

Chapter 3: Origins and publishing philosophy of South Africa's university presses

To understand the role and functions of the university presses during the apartheid era, it is necessary to first examine the origins of those presses, and that is what this chapter seeks to do. The focus on origins is significant, as it was at crucial foundational moments that the university presses spelt out their missions and publishing philosophies most clearly. Moreover, what this chapter aims to show is the links between the publishing philosophies – the values and ideologies – of the presses, and those people who played a key role in their direction and development. The local university presses were at first run by committees and part-time staff, and the first great influence on their character and values may thus be related to the composition of their Publications Committees. If a university press was to either maintain or challenge the ideologies of its institution or wider society, then the role and intellectual outlook of such individuals assumes great importance.

Apart from examining the origins of the university presses, it is important to trace how they evolved over time. From the perspective of the 'business' of publishing, or the operations of publishers, book history scholars have argued that attention should be paid to aspects such as staffing, funding, and infrastructural needs, as well as regulatory issues, including policies, contractual arrangements, and the implementation of standards. In other words, what Simone Murray (2007: 4) refers to as "the contemporary structures, economics and cultural politics of the book publishing industry". She specifically notes the importance of finding out more about "house origins, staffing, growth, authors, titles and imprint identity" (Murray, 2007: 7). These important aspects of the operations of a publisher influence its values and philosophy, as these will later be reflected in its publishing lists.

3.1 Higher education policies and politics

The origins of South Africa's university presses lie in the origins and development of the country's tertiary institutions themselves. Moreover, as university presses are an integral

part of the academy, any changes in the higher education sector could be expected to impact on the role and functions of the university presses.

3.1.1 Origins of the higher education sector

Higher education was introduced into the British colonies that now form part of South Africa during the nineteenth century, with the South African College (now the University of Cape Town) being founded in 1829. In keeping with their colonial status, the original universities were colleges which initially offered secondary education, and then examinations through boards in London. The University of the Cape of Good Hope was founded in 1873 to become an examination and degree-awarding institution, with all the existing colleges at the time serving as constituent members (Boucher, 1973). This institution was a colonial creation, in that it was an examining body only, reliant on universities in the imperial metropole (London) for all other aspects of university education. The explicit model for the university was the University of London model, which, as Boucher (1973: 22) explains, had become a “popular model for export” due to it being fairly cheap to run and, unlike Oxford and Cambridge at the time, religiously neutral as well (quoted in Buchanan, 2008: 36). The university was later to become the University of South Africa (Unisa), with other universities attached to it in a federated structure.

In 1916, the Universities Act established the Universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch as autonomous institutions, which could conduct their own examinations. The South African Native College of Fort Hare was founded in the same year, in a deliberate move to provide separate education for African students.

The origins of the University of the Witwatersrand may be traced to the South African School of Mines, which was established in Kimberley in 1896 and transferred to Johannesburg as the Transvaal Technical Institute in 1904. A struggle ensued between the Afrikaans and English-speaking groups for control of higher education in the Johannesburg-Pretoria region. After several name changes (from Transvaal University College in 1906, to the South African School of Mines and Technology in 1910), the name settled on University College, Johannesburg in 1922. Once full university status was granted two years later, the

College became the University of the Witwatersrand. The University of Pretoria emerged out of this same tussle for university status, evolving from the Transvaal University College in 1908. It achieved full university status in 1930.

These early institutions were set up explicitly along the lines of their British counterparts by the authorities, and were governed by the colonial-era Higher Education Act (1823). Some were intended to support a policy of Anglicisation, and thus had a political purpose as well as a scholarly one. Perhaps this is most clearly evident in the establishment of the Rhodes University College in Grahamstown in 1904 (affiliated to the University of South Africa), which was named after one of the great imperialists, Cecil John Rhodes. But it also had implications for the other universities, and especially the growing Afrikaner nationalism at certain institutions. Viljoen (1977: 176) notes that “it is ironical (sic) that most Afrikaner universities started as English-medium institutions modelled on the British pattern, even when they were founded and maintained from the Afrikaner community”.

The universities were greatly affected by World War II in terms of resources, but numbers of staff and students continued to grow steadily nonetheless. After the war, “[q]uestions of South Africa’s status as a nation-state were powerfully to the fore” (Dubow, 2006: 206). Science came to be portrayed as a universal(ist) project, and there was increasing professionalisation in the expanding tertiary system, which was beginning to build its own research capacity. Moreover, while “[s]cientific research had long been dominated by an anglophone elite who maintained strong imperial connections” (Dubow, 2006: 248), after the war increasing emphasis was given to Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and to the promotion of this language. Another effect of World War II was to reduce opportunities for local students, especially black students, to study abroad, and so applications to the universities from such groups of students rose. Murray cites the numbers of black students at Wits, for instance, as rising from four before the war, to 87 in 1945 (Murray, 1982: 298).

After the war, the university sector saw wide-scale restructuring, as the Nationalist government came to power in 1948, and then began to implement its apartheid policies in the area of education. There were great changes to the higher education sector at this time. For a start, there was segregation of the student body along racial lines. Then, following a

commission of enquiry headed by Dr Edgar Brookes, the federal structure of Unisa was broken up, with the constituent parts being granted full university status. It was at this time, as a result, that the Natal University College became the University of Natal, and other universities also gained autonomy, including Rhodes, the Orange Free State and Potchefstroom (see Greyling, 2008). Unisa's role was unique, in that it was designated a distance education institution, operating largely through correspondence, and it was allowed to admit both black and white students. It was also intended to be a bilingual institution, offering tuition in both English and Afrikaans.

Once the Bantu Education Act (1953) and Universities Act (1955) were enacted, the education context was re-shaped for the apartheid period, with separate institutions being developed and mandated for the various population groups. Badat (1994: 9) writes of the intentions of this policy:

The report of the Eiselen Commission (Commission on Native Education, 1949–1951) which powerfully influenced the contents of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, drew the key connection between state education policy and political and economic control of the African population. African education was to reflect the dominance of the ideology of white rule and superiority. Moreover, in accordance with the requirements of the 'separate development' programme, higher education for blacks was to be planned in conjunction with 'development' programmes for bantustans and placed under the direct control of the Department of Native Affairs.

As a result of the Extension of University Education Act of 1959, various new universities were established, along racial or ethnic lines. These included the University Colleges of the North (Turfloop), Zululand, Western Cape and Durban-Westville. Fort Hare, which had been established as early as 1916, was also affected, as, in terms of the Fort Hare Transfer Act of 1959, the University College of Fort Hare became a 'bantustan' university in the Ciskei, and restricted to Xhosa-speaking Africans. Fort Hare, however, did not see itself in the same light as the other historically black universities, and it is interesting to note that its press began publishing the following year, in 1960. The University College of Fort Hare (after a name change in 1951) did not cater to a large body of students, but its alumni include many prominent figures, including politicians, statesmen and presidents. It also played a very important role in raising and maintaining political awareness.

At the same time, more universities were also established for the Afrikaans-speaking community, specifically Rand Afrikaans University in Johannesburg, and the University of Port Elizabeth. Commentators note that these – both the black and Afrikaans universities – were not established primarily as research institutions; rather, “[t]hey were instrumental institutions in the sense of having been set up to train black people who would be useful to the apartheid state, and political in the sense that their existence played a role in the maintenance of the overall apartheid socio-political agenda” (Bunting, 2002: 74). Moreover, there was strict control of the new institutions, as the “bantustan universities were appendages of the central state which appointed their governing bodies, dictated their academic standards and prescribed the curriculum and ensured that government-supporting Afrikaners dominated administrative and academic positions” (Davies, 1996: 322).

With the Extension of University Education Act, the entire higher education structure was thus differentiated along racial (and linguistic, it should be added) lines. With the universities reliant on the state for a considerable proportion of their funding, and with the national Ministry of Education keeping a close eye on appointments and policies, the stage was set for a spectrum of responses: from compliance, to tacit acceptance, to resistance. These subject positions for academics, and the general responses of the universities to apartheid policies, will now be considered in more detail.

3.1.2 Academic responses to apartheid

Because of the imposition of policies of separate development on the universities, academics and students came into conflict with the state. But, as Moodie (1994: 7) notes, “the extent, nature, and origins of the conflict varied immensely between the three main university groups”. Based on the segregationist regime and the colonial heritage, South Africa’s universities have historically fallen (or been placed) into three main categories: English-medium, Afrikaans-medium, and black institutions. The first of these, the English-medium universities, are traditionally seen as liberal in ideology – these are the so-called ‘open’ universities of Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes and Witwatersrand. The designation of ‘open’ implied that these universities’ admission criteria were purely academic, and applied

without regard to considerations of race, colour or creed (Murray, 1997: xi). Dr T.B. Davie, the Vice-Chancellor of UCT, famously declared that there are “four essential freedoms” for a university: “to determine for itself on academic grounds who may teach, what may be taught, how it shall be taught, and who may be admitted to study” (quoted in Moodie, 1994: 9). This has become a classic definition of academic freedom.

The open universities had a complicated relationship with the government and with society, summed up in Wits’s formulation of “academic non-segregation and social segregation” (Murray, 1997: xi). The relationship of these universities and the apartheid government is well summarised by Bunting (2002: 70):

... the four universities accepted that they were public institutions and that they were, as a consequence, entitled to government funding. However, they argued that by their very nature as universities, they were not servants of the state and thus that they would not accept that their functions could be limited to those of serving the needs and implementing the policies of the government of the day. Indeed they believed that their commitment to the universal values of academic freedom made it impossible for them to act as the servants of the apartheid state. From time to time, therefore, they objected strongly to the policies and actions of the apartheid government, even while accepting substantial subsidy funding from that government.

Moreover, as the struggle against apartheid intensified, and student activism in particular grew much stronger after the Soweto Riots of 1976, the open universities were increasingly affected by external factors, too: the introduction of the academic boycott and resulting isolation of South African academics. Increased activism also led to the rise of “anti-government” research institutes at certain of the universities (Mouton et al, 2001: 45). These research institutes and centres, as will be seen when we examine their publishing records in a later chapter (Chapter 5), appear to have operated with a great deal more autonomy than the usual departments and faculties within the universities. They were run by independent-minded researchers – often mavericks who did not fit well into the strictures of a department – and they reflected the more radical ideologies of their founders and directors in their research themes and publications. Within the confines of this study, we can only speculate as to why the research institutes were granted so much institutional autonomy. Perhaps because of independent funding sources or sponsorships? Perhaps to

promote a reasonably liberal or at least tolerant image for the university? The factors are unclear, and further research into this area would be of great interest.

