

Chapter 7: Findings and conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This doctoral thesis represents a contribution to three main disciplines: to book history, to social history, and by extension to intellectual history. In terms of book history, the history of the university presses is examined in terms of their origins, analysis of their publishing lists and author profiles, and their business practices. Data has been sourced from a combination of bibliographical, archival and informant research. This ‘biography’ of the university presses inevitably raises questions of social and of intellectual history. In particular, these revolve around the shifts in political orientation of the university presses and the scholarly texts they published. This deepens our understanding of a specific, and highly complex, period in South African history. And, as Evans and Seeber (2000: 4) point out, the social history of this country may be traced through the marker of “what was and what was not able to be published”. This study thus examines “cultural, social, and textual histories as reflected and represented through editorial theory and practice” (Young, 2006: 185).

The story of scholarly publishing in South Africa is, as others have pointed out in international contexts, a story of both great stability and great change (cf. Abbott, 2008: 12). The research conducted for this thesis shows that, in the university presses of South Africa – Wits, Natal, Unisa, and even Fort Hare – there has been great stability in terms of policies, organisation, and processes. This may be seen in the fact that, for instance, peer review policies have remained largely unchanged for fifty years or more, at the country’s university presses. Complaints and concerns, especially regarding resources, have remained relatively constant, too!

But there have also been sweeping changes, in terms of both the publishing and the academic context: for example, there has been huge expansion in both the numbers and profile of academics in South Africa; at the same time, there have been technological

developments that have changed both publishing processes and formats of distribution for publications; there has been a shift away from publishing local faculty (Abbott refers to this trend as a sign of “robust growth” (2008: 19), and it is also seen as an indicator of increasing professionalism); there have been ongoing attempts at breaking into the international market to improve reach and sales; and there has been a rise in the number of edited volumes as opposed to single-author monographs.

Some of these changes have been far-reaching, spiralling out from wider societal changes into the university domain, while others have been more closely related to the processes and economics of scholarly publishing. For example, the increasing influence of market forces can be seen in the changing relations between supply and demand (for symbolic and cultural goods as well as those with market value), as well as the growing professionalisation of authors and of publishers. In this regard, Bourdieu identifies two distinct strategies in publishing: “the logic of short-term profit, staking on quick sales and ephemeral success, and the logic of long-term investment, for the constitution of a stock of books likely to become ‘classical’” (quoted in Sapiro, 2003: 452). These broader international trends have indeed been mirrored in local scholarly publishing. Contemporary trends would include growing professionalisation, the use of technology, and – especially – increasing market pressures.

Perhaps the most striking change has come with the changing political dispensation. In addition to ideological, symbolic and market forces linked to colonialism, South Africa experienced a specific history of repression and attempted control over cultural and knowledge production during the twentieth century. The apartheid period’s repression, complicity and resistance forms the backdrop for this study, as the apartheid system and its accompanying legislation had a constraining effect on both academic freedom and scholarly publishing in South Africa. Indeed, the emergence of apartheid provoked a wide spectrum of responses, which can be plotted on a continuum from one extreme of collaboration, to the other extreme of resistance – or, as Andries Oliphant describes it, “[a] discourse of complicity and resistance, with all its shades of ambiguity ... inscribed in the various literatures of South Africa” (2000: 113). This study has considered the location of South Africa’s university presses on such a scale of responses to apartheid, examining how their

publishing programmes and histories reflect their insertion within a wider social context. This enables us to trace intellectual and political currents and to develop a relational analysis of academic freedom, through the medium of scholarly publishing.

7.2 Answering the research questions

As has been described in this study, the university presses were established and published actively during a very complex era in South African history. Their history is thus intertwined with the history of academic freedom and the struggles between academia and the government. The aim of this study is to reflect on academic freedom in South Africa during the apartheid era, and to contribute to the debates on social and intellectual history during this period through an examination of local knowledge production. In order to fill the gaps in our knowledge of local scholarly publishing and its wider context, the main research question which this study aimed to investigate is the following:

What does the history of South Africa's university presses reveal about knowledge production and academic freedom during the apartheid period?

