practices within the constitutive institutional type of the university. These epistemic conditions and standards of excellence also characterise the formal elements of the idea of the university as a concept. Any practices, functions and components of the university which are not underpinned by this constitutive epistemic ideal and the required standards of excellence form the material elements of the university as an institution.

It is also important to note that the constitutive institutional type of the university and its ensuing practices are always in danger of being eroded and thus corrupted by the service functions of the university. It is the competitive nature of the goods which are external to the epistemologically constitutive practices of the idea of the university, such as money and status, and any over-zealous or repressive socio-political goals which make it a threat to the goods which are internal to the constitutive epistemic practices and functions of the epistemologically constitutive institutional type of the university.

Central to any understanding of the concept of the university, are this multi-layered distinctions and the extent to which the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the university are in danger of being eroded and thus corrupted by the service functions of the university.

3.2. The aim of this chapter

The relationship between the university and the society that supports it has a valuable history, which should not be ignored. Here is an insightful comment regarding this view,

> A look at the history of the university helps us to understand how, in each era, it has responded to the society that supports it (Fallis, 2007: 8).

Such a perspective forms the vantage point of this chapter. In this chapter I explore the extent to which the more established and formalised nature of the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the concept of the university, as we know it today, have evolved, and the extent to which the product of such an evolution can impact/influence current concepts of the university in South Africa today.

In so doing, this chapter also attempts to demonstrate the historical relationship between the epistemologically constitutive functions and service functions, specifically the socio-political service functions of the concept of the university. This relationship is significant in the South African context because South Africa is precariously situated at the interface of a past whose repressive political goals consumed its social institutions like universities; and a contemporary dispensation which attempts to use its social institutions such as universities to realise more socially respectable democratic goals.

In order to accomplish this task, I provide a summary of the contributions of three seminal contributors to the concept of the university; these are Cardinal Newman; Wilhelm Von Humboldt and Karl Jaspers. In this summary I examine the way they conceived university and its constitutive practices and functions, on the continuum of the constitutive epistemological functions and service (political) functions of the concept of the university as an institutional ideal. In order to fulfil this task I rely on my conceptual framework in which I apply Taylor's theory of institutions to this context.

I then draw a parallel between this historical trajectory and the extent to which at least one university type in South Africa, viz, the Afrikaner University, was used by the South African Apartheid State to fulfil its political functions. I do this to show the relevance of this debate in the South African context. I conclude this chapter with a critical discussion that attempts to reconcile these chronological and ideological divides.

3.3. The idea of the university from a historical perspective

Is it possible to extrapolate an idea from the 'concept of the university' as it has evolved historically? In order to answer this question, I will provide a summarised version of the historical development of the idea of the university in the Western world, beginning with the medieval period, going to the rise and development of the modern university from the 18th to the 20th century.

Although there were many seminal contributors to the idea of the university such as, inter alia, Fichte, Kant, Plato, and others, for the purposes of this study I will only focus on Cardinal Newman, Von Humboldt, and Jaspers.

3.3.1. The medieval period: the 18th century

The search for a good place to begin with a description of the university is with the medieval period. Even though some kind of higher learning did take place under the Greeks and Romans, this cannot contribute to a concept of the university as an organised institution of higher learning. In fact it is argued that the university is a creation of the middle ages (Haskins, 2001: 1).

According to Dunbabin (in Smith and Langslow; 1999) it is however, worth noting that if one tries to disclose the meaning of the idea of the university during medieval times, by going back to the original meaning of the word, one is confronted with obscurity. The word 'university' itself was misinterpreted when it was understood to refer to that which is 'universal', 'general' and which is 'ultimate truth', in contrast to what it ought to have been at the time, which was, 'specific, practical or utilitarian', given the context of the emergence of these institutions from very specialised schools, like those related to the church/state for example (Smith and Langslow; 1999: 71-72).

This same kind of obscurity is discerned when one tries to discover the origins of these institutions of higher learning,

> If the final end of the medieval university was and is contentious, so is the moment of origin. … But it is true that the exact moment of emergence remains obscure for most universities" (Smith and Langslow, 1999: 32).

So clearly, trying to establish a definite meaning based on etymology in the medieval period leads us to obscure areas from which we can derive very little clarity. What does become clear though is that by the 13th century universities attracted people who wanted to study a body of knowledge for specialised purposes like law, medicine, theology or how to become better politicians (Smith and Langslow, 1999: 31-32).

In fact, if one searches for the word university from the very inception of these institutions during medieval times, one would not be able to find it, for there was no particular word that was used to name these schools of higher learning. Words such as "studia generalia", and "universitas" came into use only much later,

> The noun *universitas*, used to describe any privileged corporate body, was not narrowed down to refer first and foremost to an academic community specialising in Higher Education before the fifteenth century. Students and masters usually referred to their places of study as studia, a word which could also apply to other less-elevated educational institutions" (Smith and Langslow [eds], 1999: 30).

Dunbabin argues that the reason for this lack could be attributed to the fact that though some schools were more organised and specialised others were not (Smith and Langslow; 1999: 31).

Medieval universities in Europe were in fact very specialised and vocational by nature and catered for people interested in pursuing a profession in law, theology or medicine.

What is really interesting about these early ideas of the university is that even though they emerged as being very specialised and vocational by nature, the curriculum or the kind of knowledge that was being disseminated was in fact very broad (Olubummo and Ferguson; 1960:2). Not only was it very broad it also focused on teaching per se,

> During the eighteenth century, universities were increasingly described as "medieval", a term that had a clear perjorative connotation. A phrase often used at the time described the universities as "atrophied in a trade-guild mentality". It was widely believed within universities that knowledge was fixed within closed systems and the only task of the university was to transmit what was known to students, usually by reading aloud from old texts (Fallon quoted in Kwiek, 2006: 10).

The extent to which Fallon's analysis of the medieval university contributed to the concept of the university is a contentious issue. Edward Shills for example, who is regarded as an illuminating protagonist of the first principles of higher education (Epstein and Grosby, in Grosby; 1997: ix-xiv), confers significant value on the influence of the earlier centuries on the concept of the university. The following analysis by Shills articulates this contribution rather succinctly,

> Some of the distinctive features of universities - of the universities of the past century and a half as well as those of earlier centuries - were settled in these early centuries. Instruction at an advanced level, the pursuit and transmission of fundamental truths, institutional autonomy and financial support by external powers, are now in practice and at least in declaration, characteristic of universities everywhere. These features were certainly fixed long before the emergence of the liberal-democratic order which took root over the past two centuries. They were creations of the medieval and early modern churches, absolutist monarchies and empires, princely states and oligarchical municipalities and commercial republics (in Grosby, 1997: 250).

Whilst it would be really interesting to take this debate further, such an initiative would defeat the purposes of this particular chapter, which focuses on a particular aspect of specific historical eras of the evolution of the concept of the university.

These ideas of the university formed the basis of what we know and how we understand the concept of the university today.

3.3.2. The rise of the modern university

It would be inappropriate to refer to European medieval places of learning as "universities", since these places of learning lacked a definite structure and modus operandi. The modern idea of the university only came into being during the 19th century. The following analysis depicts this development succinctly,

> The emergence of the modern university is by and large a phenomenon of the late nineteenth century. It is only in this period that universities were resurrected as primary knowledge-production institutions, and that the idea of the research-oriented university became predominant. It is only too obvious that this institutional process is intimately linked to another one, namely the rise of the modern nation-state, whether in newly formed politics on the European continent, such as Italy or Germany, or through the reform of older organizations, such as France or the United States of America (Wittrock in Kwiek, 2006: 17).

Three theorists have made a huge impact on the development of the modern idea of the university, and they are Cardinal Newman, Von Humboldt, and Jaspers. I will be discussing each of these three contributors and their contributions respectively. Because I extrapolate a particular interpretation of these contributions on the evolution of the concept of the university, I rely on their (Cardinal Newman and Karl Jaspers) original texts almost exclusively. Unfortunately because it was difficult for me to procure Von Humboldt's works in English, I had to rely on interpretations of his works.

3.4. Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1767-1835)

Twenty years after the Storming of the Bastille, which heralded the beginning of the French Revolution, the history of the modern university as a research institution was initiated. It was initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the establishment of the University of Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt (Von Humboldt hereafter) (Ringer, 1990: 111).

It is for this reason that it is argued that the birth of the 'modern university' or its appearance 'on the historical stage' is clearly indebted to the progress of Prussian Protestant-institutions, and the University of Berlin in particular (Howard, 2006: 4). Wilhelm Von Humboldt was instrumental in the development of the University of Berlin and the subsequent influence this university and its ideals had on the modern university as we know it today.

Von Humboldt lived during a period that experienced the collapse of the German monarchy, the beginning of the French Revolution and the period of 'sturm und drang' (storm and stress). He was part of a group of people who assumed responsibility for the fate of Prussia after the Napoleonic occupation, and who helped to reshape another Europe (UNESCO, 2000:1). Von Humboldt made a significant contribution to this project through his notion of 'bildung', which links the cultural and humanistic ideals of the 'idea of the university' with scholarly freedom, in the scholarly pursuit of science.

For him, the 'idea of the university' was integral to the development of the German nation (Readings, 1996: 68-69). It was the illusive quality of truth as opposed to the uncritical acceptance of an enforced ideology that Von Humboldt held onto and which he used as a cornerstone upon which to build and justify the addition of research to teaching in a university.

For Von Humboldt, it was the relentless quest for an irretrievable certainty that was at the heart of our emancipation and humanity; he explains this principle very eloquently here,

> Everything depends upon holding to the principle of considering knowledge as something not yet found, never completely to be discovered, and searching relentlessly for it as such. As soon as one ceases actually to seek knowledge or imagines that it does not have to be pulled from the depths of the intellect, but rather can be arranged in some exhaustive array through meticulous collection, then everything is irretrievably and forever lost. It is lost for knowledge, which disappears when this is continued for very long so that even language is left standing like an empty casing; and it is lost for the state. This is because knowledge alone, which comes from and can be planted in the depths of the spirit, also transforms character; and for the state, just as for humanity, facts and discourse matter less than character and behaviour (Von Humboldt quoted in Kwiek, 2006: 25).

Integral to this concept of the university, is its epistemologically constitutive ideal which is located in the systematic pursuit of disinterested inquiry. For Von Humboldt, like Jaspers after him, the holding on to the ideal of not fully realizable certainty and truth, is at the heart of the idea of the university, without which the idea no longer exists, or as he puts it in the above extract, 'is lost' (Kwiek, 2006: 25).

For Von Humboldt this epistemologically constitutive function of the idea of the university is what he saw as instrumental in resurrecting Prussia from its impasse that the war had brought upon it (Kwiek, 2006). For Von Humboldt, the idea of the university is predicated upon the unity of research and teaching; this forms the core of the idea of the

university, and the university as an institution enables this function. In this ideal we see the foundational beginnings of the modern idea of the university as we know it today.

3.5. Cardinal Newman (1801-1890)

For many, Cardinal Newman (I will refer to him as Newman hereafter) was instrumental in the establishment of a coherent, substantive and formal notion of the 'idea of the university' (Kerr, 2001:2).

Newman wrote his version of 'The idea of the university' during the mid-19th century. Here is a brief synopsis of the chronological development of this book, and the kind of response it induced,

> Originally published as two sections, the first in 1853 consisting of nine lectures titled "Discourses on University Education" and a second volume titled "Lectures and Essays on University Subjects" which was published in 1858. The volume attracted immediate attention and evoked widespread discussion (Newman, 1959).

Newman's concept of the university is based on a liberal notion. He disagreed with the notion of the utility and usefulness of knowledge, he believed in 'knowledge for knowledge's sake'. For Newman the pursuit of knowledge itself changes the individual for the better (Newman, 1959).

For him, the university is the locus for disseminating universal knowledge and the development of the individual, and not the scholarly pursuit of research (Newman, 1959: 7). He predicates this exclusive quality of the concept of university on the following rationale,

> The nature of the case and the history of philosophy combine to recommend to us this division of intellectual labour between academics and universities. To discover and to teach are distinct functions; they are also distinct gifts, and are not commonly found united in the same person. He, too, who spends his day in dispensing his existing knowledge to all commoners is unlikely to have either leisure or energy to acquire new. The common sense of mankind has associated the search after truth with seclusion and

> quiet. … The great discoveries in chemistry and electricity were not made in universities. …
>
> Whether or not a Catholic University should put before it, as its great object, to make its students "gentlemen", still to make them something or other *is* its greatest object, and not simply to protect the interests and advance the domination of science" (Newman, 1959: 10-11).

In the above rationale and description of his epistemologically constitutive functions of the university, Newman (1959) differentiates between teaching and research. According to him, these two practices require different functions and conditions. The lecturer he argues, cannot do research because the time that he/she spends transmitting knowledge to his/her students limits his/her time to do research. According to this account, the lecturer should only teach according to his/her existing knowledge and not try and advance that knowledge.

The researcher on the other hand, he argues, needs seclusion to engage in research. According to him, the university was not meant to be the locus for research, and he corroborated his argument on the notion that some of the most distinctive discoveries were not made in the university (Newman, 1959).

Although Newman's 'Idea of the University' and its focus on teaching is still regarded as valuable by some, its overall impetus in contemporary society is regarded as limited by others. The following comment depicts this scepticism,

> Newman's Idea is still appealing to many of us who believe that knowledge is worth pursuing for the sake-of-knowledge alone. But 146 years later, Newman's book could not be listed as one of the 100 outstanding books on Higher Education during the 20th century (Fincher, 2000: 1).

I would however contend that despite the scepticism regarding the value of Newman's 'The Idea of the University' today, Newman's contribution to this idea remains invaluable, as he was one of the first people (through his seminal book) to talk about 'the idea of the university' in a coherent and more formalised way, thus laying the foundation (together with others) for the formalisation of the modern idea of the university.

3.6. Karl Jaspers (1883-1969)

Another significant contribution from Germany came through the work of Karl Jaspers who was born in Germany in 1883. His contribution to the concept of the university evolved through his experiences with a very powerful and intolerant political leader, the notorious Adolf Hitler. It is argued that Hitler was determined to ensure that the universities in Germany not only supported the political goals of the state, but that universities had to show unwavering support for him as well (Remy, 2003: 12).

Hitler and his party fulfilled these aims through the Reich Education Ministry, the National Socialist University Instruction League and the Security Service (Remy, 2003:15). Jaspers' *Idea of the university* was written in the aftermath of World War II. Germany had just been defeated and had seen the end of Hitler's dictatorship. The country was in chaos in every respect, especially the universities that were used as instruments by the Nazi regime.

Deutsch encapsulates this period in the history of the German university very well,

> Karl Jaspers' *The Idea of the University* was written at the end of Hitler's dictatorship and the defeat of Germany in World War II, after the worst outward and inner catastrophes had befallen the German universities. The outward destruction was evident in the rubble of the German cities. The inner devastation was less manifest but worse. It was the memory of the thousands of students who had forsaken the books of Kant for the loudspeakers of Goebbels and the jackboots of the elite guards; the professors who had eagerly believed the nationalistic and racial propaganda, forsaking their standards of critical thinking; and those other professors who, while not believing the doctrines of the Third Reich, yet found it prudent to pretend belief, and not deceived, yet aided the deceivers (in Jaspers, 1960: 15).

It was within this context that Jaspers appealed for the fundamental reconstruction of German universities from the ashes of repression and systematic destruction that they had been subjected to. In response to a period and regime of deception in which science was used to perpetrate the worst atrocities on humankind, Karl Jaspers implored universities

to retrieve their epistemic autonomy and to engage in the systematic pursuit of truth, which he saw as a great honour,

> Academic freedom is a privilege, which entails the obligation to teach truth, in defiance of anyone outside or inside the university who wishes to curtail it (1960:19).

Jaspers' fundamental contribution to the idea of the university was his determination to reinforce scholarship in the university after the war (1960: 10). Deutsch comes to the following conclusion regarding Jasper's contribution,

> Professor Jaspers gives us a timely reminder that teaching divorced from research robs the University of its basic impetus (1960:11).

For Jaspers the university as an institution is premised on a '*founding idea'*, which for him was the combination of teaching and research (Kwiek, 2006: 11). According to Jaspers (1960), the combination of teaching and research makes the university distinctive from other institutions. For him it is the interplay of these two key components that constitutes the idea of the university (1960: 10). It is this interpretation of the idea of the university that distinguishes Jaspers from Newman.

For Newman (1959), the idea of the university was based on teaching and not the unity of teaching and scholarship. In the preface to *The Idea of the University*, Newman is explicit regarding this exclusivity of teaching,

> The view taken of the university in these discourses is the following: that it is a place of *teaching* universal *knowledge*. This implies that its object is, on the one hand, intellectual, not moral; and on the other, that it is the diffusion and extension of knowledge rather than the advancement thereof (1959: 7).

Jaspers' combination of research and teaching as the key components that constitute the concept of the university makes his contribution to the concept of the university significantly different from Newman's. Unlike Newman who espoused a mutually exclusive distinction between these two epistemic practices and functions of a university, Jaspers, like Von Humboldt before him, insisted that they are mutually dependent on each other. This is how he interprets these epistemic practices and functions within the context of the university,

> Hence the combination of research and teaching is the lofty and inalienable basic principle of the university (1960: 58).

Another key acknowledgement by Jaspers is his recognition of the distinction between the university as the home of epistemic practices and their regulatory ideals, and the institution which this ideal inhabits in order to survive. According to him, the university as an institution cannot sustain itself financially, so it therefore depends on the state; this relationship entails a symbiotic liaison between the university and the State. For Jaspers the university is dependent on the State for material resources and protection, and the State is dependent on the university for, inter alia, intellectual and cultural knowledge and skills. Jasper's is however cautious of this relationship and portends its imminent dangers,

> The state has easily the upper hand over the university and can in fact destroy it (1960: 135).

Jaspers is thus clear about the need for the university to be independent of the State and its potentially destructive agenda.

Jaspers' recognition of the unity of teaching and the systemic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths as a foundational idea, and the need to protect this idea from external stakeholders makes his contribution to the idea of the modern university as we know it invaluable.

3.7. Newman and Jaspers

Unlike Jaspers (1960), Newman's (1959) concept of the university is predicated upon a particular scope of the characteristic practices of a university, that is only limited to teaching. For Newman (1959) the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths and the concomitant social dimensions are not constitutive of his concept of the university.

Newman's (1959) view that the principle function of a university is to teach is challenged by Jasper's concept of the university. Jaspers (1960) sees the idea of the university more comprehensively. For him it is the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths as a foundational idea, the social dimensions of this epistemic practice, and the epistemic values and aims of such and other epistemic practices, which should underpin the constitutive functions of the university. Such an epistemic ideal enables the communities, both within and external to the university, to distinguish between dogma and provisional truth.

Jaspers' (1960) description of the type of teaching that Newman (1959) refers to is disparaging. This is demonstrated in the following description of what he refers to as 'scholastic instruction',

> This type of education is limited to mere 'transmission' of the tradition. The teacher only reproduces; he is not himself active in original research. ..Knowledge is frozen for all time into an orderly world picture. Here the student is interested only in what is fixed and permanent…. The scholastic approach continues to be indispensable to Western rationalism (1960: 62).

Implicit in his critique of focusing on teaching to the exclusion of any systematic inquiry, is Jasper's (1960) critique of the certainty of knowledge which is also evident. His use of the metaphor 'frozen' as opposed to the vitality associated with running water for example, reinforces his idea of the limitations/danger of such an approach to knowledge.

This disdain for merely transmitting knowledge and the extent to which this kind of epistemic practice is not constitutive of Jaspers' idea of the university, is foregrounded in his qualification of the need for communication within a university,

> Another is the responsibility of thought itself, which flourishes much better in an atmosphere of communication than as a solitary thought which meets no resistance.
>
> The effectiveness of intellectual formulations and ideas is grounded in truth. Communication is itself a function of the search for truth. It tests truth by testing its effects. Intellectual exchange makes the university the place where people meet who have committed their lives to the search for truth. For the university must not be confused with the sort of school where intellectual spontaneity is rigidly channelled along curricular and pedagogical lines (1960: 76-77).

Jaspers' characterisation of the systematic search for provisional truth within a social context is what Haack (1998) refers to in her description of the social dimensions of epistemic inquiry. This conception of the social needs of the researcher and the social dimensions of research is distinctly different from Newman's (1959) rationale for why research should not be a constitutive feature of the concept of the university.

For Newman (1959), the construction of the Catholic gentleman, which was the purpose of his idea of the university, was based on the acquisition of liberal knowledge. For him the ability to engage in systematic and disinterested reflection, the concept of 'higher order thinking', that Barnett's (1990) idea of higher education entails, is not what Newman (1959) had in mind, despite his proclivity towards this ideal which he alludes to in the way he expects the 'Catholic mind' to be shaped by his concept of the university. This is Newman's expectation of the 'Catholic mind',

> Our desideratum is, not the manners and habits of gentlemen - these can be, and are, acquired in various other ways, by good society, by foreign travel, by the innate grace and dignity of the Catholic mind - but the force, steadiness, the comprehensiveness, and the versatility of intellect, the command over our own powers, the instinctive just estimate of things as they pass before us, which sometimes indeed is a natural gift, but commonly is not gained without much effort and the exercise of years.

> This is the real cultivation of mind… (1959:12).

The problem with this expectation is that it ignores the epistemic practices, values and aims that would lead to the development of such a mind.

It is Newman's neglect of the epistemic practices that is characterised by the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths and the ensuing social dimensions, which makes Newman's contribution to the concept of the modern university as we know it, limited. It also challenges an important assumption, which is that the concept of the university is a monolithic and calcified concept. The differences between Newman's and Jaspers' concept of the university that have been highlighted so far attest to this assumption.

3.8. The epistemologically constitutive functions of a university

For both Von Humboldt and Jaspers the concept of the university is embedded in the pursuit of science and teaching that is based on provisionally warranted knowledge. Newman on the other hand, sees the university as an exclusively teaching institution and claimed that research should be the domain of other institutions (1959). Newman's idea of the university is predicated on the reproduction and dissemination of knowledge and in this sense it is dependent on the certainty and timelessness of truth/knowledge claims (1959: 7).

For Humboldt and Jaspers on the other hand it is the production of knowledge within an epistemic community, within the parameters of certain epistemic practices and functions that can contribute to the development of the individual. For them, taking the certainty and validity of knowledge claims for granted can lead to the destruction of humanity. Universities in the 21st Century still rely on the German model of combining teaching and research, and this can be seen in for example, the initiatives to motivate academics to publish more prolifically and thus expose their findings to peer review.

3.9. Constitutive epistemological and service functions

A clear trend can be extrapolated from the above account, and that is the link between the constitutive epistemological and service functions of the university and the needs of the State it serves. In their pursuit of the political legitimisation of their nations, Von

Humboldt, Newman and Jaspers endeavoured to re-establish their respective concepts of the university along strong epistemological grounds, such that political legitimacy became an indirect outcome of the university. For Von Humboldt it was the search for truth that would help to resurrect the Prussian State,

> The search for truth, is related to the creation in 1810 of the University of Berlin by Wilhelm von Humboldt. In his perspective, the long term public good is better serviced by the exploration of the unknown, by the traditional scientific quest based on the constant revision of prevailing orthodoxy since the search for original views can indeed induce real transformations in society. Students and teachers have to learn from doubt and hypotheses they test and verify; truth, then, becomes a fleeting target simply to be approximated (Barblan, 2005: 4).

For Newman (1959) it was the dissemination of liberal notions of truth that would emancipate the oppressed Catholics; and for Jaspers, like Von Humboldt it was the need to pursue the legitimacy of knowledge claims through research and teaching based on warranted knowledge that would save Germany.

What the accounts of Von Humboldt's, Newman's and Jaspers' 'idea of the university' and their ensuing purposes also foreground is the inextricable relationship between the constitutive epistemological and service functions of the university, which operates on a continuum of two basic institutional ideals, and more specifically the relationship between the university and the society it serves, as well as the extent to which this relationship impacts on the concept of the university.

What is significant about this relationship in the aforementioned historical contexts is the extent to which the service functions of this concept influenced particular constitutive epistemological practices. Practices not based on certainty, dogma and repression, but constitutive epistemic practices which celebrate the provisional certainty of knowledge and truth that would militate against autocratic, repressive and also complacent socio-political contexts. In these contexts the nature of the constitutive epistemological functions and practices were constructed to be the gatekeeper of the corruptive tendencies

of political might and complacency, and not to be consumed in a weak and uncritical manner.

This richness of the history of the evolution of the concept of the university is what makes the historical development of the concept of the university significant for the challenges regarding the functions and obligations of the university in a democratic South Africa invaluable. The value of this component for the South African context is demonstrated in the next section.

3.10. A parallel between the German experience and South Africa

It is within such a context that I draw a parallel that can be drawn between the history that gave rise to the 'idea of the university' and the kind of history that we as South Africans have inherited. What is clear from the contributions of Von Humboldt, Newman and Jaspers is that there is a definite parallel between how a society changes and how the ideals of a university education evolve from and with it. So clearly the development of the idea of the university is not an abstract or a decontextualised phenomenon, but has always taken into account the history of the State that it aims to serve.

It is for this reason that the historical experience of the 'idea of the university' is important to take into account when a State begins the process of questioning the aims of its universities, at the levels of purpose, mission, and identity. As important as the relationship between the experiences of a State are and how the ideals of higher education evolve from and with it, it is equally important that our approach in addressing these problems in the transformation of our universities, is not an ad hoc, myopic or reactionary one.

The conditions, under which many Universities in South Africa have evolved and developed are not unlike the conditions under which Newman's, Von Humboldt's and Jaspers' educational ideas emerged and aimed to address. The period prior to the new Democratic dispensation is South Africa, was one characterized by political repression and oppression (described in more detail in Chapter Five).

This was a period during which the most inhumane kinds of atrocities were inflicted on people merely because they were black or because they challenged the Government of the day. It was a period during which people were killed and in which justice worked to the disadvantage of the majority of people in this country. It was a regime of terror that deprived people of their human dignity and human rights.

For example, black people were rendered economically *impuissant* through a range of strategies, such as the Pass Laws, the Job Reservation Act, and more, and adults and children were mercilessly hunted down and murdered for protesting against the Afrikaner State.

The Afrikaner Government used all state institutions to ensure their domination and power. The South African education system is one such example of a State-dominated institution,

> No field in South Africa is more completely dominated by the Broederbond than education. The history of the AB has always been closely interwoven with the Afrikaner's fight to assert his control over education – first, his own; then that of all other race and language groups (Serfontein, in Bowker, 1997: 159).

Universities were established to exclude the majority of black people from gaining access to genuine higher education. Some Afrikaner professors played a major role in using their positions to disseminate the Afrikaner Nationalist ideology and invested much intellectual capital in developing and contributing to theories that would enhance the legitimization of Afrikaner Nationalism and the indoctrination of young people.

In fact education across the board was used for political gains over and above that of the development of intellectual capital; and this caused tremendous dissatisfaction amongst the black people of this country,

> The Soweto Riots of 1976 demonstrated in tragically clear terms the burning hatred young blacks have for the system of education imposed on them. The

> Nationalist Government's insistence on Afrikaans as a medium of instruction was listed by the Institute of Race Relations in its evidence to the Cillie Commission investigating black unrest as the major contributory factor to the riots, which exploded into injury and death on June 16 that year. Again, the Broederbond must look to its conscience for what happened in those riots. Its zealous pursuit of division and ruthless passion for "order" in South African society are faithfully reflected in the education systems it helped create for the various race groups in South Africa (Wilkins and Strydom, 1978: 254).

It is against such a backdrop of historical inequity, the misuse of education and the deliberate sabotage of its ideals for the systematic search for provisional truth and validity that an idea of the university is being shaped in South Africa today.

It is for this reason that I think referring to the traditional/modern 'concept of the university', as it has evolved historically, will be of much value as we engage in the transformation of our universities in a new and Democratic South Africa.

3.11. An assessment of this account against my Model Example

Implicit in Newman's, Von Humboldt's and Jaspers' contributions to the development of the modern university is the role of the service functions in the universities. In this context, the university is interpreted in terms of its function within a particular State, and the use of certain kinds of knowledge and practices to be able to deliver its political functions.

For Newman it was the cultural emancipation of the Catholic people, for Von Humboldt it was the function of humanizing the State through the individual; and later reinforced by Jaspers it was the same function of critique that he hoped would strengthen the German nation.

This political function of the university can be applied to Taylor's theory of the service functions, in which the kinds of services that are provided by such an institution serve a purely

instrumental function. These functions are defined by external validation (such as the State) by those who benefit from this service. In so doing the roles of those who participate in this function are defined externally. The role and obligation of service institutions are thus to provide a good service, and in so doing assume the instrumental principles of a service paradigm. By providing and upholding certain kinds of knowledge and practices, the university as an institution performs a particular service to the State, but this service must not be misinterpreted as the constitutive identity of the university.