While the ‘open’ universities are often depicted as liberal, even oppositional, in outlook during the apartheid years, commentators such as Mahmood Mamdani have 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” (1998, quoted in Bunting, 2002: 73). Arguing that the white English-speaking universities are essentially conservative institutions, Margo agrees that they “always have been, and continue to be, deeply involved in the white power structure of this country” (quoted in Moodie, 1994: 33). Similarly, Dubow (2006: 10) notes that the “English-speaking establishment and its institutions were in reality often highly conservative during the apartheid era”, although later they became “indelibly associated with ‘liberalism’”. Indeed, anti-apartheid academics such as Richard Turner criticised their “pose of virtuous academic neutrality”, which he argued enabled them to continue to serve “the existing interest structure” (quoted in Taylor, 1991: 34). He went on to argue that “[t]he myth of neutrality is further undermined if one considers the nature of ‘White’ academic culture – for it is a culture dominated by a Eurocentrism, it is a culture that serves to promote and reproduce Western values.” As a result, black academics and students had to “integrate themselves into this value system – if they do not they are unlikely to succeed. ... There are few black academics; at Wits, for example, amongst the professoriate in 1984, there were just two black professors and one black associate professor – in 1988, 93% of Wits academic staff were white” (Taylor, 1991: 34–35).

In contrast, among the Afrikaans-medium universities there was greater acceptance of the Afrikaner nationalist government and its policies, or what has been termed a “convergence of interests” (Davies, 1996: 322), although this cannot be interpreted as across-the-board support. These universities include Pretoria, Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom, Port Elizabeth, (Orange) Free State, and Rand Afrikaans University (now known as the University of Johannesburg). Various commentators in the literature have pointed out that “[o]pposition, let alone conflict, was weakest among the Afrikaans-medium universities” (Moodie, 1994: 7). The reasons given are not always the same, although they tend to agree on the aspects

of a “struggle for survival in the face of rampant British cultural imperialism” (Davies, 1996: 323), as well as “immense social and peer-group pressures to ensure public conformity and private discretion in the interests of *volk* solidarity” (Moodie, 1994: 7). There were thus close ties between the National Party and many Afrikaner academics, and they were to support Afrikaner nationalism and, by extension, apartheid, by elaborating its ideological underpinnings.

Some suggest that the relationship went further than ideological compliance, to the extent of very close political ties. Mouton et al. (2001: 44) note, for instance, that “[m]ost of the Afrikaans-medium universities were staffed by predominantly sympathetic and conservative supporters of government policy. Most of the rectors of these universities (as well as the ‘bush colleges’) and members of councils, were either card-carrying members of the NP [National Party] or members of the secret Broederbond (‘Brotherhood’) organisation which was later exposed as a powerful, nationalist body that promoted Afrikaner ideology in all spheres of society.” The rector of Rand Afrikaans University was widely believed to be a member of the Broederbond, and various NP ministers had at one time been academics themselves, including H.F. Verwoerd (a sociologist). Another example is the sociologist Geoffrey Cronjé, who has been described as a “seminal contributor to the theory of apartheid” (Coetzee, 1991: 1).

This was not the only subject position open to academics at the Afrikaner universities, and opposition may also be found among these ranks. For instance, the Groep van 13 (Group of 13) protested against the loss of the Coloured vote as early as the 1950s. As time went on, the rift between the camps of so-called *verligte* (enlightened) and *verkrampste* (conservative) Afrikaners would widen, and more intellectual responses would open up, along the entire continuum.

These, then, were the positions into which the ‘open’ and ‘Afrikaner’ universities would usually fall. But the University of South Africa (Unisa), the official distance education institution, does not fall easily into one of the three categories, and has as a result been classified in a number of different ways, from the extreme of Moodie (1994: 4) describing it as “the only genuinely bilingual and multi-racial university” to Dick’s (2002: 23) suggestion

that “Unisa, like many other Afrikaans universities at that time, was publicly characterised as a *volksuniversiteit* (‘volk university’) by government officials”. Bunting (2002: 80), too, depicts the unique position of Unisa by aligning it with the Afrikaans universities:

... the University of South Africa was more akin to historically white Afrikaans-medium than historically white English-medium universities. When conflicts arose within the university system, it tended to support the Afrikaans rather than the English universities and so became the seventh member of this Afrikaans bloc. Its intellectual agenda was also typical of that of an historically white Afrikaans-medium university. It had a very large, well-qualified academic staff complement, but engaged in little or no research and maintained few international linkages.

According to Suttie (2005), this ambiguity around Unisa’s role may have been deliberate, at least in part:

It was convenient for the apartheid state and the university managers to parade Unisa as a ‘nonracial’ national university. This ambivalent identity became a feature of Unisa’s role in higher education, able to juggle compliance with a greater openness – conforming to the spirit of the law without having to adhere to its letter. It diversified its staff, allowing some individualised dissent, but discouraged views or actions that were likely to implicate the institution in any direct challenge to government policy. (Suttie, 2005: 114–115)

In the early 1960s, as politics became an increasingly important factor, “Unisa was drawn into the whirl of nationalist politics that accompanied the plan to allocate extra resources to the needs of Afrikaans-speaking students, which led to the eventual establishment of the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) and Rand Afrikaans University (RAU) in the wake of strong lobbying by the Broederbond” (Suttie, 2005: 104). But, Suttie cautions, “it is too simplistic to view the relationship between Unisa and the National Party government in purely ideological terms” (2005: 106).

Moreover, Unisa changed its political stance to some extent over the years:

As South Africa’s political landscape changed in the wake of student activism, African trade unionism and strike action, as well as international opposition to apartheid, so Unisa tried in the era of Theo van Wijk after 1972 to construct itself as an ‘open university’. The appointment of van Wijk itself represented a setback to Broederbond control of the university when the professor of librarianship and head of the department, S.I. Malan, lost the Senate vote in favour of Van Wijk. Unisa was

to be open, in the sense of providing higher education to black and white, but still conceived in the narrow framework of Afrikaner nationalist ideology. Van Wijk preached open access to university education, but within the boundaries of segregation. Separate classes for black and white students were maintained, lecturing staff were all white and predominantly Afrikaans speaking. Moreover, meetings were conducted in Afrikaans and minutes were also recorded in Afrikaans. (Suttie, 2005: 111–112)

It is thus not straightforward to label Unisa an Afrikaans university, nor an open university, as its competing purposes create a highly ambiguous and complex picture. On the whole, though, the university complied with apartheid policies: “[d]espite Van Wijk’s attempts to construe the university in apolitical terms, its projects betrayed its pro-government credentials. The library, no less than the rest of the institution, proved amenable to apartheid policy and built a formidable repository of archives, books and journals within the political culture of the ruling party. In line with such compliance, the library worked within the parameters of apartheid censorship” (Suttie, 2005: 112).

The third category of higher education institution in South Africa is the ‘black’ university. The earliest of these was Fort Hare, which was later supplemented by specially developed ethnically separate universities: Durban-Westville (for Indians), Western Cape (for Coloureds), and for black students, the University of Zululand, University of the North, Medunsa University (for medical training) and Vista University (for correspondence education). In particular, the University of Fort Hare, like Unisa, is a complicated case. It played an important role in creating a class of black intellectuals, but it was also increasingly constrained by legislation intended to restrict the scope for black people, both socially and in terms of employment. It later played a significant role, through an increasingly politically aware and activist student cohort, in protesting various apartheid policies. The so-called ‘Bantustan’ or ‘bush’ universities were rigidly controlled by the government, but to varying extents, they too played a role in the struggle against apartheid. To a large extent, these institutions fall outside the scope of this study, although an attempt was made to include Fort Hare (see Chapter 1).

Apart from setting the universities against the government, at least on occasion, the imposition of apartheid policies had long-term and chilling effects on the role and practices

of the universities, especially in the area of research. Critical work declined at South African universities in the 1960s (due to factors as diverse as academic boycott, brain drain, political restrictions, and so on), but there were shifts in ideological outlook and in academic fashion. For instance, in the discipline of History, a trend may be discerned over the years: “there has however, since the early 1970s been a rise in work that has drawn on historical materialism and class analysis. The body of liberal historiography and liberal research on race and ethnic attitudes has come to be supplanted (sic) by this rival school of studies which has primarily shown how apartheid is a function of capitalism” (Taylor, 1991: 38). Taylor also links such shifts in ideology and in research patterns to “[t]he growth of publishing outlets offered through Ravan Press and David Philip, in South Africa” (1991: 38). Thus, “[t]he constraints on research were real enough, but research still took place, even if on occasion it had to be published abroad” (Moodie, 1994: 20) or by the independent oppositional publishers.

Resistance grew more intense and more vocal over time, and in particular in the decades of the 1970s and 1980s. This period has been characterised as a time of “increasing polarisation and the deepening of existing divides” (Mouton et al, 2001: 34). Some of these divides included the following: “Divisions between Afrikaans and English academics and between advantaged and disadvantaged scholars increased. Ideological polarisation between paradigms (Gramscians, Althusserians, functionalists and so on) became even more prominent in the early eighties” (ibid.). At the same time, the divisions between pro-apartheid and anti-apartheid academics grew, as the latter group in particular became more vocal in their critique of the government and its policies. Mouton et al. single out science councils, such as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), as being “perceived to be working in collusion with the government”; as a result, they argue, they were dismissed as being “ideologically tainted” (Mouton et al, 2001: 34). This situation would only start to normalise during the transitional period of the 1990s.

Realistically, then, “[i]t must probably be accepted that, in the short-run at least, none of the universities were or could be institutions of fundamental change in any society” (Budlender, quoted in Moodie, 1994: 34). Yet, perceptions remain of the dominant attitudes and roles played by the universities during the apartheid years. This tension, between

perception and reality, will be seen to emerge once again when we examine the scholarly publishing records of these institutions in later chapters, in the form of the publishing output of their university presses.

3.2 Establishing the university presses

There are four active university presses in South Africa, the earliest dating back to the early twentieth century. The Witwatersrand University Press (also commonly known as Wits University Press, or WUP) was established in 1922, and is the oldest university press in South Africa. The University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, which was founded as the University of Natal Press (UNP) in 1948, focuses on scholarly books as well as cross-over titles that are aimed at the general market and children. The University of South Africa (Unisa) Press has published in a wide range of social science disciplines since 1956. Fort Hare University ran a press from the 1960s until the early 1990s, but is no longer actively publishing under this imprint, despite sporadic efforts to revive it. The University of Cape Town Press, established in 1993, is now owned by a commercial academic publisher, Juta & Co, and produces a few titles a year. UCT continues to publish from time to time under the name of the university alone – as it did on occasion before the formal establishment of the Press – in addition to the imprint of the Press (as mentioned, this press will form only a minor part of the study, as its operations fall largely into the post-apartheid period). The other South African universities all publish from time to time, but not under the imprint of a university press.

In addition to the university presses, some of the earliest publishing in South Africa may be classified as scholarly, through the mission presses and publishing houses set up by immigrants to the Cape in the eighteenth century. For instance, R.H.W. Shepherd has described early publishing efforts at Lovedale Mission Press, such as the first historical work of George M. Theal, who was to become a famous and influential historian in South Africa. Lovedale Press published Theal's *Compendium of South African History and Geography* in the 1870s (Shepherd, 1945: 15).