As described in Chapter 1, sub-questions that arose out of the main research question included the following:

- What was the motivation for establishing university presses at certain local universities (and, by extension, why were they *not* established at other universities), and what were their publishing philosophies and missions?
- To what extent did or do the local university presses conform to international models of scholarly publishing, and specifically what I refer to as the 'Oxford model'?
- How can we conceptualise the shifting roles and intellectual responses – between resistance and complicity – as represented by academic knowledge production?
- What did the local presses actually publish during the apartheid period, and what do their publishing lists, author profiles and philosophies reveal about their and academics' shifting responses to apartheid?

- To what extent can the local university presses be seen as oppositional publishers, and what was the role of the independent oppositional publishers?

To answer these questions, a hybrid methodology, incorporating theories, frameworks and insights from a variety of disciplines, was employed. To begin the study, a literature review was conducted, followed by the use of historical bibliography and archival research to construct more complete publishing records for the university presses in question. Because of the dearth of documentary evidence available, and to improve the validity of the data collected, the archival and secondary research were supplemented by content analysis and by interviews, with a key informant group of academics. Then, more qualitative methodologies, such as content analysis and author profiling, were applied to the publishing lists, using a specifically developed continuum to categorise and analyse the lists. The underlying theoretical approach was largely one of social history and book history, with some aspects of political sociology included.

The literature review described in Chapter 2 revealed large gaps in the literature. One of these gaps is the story of scholarly publishing in South Africa, and in particular the biography of the university presses. The international literature reveals a stark contrast, as university presses and their histories have been examined in some detail. This study aimed to fill that gap, and to lay the foundations for future studies of university press publishing in both South Africa and the African continent more generally.

7.2.1 Origins and philosophy of the university presses

- What was the motivation for establishing university presses at certain local universities (and, by extension, why were they *not* established at other universities), and what were their publishing philosophies and missions?

Chapter 3 of this study described the origins of university presses, both locally and abroad, examining their role as conceived at the time of establishment. The motivation for establishing university presses in South Africa usually related to the university's perception of itself as a significant research institution and knowledge producer, within a context where there were few local publishing platforms yet a growing research cohort. An attempt was

made to trace the development of the presses' publishing philosophies and missions over time. It was shown that shifts are discernible in these publishing philosophies, often related to the role and influence of the members of the Publications Committees or the key staff members of the presses.

Like any publisher, the university presses developed particular reputations – accumulated cultural and symbolic capital – as a result of their publishing lists. These reputations have also accrued to their parent institutions. For instance, university presses confer prestige on their parent universities by associating them with research, by publishing distinguished academics, and by disseminating quality scholarly books. The selection of these titles is influenced by a great many individuals and institutions, including the editorial staff of the press, the members of the Publications Committee, and the academics used for the purposes of peer review. The origins and mandates of the university presses thus tell us a great deal about their perceptions of their own role as scholarly presses, as well as their broader social role.

In this study, we could only speculate as to why university presses were established at certain local universities, and, by extension, why were they *not* established at other universities. There are, for instance, no presses at the traditionally Afrikaner universities (except Unisa, which falls into this category to some extent) or the traditionally black universities (except Fort Hare, for a period), and this may be because of how these universities conceptualised their own role in society. The ideology of the institution is thus significant, as well as its attitude towards research. Paradoxically, a significant perception of Unisa is that it is not a research-oriented institution, yet on the initiative of a group of research-minded professors, a publishing programme was established. Thus, another important factor is the personalities and influence of individuals at the different higher education institutions. Further research attention could be devoted to explaining how the other universities certified and circulated their research output, as well as what values they promoted and disseminated.

These two key factors in the establishment of a university press – the specific institutional milieu and ideology, and the role of individuals – receive attention throughout the study.

