

AFRICANISATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN LIBRARIES: A RESPONSE TO SOME RECENT LITERATURE

P J Lor
The State Library
P O Box 397
0001 Pretoria
South Africa

Introduction

I was taught in library school that an abstract is supposed to be "a précis of information" (Ashworth 1967:457) contained in an article, conference paper or report. The information science literature distinguishes two main types of abstracts, indicative and informative. There is a third and lesser known type of abstract, which I shall call an immaterial abstract because it is a précis of something that does not yet exist, that one hopes will materialise, but that may not. The abstract produced when an author makes a proposal for a conference paper is frequently of this type. All this is to warn you that the abstract of this paper that has been published in the programme of this conference is an immaterial abstract. It is a précis of a paper that has failed to materialise, at least in the form that I had intended.

In the course of my reading since I wrote the abstract I discovered that lately not all that much has been written explicitly about the "africanisation" of South Africa's libraries - at least not under the label of "africanisation". A great deal has been written recently about adapting South Africa's libraries to the changes that we hope will take place here; many of these contributions contain quite concrete proposals about what we should do - but the word "africanisation" does not feature in their titles.

The last sentence of the abstract as reproduced in the conference booklet reads as follows:

An attempt is made to explicate some assumptions underlying the call for africanisation and to raise some questions about the essential characteristics of the library as an institution, the universality of library functions in different types of libraries, and the adaptability of libraries to African and multicultural environments.

I put it to you that it is not bad for its genre - it is the sort of sentence one writes when one puts together a proposal for a conference

paper without quite knowing where it will lead one. My reading since then has brought me to the conclusion that I do not have the philosophical, political and economic background, or the time required for reading and reflection, to allow me to pontificate in this way about libraries and africanisation.

So please take out your pens and draw two parallel lines across the abstract. Between the two lines write the word "bullshit" or its equivalent. I request you to consider the abstract as cancelled. Allow me to start again, more humbly this time, with a slight change of title: "Africanisation of South African libraries: a *response to some recent literature*".

I shall as promised look briefly at some suggestions and proposals made in recent literature - not only library literature but non-library literature as well - but I do not intend to present a systematic overview of the scope of africanisation in respect of library users, staffing, collections, etc. This has already been done quite successfully in the literature. There is no need for me to rehash it.

Instead, I should like to use this opportunity to explore what "africanisation" can mean in the context of South Africa's libraries. I shall try to come closer to an understanding of why the notion of "africanisation" is found worrying or threatening by many of us, so that we tend to respond to it with a defensive "yes, but" sort of response. In this paper I shall try to find some reasons for this, and to consider the implications of africanisation for South African librarianship.

Current South African writings on africanisation in fields other than Librarianship

A literature search going back to 1987 in the *ISAP (Index to South African periodicals)* database, undertaken at the beginning of this year yielded a total of eleven references to periodical articles to which the keyword "africanisation" had been allocated. In three cases this word also appeared in the title of the article. The disciplines represented were:

Business economics:	1
Pedagogics:	1
Linguistics (Afrikaans language policy):	1
Religion:	1
Higher education (universities):	7

No articles on africanisation in the context of librarianship or information work were retrieved.

I shall briefly discuss the articles with a view to determining what the writers understand by africanisation. In this section I shall deal only with the first four articles.

The business economics article appeared in the journal of the Institute for Personnel Management and is mainly concerned with "manpower development, particularly in relation to the Black population group" (Wajsman 1987:4). The author seeks to promote an attitude of "South Africanisation", which she defines to mean

the growing together of the various cultures to form a South African culture in a South African industrial scene (p.4).

The article is mainly concerned with describing a "cultural analysis instrument" which can be used to describe a culture in terms of certain dimensions of importance to industrialists. It enables the management of a company to "gain a deeper understanding of the different cultural values, beliefs and expectations of all the different population groups represented in the organisation" (p.5).

The pedagogics article is based on the inaugural lecture of a professor of "Fundamental Pedagogics". This is a rather impenetrable discipline which uses a vocabulary not many other people can understand. I'm not sure why this article was indexed under "africanisation" because it is only referred to in a brief passage (Van Rensburg 1987:24). The only thing that is clear is that the professor does not like africanisation.