Moreover, at the university colleges, and before a formal university press was established, there was also some ad hoc publication of reports and inaugural lectures, such as a lecture

by Reverend J. Hertz of Columbia University on ‘The Place of the University in Modern Life’ at the Transvaal University College (now the University of Pretoria) in 1906, and an address delivered by Lord Selborne to the University of the Cape of Good Hope (now the University of South Africa) in 1909. Two early notable publications in this regard by the University College, Johannesburg (then part of the University of South Africa) include the publication of an inaugural lecture by Professor J.L. Landau on *The Study of Hebrew: Its past and its future* (1919), and the publication of a series of lectures by Professor John Dalton, known collectively as *The Rudiments of Relativity* (1921). The South African School of Mines and Technology, itself a precursor to Wits University, published some early titles in its name as well, including *Economics in the Light of War* by Professor Robert Lehfeldt (1916).

3.2.1 The Oxford University Press influence

However, the first university press to set up shop in South Africa was not local; it was Oxford University Press, which opened a Southern African sales office in 1915, “with the primary purpose of selling that notoriously unvendible commodity, the Clarendon Press book” (Sutcliffe, 1978: 115). When the local universities began to establish presses in the first half of the twentieth century, they explicitly looked to OUP for a model and a framework, and created their presses in the image of OUP. An overt example may be found in the visits to Oxford by representatives of various university presses, such as Unisa (the report is available as Grässer, 1977) and Natal. It should be noted that the universities themselves looked to the institutional models of Oxford and Cambridge, too. The university press established at the University of Cape Town in 1993, in contrast, used the model of the University of London. Interestingly, Altbach (1989: 16) notes that “it was the London model that was exported to India rather than Oxford or Cambridge” – but this does not appear to have been the case to such an extent in South Africa.

What is the ‘Oxford model’ for a university press? Generally speaking, as described in Chapter 2, it is a press set up as a department of the parent university, and administered by a university committee. It has academic aims, to promote research excellence, which complement those of the university. It receives a subsidy, but has to pay its own way to some extent; for this reason, it is often a non-profit organisation and is thus in a position to

publish meritorious works that are financially non-viable. The press also confers prestige and international visibility upon the parent institution. As OUP describes itself, “the most characteristic feature of the Press is its commitment to publish learned works in the arts and sciences and to sustain the research on which some of these are based” (OUP, 1978: 3).

Echoing the Oxford model, the South African university presses were established to promote the aims of the universities themselves. These aims are largely academic and research-oriented, but they also have an educational and a cultural component (see OUP, 1978: 3). The use of a European model of this sort conferred authority upon the nascent universities and their presses, suggesting that their intellectual outlook was “supra-local” (Dubow, 2006: 16).

Actual book production for OUP did not move from the UK until after World War II. In the 1920s, Eric Parnwell was sent to South Africa to evaluate the branch and to make recommendations on options for the future. His report, as Davis (2011: 81) points out, “articulated his plan for a racially-stratified publishing policy in South Africa”. Scholarly titles continued to be published in Oxford, and exported for the white minority in the colony, while schoolbooks would be locally produced for the ‘Native Education’ programme. In 1946, the local OUP branch was permitted to begin publishing scholarly work from its Cape Town office, with its first title, *South African Short Stories*, appearing in 1947. Leo Marquard was appointed with the specific aim of publishing “special books for Africa particularly in the educational sphere” (Davis, 2011: 82). Marquard, himself a well-known liberal thinker and writer, was successful as a publisher, but given his background his focus naturally fell on academic and scholarly books rather than education (schoolbooks). During his tenure as manager, as Davis shows, OUP published a number of significant anti-apartheid and liberal titles.

But, as the legislation governing freedom of speech and freedom to publish in South Africa grew more repressive, OUP’s oppositional publishing was curtailed. From the 1970s, when OUP was to take a deliberate decision to ensure its publishing was not in opposition to mainstream politics in South Africa, the local university presses also followed a (largely

unwritten and unspoken) policy of keeping out of politics – to the extent that any publishing during this era, and linked to government funds, could be said to be determinedly apolitical.

3.2.2 South Africa's first university press: Wits University Press

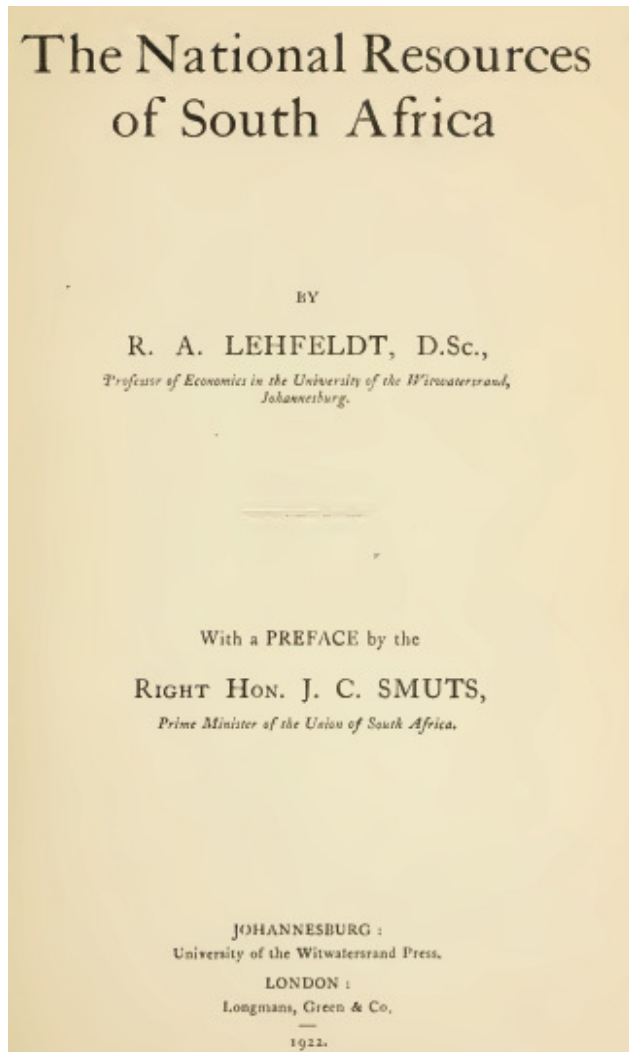
J.D. Rheinallt Jones was secretary of the Witwatersrand Council of Education, and was involved in the efforts to transform the South African School of Mines and Technology (established in 1910) into a university college. Through these efforts, the University of the Witwatersrand was established in 1922. With his own interest in studying African life and institutions as an academic discipline, he was instrumental at the same time in establishing the first Department of Bantu Studies in the new university, and setting up a new journal, *Bantu Studies*, as well as a publications series, in October 1921 (this history is summarised in *African Studies*, 5 December 1953). The notion of publishing through its own press was thus instilled very early at the University of the Witwatersrand, and was closely entwined with the study of native law (as it was known), and race relations.

This situates Witwatersrand University Press (WUP) as the first university press in South Africa to publish local scholarly material: in 1922, the fledgling press of the fledgling university published both the first issue of what was to become a highly prestigious journal, *Bantu Studies* (the scope was later broadened, as reflected in the name change to *African Studies*), and Wits Economics Professor Robert Lehfeldt's *The National Resources of South Africa* (Council of Education, 1922). The latter title bore a preface by J.C. Smuts, then the Prime Minister of South Africa, underlining its significance to the institution and the wider society. Longmans, Green & Co undertook to act as agents in the UK after correspondence with the Oxford and Cambridge university presses was deemed unsatisfactory.

Interestingly, as described in Chapter 2, this was precisely the same time as Australia's university presses were to begin publishing. Melbourne University Press was also officially established in 1922, and published its first title in 1923: *A History of the White Australia Policy until 1920*, by Myra Willard, which was published at the author's expense (Thompson, 2006: 329). This reflects the decolonising trend, visible in the higher education sector in particular, among some of Britain's settler colonies after World War I. It also reinforces the

notion, pointed out in Chapter 2, that scholarly publishing has followed a remarkably similar trajectory around the English-speaking world.

Figure 3.1: Title page of the first WUP book, 1922



The establishment of a university press at the newly created university was suggested to the Principal, J.H. Hofmeyr, by the Council of Education at the first ordinary meeting of Senate, and indeed the Council was to play an important role in funding the nascent Press. The Minutes (Council of Education, 7 March 1922) note that “the Principal reported that the Syndic of the Wits Council of Education had decided to refer to the Senate the desirability of issuing all approved publications of the Syndic under the name of ‘The University of Witwatersrand Press’ ... The Senate concurred with this suggestion.” The first Publications Committee met for the first time on 2 July 1923, with as members Professors C.M. Drennan

(Chairman), H.J.S. Heather, L.F. Maingard and C.E. Moss, and Rheinallt Jones as an accessor member. They were assisted in their task by a sub-committee of Principal Hofmeyr, as well as Emrys Evans and T. Reunert, to consider all manuscripts submitted for publication. Hofmeyr's keen adoption of the Oxford model for the press, and for the university broadly speaking, may possibly be attributed to his own education at Oxford University.

At this time, the University had six faculties – Arts, Commerce, Engineering, Law, Medicine, and Science – with just 73 academics and around 1 000 students. The publications programme of the university press, as will be seen in later chapters, was at first closely associated with these faculties and dependent on the output of this small group of academics.

The sources do not all agree on the founding date of WUP. The oldest documents record a date of 1922, when the Senate approval was given for the establishment of a press, and the first book was published. A background document on WUP circulated in 1983, however, notes that WUP was “established in 1923 to take over publication of *Bantu Studies*” (Wilson, 1983: 1). This information was carried through into the official history of the University, with Murray (1982: 138) noting that “... in 1923 the Witwatersrand University Press was founded to publish the journal and other manuscripts approved by the Council of Education, which provided the funds, and the University Senate, which gave the academic stamp of approval”. Murray (1997: 166) corrects the date of establishment to 1922 in his later work on the history of Wits University, and notes that, while WUP was “a small, under-funded operation”, the Press “was nonetheless responsible for a series of important publications”. “Otherwise,” he continues, “WUP was mainly concerned to publish works by members of the Wits staff, and after World War II it also published the inaugural lectures of Wits professors.” This kind of inaccuracy regarding dates and other matters has been found to be common even in the records of each university press.

Because of those involved in its founding, the early years of the press would be coloured by the political views of these English-speaking liberals. Jannie (“Onse Jan”) Hofmeyr, the first Principal of Wits University, at his 1919 installation spoke of the need for the university to “know no distinctions of class or wealth, race or creed” (quoted in Shear, 1996: 1). Men

such as J.F.H. Hoernlé, Edgar Brookes, and Rheinallt Jones would all be involved in setting up the South African Institute of Race Relations in 1929, while other “liberal social scientists at Wits challenged ‘race’ as a scientific concept after the 1930s” (Murray, 1997: 252). Maingard, one of the members of the first Publications Committee, was closely associated with the group of scholars in the Department of Bantu Studies around Clement Doke. This would be the political orientation of the first generation of scholars to be published by, and to influence the publishing decisions of, the Wits University Press. However, it should be noted that some academics were less politically inclined, such as Max Drennan, a professor of English with an apolitical focus on Chaucer; Henry Heather, a mining and electrical engineering specialist; and Charles Moss, first professor of Botany at the university.