They are also significant factors in the direction of publishing philosophies, and in the gatekeeping function by which manuscripts are selected for publication. Indeed, the fact that the university presses functioned as integral departments of their respective parent institutions, rather than as autonomous business units, means that the institution influenced any and all publishing decisions, as well as operational decisions relating to strategy, structure, and staffing. Moreover, as shown in Chapter 6, the varying value attributed to the university presses by their parent institutions can be traced in the fluctuating grants given by their institutions, and by the frequent reviews of their operations. It is thus not surprising, given their institutional constraints, that the local university presses were not as free in their publishing philosophy and selection decisions as more independent oppositional publishers were able to be.

7.2.2 The 'Oxford' model

- To what extent did or do the local university presses conform to international models of scholarly publishing, and specifically what I refer to as the 'Oxford model'?

As essential background and context to the study, the history of and literature on university presses in other comparable countries was briefly set out. Secondary sources for the literature review consulted included the published histories of a number of university presses world-wide (in the UK and USA, but also in Commonwealth countries such as Australia and Canada, and in other African countries), as well as wider studies of scholarly publishing and its evolution in other contexts, for comparative purposes. The literature review helped to sketch a clearer picture of the development and dispersal of the so-called 'Oxford model' of university press publishing. This was described in Chapter 2.

Moreover, the literature review revealed an imbalance in the depth and number of studies conducted on university presses in various parts of the world – with a dearth of such studies in, for instance, the African countries – but the literature available, it was shown, supports the contention that scholarly publishing has followed a remarkably similar trajectory, and developed according to similar elements, around the globe.

From the literature, it was possible to distil these similar elements, which make up what is referred to in this study as the ‘Oxford model’ of university press publishing. The key elements are as follows:

1. A close relationship between the university presses and their parent organisations;
2. A commitment to publishing high-quality, meritorious academic work;
3. An attempt to balance scholarly merit with commercial concerns;
4. A coherent publishing list that focuses on a specific and usually well-defined niche.

In addition, a fifth point could be added at a later stage, relating to the wider societal role of the university presses, and their responsibility to promote academic freedom. This became a key element of emphasis in this study, as the wider social insertion of the university presses in the apartheid period would be examined.

Examination of the origins and original mandates of the South African university presses reveals that they, too, conformed to international models of scholarly publishing, and specifically the ‘Oxford model’. However, it was found that they, like university presses in a developing country context elsewhere, do show a greater adherence to a service mandate in addition to a scholarly one, to the extent that at Unisa the dual mandate of the press placed the emphasis more heavily on service than on publishing.

Moreover, the element described above relating to list-building would only emerge as the presses became more professional from the 1980s onwards. This can be seen in the overlaps between the niches of the university presses, and in their lack of differentiation or deliberate commissioning until a much later date. At about the same time, the element of balancing scholarly merit and commercial concerns began to shift towards a much more commercial, profit-oriented outlook at the South African universities. This has been termed a growth in ‘managerialism’, and is a world-wide trend among higher education institutions and university presses alike.

7.2.3 Between resistance and complicity: The continuum

- How can we conceptualise the shifting roles and intellectual responses – between resistance and complicity – as represented by academic knowledge production?

The main research question considers shifting responses to apartheid, and the concepts of complicity and resistance. To situate South Africa's university presses on a continuum of such roles, a model for conceptualising these intellectual subject positions had to be devised. Based on the work of political sociologists such as Heribert Adam, Pierre Hugo, and Mark Sanders, a continuum was developed with intellectual responses varying between resistance and opposition, on the one hand, and collaboration and complicity, on the other. The continuum describes the potential intellectual stances and responses among academics during the apartheid period, and the influence of both academic and political factors on the intellectual sphere in South Africa. Because the continuum is not static, responses could also shift over time or in different contexts, and a certain degree of ambiguity can also be described (e.g. a tendency to hold more than one stance at a time).

As background, a further part of the literature review examined the concept of academic freedom in greater detail, referring to the historical context in which resistance or complicity emerged. Attention was also paid to the literature on oppositional publishing in the South African context, for comparative purposes. A key finding that emerged from the literature is that university press publishing has traditionally been closely associated with academic freedom and the role of the public intellectual.

