Diverging on diversity and difference: The mask of inclusion

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In this paper we argue that the clichéd phrases, 'dealing with difference' and 'dealing with diversity', despite their commitment to accepting and appreciating difference and diversity, may be used in counterproductive ways to camouflage resistance to change and transformation. In a small sample of interviews conducted at a South African university, the appropriation of these phrases for the purpose of practicing sameness was apparent. While pointing to the possibilities of asserting diversity and difference and simultaneously practicing sameness, the paper also proposes the possibilities for the acknowledgement and embracing of the ambivalence toward diversity and difference as valuable opportunities for transformation.

Keywords: diversity, difference, transformation, higher education institutions, inclusion

Introduction

Despite their overuse, the clichéd phrases, 'dealing with difference' and 'dealing with diversity', carry a sense of the value and appreciation of difference and diversity. As we understand them these phrases suggest a commitment to accepting and appreciating difference and diversity and their contributions to the complex fabric of social institutions. However, in a series of interviews conducted at a South African university, the appropriation of these phrases for the purpose of practicing sameness was apparent. This paper points to the possibilities of asserting diversity and difference while practicing sameness. We argue that using the language of inclusion can effectively serve to exclude.

Background and methodology

The data used in this paper is part of a larger study on institutional cultures conducted in five South African universities.[1] The larger study identified three central research aims. The first was to develop a reliable and meaningful measure of institutional cultural change; the second was to measure the nature, degree and pace of institutional cultural change in response to the changing policy environment and the third was to explain the institutional culture change in relation to both intra- and extra-institutional politics in South Africa. This paper focuses on data collected with the third research aim in mind. The research team had agreed on the following visible elements and symbols as indicative of changes in institutional culture and internal and external politics at the institution: the music and organisation of university choirs, buildings, architecture and physical symbols of the institution; how is communal space used and organized; the language policy of the institution; the religious practices of the institution and the planning and organisation of residence life. The data we use here is drawn from responses to the issues identified above and relates to one of the five universities, henceforth referred to as Sonneblom University. Two core questions were identified to gather the data required for the third research aim described above. These were:

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1   Permission to use this data was obtained from the project leader.

- What does your university concretely do in order to accommodate the growing diversity within the "institutional culture" (that is, diversity of students and staff) of the institution?
- How is the institutional culture of your university reflected in the various cultural and sports activities of the university?

For the larger study, three deans, two advisors to the principal, the director of marketing, an executive member of the council, the president of the SRC and two other identifiable student leaders were interviewed. Data from interviews conducted with two student leaders, three management staff and one member of the university council are included in this paper. Data from the other interviewees did not directly relate to the core research questions identified in this paper. Purposive sampling was used to select a white student leader on the student representative body (SRC) and a black student leader, a deputy chairperson of the house committee of the residence in which she lived. A student leader from the residence and from the SRC was selected as these structures were strongly involved with cultural and sports activities of the institution. One of the management leaders was at the time[2] the dean of students, one other was an advisor to the vice-chancellor and the third management member was a dean of a faculty. The sample in the study was also purposively racially diverse given that a central underpinning to the study was an effort to understand how universities responded to the new racially diverse context they have been in since 1994. While the sample used in this paper is small and no attempt is made to generalize these findings, we suggest that the data does point to at least one important issue with respect to Sonneblom University, namely that, irrespective of race, there is an ambivalence to change at the institution. While this is not unexpected or new, it does contradict the intuitive expectation that the black student or staff member seeks quick and dramatic change. The research also reinforces the point that changes in institutional culture cannot be legislated and that what students and staff say and do build the institutional culture of an institution.

For the purposes of this study 'institutional culture' was understood to be 'the way we do things here', and diversity refers to the racial and cultural diversity visible in the institution. This would include religious diversity. The term difference is used to encapsulate the cultural (including language and religion) and racial differences among students and how the interviewees perceive such differences.

Theoretical framework

In framing the arguments of this study, we make use of an expansion on Weiler's (2005) theory of ambivalence as it relates to explaining the often contradictory behaviour of universities. Weiler makes use of the construct of ambivalence in two ways. Firstly, it relates to the contradictory attitudes of a person or institution toward another person, institution, or object. Secondly, ambivalence as Weiler uses it speaks of uncertainty about the appropriate approach, attitude or treatment to follow in a particular case (2005:177). He makes several inter-related arguments about the ambivalent nature of universities and how that ambivalence helps to explain university behaviour in various areas, even when that behaviour seems perplexing and sometimes inexplicable. His concluding arguments are that "at its best, ambivalence in academia provides the very space for alternative answers without which the process of inquiry would remain a rather sterile affair. At its worst, ambivalence provides a comfortable excuse to avoid asking the hard questions and finding the hard answers" (2005:190).

Weiler provides no fewer than ten illustrations of how the ambivalence of a university is expressed. Included in those ten illustrations are "ambivalence about change" and "ambivalence about inclusion and exclusion". Although Weiler uses the German higher education system as his point of departure, these two areas of ambivalence are especially relevant and useful as a framework in which to explain and understand what was found at the South African university with regards to the issues of diversity and difference. In the South African context, the issues of change, inclusion, and exclusion are inevitably linked to the history and legacy of apartheid. Change in the South African case, and in the case of this study, is best expressed by talking about transformation from apartheid to democracy for the country and for higher education

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2   The interviews were conducted in the mid-2000s.

institutions. Therefore in this study, Weiler's "ambivalence about change" will be read as "ambivalence about transformation". We attempt to apply Weiler's use of ambivalence to the data collected from the described sample. In doing so, we examine illustrations of their ambivalence toward issues of diversity and difference.