When Drennan retired, H.R. (Humphrey) Raikes would take over as Chairman of the Publications Committee. Raikes, who had been an Industrial Chemist, also became Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University. An example of Raikes’s influence over the publishing strategy of the press may be seen in the fact that Dr William Harding le Riche’s study of *A Health Survey of African Children in Alexandra Township* was “undertaken at the request of Mr Humphrey Raikes, Principal of the University” (Hutchings, 1969). As the pressure of work as Principal intensified, Raikes relinquished his role as Chairman in 1946, and Prof. John Greig was elected in his place. Greig was a literary scholar who had succeeded Drennan as head of the Department of English, and was a moderate liberal. He was then followed, in turn, from the 1950s until 1982, by Prof. Desmond Cole of the Department of Bantu Studies, also of a liberal inclination.

Operationally, at Wits (as at Natal, as will be shown), the university press was at first integrated with the Library. Percy Freer was the first Librarian at Wits, a post he took up in November 1929, and he became a member of the Publications Committee in 1934. Ever since that date, the Librarian has served on the Committee – and often played a much more important role. At first, the Wits Librarian was mostly involved in exchange agreements but as of September 1937 was also tasked with editing the works published by WUP and upholding the “technical standards” of the Press (Hutchings, 1969: 9). It was soon also resolved that “negotiations for distribution of series, appointment of agents and other similar matters relating to books published by the University Press, be left in the hands of

the Librarian” (Ibid.: 10). The first book proof-read by Percy Freer was Solomon Neumark’s *The Citrus Industry of South Africa*, as the author was Afrikaans-speaking and thus had some difficulty with writing in English (this was also the first text to be sold on a “sale or return” basis in local bookstores, a landmark in terms of distribution). Freer remained actively involved in the Press until his retirement at the end of 1953. An article in the local newspaper, *The Star* (1 January 1955), reflects the close relationship between the Library and the Press: “The University Press falls under the management of the library, and although there is no separate section of the library staff detailed for work solely on publications, this will no doubt come in time.”

As the *Star* article suggests, with the Librarian playing such an active role, WUP continued its work without a single dedicated member of staff. The first suggestion to hire a Press “officer” was made by Prof. C.S. Richards in 1941. The idea was approved (Publications Committee Minutes, 14 October 1941), but there were no further developments. Freer himself made an effort to withdraw from increasingly onerous Press duties throughout the 1940s, referring to his “amateurish efforts” to keep the Press going (Correspondence with Registrar, 23 August 1944): “The output of Witwatersrand University Press publications is constantly growing, with the result that the time left for the fulfillment of my proper duties as Librarian is correspondingly decreasing.” Attempts to share publishing tasks with the South African Institute of Race Relations also came to nought. But ongoing and increasing agitation from Freer led to the appointment of the first full-time appointment to WUP, when Mrs S.E.H. Logie was hired as a temporary assistant in September 1947. The scope of her duties – which would be almost unheard-of in modern publishing – included correspondence and filing; sales; preparing copy for press; proof-reading; and advertising. Mrs Logie remained with the Press for just two years, a common pattern at that time as married women would often resign (or even be forced to do so) when they became pregnant. She was replaced by Mrs M.A. Hutchings, who would become an institution at WUP, remaining from 1950 until her retirement in 1969.¹

¹ This is the same Mrs Hutchings who compiled the first unofficial history of WUP, covering the years from 1922 to 1969.

This meagre staff was supplemented by the appointment of Mr S.A. Morley, a printer, to the post of Production Officer in 1948. During his tenure, the University discussed the possibility of setting up its own printing press, but nothing came of this idea for a number of years. In 1958, Prof. Desmond Cole – who served as Chairman of the Publications Committee until his retirement in 1982 (Murray, 1997: 241) – was requested to investigate the status at American university presses, with regard to in-house printing. The position of Production Officer was outsourced when Morley left Wits in 1951, with Mr Alan Dodson being briefly appointed on a commission basis.

With Percy Freer retiring in 1953, the University appointed Miss Elizabeth Hartmann to the position of Acting Librarian, and thus by default to the position of Publications Officer. In a sense, she would be the first female manager or “Controller” of the Press, assisted by an all-female crew – and the first woman to be appointed University Librarian in South Africa. In May 1954, female staff were greeted with the news of a Treasury ruling permitting cost-of-living allowances to married women for the first time. This ruling enabled Hutchings to be appointed permanently to the position of Publications Officer, at a higher salary, and for the new part-time temporary clerical assistant to become a permanent appointment as well. This created a certain amount of stability in the staffing of the Press, yet the high turnover of staff in particularly the clerical positions continued, often due to marriage. The Press struggled to fill vacancies quickly, due to a lack of suitably qualified and experienced staff.

In spite of the early support for a university press, the university was to question its decision to establish a press several times during the twentieth century. This revealed, time and again, the importance of a clearly defined mission for the university press. A document produced in 1962 on the mission and functions of the WUP Publications Committee sheds some light on the motivations behind the establishment of the Press:

The original purpose for which this Committee was created and funds placed at its disposal by the Council, seems to have been to make available in printed form (a) the research work and scholarly or scientific writings of members of the staff, and (b) theses of post-graduate students of the University presented for degrees higher than Honours. (Memo of the Publications Committee, MISC PS/167/62, March 1962)

Once this review was complete, and the significance of the Press re-affirmed, new staffing arrangements were proposed for WUP in 1964, with a permanent staff complement of a full-time Publications Officer, Assistant and Invoice Clerk, and a part-time typist. In requesting this larger staff, the University was asked to “take note of the expanding activities of the Witwatersrand University Press and its important contribution to the reputation and status of the University” (Hutchings, 1969: 72). The proposal was successful, and Hutchings took on the role of full-time Publications Officer, at a salary of R2 640. The first black staff member, Mr D. Ndwambi – recorded only as “Dan” in Hutchings’ history of the Press – was appointed as a sales assistant in 1968. Hutchings calls him “a willing and efficient worker” (1969: 78). He was promoted from Junior Clerical Assistant to Bookshop Assistant in 1979, and remained at the Press for more than twenty years. Another significant appointment was made in 1967, when Mrs N.H. Wilson was appointed, as she would remain at the Press into the 1980s. When Hutchings left WUP upon her retirement in December 1969, it was Nora Wilson who would take over the reins, ushering in a new era for Wits University Press.

Nora, or Nan, Wilson grew into the position of Publications Officer of the University Press, growing steadily more proficient and professional as a publisher. She saw the WUP through a very difficult period in the 1970s, when the Press was losing money and struggling from a lack of institutional support. Gradually, however, she was successful in growing the staff structure, for instance in obtaining a Deputy Head and in lobbying for the Publications Officer to become a manager at an appropriate salary level. With Prof. Cole’s retirement from the position of Chairman of the Publications Committee in 1982, there was added impetus for the position to be upgraded. After a confidential proposal was submitted to the Publications Committee in 1984, it was “[a]greed that in terms of its decision to press for the appointment of a Manager/Editor, a formal request be submitted annually to the administration” (Publications Committee Minutes, 16 March 1984, 15 June 1984). The manager would be responsible for implementation of University and Committee policies, staffing matters, financial control, and management of the publishing and bookselling activities of the Press. Wilson was promoted to this position (simply titled ‘Head’ of the WUP), and took on certain responsibilities from the Chairman. The 1982 WUP Annual Report paid tribute to Cole for his role in steering the Press:

Professor Desmond Cole, Chairman of the Publications Committee for 24 years, retired in December [1982]. As Chairman, Editor of *African Studies* and of the Bantu Treasury Series, Professor Cole made many personal sacrifices to build the Press into an organisation which is respected throughout the academic world. (WUP Annual Report, S83/240, 1982: 350)

The report also praised Cole's "practical experience and wide knowledge of all aspects of the administration of a scholarly publishing house" (ibid.), although there is little evidence in the records to support this assertion.

With her promotion to a more important role as Head of the Press, Wilson also took the opportunity to prepare a broader statement of WUP's publishing philosophy. She listed as the key aims of the press:

1. Publication and distribution of scholarly works
 2. Service to the academic community
 3. Service to Black writers and students
 4. Businesslike and economical management of its professional activities within the framework of its commitment to excellence, service and the spirit of university press publishing
 5. Promotion of the interests of the University and of its reputation for scholarship.
- (Wilson, 1983: 1)

This is a significant reworking of the original mission of WUP, and shows a distinct trend towards a more progressive, and more oppositional, outlook. It also reveals the ongoing tension between the 'cathedral' – the publication of scholarly work – and the 'market' – the business of publishing and the reduction of the subsidy on which the press operated. This professionalisation may also be seen in the expanding staffing of the university press. After a long search for a suitable candidate, Mr R.M. Seal was appointed Deputy Head in August 1985. Much was made of the fact that he had experience of working at Cambridge University Press. Unfortunately, he left under a cloud just a year later, having resigned to avoid disciplinary action.

Around the same time, WUP was again the subject of an intensive review in 1987, which called into question its very existence – largely on the basis of affordability to the university.

Documents were produced, evidence adduced, and academic support rallied, and the result was that the Press was once again found to be an integral part of university activities. The role of the Press as a publishing outlet for local scholars was also re-emphasised. It was argued that, “[i]n the present political climate, it was essential that the Press’s activities should continue and perhaps even expand” (‘Review of WUP’, S87/415, 1987: 7) – a reference to the academic boycott and resulting closure (or at least narrowing) of publishing platforms to South African academics. Thus, it was recommended, among other measures, that the Press should consider publishing more journals and more cross-over books for a wider audience, should encourage submissions from external authors, and should improve distribution and marketing (S87/768: 186).

After the formal review was completed, and the confirmation that the Press would continue its functions, the vacant positions on the staffing structure were finally advertised. Eve Horwitz (later Gray) was appointed Deputy Head in April 1988, and on Nan Wilson’s retirement in 1989, she was promoted to Head. The position of ‘Publisher’ was finally created as late as 1988, and in that position Horwitz would play an important role in professionalising WUP and putting in place a rational publishing structure. Gray (2008: 4) notes that when she joined the Press, “it was in a state of decline, publishing very little”. She was thus “responsible for rebuilding the publishing list of WUP to make it an internationally recognised university publisher, putting in place a professional publishing structure and establishing an international network for co-publications”. Gray remained at WUP until 1995, when she left to set up the new University of Cape Town Press.