- What did the local presses actually publish during the apartheid period, and what do their publishing lists, author profiles and philosophies reveal about their and academics' shifting responses to apartheid?

The continuum was then used as a tool to examine and situate the publishing lists of the university presses. This enabled us to track patterns and trends in publishing philosophy over the decades of the apartheid period and, in effect, to interrogate to what extent knowledge production and circulation were affected by the repressive environment during this era. We could thus ask, on the basis of concrete evidence of outputs and policies, what

responsibility and role the university presses had, and whether they maintained or challenged the ideological positions of their institutions and of the wider social context. The content analysis used the content of the books published by the university presses as a measure of their commitment to resistance or dissent – to their very mission. The expectation was that the university presses, in keeping with the international literature on academic freedom, would have played an oppositional, dissident or at least provocative role.

However, the reality was highly complex, sometimes ambiguous or even contradictory, and it changed over time. The application of the continuum of intellectual responses to the content analysis and author profiles of the university presses reveal a wide range of responses to apartheid, from the point of view of the authors, the content of works, and the philosophies of the presses themselves.

Increasingly, studies of higher education during the apartheid period are identifying the ‘open’ universities as somewhat conservative and cautious in their approach, in contrast to the earlier perception that they were very liberal or even radical in opposing apartheid. This study supports this shift in thinking, to show that none of the university presses acted as an agent of change during the apartheid period. Like the majority of academics, the presses tended to support (or at least comply with) the status quo, rather than take the risk of confrontation or opposition. Thus, even if the university presses at Wits and Natal did publish books that may at times be classified as ‘militant-radical’ or ‘political reform’, their own stance appeared to be one of tacit acceptance. This holds true for most, if not all, of the apartheid period, as their editorial policies shifted to become more politically aware and more outspoken right at the end of the 1980s. This late apartheid period saw growth in politically aware and critical texts.

Unisa Press, in contrast, was found to have allowed a certain amount of individualised dissent, within an atmosphere of what Marcum (1981) calls “repressive tolerance”. Thus, the subject positions at Unisa – especially as reflected in the research output placed under the brand of the university itself – varied from compliance to openness, but with little direct

challenge to the status quo. An image of reason and academic freedom could thus be promoted, at very little risk to the institution or its academics.

On the whole, then, the pressures to conform appear to have been greater than the pressures to oppose. Moreover, an author profile of the university presses supports the main conclusions of the content analysis, but enabled the further insight that the more radical or activist authors tended towards either publishing abroad or with the independent oppositional publishers, such as David Philip Publishers and Ravan Press, while the more conservative academics continued to publish with the university presses. On the whole, though, the university presses were not the first port of call for most local academics. Concerns about censorship and submission to the government's censorship apparatus drove this trend, as well as the need for greater world-wide visibility. There was certainly a perception among academics that university presses would not take a chance on controversial texts, and could not assure an author of widespread distribution and readership. Thus, the most important oppositional work of the apartheid era – even when scholarly in tone and audience – was not published by the university presses.

- To what extent can the local university presses be seen as oppositional publishers, and what was the role of the independent oppositional publishers?

While the university presses made an attempt to offer a diversity of opinions and viewpoints, they were not, however, oppositional in approach. Thus, a key conclusion of this study is that the South African university presses did not respond to apartheid's repression, censorship and political pressures by playing an oppositional role. Eve Gray (2000) is thus right to argue that "the university presses failed to provide a space for radical views or marginalised voices". The university press, as a formal site of knowledge production, was thus not "conducive to the production of radical discourses" (Singh, 1994 : 211).