The Afrikaans language policy article is written by another writer of the same surname (Van Rensburg 1991), who by contrast is very positive about africanisation. He proposes africanising the Afrikaans language, which he feels has in its standardised written form become sanitised and bloodless as well as a symbol of repression and disempowerment. He proposes a new standard Afrikaans that will encompass elements from non-standard varieties (such as the Cape Afrikaans spoken mainly by the so-called Coloured people). In this way Afrikaans will be enriched and more Afrikaans speakers will be able to identify with their language. He presents such an approach as a contribution to liberation and nation building.

The religious article is by Father Jose Goncalves (1987) of the Nampula diocese in Mozambique who describes how Mozambiquan Christians responded to poverty, enmity and harassment by forming small ministering communities. The decolonisation and africanisation of the Catholic Church is described positively as a renewal and a rebirth:

Mocambicans [sic] in the dialectic process of incarnation in

their concrete world, have recreated their church out of the old seed brought by the missionaries. And these missionaries were also reborn in the process (Goncalves 1987:88).

Current South African writings on africanisation in higher education

As I indicated earlier, seven of the eleven articles we found when searching *ISAP*, dealt with africanisation in the context of higher education - specifically in the university context.

Historical insight is provided by Burchell (1988) who describes the political thinking of the authorities of the University College of Fort Hare until 1960, the year in which the college was taken over by the government. He shows that, contrary to general belief, the college during this period was only a partially open and liberal institution. Although the founders of the college had envisaged an innovative curriculum, innovation was stifled by various factors. Although pioneers such as Z.K. Matthews looked forward to the africanisation of Fort Hare, Burchell states that

The early generations of students largely accepted their Eurocentric and rather elitist education, despite its shortcomings. They were similar to Africans elsewhere who wanted a replica of a European university. ... The clamour was for curriculum identity with European students. Any adaptation of the curriculum to African needs were seen as concessions that would lead to a softening of standards. (Burchell 1988:52)

Two of the articles are concerned with the africanisation of the curriculum. Lambert (1989) ponders the future of the Classics (Latin and Greek) in South African universities, defends their educational value and relevance to Africa today, and proposes to africanise the Classics by contextualising them. Greece and Rome should not be idealised. Military coups, riots, murder and arson, grinding poverty and slavery also occurred there. The study of the Classics can help to free the student from "the tyranny of nationalism and ethno-centre [sic] thinking" (Lambert 1989:21).

Suzman and Herbert (1991) are concerned with the africanisation of the curriculum in (general) linguistics. They present a brief but lucid overview of the various meanings of africanisation and outline various forms that africanisation of the curriculum has taken. Some disciplines (e.g. physics) tend to resist africanisation. In others (e.g. botany and zoology) locally occurring organisms can replace those dealt with in northern hemisphere texts. In social sciences disciplines new courses in African history, geography, political systems etc. can be introduced.

The rationale for such adaptation is well stated and worth considering by librarians:

One of our goals must be to provide students with a greater understanding and appreciation of their own society and cultures, Liberal education should enhance rather than remove a sense of connectedness between the student and the environment: higher education should be neither foreign nor alienating. In this way, the university draws on the society and also serves society by producing graduates who are fully integrated and thus better equipped to participate in future development, be it political, moral, economic, social, or other. (Suzman & Herbert 1991:22)

In 1988 two articles appeared in *Leadership SA* on the future of South Africa's universities. Duncan Innes (1988) discussed a survey on perceptions of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Organisations interested in educational matters in South Africa's disadvantaged communities were surveyed. Matters such as access to Wits (including the vexed questions of non-discriminatory entrance requirements and academic support programmes), the curriculum, and the governance of the university, were highlighted. The article also addresses the impact of proposed changes on academic standards and academic freedom. The second article in the same issue of *Leadership SA* (Smuts, 1988) expresses concern about academic freedom in the light of proposals for africanisation. In this article there are hostile references to proposals made earlier that year by Natal academic James Moulder.

The article by Moulder (1988) is the most thought-provoking of those uncovered. It was a deliberate attempt to provoke controversy and it succeeded. He starts off by stating that "the idea of 'Africanising' our universities is an absurd idea" (Moulder 1988:2). The idea of anglicising Oxford or americanising Harvard makes no sense. But paradoxically, the idea of africanising South African universities does make sense. The absurdity lies in the fundamental injustices of South African society which render africanisation a sensible approach. Moulder outlines four dimensions of africanisation. They concern (1) the composition of the student body and the academic and administrative staff; (2) the syllabus or "content of what is taught" (p.5); (3) the curriculum or "the whole way in which teaching and learning is organised" (p.5); and (4) the criteria for determining excellence in a research programme (it lies not so much in what is researched as in how it is done - p.6).