As it entered the transitional period, towards the end of the apartheid era, WUP’s publishing philosophy would grow more ‘progressive’, to use its own terminology. With UNP, the press joined the Independent Publishers’ Association (IPASA) in 1989, and described itself in advertising materials as a “progressive publisher for a new South Africa” (WUP advertisement, 1990).

3.2.3 The University of Natal Press

On 15 March 1949, the Natal University College was accorded the status of a fully-fledged university and renamed the University of Natal, with its first chancellor being Dennis G. Shepstone. The university college had produced publications in the name, “Natal University College, Durban”, before a Publications Office was established, largely inaugural lectures of new professors as the institution became more established. It had also brought out the first volumes (1–13) of a large and important multi-disciplinary research project, the Natal Regional Survey, with Oxford University Press as publisher. Such publishing was, however, done in a highly ad hoc manner, and the need was clearly felt for a more systematic approach to scholarly publishing.

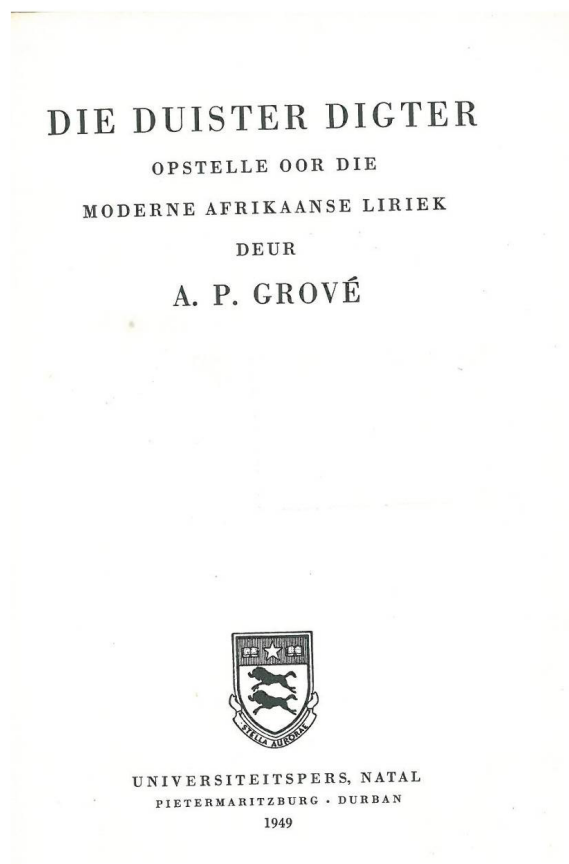
The University of Natal Press was thus established in 1948.² It started life as a service department, a Publications Office, with the key task of supervising the university’s publications (including calendars, notices, brochures, etc., as well as the journal *Theoria*) and considering the publication “of work contributing to criticism, research and teaching by members of staff, advanced students and others”. It was also authorised “to make suitable arrangements for printing and distribution of each publication” (Minutes of the Press Committee, 4 November 1987). Any publication produced under the auspices of the Publications Committee would bear “the imprint of the Natal University” (*ibid.*).

The first meeting of the Publications Committee (which would later change its name to the Press Committee) was 25 March 1948, consisting of six members appointed by the Senate: Professors Burrows, Sydney Frank Bush, Alan Hattersley and G.S. Nienaber (the latter two, a historian and a linguist/literary scholar, would each serve several terms as Chairman right up until the late 1960s), as well as Dr Herbert Coblans (who was the first Librarian of the Natal University College) and Dr Bernard Notcutt. At the second meeting of the Committee, in October 1948, R. Stephens was appointed as Publications Officer, and £250 was allocated for publishing expenses. The earliest title to be published under the new imprint (listed on

² As in the case of WUP and Unisa, the founding date is disputed in the sources. While the first meeting of the Publications Committee was held in 1948, and the first title was issued in 1949, some sources continue to list the founding date as 1947. See, for instance, Abbott (1972: 1): “In 1947 the Natal University College established its official press, which in due course became the University of Natal Press”. Later internal documents tend to give the date as 1948, and the weight of evidence suggests this to be the correct date.

the title page as ‘Universiteitspers, Natal’) was *Die Duister Digter: Opstelle oor die Moderne Afrikaanse Liriek* by A.P. Grové in 1949. The language of this text was atypical for this press, which would come to be characterised by English-language output, but its literary theme was a forerunner of many further works on literature. The essays collected in *Die Duister Digter* were considered of great value in teaching, and were described in publicity material as “penetrating and searching” (*Theoria*, 1952). The text was also widely reviewed in popular magazines such as *Standpunte* and *Die Huisgenoot*.

Figure 3.2: Title page of the first UNP book, 1949



While a later Chairman of the Press Committee, the legal scholar John Milton (1990: 1), would argue that “[t]he Press was never founded in any formal way by the University”, because a staffing structure and constitution were not immediately established, the setting up of the Press Committee is in itself a formal acknowledgement of the initiation of a new publishing venture. As at Wits, the character of those involved in the Press Committee shaped the emerging press. Prof. G.S. Nienaber, professor of Afrikaans at the University, was a founding member of the Press Committee, and served as Chairman for a long time. He

retired from the chair in 1968, and, in an interesting turn of events, became one of the panel of censors on Jannie Kruger's board in 1971 (McDonald, 2009). This evidence of his political affiliations is in contrast to other members of the Committee, like Prof. Colin Gardner, who was a member of the Liberal Party and later, in the 1990s, joined the African National Congress (ANC). Yet others, like Alan Hattersley, whose work focused on the British settlement of Natal, appear to have been as politically neutral as possible. The composition of the Press Committee was thus somewhat mixed in terms of political affiliation, and it would be difficult to attribute a generally accepted or consensus political ideology to the Press as a result.

The staffing situation at Natal followed a similar pattern to WUP. For a time after its inception, the Press was administered by the Press Committee and operated under the auspices of the University Library. The first Publications Officer, Mr R. Stephens, served from 1948 until 1951, with the task of spending an hour every day "registering, numbering and display[ing]" periodicals in the Pietermaritzburg Library. His dismissal for an unspecified offence created a staffing gap, in the already understaffed Library (Buchanan, 2008: 123). This gap was filled when he was replaced by two temporary and part-time Publications Officers, Dr Colin Gardner and Lindsay Young, academics from the departments of English and History respectively, serving in a part-time capacity. This was intended only as an ad hoc, temporary arrangement, although the Librarian, Mr H. Coblans, may have been premature in reporting that "[p]ublications work is thus no longer a library responsibility" (University of Natal Library Annual Report, 1951, quoted in Buchanan, 2008: 123).

The extant archives provide few details about the following years in the 1950s, and it seems that little progress was made in attempts to fill the position of Publications Officer. This uncertainty ended only when Dr William McConkey, a distinguished educationalist, was appointed Publications Officer and Secretary to the Press Committee in the early 1960s, a period when the Committee was handling increasing numbers of publications. McConkey had recently retired as Director of Education in Natal, and strongly opposed the imposition of Bantu Education (the Press would later publish his critical study, *Bantu Education*, in 1972). He remained in the post until his retirement in 1969. An Editorial in the UNP journal *Theoria* (32, 1969) paid tribute to McConkey thus:

Special tribute must be paid to Dr W. G. McConkey who has retired as Publications Officer after nine years in that position. Shepherding *Theoria* through the press formed only a section of his devoted work for the University of Natal, yet he made himself available to us at all times and attended with characteristic care and erudition to any problem on which he could offer advice. We wish to thank him for his unsparing interest. It is fitting that the first article in this issue should be his study of a crucial matter in Education at the present time.

In 1969, Mr R.A. Brown, the University Librarian at Pietermaritzburg since 1961, took on the duties of Acting Publications Officer, until his retirement in 1973. At this time, too, a permanent Secretary was appointed, in the person of Helen Cook. Brown was a librarian by training, as well as a former school teacher, and had a great interest in publishing and cataloguing. During his short tenure, he was particularly active in visiting other university presses around the world (in Britain, Australia and New Zealand, in particular), in an attempt to place the press on a more professional footing. He continued to give advice to the press, usually from London, even after leaving the university. The end of Brown's tenure signalled the end of the close relationship between Library and Press, in the sense that the Press would no longer be run by Library staff, but by dedicated publishing staff.

During Brown's tenure, an attempt was made to formalise the publishing philosophy of the university press. Thus, the mission of UNP was set out as being to:

1. Publish and disseminate to a wider public the results of research and survey work carried out within the University, and
2. Make available meritorious publications which could not be published commercially. (Abbott, 1972: 1)

This mission recalls that of the 'Oxford model', as described in Chapter 2. In addition, as later documents make clear, one of the motivating factors behind the establishment of the Press was that it conferred a certain status on the university, "and also provided a readily available means for the publication of scholarly works by members of the academic staff" (University of Natal AP&PC, 1972).

The Minutes of the Press Committee from this period also record the first (and only) reference to a black staff member: Mr F.J. Sitole, who passed away in 1972, after being with

the Press for nine years. The Committee voted to send his wife their condolences and a small stipend (Minutes of the Press Committee, 17 August 1972). As it is not stated what his role was, it may be speculated that Mr Sitole was a typesetter or parcel wrapper (job titles indicated on an organogram of that period).

After Brown's retirement in 1973, there was again a vacuum in terms of management for the university press. To resolve this situation, in 1974, Mr Percy Patrick was seconded by the University Principal to run both the Publicity Office and the University Press. He had been involved with the Press, in his capacity as Public Relations Officer, for a number of years already. Having had previous experience in publishing as the production manager for SABC publications, Patrick made a concerted effort to improve the publishing procedures at the university, producing a report on 'University Publications' (1969) and submitting an idea for a colophon (a printer's mark or logo). He also understood the importance of a university press, often quoting the words of John Brown, publisher of Oxford University Press, that it was "University Extension work of the finest kind" (Patrick, 1969: 1). In examining the quality of publishing at the University of Natal, Patrick used one of Brown's papers as a guide – overtly applying the Oxford model to UNP, and measuring the latter against this yardstick. But Patrick's role was cut short by illness just a few months later, and he was to retire from the university in 1975 before passing away in 1976.

As a result, another plan had to be made, and Ms Margery Moberly – affectionately known as Mobbs – was temporarily released from some of her Library and Archive duties for two hours a day to assist with the duties of part-time Secretary to the Press. Her key task was to complete the publication of *The Eland's People*, an important scholarly work, but she was expected to continue her work in launching the university archives at the same time. Ms Moberly, who had worked at the University since 1968, would remain with the Press until her retirement in 1997. As the part-time set-up was initially intended to be a temporary arrangement, a detailed report on 'Staffing the University Press' was produced to illustrate the actual staffing requirements and to assist planning for the future. This report (Moberly, 1976) detailed the tasks of just two staff members: the Press Secretary (a role played by Ms Cook and later by Ms Cockcroft) and a proposed Press Manager. The proposals were accepted, and Moberly stepped into the role of full-time manager or "Press Organiser" on a

three-year trial basis, from 1978. During this time, the Press was required to show that a full-time manager would make it more efficient and effective, which Moberly was evidently able to do – in 1981, she was made full-time, and permanent, Publisher to the University. An obituary for Moberly, who passed away in 2008, notes that, “[i]nitially termed the manager of the University of Natal Press, she was eventually awarded the rather grand title of Publisher to the University and built up the press from a shaky start as a somewhat amateur and part-time operation to a highly professional institution, internationally respected for the quality of its scholarly publications” (Frost, 2008: 82).

