

SOUTH AFRICA'S ENDURING COLONIAL NATURE AND UNIVERSITIES

Johann Rossouw
Department of Philosophy
University of the Free State, Bloemfontein

Abstract

This article focuses on the question of South African decolonisation with particular reference to the Afrikaners as both the colonised and the coloniser. It is argued that Afrikaners winning state power in 1948 became something of an ironic blueprint for African post-colonial countries — nominally independent and free, but in reality still colonies. The enduring colonial characteristics of South Africa are briefly discussed, and how Afrikaner- and African nationalists in power turned out to be variations of a post-colonial pattern. Language is discussed as a focal point of this pattern since 1948, also with regards to the 2015 student revolts at South African universities. In conclusion some proposals are offered about what decolonisation should be, and what universities can contribute to it.

1. Personal introduction

I can only speak from inside my limited historical perspective as an Afrikaner, that is, as a member of a community that has both been colonised and the coloniser.¹⁾ I hope my limited perspective will help to shed light on the question regarding the decolonisation of the South African university — and that similar unique perspectives from others with their own unique identities and histories will help to enlarge my perspective, particularly since I also struggle with understanding why the great post-*apartheid* dream of a self-sufficient, dignified country of mutual cultural recognition and economic justice must still be fulfilled, and what can be done in this country to dream and hope again for a better future together.

The great anti-colonial, Afrikaner-nationalist poet, N P Van Wyk Louw, is said to have once remarked, that the cultivation of a sense of irony is essential to live in South Africa. If he did indeed make this statement, I unfortunately failed to

locate the reference, but like all good stories it is too good not to be believed — especially considering what a perceptive statement it is.

2. An anti-colonial leader and irony

Let us examine this statement with regards to an anti-colonial Afrikaner leader whose life inspired Louw (1966) to write a play²⁾ for the fifth anniversary of the *apartheid* Republic of South Africa in 1966, and which led Louw to clash with the then prime minister, Hendrik Verwoerd.³⁾ Once upon a time this anti-colonial Afrikaner leader was the president of a small rural republic, which was recognised world-wide as a model republic.⁴⁾ In its early decades parliamentary elections were not held every five years, but annually. Although it was most definitely not free of the racism of the time, it also maintained good relationships with many of the neighbouring black polities, such as the Sesotho kingdom under Moeshoeshoe.⁵⁾

Under the presidency of its anti-colonial Afrikaner leader the small republic was reluctantly dragged into what became one of Africa's first major anti-colonial wars, variously referred to as the Anglo-Boer War or the South African War. This happened because the small republic under its anti-colonial president felt itself duty-bound to honour its pact with another small anti-colonial republic⁶⁾ to defend each other's independence.

Ironically the second small republic soon suffered such huge losses that one of its leaders⁷⁾ secretly entered negotiations with the British empire. The first small republic, though, under the brave leadership of its president⁸⁾ soldiered on. For nearly three years he constantly travelled through the field to support his soldiers, which took such a toll on him that he was eventually paralysed. When the war ended with massive losses for his small republic, including the loss of its freedom and independence, he saw to it that the terms of the peace⁹⁾ did not include the term 'surrender', but rather 'ending the war'.¹⁰⁾

After the war he left his former country temporarily, amongst other reasons to raise funds to establish a new university¹¹⁾ in his former country. After his return a few years later to a hero's welcome he went on to raise money for two other causes for which he is remembered to this day — a monument to remember the suffering of women and children in the war,¹²⁾ and a school to educate Afrikaner girls, which went on to become one of the best schools in Africa.¹³⁾ On balance we may say that this anti-colonial Afrikaner leader was prepared to pursue an African anti-colonial struggle through war if it could not be avoided, but preferably through peaceful means.¹⁴⁾ Crucially he understood the role of education in this struggle.

Although the girls' school that he founded nine years before his death was

from its inception Dutch-Afrikaans, the university that he helped set up in 1904 was English with some accommodation of Afrikaans until the early 1950s, when it became Afrikaans with some accommodation of English.¹⁵ In 1929 Afrikaner-nationalist students at this university erected a statue of this leader in front of the university's main building, partly to commemorate the role that he had played in establishing the university. The statue is not unironic, for in spite of this leader's legendary self-effacing humility, the statue is massive and stands on a huge granite plinth, adding a triumphantist element to the way in which the statue memorialises him.