The concept of a university, according to the German contributors is predicated upon a particular founding idea, and this idea is the scholarly pursuit and dissemination of disinterested inquiry. It is the rigour entailed in the search for provisional truth, according to the internal norms and values of the epistemic practice of providing warranted status to knowledge claims that form the epistemologically constitutive identity of the university.

It is this kind of constitutive identity that Taylor locates within the constitutive institutional types of public institutions.

3.12. Implications for the South African context

For the transformative purposes of South Africa in general and its universities in particular, it is imperative that we should be able to draw a clear distinction between the service functions of our universities and the epistemologically constitutive functions of our universities. A conflation of this distinction, will allow political legitimacy to supersede constitutive epistemological ones, and in so doing lead to both the complacency and docility of our new democracy or the calcification of a repressive past.

What is needed is an awareness of the tension that exists between the service and epistemologically constitutive institutional types of the university, in which the epistemologically constitutive practices, functions and purposes can become completely eroded and corrupted by the functions and purposes of its service institutional type. This situation is very much like what happened to the epistemologically constitutive identity of universities in post-apartheid South Africa.

The epistemologically constitutive identity of South African universities during this era was so eroded and corrupted by the service functions as they served the State that they lost/did not develop their epistemologically constitutive functions of engaging in the epistemic practices such as, inter alia, the production, dissemination and maintenance of provisionally warranted truth/s.

3.13. Reconciling chronological boundaries of the history of the concept of a university

Analyses of the changing role of the university and the extent to which the State exerts increasing pressure on the university to make itself more accountable to it (the State) (Barnett, 1990), alerts us to one of the strongest challenges in the history of the modern university and that is the extent to which the university can become an arm of the State.

Von Humboldt's and Jaspers' contributions to the modern idea of the university are predicated upon the extent to which the university was being used to reproduce the ideologies of the State. The responses of von Humboldt and Jaspers to this situation were not to continue to display unanimous compliance nor to attempt to insulate the university from the state and its problems, but to provide an epistemological basis on which to critique ideologies and put taken-for-granted truths through rigorous and systematic standards of evaluation, such as through epistemic practices of distinguishing between competing knowledge claims on the grounds of the strength of their warrant statuses.

According to Taylor (1993), institutions are arranged on a continuum with regard to their identity and ensuing functions. These characteristics of an institution are those that are predicated on the extent to which their main purposes are understood as service or constitutive functions. According to Taylor (1993), these are not discrete categories, and it is often the case that one function can subsume the other.

Accordingly, the service functions of a university are the functions that are external to the constitutive idea of the university and its epistemic practices, functions, aims and values. These functions can be in the form of providing support to the State in return for protection or status, or providing much needed skills and knowledge for financial

advantage (money that is procured from the State via subsidies, or State support such as status, or qualifications).

The constitutive functions of a university, on the other hand, are the epistemic practices, aims and values that underpin the idea of a university. It would be safe to say, that the different purposes and their respective functions of an institution, such as a university, have developed and changed over the years to accommodate not only socio-political changes but also epistemological changes.

For example, the epistemological status of truth/knowledge claims based on certainty, demanded a concomitant epistemic practice of teaching that was characterised by the reproduction of knowledge. This is demonstrated through Newman's (1959) idea of the university in which teaching (transmitting knowledge which is accepted as certain) was the constitutive function of the idea of the university. This function depended on the certainty and stability of knowledge/truth.

However, the lack of criticism and the ensuing consequences for Germany regarding knowledge that was based on ideology that universities and the German nation were obliged to support during the Nazi regime, forced the emergence and reinforcement of an alternate epistemic practice. This practice is based on the unity of teaching and research. The basis of such a unity is the lack of certainty in which truth and its attainment can only be an ideal.

Research and its ensuing practice of granting or depriving provisional warrant status to knowledge claims demonstrates the extent to which the idea of the university, characterised by the German contributions of Von Humboldt and Jaspers, et al., has responded to the limitations and dangers of epistemological certainty in their respective contexts.

The unity of teaching and research which define this idea of the university, also answers in the affirmative to concerns regarding the stability of the idea of the university in the face of the emergence of alternate higher education institutions (Nibblet, 1974). This concept of the university is not only dependent on teaching mature students for the

preservation of its constitutive identity; it also relies on, inter alia, the specialised social dimensions of the pursuit of systematic disinterested inquiry.

As long as epistemic practices remain as the basis upon which the idea of the university is predicated the university will survive, and its contribution to society will be a fruitful one.

Also, unlike its service functions, epistemologically constitutive functions of the university are not motivated by competition for scarce resources, but by their own regulative ideals.

The concept of the university is not a monolithic one. For example, the epistemologically constitutive function of Newman's (1959) concept of the university is teaching only, and the epistemologically constitutive function of the concept of the university that is premised upon the German model is the unity of teaching and research. The latter is based upon a reliance of the pursuit of provisionally warranted knowledge as an ideal in which truth/certainty is defined in terms of its elusive qualities.

Von Humboldt sums up this description well,

> Everything depends upon holding to the principle of considering knowledge as something not yet found, never completely to be discovered, and searching relentlessly for it as such (Humboldt quoted in Kwiek, 2006: 25).

Given our politically repressive history, (which I describe in more detail in Chapter Five), it is imperative that we do not abandon the epistemologically constitutive identity of the university, as explicated through the German model, in South Africa. Instead, we should make a concerted effort to protect this identity and its functions from not only the criticisms of the continuing relevance of universities today, but also from its service obligations and functions.

What Taylor (1993) warns us against is the proclivity of the service functions of an institution to destroy its constitutive functions. This is particularly pertinent in a context in which the complexity of the needs of the State can only be addressed by an equally strong constitutive epistemic identity as that which is embodied in the university.

3.14. Conclusion

The historical role and roots of the idea of the university have come under serious attack (Grosby, 1997; Readings, 1996; Ringer, 1990). The sources of this discontent are, according to Barnett (1990), challenges to the certainty of knowledge and the extent to which the university has up until now become more accountable to the State which supports it financially.

Professor Roy Niblett, who has written extensively and insightfully about the problems plaguing universities, and the extent to which the university can be rescued from this situation, contextualizes this status quo slightly differently (1974). According to him, the university today is caught between two worlds both chronologically and ideologically.

He locates this dilemma in the following sources, the variety of institutions apart from universities offering higher education and, like Barnett (1990) - the uncertainty of knowledge (Niblett, 1974).

In order to face the challenges posed by Niblett (1974) and Barnett (1990) regarding the relevance or lack thereof of the historical roots of the idea of the university today, an evaluation of these roots is merited.

There have been three notable contributors to the idea of the university as it has evolved historically, and these are Von Humboldt, Cardinal Newman and Jaspers. From their respective contributions, two distinct, but also similar in some respects, ideas of the university can be extrapolated.

Newman's (1959) idea of the university is predicated on the certainty and stability of knowledge. In his (Newman's, 1959) idea of the university, teaching is its constitutive function, and research is relegated to other contexts. For him the purpose of the university is the cultivation of the Catholic gentleman (Newman, 1959). In terms of Taylor's (1993) conceptualization of institutions, the above purpose conforms to the service functions of the university as a service institutional type.

However, in the German model of the concept of the university, the unity of teaching and the pursuit of systematic disinterested inquiry are the constitutive functions of the university. Fulfilling these constitutive epistemic functions based upon its own internal standards of excellence is the purpose of this model of the university. Such a concept of the university is predicated upon the systematic search for an elusive truth/certainty. It was believed that in fulfilling this ideal, Germany could be resurrected from the negative impact of the war.

This social goal conforms to the service functions of the university as a service institutional type.

Jasper's (1960) contribution to this trajectory is his distinction between the idea of the university as a regulatory ideal and the university as an institution. The idea of the university as a regulatory ideal and its ensuing epistemic practices can be described in terms of what Taylor (1993) refers to as the constitutive functions of a constitutive institutional type. The university as an institution that procures material support for the constitutive functions of the idea of the university can be described by what Taylor (1993) refers to as the service institutional type.

When Jaspers (1960) cautions us against the corruptive tendencies of the university as an institution, he is warning us about the corruptive tendencies of the service functions of the university, which are predicated upon the service identity of the university as an institution. Accordingly, what the service institutional type and its ensuing functions of the university aim to corrupt is the epistemologically constitutive dimension of the university and its ensuing epistemic functions.

The epistemologically constitutive concept of the university can best be sustained under conditions of epistemic authority that value the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths.

The differences between the contributions of Newman's (1959) idea of the university and von Humboldt's and Jaspers' (1960) idea of the university demonstrate that the idea of the university is not a monolithic or ahistorical one. It therefore necessitates that any reference to the idea of the university needs to be cognisant of this distinction, as well as the extent to which the concept of the university is a historically evolved one, whose value and merit are involved in this historical evolution.

Niblett's (1974) and Barnetts' (1990) concerns regarding the continuing relevance of the founding idea of the university seem to be neglectful of this distinction. Their challenges to the relevance of the historical foundations of the university are only relevant to Newman's (1959) idea of the university, which have become obsolete with the resurrection of the idea of the university which is based on the German model.

The emergence of other institutions offering higher education must not be allowed to destabilize the concept of the university, because merely teaching or engaging in isolated research is not what the constitutive epistemological ideal and its functions are predicated upon. What distinguishes the university from other institutions offering teaching or research is the epistemologically constitutive functions of the university and its epistemic practices that are predicated upon the unity of the pursuit and dissemination (teaching) of systematic, warranted inquiry, and the concomitant social dimensions of this form of inquiry.

From the various historical contributions to the concept of the university as we know it today, it is clear that what we need to be concerned about is the extent to which the service functions of the university can erode and corrupt the epistemologically constitutive functions of the university and its ensuing functions, practices, values and goals.

From a historical perspective it is clear that the service functions of the university, as constructed by the key financial and political sponsors of the university, in this case the State, have posed a historical threat to the epistemologically constitutive concept of the

university, specifically under conditions in which the regulatory ideal of the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truth and the teaching thereof, was compromised.

Jaspers (1960) portends that by its very nature the epistemologically constitutive functions of the university will always be in a tense relationship with the service functions of the university. The preservation of the constitutive ideal and functions of the idea of the university should be strong, and one needs to be constantly vigilant of the corrupting tendencies of the service functions of the university.

Given the history of:

- the ideologically instrumental nature of some South African universities during apartheid, which could be paralleled with the history of the German universities during the Nazi regime,
- as well as the history of the extent to which the apartheid government tried to repress the epistemic search for truth in all South African universities through its various repressive statutes (explicated further in Chapter Five),
- and the extent to which the constitutive identity of the idea of the university in apartheid South Africa was repressed, in order for the university to conform to the service functions of State (explicated further in Chapter Five).

The lessons learnt from the development, repression and resurrection of the concept of the university, that the German Model is based on, are imperative for the transformation of South Africa in general and for the transformation of South African universities in particular.

It is in this particular context, that the caution regarding the impending threats to the epistemologically constitutive functions of the university should be taken seriously.

In this chapter, I have provided more conceptual clarity on the idea of the university by appealing to its historical roots; I have shown to what extent these historical roots have impacted on the concept of the university as we understand it today. Then by applying

my Model Example of a concept of a university I have demonstrated the extent to which the corruptive tendencies of the service functions of the university as an institution, as constructed by politically repressive States, can become manifest at the level of implementation from a historical perspective.

I have also showed the relevance of these roots to the transformation of the concept of a university in South Africa today given our own repressive history.

In the next section I will look at the concept of a university from an international perspective. In so doing I will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the general trends in contemporary American and German universities?
- What is the current status quo regarding the tension between the epistemologically constitutive institutional type of these institutions and the service institutional type of these institutions? How is this status quo impacting on the concept of a university in these countries?
- What insights can such an understanding provide for the transformation of the concept of the university in a post-apartheid South Africa?

CHAPTER FOUR

TRENDS IN AMERICAN AND GERMAN UNIVERSITIES

4.1. The previous chapter

In the previous chapter I examined the historical roots of the concept of the modern university, and the extent to which this concept still has relevance for contemporary society. From my examination I was able to conclude that the modern concept of the university and the model that it is predicated on is not a monolithic one. Critics of the relevance of the university and its institutional manifestation in contemporary society need to be mindful of the distinction between the concept of the university is based on Cardinal Newman's model of the centrality of teaching and the modern concept of the university that was established by Von Humboldt and Jaspers (1960).

This modern concept of the university as we know it today is predicated on the German model, which is underpinned by the regulatory ideal of the unity of research and teaching. According to the modern concept of the university, which is based on this model, the constitutive idea of the university and its constitutive epistemic practices and functions are always in danger of being eroded and corrupted by the service functions of the university.

4.2. The aims of this chapter

In this chapter I will identify some of the key trends in American and German universities, taking into account insights, regarding the unity of teaching and research, from the previous chapter. It was my intention to focus on the unity of teaching and research in these countries, but after some research I began to realise that I could not speak about trends in these countries without at least referring to some issues of accountability in these institutional contexts.

Institutional accountability and the kinds of measures that are put in place seem to be on the agenda for change in these universities. I shall therefore focus specifically on *research, teaching*, and *accountability* in universities in these countries. I shall use my Model Example of the university to examine these trends. Furthermore, I shall also extrapolate some key insights from these contexts in order to contribute to how we should conceptualise our universities in South Africa.

This overall aim of this thesis is to examine the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. This chapter forms the final part of the evolution of the concept of the university within a broader context, since the forthcoming chapters focus on the South African context specifically.

Changes in universities in other broader social contexts should not be ignored in the examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa, as a concept that is always evolving. With each refinement comes a clearer, wider and deeper scope of application of that concept (refer to Toulmin, 1972 in Chapter One).

It is within the above epistemological context that this chapter attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the current trends regarding teaching, research and accountability in contemporary American and German universities?
- How are these trends impacting on the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the university as an institutional ideal?
- What insights can such an understanding provide for the transformation of the concept of the university in a post-apartheid South Africa?

4.3. The structural sequence of this chapter

This chapter is structured in the following sequence:

- I begin with a short summary of the key trends in American and then German universities. I summarize these trends according to the following headings: teaching and research, research and accountability.

- I then engage in a general discussion of how these trends impact on the constitutive concept of the university in these contexts.
- I then look at some lessons that can be extrapolated from these contexts to the contemporary South African context.

4.4. Why America and Germany?

Discourses that underpin contemporary higher education policy in this country are very clear that our universities have a dual obligation, which is to be responsive to our national needs, as well as being responsive to global challenges and changes (NCHER, 1996:1). These discourses extend the parameters of the concept of a university from a contemporary South African context to a broader global one.

Such a policy message thus dictates that trying to derive clarity on a concept of a university in our contemporary university context necessitates some kind of clarity on the concept of the university beyond our borders. Given the scope of this project, I had to make a very limited selection from a wide variety of contexts. After much deliberation, I finally decided to choose America and Germany.

4.4.1. America

I chose America because it is often argued that this country houses some of the best universities in the world (Clark, 2004: 163; Newman, Couturier and Scurry, 2004: 152). In addition to that claim, America is a very competitive and dynamic society, and I was curious to explore:

- how universities in that country can be expected to change accordingly in a significant way;
- how universities in that country actually become susceptible to these changes in a significant way.

I also had an opportunity to present some of the key conclusions of this chapter, as part of a paper that I presented at a conference in Chicago (Pillay, 2008). My conclusions regarding the current trends in American universities, as well as the extent to which this is impacting on the constitutive idea of the university, were validated by the positive

responses I received from my American peers. They agreed that this synopsis did in fact characterize trends in their country.

4.4.2. Germany

I chose Germany, because it is impossible to speak about the modern idea of the university and its evolution, without recognizing and acknowledging the contribution of German intellectuals, such as Wilhelm von Humboldt, Jaspers, *et al.* I was therefore curious about the extent to which their founding idea, which is predicated on the unity of teaching and research, would still be relevant and applicable today.

I also had the opportunity to visit Germany as I was starting this research project in 2004, and was really overwhelmed by the tensions that existed between holding onto this traditional ideal of the unity of teaching and scholarship, and to their ideals of *lehr freiheid;* and those external pressures which are compelling universities to change.

4.5. Trends in contemporary American universities

Despite the recognition of American universities as leaders in research, universities in that country are subject to increasing pressures and criticisms from the public and private sectors (Altbach, Berdahl and Gumport, 2005:1; Newman, et al., 2004: 70-78). This litany of criticisms and pressures has transformed these universities in various ways. A synopsis of current trends in American universities portrays the extent to which American universities have been influenced in many ways, not just by local, external pressures, but also by broader, global, external pressures (Adams, 2002).

4.5.1. Criticisms regarding the epistemologically constitutive role of universities

Criticisms of the quality of research and teaching in American universities are testament to the extent in which the epistemologically constitutive role of these universities is still subject to interrogation from within that country (Newman, et al., 2004: 52; Adams, 2002: 35). The epistemologically constitutive purposes, practices and functions in American universities and the extent to which they are valued by the broader society are still debatable in this country.

For some, the traditional constitutive nature of universities makes these institutions and their attendant purposes increasingly irrelevant in a changing society (Newman, et al., 2004: 69). Adams (2002: 35) refers to Drucker who,

> ... raises the possibility that universities might become intellectually obsolete by remaining fixated on abstract, 'Mandarin' knowledge. He even contemplates their physical obsolescence due to the advancement of information technology.

For others, the transformation of the traditional epistemic nature of American universities has made them increasingly valuable in contemporary society. Of note is the extent to which knowledge has been transformed to meet these external needs,

> American universities have in fact excelled in producing the knowledge and knowledge workers needed in a post-industrial society (Adams, 2002: 36).

It is within the context of the above kinds of pressures and the way universities transform themselves in response to these that current concerns regarding the future of the special epistemologically constitutive practices and functions that distinguish universities from other social institutions, are beginning to emerge. Although Newman, et al. (2004), are aware of the realities that face America, both locally and within a competitive international arena, they are nonetheless concerned about the extent to which these challenges will erode the constitutive epistemic purposes, functions and practices of their universities.

Furthermore, they are concerned that such a change will have a detrimental effect on America in the long run. Of equal importance is their concern that the mutually beneficial relationship that has existed between society and their universities, through its respective constitutive epistemological and service functions, will be eroded within a more corporate paradigm (Newman, et al., 2004: 214). The nature of their concern is well captured in the following synopsis,

> Higher Education serves society through teaching that is non-ideological, research that is open and trustworthy, and service that helps address the difficult issues that society faces. Its objectivity and integrity can be trusted because its interests are beyond the marketplace. In return, society has extended unusual privileges to these institutions –

> academic freedom, the right to debate controversial issues facing society, financial support, tax exemption, and respect and trust.
>
> Some of the benefits of the compact are immediate and tangible, such as tax exemption and subsidy. Some are more important but less tangible, such as academic freedom. The benefits hardest to quantify are at the core of the relationship between the academy and society: trust and respect. If Higher Education allows these profound benefits to erode, if Higher Education becomes just one more participant in the marketplace, the loss to Higher Education and to society will be fundamental and probably irreversible.
>
> This compact now suffers from a slow, but deeply concerning erosion – a slow weakening, that is causing, in turn, erosion of the special nature of Higher Education (Newman, et al., 2004: 214).

The extent to which this erosion of the special nature of higher education within universities is taking place can be extrapolated from the extent to which some of the constituent practices of the university, such as research and teaching, and the unity of these two epistemic practices are being transformed to accommodate external pressures.

What follows, is a brief synopsis of some of the key challenges and transformation imperatives that are facing these constitutive, epistemic practices and their attendant epistemic functions in American universities.

4.5.2. Teaching and research

Teaching and conducting research are epistemologically constitutive functions of the university. The unity of these constitutive practices has been the fulcrum upon which the constitutive concept of the university has balanced. For decades (since 1945) universities in America have recognised the unity of teaching and research as being central to the concept of the university in that country. However the extent to which American universities try to fulfil this epistemologically institutional ideal has become a key challenge (Newman, et al., 2004: 50-51; Duderstadt, 2003: 20).

There is a range of factors which has contributed and continues to contribute to this dilemma. A brief synopsis of the status quo and the conditions that have led to it, are given in the next section.

4.5.2.1. The unity of teaching and research

American universities can be characterised according to a hierarchy premised upon the 'division of labour', in which top universities focus predominantly on research, while other less prestigious ones focus mainly on teaching (Adams, 2002: 22). A system of competitive peer-reviewed grants and an accompanying structure that allows universities to engage with government agencies for research contracts are the key factors that have lead to this stratification of universities in America.

In addition to this status quo, increasing demands for high levels of research productivity are over-extending the possibility of fulfilling the Humboldtian ideal in American universities. What also seems to be emerging is that there is an over-extended epistemic work force (faculty size) and a set of conflicting, external pressures that currently underpin the transformation of American universities (Adams, 2002: 10-11).

A preponderance of the research functions of universities has evoked much public criticism, mainly because it is argued that teaching is being marginalised within such a climate (Newman, et al., 2004: 51, Duderstadt, 2004: 20). Here is a typical response to the unbalanced focus on research that seems to typify many American universities,

> Politicians, journalists, and apostate academics have raised a chorus of allegations that faculties devote too much time and energy to their own scholarly pursuits and too little to students and teaching (Adams, 2002: 23).

These allegations go to the heart of the current crisis raging in American universities. This is increasing pressure for more research, on the one hand, and increasing pressure to focus more on teaching, on the other hand. In fact, the current pressure on American universities is to become more student-centred, which is interpreted as the need to become more focused on teaching and learning. Whilst this does not in any way mean a neglect of research, it does mean that universities are encouraged (through a shift in budgets) to focus more on students' needs.

A competitive grant system to improve teaching and learning has now been put in place. Even though some are optimistic about the advantages of such an initiative, there is

growing apprehension about the extent to which such an initiative could transform these constitutive, epistemic practices into entrepreneurial ones (Newman, et al., 2004: 180-193).

The nature of the conflicting, external pressures that motivate for the epistemic transformation of American universities is well summed up in the following account,

> …for complex reasons, universities have been reluctant to increase the size of their faculties. Yet, the demands upon faculty have grown – to be actively engaged in research and service activities, to teach more graduate students, and more recently to devote more time and energy to undergraduate instruction (Adams, 2002: 80).

The extent to which the epistemic community tries to address these increasing demands with limited epistemic practitioners, will invariably impact on the quality of their epistemic engagement in these key epistemic practices and their ensuing functions. This is a typical example of how the service functions of the university as an institution can impact on and erode the epistemic practices, identity and functions of universities.

4.5.3. Research

Since the 1950s and 1960s a substantial amount of money has been channelled into research in American universities. However, this injection of much-needed resources has led to many problems, such as a growing gap between teaching and research and the commercialisation of research as a practice.

4.5.3.1. Applied research

Links between external stakeholders have resulted in a marked shift from basic research to applied research, and this trajectory has contributed to the transformation of this epistemic practice (Newman, et al., 2004: 52). The diagnosis of these implications for American universities is sombre, as is clearly evident in the following description,

> The national trends in academic research just reviewed define the essence of the problem facing universities: the inherently expansive demand for research lies increasingly with "science-based technologies", but accommodating these fields stretches universities intellectually into arcane specialities, organizationally into separate research units, and

> philosophically into relationships with self-serving commercial firms. Universities collectively face the choice of defending their recent role in the ecology of knowledge - performing half of all basic research - or limiting their involvement and forfeiting some portion of activity in these burgeoning research fields to other parties (Adams, 2002: 69).

These parameters are further extended as the industrial sector takes a more significant role in terms of determining what should constitute research. This goes to the heart of the argument that made in chapter two (2.9), regarding the substitution of constitutive, epistemological processes of 'warrant' with the more commonplace social process of 'acceptance'.

In this case, what is being identified as more useful and valuable research/knowledge by the market/industry, is becoming 'accepted' as legitimate research/knowledge. This status quo epitomises the kind of myopic interpretation of the socially constructed process of scientific knowledge that Haack (1998: 112) speaks about, which I discussed in Chapter Two (2.9).

This is a clear example of how the service functions of a university can erode the constitutive, epistemological ones. This situation is also reminiscent of the kinds of uncritical political domination that Von Humboldt and Jaspers (1960) were concerned about when epistemic processes of scientific scrutiny were abandoned for politically accepted (determined) norms regarding what should constitute knowledge, (discussed in the previous chapter).

This epistemological intrusion is further facilitated as universities are forced to form alliances with the private sector, in order to procure goods such as extra funding (Newman, et al., 2004: 61-63; Mc Adams, 2002: 69). These alliances are external to the constitutive, epistemic practices of a university. These external intrusions into the university context have very serious ramifications for the constitutive identity of the university in America today, and also demonstrate the extent to which the foundational ideas of Von Humboldt and Jaspers are being compromised.

Such a proclivity towards industry-university research has resulted in a shift towards the increasing emergence of university-industry research initiatives. Some are concerned that

such a shift will compromise the kind of epistemic integrity that scholarship is based upon (Newman, et al., 2004: 192).

4.5.3.2. The commodification of research as a constitutive epistemological practice and function

The nature of the industry-university liaison does not look optimistic for the identity of the university. The extent to which this dangerous liaison is further impacting on the epistemologically constitutive ideal of the university is through the way that research itself is transformed within a commercial paradigm.

4.5.3.2.1. Intellectual property

The current commercial orientation of academic research and the subsequent commercialisation and capitalisation of this practice is symptomatic of the extent to which the service functions of American universities have impacted on their constitutive, epistemic functions, practices, assumptions, values and aims. A typical example of such an impact is the renaming and attendant epistemological reconceptualisation of the epistemic language that is inherent to the epistemologically constitutive concept of a university.

Of note, is the way 'knowledge' gained through systematic inquiry is now referred to as 'intellectual property'. Such a reconceptualisation marks a seismic shift from systemic inquiry as a process of engagement, (whose advancement belongs to the entire epistemic community) to systematic inquiry and its advancement, belonging to a single person. The shift of knowledge to a 'property' status is symptomatic of the extent to which knowledge and research itself have become capitalised, and hence the erosion of the institutional ideal of the university and its attendant practices and functions.

4.5.3.2.2. Patents

The second example that is symptomatic of this intrusion on research as an epistemologically constitutive practice and function is the institutionalisation of the relationship between this epistemic practice and the commercial sector through the use of patents. Chetty elucidates this scenario as follows,

> The legacy of the Bayh Dole Act, passed in 1980, paved the way for a revolution in the engagement between Higher Education and business and created ripple effects across the globe. Driven by anxiety about declining US productivity and competition with Japan, the Act allowed universities to patent research supported by federal funding. 'The goal of the legislation was to bring ideas out of the ivory tower and into the marketplace, by offering universities the opportunity to license campus based interventions to US based companies, earning royalties in return'. Additional legislation since 1980 has provided business with further inducements to invest in Higher Education (2005: 14).

Even though such an initiative raises productivity in research, and procures large funds for the university as an institution, it also has a detrimental effect on the constitutive identity of this epistemic practice. This negative effect is fore-grounded by the extent to which research as an epistemic practice has been conceptualised within a profit-generating capitalist agenda. This agenda is at odds with the epistemic ideal of excellence and the search for provisionally warranted truths.

4.5.4. Accountability

Another key issue in American universities is the need for accountability to the public that supports them. Issues regarding the accountability of universities are largely about whether the university is a service or an epistemic institution. Some academics argue that a university is a national entity and should therefore be accountable to the public (Newman in Smith and Bender, 2008: 40). Some are even more adamant and conceptualise universities as 'creatures of the State'. They argue that these institutions are funded by taxpayers (through research grants, student financial aid, tax benefits, and suchlike), and should therefore be accountable to the State and be responsive to its needs (Duderstadt and Womack, 2004: 13).

Not all subscribe to this view. Some argue that such an injunction calls into question the constitutive ideal of the university which is founded on institutional autonomy and internal governance (Adams, 2002: 34-35). However, despite such strong resistance, almost half the States in America have implemented performance instruments to monitor basic tasks like student performance, faculty workloads, and more.

The current status quo in American universities regarding the epistemologically constitutive identity of the university is that due to increasing external pressures, this constitutive ideal stands in danger of being eroded. This erosion is a result of the extent to which the service functions and purposes of the service institutional type of American universities have already superseded and are still superseding the epistemologically constitutive, institutional identity of universities in this country.