Part of the reason for this is institutional constraints, as well as societal ones. The university presses were certainly not in the same position of freedom to select manuscripts and authors as were the oppositional publishers. Some of the key factors constraining these presses include their gatekeeping practices, which depended on a system of peer review

through the channel of a publications committee, itself made up of senior academics at the University. As this study shows, the review and selection processes extended to the extent of self-censorship of politically uncomfortable topics, although not to overt censorship. Secondly, the oppositional publishers were largely funded by external or donor funding, and thus could take more risks than a publisher subsidised largely by the state, through the parent institution – again, the University. The university environment itself was thus a constraining factor in determining what would and would not be published by the university presses.

7.2.4 Impact of the university presses

It has been noted that it is difficult to gauge the impact of a publishing house, whether an independent oppositional publisher or a university press. However, an attempt was made in this study to track the reception and impact of local university press books, as research needs to be published and disseminated in order to reach an audience and make a contribution to the literature. This issue was considered from a few, related perspectives: distribution efforts from the university presses; marketing and especially advertising by the presses; and readership, as seen through reviews in local and international academic journals.

To a much greater extent than expected, local university press books, especially from WUP and UNP, did reach the international scholarly community, and they were generally very well received. As argued in Chapter 6, this insertion into the international community of scholars did decline over time, especially in the 1980s, due in part to the growing isolation of South Africa and the academic boycott. It was at this stage, too, that the perception grew internationally that the university presses could not be considered oppositional publishers.

It seems that the growing liberalisation of the political sphere in the late 1980s and into the post-apartheid era opened up the structural blockages impeding some academics from publishing in their own institutions and presses, while also opening the way for the use of peer review as a tool by those who wished to perpetuate old agendas. This could not be proved by solid evidence from peer review files, but there is additional evidence available, in

the form of notes and the availability of reviewers and authors for interview. In one documented case (based on notes taken during a meeting, rather than its official record), a Unisa Press Publications Committee member attempted to block the review of a manuscript that conflicted with his theoretical stance – and just happened to be written by a foreigner as well. In contrast, in at least two other cases, manuscripts that were *not* ready for publication were accepted into the publication process, in a clear effort to grow the numbers of black authors, after apartheid. In other words, peer review may be used as a tool for both exclusion *and* inclusion. But this is also part of the nature of gatekeeping: “The dual nature of gate-keeping is important to emphasise: that gate-keeping can function as exclusion and control, on the one hand, and inclusion and facilitation, on the other” (Husu, 2004: 70).

The university presses also displayed a renewed focus on the rest of Africa, once the new government had been installed in 1994. For example, WUP stated in a press release: “With the launch of five new books dealing with Mozambique, WUP has become the definitive publisher on that country’s history” (13 June 1995). This was stated without irony, in spite of the clear elements of a paternal approach promoting South African neo-colonisation or appropriation of especially the near parts of the continent. WUP now refers to itself as being strategically positioned as a publisher on the African continent – as, indeed, do the other university presses as well. Recent marketing materials for the presses underscore this new emphasis: WUP argues that it is “strategically placed at the crossroads of African and global knowledge production” (WUP, 2012) and Unisa Press that it has “a primary focus on the African continent” (Unisa Press, 2012). Indeed, Unisa Press (*ibid.*) goes on to quote leading Africanist scholar Amilcar Cabral in this context: “Each of you has to have the courage to shoulder the responsibility of being an African at this decisive moment in the history of our peoples.”

Similarly, in line with changing university policies and strategic objectives, and as a reflection of the opening up of South Africa after the democratic elections in 1994, the university presses began a deliberate policy of selecting texts with an African perspective. Thus, a survey of UKZN Press’s latest catalogues reveals a clear focus on the rest of the continent as well as its insertion into the KwaZulu-Natal region. More titles have also been published in

the other official South African languages during this transitional period (there are nine, in addition to English and Afrikaans). The presses also began to seek co-publishing deals and partnerships with other publishers much more actively, to re-insert themselves into a wider international scholarly publishing community.

As a result of such publishing decisions, the university presses are now beginning to set an agenda for scholarly publishing in South Africa, rather than simply reacting to or indeed remaining aloof from current events.