Having demonstrated that africanisation will require thorough-going change in the universities, Moulder proposes that a paradigm shift, with a concomitant radical revision or even reversal of assumptions, is required. He ends his article by listing ten "provocative statements",

most of which in effect turn accepted assumptions on their heads. I shall return to them a little later.

The final article retrieved in the *ISAP* search concerns freedom of speech and academic freedom in South African universities (Benatar 1991). In a brief section on africanisation, Benatar discusses the demand that universities should be relevant to national developmental needs, addressing "themselves to specific sectional or regional requirements and realities (Benatar 1991:6). Such a "particularistic" stance is in conflict with the university's essential "universalism" which requires a certain measure of university autonomy and academic freedom.

To conclude this section I should mention a publication by the University of Cape Town's Centre for Africa Studies entitled *Rethinking UCT*. It contains an important paper by Goosen and Hall (1989) on "Africanisation and the University of Cape Town". This paper has a useful chapter on the origins and development of the concept of africanisation from the early years of this century until the 1960s, relating this to the context of decolonisation, the search for national identity and the theory of modernisation (Goosen & Hall 1989:5-13). At the end of this chapter they identify the key elements of africanisation as:

a belief that universities should be of, and for, Africa, that there should be an African academic community, that curricula should be changed to reflect the needs of Africa, and that universities should be committed to the needs of the community and the nation. (Goosen & Hall 1989:13)

After an in depth analysis of the situation at UCT, they return to the further development of the concept of africanisation in the 1970s, a period during which some disillusionment with modernisation theory set in. It was becoming clear that simply providing more education would not guarantee political and economic progress. Similarly, simply replacing white faces with black faces would not be an adequate response on the part of UCT. What is required is thorough democratisation of the university's management (Goosen & Hall 1989:81-85).

Some dimensions of africanisation: insights from the literature

If one analyses the articles reviewed above, the following dimensions of the concept of africanisation can be brought to the surface. I have tried to arrange them more or less in order of increasing abstraction:

Adaptation: Africanisation is concerned with adaptation to the African environment; in a crude sense it is concerned with making things work in Africa, with getting things done (managing) in Africa.

Opportunity: Africanisation is concerned with opportunities for Africans. In a crude sense it is concerned with the relative number of Africans that have access to and are employed in institutions in Africa.

Governance: Africanisation is concerned with decision-making and management by Africans; with control by Africans of their own destiny.

Benefits: Africanisation demands that the benefits of investment, whether of labour, capital or other resources, accrue to Africans. It therefore demands that its institutions be relevant to the aspirations of Africans and must have utility for them.

Afro-centredness: Africanisation is concerned with the centrality of Africa. It demands primary attention, rather than relegation to the periphery, for African phenomena, whether they be natural or cultural, and the African context. This is reflected, for example, in the indigenisation of the curricula of African educational institutions.

Empowerment: Africanisation is concerned with the empowerment of Africans, with liberation from dependency, and with the nurture of African self-worth, self-confidence, self-reliance and creativity.

Community values: Africanisation is concerned with African community values and nation-building. Africanisation is also egalitarian (anti-elitist) and inclusive.

Spiritual: Africanisation is concerned with an enormously rich heritage, with renewal and rebirth.

I must stress that this list is derived inductively from an examination of the literature I have cited. It is not exhaustive.

Challenges of africanisation

Clearly the dimensions that I have just outlined are in themselves unobjectionable. Nevertheless there is evidence that the movement towards africanisation elicits some concern and resistance, if only of the "yes, but" variety. Somewhat simplistically one could explain this by saying that the agenda of africanisation enters into conflict with the eurocentric values of Africa's colonial heritage. Such an explanation does not ease the discomfort.

It is probably no coincidence that my *ISAP* search retrieved many more articles dealing with africanisation in the university context. Why this debate about africanisation in the universities? For one thing, univer-

sities are large and costly institutions which require an enormous investment. For another, they are characterised by a particular ethos which has come a long way and with which all academics are indoctrinated. Both the investment and the ethos may be perceived to come under threat. In addition, universities are staffed by people who are concerned about the preconditions of academic work and who are used to reflecting on and debating the nature of their work.

The literature I have cited indicates that africanisation can be perceived by academics as a threat to cherished values relating to academic standards, universalism, university autonomy and academic freedom. As indicated by Moulder (1988) africanisation requires a new paradigm, and a paradigm shift is a painful experience.