The newspaper *The Witness*, in its obituary, placed her contribution in the following context:

Perhaps her greatest triumph as a publisher was the production of *Pietermaritzburg 1838–1988, A New Portrait of an African City* to mark the capital’s sesquicentennial. It was a project which she both conceptualised and drove with relentless energy and enthusiasm. Edited by John Laband and the present Msunduzi Municipal Manager Rob Haswell (then on the staff of the university), the book embodied contributions by an astonishing 73 authors from a wide range of academic disciplines. It covered virtually every possible aspect of the city’s history from two million years before the present to what were at that time contemporary developments. (*The Witness*, 19 June 2008)

After Moberly’s retirement in the early 1990s, Natal again followed a similar trajectory to Wits, appointing a practising publisher to direct its Press and to bring in more professional publishing practices. Glenn Cowley, who was to remain as Director until his retirement in 2008, was appointed at this time, and took the press into the transitional period and the new century.

A 1990 internal document spells out that “[t]he Press was established to perform the traditional role of university presses throughout the western world, namely to serve the academic community and the world of scholarship by publishing academic and scholarly works which because of their specialized and academic nature are often not considered for publication by commercial publishers” (‘Response’, 1990: 1). The identical mission had been set out in a document called ‘Terms of Reference’, as early as the 1970s, and further formalised with the drafting of a constitution in the early 1990s.

3.2.4 The University of South Africa Press

An early attempt to found a university press at Unisa was unsuccessful. Boucher (1973), in his official history of the university, notes that, “Unisa’s early years (1920s) were spent trying to think of ways to encourage research and improve intellectual activity. An idea to create a university press had to be put aside as there was no additional money beyond the government subsidies to cover the activities of an administrative staff that started at twenty five in 1918 and grew with each successive year.” Later, although still before any form of internal publishing was contemplated, a fund was established to support publication. In 1932, a committee led by Advocate Roberts recommended to Council:

- (i) That a graduate bursary of £200 per year for three years be established, open only to graduates of the University of South Africa. This bursary will be known as the “Hiddingh-Currie Memorial Bursary” and the conditions of its award will be formulated by the Senate for approval by the Council.
- (ii) That a Hiddingh-Currie Research Fund of £100 per year be set aside to provide assistance to members of the University of South Africa, as described in Article 4 of Statute 1 (page 599 of the Calendar), in the publication of reports of original research work of scientific value. (Council Minutes, 23 September 1932: 118, 119, my translation)

The fund was created from a portion of the interest realised from the sale of the old University Buildings in Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town, “to be used for some approved University function such as the encouragement of research by special grants or scholarships”. Dr William Hiddingh and Sir Donald Currie had each contributed £25 000 towards the erection of the University Buildings, but the money was no longer needed for this purpose when the University of the Cape of Good Hope became the University of South Africa, and the campus was moved to Pretoria. The publications fund was considered a fitting way to commemorate their names. Hiddingh was one of the first advocates in the Cape Colony and played an important role in the cultural life of the Cape, while Currie supported higher education in both the UK and South Africa (he is better known in South Africa for having donated the Currie Cup for rugby). In 1974, the Hiddingh-Currie Publications Fund was placed under the control of the Publications Committee (Council Minutes, 13 November 1974). Publications qualifying for the fund would fall under the Studia series, and be judged in a similar way in terms of quality. And, in contrast to the

collaborative nature of the past, “[o]nly the University will publish works in this series from now on” (SPC Minutes, 21 August 1975: 65, my translation).

The eventual founding of a Unisa publisher in 1956³ was based on the initiative of a small group of lecturers who wanted to promote research as a focus alongside teaching at the University, and in this they were successful. From 1946, the University of South Africa was reorganised, with most of the constituent colleges becoming independent universities in their own right. The University was then given the role of ‘external’ or correspondence teaching. These early years in a new form saw a great deal of debate and controversy over the role and character of the University. For instance, there was debate over the place of research in an ‘external’ university. In April 1956, a new principal, Samuel Pauw, took office at Unisa. He “spoke of the university’s need to advertise itself”, and saw a role for a university press in this new strategic focus (Boucher, 1973: 311). At the same time, a small group of lecturers began to meet on their own initiative. They helped to establish two committees: the Committee on Academic Initiatives, which was largely responsible for organising lectures, symposia and visiting lectureships, and the Publications Committee, which was set up to provide publishing channels for Unisa academics and students.

The first Publications Committee consisted of Professors W.A. Joubert, H.S. Steyn, G.W. Perold, F.A. van Jaarsveld, G. van N. Viljoen and J.L. Steyn, and Mr A.M. Davey (Van Jaarsveld, 1961: 71). The Committee felt that the Hiddingh-Currie series provided scope for wide-ranging (*omvangryke*) publications and that there were sufficient journals for articles, but that a middle path was required (Rädel, 1960: 67). They thus set up a publications series known as the Communications of the University of South Africa (*Mededelings van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika*), with publications differentiated according to three categories:

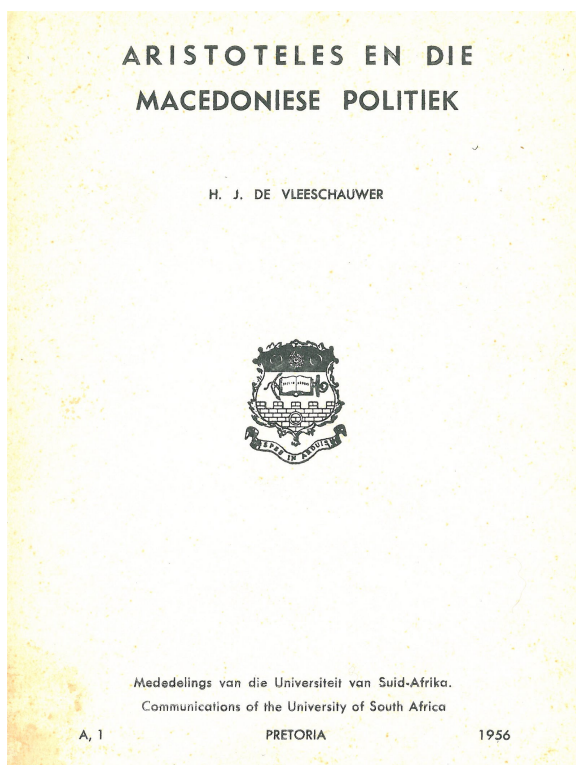
- A. Inaugural lectures
- B. Lectures and symposia
- C. Research work done by Professors, Lecturers and Students. (Boucher, 1973; Rädel, 1960: 67)

³ Again, sources disagree on this date. Despite the evidence, there was a widespread belief at the Press until quite recently that it was founded in 1957, and this ‘fact’ is to be found in a number of documents as well as in Darko-Ampem’s 2003 study (based on information obtained from Unisa Press). However, the first title issued under the new arrangement is clearly dated 1956.

The first members of the Senate Publications Committee were all respected scholars, as a quick scan will illustrate: Willem Joubert was a legal scholar, founder of legal journals and “prolific mentor of research” (Cameron, 1993: 51); H.S. Steyn was a statistician who founded the South African Statistical Association and later became Vice-Chancellor of Unisa; Guido Perold was professor of Organic Chemistry; Floors van Jaarsveld was a celebrated historian; Gerrit Viljoen lectured in classical languages, and would later become first rector of the Rand Afrikaans University and then a Government Minister (of Co-operation, Development and Education); J.L. Steyn was professor in the Department of Afrikaans-Nederlands; and Arthur Davey, also a historian, was a young scholar in 1956, having just completed his MA, but was being mentored by C.F.J. Muller and Theo van Wijk.

The first title published by the Publications Committee, in 1956, is fairly representative of the kind of publication produced in the early years: titled *Aristoteles en die Macedoniese Politiek* (‘Aristotle and Macedonian Politics’), by H.J. de Vleeschauwer, it was the short, Afrikaans-language text of an inaugural lecture by a Unisa professor and later a prominent member of the Committee, and focused on history, classics and politics – but not contemporary politics, by any means.

Figure 3.3: Title page of the first Unisa book, 1956



It is indicative of the kind of texts that would come to be published by Unisa, that De Vleeschauwer was the first author. While noted as an authority in his field, he was also a convicted collaborator in his home country of Belgium, who had fled to South Africa to avoid the death penalty (he was later pardoned). During his stay at Unisa from 1951 to 1966, he headed the Department of Philosophy from 1951 to 1964 and simultaneously the Department of Librarianship and Bibliography from 1955 to 1965. He even acted as head of the Department of Romance Languages for a short period. Dick notes that he was “a towering academic who influenced and helped to shape the curricula of a number of academic disciplines in Unisa’s Faculty of Arts for several years” (2002: 8). As for his political views, “[h]e was instrumental in the first meetings of an Afrikaans Philosophy Association, whose membership was restricted to whites only, and he began his political commentary in the local Afrikaans newspapers soon after his arrival in South Africa, ardently advocating the nationalist cause” (Dick, 2002: 23).

In contrast to Wits and Natal, the Unisa Library assisted only in disseminating the publications of the nascent Press. A report from the 1960s refers to such activities: “The result of a campaign to increase the circulation of *Mededelings van die Universiteit van Suid-Afrika* had disappointing results; only 1 193 were sold, 341 more than in 1964. *Mousaion* [a journal] fared better. Together with the textbook series, a total of 9 438 university publications were distributed, either through purchase, exchange, review or free issue” (Suttie, 2005: 107).

Like the other presses, Unisa managed its publications programme without a full-time manager for some time. The publishing office was run on an ad hoc basis, largely by the head of the Publications Committee, for many years. With the success of the early publishing programme at Unisa, there was support for the notion of expanding the publishing services into a press. Thus, in the 1970s, a survey was conducted of international university presses, and it was recommended to the Unisa Council to redevelop the Department of Publishing Services (*Uitgewersdienste*) into a university press. The suggested model was, again explicitly, that of Oxford University Press. Prof. H.S.P. Grässer, the chairman of the Publications Committee at the time (and right until the end of the 1980s), visited Oxford University Press in 1977 to “investigate the running of OUP and its relation to

the University of Oxford, and to relate the findings to the publishing policy and practice of UNISA in general and the functioning of the Publications Committee in particular” (Grässer, 1977). The new publishing house would report to a sub-committee of Senate, the Publications Committee, which was responsible for overseeing quality control and peer review. These structures and policies have remained in place to this day. In general, in fact, procedures in terms of the Unisa Publications Committee have changed only marginally from the mid-1970s until the present day (‘Manifes’, 1976.)