7.3 Value of the study

The social history to which this research contributes, the case studies described, and the bibliographies developed (see the accompanying CD) all make a contribution to the literature on scholarly publishing in South Africa, and could be used as resources for further research in this field. The study is also an important contribution to the development of the field of book history in South Africa. Moreover, this research reveals the potential richness of a study of the publishing history of non-fiction, as opposed to that of fiction, which has dominated book history studies to date. The university presses in South Africa have not been the focus of sustained study before, so this study is the first of its kind.

As noted in the Introduction, there are several other benefits to this study. The first of these was the development of bibliographies or publishing lists, to a greater level of completeness than any lists otherwise available. In addition to being a contribution to the digital humanities, the bibliographies may also be used for future research. Another benefit of creating these bibliographies was the ability to refute misconceptions about the local university presses, and to offer evidence based on actual publishing practice to support a range of contentions. The study thus also adds to our understanding of publishing and intellectual history in the specific context of apartheid.

In addition, the methodological tools employed in this study constitute a contribution to the field of publishing studies and history. The innovative use of a hybrid methodology, employing theoretical constructs and insights from a wide range of humanities and social

science fields, enhanced the qualitative analysis possible. Moreover, new theoretical insights have been enabled through this study, largely due to the development of a model for categorising academic or intellectual responses to apartheid, as applied to a publishing list. This is a new model, applied to the South African case, but it enables comparison with international experiences as well. The model was developed once it was found that there was no existing theory that could be used to trace shifting subject positions and publishing philosophies over time and in different contexts. Because the classifications used by Adam, Hugo and Sanders are applicable to academics and their output, they were considered singularly well suited to a study of knowledge production and to the products of research. This was the first time, however, that they were applied in the context of publishing and to the concrete output of a publishing list. The lack of analyses of publishing lists or South African book history studies is a clear shortcoming in the literature.

This study will also make a wider contribution to debates around South African print culture and history, via the medium of the conference and publication outputs associated with the research, as well as this thesis.

7.4 Recommendations

There are two kinds of recommendations that emerge from this research: the first is a set of recommendations of direct relevance to the scholarly publishing industry, and specifically the South African university presses. The second set of recommendations relates to future research areas and to gaps in the current body of knowledge that further research could aim to fill.

7.4.1 Recommendations for the publishing industry

The results of the study are expected to strengthen the current practices of university presses, both in South Africa and beyond. While the study has not specifically evaluated the university presses' ability to cope with the fast-changing demands of publishing in the twenty-first century, the trends and patterns described do assist in pointing the way for the presses to adapt and survive. At the same time, it seems that South Africa's publishing

industry has evolved, in step with much of the rest of the scholarly publishing world, from “ideological constraints to having mercantile constraints” (Sapiro, 2003: 460).

For instance, Unisa Press started its life as a publishing services department, rather than being considered as a fully fledged university-based publishing house from the outset. As Unisa is a distance education institution, the design, creation and printing of study material has always been an important part of its function, and the role of Publishing Services was to ensure that study material was properly costed, and that professional layout and design were applied, before it was passed on to a (separate) Department of Print Production for printing. Today, Unisa Press features prominently in the university’s strategic plan, with the bold aim of becoming a “publishing power house” on the African continent (Unisa, 2005: 16). This implies a real shift in emphasis and business model, from an inward-looking department, supplying services, to an outward-focused publishing house serving a much larger community of scholars.

As this study has highlighted, the development of a coherent publishing list, based on a specific niche, is a key element of the ‘Oxford model’ for university presses. Yet analysis of the university presses’ publishing lists reveals that, apart from a recent, more deliberate attempt at commissioning, the university presses have to a great extent followed a trend prevalent in South African scholarly publishing, of selecting their texts from unsolicited manuscripts. There has been little concerted attempt by any of South Africa’s university presses to actively develop niches and build a coherent list. They are thus subject to the whims and research trends of individual academics, rather than gauging market needs. On the whole then, while they have developed strengths in a few areas, it is recommended that all of the university presses engage in analysis of their publishing lists to develop coherent niche areas. This will also improve and target their marketing efforts, another area that requires improvement.