4.6. Trends in German universities

Despite the strong historical roots of the epistemologically constitutive concept of a university in Germany, universities in this country are also subject to much external criticism and pressures for change. Germany's current trend towards Europeanization and Internationalization through the Bologna Agreement, is putting a huge strain on universities in this country (Pritchard, 2006:95). It is argued that contemporary German universities are in a crisis because of their reluctance to respond to current changes that they are being forced to implement (Baker and Lenhardt, 2008:49).

This dilemma is well summed up by Baker and Lenhardt in the following extract,

> Once an exalted institutional model for Higher Education in Western societies, the German university of today struggles to adapt to new challenges facing Higher Education for the new century, and appears at times entrapped within the myth of its former self (2008: 50).

These pressures for change and their concomitant responses from the university sector have led to many developments in contemporary German universities which are impacting on the identity of universities in Germany today.

4.6.1. Epistemologically constitutive functions within an economic paradigm

Some argue that universities in this country could be improved if they were to assume a more economic paradigm (Hans-Uwe, 2002: 2). This position is however not well received by those who are keenly aware of the value of the epistemologically constitutive, institutional ideal of the university and the extent to which this ideal can be eroded by a shift to an economic paradigm (Pritchard, 2006: 111; Hans-Uwe, 2002: 2).

The following description of the type of discussions regarding pressures to transform the concept of the university in Germany, explicates this disjuncture between the identity, purposes, values and functions of an economic paradigm and that of the ideal paradigm for the university.

> In the current discussions on the future of universities, politicians and representatives of the economy consistently suggest the adoption of economic principles for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of universities. However, quarterly financial statements can not be an adequate way of measuring the performance of universities. It is important that universities stand by their own culture and maintain it. This is the only way a synergetic, productive and beneficial communication and interaction between university, society and economy is possible. The university culture does not aim to make profit, but is characterised by a cognitive interest, curiosity and a certain ethos connected to immaterial values. The function of money at universities should be stimulation not motivation. Thus the consistently repeated complaints at German universities about the insufficiency of funding should also be understood as alarming signals concerning the self-image and the culture at German universities (Hans-Uwe, 2002: 2-3).

Hans-Uwe's (2002: 2-3) analysis of the future of German universities is significant, as it indicates the current tensions that are evolving between the epistemic community and external stakeholders. His concern is predicated upon the extent to which the goods external to constitutive, epistemic practices will determine and erode the constitutive, epistemic values of goods internal to such practices.

In other words, he is concerned that the kinds of corporate values characteristic of an economic paradigm will impact on the values of teaching and research.

Hans-Uwe's (2002) analysis of the extent to which economic principles and values are in opposition to the principles and values that underpin the ideal of the university is underpinned by the principles and values of epistemic excellence that characterise such forms of inquiry. He makes a relevant point in this regard.

A failure to make this distinction is to be ignorant of what the institutional ideal and its concomitant functions and practices are all about. Jaspers makes this point very clear, in his 'Idea of the University',

> All the university recognizes is responsibility to truth. This struggle for truth must not be confused with a struggle for economic existence. It occurs on the level of disinterested investigation (1960:76).

It is within such a context that Von Humboldt's and Jaspers' (1960) age-old principle of maintaining the independence of the university is crucial for the continued existence of the contemporary German university. Hans-Uwe makes the following significant point regarding this principle,

> It is taken for granted that independence of research and teaching is an essential part of universities' identity, and it has to be protected against interference by state or society (2002: 2).

It becomes clear from Hans-Uwe's analysis that a significant part of solving some of the key problems in the German university context centres on the extent to which the identity of the university can remain strong under increasing pressure from external stakeholders, such as the State.

The extent to which the ideal of the university in Germany is moving progressively further and further away from the regulatory ideal of Von Humboldt and Jaspers, is well demonstrated by the extent to which the practices of universities in this country are becoming increasingly subject to external forces, pressures and instrumental functions.

4.6.2. Research

4.6.2.1. The changing purposes of research as a practice and function

The extent, to which the economic paradigm, which seems to be hegemonic in German universities, is eroding the functions of these universities, is clearly demonstrated in its impact on the current significance of research in these universities. The Von Humboldtian dream of research as a practice characterised by disinterested inquiry, is being eroded by more practical economic imperatives, which are contributing to the value and nature of research in contemporary German universities.

The aims of research within such a paradigm are now being characterised in terms of wealth creation, enhancing Germany's competitive edge and other economic imperatives

(Enders, et al., in Adams, 2002: 100). This does not augur well for the future of German universities.

4.6.2.2. Universities are no longer the sole sites of knowledge production

According to Enders, et al., (in Adams, 2002: 86) one of the trends that is currently changing the role of research in German universities, is that universities are no longer the sole sites of knowledge production.

Enders et al., locate this shift to society's transition to a knowledge society, which they argue, has impacted on the unique, epistemic status that was once afforded to universities. This shift is demonstrated by the proliferation of other research-based institutions, with which universities now have to compete for status as knowledge producers (in Adams, 2002: 86).

Globalisation is demanding more of a cutting edge and technologically applied research, thus forcing research to move beyond the confines of the university, to other kinds of research institutes. Enders, et al., extrapolate a key implication of this manoeuvre for what constitutes knowledge in such an era,

> New information and communication technologies influence the distribution and dissemination of knowledge as well as the textual and epistemological meanings of "knowledge" and "science" (in Adams, 2002: 87).

Such a transformation in the epistemology is a result of the relationship between the universities' need for capital to support research initiatives, and the agenda of outside sponsors who are willing to support applied research. In so doing, the more technological and applied kinds of knowledge have more currency than the kind of knowledge which does not have immediate practical results, such as that which is procured through epistemologically constitutive forms of inquiry.

This epistemological propensity also has significant consequences for the underpinning regulatory ideal of a university. This should be the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths/knowledge.

Universities in Germany have lost their status of being the epistemic centres of research and subsequently the key producers of knowledge. The emergence of other research institutions, (for example, the Max-Planck-Society) has caused a significant impact on this declining status of German universities as the epistemic centres of knowledge production.

This has resulted in the migration of good scholars and scientists to these institutes, and a slow depletion of the once-strong epistemic community within such universities. The advantages that these institutes afford researchers are that they enable them to focus solely on their research interests in a pure research setting (Adams, 2002: 14).

This move has serious implications for universities in Germany, especially in terms of Jasper's model of the combination of teaching and research and the epistemologically constitutive nature of these epistemic practices,

> Hence, the combination of research and teaching is the lofty and inalienable basic principle of the university (1960: 58).

For Jaspers (1960), the extent to which the concept of a university depends on the combination of these practices is fore-grounded by his use of the word 'inalienable'. For him it is the social dimension of these practices that make their unity so fundamental to this regulatory ideal, both on the part of the scholar/student and on the part of the researcher.

However, despite these challenges to the ideal of the university, some (Adams, 2002: 90) are still optimistic about the continued existence of this institutional ideal and its respective functions and practices in German universities, as expounded by both Von Humboldt and Jaspers (1960). It is argued that universities in Germany have managed to retain their epistemologically constitutive dimension in the face of difficult epistemological conditions, and this is a result of their strong focus on teaching, as well as their commitment to basic research, which Japers and von Humboldt argued were the cornerstones of the university.

The following quotation reflects a typically optimistic response regarding the acknowledgement of the preservation of the constitutive idea of the university in this country,

> Nevertheless, Higher Education institutions are the specific domain within the German system of research in which the largest proportion of basic research takes place.
>
> It is said that basic research is the "humus of research"; without it applied research would sooner or later lose its innovative capacity. For this reason, universities may rightly be called - as they are in German research policy - the "foundation" of the German system of research (*Bundesbericht Forschung*, 1988:37). This also holds true in another respect: Higher Education institutions train researchers for the whole system. Another reason why universities are the "foundation" of the German research system is their almost complete spectrum of research fields, a number of which are represented nowhere else, and others only to a limited extent in other research establishments or research sectors (Adams, 2002: 90)

The above reflection of the status quo of research as a constitutive practice in German universities augurs well for the prevalence and value that is attributed to this epistemic practice and its continuation in this country.

4.6.3. Research and teaching

German universities try to uphold the unity of teaching and research, according to the Humboldtian ideal. In this respect, unlike their American counterparts, professors and other academic staff share joint teaching and research responsibilities. In addition to this aspect, another key principle that is predicated upon the German ideal is their respect for scientific and scholarly freedom in the pursuit of the production of knowledge (Adams, 2002: 94).

4.6.3.1. Dissolving the unity of these constitutive epistemic practices

Due to socio-political issues, the early 1990s' budgets for education and research in Germany were significantly downsized. The allocation of resources in universities tended to dominate the teaching component. This aspect coupled with their 'open door' policy, (which ensured that universities could increase their admission numbers for a few years, without an attendant increase in monetary and human resources) raised concerns about staff spending more time on trying to cope with teaching to the detriment of their research responsibilities.

The high teaching loads, as a result of the massification in this sector, as well as its impact on continued research productivity, have raised significant concerns in German universities. Often this concern and its sources are misplaced, particularly in instances such as the following, in which policy makers conflate the service functions and service institutional type of the university (Adams, 2002: 100).

Such a stance is also symptomatic of the covert way, in which external stakeholders try to traverse the internally generated epistemic standards and practices,

> The policy makers see this as an efficiency and legitimization crisis; Higher Education institutions see it as a financial crisis. These radically divergent views make it extremely difficult to work out a solution (Adams, 2002: 100).

This deep ignorance of the value of the epistemologically constitutive ideal of the university, which is premised upon its own internal epistemic standards of excellence, is demonstrated by the often conflicting, external pressures on the constitutive practices of the university, which under financial restraints, make the Humboldtian ideal, almost impossible to realise. The following comment goes to the heart of the crisis in Germany, regarding these key epistemic practices,

> …most honors and quality assessments refer to the research function, while most daily pressures are directed toward teaching (Adams, 2002: 88).

This lack of coherence, as demonstrated in the above description, in terms of the kinds of imperatives that are evinced from policy instruments and other external pressures, poses a significant threat to the continued existence of the ideal for universities in Germany.

So despite their ideological allegiance to Von Humboldt's ideal, current external pressures on German universities make this ideal difficult to realise.

4.6.4. Accountability

The current crisis that seems to be evolving in German universities is centred on issues of external accountability. Universities do not think that they need to explain themselves and their continuing relevance to external stakeholders and their respective external criteria. They are thus distrustful of externally constructed accountability measures (Adams, 2002: 100-102).

Debates on the evaluation of universities in Germany have developed since the 1980s, first at an internal level, and then at a more public and policy level. Many evaluation activities are currently underway in universities in Germany, in which most approaches are decentralised. The epistemic community in German universities is critical of external evaluation and demands for relevance, and has thus opted for internal forms of evaluation.

The focus of external forms of evaluation is on teaching, organisational structure of these institutions, curriculum, and suchlike, with only a limited focus on research (Adams, 2002: 100-102).

4.6.5. Conclusion of summary

Despite the proliferation of research in other institutions outside the university, it is still believed that the unity of research and teaching remain significant ideals in both America and Germany. The following comment epitomises such a position,

> Somehow the Humboldtian ideal of the unity of teaching and research has found a way to remain valued and sought after (if rarely achieved) in both countries, retaining its enduring validity even under increasing stress. … Yet an underlying consensus seems to

> hold in both of them that the essential, indefinite centrality of universities in most of their present roles in both countries is assured (Adams, 2002: 17).

What is crucial about this optimistic view is the extent to which it articulates the way practices are underpinned by the German regulatory ideal of the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths, which conforms to the standards and conditions of excellence. If these practices are bereft of this epistemological ideal and internal standards and conditions of epistemic excellence, then these practices will fall short of the ideal which constitutes the formal idea of the university as a concept.

These practices can only assume a recognitor function, and will in so doing represent the material elements only of the university.

4.7. Discussion of trends in America and Germany

Whilst America and Germany each have their own unique problems regarding universities in their countries, it is clear that there are areas of commonality. Change is one of the traits that is characterising both these countries, particularly how the universities there are responding to broader societal changes; and how these changes are impacting on the concept of the university in each country.

What follows is a brief discussion of some of these changes that are influencing the concept of the university in both these countries.

4.7.1. Society and the university

One of the central issues regarding the status quo of universities in Germany (Baker and Lenhardt, 2008: 50; Pritchard, 2006: 50, 92) and America is its projected and expected relationship with society. This tension within the American system is well illustrated in the following criticism,

> The success of American Higher Education has depended on the broad social compact… a widely shared understanding of what it is that Higher Education does for society and the support, privilege, and respect that society provides in return. Over time, this compact has become visibly frayed. Institutions often seem more self-focussed than public-focused. As society continues to change, Higher Education has not always kept

> up with the new demands placed on it. As market forces play a greater role, the risk that Higher Education will fail to meet its side of the compact grows.
>
> …
>
> Governments today are struggling with the task of creating policies that encourage greater responsiveness and accountability on the part of universities and colleges (Newman, et al., 2004: 222-223).

What makes this tension significant for the university in America and Germany is the extent to which this tension and its respective pressures impact on the ideal of a university. Newman, et al. (2004: xi), articulate this concern very clearly as they examine the relationship between the new forces that try to bring universities closer to societal demands, and the subsequent undermining of the university ideal. They refer to this ideal concept in terms of 'traditional purposes', and are critical of the complacency that has enabled this situation to develop,

> What has motivated our efforts to understand these forces is the concern that American Higher Education, feeling successful and satisfied with itself, will fail to understand the speed and significance of the changes under way and drift into new and unexamined structures that undercut Higher Education's traditional purposes (xi).

Two issues regarding this concern merit emphasis here, and that is their reference to the 'traditional purposes' of the university; and the other is the shift to the epistemic community to assert their authority and to take control of this situation.

In other words, their concern is quite simply that, given the extent of and the attendant powers connected with external pressures for change, the epistemic community needs to start examining the effect these external pressures are having on the idea of the university, and to take the lead in fortifying this sacrosanct ideal.

It is interesting and significant that Jaspers proffers the same advice when he describes the inherently, erosive tendencies of the university as an institution,

> Any institution tends to consider itself an end in itself. Though an institutional structure is indispensable to the progress and transmission of research, only constant re-

> examination can ensure its proper functioning on behalf of the ideal it is meant to serve. For administrative organizations are notoriously intent upon perpetuating themselves (1960: 84).

Newman, et al.'s (2004) proclivity to examine the structural changes that are taking place in universities is unwittingly predicated upon Jaspers' (1960) characterization of the corruptive tendencies of institutions, and the need for the epistemic community to be aware of this tendency in the face of the deterioration of the idea of the university. Their concern is that in the face of such demands, the epistemic community needs to protect its fundamental ideas and traditions by examining the nature of these institutional changes and their effects on the idea of the university.

Regarding Newman, et al.'s (2004) concern, Altbach's (2003) analysis of the negligible impact that external pressures and the respective internal changes have on the nature of the constitutive identity of the university, is a good case in point. Altbach's analysis of university trends demonstrates the extent, to which some are not aware of the extent to which these trends impact on the constitutive concept of the university,

> The central realities of Higher Education in the 21st century – massification, accountability, privatization, and marketization – shape universities everywhere, and those who work at them, to differing degrees. Massification has led, among other things, to an expanded academic profession and an academic community that is increasingly unrecognizable. Accountability has limited the traditional autonomy of the profession, more tightly regulating academic work and eroding one of the major attractions of the academic profession. … Marketization has forced academics to be more cognizant of student curricular interests and opportunities for entrepreneurial activities. The sad fact in the era of mass Higher Education is that the conditions of academic work have deteriorated everywhere.
>
> While the current realities are not necessarily detrimental for either the profession or for Higher Education, they do constitute a major shift in the nature of academic institutions and academic work (Altbach, 2003: 2-3).

The above analysis of international trends in Higher Education is premised upon the material elements of the idea of the university - so much so - that as long as the key

epistemic features such as professors are still in universities, the idea of the university remains intact. What is clear is that some critics, like Altbach (2003), confuse the formal elements of the university with its material elements. Altbach's concept of the university is reminiscent of the epistemologically constitutive elements of a university, whose continued existence depends on the inalienability of its constitutive, epistemic practices, values, functions and those purposes that sustain it.

It is my concern that although external realities such as massification, marketization, accountability and privatization, to which Altbach (2003) refers, pose serious challenges to the functioning and existence of the university in contemporary societies, it would be fallacious to wish them away in the hope that the university could continue unperturbed.

In fact, such socio-economic changes and their impact on the idea of the university are historical, but what is of significance, is the extent to which external forces such as these threaten the constitutive identity of the university. It is within such an epistemological context that I disagree with Altbach's (2003) analysis.

What follows is a discussion which focuses on the extent to which the epistemologically constitutive and institutional ideal of a university can be eroded by the service functions of the university as an institution. My discussion will be located within the following two tensions,

- The extent to which the constitutive, epistemic practices of the idea of the university such as research, can be eroded through the intrusion of external forces such as, industry.

  In order to support this discussion I will refer to Habermas (1968), Newman (2004) and Haack (1998).

- The extent to which the epistemic community and their changing roles can impact on the constitutive concept of the university.

  In order to support this discussion I will refer to Derrida (in Cohen, 2001).

4.7.2. The erosion of the constitutive features of epistemic practices

In order to demonstrate how this is possible, I will rely on Habermas' interpretation of the political influence of the State on the university. Although Habermas (1968:4) remains realistic about the role of the university in the socio-economic development of society, specifically with regard to its role in the advancement and dissemination of what he refers to as 'technologically exploitable knowledge', he is critical of the extent to which such a function should determine a university. For him (1968), such an extensive intrusion into the inner sanctity of the university, would have dire consequences for the epistemologically constitutive purposes, practices and functions of the university.

Referring to the extent to which this can happen, he uses the example of how the intrusion of service functions in the form of military imperatives in the research practices of a university can erode the constitutive features of this epistemic practice. According to him,

> While earlier industrially utilizable information was sometimes kept secret or protected for reasons of economic competition, today the free flow of information is blocked primarily by regulations of military secrecy. The interval between discovery and public disclosure for strategically relevant findings is at least three years and in many cases more than a decade.
>
> …
>
> The concrete, objective interest of the scientist integrated into a large organization, aimed at the solution of narrowly circumscribed problems, no longer needs to be coupled from the beginning with a teacher's or publicist's concern with the transmission of knowledge to a public of auditors or readers. For the clients at the gates of organized research, to whom scientific information is addressed, it is now no longer (at least immediately) a public engaged in learning or discussion. It is instead a contracting agency interested in the outcome of the research process for the sake of its technical application. Formerly the task of literary presentation belonged to scientific reflection itself. In the system of large-scale research it is replaced by the memorandum formulated in relation to the contract and the research report aimed at technical recommendations (Habermas, 1968 :76).

What Habermas (1968) is able to demonstrate through the above example, is how the protocol of military politics, in as early as the mid-sixties, eroded one of the key aspects of the social dimensions of epistemic practices. This is in terms of how, for security reasons, the research that is undertaken for military purposes at a university cannot be discussed and reflected upon by the broader epistemic community, for example, in the epistemic practice of teaching.

This restraint, forces a separation between the epistemic practices of teaching and research, which is the central tenet of the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university. Not only does it force a separation, but it also precludes one of the most significant features of these epistemic practices and that is its social dimensions.

Newman, et al., (2004), also demonstrate how current changes in universities, as a result of competitive grants from the State, impact on the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university today,

> Another potential area of distortion is the risk that the competition for funding (and for the prestige – both individual and institutional – that flows from research success) will lead to greater secrecy. The growing value of patents that flow from federally funded university research compounds this danger. University research, in contrast to industrial research, has had the great advantage that its results have been open, allowing the entire scientific community worldwide to share ideas, confirm hypotheses, avoid dead ends, and move forward far more rapidly (Gould, 2003). As university-industry collaboration grows, and as patent income becomes a major source of university revenue, the threat to openness grows (Newman, et al., 2004: 192).

The extent to which the epistemologically constitutive nature of the social dimensions of the idea of the university can be further eroded, is through the extent to which the notion of 'competition' is conceptualised, which is purely in the context of goods external to the epistemic practice of research, as opposed to the context of goods internal to the practice of research. Within the context of patent revenue, researchers are rewarded monetarily for being able to produce cutting edge patents for their industrial clients.

Due to the contingent, external and selfish nature of monetary rewards, the social dimensions of research are revoked; in this sense 'competition' takes on a destructive function.

Altbach (2003) however seems unaware of the destructive potential such an intrusion will make on the epistemologically constitutive ideal of the university, when he argues that changes brought about by socio-economic factors will not change these practices on which the idea of the university is predicated.

4.7.3. The erosion of the epistemic professional

Altbach (2003) argues that the nature of academic institutions and academic work will have to conform to certain changes that current realities dictate. For him these kinds of changes do not threaten the idea of the university and the epistemic practices and professions that are underpinned by this idea. Within such a context Altbach's (2003) characterisation of the idea of the university and its epistemic practices is predicated upon the material elements of the idea of the university.

Altbach (2003) thus demonstrates a lack of insight into the inalienable epistemic characteristics of the university. This is because the basis of his argument is that even if the very nature of this constitutive idea and its epistemic practices were to change this idea and its practices would still be there and remain untouched. By ignoring the epistemologically constitutive nature of the idea of the university and its practices, Altbach (2003) inadvertently characterises the university at the far end of Taylor's (1993) ideal institutional type continuum (see Chapter 2).

Within the parameters of this continuum, Altbach (2003) places the idea of the university in a dominantly service paradigm. In so doing, Altbach (2003) conflates the material elements and functions of the service institutional type with the epistemologically constitutive institutional ideal of the university as an institution. According to him, as long as epistemic professionals, such as lecturers and professors, are in universities, universities will continue to exist.

What he does not realise is that the epistemic professional corps forms the material elements of the university. In other words, they enable us to recognise something about a university. But unless this lecturer or professor is engaging in epistemologically constitutive functions, such individuals do not contribute to a full understanding of the idea of the university, nor do they represent the continued existence of this institutional type.

What he does not seem to realise, is Jaspers' (1960) warning that without its epistemologically constitutive, regulatory ideal, the university would cease to exist.

4.7.3.1. The academic profession as epistemically constitutive

In order to provide a justification for my disagreement with Altbach (2003), I will refer to Derrida's elaboration of a 'profession',

> This word 'profess' of Latin origin (*profiteer*, *fessus sum*, *eri*; *pro et fateor*, which means to speak, from which comes also fable and thus a certain 'as if'), means, in French as in English, *to declare openly, to declare publicly*. In English, says the *OED*, it had only a religious sense before 1300. 'To make one's profession' means then 'to take the vows of some religious order.' The declaration of the one who professes is a *performative* declaration in some way. It pledges, like an act of sworn faith, an oath, a testimony, a manifestation, an attestation, or a promise, a commitment. To profess is to make a pledge while committing one's responsibility. 'To make profession of' is to declare out aloud what one is, what one believes, what one wants to be, while asking another to take one's word and believe this declaration. I insist upon this performative value of the declaration that professes while promising. One must underscore that constative utterances and discourses of pure knowledge, in the university or elsewhere, do not belong, as such, to the order of the profession in the strict sense. … The discourse of profession is always, in one way or another, a free profession of faith; in its pledge of responsibility, it exceeds pure techno-scientific knowledge (in Cohen, 2001: 35-36).

Derrida's elaboration of the notion of a 'profession' goes to the heart of the epistemologically constitutive ideal of a university, which is, inter alia, the social dimension of this ideal. The epistemic community and their commitment to the epistemic values, standards of excellence and aims form the core of this ideal. Within the context

of Taylor's (1993) constitutive institutional type, it is the constitutive epistemic practices and functions of the university that define the values, aims and standards for those who undertake these practices. In other words, it is the implicit epistemic identity of the epistemic practices that is underpinned by the epistemologically constitutive, institutional ideal of a university, which shape the needs and form of those who participate in its practices. Academics and their practices are therefore central to the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university.

In order to undertake such epistemic practices and to be bestowed with the authority to do so, academics have to honour certain standards and obligations, and they also have to take on certain concomitant responsibilities that are defined within the university. .

This declaration of the 'profession' that Derrida (in Cohen, 2001) describes is within the university context, the declaration of, inter alia, the academic. Such a professional declares who he/she is to the public and in this declaration he/she defines his/her epistemic identity, an identity which has certain valuable responsibilities to society in general and to the idea of the university specifically.

This is the responsibility to uphold, to protect and to engage in the epistemic ideal and ensuing academic practices that the idea of the university is predicated upon. This ideal goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge or the production thereof, but which as Derrida (2001) says, is performative by nature. In other words, it is these epistemic practices, according to internally constructed standards, values and aims that have been set out, that distinguish the academic profession from other professions.

Therefore it is not just research in terms of the production of knowledge that defines this regulatory ideal; it is the unity of the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths, and teaching based on this type of inquiry, as well as the social dimensions, that inform this unity. This is what defines the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university.

Altbach's (2003) thesis that the changing nature of the academic profession should not in any way pose a threat to the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university, is predicated upon the service institutional ideal of the university as an institution, in which

the roles of those who participate in the university can be externally defined, e.g. by socio-economic imperatives.

In other words Altbach's (2003) argument, that the academic profession can undergo changes to its nature without posing a threat to the constitutive idea of the university, is based upon a purely service identity of this institution, which views the practices, aims, values of those who participate in these practices as purely instrumental functions. The problem is that such an interpretation of the university is unmindful of the distinction between the university as a service institutional type and its ensuing service functions and aims.

To understand the complexity of what a university is, is to understand this distinction. To ignore this distinction is to lose touch of what a university is all about. In other words, by virtue of their contingent nature the functions and aims of the service dimension of a university do and can change over time. However, by its very nature, the epistemic functions, aims, values and practices of the university cannot be contingent upon external standards.

Changes to the epistemic core of this dimension of the university pose a serious threat to the existence of the university in its truest sense. Altbach's (2003) thesis, and an endorsement of such a view, is in this sense deeply problematic.

4.8. Conclusion

A synopsis of the extent to which the epistemologically constitutive concept of the university in America and Germany is still prevalent and of value in their universities, has demonstrated that the tensions between the service and epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the university is an almost timeless one.

Universities in both America and Germany are experiencing increasing pressures to transform their practices, in order to accommodate more socially relevant service functions. These external pressures and the attendant transformations that have been made to appease external stakeholders have placed the ideal of the university in danger of being completely lost.

Changes are inevitable if the university wants to remain valuable and relevant, but these changes will not affect the epistemologically constitutive ideal of the university. Some are extremely apprehensive of the effect that these changes will have on the constitutive idea of the university and the subsequent demise of the university and its valuable role in society.

What can be gleaned from the experiences of these two countries is that the epistemologically constitutive purposes, practices and functions of the university are always in danger of being eroded by the service purposes and functions of the university which is externally funded. The scarce and subsequently competitive nature of the goods external to the epistemic practices of the constitutive idea of the university plays a major role in corrupting the goods that are internal to the constitutive epistemic practices of the university in both America and Germany.

This propensity is manifest in the following ways, inter alia:

- The way industry uses the lure of much-needed financial sponsorship to hijack the disinterested nature of epistemic inquiry.
- The way certain service function conditions impede the epistemologically constitutive social dimensions of epistemic practices.
- The extent to which the internal epistemic standards of excellence in constitutive epistemic practices, such as teaching and research, are compromised under conditions of massification and by limited budgets.

A strong parallel can be drawn between the way the service functions of contemporary society have corrupted the constitutive concept of the university and its epistemic practices and functions; and the way the service functions of nineteenth century Europe attempted to corrupt the constitutive concept of their universities and their respective epistemic practices and functions: In contemporary society at an international level, the goods external to the constitutive epistemic practices of a concept of a university are characterised mainly by material resources, such as money.

In nineteenth century Europe, the goods external to the epistemologically constitutive concept of a university and its epistemic practices and functions were characterised by political support from the State.

The chronological prevalence of the corrupting tendency of the service functions of the university is a significant one. For any country that wishes to transform its universities into epistemically invaluable cornerstones this truth should not be overlooked.

A post-apartheid, democratic South Africa has many transformatory goals, and the transformation of education in general and universities in particular is high on its agenda. Such an agenda should seek to liberate the previously oppressed from the shackles of an ideologically driven regime to an intellectually independent and critical democracy, and it has identified the university to contribute to the fulfilment of this key transformatory goal.

Pivotal to this goal and its attendant ideals is the need to construct or reconstruct or resurrect a strong concept of the university in South African universities. The extent to which this initiative is possible will be largely influenced by the extent to which the constitutive concept of the university was prevalent during the apartheid era in South Africa.

Using some of the criteria elaborated on in Chapter Two, the next chapter asks the following question: **What was the concept of the university in South Africa during the apartheid era?**

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSITY DURING APARTHEID

5.1. The previous chapter

In the previous chapter I looked at the status quo regarding the constitutive idea of the university in international universities. From the experiences regarding the constitutive epistemic practices and functions in American and German universities, I was able to conclude that despite their commitment to the Humboldtian ideal in principle, current external pressures are slowly eroding the constitutive idea of the university in these countries.