Unisa Press’s dual role, of publishing and service, is summed up in its mission as described in an undated document from this period titled ‘Functions of the Department of Publishing Services’:

1. Publish and sell prescribed texts and other academic manuscripts;
 2. Assist with the publication of inaugural lectures, papers, Unisa journals, etc.
- (‘Functions’, n.d.)

Primarily, the focus of the publishing philosophy for Unisa’s Publishing Services department entailed the publishing of scholarly texts by Unisa academics, conceived and intended for both an internal academic and student audience. There was at first almost no focus on traditional publishing functions, including the development of a coherent publishing list, the structures and kinds of staff required, or the channels of dissemination and types of access that may be demanded. This can be clearly seen, for instance, in the fact that the ISBN allocation was not solely for the Press, but for the university as a whole. As in many other cases, the Press ended up administering a function on behalf of the university, retaining little or no authority over such processes.

The transition to a more professional publishing house was not entirely smooth, as evidenced by minutes of the monthly production meetings from the 1970s (the so-called *dagbestuur*). For instance, some of the publications took up to four years from approval to publishing. Relying largely on unsolicited manuscripts rather than a focused publishing philosophy or specific niche areas, the Press would allocate priority according to the degree of attention still necessary to complete a manuscript and take it through the production

process. Problems that arose regularly included delays in delivery from the printers, the use of Unisa's Production Department for typesetting and printing when urgent, contacting authors who lived overseas and delays in correcting proofs, for instance (a problem that may only have been overcome with the widespread use of e-mail some years later), and delays with authors handing in their manuscripts on time, even when prescribed for students.

The period of growing professionalism in the 1970s also saw a huge proliferation of series and categories for publishing. These included:

- Manualia
- Studia
- Documenta
- Miscellanea, a useful catch-all category which included both books and certain journals, such as *Mousaion*, *Codicillus*, *Progressio*, *Semitics* and *English Usage in Southern Africa* (many of the journals were given Latin names)
- Miscellanea Congregalia
- Miscellanea Anthropologia
- Miscellanea Criminalia (instituted in 1979).

The position of a dedicated and professional publications officer (a *publikasiebeampte* or *uitgewersbeampte*) at Unisa was first created and filled in 1973, with Mr Etienne van Heerden (former news editor of *The Star*) taking up the position. He was Publications Officer until 1980, then Acting Director when the position was first created, and finally confirmed as Director. In 1977, the staff was expanded with the recommendation to hire a copyright officer, contracts officer and designer. As of 1978, the sales section was incorporated into the Department of Publishing Services, with a view to improved auditing and record-keeping. Van Heerden's Assistant Director was Phoebe van der Walt, and between them they oversaw a group of 26 staff members. For a brief period after Van Heerden's resignation, the Acting Director until February 1989 was Mr S.J.J. van den Berg. He was then replaced by an internal appointment, Ms van der Walt, who had been at the Press since 1980.

As Director – and the first woman to head a department at Unisa – Phoebe van der Walt would introduce various innovations relating to the professional operations of the Press,

drawing on her experience in commercial publishing, as well as changes in the publishing philosophy. Unisa Press was divided under Van der Walt into the following divisions: administration; service publications for the university; printing and publishing; business (essentially sales and royalties); finances; and journals. Moreover, almost all aspects of publishing at Unisa were covered in-house, including copy-editing, typesetting and printing (at the university's Print Production department, which now houses the largest printing press in the Southern Hemisphere – a reflection of Unisa's role as a distance education university, which prints and posts study material to a large number of students). The hope was that "... the University may possibly one day become largely independent of commercial printers" (Publications Committee Report, 1967: 128). Van der Walt would shape the Press until her promotion to Executive Director in 2004, and retirement in 2006.

While for ease of use I primarily refer to 'Unisa Press' in this study, it was in fact only under Van der Walt's direction, in 1994, that the name Unisa Press would be introduced to describe the former Department of Publishing Services. A proposal was put forward in the early 1990s to move the press to a more commercial footing, to commission more manuscripts, and to adopt more flexible policies and procedures. The detailed proposal included an analysis of the market segmentation of the press. The Committee considering the potential commercialisation of publishing turned down the proposal, arguing that an independent business with a commercial, profit-making focus would not fit well with the mission and objectives of the University as a whole. It was recommended that the subsidy be continued and that the Press remain a fully integrated department of Unisa. Indeed, it seems that the only concrete result from these suggestions was the change of name to Unisa Press.

The publishing philosophy changed markedly once Publishing Services truly became a university press. There was an immediate shift to a more tolerant, pluralist publishing mission, although the press was never to attain the same reputation for oppositional publishing as WUP and UNP would. Conservatism would linger for somewhat longer.

3.2.5 University of Fort Hare Press

One of the continuing silences in the (somewhat sparse) literature on university presses in South Africa is the near-total exclusion of the University of Fort Hare Press. A few small references may be found, such as the following, fairly ambiguous one:

The name Tyhume soon changed to Lovedale and became the principal publishing house of Xhosa material. This primacy was reinforced when the South African Native College, now known as Fort Hare University, was established nearby in 1915. The classic association of a press with a University, so successful in Europe and elsewhere, ensured that both institutions flourished. (Hooper, 1997: 70–71)

Lovedale was never a university press in the sense suggested by this comment. (Interestingly, though, Lovedale Press was a business enterprise, most of whose profits came from printing. The journal *Bantu Studies* was printed by the Lovedale Press for a number of years. See Shepherd, 1945: 16.) However, the close relationship between the university and the press does reveal an alternative publishing model for the dissemination of scholarly and research work. Even Fort Hare’s own materials speak of “[t]he lively publishing culture that characterised the University of Fort Hare and Lovedale Press in the 1930s and 1940s” (GMRDC, 2008: 11).

But, even without taking Lovedale into account, the University published under the imprint of the “University of Fort Hare Press” from at least 1960 (the earliest text I have located thus far), and as the University College Fort Hare brought out the serial *Fort Hare Papers* from 1945. While never a prolific publisher, this sort of initiative needs to be recognised alongside the other, more established university presses. Fort Hare began its publishing programme just a year after it was formally constituted as a black homeland or bantustan institution. This was not intended as a subversive or oppositional exercise, but rather an attempt to provide a much-needed publication outlet for the researchers employed at the university. Unfortunately, further archival material regarding the origins of this press could not be located, and the decision was thus taken to exclude Fort Hare from the focus of this study. For this reason, it is difficult to speculate on the form and organisation of the press at that institution. The UFH Press may have been run by the Library, as it was closely associated in reports with the Library and Archives. When an attempt was made to revive the Press in

2008 by establishing a book publishing division at the National Heritage and Cultural Studies Centre (NAHECS), the Archivist and Director of NAHECS, Prof Cornelius Thomas, was selected to oversee the process (GMRDC Research and Postgraduate Bulletin, 2008: 11).

3.2.6 University of Cape Town Press

The University of Cape Town (UCT) Press was a new entrant to the academic publishing scene only at a much later stage than the other university presses described in this study, being established in 1993. Before this time, there was certainly interest in and support for a university press at UCT, as evidenced by the repeated requests for information on the operations of WUP (Wilson recorded four such requests for information between 1968 and 1983, S87/414, 1987: 165).

Eve Gray, who had been Director of Wits University Press, was appointed the first Publishing Director of UCT Press in 1994. According to Gray, “it started out with a mission to use print-on-demand techniques to produce short-run academic books. It might have been ahead of its time, or ahead of the technology, in this aim, as neither production quality standards nor profitability met expectations. It was taken over by Juta in 1995, in an experimental partnership between a commercial publisher and a university press” (Gray, 2000: 177). The press continues to function in this form, as an imprint of Juta, which Darko-Ampem (2003: 128) describes as a “unique combination of academic and commercial interest [which] represents a consolidation of academic excellence and integrity with sound business and commercial direction and resourcing”. It certainly merits further investigation.

3.3 Why a university press?

A question that has arisen in the course of this study is why some universities have set up university presses, and others not. Motivations for setting up a university press include enhancing the academic prestige of an institution, boosting the research reputation of a university, and providing a publishing outlet for academics. My hypothesis is that this is linked to the categorisation of universities, and to what they perceived as their roles and mandates, especially during the apartheid period. It is thus significant in terms of the

publishing philosophies of the presses themselves, and how they may have perceived their own role.

The first category I will discuss here is that of Afrikaans universities, which, according to the literature, tended to have a more instrumentalist view of their mandate, rather than an idealistic one. In addition, a number of scholars have argued that research was not prioritised at such universities; rather, the focus was on teaching. See, for example the following description of the early years in the universities in South Africa:

Professors within South Africa did not have the facilities, equipment or the finance for their laboratories and rapidly became isolated from the great centres of research elsewhere in the world. They were overloaded with the tasks of teaching and administration at the universities, where the research culture had not yet penetrated. Conducting research was inopportune, tantamount to neglecting the more immediate tasks of organising, educating and managing. (Mouton et al., 2001: 15-16)

This led to a suppressive effect on publishing generally. (Unisa, which was exceptional in many ways as an Afrikaans-dominated university, did set up a university press, for reasons relating to the research needs of a specific group of academics.) Outlets for the dissemination of research remained necessary.

For example, the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU, now the University of Johannesburg), while not establishing its own press, clearly saw the need to disseminate the research of its own faculty. It thus set up a publishing series in 1968, in partnership with a local publisher. The series was established to publish (a) inaugural lectures and other significant lectures, and (b) research by lecturers and students. The first title, a collection of essays by professors at the university, focused on *Universiteit en Onderrig* ('University and Tuition'). Prof. F.I.J. van Rensburg, the Chairman of the Tuition Committee at RAU, noted in a foreword to the first title the "generosity" of the Voortrekkerpers, which had agreed to publish the first academic title at no cost. He called this a "heartening example of cooperation between university and publisher" (in Van Zyl et al., 1968: 9, my translation) – clearly a different model to that of a university press. (It could be noted here that Voortrekkerpers, as its name

suggests, supported Afrikaans nationalism from the mid-1930s. It would later merge with Afrikaanse Pers to form Perskor.)

Stellenbosch University would also establish a 'university press' in the 2000s, a digital initiative called African SUN Media. This merits further research attention, especially in terms of comparing the business model of this publisher to the traditional university press model.

Similarly to the Afrikaans universities, the black universities also tended to have an instrumentalist view and indeed purpose. This militated against the creation of university presses, which are closely linked to a culture of research and publication, and to a certain prestige element. Some of these universities have, inaccurately, labelled publications forthcoming from their institutions as products of a 'university press', as may be seen in the case of certain publications from the University of the Western Cape, for instance.