Ironically neither the erection of this statue, nor the late 1940s decision to change from an English to an Afrikaans university would have happened if the anti-colonial war that the anti-colonial leader reluctantly entered, did not take place. For, as conventional wisdom today acknowledges, the unresolved trauma that his people suffered became the main source of the second phase of the anti-colonial struggle of his people, culminating in the electoral victory of the National Party (NP) in 1948 and, ultimately, *apartheid*. In this phase the historically republican nature of this struggle became more nationalist (and racist). The anti-colonial leader was re-interpreted as a nationalist symbol, and the Afrikaans language was turned into a key site of this struggle.

3. Characteristics of an enduring colony

Leaving aside for a moment the role of Afrikaans in this struggle, in many other respects this phase of Afrikaners' anti-colonial struggle displayed the same traits as most other African anti-colonial struggles. That is, historical grievances against the colonial power were used to mobilise the people in a nationalist struggle to take control of the colonial state and economic structure. Once this control was achieved, so ran the argument, the colonial and economic state structure could be used for the advancement of the previously suppressed local people.

However, this idea failed to take into account what the colonial state structure could do to the vanguard of the formerly suppressed locals if this structure was not decisively reformed to truly reflect the aspirations of the formerly suppressed locals. And thus, time and again in post-colonial Africa, capturing the colonial state and economic structure from the former colonial power turned out to be not only the vanguard's crowning achievement, but also to carry the seeds of its own destruction as the vanguard were captured by the unreformed colonial state and economic structure, and ended up governing in their own interests against the interests of the people. An analogy of this could be how the road behaviour of a former owner of a small family car changes after he miraculously

suddenly becomes the owner of a powerful sports car. Thus, in a great ironic twist, the former vanguard of an anti-colonial struggle became colonialists of a special type, that is, maintaining many of the established colonial patterns against their own people — with the limited exception of often advancing the interests of their own ethnic group.¹⁶⁾

What arguably sets South Africa apart, though, from many if not most other African countries is that it went through this historical pattern not once, but twice. The two dates that mark the establishment of this pattern and of its repetition are 1948 and 1994, the latter of course when the African National Congress (ANC) came into power. In both instances an anti-colonial nationalist party strove to capture the colonial state structure and ended up being captured by it, eventually spending all its moral capital but making its elites quite wealthy in the process.¹⁷⁾ The revolt against this pattern was in both cases led by the disaffected youth, starting respectively in 1976 and 2015,¹⁸⁾ in both cases fatally exposing the immorality of the regime, which merits the question of whether a government can survive the betrayal and subsequent loss of support of its youth? At this stage there is no reason to believe that the ANC will not follow the demise of its Afrikaner-nationalist predecessor, the National Party.¹⁹⁾

Regardless of what may be said about the use of violence and intimidation by some youth leaders and security forces both in 1976 and 2015 (including private security forces at some South African universities in 2015), the fact of the matter is that the youth leadership of 2015 in making the decolonisation of the university their key demand managed to make a previously hidden or denied fact glaringly obvious, namely that South Africa is still a colony.²⁰⁾ The following colonial characteristics of the South African unitary state that came into existence with so-called unification in 1910 have now been in place for more than a century, ultimately undoing the successes of both the NP and the ANC in their quest to decolonise and modernise South Africa. Here is a basic summary of the enduring colonial characteristics of South Africa from unification in 1910 up to the present:

South Africa's model of excellence is always sought outside the country, and this changes in accord with the preferences of the ruling elite of the moment. For the British from 1910 to 1948 the model of excellence to be emulated locally was London; for the NP from 1948 to 1994 it was Western Europe and especially Britain as a highly ambiguous point of reference;²¹⁾ for the ANC it is leading non-Western countries like China and Russia.

From unification in 1910 until the present South Africa has been ruled by a self-serving minority in the name of the majority, whose power and wealth largely depends on serving the interests of foreign clients. The British served London's financial interests, the NP that of Western Europe and the United States (US), and

the ANC that of China, India and Russia.

From 1910 to the present a large part of the South African economy rests on the extraction and export of unrefined minerals. Much of the capital accumulated thus is taken out of South Africa, contributing to the country's heavy dependence on foreign investment and undermining South Africa's sovereignty, with the qualified exception of the period from 1948 to the mid-1970s.²²⁾

Since 1910 state power has been centralised and the real political decisions are not taken in parliament.²³⁾

Since 1910 whenever the ruling elite is challenged by internal resistance it deploys the classical colonial strategy of divide and rule on the basis of ideology, ethnicity, race or class.²⁴⁾ Different sectors of society are played off against each other so that new alliances based on a shared experience of discontent are hindered.

