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## Contradictory transformations: observations on the intellectual dynamics of South African universities

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### Abstract

What sort of expectations of transformation of higher education have been aroused by liberation movements? Has the new South Africa fulfilled such expectations? This paper explores the promises and processes that have enveloped South African universities in recent decades. It focuses on the underlying assumptions shaping academic disciplines in the humanities, the debates contesting them and the social-political-economic movements encompassing them. It traces the impact of marxism, africanism, postmodernism and neoliberalism on the production of knowledge. It concludes that South African universities are caught up in a complex field forces where they are subject to conflicting pressures. The result is a state of contradictory transformations – one stemming from the politics of liberation and the other from the demands of the global market.

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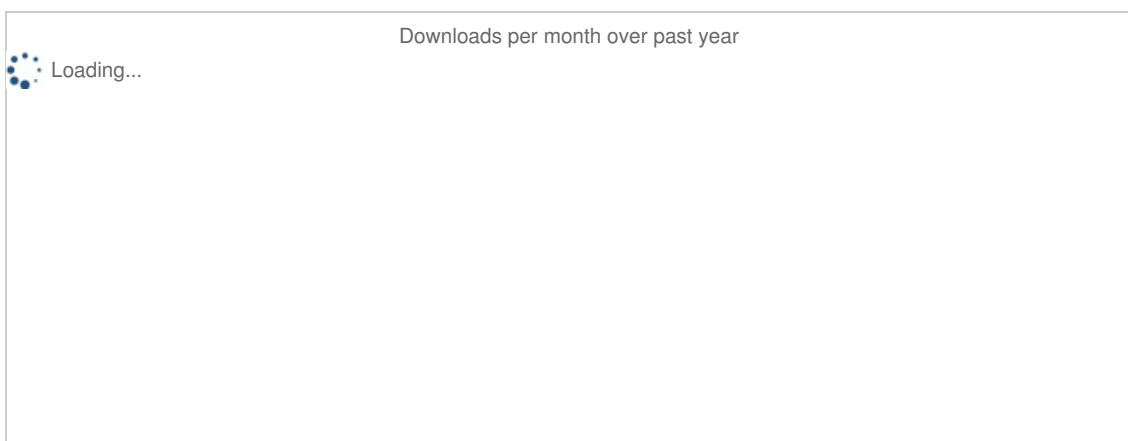
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