

THE NEW SPIL LOGO: A FACE FOR THE FUTURE

The first issue in the **SPIL** series, to which **SPIL PLUS** is a supplement, was published in 1978, a decade ago exactly. Now, ten years on, **SPIL** more than just survives: it reaches a readership in more than twenty countries around the globe.

The occasion, we feel, calls for something special. So, we have decided to take the opportunity to affirm our determination that the future will continue to see **SPIL** and linguistics thriving at Stellenbosch, even though the outlook for our country at present seems bleak. To give graphic expression to our commitment, we have adopted a logo for **SPIL**. The logo made its first appearance on the cover of a special anniversary issue of **SPIL**; in future, it will feature on all issues of **SPIL** and **SPIL PLUS**.

The logo depicts Simon van der Stel, Dutch governor of the Cape of Good Hope from 1679 to 1699. The representation we have chosen for our logo is based on a photograph of the only portrait of Van der Stel that is considered authentic by professional Dutch iconographers. It is a portrait that has been surrounded by controversy because of its graphic portrayal of Van der Stel's unmistakably creole features. For an account of this controversy and of the portrait's history more generally, the reader is referred to the article specially written for **SPIL** by Jan Baptist Bedaux.

We have chosen to portray Van der Stel in our logo for reasons of symbolism that relate to his historical significance, his intellectual qualities, and his creole descent.

Firstly, there is the fact, of particular historical significance to us, that Simon van der Stel was the founder of Stellenbosch. The fact is significant not only because of our association with this town, which today prides itself

on its scenic beauty, on its splendid examples of Cape Dutch architecture, on its university, on its fine wines. The founding of Stellenbosch is of singular significance within the wider context of Southern African history as well. It was a deliberate initiative towards establishing the permanency of the young Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. The initiative, moreover, was Van der Stel's own, taken within the first month of his administration. In taking it, he set about creating a future in which the settlement would be more than just a victualling station along the trade route to the East.

Secondly, Van der Stel's biographers have depicted him as a man endowed with special intellectual qualities. He was interested in chemistry; he engaged in agricultural and viticultural experiments; he seems to have read Spinoza in the original Latin. Certainly, he impressed many visitors to the Cape by his erudition as a conversationalist. And, in general, he set great store by the ideal of clear, factual thinking, an ideal that exercised a lifelong influence. In the second place, then, it is because we value intellectual qualities such as these that we have chosen to portray him in our logo.

Thirdly, the man who had so large a hand in setting the course of future developments in South Africa was of mixed Dutch and Indian descent. This biological fact invests the subject of our logo with a further symbolic significance. To us, Van der Stel's "creoleness" is a symbol of the melting-pot from which emerged the South Africa of the 18th century. The same kind of melting-pot also produced a new language, Afrikaans. Like Simon van der Stel, Afrikaans has some features that are distinctly creole. It is through this language that we, in common with millions of other speakers, have a special bond both with Europe and with Africa.

But Simon van der Stel is more than a symbol of the past.

He also symbolizes the kind of future that we envisage for our country: a future unmarred by the racist divide that infects our society today. Our linking of Van der Stel's image to SPIL is intended to reflect our commitment to such a future. We are happy to note that this commitment is reflected, too, in the policy of our university, quoted below:

We reject outright all discrimination on the grounds of race, colour or creed and see ourselves as committed, unequivocally, to the dismantling of apartheid and to achieving inclusive democracy and equal opportunity for all in this fair country.

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Cecile le Roux
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Walter Winckler

Editors of SPIL 17 [in which the article
by Bedaux was first published]