Since 1910 one language is privileged above South Africa's other languages. Other indigenous languages are not allowed to develop, so that only those who speak the elite's language can advance.

From the late 19th century to the present most South Africans' place of work and of residence are separated.²⁵⁾ This puts huge pressure on family structures and remains a source of social instability.

Since the late 19th century networks of transport and communication mostly serve corporate, industrial and metropolitan interests instead of all the citizens of the country. Truly inclusive and secure cities for all where we can in republican fashion appear to each other as participating citizens remain elusive.²⁶⁾

4. Afrikaners in power: Variation on a colonial pattern

Earlier I hinted that the role of Afrikaans in the anti-colonial struggle of Afrikaner-nationalism distinguishes this struggle from most other African anti-colonial struggles and their post-colonial aftermath. Why is this so? First, the elevation and development of the Afrikaans language to a status equal to the former colonial language of English seems to have been nearly unique in African anti-colonial struggles.²⁷⁾ Second, in the post-colonial aftermath of 1948²⁸⁾ the fact that Afrikaner-nationalists sought the advancement of their own ethnic constituency in their shared language had two important consequences.

In the first place the fact that the Afrikaner political elite governed in the indigenous language shared with its constituency arguably led to greater political accountability of this elite *vis-à-vis* its ethnic constituency than in other African post-colonial contexts, where the post-colonial elite's mastery of and choice for the former colonial language weakened their political accountability and

strengthened their hold on power. In this regard it is doubtful whether the NP would have entered negotiations for a new dispensation between 1990 and 1994 if it was not seriously threatened by both left-wing and right-wing Afrikaner resistance in their shared language.²⁹⁾

The second important and somewhat ironic consequence of a nationalist elite governing in their own indigenous language was that this very language that had a long anti-colonial history became fatally identified with white nationalist interests, mostly through the NP between 1948 and 1994 associating Afrikaans with its white speakers and repressing its black and coloured speakers, to the extent that the Afrikaans language turned out in the youth revolt of 2015 to be seen as a remnant of *apartheid* and colonialism at formerly Afrikaans-only universities. So deep did the anger against Afrikaans run, that absolutely no policy proposals to accommodate Afrikaans in a non-hegemonic way was acceptable — neither simultaneous translation of Afrikaans instruction into English or an indigenous language, nor parallel-medium instruction or any other proposal.³⁰⁾

In a further ironic twist the African-nationalist youth at the university where their Afrikaner-nationalist predecessors erected a statue for the anti-colonial Afrikaner leader who helped to set up their university, attacked the statue early in 2016.³¹⁾ Even more ironic is that their attempts to topple the statue probably only failed because of its massive granite plinth. The fact that some of these students explained their animus against the statue with the claim that this anti-colonial leader, who died precisely a century earlier when the university was still English, was somehow co-responsible for *apartheid* is so ironic that one is at a loss for words.

The animus of these students against the Afrikaans language must of course also be understood in a broader context of political mimesis. The doyen of Afrikaner history, Hermann Giliomee, argues that the initial impetus of Afrikaner-nationalism was not the suppression of other South African groups, but to succeed in imitating the achievements of their British-descended counterparts and to thus gain their recognition. This explains why so-called *volkskapitalisme* did not strive for economic redistribution, but rather for the establishment of Afrikaner businesses that could compete with traditional British-descendant business.³²⁾ This probably also explains why the NP in spite of its many failures according to Moeletsi Mbeki succeeded in growing a productive industrial economy that did bring the country closer to decolonisation, although at a massive moral and human cost. This also explains why universities either became Afrikaans or were newly set up in Afrikaans and strove to compete with the leading historically white English universities. In fact, this mimetic striving by Afrikaners for recognition from the British would prove to be so strong in post-*apartheid* South Africa that more than one Afrikaner rector was prepared to phase out Afrikaans in favour of

English in the struggle to outdo historically white English universities in the Anglo-American dominated so-called world rankings of universities.³³⁾

5. African nationalists in power: Another variety of a colonial pattern

The mimetic politics of African nationalism after the achievement of state power in 1994 of course took a different form. While it did, like Afrikaner-nationalism before it, strive for the recognition of its former oppressors — that is, the Afrikaners — it chose the path of economic redistribution instead of economic self-reliance as the Afrikaners did. Could it be that the psychological damage of colonialism and *apartheid* was so severe that the African-nationalist vanguard's collective self-confidence was so low that it never seriously considered to strive to compete on equal footing with Afrikaner business? And is Moeletsi Mbeki right when he argues that black South Africans' exclusion from 20th century production and neglect of their languages helps to explain why the ANC focused more on consumption than on production?