In South Africa the paradigm shift required by africanisation is likely to be a more painful experience than elsewhere, if only because South Africa has a long colonial history, a substantial minority population of European descent and a large number of eurocentric institutions which were left unchallenged until very recently.

Possible implications of a paradigm shift

To explore the challenge of africanisation in the South African library and information context a little further, I shall now cite the ten provocative statements put forward by Moulder (1988) and try to translate them into terms applicable to librarianship and information work. Obviously Professor Moulder cannot be held responsible for this adaptation of his ideas. On the other hand, I do not lay claim to any originality, as I shall be applying insights gleaned from many South African colleagues who have addressed the question of how our libraries should be transformed. They include Cuthbertson (1992), Daniels (1992), Fairer-Wessels (1990), Karelse (1991), Manaka (1982), Nassimbeni (1986; 1991), Shillinglaw (1990), Stadler (1991), Stilwell (1991), Suttie (1990), Tsebe (1985), Van Zijl (1987), Vermeulen (1989) and Zaaïman, Roux and Rykheer (1988). Among writers further afield I would single out Havard-Williams and Marco (1991) and Mchombu and Miti (1992). Needless to say, my participation in the process that gave rise to the NEPI report *Library & information services* (1992) greatly influenced my thinking on this topic.

- (1) "A new paradigm for our universities will assume that South Africa is essentially a Third World country with some complicated pockets of First World privilege" (p.10).

In this sentence I replace "universities" with "libraries", so that it reads:

A new paradigm for our libraries will assume that South Africa is essentially a Third World country with some complicated pockets of First World privilege.

The usual way we librarians have tended to look at our library and information system is from the opposite perspective: that of a First World system which unfortunately is not reaching some complicated pockets of Third World poverty. The assumption is then that all we have to do is to extend the system so that the "Third World" people can also benefit from the system, and basically all we need to accomplish this is much more money.

If we accept the rephrased statement the implication is that the rural and urban poor, the non-expert, the illiterates, and the children (those in society who are relatively powerless) should be targeted first. They should not have to wait until after library provision to other groups has reached saturation point. This has immense implications for *inter alia* the deployment of resources, the training of library workers, the range of activities carried out in libraries, and the selection of library materials.

- (2) "A new paradigm for our universities will not confuse the difference between standards and levels of education" (p.11). This is not easy to grasp unless a comparison is employed: for example, a South African school leaving certificate marking the twelfth level of the educational system (i.e. achieved after twelve years of schooling) might measure up only to the ninth level of schooling in another, more developed country. Moulder's argument is that this does not mean that there is anything wrong with the standard of the South African system. It is merely operating at a lower level. Academics have found this point hard to swallow (cf. Smuts 1988: 60).

In this statement I replace the words "universities" and "education" with "libraries" and "service" respectively, so that it reads:

A new paradigm for our libraries will not confuse the difference between standards and levels of service".

The implication for the provision of library and information services is that it should be possible to maintain a good standard of service even if levels of bookstock provision, staff qualifications etc. are not comparable to those obtaining in wealthier countries. In practical terms this might mean that the people who select the books that are placed in community libraries should be prepared to purchase useful "home-made" books (for example readers for neo-

literates and materials in vernacular languages that have been produced using desk-top publishing technology and not published on glossy paper with stout library bindings). It might also mean the employment of appropriately trained community librarians without formal post-secondary qualifications.

Standards should thus be measured in terms of the levels of provision aimed at. Admittedly this principle may be easier to accept in the case of international comparisons than when systems or institutions within the same country are compared. In South Africa, for historical reasons, there is strong pressure for equality of provision in order to redress past injustice.

- (3) "A new paradigm for our universities will accept that they are trying to operate at too high a level; and therefore that they will have to lower this level without ceasing to strive after excellence" (p.12).

I replace the word "universities" with "libraries" so that the statement reads:

A new paradigm for our libraries will accept that they are trying to operate at too high a level; and therefore that they will have to lower this level without ceasing to strive after excellence."

This follows logically from the preceding statement. An implication is that the skill, dignity and job satisfaction of a library worker serving a village community can be just as great and are just as important as those of information workers serving sophisticated users in a research library.

- (4) "A new paradigm for our universities will take it as self-evident that they should give a much higher priority to being excellent at teaching than to being excellent at research" (p.12).

This could be rephrased in more than one way. For example:

A new paradigm for our libraries will take it as self-evident that they should give a much higher priority to being excellent at communication than to being excellent at organisation."