This can be seen by the extent to which constitutive epistemic practices and functions of their universities have been corrupted by the service functions of the universities in these countries. This is also particularly evident in the way that the goods internal to the university in these countries are being violated by the competitive nature of the goods that are external to epistemic practices, such as money and status.

5.2. The aim of this chapter

This chapter aims to provide a description of the constitutive idea of the university in South Africa during apartheid. I begin by demonstrating how the idea of the university was shaped by apartheid policy and laws. I do this by focusing on some of the Acts that circumscribed the fulfilment of the ideal of the modern idea of the university.

I will then provide a description of how a particular apartheid policy, based on the separation of races and the Extension of the University Education Act, shaped the higher education terrain into a highly differentiated one, and how this differentiation then led to a set of competing ideas on the university in South Africa under apartheid.

I attempt to extrapolate some lessons that could be learnt from this account, for the transformation of the idea of the university in the new dispensation in South Africa.

5.3. Apartheid policy and the concept of the university

Education was one of the institutions used to advance the ideology of the apartheid government and its ensuing racist policies in South Africa (Mabokela, 2000: 2). However, since the focus of this thesis is an examination of the concept of the university in South Africa, I will focus on the university sector exclusively.

5.3.1. The university landscape prior to apartheid

Prior to the apartheid system in South Africa, segregation characterised the university landscape in this country. Segregation was a policy that was based on the separation of races. Under a segregated system universities in South Africa constituted ten Higher Education public institutions.

Of the ten, one was established for black people specifically. This was the South African Native College at Fort Hare. Four were Afrikaans universities and admitted white students only. There was also a bilingual correspondence university. Of the four English universities, only three allowed admission to students of all races, and these were the University of Cape Town, the University of Natal and the University of the Witwatersrand.

Prior to 1959, the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand had an open admissions policy, in which merit alone determined admission of a student to their campuses. As a result of this policy, they were referred to as 'open universities' (Beinart,, 1974: vii).

Even though they were referred to as the Open Universities, as they purported to admit students of all races, literature indicates that both segregation and racism were prevalent in some of these 'open universities' even before the National Party assumed power in South Africa (Greyling, 2007: 1-5; Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, 2006:5).

Black people were able to attend white universities, even though this was limited in some instances, during the pre-National Party era.

This choice was however curtailed as soon as the National Party came into power.

5.3.2. The university landscape during apartheid

In 1948 the National Party assumed political power in South Africa. Apartheid was implemented as the National Party's official policy and ideology. Apartheid was used to reinforce and institutionalise the policy of the previous dispensation which was based on racial segregation (Guelke, 2005: 2-5).

The South African apartheid system was a highly sophisticated system which used all social, legislative and executive functions and institutions in South Africa to advance Afrikaner nationalism and its ensuing ideology of apartheid. The apartheid system was predicated on the idea that black people were intellectually, spiritually and morally inferior to their white counterparts. It was therefore believed that not only were black people to be treated differently (differentially), but white people had to be kept separate from them in all areas including universities (Sedgewick, 2004: 1).

The systemic nature of this differentiation is well summed up in the following comment,

> From its inception in 1948, the NP government embarked on a systematic policy campaign to institutionalise the racial classification of universities. These policies not only had the effect of deepening the segregation of Higher Education institutions, but also provided a highly unequal system of funding and political support that exacerbated inequalities between historically black and white universities (Nkomo, Swartz and Maja, 2006: 148-149).

The systemic nature of this racist policy campaign is clearly evident in the kinds of laws and statutes that supported this system. The governed the universities during this period (Mabokela, 2000: 2).

Apartheid universities were shaped by the political idea that universities were 'creatures of the State', and hence many laws were created and enforced to support this belief

(Bunting, 2007: 69). Bunting describes very concisely how this metaphor was applied to the Higher Education policy context,

> The government maintained that any public Higher Education institution in the RSA was essentially a legal entity, a 'creature of the state'. … This made legitimate, the government believed, any decision to restrict institutions to serving the interests of one and only one race group (2007:61).

The promulgation of the *Extension of University Education Act of 1959* meant that black students were no longer allowed to attend white universities without Ministerial consent. In so doing this, Act deprived black students of the choice of applying for admission to white universities that were previously open to them. It also curtailed the freedom of these universities to admit students of their choice, such as black students who met admission requirements.

It was within such a context that universities in South Africa came to be referred to as white universities and black universities.

In addition to the segregation of universities, a panoply of laws and statutes affirmed the power of the National Party. What follow is a selection of some of these laws and statutes, and an account of how these impacted on the concept of the university under apartheid.

5.4. Apartheid legislation and the university context

In order to entrench the racist ideology of the Nationalist government, the legislature was used in the form of, inter alia, various acts, which aimed to not only divide black and white education, but also sought to prevent black people from enjoying the same educational benefits as white people could.

The entrenchment of this racist ideology was clearly demonstrated in certain principles that underpinned key acts which determined universities in specific ways. Here is an interesting example,

> The idea of a tertiary institution exclusively for black students owes its genesis, at least in part, to Article 14 of the Christian National Manifesto of 1948: 'With regard to the

> national principle, we believe that the coloured man can be made *race conscious* if the principle of apartheid is strictly applied in education' (Nkomo, et al., 2006: 67).

This equation is however, not as simplistic as it seems. It was not simply that white universities themselves were allowed to flourish freely in autonomous sites of higher learning; these institutions were also gravely restricted in all the central aspects that constitute a university as an autonomous site of higher learning.

Some acts not only directly impacted on the freedom of black students to study at an institution of their own choice, but this act also directly affected historically white universities (although this category related more to historically white English-medium universities). This denied such institutions the freedom to accept any student who met their academic requirements.

In so doing, this affected the entire university landscape by preventing a truly representative community of scholars and apprentice scholars from being part of the university community, of universities in South Africa and internationally.

I will now provide short descriptions of some of the Acts that impacted on the constitutive identities of South African universities during this period. Although these Acts were applicable to all South African universities, my descriptions focus mainly on the experiences of some universities, as information on these institutions was more readily available than others.

Since I am attempting to show how apartheid policy impacted on the constitutive epistemological functioning and practices of universities in South Africa during this period, this selection will have to suffice.

5.4.1. The Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959

The Extension of University Education Act 45 of 1959 restricted access of black students into certain white universities, and section 14 of this act, enabled the Minister to restrict university access to any student. This Act remains a classic example of how race affected the demographics of Higher Education institutions in Apartheid South Africa, and not only shaped the future of the Higher Education landscape in South Africa, but also had a

direct bearing on how the idea of the university was shaped in this era. The regulatory impetus of this piece of legislation can be seen in the following excerpt from this Act,

> **Extension of University Education Act, Act No.45 of 1959**
>
> Act No. 45 of 1959
>
> To provide for the establishment, maintenance, management and control of university colleges for non-white persons; for the admission of students to and their instruction at university colleges; for the limitation of the admission of non-white students to certain university institutions; and for other incidental matters (aluka.org,2007: 1).

Other extensions of this Act also impacted on the identity of the university as an autonomous institution. Section 13 (4) of this Act, which enabled the Minister to restrict the number of students who could register for a particular course is one of many such examples. Here is an excerpt from this Act,

> **496 Extension of University Education**
>
> Act No. 45 (4) The Minister may, after consultation with the council, of 1959, in his discretion limit the number of students who may be permitted to register for any course (aluka.org, 2007: 7).

The significance of this Act and its implications for the concept of a university in Apartheid South Africa is clearly enormous. In this respect, the constitutive epistemological functions of the academic community, such as determining epistemological access to South African students were significantly curtailed and subsequently absent in South African universities (CHE, 2005:7).

This Act and its 43 amendments also deprived South African universities of some of the core functions of the university, which are embedded in its social dimensions and practices. These functions are enabled when a diversity of students and academics come together as a scientific community and engage in constitutive epistemic practices and functions.

According to Jaspers, the concept of a university is about an epistemic community who come together with the united task of 'scholarly or scientific learning and teaching'

(1960: 19). It is within the ambits of this task that Jaspers (1960) locates a crucial task of the university, which is to unite people.

For him the university is not just the locus of knowledge, but it is also essentially the commingling of students and scholars within an epistemic context. This is how Jaspers describes this social dynamic,

> In order to do the work of the university successfully, there must be communication of thinking men. Scholars must communicate with one another, teachers with their students and the students among themselves. Communication of all with all is necessary - each according to his intellectual level (1960: 51).

He reinforces the centrality of this trait when he refers to the original meaning of the concept: university,

> The original sense of *universitas* - a community of teachers and students - is just as important as the unity of all studies (Jaspers, 1960:75).

By separating students according to their race, South African universities were prevented from engaging in some very significant constitutive epistemological functions and practices.

5.4.2 The Suppression of Communism Act of 1950, the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1953 and the Terrorism Act of 1967

This is another one of the many Acts which had a significant effect on the development and functioning of constitutive epistemic practices in South Africa during Apartheid,

> **Suppression of Communism Act, Act No. 44 of 1950**
>
> To declare the Communist Party of South Africa to be an unlawful organization;
>
> To make provision for declaring other organizations promoting communistic activities to be unlawful and for prohibiting certain periodical or other publications; to prohibit certain communistic activities; and to make provision for other incidental matters.
>
> …Definitions:

> (ii) "communism" means the doctrine of Marxian socialism as expounded by Lenin or Trotsky, the Third Communist International (the Comintern) or the Communist Information Bureau (the Cominform) or any related form of that doctrine expounded or advocated in the Union for the promotion of the fundamental principles of that doctrine and includes, in particular any doctrine or scheme:
>
> (a) which aims at the establishment of a despotic system of government based on the dictatorship of the proletariat under which one political organization only is recognized and all other political organizations are suppressed or eliminated or
>
> (b) which aims at bringing about any political, industrial, social or economic change within the union by the promotion of disturbance or disorder, by unlawful acts or omissions or by the threat of such acts or omissions or by means which include the promotion of disturbance or disorder, or such acts or omissions or threat; … (aluka.org, 2008a: 1).

Under this Act, constitutive epistemic functions, such the freedom to engage in research and teaching were curtailed. Here is a typical example of the application of this Act which prevented the practice of constitutive epistemic functions during the apartheid regime,

> Several academics restricted under the Suppression of communism Act, such as Professors Edward Roux and H. J. Simons and Dr Raymond Hoffenberg, were excluded from both teaching and research work in terms of their restriction orders (Beinart, 1974: 29-30).

What exacerbated this situation, was that the nature of these Acts was so broad and vague that it was fairly easy to convict people or prohibit them from their daily constitutive epistemological practices without needing much or any material evidence for proof of 'treacherous behaviour'. Potential dissidents were thus incarcerated or detained if they were perceived to be stepping out of line, by, for example, saying something that could or could not function as a threat to the apartheid government.

The extent to which the service functions of the apartheid university, in terms of its ideological allegiance to the National Party, impacted on the epistemologically constitutive functions of these universities is indeed very significant and blatant.

5.4.3. Terrorism Act 1967, Act No. 83 of 1967

Terrorism Act 1967, Act No. 83 of 1967

To prohibit terrorist activities and to amend the law relating to criminal procedure; and to provide for other incidental matters.

(vi) "terrorist means any person who has committed an offence under section 2 or an act which had or was likely to have had any of the results referred to in section 2 (2); (vii)

Terrorism 2 (1) Subject to the provisions of subsection (4), any person who

(a) with intent to endanger the maintenance of law and order in the Republic or any portion thereof, in the republic or elsewhere commits any act or attempts to commit, or conspires with any other person to aid or procure the commission of or to commit, or incites, instigates, commands, aids, advises, encourages or procures any other person to commit, any act; or
(b) in the republic or elsewhere undergoes, or attempts, consents or takes any steps to undergo, or incites, instigates, commands, aids, advises, encourages or procures any other person to undergo any training which could be of use to any person intending to endanger the maintenance of law and order, and who fails to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he did not undergo or attempt, consent or take any steps to undergo, incite, instigate, command, aid, advise, encourage or procure such other person to undergo such steps (aluka.org, 2008b: 1-2).

Terrorism Act No. 83

(l) To embarrass the administration of the affairs of the State (aluka.org, 2008b: 3).

These Acts were designed to prevent any subversive activity that was committed to bring about social and political change. The impending penalties of prosecutions without trial and banning orders that were associated with the contravention of these acts, made open debate on socio-political subjects like Marxism, the law and race, as well as other similar

issues, a very dangerous venture. Here is one account of the consequences of such activities,

> On March 25, 1965, the Apellate Division of the South African Supreme Court rejected the appeals of Dr Neville Alexander and his ten comrades. Arrested in July, 1963 and indicted under the "Sabotage Law," The Eleven were convicted on April 15, 1964 and sentenced to prison terms ranging from five to ten years. In reality, they have been sentenced to indefinite terms: Under South African law, any prisoner can be held *after* having completed his sentence as long as the Minister of justice deems his further detention to be in the 'public interest.' Dr Alexander and his friends were never accused of having committed any act of violence; nor even of having planned one. The prosecution sought to prove only that they had formed study groups to investigate various possible methods of conducting the struggle against apartheid and had read and discussed Marxist literature and works on guerrilla warfare. Nor had any of the defendants a long political past. Dr Alexander, it is true, had been active at the University of Cape Town in student groups affiliated with the Unity Movement of South Africa. But his initiative in forming the study groups was his first act of political leadership. For the other defendants, joining the study groups was their first political action of any sort. That such severe penalties were imposed on such novices, whose efforts were still in the stage of general discussion, demonstrates how terrified the South African regime is of *any* potentially serious opposition (Langston, 1965: 66).

There was also the danger that engaging in open debates on these issues in the classroom would be misapprehended as an opportunity to incite students to engage in treacherous activities. This situation was even more dangerous as the government paid students to act as informers for them. These informers would thus wittingly or unwittingly misconstrue certain issues and see them in a negative light. The potential and actual presence of these informers, together with the government's arbitrary prosecution of students without trial of justification, made students reluctant to commit themselves to engage in open debates on many issues. Open debates in which issues were examined and discussed were not encouraged (Beinart, 1974: 39-40).

This climate was vividly described by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of the Witwatersrand in 1969,

> There is a second form of interference with the freedom of an academic body to conduct its affairs in the true university tradition, and that is by the process of intimidation and thinly veiled espionage. What company would find it possible to conduct its business properly in the knowledge that within its own walls there are persons prepared to carry information to outside authority and be paid for doing so? Yet, the principal of a university cannot help being aware of the fact that there are students who are paid to keep their eyes and ears open for any remark or action that could be reported and so earn themselves a reward; that every student meeting is likely to be attended by plain-clothes police and photographers; that a group of students presenting their viewpoint to their fellow citizens is likely to come under the immediate scrutiny of a posse of policemen and to be dispersed by the aid of riot dogs (a sledgehammer to a gnat); that students are likely to be whisked away and disappear for months without any communication; that students are likely to have passports withdrawn for no stated reason (in Beinart, 1974: 39-40).

One of the key constitutive functions of a university is to afford the epistemic community the opportunity to come together in a safe environment to engage in open discussions on any topic, no matter how controversial. The kind of climate that was fostered by these Acts prevented such epistemic engagement, and thus circumscribed the very nature of the university in South Africa during this period.

This kind of political climate also impacted on the types of courses and research topics that academics chose, and in this way circumscribed not only the content of curricula but also the foci of research.

5.4.4. Contempt of Court

The production/development of scholarship was also very circumscribed, and academics had to be very careful about what they wrote for fear of prosecution. The government clearly did not tolerate any kind of examination of its system and institutions, and went to any lengths to demonstrate this (Beinart, 1974: 27). The following prosecution (although he was later acquitted) is one of many examples that demonstrate this system of epistemic repression,

> The courts have wide powers to punish persons for Contempt of Court and it has recently been shown that scholars are not immune from prosecution in respect of their scholarly writings. In 1970 Dr B van D van Niekerk of the Law School of the University of the Witwatersrand was prosecuted for contempt of court arising out of an article he published in the *South African Law Journal* in which he discussed the racial factor in the imposition of the death penalty in South Africa (Beinart, 1974: 27).

Dugard describes similar experiences,

> I was a legal academic during the apartheid era. Legal academics who wrote and spoke about the injustices of apartheid played a risky game. Professor Barend van Niekerk was prosecuted twice and convicted once for contempt of court arising out of comments he made urging judges to play a more active role in the promotion of human rights… .
>
> I too was investigated for contempt of court on several occasions and convicted under the Internal Security act 44 of 1950 for reading the speech of a "banned" person (that is a person who might not be quoted, 2008: 3).

This restriction on the kinds of subjects and issues that academics could pursue during apartheid imposed serious impediments on another significant epistemologically constitutive practice, and that is the freedom to choose any subject or issue worthy of scholarly engagement/epistemic interest. Jaspers refers to this key characteristic of the idea of the university, when he refers to one of the assumptions of science,

> A further important assumption of science pertains to the choice of subject to be investigated. The scientist selects his problem from among an infinite number of possibilities (1960: 35).

Government proscription during apartheid threatened this basic epistemic assumption at its very core. The extent to which research was circumscribed by the government in South Africa during the apartheid era points to a very instrumentalist idea of science that was espoused by the government. It was instrumentalist in the sense that the only kind of scholarship that was endorsed was the kind that was not hostile to the government and its

ideology. This predilection invariably shaped the depth and parameters of scholarship in this era and foregrounded the extent to which the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the university in Apartheid South Africa were superseded /substituted by its service functions and practices.

5.4.5. The Publications and Entertainment Act

This Act was promulgated by the government to prevent the dissemination of any kind of information that would challenge the deceptive epistemological basis of their (government's) ideological deceit. Practices such as the development and dissemination of scholarship and teaching were seriously affected by this Act. In so doing this Act eroded constitutive epistemic practices and functions of the constitutive epistemological institutional ideal of South African universities during this period.

Here are two excerpts from this Act which demonstrate the extent to which the conditions for the development of these constitutive epistemic practices were eroded,

> **The Publications and Entertainment Act, No. 26 of 1963**
>
> The Act established the Publications Control Board and introduced a system of control over "undesirable" publications, objects, films and public entertainment. The Board was invested with powers to –
>
> - Examine publications or objects with a view to prohibiting the production and dissemination of publications and objects found to be "undesirable";
> - Vet films intended for public exhibition; and
> - Prohibit any public entertainment deemed to be "undesirable".
>
> In so far as films were concerned, the Act expanded section 5 of the previous Act to include the prohibition of the approval of any film which, in the opinion of the Board,
>
> - Offends the religious convictions or feelings of any section of the inhabitants of the republic into ridicule or contempt;
> - Harms relations between any sections of the inhabitants of the republic, or
> - Propagates or promotes communism, as defined in the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950 (gov.za, 2008a: 2).

The Publications Act, No. 42 of 1974

> Apart from amendments mainly concerned with bringing publications within the scope of censorship laws, no new legislation was introduced until the enactment of the Publications Act, 1974, which replaced the Publications Control Board with a Directorate of publications, and replaced the section 10 category of films which may not be approved under the 1963 Act with a simpler but broader category of "undesirable" films, publications, objects or public entertainments which:
>
> …
>
> - Are prejudicial to the safety of the State, the general welfare or the peace and good order (gov.za, 2008b: 2-3).

According to Beinart, (1974: 28) the Publications Control Board was set up to discern which books were acceptable and which were not. The decisions of the members of this board had a severe impact on the literary development and dissemination of literature and scholarship in South Africa during this time,

> The actions of the Board and its predecessors have resulted in the 'banning' of more than 26 000 works, many of which are books of accepted literary quality (Beinart, 1974: 28).

This Act prevented students and academics from writing on subjects that were deemed unsatisfactory by the government. Not only were there works banned but the writers were also prosecuted. Published works that were judged to be controversial were not allowed to be studied at the university, and anyone found in possession of them would be subject to prosecution. Not only did this Act restrict the parameters of scholarship, but it also impacted on constitutive epistemic practices, such as teaching and learning, in that it banned the teaching and discussion of certain publications in universities.

Speaking from his experience of Prussia under the Nazi regime, Jaspers commented gravely on how a university suffers under intense State control. The following comment that Jaspers made, is very poignant not just because of the severity of his tone, but

because it mimics the South Africa university context that I was just describing very vividly,

> Politics has a place at the university, not as actual struggle, but as an object of research. Where political struggles invade the university, it is the idea of the university itself which suffers. Since the existence and external form of the university are dependent upon political decisions and good will, there is no room within the confines of the university, free from state interference by state consent, for political conflict and propaganda, only for the quest for truth.
>
> This means that the university requires absolute freedom of teaching. The state guarantees the university the right to carry on research and teaching uncontrolled by party politics or by any compulsion through political, philosophical, or religious ideologies.
>
> Academic freedom extends not only to research and thought but also to teaching (1960:141).

Any examination of the concept of the university under apartheid would be incomplete if it did not take into account how the State's ideological conceptualisation of its universities eroded the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of those universities. What is also of crucial importance to this historical context is also the extent to which the political functions of these universities replaced/superseded their constitutive epistemological ones.

Since the Apartheid government used the university to separate people, suppress ideas and dissent and to demonstrate its power, politics became actualised in the university, not as an object of research but rather as a way of objectifying a particular concept of the university and its embodiment. It is within such a context that a value like academic freedom was anathema to the Apartheid State. It was therefore inevitable that the concept of the university suffered, since many universities were established on political grounds and became instruments of the State.

The establishment of most historically white Afrikaans-medium and black universities is a significant case in point.

The Extension of University Education Act of 1959 highlights some of the most significant themes in universities under apartheid which were issues of State intervention, academic freedom and institutional autonomy. Academic freedom and institutional autonomy are key characteristics of any concept of the university. Without these two freedoms the university will find it very difficult to fulfil its two core duties which are the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths and teaching based upon such scholarship.

Current debates regarding universities under apartheid focus on the extent to which we can actually refer to universities during this period, as actual universities. For some, given the intensity of State control and the extent to which universities were used by the State to further their aims, the university in the true sense of the word did not exist in South Africa. For others again, despite the challenge of State interference, many attempts were made to try and fight for academic freedom and institutional autonomy and in so doing to try and construct and preserve some coherent idea of the university.

In order to understand such issues more clearly it is necessary to paint a picture of the Higher Education landscape during apartheid.

5.5. The racial classification of universities and the concept of a university under apartheid

The Extension of University Education Act of 1959, influenced the conceptualisation and identity of universities in Apartheid South Africa (Bunting, 2007: 65).

During the apartheid era universities were classified as historically black and white universities. This classification was extended further to distinguish between historically white Afrikaans-medium and historically white English–medium universities. This distinction demonstrates the complex political and academic identity of universities during Apartheid (Bunting, 2007: 65).

5.5.1. A general overview of historically white Afrikaans-medium universities

These universities were run, managed and supported by academic and administrative staff and students that strongly buttressed the National Party; this position was affirmed through the uncritical support that they gave to the policies that governed universities at the time. Bunting comes to the following conclusion that provides insight into the tension or lack thereof that existed between the political and academic identities of these universities at that time,

> They accepted the government's ideology of universities being 'creatures of the state' and therefore took their chief function to be that of acting in the service of the government. … The high level of support which these universities gave to government had a major impact on their academic and governance structures: by the 1990s they could be described as instrumentalist institutions which were governed in strongly authoritarian ways (Bunting, 2007: 66).

The knowledge that was generated, reproduced and disseminated within these universities was contextualised within the socio-political framework of the National Party, and hence took on a predominantly instrumental value, which was to advance the National Party agenda. In so doing these universities assumed a dominantly service function. This kind of instrumentalist approach engendered an academic culture that had a very limited social conscience with regard to how people of colour were being abused and oppressed. It lacked a critical culture and discourse both within and outside of the university; it developed a pedagogy that was underpinned by a racist ideology and its research imperatives were largely limited to the interests of the government (Bunting, 2007: 66).

Within such a context it is clear that the epistemologically constitutive functions of these universities were superseded by the State-imposed service functions of these universities, as was the case in Germany during the Nazi regime.

The political nature and identity of the research foci of these universities is well illustrated by the following examples,

> A great deal of their research involved policy work for the government and government agencies and technological work undertaken on contract for defence-related industries (Bunting, 2007: 68).

This example illustrates the extent to which the political service functions of these universities compromised the epistemologically constitutive functions and identity of these universities.

Although not all historically white Afrikaans-medium universities conformed to this description, the majority of them did, and in so doing played a major role in providing a strong epistemological basis for the apartheid government. These universities also played a major role in allowing themselves to be conceptualised in terms of their political service identity in contrast to their epistemologically constitutive identity, or a balance between the two.

It is clear that epistemic forms of inquiry, such as epistemologically constitutive practices of warrant that depend on specific epistemological values and principles were abandoned, in favour of the social acceptance status of the National Party, whom they supported.

5.5.2. A general overview of the historically white English-medium institutions

These universities referred to themselves as liberal in protest of the government's belief that universities were 'creatures of the state'. The reference to liberal here is a reference to the pursuit of disinterested inquiry, as opposed to engaging in research and teaching that serviced the needs of the National Party's agenda. They argued that serving the needs of the government would go against their commitment to institutional autonomy and academic freedom (Bunting, 2007: 70; Greyling, 2007: 173).

The role of these universities under apartheid is frequently a contentious issue. For some, these universities were no better than their Afrikaner counterparts, as it is argued that they did very little if anything at all to rebel against apartheid. But here the issue is more complex, as these universities argue that they made a concerted effort to challenge State intervention in order to preserve a legitimate concept of the university in their institutions.

Challenges to this stance were often intermingled with political issues of political emancipation and academic issues of the maintenance of the idea of the university. For some it did not matter whether these universities fought for academic freedom or not, for others these institutions had reneged on their social responsibilities and in this sense negated any idea of the university that they purported to hold sacrosanct.

For this position it is an 'all or nothing' stance, for others again it is just a matter of these institutions being another apartheid instrument and enjoying the benefits that their complicity in this nexus ensured (Hendricks, 2008: 2-4; Greyling, 2007: 173; Shackleton, 2007: 13; Jansen, 2004c: 8; Davies, 1996: 324).

According to other commentators however, these institutions rejected and challenged the apartheid government's racist stance and policies. These universities saw themselves as part of an international community of scholars and argued that they engaged in the production, reproduction and dissemination of knowledge for its own sake, as opposed to the kind of instrumental epistemic practices that would help to sustain and maintain the political status quo.

This position is demonstrated by the kinds of proscriptions that were established within these institutions to prevent academics from these universities taking on defence-related work. These universities fought for institutional autonomy and academic freedom in their attempt to preserve an idea of the university, within the Apartheid State that saw universities as their legal instruments (Halsey, 1976: 2-3; Birley, 1965b: 3,1965a: 4).

The Davie Lectures were developed to openly demonstrate the attempts of the English Universities to resist State intervention in their institutions. Professor Halsey, who represented the British Council, made the following comments, in his lecture entitled, 'Academic Freedom and the Idea of a university', at the Seventh Davie Memorial Lecture,

> But it begins and ends in a dogma - that the quest for truth is endless and the pursuit of truth is the ultimate raison d'etre of the university. Hence the perpetual concern with academic freedom – its meaning, its justification and its realisation in an ever-changing world. The open society must know its enemies. Truth can never be made visible

> without freedom of thought, enquiry and publication. These liberties, together with the inviolability of the person are essential pre-conditions of both the civilized society and the university.
>
> We are entitled, I think, to demand, in season and out of season and in the name of our liberal inheritance, that a decent society must guarantee freedom to express opinions in so far as these opinions accept fully the rights of others to do likewise and we have the duty to resist any attempt at their suppression.
>
> … There is however, a troublesome addendum to be made. It has been repeatedly argued in these lectures that freedom is indivisible – that academic freedom is the freedom of citizenship in a special context. Can we say the same of truth? I think we can. Yet one can conceive, for example, of an effective organization for discovery of truths about the natural world under a regime of political tyranny or in a society with extremely unequal access to the scientific vocations. The additional argument must be that in an organization of higher learning which may properly be called a university all truth must be in principle accessible to all men. The idea of a university, in short, embodies the idea of indivisible truth and indivisible freedom (Halsey, 1976: 2-3).

Halsey's contribution is significant in that not only is he blatantly critical of the repressive tendencies of the State, but he also foregrounds a concept of the university, which is characterised by the pursuit of truth and the freedom to engage in this constitutive epistemological practice. Implicit in his argument is the critical function of a university, as the necessary condition for its pursuit of epistemic excellence. He asks the important question: Can we even imagine the pursuit of disinterested inquiry in a repressive context?