It is widely recognised that a mismanaged economy and its dwindling resources was one of the catalysts for the student revolts of 2015 and later. In contradistinction to their parents and grandparents who were still prepared to seek an accord with their white counterparts, these students, however, focused their ire not only on the government that had failed them with poor schooling and the mismanagement of higher education, but also took vehement aim at their white counterparts at university, accusing the latter of still secretly trying to control the universities and undercutting them.

That this accusation was sometimes less and sometimes more true is perhaps of less import than the fact that these students now displayed a tendency *vis-à-vis* the West represented by white South Africans that Pankaj Mishra summed up in his brilliant analysis of the post-colonial Indian sub-continent when he wrote that “many Third World middle classes [are] fiercely nationalistic, but at the same time craves approval from the West” (Mishra 2007: 210). In the case of the 2015-revolts the revolting mostly black students whose fate was mostly tied to a mismanaged state sought the recognition of their white counterparts whose fate was mostly tied to a highly successful post-*apartheid* private sector as it was expressed in the disappointment of black students that the same white students they blamed for their oppression failed to join them in their struggle against this oppression. It is equally striking that the animus directed against Afrikaans as a so-called language of white privilege³⁴⁾ was not echoed with a serious demand for the advancement of other African languages in higher education. In other words,

from an Afrikaans perspective these students by opting for English effectively colonised their own minds further, to echo Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1987).

6. The university and decolonisation

Against this background the answer to the question whether decolonisation is relevant or not to the contemporary South African university must be an unequivocal “yes”. Also against this background, and given South Africa’s double failure with Afrikaner- and African-nationalism to decolonise the country by simply taking control of the colonial state structure, another answer to the question what decolonisation is must be sought. I propose that decolonisation means the advancement of the freedom and self-reliance of all South African communities that identify with this country. In my view such advancement requires amongst others at least two preconditions. First, it can only succeed on a basis of mutual recognition between South Africa’s cultural communities based on the fact that by now there is not a single South African community that has not been both in the position of the coloniser and the colonised, whether in the conventional sense of living under a colonial power, or whether in the sense of living in an enduring colonial state and economic system where the shoe is, so to speak, on the other foot. Let us call this the community of the mutually colonised. Second, this advancement can only succeed if our universities are decolonised. If decolonisation is the advancement of the freedom and self-reliance of all our communities, decolonising the university must have at least four aspects, namely that of language, curriculum, locality and the economy. I close with brief remarks about these four aspects.

On the whole, the most esteemed South African universities have all since the end of *apartheid* bought into the dominant Anglo-American model of the so-called world-class university. With the notable exception of Rhodes University this entailed a deliberate choice for much larger student numbers — as well as a business-like view of the university, a race to the bottom competing for the small pool of students from quality schools, an obsession with the dubitable various global university ranking tables and a disregard for indigenous languages as mediums of academic teaching and research. The sustained linguicide perpetrated against Afrikaans as an academic language deserves special mention in this regard.³⁵ A notable and encouraging exception to this linguistic pattern is the serious work being done in the development of isiZulu and isiXhosa at Rhodes and KwaZulu-Natal universities, as well as the use of indigenous languages as auxiliary languages facilitating a better mastery of academic concepts studied through the medium of English at these universities, as well as the University of

the Western Cape and the University of the Witwatersrand.

As for the decolonised university surely much more must be done to enable students to study in their first languages. Notable post-colonial African thinkers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Achille Mbembe and Mahmood Mamdani have all espoused this.³⁶⁾

As far as curriculum is concerned, I shall comment mostly on the humanities, not only because that is the area of my own specialisation, but also because that is the field where advocates for decolonisation most often ask for curriculum reform. If the aim of a South African humanities curriculum is to equip students with the necessary hermeneutic skills to understand contemporary South Africa and its place in the world, such a curriculum has to feature all the sources of the ideas that shaped contemporary South Africa, that is, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa, as well as ancient, medieval and modern Western ideas, as well as indigenous religions, Islam and Christianity. These various sources should be taught in a comparative fashion, not only to help students understand what are the enduring ideas of persistent colonial practices in our country, but also what ideas these various traditions offer us to pursue the struggle for a free and sovereign country. As Danie Goosen recently pointed out, African colonisation cannot be understood without Europe's self-colonisation with the imposition of the modern territorial state on Europe's patchwork of communities from 1400 onwards. It is this state and economic model that was imposed on Africa from the late 1800s (Netwerk24, 2017/4/26). Hence, not exposing students to the ideas and history of Europe's self-colonisation as precondition for the colonisation of Africa would be criminally negligent.