Another important recommendation relates to the importance of better archiving and record-keeping practices at the university presses, and indeed at South African publishers in general. In his introduction to a series of articles on ‘Archivists with an Attitude’, John Brereton cautioned scholars “to begin asking what is missing from the archive and how it

can get there. And we can also ask some questions while there is still time to act: Are there things we should be working to preserve right now? What can we do now to make sure current practices and materials will be accessible in the archives of the future?” (1999: 474–5). This brings us to the question of preservation. Without policies or guidelines in place, South African publishers will continue to preserve their records erratically and without an eye to history. What is required is the preservation of only a small proportion of a voluminous record-keeping, but the question inevitably arises as to what should be kept. A basic starting point would be the preservation of “corporate historical records and artifacts deemed to be of permanent value in documenting the company’s founding and subsequent growth” (Bakken, 1982: 281).

Brereton (1998) notes that existing guidelines for archives are not entirely applicable to publishing houses. She argues that they tend to emphasise the materials of greatest interest to secondary users, at the cost of retaining business records such as administrative and especially financial records, which are of greatest use to the creators of the records. Canada’s Simon Fraser University has produced a small booklet to encourage publishers to preserve their records (Coles, 1989). A similar effort for South African publishers would be of great use.

7.4.2 Recommendations for further research

While research was being conducted for this study, a number of gaps in the literature were identified. In addition, this study has certain limitations, which opens the way for further studies in the same field. Some of the key gaps highlighted in the literature review include the lack of in-depth study of South Africa’s publishing history. Further research is required on all aspects of the publishing value chain: from authoring and production, to marketing and circulation, and beyond, to readership studies. As shown, the inclusion of mission and publishing philosophy in the value chain is also of importance when developing publisher histories.

A broader idea that emerges from this study is the necessity of charting the development of university presses in developing countries. Some research initiatives have been made in

India, but much more remains to be done in that country, as well as in various African countries. Britain's colonies were all affected, to some extent, by the models of higher education and of publishing that were reproduced – and often adapted to local conditions – in those countries. In many former colonies, there has been a deliberate attempt since decolonisation to break away from the so-called Western model of education, or “looking like Oxford”, but it is not clear whether this ideology has carried through to the area of scholarly outputs and publishing. Thus, the impact of the ‘Oxford model’ across the globe is also of interest for future research, and especially the aspect of the transmission of values and culture via a specific publishing model. Moreover, the study was limited in focusing on English-speaking publishing, to a large extent, and further study of university press publishing in non-Anglophone countries is also encouraged.

Another category of publishers that requires further study is the oppositional publishers in South Africa. Potential research questions could consider why this group of publishers arose at a specific historical moment, in the 1970s, and trace the development and impact of their publishing lists. In addition, looking at the rise of black, minority or independent publishing in other countries, outside the mainstream channels of publishing but nonetheless representing a substantial mass of authors and publishers, leads us to a fundamental question about the history of publishing in South Africa: why has there not been a similar rise of black-owned publishers in South Africa, whether competing with or distancing themselves from mainstream (white-owned) publishing? A consideration of this question fell outside the scope of this study, but it is an important issue for future research. While black writers and leaders in South Africa have called for more black-owned publishing houses, these have either failed to materialise or not survived. This is a matter that requires further research, to ascertain the reasons for their failure and to consider whether there is still a need for publishing houses that could enable black authors to reach out to their readers without the mediation of white publishers. Perhaps a more racially aware and enlightened editorial policy, even at the mainstream publishers, could in itself make a difference.