His answer to his question is that the pursuit of truth, like freedom to pursue and disseminate this truth, must be the governing principle of the university in any context.

Other commentators have also attested to the rejection of State intervention in these institutions. In his lecture entitled 'The shaking off of burdens' at the seventh, T.B. Davie Memorial lecture in the University of Cape Town in August 1965, visiting international academic, Professor Robert Birley acknowledged not only his rejection of,

but also the resistance of these universities to, state interference regarding admission of all races,

> It is for this reason that I feel that the decision to forbid entry to the English Universities to those who are Non-Whites was so deplorable, and it was for this reason, no doubt, that these Universities resisted the measure.
>
> … And, in fact, it is because you yourselves believe that this reversal of policy should still be fought for that you are listening to this Memorial lecture (1965b: 14).

In addition to such initiatives, the University of the Witwatersrand also demonstrated their resistance to state interference, through the establishment of The Chancellor's Lecture, which was held every third year, to pay tribute to the General Assembly of the University which avowed the following dedication on 16th April 1959,

> We are gathered here today to affirm in the name of the University of the Witwatersrand that it is our duty to uphold the principle that a university is a place where men and women without regard to race and colour are welcome to join in the acquisition and advancement of knowledge and to continue faithfully to defend this ideal against all who have sought by legislative enactment to curtail the autonomy of the university.
>
> Now therefore we dedicate ourselves to the maintenance of this ideal and to the restoration of the autonomy of our university (Birley, 1965: 3).

Such a dedication is significant, as it highlights a strong concept of the university that is located in the Modernist conception of the university, which is predicated not only upon the unity of teaching and research, but also a community of scholars coming together to engage in such constitutive epistemic practices. It is within such a context that the fight for the preservation of institutional autonomy within these institutions gained and maintained impulse.

5.5.2.1. Challenges to the concept of the university in these universities

There have however been several challenges in the fight for institutional autonomy and academic freedom that these historically white English-speaking universities fought for.

Some of these criticisms are located in questioning the legitimacy of the concept of a university that operated in a vacuum, unfettered by the consequences of the socio-political policies of the apartheid regime in society at large.

Such critics question the veracity of the fight for institutional autonomy and academic freedom of these universities during apartheid. (Hendricks, 2008: 2-4; Greyling, 2007: 173; Bunting, 2007: 73; Shackleton, 2007: 13; Jansen, 2004c: 8). Here is one response that articulates such a position:

> Mamdani (1998) has commented that the historically white English-medium universities were never major agents for social and political change in South Africa, despite the anti-apartheid stance they had adopted. He maintains that their systems of governance and their intellectual agendas made these four institutions islands of white social privilege during the years of apartheid oppression, and maintains further that they displayed little sense of social accountability to the broader South African community during this period (Bunting, 2007: 73).

Mamdani's (in Bunting, 2007: 73) criticism is located within a particular concept of the university, which sees the role of the university in a particular way. Such a view characterises the function of a university as an agent of socio-political change. It is the failure of these universities to take a stand against the socio-economic policies of the apartheid government that Mamdani (in Bunting, 2007: 73) refers to in his assessment of the subversive role that these universities played during apartheid.

Mamdani's (in Bunting, 2007: 73) criticism can be contextualised in Kerr's (1963) concept of the multiversity, in which Kerr argues that the "edges" of a university are "fuzzy" (1963: 19). The point that Kerr makes is that the boundaries between a university and society are permeable and that the university as a community also includes amongst others, its relationship with society, whom it also serves to a significant degree (1963: 18-19).

The question that emerges from such a stance is the extent to which the role of a university should be involved in broader socio-political issues. To what extent can

universities be expected to exist in a vacuum surrounded by broader socio-political turmoil?

In a commemorative lecture entitled, 'The shaking off of burdens' at the seventh, T B Davie Memorial lecture in the University of Cape Town in August 1965, Professor Robert Birley echoes the kind of vision of a university that Mamdani supports. Here is an excerpt from his lecture, which is significant as it ties in very well with descriptions of Nazi universities to which I referred in Chapter Three,

> The freedom of Universities may be destroyed in order to establish or perpetuate injustice. This is what happened in Nazi Germany, when their freedom had to be destroyed in order that there might be no opposition to a government which thought of the nation as the "master race" and of many other peoples, not only the Jews as *Untermensschen* or sub-humans.
>
> … It is certainly not the business of a university to become a kind of unofficial political opposition. But it does not mean that it should ignore what happens in the world outside it. The fate of the German universities in the 1930s should be a warning to us. They believed that, as long as they preserved the right of free research and free teaching within their own walls, they did not need to concern themselves about what else was happening in their country. As a result they did nothing to oppose the rise to power of a political party which had made it quite clear that it intended to destroy the academic freedom which the Universities enjoyed. I should say that a university today should be deeply concerned about the denial of justice beyond its own walls (Birley, 1965: 15-16).

The gist of this extract locates within the idea of the university a social responsibility to the society it serves. A responsibility which dictates that a university should not resort to an ivory tower status but which should also confront the atrocities that are happening in the broader society. The extent, to which these universities acted as change agents in an Apartheid South Africa, will remain a moot point, but what is clear from Birley's (1965: 15-16) lecture is that such issues were recognised and discussed.

Adesina (2006) also provides an insightful critique regarding the functions and identities of these universities during this period. His critique focuses on the kind of decisions that were taken at these universities during the apartheid period,

> In reality, it co-existed not too dis-comfortably with racialism (cf. Appiah 2001), if not outright racism; sexism and a feudal mindset in the running of universities and academic departments. When in 1968 the University of Cape Town (UCT) denied Archie Majefe an academic post, it was not a passive victim of the apartheid state. Similar illustrations abound for the University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes University and the University of Natal.
>
> A shared legacy of racism, patriarchy and authoritarian order: Here the case of Rhodes University under the apartheid system may suffice. From Terence Beard to Barry Streek; from Steve Biko to Zubeida Jaffer, what came across was a record of cold complicity in a system of intolerance, racism and authoritarianism (Adesina, 2006: 4).

Such an evaluation, calls into question the intellectual integrity of these universities and argues that implicit in the outspoken resistance to State interference, these universities were not objects of apartheid but were actually perpetrators of oppression and repression themselves, and engaged in a symbiotic relationship with the State. Such a relationship enabled them freedom in some ways but also made them apartheid conspirators. Jansen's analysis of the issue of autonomy within these universities corroborates such a stance in the following extract,

> The first is to concede that autonomy as a historical and political concept is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, the struggle *for* autonomy enabled the white English **universities**, and in particular UCT and Wits, to declare themselves 'open' and reserve the right to admit 'non-Europeans' (as **black** people were then called). On the other hand, it was also a powerful instrument in the hands of institutions to determine how many to admit, to what facilities, and into which programmes. The same argument could be made for staffing appointments. In preparing for this Lecture, I was struck by the deep racism, offensive paternalism and sense of European mission (let alone epistemological naivete) that accompanied moving arguments by the great English liberal men for greater autonomy with respect to decisions over admissions. Is it possible, therefore, that the racial distribution of senior **academic** staff at the former white **universities** reflects, at least in part, the negative consequences of institutional autonomy? (Jansen, 2004c: 8).

For Jansen (2004c) the fight for institutional autonomy that these universities projected was a subterfuge that enabled them to engage in a circumscribed kind of racism. This

kind of racism it was argued, was a form of discrimination that enabled these universities to allow only a select number of black students into a limited selection of career choices, and which appointed black academic staff provided that they only occupied non-senior positions.

Du Toit's (in CHE, 2005) analysis of the situation corroborates Jansen's (2004c:8) position. An interpretation of this analysis is presented below,

> He notes that the 'categorical and unqualified assertion' of the TB Davie formulation of academic freedom was made by the open universities at a time when all were overwhelmingly dependent on state funding to a much greater extent than would be conceivable today. Thus, apart from confronting the state on the issue of 'racial' admissions and staffing, other aspects of governance relationships remained relatively unaffected. Furthermore, the open universities still 'primarily understood their mission in continuity with a colonial heritage' and in this respect 'a handful of black students and a few solitary black academic staff members in junior positions made no impact.
>
> … Du Toit cites a further consequence of apartheid for the liberal conception of academic freedom in South African Higher Education… : the TB Davie formulation essentially conflated the concepts of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, directing attention continually at external threats to freedom, to the neglect of consideration of internal ones (in CHE, 2005:8).

For du Toit (in CHE, 2005) what was problematic about the way these universities conceptualised 'institutional autonomy' and 'academic freedom', was that it was embedded in opposition to external intervention from the State, and what they neglected to address was the kind of repression that was entrenched within the walls of these universities, through the internal governance culture of these institutions.

Du Toit substantiates this claim with the following examples that were prevalent in these institutions at the time,

> These include: the rise of managerialism; the demise of collegial faculty practices; the absence of an appropriate conception of academic tenure; the failure to empower disciplinary discourse by engaging the needs of social and political accountability; and

> slowness to transform institutional cultures that have historically been colonised and racialised (in CHE, 2005: 12).

Du Toit (in CHE, 2005: 12) is thus not ignorant of the fight of the historically white English-medium universities for institutional autonomy and academic freedom with the State. He is critical of the internal governance of such institutions which he argues remained stagnated in colonial and racist practices.

On the other hand, other critics are also dismissive of the authenticity of the institutional autonomy that these institutions fought for and stood for, in opposition to the State. Here is a typical example of such a position,

> From this he finds that the 'classical idea' of academic freedom as the autonomy of the university from state interference - upheld at that time by the English-medium universities - was negated as a fallacy. The concept of academic freedom was accordingly distorted by the apartheid state as it 'tie[d] itself in knots trying to argue its own position as the right and the neutral position. The report favoured the view that the university was coherent with the nation and therefore did not stand completely apart from other spheres, such as the state and civil society. If the academic freedom of universities was enjoyed only so long as they did not jeopardise it by engaging in political ideology and public action that brought them into conflict with these other spheres, then, in Higgins's argument, any apparent autonomy enjoyed by institutions was deceptive (in CHE, 2005: 13).

The debates regarding issues of 'institutional autonomy' within historically English-medium universities, during apartheid, is a comprehensive and multi-dimensional one, which demonstrates the complexity of the constitutive epistemic features of the idea of the university as a concept.

The lack of certainty that remains regarding the role that historically white English-medium universities played or fail to play in the maintenance and sustenance of the racist ideologies of the apartheid government is an interesting and important issue for our history and future, but will not be taken further in this thesis, given the aims of the chapter and the thesis as a whole.

5.5.3. General overview of historically black universities

These universities were not established to promote the epistemic values and aims that are constitutive of the idea of the university or higher learning per se; they were established to serve the socio-political needs of the apartheid state. These universities focused on programmes that would be able to train black people for certain occupations, such as teachers and civil servants. It was never the government's intention to develop scholarship within these universities, much less black scientists (Bunting, 2007: 76; Subotzky, 1997: 497; Davies, 1996: 322; Van Heerden, 1995: 51).

These universities were staffed by predominantly white Afrikaner managers and teaching staff who supported the government's ideology and saw it as their duty to ensure that this ideology was maintained in these universities (Bunting 2007: 76). The following description sums up the extent to which constitutive epistemic standards of excellence were not adhered to or deliberately ignored in these universities,

> The intellectual agendas of the RSA's six historically black universities were set by their apartheid origins. In their early years their academic staff members tended to come primarily from the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities which, as was said earlier, functioned with instrumentalist notions of knowledge. These academics therefore accepted readily an academic agenda with a strong training focus and, in particular, a focus which placed little emphasis on the production of new knowledge. As a consequence, few of the academics employed by the historically black universities believed it necessary to introduce research and postgraduate programmes in these universities. The intellectual agenda of the institutions often became no more than that of reproducing material taught in previous years at historically white Afrikaans-medium universities (Bunting, 2007: 76).

It is clear that given the instrumental nature of the constitutive epistemological practices and functions in these universities, the concept of a university that these universities embodied was epistemologically shallow and inadequate, and such universities existed more in name than in substance.

They existed in name in that they appeared to have the material elements of a university such as academics who taught different disciplines, different faculties, students,

graduations, but they did not engage in constitutive epistemic practices such as the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths and research and teaching based on such scholarship.

The curricula were designed according to a distinctive political agenda, in which the aim was not to ensure a particular level of development of the student, but aimed to suppress and oppress students and to gear the student for a very constricted range of occupations (Swartz in Nkomo, et al., 2006: 150; Bunting, 2007: 76; Subotzky, 1997: 497; Davies, 1996: 322; Van Heerden, 1995: 51).

This significant omission in the constitutive epistemic practices, underpinned by internally governed epistemic standards of excellence, point to the extent to which a strong formal concept of the ideal university was absent in these universities. Despite the institutional culture of oppression and repression that the State tried to instil in these universities, resistance to the status quo was prevalent, and this was demonstrated in the form of student resistance at these institutions.

5.5.4. Challenges to the concept of a university in these universities

One of the central debates regarding historically black universities is the one which is disparaging of the intellectual heritage of these universities, and which therefore argues that they should be closed down in the new democracy (Nkomo, et al., 2006: v). In other words, it is argued that the kinds of knowledge production and dissemination that developed in some of these universities were incompatible with the kind that is expected at a university (Nkomo, et al., 2006: v).

Jansen's assessment of one of these universities confirms this position,

> But despite these routines of ceremony and administration, this so-called university had long ceased to exist. Quite possibly, it might never have existed as a university in the first place… (2004a: 4).

Jansen's evaluation is predicated on a particular concept of a university, which he articulates very clearly in the following rationale,

> A university ceases to exist when the intellectual project no longer defines its identity, infuses its curriculum, energises its scholars, and inspires its students. It ceases to exist when state control and interference close down the space within which academic discourse can flourish without constraint. The university ceases to exist when it imposes on itself narrowing views of the future based on ethnic or linguistic chauvinism, and denies the multiplicity of voices and visions that grant institutions their distinctive character. And the university ceases to exist when it represents nothing other than an empty shell of racial representivity at the cost of academic substance and intellectual imagination (2004a: 9).

Jansen's (2004a) analysis of the university that 'ceases to exist' if its material elements such as its curriculum, are not underpinned by a strong formal element, which he refers to as 'the intellectual project', goes to the heart of the extent to which severe and repressive State control can threaten and eradicate the formal constitutive element of a university. A similar position was espoused by Jaspers, as he evaluated the legitimacy of universities during the Nazi regime,

> Even so, the university is lost if official hostility to its ideal should persist over a long period of time (1960: 135).

Both Jansen (2004a) and Jaspers (1960) make a significant point, that the political determination of repressive States can erode the constitutive concept of a university.

Others however claim that despite the conditions that led to the establishment and maintenance of historically black universities, they did nonetheless make an impact on the intellectual development of black people. The following assessment confirms such a position,

> So we have a fractured inheritance…and the question we face is: what do we do with it? One possible answer is that we should transform historically-black institutions from the educational dumping grounds that Verwoerd designed them to be, and make them bastions of the new democratic excellence.
>
> This is not a vision entirely without merit. Whatever the intentions of the apartheid rulers, the fact is that individual students and professors - black and white - made, and continue to make, valuable contributions from these venues that were intended as

> dumping grounds. Their contributions cannot simply be discarded (Asmal in Nkomo, et al., 2006: 1).

Implicit in such a position is the idea that despite the inadequate conception of a university that these universities were predicated upon. In these institutions, some kind of constitutive epistemological functions were fulfilled. In other words implicit in this position is the notion that although not comprehensive or adequate, some concept of a university and its constitutive epistemic practices and functions were prevalent in these universities during apartheid, and that this must be acknowledged.

Such a position is corroborated by a comment made by former President Nelson Mandela, regarding the presence of scholarship at one such university,

> Fort Hare was both home and incubator of some of the greatest African scholars the continent has ever known (1994: 42).

Like Mandela, others argue that some of these institutions managed to extract and preserve some idea of the university despite the challenges of the hostile Afrikaner government,

> It is worth reminding ourselves that some of these institutions were resources apart – thriving sites of intellectual production during the anti-apartheid years. … My contention is that several promising HBUs, which at various historical moments stood on the brink of defying their origins to become strong academic entities with strong developmental agendas… (Jansen, 2004a: 8).

This is a good example of the tension that exists between the service functions and epistemologically constitutive functions of a university as an institutional ideal. But more importantly it shows that taking a deliberative stance against a repressive system instead of acquiescing can contribute to the strengthening of the epistemologically constitutive functions of a university. In fact it can contribute towards the defeat of such hostile regimes. Such a context also exhibits the complexity regarding the service-epistemologically constitutive tension that exists within a university as an institutional ideal.

These HBUs which Jansen (2004a) speaks about, did not take a purely epistemological stance against the repressive apartheid regime, but instead they engaged in deliberative revolutionary action in order to subvert the racially repressive aims that these institutions were constructed upon. In other words student activists and academic activists within these universities, engaged the university's political service functions (within a liberated context) to rescue its epistemological functions, and vice versa.

The debate regarding the concept of the university in historically black universities during apartheid looks at the extent to which historically black universities conformed to the concept of the university or not during apartheid, and in so doing, argues for a particular set of conditions that should define constitutive epistemic practices, such as scholarship and teaching within a university.

5.5.5. Reflective conclusion of the general context

The above descriptions of historically black, historically white English-medium and historically white Afrikaans-medium universities and the ensuing debates on the concept of the university that these universities had or did not manage to embody, provides a picture of a university landscape that:

- was neither homogeneous, nor monolithic;
- evinced very controversial debates on what the concept of a university should be.

This account paints a bleak picture of a consensual and coherent concept of a university during the apartheid era. Such a context portends doom for our future if our present system aims to build its concept of the university on similar foundations.

5.6. Summary of chapter

It is clear from these accounts that universities during apartheid assumed a strictly service function, which was constructed to meet the racially repressive ideology of the National Party. Even though some of these universities purported to reject the political agenda of the government and assert their institutional autonomy, the different laws and statutes that governed all universities during this era made academic freedom and institutional

autonomy, which are the key predicates for a university to meet its epistemic ideal, impossible.

The constitutive epistemic functions of these universities were suppressed in order to ensure that the political status quo of a repressive political climate remained intact. This was done to deceive people that the current hegemony was legitimate. Jaspers makes a very pertinent comment regarding this kind of behaviour on the part of repressive governments,

> Not every state is interested in truth to the point of granting academic freedom. No state anxious to conceal a basic criminality of principle and action can possibly want the truth. It is bound to be hostile to the university, pretending friendliness only the better to destroy it eventually (1960: 142).

Implicit in Jaspers' (1960: 142) warning is the centrality of the formal element of the idea of the university in which the systematic pursuit of provisionally warranted truths that underpin the epistemic practices of the constitutive idea of the university, pose a threat to the practices of deceit that repressive political regimes are characterised by.

It is this very constitutive epistemic threat to the concept of a university that makes such regimes, antagonistic to the constitutive epistemic functions, practices and values of a university as an institutional ideal.

It is exactly this kind of enmity to the constitutive regulatory ideal that a concept of a university and its practices are predicated on, that destroyed whatever possibility and hope there could have been for any coherent and consensual concept of the university to grow and sustain itself in South Africa during the apartheid era.

5.7. Conclusion

The South African Apartheid government saw South African universities as 'creatures of the State'. South African universities were subsequently informed by and shaped through apartheid policy and its concomitant statutes. The university terrain during this era was characterised by deep divisions and inequities based on race.

There were three basic divisions namely, historically black universities, historically white Afrikaans-medium universities and historically white English-medium universities. State control within all three categories was significant, with varying degrees of control and compliance.

Control and compliance in most historically white Afrikaans-medium universities were both very strong.

Control in historically black universities was also very strong, and the level of compliance was high. Given this scenario, current debates centre on the extent to which some of these universities had ceased to exist as universities. Compliance at these universities was low, with regard to student resistance to the status quo, both at an institutional level and to the broader socio-political arena.

Control, as well as compliance, in historically white English-medium universities was a moot point. These universities enjoyed certain benefits, but were also subject to the laws that governed universities at the time. This made any reasonable expectation of freedom at these institutions impossible, and control became the norm. These universities challenged State interference with regard to institutional autonomy and academic freedom, so compliance in this respect was limited.

The Davie lectures and the 'Open Universities in South Africa' conferences and publications were initiated and sustained to publicly affirm their opposition to state control at such institutions. Compliance and control with regard to these historically white English-medium universities remain to date still a contentious issue.

For some, these universities reneged on one of the key characteristics of the university which is the role of being an agent of social change. For others, any claims to institutional autonomy would be deceptive given the benefits that these universities derived from the State. For yet others, their claims to institutional autonomy provided them with a ruse to practice their own forms of colonial racism at these institutions.

Although these issues seem extensive and distinct from each other, they actually point to one theme, and that is, what is the concept of a university? And more specifically, what

was the concept of the South African university during apartheid? What this chapter demonstrates is that there were several rival ideas of the concept of a university during apartheid.

Embedded in the historically white Afrikaans-medium universities is the concept of a university that is located in the service paradigm of the university as an institution. In this sense the university was conceived as fulfilling the needs of the State to the deliberate neglect of its constitutive epistemic functions and practices, such as the pursuit of provisionally warranted truths and teaching based on such scholarship.

Embedded in the historically white English-medium universities is a concept of the university located in the constitutive functions of the university. This is the epistemological pursuit of disinterested inquiry and teaching based on scholarship.

Challenges to this idea emanate from the concept of a university that is located in a service function, and which sees the university as an agent of social change.

Embedded in historically black universities is a concept of the university that is predicated upon its service functions and which sees the university purely in terms of the services it can afford to those in power. In this case it was seen by the Apartheid State as an instrument which would separate black people from white people, and provide black people with an education that would befit the their alleged intellectual inferiority.

Challenges to this notion, locate the concept of a university within an epistemologically constitutive paradigm, and argue that if constitutive epistemic practices, such as the pursuit of provisionally warranted truth and teaching based on that engagement are thwarted by State intervention, then the concept of the ideal university in such universities ceases to exist.

The weakness of each of these conceptions is that they tend to articulate themselves very strongly upon either a service or an epistemologically constitutive function. In so doing they see these two functions of the concept of a university as mutually exclusive. Or more importantly they conceptualise the university as being either a service institution or an epistemic one.

However, a concept of a university cannot be determined by either of these exclusively. If it focuses on its service function exclusively it loses one of its essential predicates, which is its epistemologically constitutive function. If it focuses on its epistemologically constitutive functions only, and remains remiss of its obligations to society at large, it falls short of one of its key functions. This is to be accountable to those who support and sustain it.

A university is an agent of change only in so far as it remains critical of society at large, but to use the university to pursue political ends to the neglect of its epistemological identity would be to ignore what the idea of the university really should be. This requires a balance between its constitutive and service identities.

The only position that tries to capture a more coherent concept of a university regarding its service and epistemologically constitutive functions is the one that is implied by comments made by Jansen (2004a: 8), Asmal (in Nkomo, et al., 2006: 1) and Mandela (1994: 42) earlier in this chapter. This position conceptualises a university as pursuing both service (emancipatory) and epistemologically constitutive functions.

I was a student during the 1984 – 1993 period, in a historically black Higher Education institution. I have very vivid memories of learning about Communism and Karl Marx, not in a lecture room, but from my 'comrades', as we engaged in student protests against the apartheid system.

If we want to transform universities in South Africa we have to unlearn some of the conflicts and tensions of the past, and learn how to construct a more shared and coherent concept of the university in this country.

And more importantly, engaging in epistemic practices such as teaching and research, without the attendant epistemic standards of excellence, values and purposes that underpin the epistemologically constitutive functions of a university, is to make this constitutive idea vulnerable to the corruptive powers of external stakeholders.

In other words, to conceptualise and to subsequently base the implementation of this concept of the university on its material elements only is to enable the university to

become just another appendage of external forces such as the State or economics. This is precisely the warning that MacIntyre extends regarding the vulnerability of constitutive practices,

> Without them, without justice, courage and truthfulness, practices could not resist the corruptive power of institutions (1981: 194).

The extent, to which South African universities were underpinned by constitutive epistemic values and standards of excellence during apartheid, is negligible to the point of being non-existent. It is imperative that our universities and their epistemic practices and functions, in the current dispensation, should be underpinned by these constitutive epistemic standards and values, in order to protect such functions and practices from the corruptive powers of its service functions.

The next chapter will attempts to examine how the concept of a university is defined in two seminal policy documents, in South Africa.

CHAPTER SIX

THE CONCEPT OF THE UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN POLICY DOCUMENTS

6.1. Previous chapter

In the previous chapter I examined the concept of the university during the apartheid era in South Africa. This chapter provides insight into the concept of the university during apartheid. In so doing it provides clarity into the immediate South African historical context that is embedded within the current concept of a university in this country. Since the Apartheid State harnessed ideology to sustain and maintain its power, it depended on the services functions of all South African universities significantly during this period.

South African universities were subsequently characterised by a highly differentiated, State-regulated system, in which the State used a range of instruments to corrupt, repress and oppress the epistemologically constitutive practices, functions and values of its universities. This State-regulated, repressive epistemic climate fostered a variety of conflicting and competitive concepts of the university during this era.

Such a lack of coherence and shared vision regarding the concept of the university during the apartheid era does not augur well for the construction of a strong, coherent and shared understanding of the concept of the university in a new dispensation.

6.2. Aim of this chapter

It is within such a context that the purpose of this chapter is to try to provide an examination of the concept of the university within a contemporary, post-apartheid Higher Education policy terrain.

In order to accomplish this task I,

- Provide a short summary of the trajectory of the contemporary, post-apartheid, higher education policy cycle in order to contextualise the current higher education policy landscape.
- Using two seminal policy documents, from this policy landscape, I then go on to extrapolate and examine how current policy defines the concept of a university in South Africa.

6.3. A synopsis of the contemporary, post-apartheid, Higher Education policy cycle

Given the highly illegitimate nature of the apartheid system, and its ensuing influence on the policies that determined the concept of the university in South Africa during this period, one of the most immediate priorities of the new dispensation was to transform these institutions through the promulgation of an alternate vision with attendant policies. The following excerpt summarises this context very succinctly,

> Having inherited a Higher Education 'system' profoundly shaped by social, political and economic inequalities of a class, race, gender, institutional and spatial nature, South Africa's new democratic government committed itself to 'transforming' Higher Education as well as the inherited apartheid social structure and institutionalising a new social order. Indeed over the past ten years virtually no domain of Higher Education has escaped scrutiny and has been left untouched, and there have been a wide array of 'transformation' orientated initiatives (Badat, 2007: 2).

Experts on Higher Education policy have discerned a distinct chronological pattern in the way that the South African Higher Education policy initiatives have unfolded since 1990 (Badat, 2007: 7; Luescher and Symes, 2003: 6). For the purposes of this study I will use Badat's archetype. I selected Badat's (2007) archetype because he times the trajectory of the Higher Education policy cycle in a simple, succinct and coherent manner. Badat (2007) identifies the transformation of contemporary policies governing universities along the basis of three distinct periods, namely:

- the first period which he identifies as the :*1990-1994 period*;
- the second period which he identifies as the :*1995-1998 period; and*
- the third period which he characterises as the : *period which began in 1999 and which continues up to today (1999 onwards).*

I will now describe each of these periods briefly.

6.3.1. The 1990-1994 period

This period is still located in the apartheid policy dispensation. It is however significant, as it is characterised by alternate discourses regarding the purposes of higher education and the principle of inclusivity as opposed to exclusivity. Such a detour presages the end of apartheid and the beginning of democratic transformation - even if only at a symbolic level.

Since policy initiatives during this period were characterised by setting the criteria and standards for the formulation of policy and not the formulation and adoption of policy per se, this period is also referred to as a period defined by symbolic policy making (Badat, 2007: 7-9; Luescher and Symes, 2003: 6; Cooper, 2001: 2).

During this period the policy focus was on the kinds of principles, values, vision and goals that would enable the transformation of the past system, and which would be used as criteria for the projected policy cycle, that is, policy formulation, adoption, implementation and evaluation.

Given the highly differentiated nature of the apartheid dispensation, a significant trait of this period was also its strong inclusive focus. In doing so, this period identified itself with a strong concern for narrowing the gap between civil society and the State. Hence the high levels of political mobilisation to ensure that mass movements and civil society were involved in policy debates, policy negotiation and policy making (Badat, 2007: 7-9; Luescher and Symes, 2003: 6).

Given this context the policy products that characterised this period were: The National Education Policy Investigation (1990-1992) which was the formation of a civil society initiative; the publication of a Framework and Post-Secondary Education Report; the

policy proposals developed by the Union of Democratic University Staff Associations, the Education Policy Unit (University of Western Cape) and other formations; and the ANC 1994 Policy Statement on Higher Education (Badat, 2007: 23).