As far as locality is concerned, I would like to cite Ngũgĩ from his Africa Day Memorial Lecture delivered at the University of the Free State in 2012: "The world begins at home". The issue is not whether South African universities should focus on the global or the local — of course they should do both. The issue is rather that there are to my mind very few if any globally recognised universities or thinkers who achieved that recognition without first achieving excellence in their local context. The bizarre incantation of the world-class mantra as a byword for importing all the worst practices of Anglo-American universities into South Africa since 1994 is nothing but self-colonisation of a special type. It is much more challenging and creative to focus on what universities can do in their geographic, regional and national locations to prepare students to work and live there, and to find solutions to the problems facing us today in this country. There is a long-standing and disturbing trend to import third-rate Anglo-American concepts into this country instead of developing our own concepts and vocabularies in our own languages to articulate the realities of what is after all one of the most imaginative

countries in the world.

As far as the economy is concerned, South African universities have a special responsibility through the development of our indigenous languages, curriculum reform and a sense of locality to contribute to the development of a participatory market economy. In such an economy capital will be devolved to local community level, skills will be transferred to local communities, as well as the authority to manage their own budgets. A truly excellent and world-class decolonised South African university would distinguish itself by developing such economic initiatives in the areas where they are based, especially the rural and provincial universities.

If these four goals can be successfully pursued we shall have universities that no longer serve the colonial metropolises, but that guide our people to freedom, dignity and self-reliance.

Endnotes

1. This article was first delivered in a shorter version on 26 October 2017 at the *Decolonizing the University?* seminar hosted by the Centre for Africa Studies and the Department of Philosophy of the University of the Free State. Most of the rest of the endnotes were added for further nuances and background information to the main text — readers should be able to follow the basic argument without reading these endnotes, but readers who prefer more detail and backing arguments for statements in the main text would hopefully gain from reading the endnotes as well.
2. *Die pluimsaad waai ver* (“The seed of the plume is blown far”).
3. For an extensive discussion of the clash between Louw and Verwoerd see chapter 24 of Steyn’s biography (1998) of Louw.
4. The republic in question is the Republic of the Orange Free State (ROFS), that existed from 1854 to 1900. One of South Africa’s greatest historians, Karel Schoeman, traces the view of the ROFS as a model republic back to an assessment by the Northern-Ireland academic, politician and writer, James Bryce who called it “an ideal commonwealth ... because the economic and social conditions which have made democracy so far from an unmixed success in the American States and in the larger Colonies of Britain, not to speak of the people of Europe, whether ancient or modern, have not come into existence here ...” (quoted in Schoeman 1989: 163-64). Schoeman (*op cit.*: 163-172), however, goes on to point out how ambiguous this assessment nevertheless is from a 21st century perspective — while the ROFS was characterised by a lively participatory democracy, unity amongst its (white) citizens, civil service and public education, for black people residing in the ROFS life was not ideal, to say the least, and what is today known as the ideal of white supremacy was espoused by the leadership of the ROFS.
5. At the same time the ROFS was also sometimes involved in wars for land, such as

- those of 1865, which to this day is apparently a factor in stock theft on the border between South Africa and Lesotho in the present eastern part of the Free State province. This is a view expressed to me in personal conversation by the church historian, Prof Dolf Britz, who has done extensive research on 19th century Christian missionary work in what is presently known as Lesotho.
6. The Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR), that existed from 1857 to 1902, and that consisted broadly of the current South African provinces of Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Gauteng and Northwest.
 7. General Louis Botha, who later became the first premier of the Union of South Africa in 1910.
 8. Marthinus Theunis Steyn (1857-1916).
 9. The peace treaty of Vereeniging, signed on 31 May 1902 in Vereeniging, and which brought the Anglo-Boer War to an end.
 10. This was related to me personally by the amateur historian and great-grandson of M T Steyn, Colin Steyn, who is a member of the fourth-generation of the Steyn family to live on the farm Onze Rust that M T Steyn bought in 1896.
 11. In 1904 Grey College accepted its first (six) students for the BA-degree; in 1906 Grey University College became an institution independent of Grey College; in 1950 it was renamed to the University of the Orange Free State; presently it is known as the University of the Free State.
 12. The National Women's Memorial which was unveiled in 1913 in memory of the Afrikaner women and children who died in British concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer War, initially thought to be more than 26 000, but according to the latest research more than 34 000. See <http://www.vrouemonument.co.za/index.php/af/geskiedenis>, accessed on 13 March 2018.
 13. The C&N Oranje Meisieskool, established 1907.
 14. Steyn's reluctance to enter into war with Britain as well as his role in negotiating the peace treaty of Vereeniging is well-known. Notwithstanding all Steyn's exceptional qualities and achievements, it should also be noted that he and the leading Afrikaners of his time were committed to what is now called white supremacy over black people. See for example his references to this issue in a recent publication of a selection from his correspondence (De Wet and Van Heyningen 2017). At the launch of this publication late in 2017 in Bloemfontein at the National War Museum one of the editors of this publication, the historian Elizabeth van Heyningen, confirmed this in response to a question I asked her during the event.
 15. In 1918 the Afrikaans writer, language-activist and then rector of the university gave permission that examinations could henceforth be answered in Afrikaans. When the university's medium of instruction was changed to Afrikaans in the late 1940s the same gesture was made to English students.
 16. Of course Afrikaner-nationalists after the victory of the NP in 1948 not only advanced the interests of their own ethnic group, but added a racial element to their government by maintaining the alliance with white South Africans of mostly British descent, an