As mentioned in the section highlighting the limitations of this study, the periodisation limits its focus to the twentieth century. While this study has focused on the second half of

twentieth century, and particularly the period of high apartheid between 1960 and 1990, attention should also be paid to the huge changes experienced in the last decade of the twentieth century and first decade of the twenty-first. As a result, analysis of the changing roles and policies of the university presses in the 1990s and thereafter, in a changing society and a post-apartheid context, is needed. Specifically, the role of UCT Press – a press established in the 1990s – has not been explicitly examined, due to the periodisation, and this merits further research. In addition, it needs to be acknowledged that the university presses have changed since democratisation, and it would be interesting to evaluate to what extent this reflects the wider context. Has the new state differentiated itself from the previous regime on the basis of freedom of expression, for instance? And has this been reflected in newer understandings of academic freedom and knowledge production, as reflected in the publications of the university presses since 1994?

Other twenty-first century concerns, such as the impact of digital publishing or the changes in distribution and formats of publications (e.g. from print to e-books), also merit attention, especially within the context of scholarly publishing and dissemination. The Open Access debate has had an impact, with the Human Sciences Research Council Press restructuring its business model to one where all of its publications are available for free download online, or a print copy may be bought. This example raises another area that has hardly received academic attention to date, viz. the role of the science councils and learned societies in promoting scholarly publishing in South Africa.

7.5 Final conclusions

At the conclusion of this study, the question may be asked: Does it matter? In other words, does it matter that the South African university presses failed their most radical potential authors? Does it matter that they did not speak out in favour of academic freedom until the dying years of the apartheid period? The answer depends very much on one's view of the role and function of a university press in society. A debate around the ethics of the university thus arises – what are the core rights and obligations of the academic or of the academic department? And are these the same for the university press, which is an integral part of the university and of the scholarly communication cycle? Do universities, and by

extension their publishing arms, have an obligation to speak truth to power? Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the freedom of expression for teaching and publishing, and freedom of information for conducting research (De Baets, 2002: 24). If we accept this Universal Declaration, then it means that universities and their constituent parts should be tasked with upholding and transmitting the important values of a search for truth, critique, and integrity.

In support of such a position, during a lecture in the Richard Feetham series on academic freedom, Mittelman argued:

The university is a site of contestation not only because of its role in the production of knowledge and the reproduction of societal values, but also because it is a source of critical thought. The intellectual vocation is to advance social criticism – an appraisal of the assumptions, origins, and possible transformation of a given framework of action – so that a society may elevate itself and realise its potential. If so, academics have a responsibility to articulate alternative forms of action. (Mittelman, 1997: 45)

Similarly, De Kiewiet was to argue during the 1960 T.B. Davie Memorial Lecture:

The definition [of academic freedom] which seems to have the most dignity and creative meaning is the right of scholarship to the pursuit of knowledge in an environment in which the emancipating powers of knowledge are the least subject to arbitrary restraints. This means that scholarship and the teaching or writing in which it expresses itself must be free to deal with the major problems or issues of the age. It is vital that we go beyond freedom to pursue knowledge for its own sake, and claim for scholarship today a greater and freer role in relieving mankind of inequality, injustice, deprivation, fear, ignorance or anger. I know these are emotional words. I know also that there is a more severe definition of academic freedom that fears these responsibilities, but as an historian, I reply that we have reached a period of history where the laboratory and the library of the university are no longer within an ivory tower. Academic responsibilities have evolved with history and have become co-extensive with it. (quoted in Bozzoli, 1974: 433)

If we are to accept the arguments made by such academics, then the role of the university press, no less than any other department or institute of the university, should be to promote academic freedom. Some commentators see this as central role for university press publishing.

Post-apartheid scholarship is now arguing that the greatest threat to scholarly publishing and the freedom of expression implied by that form of publishing, may not come from traditional threats to academic freedom, but rather from the growing influence of market pressures. In other words, if short-term commercialism is to take precedence over long-term academic merit, then that would constitute a distinct threat to the freedom of the academic to conduct research and to publish that research in any area of knowledge (without having to be mindful of the market value of that research). With their unique business model, in the form of mission-driven publishing, university presses have an important part to play in maintaining the balance between the cathedral and the market. As a result, the role of the university press – I would argue – thus matters a great deal to the ongoing value of intellectuals and scholarly knowledge production in society.