6.3.2. The 1995-1998 period

This period is significant for the higher education policy cycle, because it introduced a democratic dispensation in South Africa. In this regard any policy initiatives that were developed during this period signalled the political character and values of the newly elected ANC government. Within the higher education policy context, it signalled the placement of the university and its subsequent meaning within a new democratic society.

According to Badat,

> The principal outcome of this period was a legislative and policy framework, the formulation and adoption of a number of substantive policies and the establishment of an embryonic government infrastructure for policy implementation and further policy planning and policy development (2007:10).

Badat's (2007) characterisation of this period illustrates the move from the previous period of symbolic policy making to one whose focus was on providing greater clarity and detail to the higher education policy context through more substantive strategies, structures and instruments. During this period the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was established (1995) to carry out an extensive appraisal of all aspects of higher education, and to make policy recommendations on the basis of these findings.

The National Commission of Higher Education Report (NCHER) that was published in 1996 presaged the transformation of the Higher Education landscape in profound ways. This policy document is seminal in this regard, and therefore merits authority in terms of the conceptualisation of the university in contemporary South Africa. This report formed the basis for the policy and legislative processes of the Ministry of Education.

In 1997 the Ministry developed the Green paper on Higher Education; this policy fed into the White Paper 3. The White Paper 3, which was a Programme for the Transformation

of Higher Education was released, adopted and fed into the formation of a legal framework for Higher Education. The product of the latter is the Bill on Higher Education and the adoption of the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997 (Badat, 2007: 23-24).

6.3.3. The 1999-onwards period

This period is significant, as it demonstrates the institutionalisation of the new dispensation's socio-political placement of the university, and its subsequent identity in contemporary South Africa.

This period is characterised by a stronger government presence in determining the university policy context. Given the principle of inclusivity that the first period imbued and chose to promote, this trait that characterises the *1999-onwards period* is therefore very significant for the conceptualisation of the university in contemporary South Africa.

The extent of this strong governmental presence is aptly described in the following extract,

> Participation in policy-making on the part of mass organisations and Higher Education stakeholders relatively declined, while the role of the Ministry in policy-making began to predominate (Badat, 2003: 13-14). This third period, which continues to date, has been most significantly characterised by the attempt on the part of the Ministry to make decisive choices and take tough decisions (Luescher and Symes, 2003: 7).

The Council on Higher Education Document of 2000, and The National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) which the Minister announced in February 2001, motioned an end to the "symbolic policy making" period of 1990-1994. In its place came more substantive policy decisions and initiatives. The level of policy development that was developed during this period is well characterised in the following description,

> Prior to 2000, the new democratic government's most important policy documents on Higher Education, the white paper of 1997, as well as key advisory documents before this, were involved primarily in symbolic policy - outlining the values, missions, and broad frameworks required to transform the Higher Education system, but without any specifics on policy choices, implementation, or evaluation of results. In contrast, CHE

> 2000 and NPHE 2001 signal a shift towards what can be termed "substantive, procedural, and material policy" approaches, incorporating concrete actions, implementation procedures, and resource allocation mechanisms (Cooper, 2001:1).

Whilst the progression of the policy cycle proceeds almost linearly in terms of time, the above observation indicates that the nature of policy decisions and choices follows a non-linear inclination, with some principles that were once fundamental to one particular period become incongruent within another one.

The most significant policy implication of this period is the strong presence of the State, as an external stakeholder in determining the identity of the university.

6.4. The definition of the university according to policy

It is clear from the above synopsis of the higher education policy landscape that there are several policies and policy initiatives that define the university policy context in post-apartheid South Africa. However, given the nature and scope of this study, I will refer only to the definition of the university as explicated in the National Commission on Higher Education Report (1996); and the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997. Both these documents are an outcome of the second period that has been outlined above and are respected as seminal documents in providing a framework within which to transform universities in this country (Mda and Mothata, 2000: 4, 12).

6.4.1 Towards defining the contemporary South African university, according to the National Commission on Higher Education Report

The National Commission on Higher Education Report, a Framework for Transformation (hereafter referred to as the NCHER), is a report that the National Commission of Higher Education was directed to formulate by the Minister of Education. Their directive was to formulate policies to restructure the Higher Education sector in South Africa (Mda and Mothata, 2000: 4; NCHER, 1996: 23).

This document is instrumental in formulating a new conception of the university in contemporary South Africa (Mda and Mothata, 2000: 4). In order to provide a conceptual background to this document's conceptualisation of the university in a new

dispensation, I will refer to how this document articulates a vision for the new Higher Education context.

6.4.2. Vision

The vision of Higher Education as set out in the NCHER sets the scene for the new conceptualization of higher education in South Africa by providing an interpretation of the rationale and purpose of higher education from a historical perspective. This scene is important for the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa, as it introduces the formal element of this concept. The document argues that contingency and change mark the interpretation of higher education historically. This contingency it is argued, evolves in conjunction with the dynamical nature of the milieu it (higher education) engages with (NCHER, 1996: 68). The report articulates this argument as follows,

> The Commission believes that the idea of Higher Education is subject to historical change and development; it has a history of interpretation and reinterpretation. That means the conception of the significance and purpose of Higher Education has been modified over the years, and can be modified in future, in response to the changing needs and agendas of the environment it is interacting with.
>
> This, however, does not detract from the fact that there is a continuous and cumulative tradition of interpretations regarding the role of Higher Education in human affairs. This tradition can fulfil a valuable function of orientation and can serve as a framework for thinking about the future of Higher Education in South Africa (NCHER, 1996:68).

This rationale is substantive as it fulfils the purpose of contributing to the formal element of the concept of a university that it aims to define. Given this significance, it is of deep concern that such a rationale contextualises the university and its subsequent meaning within a dynamically contingent social context. Although it acknowledges a stable and evolutionary dimension of the university as a concept, it underplays this aspect, and instead foregrounds the contingent nature of this concept.

It does this by embedding the meaning of the university in terms of the contingent needs of the society it serves. It is thus able to argue that the meaning of the university will have to change out of necessity as society's needs change. What seems clear to me is the

extent to which the formal element of the concept of the university, according to this document's rationale, as set out in its vision, is predicated upon the service functions of a university as an institutional ideal.

It is within such an epistemological context that this document defines the concept of a university in contemporary South Africa.

6.5. The concept of the university according to policy

The National Commission on Higher Education Report (hereafter referred to as the NCHER) defines the university in the following way,

> The Commission recommends that the new Higher Education Act declare tertiary education and Higher Education to be identical terms, and define Higher Education as all learning programmes which lead to the award of a qualification more advanced than the further education certificate on the NQF (or than the current Standard 10 or school leaving certificate) (NCHER, 1996: 88).
>
> The Commission believes it is imperative in this context that Higher Education in South Africa should be conceptualized, planned, governed and funded as a single co-ordinated system. This single co-ordinated system should recognize the diversity of institutions providing Higher Education programmes in a range of governing, planning and funding arrangements (NCHER, 1996: 89).
>
> e) … Higher Education programmes should be offered by institutions within the framework of their own distinctive missions (NCHER, 1996: 89).

A year later, The South African Higher Education Act No.101 of 1997, defined Higher Education as follows,

> "Higher Education" means all learning programmes leading to qualifications
>
> higher than grade 12 or its equivalent in terms of the National Qualifications
>
> Framework as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority
>
> Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995), and includes tertiary education as

contemplated in Schedule 4 of the Constitution; (ix)

"Higher Education institution" means any institution that provides higher education on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and which is—

(a) established or deemed to be established as a public Higher Education institution under this Act;

(b) declared as a public Higher Education institution under this Act; or

(c) registered or conditionally registered as a private Higher Education institution under this Act; (Republic of South Africa, 1997: xi)

6.6. Examining the policy definition of the concept of a university

6.6.1. The university as a distinct 'concept'

What is immediately and glaringly apparent from both these definitions is the omission of the concept 'university'. By the concept 'university' I mean, a concept that relies on a distinctive, constitutive, epistemic formal element. Such a definition of the university as a concept is predicated upon constitutive epistemic practices, purposes, functions and values. The fundamental regulatory ideal of this constitutive idea is the systematic search for provisionally warranted truths, which the combined epistemic practices of research and teaching, and their social dimensions, and standards of epistemic excellence are predicated upon.

Such a concept of the university also differentiates between the epistemologically constitutive purposes, functions and practices of the university and the service purposes, functions and practices of the university as an institutional ideal. Although these ideal institutional types are mutually exclusive at a conceptual level (in terms of their rationale and modus operandi), they are nonetheless dependent on each other for their individual survival and continued success, and for the coherence of the university as a social institution.

Any understanding of the concept of a university has to recognise not only this difference and dependence, but also the extent to which the constitutive epistemic purposes, values, practices and functions of the university are constantly in danger of being corrupted and eroded by the service functions, practices and purposes of the service institutional type of the university.

This conceptual weakness is presaged in the way the NCHER articulates the vision that underpins this concept. The lack of a substantive and coherent formal element of the university in contemporary South Africa, is affirmed in a vision of Higher Education that is constructed upon the contingent needs of society. It is further reinforced through the omission of the university as a distinct, epistemologically constitutive institutional type in its formal policy definition.

Furthermore, any concept of the university which does not take the epistemically distinctive, constitutive nature of the university into account, is predicated upon a material definition of the university as a concept, whose only epistemological status is recognitor status.

The epistemologically distinctive, constitutive nature of the university as a constitutive institutional ideal is absent in the way policy conceptualises or neglects to conceptualise the idea of the university in South Africa.

6.6.2. The concept of the university as higher education

In order to try to formulate a definition of the university in South Africa according to official policy documents, one has to extrapolate a meaning that is embedded in the way policy describes and defines 'Higher Education'. There is thus a definite policy expectation and assumption that the concept of the university is and can be subsumed by/through an understanding of 'Higher Education'.

This conceptualisation of the university, is best represented though its placement on the National Qualifications Framework.

Both of the policy definitions (that I have selected) conceptualize the university within a particular position on the National Qualifications Framework (referred to as the NQF

hereafter). The NQF is thus integral to the conceptualization of the university in South Africa and therefore merits some clarification.

6.7. The National Qualifications Framework

A brief definition typifies the National Qualifications Framework (will be referred to the NQF hereafter) in South Africa as a nationally recognised framework that is predicated on the integration of education and training (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 3). In order to get a clearer understanding of what this textual definition means contextually, further elucidation is required.

6.7.1. Aims and objectives of the NQF

The all-inclusive approach to education and training via the NQF is predicated upon a fundamental political goal in our new democratic dispensation. This is the eradication of discriminatory practices and institutions and the need to address issues and practices of inequity, which were endorsed and institutionalised by the apartheid government. It is within such a context that the projected aims of the NQF are articulated in the following way,

> The NQF is one of the innovations of the new democratic government aimed at transforming the education, training and skills development system. It is an idea and a set of institutions and practices that have been developed collectively in order to achieve certain agreed upon objectives.
>
> The objectives of the NQF are to:
>
> - Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements;
> - Facilitate access to mobility and progress within education, training and career paths;
> - Enhance the quality of education, training and skills development;
> - Accelerate the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby
>
> Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 2).

6.7.2. The structure of the NQF

The most constitutive, structural feature of the NQF in South Africa is the three bands that education and training in this country are organised upon. The NQF is structured along three bands, and these are: the General Education and Training Band; the Further Education and Training Band; and the Higher Education Band (Young and Gamble, 2006: 24).

The first band, which is the General Education and Training Band (GET), prepares learners for the General Education and Training Certificate (GETC). The second one is the Further Education and Training Band (FET). The FET is based on three pathways which are: the General; the General Vocational; and Trade, Occupational and Professional (TOP). And the third band, which is the Higher Education and Training (HET) band, which includes all postgraduate qualifications (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 14-17).

The NCHER and the Higher Education Act conceptualize Higher Education as everything that is not part of the first and second middle bands: the GET and the FET bands. Higher Education could thus include any qualification, diploma or certificate from universities, technikons, colleges, private/professional institutions or the workplace.

What this allocation on the NQF implies is that higher education represents both academic and vocational streams, the purpose of which is to weaken a historically controversial binary, but which also forges a strong link between higher education and the workplace. This is a deliberate policy move and is based on the principle of integration, in an attempt to bring about social, political and economic parity, and in so doing to address the legacy of a deeply divided apartheid South Africa.

Integration is, as a result of South Africa's history, a key transformatory goal, and policy positions higher education as integral in advancing this goal. Such a position is consistent with the way the NCHER's vision locates the meaning of higher education within society's needs.

6.7.3. Examining the concept of the university on the NQF

Whilst the political integrity of much needed democratic goals in South Africa must be acknowledged and respected, the totally inclusive nature and the respect for parity that the NQF endorses together portend problems for the distinctive concept of the university to develop in South Africa at present. This lack of distinction is a conceptual weakness.

This conceptual weakness is exposed when one is forced to extrapolate a definition and subsequent understanding of what the concept of a university entails in our new dispensation. This weakness can be located in the way the definition of higher education assumes an all-inclusive property, which is described in terms of its inclusion and exclusion on the three organising bands of the NQF (GET, FET, HET).

The nature of this epistemological dilemma can be extrapolated from the peculiar nature of the construction of the NQF in South Africa,

> However, given the comprehensive nature of our NQF, it is recognised that [it] is important that the design of the NQF and its institutions must be hospitable to a range of different learning cultures and practices. There is a danger that over-emphasis on any one form of learning will devalue another (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007:7).

What distinguishes this framework from its international counterparts is its level of complete inclusivity which encompasses all areas and levels of education in South Africa (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 3). This constitutive feature of the NQF and its incumbent weakness has not gone unnoticed. The results of an evaluation of the implementation of the NQF, which was commissioned by the Ministers of Education and Labour, included a list of concerns that stakeholders identified regarding the 'efficacy and efficiency' (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 4) of this framework.

Here is one concern that merits attention regarding the principle of parity upon which this framework is predicated,

> Stakeholders, including the sponsoring government departments made representation[s] to the Study Team, which included the following concerns:
>
> …

- Lack of recognition of the diversity of approaches and practices within the education, training and skills development system resulting in the design of an NQF architecture with a "one size fits all" approach (Ministers of Education and Labour, 2007: 5).

A typical consequence of the concern that is raised above can be identified in the way the constitutive concept of the university and its respective epistemic culture, practices and functions are subsumed under the broad umbrella of 'Higher Education'.

In its attempt to address past discriminatory practices, the NQF overemphasises 'parity' and in so doing displaces the most distinctive feature of the constitutive concept of the university which is its 'uniqueness' and 'distinctiveness. In so doing it ignores the need to highlight the significantly different kinds of epistemic practices, culture and functions and their institutional embodiment.

The absence of the concept 'university' in our policy definitions of 'Higher Education' in South Africa also marks a conspicuous absence of the constitutive features of the concept of the university in the South African epistemic context.

6.8. The institutional functions of the concept of a university

A significant characteristic of the way the university is defined in South African policy is that the service functions of the university as an institutional ideal are prioritised. In other words, in order to address historical issues of political inequity and discrimination, the South African university is currently being conceptualised in such a way that it is not accorded any distinctiveness vis a vis that of other kinds of post-secondary education institutions.

It is for this reason that the university as a distinct concept has been subsumed under the inclusive banner of 'Higher Education' in the South African policy context. What is wholly distinctive about the constitutive concept of a university is its 'distinctiveness', or as Barnett (1990: 6) puts, its 'uniqueness', but such a focus on difference is anathema to the political goals of parity in a post-apartheid, democratic South Africa.

‘Inclusiveness’ as a good external to the epistemic practices of the constitutive institutional ideal of a university, has succeeded in corrupting/eroding the goods that are internal to these epistemic practices, such as the distinctive epistemic nature and functions of these practices.

It is this corruptive tendency of the service functions of the university that Jaspers’ (1960) warns us against in his Idea of the University. In addressing the broader political goals of transformation in a post-apartheid South Africa, the service functions of universities, are being forced to supersede the epistemologically constitutive institutional purposes, functions and practices of the university, and in so doing we are falling into the same trap as the previous dispensation did.

This trap, is the one in which the service functions of the university which were used by the apartheid government to promote political goals, are instrumental in repressing and corrupting the epistemologically constitutive institutional ideal of the university in contemporary South Africa. The irony is that, in order to address the political atrocities of the past regime, we are inadvertently engaging in the same kinds of epistemological detours.

6.9. A programme definition

The extent to which the corruptive tendencies of the service functions of the university in South Africa are being reinforced, can be seen in the extent to which the idea of the university is being premised on a ‘programmatic definition’ in this country. As the following analysis will show, this conceptualisation of the university erodes the epistemologically constitutive ideals of the university.

The concept of a university in South Africa, according to policy documents, is premised on a programme definition of ‘Higher Education’, in which ‘programme’ is defined as follows,

> In the context of Higher Education, it refers to the contents and offerings of a distinct and well-defined configuration of knowledge, the successful study of which leads to standard qualifications (NCHER, 1996: 272).

The significance of the programmatic definition of the university in South Africa and the ensuing concept of the university that it is premised upon, is that it attempts to define the university in terms of a 'configuration of knowledge' (NCHER, 1996: 272). The word 'configuration' is a reference to the way knowledge is organised and packaged. This type of conceptualisation positions knowledge more as a product than as part of the epistemic functions and practices that are constitutive of the university as an institutional ideal.

Such an idea obscures the kinds of knowledge that are constitutive of epistemic practices which involve the production, reproduction and dissemination of knowledge that has been subject to the processes of warranted inquiry within an epistemic community.

6.9.1. Goods external to constitutive epistemic practices

The reference to the award of a successful qualification that the procurement of this knowledge leads to is a reference to the 'goods' that are 'external' to the epistemic practices that are constitutive of a university. That our concept of a university is premised upon this conception of the practice does not augur well for the constitutive identity of the university in South Africa. Within such a conception of the university, the 'goods internal' to epistemic practices are the kinds of goods that are procured through the engagement of the epistemic practices that are characteristic of an epistemic community.

These 'goods', such as the production, reproduction and dissemination of scholarship are integral to epistemic practices that characterise a university, such that without these epistemic practices these 'goods' cannot be procured.

Within the parameters of such a definition of the university, in which the core concept of the university is inter alia, the awarding of a qualification, what becomes clear is that our concept of the university is premised upon the service functions of the university. The university is one of those institutions that is characterised by both goods internal to the epistemic practices and goods external to those practices. In order to be able to sustain itself financially, it requires certain material resources which can only be obtained through commodities such as money.

The awarding of a degree is one of the processes that enables this procurement of monetary resources. In exchange for having engaged in a process of epistemic practices for a period of time and according to a particular level, a student is then awarded a degree, but in order to obtain his/her degree the student has to pay for the opportunity to be part of the epistemic community and to engage in the epistemic practices that are definitive of such an institution.

The awarding of a qualification is what can be described as a good that is external to the epistemic practices that define the idea of the university. A qualification is external to the epistemic practices of a university because it does not set the standards of excellence or epistemic norms of epistemic practices. Its value lies in its instrumental function, and is therefore characteristic of the service function of a university. That goods external to the practice and goods internal to the practice can co-exist is not abnormal, but what is of concern is the extent to which the goods external to the practice have the potential to corrupt the goods internal to the practice.

What is of even more concern for the South African context is the extent to which the university has been defined that ignores the constitutive epistemic identity and functions of the idea of the university, and its concomitant goods internal to epistemic practice.

6.10. The formal element of the university and constitutive epistemic practices

Any definition of a university which is predominantly defined in terms of the following components: *programmes, qualifications, higher than grade 12 /equivalent, tertiary education* significantly undermines core epistemological elements of the concept of a university.

Since epistemic practices are by their very nature distinctive and constitutive of the concept of a university as an institutional ideal, such a lacuna is therefore dismissive of the constitutive functions and practices of a university. Epistemic practices such as teaching, learning, granting provisional warrant to knowledge claims, the social dimensions of such epistemic practices and the epistemic authority and standards of

excellence that reside in the functioning of such constitutive epistemic practices are the kinds of practices that are constitutive of a university. Yet there is no reference to such constitutive practices in the way policy document has defined the university in South Africa.

The NCHER (1996: 68) argues that higher education, and by implication, universities, should become more responsive to their environment. The document further suggests that higher education should become more accountable to those who sustain and maintain it[1], and should in so doing respond to the socio-political and economic needs of the country[2].

This imperative, the Commission (NCHER, 1996: 6) explains, entails a shift in the epistemological domain of higher education. The Commission (NCHER, 1996: 6) thus recommends a move to a more problem-oriented mode of epistemology which would be able to meet the various needs and challenges that South Africa faces at present. The document expresses the need to move away from traditional forms of knowledge production and grant access to more applied and problem-based forms of knowledge production and transmission:

> At an epistemological level, increased responsiveness entails a shift from closed knowledge systems (controlled and driven by canonical norms of traditional disciplines and by collegially recognized authority) to more open knowledge systems (in dynamic interaction with social interests, 'consumer' or 'client' demand, and other processes of knowledge generation) (NCHER, 1996: 6).

The significance of the State's suggestion regarding the shift in epistemological domains calls into question the epistemic authority that resides in the epistemic practices that have traditionally characterised such epistemological evaluations. Such an epistemological displacement bears testimony to the extent to which the service functions of the

[1] "There will also be greater social accountability towards the taxpayer and the client/consumer regarding the cost-effectiveness, quality and relevance of teaching and research programmes (NCHE,1996:7)"

[2]"Overall greater responsiveness will require new forms of management and assessment of knowledge production and dissemination. It has implications for the content, form and delivery of the curriculum. It will result in a more dynamic interaction between Higher Education and society, which should promote development, equity, quality, accountability and efficiency (NCHER, 1996:7)."

university are currently eroding the constitutive epistemic functions and practices of the university in this country.

Such a move is also symptomatic of the extent to which socio-political 'acceptance' of what ought to be 'accepted' as knowledge is substituting constitutive epistemic practices of 'warrant'. This is precisely the same kind of detour relied upon in autocratic and repressive States, such as Napoleonic Prussia, Nazi Germany and Apartheid South Africa.

It is also the kind of direction that countries such as America and Germany are taking in terms of the strong market presence in their respective university contexts. Whilst the Von Humboldt's and Jaspers' reconceptualised and reinforced 'warrant' as a constitutive epistemic practice and function of the university in their countries, to mitigate against the dogmatic tendencies of their States' 'acceptance' of knowledge in its attempt to escape the repression and political determination of the previous regime, the South African Higher Education policy terrain is positing a concept of the university that runs markedly parallel to their repressive predecessors.

Other references to the extent to which the State is using policy to regulate universities will be discussed in the next chapter, with special reference to Jansen's description of the nine ways that the State has challenged institutional autonomy in South African universities. This is a useful description as it demonstrates the extent to which the university in South Africa is seen as a purely service institution, whose core practices are contingent upon the needs of society at large.

That references to constitutive epistemic practices are largely absent in the definition of the university and significantly present in terms of its material elements in policy documents and practices, is indicative of the way that the university is conceptualised in South Africa. Such a material definition prioritises the university as a service institutional ideal, to the detriment of the epistemologically constitutive functions and practices of the university as an institutional ideal.

6.11. Higher education as the material elements of a concept of a university in South Africa

According to the definition of 'Higher Education' in South African policy documents, 'Higher Education' would equal everything more advanced than the FET band, the definition goes on to indicate that 'Higher Education' is equivalent to 'tertiary education' (NCHER, 1996: 88). In this sense (education) processes leading to certificates and diplomas, can also be recognised as Higher Education. This definition thus focuses on the material elements of a definition that enable us to recognise a particular constellation of education as being equivalent to higher education.

As informative as it might be these are only recognitors, since they do not provide us with any criterion upon which to conceptualise higher education, or a university education in particular. In so doing, a recognitor performs a useless function, because apart from its naming function, it does not meet any other expectations that we have of a concept, such as allowing guidelines for conduct and practices that provide meaning to the concept it attempts to define.

The formal element of a definition according to Kovesi (1967) provides a norm or standard for the material elements of a definition, and in so doing the formal elements of a concept take on a more active function.

6.12. Exploring the scope of application of such a material definition of a university

A key transformatory initiative to emerge from the current higher education policy cycle is the merging of a selection of higher education institutions, such as technikons, colleges and universities into 'comprehensive universities'. This initiative was first recommended in the NCHER (1996), and later formulated through substantive higher education policy (Jansen, 2002: 3-7). The purpose of such a reconfiguration was to institutionalise the democratic imperative of inclusiveness.

The comprehensive university thus addressed, inter alia, the apartheid legacy of a highly differentiated higher education landscape, which not only separated higher education

institutions in terms of race, but also set up a strong vocational-academic divide. It was thus the idea of bridging the divide of financially disparate universities, and also of bridging the vocational-academic divide that gave birth to this policy initiative (the comprehensive university).

6.12.1. Defining a comprehensive university

This reconfiguration in the higher education sector is significant in the transformation of universities, as it has entailed a fundamental shift in thinking about universities and their identity in a new dispensation. Apart from the physical movement of faculty and students, this reconfiguration has also implied a shift in thinking about constitutive epistemic practices such as curriculum transformation.

The comprehensive university, (which will be discussed again later in the next chapter), thus becomes another variation of the traditional university in South Africa. A comprehensive university would be a typical example of a mutation of a particular concept, which in this case would be the concept of a university (as discussed in Chapter Two, 2.7.3).

It is for this reason that the identity of the comprehensive university ought to be included in the identity of the concept (as a formal element) of the university in South Africa.

If the current concept of a university is able to extend its scope of application to include the concept of a comprehensive university, it would be able to meet its transformatory requirements in a contemporary South African context. The question that now emerges is, to what extent does the current concept of the university in South Africa; entail the concept of the comprehensive university?

The answer to this question can only be located in the way the comprehensive university is currently being defined. The fact that attempts to define the comprehensive university in contemporary South Africa has proven to be a very challenging, if not an almost impossible task, bears testament to the scope of application of the concept of the university in our country at the moment.

The following comment by a member of the Department of Education provides a key insight into this lack of epistemological clarity regarding the definition of the comprehensive university,

> "…comprehensive" was used not in an attempt to describe an institution that is somehow pedagogically or organisationally different from a university or a technikon, but for the simple reason that the department could not think of an appropriate name for an institution emerging out of a university and technikon (Auf der Heyde, 2004: 1)

This is a very astute yet epistemologically pessimistic comment, and does not augur well for the serious task of 'democratic transformation' of the higher education context that lies ahead of us.

Such a definition of the comprehensive university in South Africa cannot provide a standard upon which to understand how to engage in the significant transformation of our constitutive epistemological functions and practices nor of the fulfilment of our democratic ideals (service functions and practices) either.

6.12.2. Transforming constitutive epistemic practices and functions in comprehensive universities

The problems regarding the transformation of curricula in these universities are one of the consequences of such a limited conceptualisation the comprehensive university. In the absence of the formal element, of a concept of a comprehensive university, that functions as a standard or norm, and which can provide guidelines on how to proceed under certain conditions, curriculum transformation in these institutions is caught between the micro-politics of those trying to integrate different kinds of knowledge in their curricula, and the difficulty of trying to integrate different programmes or acknowledging the range of programmes.

This lack of clarity as to what transformation means in such a context (that is, is it "about curricula or about programmes?") is a result of an inability to provide a clear definition and conceptualisation of the comprehensive university in South Africa. This lack of

clarity regarding this process will be discussed in the next chapter. However, here is a comment that clearly indicates the lack of certainty in this process,

> In fact I have been at pains to say to people that they should not confuse the concepts 'comprehensive' and 'integrated'. Comprehensive refers rather to the range of diverse programmes that is offered, from vocational to academic, not to integration of programmes (Gibbons in CHET, 2004: 31).

The lack of clarity regarding the definition of a comprehensive university is well demonstrated in the following comment,

> Given the widely different ways in which 'comprehensivity' is used and understood in contemporary Higher Education, any attempts by us to define this term at a high, conceptual level…are doomed to meaninglessness… (Auf der Heyde, 2004: 2).

This lack of conceptual clarity regarding the comprehensive university in South Africa, stems from, inter alia, the lack of a substantively clear formal element of the concept of the university in South Africa.

Such a definition of the university is predicated upon a very limited idea of what constitutes the concept of a university in South Africa. Its limitation is entailed in the construction of its formal element. That is, it is limited in the sense that it conceptualises higher education in a linear way, that is, as being more advanced than secondary school, and in so doing does not take into account the epistemological foundations of higher education which are the keys to understanding the concept of the university, as well as the ensuing idea upon which it is predicated.