- alliance which was formalised with the establishment of the Union of South Africa, consisting of the former Boer republics (OFS and ZAR) as well as the former British colonies of the Cape and Natal — respectively consisting of the current South African provinces of the Western Cape, Eastern Cape and Northern Cape, and KwaZulu-Natal.
17. The astute analyst of Afrikaner- and African nationalism in South Africa, Moeletsi Mbeki, often describes the elite groups as, respectively, capitalists and farmers between 1910 and 1994, and a small number of beneficiaries of so-called black economic empowerment since 1994. See for example Mbeki (2009).
 18. Here I refer, respectively, to the student revolts of 1976 and 2015. It is interesting to note that while the catalyst for the 1976 student revolts was the NP government's insistence to use Afrikaans as medium of instruction in black schools, a secondary element of the Fallist movement of 2015 at some historically Afrikaans universities such as the University of Pretoria, Stellenbosch University, and the University of the Free State was resistance against Afrikaans as a medium of instruction, although none of these universities at the time used Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in such a way that non-Afrikaans-speaking students were excluded from academic instruction as a result of the offering of bilingual instruction in Afrikaans and English (Stellenbosch), parallel-medium instruction (Free State), or a mixture of English-only or parallel-medium instruction (Pretoria).
 19. Although the election of President Cyril Ramaphosa as the successor of former President Jacob Zuma was greeted with much jubilation by the financial markets and middle-class South Africans, the scale of corruption and political careerism in the ANC (pointed out in official ANC documents from around the mid-2000s onwards), Ramaphosa's slim majority in the ANC, severely weakened key state institutions and various other challenges still face Ramaphosa, the ANC and South Africa. In fact, if the historical parallels between the NP and the ANC tell us anything, it may well be that the reformist Ramaphosa, just like the last NP president of South Africa, the reformist F W de Klerk, oversees the final demise of a once great party that has lost its ideological legitimacy and its *raison d'être*.
 20. I should immediately add two qualifications to this statement. First, as has often been pointed out in public debate of the 2015 student revolts the term decolonisation for at least some of these student leaders seemed to involve a binary logic whereby one (white-dominant) structure has to be replaced by another (black-dominant) structure, so that, at least as student leaders of this persuasion are concerned their contribution to exposing the enduring colonial nature of South African society is perhaps rather inadvertent. Second, although one should perhaps not read too much into this, it is interesting to note that the 2015 student revolts started at three universities founded during and originally very much associated with the official period of British colonialism in South Africa, that is, the University of Cape Town (UCT), Rhodes University and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). In an insightful article that the American journalist and South African expert, Eve Fairbanks (2015) published in *The Guardian*, she cites the student activist, Kgotsi Chikane at UCT: "In his macroeconomics class, his