This implies revised priorities: for example the priority of user services over technical processes or collection size.

- (5) "A new paradigm for our universities will not include the idea of academic support programmes" (p.12). Academic support programmes have been instituted to provide special tuition for students whose

schooling has not adequately prepared them for university. Such programmes tend to segregate such students by taking them out of the academic mainstream. Moulder makes the point that lecturers are appointed to teach and must accept responsibility for teaching all who are admitted to the university.

This is quite difficult to "translate" into library and information terms. It certainly has implications for librarians working in academic libraries. But looking at this statement more broadly, in our field an appropriate parallel might be the acceptance of non-literate persons as fully-fledged users of libraries:

A new paradigm for our libraries will not discriminate against users on the basis of literacy.

Another parallel would be the paradigm shift involved in conceptualising the community as a source of information and knowledge, not just as a recipient.

- (6) "A new paradigm for our universities will insist that academics try to implement their research findings" (p.12).

This is also difficult to "translate" into library and information terms. The direction to follow becomes clearer if we bear in mind that many academics consider their task completed when a research project is written up and published. Understanding and explaining are ranked high in the academic's scale of values; implementation ranks low. In our field one appropriate parallel might be the acceptance by librarians of the roles of producers or publishers of literature. Thus the statement can be rephrased as follows:

A new paradigm for our libraries will insist that librarians try to contribute to the production of reading matter and other information bearing materials.

The following is another possibility that would be perceived as even more antithetical to the librarian's traditional value hierarchy:

A new paradigm for our libraries will insist that librarians commit themselves to the aspirations and values of the communities they serve.

Involvement and commitment on the part of the librarian to the extent of providing advice, counselling and advocacy run counter to the tradition of providing facts, not interpretations, and to the tenet of neutrality.

- (7) "A new paradigm for our universities will wrestle with at least two questions that some people may find strange" (p.13). The questions concern the vocational or career utility of all degree programmes and the use of the universities' facilities throughout the day and throughout the year.

A possible parallel in the field of librarianship:

A new paradigm for our libraries will accept that the public library system should primarily be geared towards supporting the educational and related needs of the poorer communities.

This implies that public funds should be spent on provision for the historically disadvantaged communities rather than on essentially recreational facilities for affluent suburbanites who can afford to buy their own books.

Another possible parallel:

A new paradigm for our libraries will accept that all the country's publicly funded libraries, regardless of institutional affiliation or autonomy, form an integral part of a library system serving all South Africans.

An implication would be that resource sharing by the relatively affluent library and information sector (for example the libraries of universities and parastatal research institutions) becomes an obligation rather than a favour.

- (8) "A new paradigm for our universities will accept that primary schooling has a higher claim on government and private sector funding than tertiary education has" (p.13).

I rephrase this as follows:

A new paradigm for our libraries will accept that community information resources have a higher claim on government and private sector funding than sophisticated information services have.

Translated into practice, this statement has important implications for our present library and information services system and our resource sharing capabilities, especially seeing that our university libraries provide the backbone of the national resource sharing system. Thus the demand for equality of provision which is articulated in this statement would have to be weighed against long-term and not immediately tangible benefits.

- (9) "A new paradigm for our universities will operate on a more sophisticated subsidy formula ... which recognises that it is not necessary to subsidise every student's university education to the same extent" (p.13).

I rephrase this as follows:

A new paradigm for our libraries will operate on a more sophisticated subsidy formula ... which recognises that it is not necessary to subsidise information services to every user to the same extent.

In library and information terms this suggests that we consider differential cost recovery for products and services on the basis of the client's ability to pay.

- (10) "A new paradigm for our universities will accept that they are not entitled to as much autonomy as Oxbridge and Ivy League universities are entitled to" (p.14). Moulder argues that everybody is entitled to a say in the future management of the universities.

This could be rephrased as follows:

A new paradigm for our librarians will accept that they are not entitled to as much autonomy as their professional pretensions call for.

This approach would also have implications for the future governance of libraries and for the cherished professional autonomy of the librarian, especially in respect of such matters as the selection of materials for inclusion in library collections.

The above applications of Moulder's statements by no means exhaust the possibilities. One can "translate" Moulder's statements into librarianship and information work terms in various other ways, many of them controversial or uncomfortable. This rather speculative attempt merely serves to indicate that the implications of a true paradigm shift are far-reaching: they would extend to almost every facet of our professional practice. In fact, the very concept of *professional* practice would have to be reviewed.