6.13. Higher education as more advanced than secondary schooling

This interpretation of a university in terms of 'Higher Education' is unmindful of the conceptual construct of 'higher' within the notion 'Higher Education'. According to Barnett (1990), it is misleading to conceptualise 'higher' within 'Higher Education' in terms of that which is more advanced than secondary schooling. According to his interpretation, higher education is different from secondary schooling, not because it

follows on from it, but because it conforms to criteria that are clearly distinct from those of secondary schooling (Barnett, 1990: 7).

Barnett describes the unique/special nature of the kind of 'Higher Education' that is entailed in a concept of a university, in the following comment,

> Higher Education is, then, more than just a sub-set of the education system. There are certain values and aims which are intrinsic to educational processes and which warrant the description 'Higher Education' (1990: 7).

He identifies these criteria along the following categories, inter alia, the higher order state of mind that a mature student develops, the epistemic practices, values and aims that contribute to this development; certain symbolic traditions and other crucial social factors. Barnett's (1990) description of the characteristics of higher education focuses on the social dimensions of the epistemic practices that are engendered within an epistemic community; the procedural and meta-cognitive level of engagement with knowledge, and the relationship that higher education has with society, in which apart from producing citizens who can make cultural and economic contributions, it also makes significant contributions to society through the epistemic practice of granting provisional warrant to knowledge claims (Barnett, 1990: 203).

Our current definition of 'Higher Education' does not express any such description of constitutive epistemic practices, values or aims, nor does it refer to the particular development of students who engage in such practices. At this level it would be possible to conclude that at a conceptual level, the idea of the university which is based on the way policy defines higher education, is conceptually inadequate and misleading.

Given the above context, the question that now emerges is to what extent it would be possible to construct standards or a set of criteria that would enable the projection of higher education in South Africa towards some kind of coherent and workable standard or quality.

In other words we are given a very limited rule to enable us to form a notion of higher education or to be able to understand what higher education means. We are provided

with a very limited rationale or set of reasons for how the material elements (as indicated on the NQF for example) have been collated.

This conception of 'Higher Education' over-rides any substantive 'idea of the university' in South Africa. Unlike in Germany, during the Nazi regime, where political imperatives on the transformation and resurrection of the nation or State were directly predicated on a concept of Higher Education within a concept of a university, as constituting a set of epistemic practices defined and held in check by their own internal epistemic values and rules, the South African definition of 'higher' within higher education limits this process to a quantitative dimension.

Within this perspective, I would thus conclude that, policy does not provide a substantive concept of a university in South Africa that is characterised by any formal element/s that constitutes certain kinds of constitutive practices, functions, and values, which are, epistemic practices, such as teaching, doing research, engaging in and providing provisional warrant to knowledge claims. Such constitutive epistemic practices are regulated by their own internal epistemic values and standards of excellence.

6.14. Service identity versus constitutive identity

Within the context of the comprehensive university context, South African higher education policy meets the political imperative of integrating epistemological divisions, which would in this case be the integration of the vocational and academic divide. This rationalisation also serves the purpose of addressing the financial imperatives that are inherent in having different institutions with different organisations and financial budgets. In so doing, they make higher education and tertiary education equivalent.

South African higher policy and its ensuing definition of a university in South Africa characterises the other service identity of the university as an institution, as it is conceptualised in terms of providing a more democratic service to the State. The kind of benefits that this definition, which makes higher education and all tertiary education of equal value, ensures is the kind of benefits that MacIntyre (1981) calls 'goods external to the practice'.

These goods are external in the sense that they enable the State to save costs and they also ensure political legitimation to the public in that they adhere to one of the key transformatory goals of a democratic South Africa, which is integration.

In so doing, what this particular definition does is allow the service paradigm to supersede and dominate the identity paradigm of higher education, as a public institution in South Africa. It does this by neglecting to provide a definition of higher education that encapsulates the kinds of epistemic rules, values, standards and practices that would provide a constitutive identity of higher education in South Africa.

Without this constitutive epistemic identity we cannot speak of a coherent and substantive concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

6.15. Conclusion

The post-apartheid university is being transformed by a comprehensive policy cycle. This cycle reflects three key phases, from which key policy documents and decisions have emerged, which have defined the concept of the university in South Africa today.

According to policy, the rationale that this concept of a university is based upon privileges the service function of the university as an institutional ideal, by foregrounding it in terms of the need for a more socially responsive higher education sector. There is nothing wrong with the democratic responsibility that our universities ought to address, but by locating the definition of a university exclusively within a service paradigm, as described above, the epistemologically constitutive idea of the university is being eroded by the dominance of the service functions and purposes of the contemporary South African university.

The National Commission of Higher Education Report and the Higher Education Act are seminal in defining the current concept of the university in South Africa. According to these documents, the concept of a university in South Africa is defined in terms of 'Higher Education', in which such higher education is equivalent to:

- tertiary education

- all programmes leading to qualifications more advanced than the Further Education Certificate on the NQF.

By making such a definition equivalent to 'qualifications', in the absence of any references to the epistemic values, aims and practices that constitute the epistemic ally to the constitutive concept of a university, such a definition posits what MacIntyre (1981) refers to as 'goods external to the practice'. In this case this refers to a 'qualification', as being the key component of the concept of a university in South Africa today.

Such a definition privileges the service function of a university by defining the concept of a university in terms of 'external goods' such as qualifications, which are only contingently attached to the constitutive identity of the university.

This concept of a university is not informed by a strong and substantive formal element that can provide an epistemic norm or standard for generating key epistemic practices in the light of the transformation of the higher education sector in a democratic South Africa. The concept of the 'comprehensive' university is a good example of the implications of this inadequacy.

The concept of the 'comprehensive university' in South Africa lacks a substantive formal element, which has had (and continues to have) dire consequences for the transformation of curricula in these institutions. This problem is characterised by a lack of clarity regarding key epistemological components. Given that the 'comprehensive' university in South Africa is partly premised upon the concept of the university in South Africa, it can be concluded that a conceptual inadequacy of the constitutive identity of the latter is a result of a concomitant conceptual inadequacy in the former.

I would thus argue by extension that the conceptual inadequacy of the concept of the 'comprehensive' university is a result of an inadequate formal element that underpins the constitutive idea of the university in South Africa.

The constitutive concept of the university stands in imminent danger of being totally effaced by a strong service identity that is being shaped by strong State interventions

through key policy decisions, such as the way policy has and continues to define the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

The most significant conclusion of my examination of the way policy defines the university in South Africa, is that the concept of the university in South Africa, is predicated upon a definition of 'Higher Education', which does not recognise the distinctive epistemic nature, practices and functions of the concept of a university.

This definition of 'Higher Education' does not provide a description of the constitutive identity of the university in South Africa. What was glaring absent from the definitions of the university in the two seminal policy documents that I referred to , was the omission of the term 'university' or any reference to its constitutive epistemic distinctiveness.

In fact, given this epistemological scenario, it would not be far out to suggest that an epistemologically constitutive concept of a university does not exist in contemporary South Africa.

According to Kovesi (1967), the formal element of the definition of a concept, plays an important role in providing the standards of excellence and norms that provide the conditions for the implementation of this concept. So, in other words, in order to transform universities in South Africa, we need a strong formal element that can guide the implementation of these transformatory initiatives and projects. The absence of such a formal element in the way that the 'university' as a concept has been defined in some seminal documents, portends doom for the attainment and implementation of key transformatory goals for universities in this country.

The next chapter will focus on the extent to which this limited definition of the university has impacted on the implementation of key transformatory initiatives in South African universities in the new dispensation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

EXTENDING THE SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONCEPT OF A UNIVERSITY

7.1. Previous chapter

In the previous chapter I examined the definition of the concept of a university as defined in two seminal policy documents. From my examination I concluded that policy conflates the service functions and the constitutive functions of the concept of a university in this country. Such an understanding of the university ignores the constitutive functions of the formal elements of this concept. Such functions will play an integral role in trying to engage in constitutive epistemic practices such as the transformation of curricula.

Such an understanding of the concept of a university fails to provide a standard or framework that could guide constitutive practices and functions that are instrumental in transforming these institutions; and it also obscures the possibility of being able to identify new examples of this concept.

7.2. The aim of this chapter

It is in the light of these concerns that this chapter focuses on the scope of application for the implementation of this definition. I will examine the scope of application of this concept within the following contexts:

- Debates regarding the transformation of curricula in merging institutions.
- Debates regarding the transformation of curricula in South African universities in general.
- The achievement of institutional autonomy in South African universities.

7.3. Debates on curriculum transformation in merging institutions

In this section, I discuss the application of the South African concept of a university, as defined by policy, within the context of the comprehensive university. In the previous chapter I discussed the difficulties that have been identified with regard to defining the concept of the comprehensive university. In this section, I discuss the problems that are being experienced with the transforming of curricula in these institutions.

7.3.1. Lack of clear guidelines

The results of an extensive research project that involved mergers between various higher education institutions[3] in South Africa, is one example which demonstrates how mergers are influencing curricula in the newly combined institutions. In his analysis of this research project, Mfusi (2004) discusses the effects of mergers on the curricula of these merging institutions.

From his (Mfusi's, 2004) discussion it is clear that mergers do not of necessity have a productive effect on the resultant curricula, in the sense that,

- the resultant curricula either remain as they are;
- or there is a partial integration of the different curricula of the different institutions;
- or the curricula of one institution are superseded by the curricula of the other institution, depending on which one was the most powerful partner.

In other words, there is no constructive or coherent transformation of these curricula. (Mfusi, 2004: 109).

In his conclusion Mfusi attributes this problem to a lack of clear guidance that could inform the transformation of curricula in merging institutions. He makes the following point in this regard,

[3] the South African College for Teacher Education and the University of South Africa; the Johannesburg College of Education and the University of the Witwatersrand; Giyani College of Education and the University of Venda; Veterinary Science Faculties of the University of Pretoria and the Medical University of Southern Africa; and the M. L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal.

> In the case of mergers used as examples in this article, the issues of power relations and power struggles clouded the merger process especially with regard to the curricula issue. None of the documents, which influenced, and advocated mergers gives guidelines on how the curricula should be composed after the merger (Mfusi, 2004: 109).

In an attempt to theorise curriculum mergers in higher education, Jansen supports Mfusi's (2004) prognosis. Jansen argues that even though mergers are usually a response to non-curricula issues like financial and organisational imperatives, curricula form the core of all teaching and learning at higher education institutions. Referring to five case studies of merging institutions and their resultant curricula, Jansen concludes that merger outcomes, specifically the resultant curricula, are predominantly a product of internal power struggles (Jansen, 2002:169-170). Jansen describes this scenario in the following way,

> What was crucial in the contestation over curriculum, and therefore the degree of curriculum integration was micro-political struggles over whose content matters (2002: 170).

Both Mfusi and Jansen highlight the dominance of micro-politics over curriculum matters in the merger process (Mfusi, 2004: 109; Jansen, 2002: 170).

7.3.2. Merging different kinds of knowledge

Another significant problem that is currently characterising the transformation of the curricula of comprehensive universities is the challenge of trying to reconcile the academic-vocational divide.

Issues of curriculum transformation in merging institutions, particularly ones in which vocational and academic binaries have to be addressed, is a very complex one. Yet bridging this divide is at the very heart of the comprehensive university.

For Young, the academic-vocational binary and the limits of integration are complex epistemological issues, which he presents as follows,

> By treating all knowledge as potentially explicit and vertical, the standards-based approach fails to recognise the fundamental differences between theoretical and everyday or workplace knowledge. As a result, vocational programmes that rely on the standards-

> based approach deny learners access to the rules governing the production of knowledge by the scientific and professional communities (in Young and Gamble, 2006: 121).

Young refers to sociologist Emile Durkheim, in order to clarify and identify the problem that accompanies an undifferentiated approach to knowledge on which social constructivism is based. According to Young, Durkheim argues that the foundations of knowledge can be extrapolated from society. He (Durkheim) used primitive societies as his frame of reference and was able to conclude that these societies made a distinction between two different kinds of knowledge.

According to Young, Durkheim referred to these as 'sacred' and 'profane' knowledge. Durkheim refers to'sacred' knowledge as a more fundamental kind of knowledge that was not context dependent; and 'profane' knowledge was of a more practical, context-dependent nature. 'Profane' knowledge constituted survival skills that enabled these societies to protect and preserve themselves.

'Sacred' knowledge, on the other hand, cannot just be acquired through experience; it is the kind of knowledge that is generalisable and not context-dependent; and it also enables its user to develop the capacity to construct/construe alternatives, both of which are possible because this kind of knowledge is not context-dependent (in Young and Gamble, 2006: 116-117).

The significance of this debate is that a weak concept of the comprehensive university will not serve as an adequate epistemological landscape for the kind of problems that integrating academic and vocational knowledge entails. These problems are currently rearing their heads in the transformation of curricula in comprehensive universities in contemporary South Africa.

The integration of different kinds of knowledge is a deeply problematic undertaking. For some it is easier to refer to organisational issues around this point and not key epistemological ones. This complexity is further extended by the failure of policy to provide a clear definition of a comprehensive university. The lack of clarity regarding this definition and its ensuing impact on curriculum transformation is foregrounded in the following debate. At a recent seminar, on 'Organising the curriculum in the new

comprehensive universities', the crux of the debate it seemed was the conflation of the terms integration and comprehensive (CHET, 2004).

According to Cloete,

> Distinguishing between 'comprehensive' and 'integration' is the centre piece of our debate… (CHET, 2004: 31)

For others the debate is a more complex one, in which the focus of the transformation of curricula in comprehensive institutions is not about integration but about the diversity of programmes. Gibbons attempts to explain it as follows,

> …the aim is not to create an integrated comprehensive curriculum – that is nowhere ever stated as a goal – but merely to integrate programmes where there is already strong overlap or correspondence. In fact I have been at pains to say to people that they should not confuse the concepts 'comprehensive' and integrated'. Comprehensive refers rather to the range of diverse programmes that are offered, from vocational to academic, not to integration of programmes. But obviously if a diploma in business management is being offered at the technikon and a degree in business management at the university, they would need to explore the possibilities for some level of integration. That's where the programme models come in." (in CHET, 2004: 31)

Gibbon's (in CHET, 2004) explication regarding the transformation of curricula in comprehensive institutions is predicated on the material elements of the university as a service institution. In other words her reference to a range of diverse programmes that is being offered is characteristic of the kinds of goods that are external to the constitutive epistemic practices of a university. They give it a competitive edge and they also enable the rationalisation of the State funding by circumscribing the number of offerings available within a cluster of institutions (in this case the comprehensive), as opposed to each of these being offered in different institutions. Both of the aforementioned are the projected goals of the State.

Young makes an important point that cuts to the heart of this debate,

> On the comprehensive issue I wanted to go beyond the policy frame a bit to think about why the term was being used and largely restricted to organisational and not curricular issues (in CHET, 2004: 33).

Young's concern is precisely the extent to which the constitutive epistemic functions of the constitutive idea of the university have been superseded/sublated by its service functions.

Implicit in Gibbons's (in CHET, 2004: 31) response is the uncertainty of key role players, like herself, with regard to what the comprehensive university really means. Her distinction between the concepts 'comprehensive' and 'integrated' and her insistent plea attached to this distinction, indicate not only that there is a significant lack of clarity with regard to the meaning of these concepts, but that role players are confused about the epistemological underpinnings of the concept of a 'comprehensive' university (issues of this nature have been discussed in 2.7.3. and 6.12.1).

According to her response, it seems that some have interpreted the epistemological basis of the 'comprehensive' to be the integration of what were once separate and distinct epistemological stances. Her response is however, that the basis upon which this concept rests is not epistemological but organisational. This distinction then raises the question: What is the constitutive identity of a 'comprehensive' university in South Africa? Young's (in CHET, 2004) comment reinforces this question with noted concern.

His concern stems from an epistemic authority that policy documents and decisions regarding the 'comprehensive' fail to demonstrate.

The above debate highlights two issues. The one relates to what is meant by the transformation of curricula in the 'comprehensive university'. The dilemma there is whether the process is one of integration of different curricula, as is expected by some, or whether 'comprehensive' refers to the diversity of programmes within such a university, as others understand it.

The other issue, which is more implicit, is one which I think is crucial to the higher education landscape, is what is meant by the 'comprehensive university'. The

aforementioned lack of clarity regarding the transformation of curricula or the organisation of a diversity of programmes is a result of a lack of clarity with regard to what is meant by the 'comprehensive university'. This lack of clarity regarding a clear definition of the 'comprehensive university' is also forthcoming in a key concept document of the 'comprehensive university'.

In fact this description is more a refusal to provide a definition than an actual lack of clarity regarding this definition,

> This general use of the term 'comprehensive' is not particularly helpful. According to such usage, many of our existing Higher Education institutions could be termed comprehensive. What we are looking for is a particular meaning for the term, appropriate to the South African context, which corresponds to the goals and objectives that the creation of these institutions is supposed to fulfil. International models may have experiences and practices that are helpful to us, but they will be found through an examination of the roles and functions of institutions, who they serve and how they serve them, rather than through a simple focus on the descriptive term 'comprehensive'. It is important, therefore, to return to a discussion of general purposes and goals.
>
> …
>
> In summary, access, articulation, the strengthening of applied research, and responsiveness are the four key goals for all these institutions (Auf der Heyde, 2004: 4).

There are two causes for concern in the above extract. The first one is the extent to which the service identity of the concept of the 'comprehensive university' is fore-grounded, particularly in the context of the 'four key goals for all these institutions'. All four of these goals conform to the service functions of the university. It is therefore inevitable that in the absence of this constitutive epistemic identity, any epistemic initiative will run the risk of being swallowed up by the service paradigm of the university, hence the focus on the 'organisation' of the curriculum.

Also, key epistemic features and functions, such as curriculum transformation, are being engaged in at the level of their material elements, i.e. the 'units of a programme'.

7.3.3. The formal element of the concept of the comprehensive university

The second cause for concern that the extract highlights is the difficulty in recognising the 'comprehensive' university as being another example of a university in South Africa. Such uncertainty regarding what a 'comprehensive university' is or is not, is a result of the lack of a formal element in the conceptualisation of the university, according to policy documents, in South Africa (refer to 2.7.3 and 6.12.1 for related discussions).

Kovesi (1967) is very clear about this key function of the formal element of a concept. He explains and illustrates this valuable function in the following way,

> The formal element is *that* same thing they all come to. Without this formal element we would be unable to find new examples of inadvertent acts, and unable to follow a rule in using the term. We must recognize what it is for an act to be inadvertent, no matter what else it may be, before we can call it 'inadvertent', and it is *this* recognition, and not the recognition of any empirical similarities between different instances of inadvertent acts which enables us to follow a rule in using this term.
>
> Tables are, of course, similar to each other; but we did not arrive at our notion of a table by having discovered similarities between some of our pieces of furniture. Rather, we make them similar because, only by being made more or less similar, can they meet the need that tables were invented to meet. But the number of ways in which we can do something inadvertently is not so limited. Our police force would have an easier job if, for instance, the number of ways in which we could commit murder were limited to a few standard techniques (1967: 16-17).

What Kovesi's (1967) illustration explicates is that the formal element of a concept or action, enables us to identity and recognise 'something' in its various forms, even when this 'something' assumes a form that appears to be (by virtue of its material elements) different. His example of murder is a good one: whether one kills someone through strangulation or poisoning, it is still murder, even though the material elements that we can observe through our senses are different.

As a result of this inability to recognise a 'comprehensive university' as being a university or not, there seems to be both a concerted effort to refuse to define the 'comprehensive university' and also an inability to do so.

A strategy of this nature, such as merging higher education institutions, forces us to rethink taken-for-granted assumptions that we have of the role of the university: What is a concept of a university, the role of knowledge and the role of the curriculum in universities? The merging of higher education institutions in South Africa forces us to revisit the identity of the university and the nature of 'higher' within 'Higher Education' in South Africa.

In the absence of a strong idea of the university or any proper curriculum transformation in South Africa, universities are unlikely to be able to transform themselves from being ideologically, iniquitous and regulative institutions to become democratic, constitutive epistemic institutions that will be able to take South Africa and its people into the new millennium.

In a recent discussion document[4], entitled: "The Idea of a South African University, Higher Education in a Transforming Society", the then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal made the following point,

> Higher Education can only enter into relationships with other social actors, whether in business, industry, labour, the public sector, or civil society, if Higher Education itself has a strong identity (2004:10).

It is this kind of imperative that must be kept in mind as we engage in current debates on the transformation of South African universities which are focusing on the resultant curricula of merging institutions, the need to make university curricula more relevant to the needs of the South African/African context, modes of knowledge, the public good and the role of curricula in a changing university landscape.

The complexity of the task is foregrounded in the various debates that have emerged.

[4] Presented at a meeting of the President's working group on Higher Education in October, 2003.

What is clear is that the South African higher education landscape is in a quandary about what the nature of new curricula is going to be and what the purpose and identity of South African universities will be in the context of democratic transformation.

There seems to be a dichotomy between the South African university as a more socially relevant institution that precludes the traditional concept of the university and all its traditional canons of knowledge; and the South African university as an epistemologically legitimate institution that derives from the traditional concept of a university.

7.4. Debates on curriculum transformation in contemporary South African universities

This section focuses on debates which are centred on the content of university curricula in a democratic South Africa.

This debate is very prominent in South African universities at present, and it focuses on what ought and what ought not to be included in our curricula. What this section demonstrates is that such debates are underpinned by often-conflicting concepts of the university in contemporary South Africa.

7.4.1. More contextualised curricula

Dowling and Seepe argue that we need to revisit the traditional idea of the university and locate higher education more within the South African and African contexts if we want to truly transform South Africa. Dowling and Seepe, and Naude, all point to the need for more socially responsive curricula in higher education. They argue that we need to,

> … ensure that the African experience is at the core of the curricula (in Naude and Cloete, 2003: 52).

This kind of contribution points to a more contextualised kind of knowledge, which should underpin curricula.

What is interesting about Dowling's and Seepe's (Naude and Cloete, 2003) recommendation is that they have situated the social responsibilities of the university,

within the constitutive identity of the university, by arguing for a more socially (one that encapsulates not just western epistemologies) comprehensive epistemology. The social responsibilities of the university are usually contextualised within its service identity, e.g. functions like providing more market-based skills are commonly associated with this responsibility.

Singh, on the other hand, makes a different kind of contribution to this debate. Although she is critical of disinterested inquiry per se she nonetheless argues for the need to go beyond our immediate, local contexts in our pursuit of knowledge,

> The pursuit of knowledge in a variety of fields is critical to human development broadly understood. Undue focus only on applied fields with strong commercial possibilities will seriously threaten the arts and humanities, thus undermining the full range of insights and understandings necessary for balanced social and cultural development. The fostering of ideas in a range of basic and applied fields is a necessary public good, allowing different ideas and their applications to nourish social development in a multiplicity of tangible and intangible ways. It should be possible in Higher Education to pursue knowledge in ways that could extend the horizon of human understanding and the limits of human imagination without always being constrained by considerations of immediate relevance or adequate returns on investment costs (2001: 9).

Singh's contribution goes to the heart of the constitutive idea of the university, which is the systematic pursuit of disinterested inquiry, and the epistemological conditions and practices that make this possible. She is not entirely dismissive of the service functions of the university as an institution, but she reinforces MacIntyre's (1981: 194) warning of the corruptive nature of the service nature of the university, and the extent to which this identity can supersede the constitutive identity of the idea of the university, if the epistemic practices, values and aims of this constitutive identity are not allowed to develop and flourish freely.

7.4.2. Applied knowledge

Some policy documents however seem to put the emphasis on more applied knowledge. Naude points to one such example which he has extracted from a report by the National Council of Higher Education (NCHE). For Naude this definition highlights the 'Modes

of Knowledge Production' debate that is currently prevalent. This description provides keen support for the emphasis on the Mode Two kind of knowledge which some are arguing should characterise higher education curricula. Policy documents support such a position,

> On an epistemological level, *increased responsiveness entails a shift away from closed knowledge systems controlled and managed only by canonical norms of traditional disciplines and by collegially recognised authority, to more open systems which are dynamically interactive with broader social interests*, 'client' demand and outside processes of knowledge generation (Naude and Cloete , 2003:74).

The significance of this policy response is, firstly, its challenge to one of the key components of the idea of the university, and that is its social dimensions, which are represented by the epistemic community and their epistemic authority. Policy's call for a broader representation of constituents within the university, regarding key epistemic decisions, is indicative of the erosion of one of the key constituents of the constitutive idea of the university. This is its epistemic authority.

Secondly, it challenges historically established standards of epistemic excellence, upon which constitutive epistemic practices are predicated. These constitutive standards of epistemic excellence cannot be cast away in favour of immediate external concerns that are inherent in the service functions of a university. That policy supports such a position is a demonstration of the extent to which the constitutive idea of the university and the goods that are internal to such practices are being eroded by the service functions and purposes of the university.

However the need to value and preserve the constitutive idea of the university and its respective functions and practices, is still prioritised by some. The significance of constitutive epistemic practices, such as the pursuit of disinterested inquiry, is clearly highlighted by Muller (2000). In response to the mode one and mode two knowledge production debates, Muller makes the following point,

> First, that mode two has, in some though not all forms, been with us for a long time but that in late modernity it has become more visible. Second, that mode one could not

> disappear because mode two competence depends upon a prior disciplinary competence (2000: 48).

Unlike Dowling and Seepe, Muller (2000) does not necessarily see a predominantly more responsive curriculum as being more edifying for the South African context,

> Contrary to belief in some quarters, mode two is not more democratically run nor more democratically accessible than mode one. There may be greater access to the knowledge networks via the new information technology, but this does not ensure epistemological access to the highly specialised activities of mode two research teams (Muller, 2000: 49).

Muller's (2000) contribution is significant in the sense that he foregrounds the need for the university to maintain its constitutive formal element by retaining the kind of disciplinary knowledge and traditions that mode two knowledge depends upon. Muller is not dismissive of applied knowledge per se, but stresses the importance of disciplinary knowledge and scholarship.

This position is significantly different from the way policy conceptualises the idea of the university, by arguing for more socially and economically responsive curricula in the form of mode two kinds of applied knowledge; in so doing policy posits a service identity of the idea of the university, which poses a significant threat to its constitutive ideal.

Singh, Jonathan and Badat (in Kagisano [CHE], 2001) and Jonathan (2001a; 2001b) add another dimension to the "responsiveness debate" by referring to a different type of responsiveness, which is social responsiveness. They interrogate the need to insert the 'public good' into higher education transformation. Singh is critical of the narrow, economically defined notion of 'responsiveness':

> …I want to invoke the multiple purposes of Higher Education and the connection between many of these purposes and the 'public good' as a means of finding a way back to the idea of social responsiveness conceptualised in a more comprehensive fashion. … Despite views which argue that the narrow accountability imperative will prevail over all other dimensions it is vital that, in a country like South Africa, where Higher Education transformation is part of a larger process of democratic reconstruction, we do not entirely subsume social responsiveness to economic responsiveness (9: 2001).

For me the problem is not whether social responsiveness is subsumed by economic responsiveness, the source of the problem is the extent to which any or a combination of these different ways of being 'responsive' as the service functions of the university can erode and subsume the constitutive concept of a university.

7.4.3. Africanising the curriculum

The following position makes a significant contribution to this debate. Its value lies in the way it shifts the locus of the 'responsiveness' debate to the constitutive concept of a university. It does this by conceptualising 'responsiveness' at an epistemological level, and in so doing acknowledges the constitutive idea of the university and its respective purposes, functions and practices.

Higgs, et al., (2003) and others make an argument for an epistemological 'responsiveness', and in so doing make a valuable contribution to the debate on the transformation of universities in South Africa by shifting the debate to the constitutive idea of the university.

They (Higgs, et al., 2003) argue that indigenous knowledge and knowledge systems have to be taken into account when reconstructing higher education, if social and university transformation are to be substantive goals:

> … it is at this juncture that we would like to argue that innovation in Higher Education goes beyond the formal systems of innovation done in universities and industrial research and development laboratories. For meaningful development and social transformation to occur in the South African context, we would maintain that indigenised African innovations and knowledge systems would also have to be taken into account in Higher Education curricula (Higgs, et al., 2003: 43).

Such a position locates political and social emancipation within an epistemological nexus and highlights the need for transformation in universities to go beyond just changing management structures and the demographics of university staff and students within the broader transformation agenda of a democratic South Africa:

> We have argued that, indigenous knowledge systems should be integrated in the transformation of the Higher Education landscape in South Africa, in the development and the implementation of Higher Education curricula. The reason for this is because we believe that there should be a move towards new ways of thinking and feeling about Africa, its history, economic, social and political status within the context of the global community. Such a deconstruction, would as Ntuli (1998:17) notes, "unleash a thorough interrogation of our own Eurocentric scholarship and the entire panoply of Eurocentric scholarship, in order to shake it from its contented hegemonic pose into an arena of meaningful contestation". Such is the challenge that confronts the Higher Education sector in South Africa and the attempts being made at its transformation by way of a national system of innovation (Higgs, et al., 2003: 44).