- white teacher seemed to baby him. He would ask Chikane a simple question and then bore his eyes into him, ‘like, ‘Mmm, I don't think you'll understand'. When I actually got a good mark, he was shocked. He said, ‘I wasn't expecting that!’” That made Chikane angry. “I thought, ‘You don't know me from a bar of soap’”.
21. Highly ambiguous in the sense that the Afrikaner-nationalists of the NP both competed with and sought the recognition of its former British rulers, reminiscent of Hegel's famous analysis of the master-slave dialectic (Hegel 1977: 111-18), Fanon's (1952) transposition of Hegel's analysis to post-colonial Africa, and to an extent René Girard's (1982) analysis of mimetic desire in modernity.
 22. Arguably South Africa's greatest economic historian, Sampie Terreblanche, who was a ferocious critic of the model of racial capitalism set up by the British and maintained by the NP, writes: “A very high rate of economic growth was maintained in the 1950s and 1960s ... Apartheid undoubtedly reached its zenith in the early 1970s. The concentration of economic and bureaucratic power in the hands of Afrikaners in this period played a decisive role in the embourgeoisement of Afrikaners ...” (Terreblanche 2002: 304). He continues to point out that this had a lot to do with the fact that the “white hegemonic order and its repressive labour system created lucrative opportunities for foreign investors, and South Africa enjoyed a large influx of foreign investment during this period”. (*op cit*, endnote 6, 354).
 23. See for example Patrick Bond's (2005) analysis of how the post-*apartheid* South African political order of 1994 was the result of what he calls an elite pact between white capital, the NP and the ANC. In addition to this Moeletsi Mbeki has often pointed to the fact that the roots of so-called black economic empowerment can be traced back to work that was done by the white-financed Urban Foundation in the late 1970s.
 24. The most recent example of this was the Gupta-Zuma patronage network's use of the highly problematic notion of white-monopoly capital, which turned out to be the creation of a notorious British public relations firm, Bell-Pottinger, which had to close its doors partly because regulatory British institutions found it guilty of malicious conduct in the South African context.
 25. This and the system of migration labour has its origins in the infamous Glenn Grey Act of 1894. For a discussion of this Act and its fateful consequences for South Africa see Giliomee (2003: 290-93; 303; 304).
 26. The history of the development of South Africa's transport and communications networks is seriously under-researched, all the more so if one considers the role of transport and communication networks in social orders. Régis Debray (1996), founder of the field of mediology, that is, the study of cultural transmission, did pioneering work in this regard, for example in showing how late 18th century French transport and communication networks were pivotal in the successful spread of the ideas that led to the popular uprising of the French Revolution. In the case of South Africa areas of white settlement and industrial production were connected first with the development of the network of railroads from the discovery of gold and diamonds in the 1870s to the first decade of the 20th century, with the British imperialist, Lord Alfred Milner completing the main railroads that were to connect areas of white settlement and in-

dustrial production. In his exceptional and largely unknown seminal work Floor (1985) describes the development of the South African national road network between the 1930s and the 1980s. Floor describes how in the late 1950s, following on intense study of the American road network by three successive chief engineers of the Department of Transport the latter of the three, De Villiers, who Floor rates as the most influential figure in the development of South Africa's road network, convinced the NP to move the lion's share of its transport budget to the development of a system of urban bypasses against the background of South Africa's ever-increasing urbanisation. This played a key role not only in making South Africa's main metropolitan centres (Pretoria-Johannesburg, Durban, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town) the main sites of socio-political changes, but also in facilitating political centralism by both the NP and the ANC — it is far easier to centrally control your voters if they are concentrated in easily accessible urban settings.

27. Responding to an email query by myself one of South Africa's leading language sociologists and language planners, Professor Theodorus du Plessis, Director of the Unit for Language Facilitation and Empowerment of the University of the Free State, confirmed this to be correct, with Afrikaans in South Africa and Somalia being the two exceptions (see Mazrui and Mazrui 1998). In his T B Davie Memorial Lecture at UCT the leading African post-colonial thinker, Mahmood Mamdani makes a similar point about Afrikaans: "It is no exaggeration to say that Afrikaans represents the most successful decolonising initiative on the African continent" (Mamdani 2017, see roughly from 57.00 till 1.00 of the video recording).
28. It is of course controversial to refer to the period after 1948 in South Africa as that of a post-colonial aftermath — especially in the light of the not altogether misplaced description by the anti-*apartheid* movement of *apartheid* as a colonialism of a special type, meaning broadly that a section of the formerly colonially oppressed population on achieving state power went on to suppress other sections of the formerly colonially oppressed population of the same country. My contention here is that notwithstanding the distinctively racist nature of *apartheid*, the Afrikaners in the run-up to 1948 contributed to a pattern that was repeated all over post-colonial Africa, whereby the successful anti-colonial liberators went on to maintain colonial patterns of ownership and government largely through not reforming the structure of the colonial state and economy that they took over from the former colonial power. See for example Katangole's classic analysis of this phenomenon (Katangole).
29. From the left the most serious resistance was one of ideas centering on the immorality of *apartheid* that had a huge effect on the Afrikaner intelligentsia and youth between roughly 1975 and 1990 through the work of writers such as Karel Schoeman (1989 and 2015), Breyten Breytenbach (for example Breytenbach 1985), Elsa Joubert (for example Joubert 1978), as well as the music of the Voëvry-movement and its famous musicians such as Johannes Kerkorrel and Koos Kombuis between roughly 1985 and 1990. From the left the most serious resistance was one playing on fears of Afrikaner survival in a black majority-ruled South Africa in the form of the Conservative Party, which drew its highest ever support in the 1989 general elections and did so well in a by-election in Potchefstroom in 1992 that then president F W de Klerk saw fit to call the so-called last