The English universities, in contrast, were set up in the image and model of the great English universities, and particularly Oxford and Cambridge: "The intellectual agendas of the four historically white English-medium universities were set by their perception that they were international institutions engaged in the same kinds of knowledge production as universities in, for example, Britain or the USA. This knowledge was not limited to instrumental knowledge. The four universities believed that knowledge was a good in itself and hence that the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was a major responsibility for any university" (Bunting, 2002: 72). Taylor (1991: 34) agrees: "The devising of curricula, setting of examinations, methods of teaching, appointment of staff and the general philosophy of these institutions all bear the hallmark of Universities in Europe".

It would seem almost self-explanatory, then, that Witwatersrand and Natal Universities should set up presses. In fact, the question arises, why did UCT and Rhodes not set up presses? There was apparently interest in setting up presses at the other English-speaking institutions, with Rhodes and UCT writing (separately) to the Wits Registrar for information on the structure and viability of the Press. Rather than providing a model for other

university presses, the Registrar's response was to propose collaboration with these universities, but this did not come to fruition.

Similarly, but on a broader scale, David Philip in 1971 suggested setting up a "Southern African Universities Press", a collaborative project between the 'open universities' of Universities of Cape Town, Rhodes, Natal and Wits. In a letter to the Wits Registrar dated 24 July 1971 (and similar letters were sent to the other universities mentioned), he set out his ideas thus:

It may seem surprising that I should be sending proposals for a universities press to the University of the Witwatersrand, which has its own university press. A reading of my memorandum as a whole, and especially paragraphs 3, 5 and 21, should make clear that my proposals are intended not to conflict with the existing university presses by (sic) to complement them by providing a unified promotion and marketing service, as well as an editorially supervised setting service. (Philip, 1971: 3)

The idea was to strengthen the commercial viability of South African academic publications, while also providing a publishing service for those universities without university presses. The universities, however, were wary and appeared not to perceive any clear benefits to the plan. In particular, they found the idea of being part of a profit-making publishing enterprise unsettling. Wits and Natal thus both responded, saying that they preferred to continue with their own presses. With little positive response, David Philip went on to establish his own publishing house, successfully publishing serious non-fiction and academic writing, and making a name for himself as an oppositional publisher. Later, in the 1980s, David Philip Publishers would act as publicity agents for the University of Natal Press, but the relationship was limited.

One can only speculate that there may also have been financial reasons for this failure of certain institutions to establish presses in their own names, or that the universities felt their faculty were well served by existing arrangements. For a long time, UCT published in the name of the university alone, using external service providers. It was only in the early 1990s that UCT would finally establish a formal press imprint. Rhodes, on the other hand, entered into an arrangement with a commercial publisher (A.A. Balkema) to publish its

Grahamstown series. In 1987, UNP was approached to take on this series, but declined citing a lack of capacity. Moberly noted that “[t]he approach is significant in that it emphasises how short this country is of publishers able to undertake specialist non-commercial publications” (‘Publisher’s Report’, 16 March 1987: 8). WUP was then approached, and agreed to take on the series, although this took several years to come to fruition (Correspondence, 02/02/1987, Dr H.C. Hummel to N. Wilson).

Indeed, based on ISBN records and the holdings of the National Library of South Africa, all of the universities have pursued publications programmes to some extent or another over the years. R.A. Brown, the University Librarian at Pietermaritzburg and the manager of UNP for a period, listed Natal and Witwatersrand as the only two university presses in South Africa in a report, but went on to note: “All the other universities produce publications of some sort (Annals, Communications, Publications) which usually consist of inaugural lectures, theses, or results of research. These are handled by their administrations, sometimes with the help of libraries” (Brown, 1970: 2). Universities that have had ISBNs allocated, and therefore have followed some form of publishing programme over the years, include UCT (0-7992 and 1-919713), Rhodes (0-86810), Free State (0-86886), RAU (0-86970), Pretoria (0-86979 and 1-86854), North (0-86980, 1-86840, 1-874897 and 1-9583158), UPE (0-86988), Potchefstroom (0-86990 and 1-86822), Stellenbosch (0-86995), Johannesburg Technikon (0-947048), Durban-Westville (0-947445), Medunsa (0-9583100), Vaal Triangle Tech (0-9584095), Western Cape (1-86808), Zululand (1-86818), and Vista (1-86828). These publication series produced theses and dissertations, occasional conference proceedings, and speeches from prominent university occasions, such as graduation ceremonies, but not scholarly books.

It is occasionally confusing to examine the bibliographic details of some of the books published by universities without presses. The reason is that they list the publisher as the “university press” of a particular institution, even where no such formal arrangement existed. For instance, the sociologist S.P. Cilliers’ 1971 work, *Appeal to Reason*, is listed as having been published by “University Publishers and Booksellers” at Stellenbosch. These inaccuracies can make it difficult to identify which universities established formal publishing houses (university presses), and which had occasional publishing programmes.

3.4 Conclusion

The specific models employed by South Africa's university presses are of particular interest in examining relations between the centre and the periphery, and between knowledge produced, packaged and disseminated in the South and in the North. In this regard, South Africa's university presses must be situated within the wider context of scholarly publishing in a post-colonial and specifically African situation. The model that emerges of the 'typical' South African university press is somewhat complicated by the different situations and positioning of the different universities that established presses: two (three, if one counts UCT Press) traditionally English-speaking, liberal, white universities; one university reserved for black students; and one predominantly Afrikaner university that nonetheless was open to all population groups because of its focus on distance education. Given this complexity, it would be difficult to assess whether a "common culture of academic publishing" (Derricourt, 1996: 6) has emerged, or whether the model has adapted and evolved to fit different contexts and situations.

The university presses were established at significant moments in the history of the country and of their parent institutions. WUP was established at the same time as the university adopted the name of University of the Witwatersrand, formally putting an end to debates as to whether a university should be established in Johannesburg. This period, just a decade after the Union of South Africa had been established and almost immediately in the wake of the First World War, signalled an expansion of the university sector in South Africa, and a growing emphasis on the local or national relevance of research (Dubow, 2006). The need for local publication outlets for both emerging and internationally recognised researchers was acknowledged, and was fulfilled by the creation of WUP at one of the country's most research-intensive institutions. Revealing the similar trajectory of higher education development across the former British colonies, Wits established its university press in the same year, 1922, as Melbourne was to establish the first Australian university press.

The University of Natal Press also came into being as its parent institution received its own statute as an independent university, in the late 1940s. The new Principal, Dr E.G. Malherbe, officially assumed duty in April 1945. Malherbe immediately initiated the pursuit of

independent university status for the College, and sought to promote the research mandate of the institution. The dissemination of research goes hand in hand with the function of a university press, and so UNP was born. By coincidence, the establishment of this university press coincided with the coming to power of the National Party.

Unisa started publishing in 1956, with a new Principal and in a context of debate over the future direction of the institution: as part of the government's policy of extending apartheid throughout the education system, Unisa's constituent parts had been broken off to become independent institutions of higher learning in their own right, and the remaining body was tasked with focusing on distance education – potentially at the expense of research. However, at the initiative of a group of research-minded professors, a publishing programme was established and, as the years progressed, “Unisa [became] intent upon imitating state-sponsored initiatives and building an acceptable research capacity that could promote its reputation in fields that enjoyed government approval” (Suttie, 2005: 112).

The mandates of the newly formed university presses were broadly similar. The common elements that emerge from the mission statements of the newly formed publishing committees may be summarised as follows:

- A close relationship with the parent institutions, often reflected in a service mandate;
- A commitment to excellence, and the use of peer review to maintain standards;
- An initial non-profit model, with a university subsidy;
- Little attempt at list-building, beyond support for the research strengths of the institution.

As may be recalled from Chapter 2, these points – especially the first three – recall the generic elements that make up the ‘Oxford model’ of university press publishing. Deviating from the Oxford model at first, the presses largely began life as publishing divisions within the university, rather than self-standing departments of the university. Their evolution over the years into a fully-fledged publishing house is similar to the trajectory followed by a number of university presses in other countries as well. One example is the still small

Canterbury University Press in New Zealand, which was established as a “publications committee” in 1964, but has since developed into a “full-time publisher” since 1991 (Canterbury University Press, 2009). But all of the local university presses have gone through an evolution from their origins to the professional publishing houses of today. Again, this is not a local phenomenon, but a world-wide trend, as Jagodzinski (2008: 4) points out: “The earliest university presses in the United States were far from the professional operations of today. They often served as no more than job printers for universities, printing catalogues, unvetted faculty publications, or annual reports.” This trend is echoed by Kerr:

In the beginning, the motive power in university press publishing was supplied by a few far-sighted university administrators, energetic scholars, broad-minded librarians, enlightened alumni, and devoted practitioners of the art of printing, and the incentive provided by such individuals remains today one of the most valuable assets of a university press. Now, however, the moving power has passed into the hands of a new group of professionals, men and women dedicated to the aims of scholarship but also trained in the techniques of publishing. (Kerr, quoted in Basbanes, 2008: 74)

The “motive power” behind the South African university presses was certainly a few far-sighted university administrators and researchers, as this chapter has shown. The composition of the Publications Committees was an important factor in the establishment, structure and values of the presses. It was through the committees and later through their directors that the university presses were in a position to reflect, maintain or challenge the ideologies of their institutions and of the wider society. The local university presses, in keeping with the ‘Oxford model’, were dominated by their Publications Committees for many years. This was particularly the case when they were understaffed and located within other departments of the university. The growing professionalisation of the staff led to the person of the director or manager playing an increasingly important role in determining the direction and editorial philosophy of the presses.

Indeed, the director of a university press has an important dual role to play, both academic and managerial. It would be interesting to consider whether the character of the directors has influenced the path of the university presses in South Africa. In a proposal for the formation of a new Department of Publications at Wits, H.E. Andriés noted the following important characteristics of a “Controller” or publishing manager: “He (sic) should

understand both English and Afrikaans and yet be neither Afrikaaner (sic) nor Englishman, but sympathetic to the points of view of both, and neither Jew nor anti-Jewish” (July 1939: 4). This rather bizarre proposal was not taken forward, but it illustrates the political role that a director also plays, whether wittingly or not, and their location within the broad pressures of society at large. Percy Patrick, who was involved with the UNP, spoke of the need for a press manager who was “a man (sic) of calibre with great clarity of thought and with the strength of character to guard jealously the standards of all publications” (Patrick, 1969: 6).

Thus, at the local university presses, there has been a clear though gradual move towards professionalisation, especially through the person of the director or publications officer. Over time, people with experience in publishing, and often commercial publishing, were appointed to this position. Their role was supplemented by increasing numbers of dedicated staff members, especially in the editorial and marketing spheres. This pattern is similar to that found in other parts of the world, where university presses have emerged from the foundations laid by library publishing programmes and publications offices.

Another interesting trend is the move from a male-dominated set-up, to the increasing inclusion of women, at first as editors and administrators, but later also as managers. This trend has become so pronounced that today, the university presses are all managed by professional publishers and by women. The ratio of male to female authors, however, remains skewed towards men, as will be seen in Chapter 5, where an author profile for the presses is described.