Higgs, et al., (2003) supports the focus on scholarship and disinterested inquiry but takes this notion further by motivating for the need for South African universities to do an audit of South Africa's epistemological resources if its universities want to truly transform themselves and contribute to the public good and scholarship in a more comprehensive way.

7.4.4. Epistemic values

Morrow adds to the debate on the need for 'more responsive curricula' that should be constitutive of local South African and African values, and argues instead that the constitutive feature of higher education is its promotion of epistemic values. He is wary of how conflicts about curriculum transformation can be superseded by economic issues, and refers to Muller to highlight this inclination in universities:

> In the words of Johan Muller, tertiary education institutions are forced into developing '…market responsive curricula, which are "targeted" and "niched" to capture some or other "market segment" and to respond to some or other market need…' (in Naude and Cloete , 2003: 6).

For Morrow, the constitutive qualities of Higher Education should be the promotion of epistemic values,

> Epistemic values are those values that shape and guide enquiry which has as its regulative goal the discovery of truth about some matter, irrespective of whether that truth is

> convenient or inconvenient, and supports or does not support any particular personal predilections or sectional interests. …Any 'curriculum transformation' that does not embody these epistemic values, that fails to respect the distinction between knowledge and propaganda, a normative notion of warrant and the descriptive notion of acceptability cannot be a benefit either to society or to the students who follow that curriculum' (in Naude and Cloete (eds), 2003: 10).

Morrrow's (in Naude and Cloete (eds), 2003: 10) injunction for the transformation of universities to embody the epistemic values upon which the idea of the university is premised is significant in the sense that it goes to the heart of the constitutive identity of the idea of the university, which is key to the reinforcement and construction of the idea of the university in South Africa.

Even though Muller, Singh, Morrow and Higgs, et al., do not refer directly to the curricula of merging institutions, the brunt of their arguments has a direct impact on possible directions that the curricula of merging institutions can follow. They refer to trends that are implicit in the current transformation of university curricula.

7.4.5. Curriculum as 'projection'

An interesting addition to the curriculum transformation debate is the one forwarded by Moore (2001), which is premised upon a hypothesis constructed by higher education specialist, Ronald Barnett. Moore (2001) refers to Barnett's hypothesis regarding the development of curriculum transformation in higher education institutions. According to Moore, Barnett makes a distinction,

> …between curricula that are 'inward-looking', reflecting a project of introjection where they are largely the outcome of 'academic influence' and curricula that are 'outward looking, reflecting a project of projection, where they are subject to 'external influences' (Barnett, 2000, p263). Barnett predicts that at the macro-level (State and institutional policies), change will be in the direction of projection (Moore, 2001: 2).

Referring to this hypothesis, Moore (2001) concludes that curricula in South Africa are controlled by external influences such as the State. In other words, according to Barnett's

thesis, the curricula in South African universities would be 'outward looking' and would thus reflect a 'project of projection'.

Using Barnett's hypothesis as his frame of reference, Moore (2001) claims that universities in South Africa are under serious threat to their institutional autonomy by the State. This danger is imminent in the panoply of policies that have been created to strengthen State control in these institutions. For Moore (2001) one of the key instruments in this respect is the programmatic definition of higher education which policy has articulated.

Such a definition, policy argues, will ensure more socio-economically responsive universities. Moore, on the other hand, argues that such a definition has problematic consequences for the continued existence of the constitutive idea of the university; he sites epistemic changes in curricula as one such consequence,

> Since the transition to democracy in 1994, Higher Education in South Africa – like other sectors – has been subject to a series of policy papers and bills which seek to reconstruct the field in various ways. … a central ambition of the policies has thus been to enhance levels of state control over the Higher Education system so as to steer the system more effectively towards these goals. The key means by which the state plans to exert this enhanced control is the academic 'programme'. The Draft White Paper on Higher Education notes that "the most significant conceptual change is that the single co-ordinated system will be premised on a programme-based definition of Higher Education" (DOE, 1997: paragraph 2.4). Programmes would thus become the unit by which the system would be planned, governed and funded, enabling a greater responsiveness of the system "to present and future social and economic needs, including labour market trends and opportunities, the new relations between education and work, and in particular, the curricular and methodological changes that flow from the information revolution" (DOE, 1997: paragraph 2.6).
>
> Programmes are thus not only a structural device to enable better steerage of the system; they are intended to be a vehicle for a qualitatively different form of curriculum.
>
> One of the arguments advanced for curriculum reform is the changing nature of knowledge and where and how it is produced (2001: 2-3).

For Moore (2001) issues of curriculum transformation in South Africa are hugely influenced by the extent to which the state has exerted control over the Higher Education terrain.

Moore's (2001) analysis of a strongly programmatic definition of the idea of the university which is embedded in an economic discourse is significant in the sense that it alerts us to the extent to which the constitutive idea of the university in South Africa is being conflated with its service identity and functions.

Jaspers (1960) warns against the impulse to conflate the constitutive identity of the idea of the university with its service functions. For him the constitutive practices of the idea of the university are the practices that are predicated upon epistemic values and aims and which conform to internal standards of epistemic excellence, and should therefore not be determined by external forces such as economics.

This warning needs to be acknowledged as we embark on the epistemic transformation of curricula within our universities:

> All the university recognizes is responsibility to truth. This struggle for truth must not be confused with a struggle for economic existence. It occurs on the level of disinterested investigation (Jaspers, 1960: 76).

Moore (2001) provides a useful interlude into how policy has conceptualised the concept of a university in South Africa.

Issues of curriculum restructuring and organisation are very difficult and complex ones particularly in a country in which higher education curricula were used to oppress and repress people. These debates highlight key trends that are significant in trying to extrapolate an understanding of the concept of a university in South Africa at the level of implementation.

7.4.6. Synopsis of curriculum content debates

Curriculum transformation in South Africa universities is largely influenced by State intervention with regard to what constitutes knowledge in a democratic dispensation.

Curriculum transformation and debates based upon this process in universities are in a state of flux at the moment, both in institutions that are engaging in mergers as well as those that are not part of the merger process. Debates point to an uncertainty and lack of consensus regarding the transformation of curricula in higher education institutions in South Africa.

According to some, curriculum transformation in merging institutions is often the result of micro-politics. Curriculum transformation in these instances relies on the material elements of the concept of the university. According to some the source of this epistemological dilemma is that the transformation of curricula in these institutions is not underpinned by any legitimate guiding framework. In fact, debates point to a lack of any such framework.

Such an epistemological dearth and the absence of any constitutive epistemic guidelines can be traced back to the policy definition of the university in South Africa which is predicated upon the material elements of this concept. The weakness of such a conceptualisation is that in precluding a strong formal element of the university, constitutive epistemic practices such as curriculum transformation are bereft of any standards and norms that could guide such epistemic actions.

There is strong motivation that curriculum transformation in Higher Education institutions throughout South Africa should move towards more responsive, 'mode two knowledge' curricula. Such a position locates the university within its service functions and purposes, and in so doing conflates the service and constitutive functions of a university.

Such an epistemological predilection, points to an inability to distinguish between the service and constitutive identity of the idea of the university. Such a conflation, to reinforce Jaspers' (1960) warning, is to threaten the very existence of the idea of the university and its regulatory ideal.

Other debates are anxious about this very tendency that conflates the service functions of the university with its constitutive functions. Such debates argue for a need to predicate

the transformation of curricula on the epistemic values, aims and practices that are represented by the constitutive idea of the university.

Debates regarding the transformation of curricula in universities can be located at the interface of the service and constitutive functions of the idea of the university. The lack of coherence regarding this constitutive epistemic practice in South African universities at present becomes manifest as different positions conflict at this epistemological interface.

Underpinning the lack of certainty and consensus regarding a constitutive epistemic practice, such as the transformation of curricula in universities, is a present lack of certainty and consensus regarding the idea of the university in South Africa.

7.5. Eroding institutional autonomy as an example of external influences on the concept of the university in South Africa

An interesting intervention, by Jansen (2004c), regarding the autonomy of the university in post-apartheid South Africa merits consideration in this study, simply because it provides a context for the types of debates regarding curriculum transformation in universities in South Africa today; it also highlights one of the key issues that posed a significant threat to the idea of the university in apartheid South Africa, and that is institutional autonomy.

I will begin by providing a summary of the extent to which the State is trying to regulate the university at present (according to Jansen, 2004c), and then I will analyse the extent to which this incursion impacts on the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. I chose Jansen's perspective because it is comprehensive, and because I am just trying to reinforce a point. It is not my intention to go into the institutional autonomy debate at any deep or comprehensive level.

Jansen (2004c) provides a comprehensive summary of the extent to which the State is attempting to regulate universities in South Africa today. Both his (Jansen's, 2004) and Moore's (2001) interventions regarding this issue demonstrate the extent to which the idea of the university in a post-apartheid South Africa has not changed significantly from

the idea of the university in an Apartheid South Africa and how even under democratic conditions the idea of the university remains under threat.

I will begin with a description of Jansen's summary and then I will evaluate the interventions of the State that he refers to. According to Jansen,

> The core of my argument today is that the most important changes in South African Higher Education since 1994 are not to be found in the dramatic structural reorganization of the sector or in the impressive policy/planning apparatus created for public institutions. Rather, I contend that the most far reaching changes in Higher Education are to be found in the gradual but systematic erosion of historical standards of autonomy that were ingrained within the institutional fabric of universities. Moreover, these erosions of autonomy within universities can be located within a steady series of specific events which, when taken together, have fundamentally altered the ways in which we talk about 'the university' in contemporary South Africa (2004c: 4).

According to Jansen (2004c), several policy initiatives and decisions have eroded and continue to corrode institutional autonomy and the intrusion of the State into South African universities. He refers to nine State interventions that have had an indelible impact on institutional autonomy in South African universities.

According to him the freedom of institutions to teach what they prefer is curbed through the use of funding formulas. Instead of being subject to internal epistemic standards, bureaucratic structures have constructed stringent criteria which institutions have to abide by if they want to receive accreditation which will either enable them to continue with their programmes or have such programmes rendered invalid:

> Moreover, an unprecedented flourish of bureaucratic structures – the South African qualifications Authority, the Council on Higher Education, the Department of Education – now create a series of approved barriers that must be scaled in order to have any new programme or qualification approved. So, it is not only that decisions about what can be taught are now centralised, but that structures of bureaucratic compliance ensure that institutions act in accordance with such authority (Jansen, 2004c: 4).

The State now makes decisions regarding which programmes a university might offer or not:

> For, example, the decision to close Mining Engineering at the University of Pretoria and transfer that responsibility solely to Wits University is a case in point (Jansen, 2004: 7).

The State also circumscribes the number of students who should be allowed access to higher education by placing a cap on student enrolments,

> …that the State now decides who can be taught, or rather, how many students are allowed to enter universities and in which specific fields (Jansen, 2004: 7).

The decision on how students will be taught is being proscribed by situating qualifications on a national qualifications grid,

> The requirement that learning outcomes should be specified, that assessment criteria should be made explicit, and that programmes should be "packaged" in particular ways are unprecedented intrusions into actions that were always considered the domain of the universities (Jansen, 2004c: 7).

The State's decision to fund some programmes more heavily, forces universities to focus more on these programmes than on others,

> … e.g., the funding formula privileges Masters degrees by dissertation only, over those in which theoretical training takes the form of coursework – irrespective of whether the latter course of action strengthens and deepens the quality of the thesis research being submitted (Jansen, 2004c: 7).

The State's decision to exert accountability through external auditing has challenged the privilege of self-regulation in higher education:

> Despite the attempted reassurances that auditing is a mechanism for institutional development, the fact is that this form of State intervention could close down institutions or programmes and make harsh and final public judgements about such activities (Jansen, 2004c: 7).

The State's decision to merge certain institutions, despite resistance from these institutions is a direct challenge to institutional autonomy,

> …that the State now decides which institutions will exist, and in what combinations (Jansen, 2004c: 4).

The installation of State-chosen administrators in institutions which are experiencing a crisis is another example of strong State intervention,

> …that the State can now displace a Vice Chancellor on the basis of review and install his or her own Administrator to run the institution (Jansen, 2004c: 4).

The final one is the current consideration by the State to decentralise university administration regarding student admissions,

> …that the State now contemplates the centralizing of information (or rather de-institutionalizing information) required for student admissions in a proposed central applications office (Jansen, 2004c: 4).

7.5.1. State intervention and loss of constitutive values and functions

These decisions regarding the regulation of what should be taught, how curricula should be organised, the external evaluation of epistemic practices, the choice of university Principals based on political expediency and the idea of centralising student information - all these have a significantly corroding effect on the concept of the university, both at the level of its service functions and at the level of its constitutive epistemic practices and functions.

The use of external bureaucratic standards to evaluate epistemic practices ignores the constitutive epistemic authority that is derived from the epistemic values and aims upon which the constitutive idea of the university is based.

The freedom to choose what to teach in a university appeals to the same aforementioned epistemic authority, and a disregard of this constitutive epistemic function has serious consequences for the nature of the constitutive idea of the university. Such a (former and latter) disregard poses a serious threat to the existence of the idea of the university.

The use of the NQF to proscribe pedagogy, which is (decisions regarding pedagogy) actually an epistemic function derived from the constitutive functions of the idea of the university, also challenges this epistemic authority and by implication the constitutive concept of the university.

The decision to appoint university leaders on the basis of their political views, as opposed to their epistemic credibility, questions the legitimacy of the epistemic leadership of such appointees, and subsequently the way the State conceptualises the constitutive functions of the university.

The decision to reconfigure the higher education landscape through the merging of institutions into 'Comprehensives', despite opposition from the epistemic communities, is another example of the disregard for the epistemic authority of the custodians of the constitutive idea of the university. The impasse with regard to the epistemological transformation of these institutions is due to a lack of epistemic understanding that informed these mergers.

The State's decision to cap enrolments by limiting the admissions criteria in universities, demonstrates a deep disregard for the epistemic authority that is derived from the constitutive idea of the university and its constitutive functions.

The State's decision to discontinue some university programmes prohibits the freedom of the epistemic community to contribute to the constitutive idea of the university in individual institutions, through their considered choice of programmes and ensuing curricula based on epistemic standards of excellence. Such a limitation challenges both the constitutive idea of the university and its concomitant functions.

The State's use of funding to privilege one kind of research programme, as opposed to another, challenges and threatens one of the key premises upon which the idea of the university is based, and that is the development of systematic disinterested inquiry. Not only is teaching based on this ideal, but also the induction of all students into this epistemic enterprise. By privileging some kinds of research programmes over others, the aforementioned function of this epistemic enterprise is limited to some students only.

Given the apartheid history of the idea of the university in South Africa, this policy decision, would be to the disadvantage of already epistemologically disadvantaged students. In so doing this policy decision also reneges on one of the key functions of the service identity of the university as an institution, and that is its social responsibility/function.

The decision to centralise the administration of student admissions prevents the university from fulfilling a key administrative function which is constituted by its service identity within the university as an institution.

Jansen's (2004c) critique of the corrosion of institutional autonomy in South African universities provides key insights into the way the State is currently threatening the continued existence and development of the idea of the university at the level of both its constitutive and service identities.

Jansen's (2004c) evaluation of the status quo regarding the institutional autonomy of universities in South Africa raises serious questions about the idea of the university in South Africa today and its imminent demise. It also brings to mind a key question, posed by a previous Minister of Education, Kader Asmal: "What is our 'idea of the South African university?'" (2004:3).

7.6. Conclusion

Debates on the transformation of universities in general and the transformation of curricula in particular lead to the following conclusions:

There is a lack of consensus with regard to the nature of curricula in South African universities. This lack of consensus stems from rival conceptions of the concept of the university upon which decisions, regarding the above, are predicated. The institutional autonomy of universities and their constitutive ideal are under serious threat from the State in South Africa.

The concept of a university that the State supports and reinforces through its policies, is premised upon a concept of the university that is located within a service paradigm, hence its strong socio-economic rationale. Such an inclination poses a serious threat to

the epistemologically constitutive concept of the university in South Africa and to the continued existence of universities in this context.

This fuzziness regarding the concept of a university in South Africa, and the threat to its constitutive identity, do not augur well for the transformation of the concept of the university in South Africa. The problems that have been highlighted in these debates point to the way policy has conceptualised the idea of the university in South Africa.

This idea ignores the constitutive identity of the university and its formal elements.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ROUNDING OFF CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS:

WHAT IS THE IDEA OF THE UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA TODAY?

8.1. Aim of study

The aim of this thesis emerged from the following conceptual question: 'What is the idea of the university in South Africa today?' In order to address this question, I set out to examine the concept of the university in South Africa today. The nature of the question and the subsequent aim of this thesis necessitated that I engage in a conceptual analysis. On the basis of this conceptual analysis I divided this thesis into two parts.

8.2. Part one: Constructing a Model Example of the concept of the university

In the first part of this thesis I construct a model example of the concept of the university. Trying to clarify a concept is a very complex task, but trying to clarify an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie in Mair, 2007:21) is an even more complex and demanding task. The nature of the 'concept of the university' is the kind of concept that I would call an 'essentially contested concept' (Gallie in Mair, 2007:21).

The university as an institution is currently contending with much external pressure and criticism, and the traditional university and its purposes are becoming more and more difficult to discern. One of the reasons that are precipitating this problem is the lack of certainty regarding what the concept of a university really entails, that is: what it stands for, what are its boundaries, and how far can they extend.

Some argue that the concept of the university in contemporary society is caught between two worlds:

- a contemporary one

- and a more traditional and historical one.

The concept of the university in a contemporary South African context is an even more complex and controversial concept; in fact some may even regard it as an issue. The reason for this is that a concept of the university in contemporary South Africa, is caught not just between two worlds, that is: a contemporary and a traditional world, but it is caught between several worlds. Such a context makes the untangling of this concept very messy and difficult.

The concept of the university in contemporary South Africa is caught between the following worlds:

- A nineteenth- century German politically repressive context
- A fast-changing 21st century global economy
- An epistemologically and socio-politically repressive apartheid dispensation
- A nascent democratic dispensation, with pressing democratic imperatives

The width of these chronological and geographical borders and the extent to which these borders both limit and extend the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa has made the examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa a very complex, messy and challenging task.

In view of the contemporary uncertainty regarding the concept of the university; and as a result of the multiplicity of influences on the concept of the university in South Africa, and its derivative effect on how we understand and implement this understanding in the contexts of our universities, I was compelled, for the sake of clarity and consistency, to construct my own Model Example of the concept of the university.

8.2.1. Challenges

There were many challenges that stood in my way and aspects that I had to take into account, as I engaged in this task of constructing a Model Example of the university,

which would enable me to fulfil my main aim. Here is a list of some of these aspects and challenges:

- One of the key challenges for me was to construct a Model Example that would enable me to take account of (not necessarily solve) conflicts in contemporary discourses regarding the socio-political and epistemological functions of the university;

- I needed an interpretation of the university concept that would also be able to take into account our unique South African context and worldview. It had to be a concept that would be able to reconcile our socio-political imperatives with our epistemological ones. This requirement comes from a particular understanding we have of transformation in our country, which we like to understand as 'democratic transformation'. This kind of transformation of our higher education sector is aptly depicted in the following extract,

  > In this sense, traditional African thought and practice is characterized not only by its concern with the person but also by its interweaving of social, economic, political, cultural, and educational threads into a common tapestry. As a result, traditional education in Africa is distinguished by the importance attached to its collective and social nature, as well as its intimate tie with social and communal life. Higher education, then, in the traditional African setting, cannot, and indeed should not, be separated from life itself. It is a natural process by which members of the community gradually acquire skills, knowledge, and attitudes appropriate to life in their community - a higher education inspired by a spirit of ubuntu in service to the community (Higgs & Van Wyk, 2006: 89).

- The concept had to be clear in terms of what the core meaning of the university is, not just at an abstract level, but also in terms of its scope of applicability (its usefulness). This aspect also had to be built in.

- The distinctive qualities of a university education and its practices and functions also had to be built in.

On the basis of these considerations I constructed a Model Example of the concept of the university, which constituted the following core elements:

8.3. The core elements of my Model Example

- **The material and formal elements of a concept of a university.**

My Model Example had to entail the epistemological conditions that went beyond recognitor status (material elements), to a more constitutive operational status (formal element). These elements underpinned the other core elements.

- **A concept of a university as an institutional ideal which is based on a continuum of constitutive and service functions and practices.**

The service functions can be political or economic, and are/can be formulated by/negotiated with external stakeholders.

The constitutive functions are predicated upon the following core elements of the idea of the university:

- **Constitutive epistemological practices**
- **Constitutive epistemic forms of inquiry**
- **A distinctive kind of higher education**

8.4. Part two: Examining the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa

The second part of my conceptual analysis constituted the actual examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. This part is controversial in terms of its extended chronological and geographical contexts, but was significant to my examination, as it makes the point that any concept of the university in contemporary South Africa is always and should always be interpreted in terms of a range of contexts.

This was based on my application of Toulmin's theory of the evolution of concepts, in which he argues that the meaning of a concept is enriched by, and in so doing evolves out of its range of applicability in various social contexts.

In this part of my thesis I used my Model Example of a concept to provide a critical examination of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. I examined the evolution of the modern concept of the university by focusing on the contributions of Von Humboldt, Cardinal Newman and Jaspers.

I looked specifically at how they engaged with the political and epistemological functions and responsibilities of a university. I then examined the concept of the university in America and Germany. I looked specifically at how the economic functions of their universities were impacting on the epistemological functions of their universities, and vice versa. I then examined the concept of the university in Apartheid South Africa.

I looked at how the Apartheid State determined the identity of universities in South Africa, during this time, and the consequences of such a dispensation. I finally examined contemporary higher education policy and how it defines the concept of a university in South Africa; and how this formal definition, impacts on our current transformatory initiatives.

8.5. A synopsis of results

From this examination I was able to extrapolate the following conclusions regarding the idea of the university in contemporary South Africa:

- Current lack of clarity regarding the concept of the university can be located in the conflation of the socio-political and epistemologically constitutive functions of a university; and the idea that the one needs to override the other.

- This problem stems from a conceptual imprecision regarding the concept of a university, which does not take into account the depth of its scope of application. This problem is thus about an artificial distinction between the university as an abstract concept and the university as a public institution.

- The way to circumvent this conceptual and practical ambiguity is to reinterpret and reconceptualise our concept of the university.

- On this basis of this solution, I reconceptualised a concept of the university in a more holistic way that took into account both the socio-political and epistemological dimensions of the university. **This solution acts as both one of the conclusions and one of the recommendations of this thesis.**

A concept of the university should be interpreted in a way that circumvents any false distinction between the university as a concept, and a university as an institution. Instead, we should look at the university as a concept that is predicated upon an institutional ideal.

This institutional ideal and its respective institutional types, are characterised by a continuum that has both (external) service and (internal) constitutive purposes, functions and practices. Within the context of such a concept of the university the following distinctions can be made:

- The external service functions of the service institutional type of the university, can be characterised by the socio-political responsibilities that the university has to the society that supports it. These functions are contingent by nature.

- The internal constitutive functions must be characterised by the epistemologically constitutive purposes, functions and practices of a university. Although these functions have evolved over time, they remain essentially consistent. These purposes, functions and practices are constituted by the internally and historically established epistemic standards of excellence. These epistemic standards and values are and must be maintained and protected by an epistemic community.

- What is important for this concept in terms of clarity, and particularly in terms of its implementation/application is the maintenance of a necessary, dialogical balance between the two institutional types and their respective functions and practices. If one institutional type is displaced by another or if they are conflated by each other, then the university cannot fulfil its purposes, both in terms of its socio-political and constitutive epistemological functions and responsibilities.

- The socio-political and epistemological consequences of such a displacement and or conflation are demonstrated in contexts such as Napoleon's Prussia; Nazi Germany; Apartheid South Africa; and contemporary America and Germany.

On the basis of an examination of a definition of the concept of a university in contemporary South Africa, according to two seminal higher education policy documents, that I selected, I was able to extrapolate the following conclusions (on the basis of my Model Example of the concept of the university):

Furthermore, the concept of a university according to South African higher education policy:

- Displaces and conflates the constitutive epistemological functions of the concept of the university as an ideal institutional type with its service functions. In so doing it ignores a key constituent of the concept of the university which is the maintenance of a dialogical balance between the service and constitutive epistemological purposes, functions and practices of the university.

- In so doing, it can be argued that the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa does not entail a concept of the university that recognises the distinction between its service and constitutive epistemological functions, and the interdependence of these functions.

- The concept of the university is characterised by a diverse constellation of material elements, which are largely neglectful of the epistemologically constitutive functions of the university.

- What is of concern in this constellation, is the explicit disregard for the distinctive nature of the kind of 'higher education' that is constitutive of the university. Such a disregard stems from the socio-political imperatives of contemporary South Africa, which are supposed to efface the apartheid legacy of 'exclusion' and segregation/distinction.

- The material elements of this concept of the university are underpinned by a weak formal element. A strong and coherent formal element could extend the scope of application of this concept in a deep, coherent and consensual/consistent way.

- In the absence of a strong and coherent formal element, the depth of the scope of application of the policy definition of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa is very limited. This thus negates the aspiration we have of the democratic transformation of our universities and society at a deliberative level (as opposed to a merely symbolic level).

This conceptual inadequacy and its consequences are evident in the following contexts/transformatory initiatives:

- A set of conflicting ideas about what kind of knowledge is /should be constitutive of a university. Whilst this kind of epistemic deliberation within an epistemic community is not a dilemma per se, what is of concern is the extent to which the external 'acceptance' of what ought to constitute knowledge is being prioritised. Instead of relying on the epistemic practice of 'warrant' to appraise this terrain, what is more socio-politically palatable is being prioritised. This scenario reinforces the dominance of the socio-political character of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa. Such a scenario demonstrates the extent to which our universities are still largely caught up in the legacies of the previous dispensation. Even though democratic values and principles govern our political context, it is nonetheless dangerous to allow the external acceptance of truth/knowledge to govern the university context.

- It can be informed by it, but should not be governed by it. As the Nazi, Napoleonic and Apartheid contexts demonstrated the quest for power and political domination relies on certainty. A university is predicated upon the quest for provisionally warranted truths and in so doing create a context for democratic transformation and growth. In the absence of such an epistemically constitutive character, not only would the constitutive functions of a university run the risk of

reneging on their social functions, but could also lead to the demise of a democratic society.

- The dominance of the service identity of our universities is also demonstrated in the extent to which the institutional autonomy of these institutions is being compromised.

- The vagueness and fuzziness regarding the definition and understanding of any concept of the comprehensive university, as an extension of the concept of the university in contemporary South Africa.

- Current definitions of the comprehensive university focus on the material elements of this concept. What is missing is a strong and coherent formal element that can underpin its material elements, and guide conduct in this context. In so doing, such a definition would be able to extend the depth of the scope of applicability of the concept of a comprehensive university.

- The application potential of such a weak concept of the comprehensive university is demonstrated in the curriculum context. Curriculum transformation in comprehensive universities is currently characterised by superficial aspects such a micro-politics and not by any clear and coherent conceptual framework that could sufficiently guide this process towards democratic transformation.

8.6. Recommendations

On the basis of what has been demonstrated in the thesis as a whole and the above conclusions, I make the following recommendations:

- That the concept of the university in South Africa be reflected upon more intently. From this reflection, the current concept of the university in contemporary South Africa should be extended to include a strong formal element; and this concept should be based on a concept of the university that is predicated upon a dialogical balance between its service and constitutive epistemological functions.

- That attempts to transform South African universities should take into account the extent to which our universities are constructed by Western and European discourses. Such an account needs to be particularly cautious of, inter alia, how these discourse posit the purposes and functions of a university, and the extent to which such a conceptualisation of a university can meet our transformatory agenda, both of higher education in particular and South Africa in general.

- The epistemic community in South African universities should be more proactive in defining the concept of the university in the South African university context, and also in terms of asserting their epistemic authority and identity.

- More work must be done in areas of theorising and conceptual clarity in education, and less on occupational skills.

8.7. Topics for further research

- A closer look at the kinds of service functions and practices that could characterise our universities;

- Interrogating historically established standards of epistemic excellence, within a context of alternate knowledge systems;

- Applying my Model Example, or some of its core components to the organisational identity of comprehensive universities.

- Applying my Model Example, or some of its core components to actual transformatory initiatives in the higher education context.

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