Are we making progress?

To what extent is the africanisation paradigm shift that Moulder proposes for universities also discernible in the South African literature of library and information work? I suggest that between the late

eighties and the present time our agenda has progressed from proposals concerned with adapting and extending services to proposals concerned with far more radical changes.

The progress is typified by the difference between two significant texts on the future of South African librarianship, the Zaaiman report (Zaaiman, Roux & Rykheer 1988) and the NEPI report *Library & information services* (1992).

It is hardly necessary to say that the Zaaiman report, *The use of libraries for the development of South Africa* is a significant report, which has played an important role in setting the agenda for library professionals within the ambit of the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (SAILIS). It was commissioned by SAILIS and presented in a preliminary version to the 1987 annual conference of SAILIS. It was published in the following year and was widely discussed within SAILIS.

In many ways it is clearly a much more progressive document than any of its predecessors. For the first time the multi-cultural nature of South African society was fully acknowledged in a major report intended to stimulate discussion and decision making on a future course for South Africa's libraries. For the first time, too, recognition was given to South Africa's Third World circumstances. The report was specifically concerned with the role of libraries in development, which was considered to have social, economic and political dimensions.

In my view the Zaaiman report remained firmly rooted in the assumptions underlying South African library practice - in the old paradigm. Nevertheless, one might say that it stretched the very boundaries of the old paradigm to the limit, in the process creating both an awareness of the need for change and a certain dissatisfaction that is very necessary for a paradigm shift.

The NEPI (National Education Policy Investigation) report, Library & information services (1992) is one of thirteen research reports emanating from NEPI, which was conducted by the the National Education Coordinating Committee (NECC) over approximately twenty months from December 1990 to August 1992. The object of this investigation, according to the Foreword by NEPI Executive Committee chairman Jakes Gerwell, was "to explore policy options in all areas of education within a value framework derived from the ideals of the broad democratic movement" (p.vii).

Perhaps one of the most important contributions of the NEPI report comes in the first chapter. On p.4-5 a distinction is made between the traditional "functionalist" approach to librarianship and the alternative "structuralist" approach. This is briefly related to current orienta-

tions of the dominant and alternative organisations of library workers in South Africa. The distinction is later amplified in Chapter 4. The oppositions delineated here are perhaps somewhat simplistic and superficial. Nevertheless, in the virtual absence until recently of any questioning of the notions of neutral libraries and value-free librarianship, and in view of the paucity in South Africa's mainstream LIS literature of serious debate about the philosophical assumptions underlying South African librarianship, the distinctions drawn here are important. Getting to grips with them may perhaps contribute more to our understanding of our current situation than volumes of survey findings.

I found that the NEPI report has many shortcomings. It is patchy in coverage, there are errors of fact and interpretation; a lot of it is too superficial and inconclusive. But I feel that this should not blind us to its importance. I have no doubt that the publication of this report is a milestone in the literature of South African librarianship and information work, to which it contributes:

- * a critical analysis of the implicit philosophy underlying current library practice;
- * an evaluative overview, from a vantage point outside the "traditional approach", of South African library and information services;
- * the placing of library and information issues firmly within the South African political context;
- * an illuminating juxtaposition of library and information services of all types, in the "informal" as well as the "formal" sectors;
- * the identification of key elements of policy that have to be addressed in planning the transformation of library and information services to serve a democratic, non-racial South Africa; and
- * a great deal of material that will stimulate discussion and debate.

The NEPI report in fact brings us closer than we have ever been to a paradigm shift in library and information work. And for that reason it is likely to be uncomfortable reading for many.

Conclusion

Until recently I would perhaps have ended this paper as follows:

We have a large corps of well-trained and experienced librarians and information workers. We also have a well-developed library and information infrastructure which can form the basis for a truly national library and information service. Let's not throw out the baby with the bath-water. Let us rather develop and extend the infrastructure so that

it can serve all South Africa's people.

I now realise that matters are not quite so simple. The recipe "more of the same, if possible better" will not work, if only because we will not be able to afford it. More fundamentally, the existing system of libraries and information agencies carries a great deal of ideological baggage of which many librarians are only dimly aware.

A paradigm shift is called for in South African librarianship and information work, and it is on its way. Paradigm shifts tend to be uncomfortable for those who experience them. Many South African librarians are going to find this out. But paradigm shifts are also exhilarating experiences! As we step onto the roller coaster of the changing South Africa, my message is: "Fasten your seat belts and enjoy the ride."

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