- white referendum to seek majority support for the NP's negotiations with the ANC and other parties for a post-*apartheid* political dispensation.
30. Two examples may be mentioned here. First, although the policy of parallel-medium instruction was adopted at the University of the Free State in 1993 specifically to facilitate the enrolment of black students who prefer studying in English rather than Afrikaans, and was probably the main reason why the UFS by 2015 had more than 65 per cent black student enrolment and had thus become the historically (mostly white) Afrikaans university with the highest black student enrolment, during the review of the UFS language policy the main arguments against the parallel-medium system was that it led to 'segregation' in the classes due to the fact that the Afrikaans classes were predominantly attended by white students, and the English classes by black students. The seemingly widely accepted view that racial integration happens to a far greater extent outside the classroom in tutorials, group practical sessions, residences and cultural and sports activities on campus made no impression on the small but vocal mostly black-nationalist minority in opposition to parallel-medium instruction, as I observed first-hand in my capacity as a member of the *ad hoc* core language policy review committee of the UFS. Second, under the stewardship of the then vice-chancellor of the Northwest University, Dr Theuns Eloff, a pioneering programme of simultaneous translation of Afrikaans lectures into English and Setswana was introduced on the main historically mostly white, mostly Afrikaans Potchefstroom campus, specifically to enable black, non-Afrikaans students to gain access to the Potchefstroom campus. In spite of regular favourable student responses to the system, yet again a small black-nationalist minority claimed from 2015 that the simultaneous interpretation system forces them to undergo a second-hand teaching experience and somehow excludes them. In March 2018 a new concept language policy envisioning that the Northwest University (NWU) must become completely English by 2022 saw the light.
 31. This happened on Thursday 25 February 2016, during a week of campus protests and closure following an incident during a Varsity Cup rugby match during which mostly black protesters had disrupted the match and were later chased off the field by mostly white spectators.
 32. Giliomee (2016) discusses this issue at length in his autobiography. See also Grundlingh's (2008) historical account of how Afrikaners started adopting consumerist and materialist values from the 1960s onwards, miming their former British colonial masters.
 33. It is something of a tragi-comedy that the historically Afrikaans universities tried to make up for their relative isolation and looking inward during *apartheid* by embracing 'internationalization', which in effect means to try to outdo Anglo-American universities in the South African context, for example calling Stellenbosch University the 'Oxford' of South Africa, and only serves to confirm how parochial the management of these universities are when they equate the international with the Anglo-American segment of global higher education. A steady stream of books and essays in the *New York Review of Books* and the *London Review of Books* bemoan what has gone wrong in Anglo-American higher education, but by the looks of how management of historically Afrikaans universities are reproducing all the policies and procedures that failed in

- Anglo-American higher education it would seem that they are not even aware of what they are miming.
34. In a further tragi-comic twist no black nationalist student would admit that only 40 per cent of Afrikaans first-language speakers are white, while those white Afrikaans first-language speakers who did point this out were often accused of misusing Afrikaans first-language speakers of other colours for their own secret white agenda.
 35. I refer to systemic efforts by university management at the universities of Pretoria, the Free State, Stellenbosch, South Africa and, lately, Northwest University to phase out Afrikaans as a language of teaching, learning, research and administration. It is often claimed by apologists of this process that Afrikaans as a language will continue to exist, all the while comfortably overlooking that the real issue is the future of Afrikaans as an academic language — and that no language can maintain its so-called higher functions without institutions of higher education.
 36. I have already above given references in this regard for Mamdani and waThiongo; for Mbembe see Mbembe (2015). The latter text was delivered as a lecture at the universities of the Witwatersrand, Cape Town and Stellenbosch, the latter early in 2015, and I cite an unpublished version of the text here as I received it from Dr Desmond Painter of Stellenbosch University who attended the delivery of the lecture there.

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