Diversity and difference: common speak for them and us

The growing diversity within the university, in terms of race, gender, culture, language, religion, ethnicity and even age was simultaneously a source of pride among senior managers of the university and an arena that required specific focus with respect to the imperative to transform the institution. The very recognition of this diversity and its implications for the challenges that faced the university was seen as something to be proud of.

> *We understand that we should move to that direction of transforming the institution and making the institution relevant to the changing circumstances in South Africa and also throughout the world. That also, I think is something to be proud of (Dean X).*

The unavoidably obvious expression of such challenges was to increase the intake of black students. There was broad agreement among the management staff interviewed that Sonneblom University had made progress in this regard. However, the focus of this paper is not about the numerical successes the institution has had with respect to racial equity but the ways in which diversity and difference have been taken up and talked about by the interviewees.

The interview with the student, Willem, on the SRC revealed that the nuance that infiltrated the issue of racial diversity was closely linked to the preservation of white Afrikaner culture. He suggested that white and black students had different aspirations and that for many black students transformation was too slow while many white students felt the need to slow down the pace of transformation. At the same time he strongly iterated the need to preserve cultural practices that are associated with different groups of people. For example, he emphasised that Afrikaners had their own culture and that they wanted to practice this culture.

> *I don't want a Volksstaat or any of that type of propaganda which the Freedom Front[3] has, but we do want to cater for an Afrikaans Christian high standard student. ... Okay, does that include anyone of any colour? If you speak Afrikaans and you are a Christian you are more than welcome in my organisation. And that is the thing that we do ... [We have] practices which are unique to the Afrikaner culture. Certain traditions that we have. And that is something that I treasure. I would say we have got a get together on campus, we sing Afrikaans songs. We talk in Afrikaans, we speak in Afrikaans, we socialise in Afrikaans. And I don't think that is being racist. No. Or anything like that expressing your culture. But a lot of other students don't understand the concept of Afrikaner culture. That's not ... that is something that we do, but we are a solid people of language. We want to retain our language.*

While in the first instance he attempted to sublimate a racial identifier as a means to ensure the exclusivity of the group by saying that a person of any colour may join their cultural group, he went on to speak of the practices of the group that would ensure its exclusivity. At one level the expression of such culture was the use of the Afrikaans language but later in the conversation he went on to explain the special role that Afrikaner women were meant to play in support of their men. This he argued was part of their unique culture. A further level of exclusivity may be found in his use of "high standard student". He did not elaborate on what he meant by high standards but the implication was that not anyone who is Christian and Afrikaans speaking could join the group. It was clear that a selection process, based on some standard which they saw as "high", whether overt or covert, was in place and through which individuals were either accepted or not. It was also evident that the culture of the group he belonged to would not change in any way and whoever entered the group did so on the understanding that they would fit into an established cultural practice.

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3   A conservative political party that seeks to preserve white Afrikaner traditions.

Willems' views on the retention of old symbols as part of the university emblem were also telling.

> *... don't penalize the university for what a government did. That, that ... [pointing to emblem of the university, which was hanging on the wall of his office] ... But we came here, we settled in [name of city], an academic institution was built. Now that [emblem] is to symbolize how the university came to be. ... Now changing the emblem we say, "Okay, we don't want to know how this university was started"... my personal opinion is, if you don't like it, go somewhere else. We like the way it was created.*

The discourse embedded in Willem's comments suggests a clear distinction between an 'us' (Afrikaners) and a 'them' (black students). There is also an effort to distance the university from the evils of apartheid while simultaneously claiming the founding of the university as a proud history. However, the most telling comment he made was that those who did not like the emblem should go elsewhere. We suggest that this is indicative of an unwillingness to negotiate alternate points of view, that it reinforces an earlier observation, that the notion of diversity is understood as different cultures existing alongside each other without an effort towards reculturation. In fact, we read Willem's view that those who did not like the emblem should go elsewhere as limiting the expressions of diversity in the university. In other words, saying that one either accepts and conforms to what is, or leaves, offers limited scope for the survival of diversity at the institution.

The council member offered an alternate view and attitude. She expressed unequivocal recognition that symbols have emotional value and that the history of a symbol is fundamental to how it is received in the current context. Most important was the willingness to redefine what the symbols of the university ought to be in this new political and social context.

> *Now if a symbol has so much emotional baggage that it creates a problem then one needs to change in the interest of accommodating others. Also some symbols become outdated. Yes. You know most big organisations are continuously involved in looking at their image… they must have appeal now.*

Acceptance of the prevailing cultural practices through the discourses of difference is also taken up by Princess, the black student leader at one of the university residences. Princess expressed much enthusiasm about the Christian organisation of which she was a member and when probed about it she pointed out that black and white Christian students did not pray together and that they belonged to different Christian organisations on the campus. The one organisation consisted of white students and the other was mainly black. She believed that they had different ways of praying and hence the racial separation was an almost natural, indeed to some extent, a divine consequence.

> *Then at the end of the day we realised that maybe at times our style of worship as black people and white people differs here and there. When we are praying together black people we are noisy and we want to pray at the same time. And our fellow white brethren would pray one by one and at the end of the day we felt that maybe God is pulling us to the other dimension. That is why we started our own outreach teams.*

For Princess, using difference as a way into explaining and maintaining separation seemed to be a satisfactory way to accept separation, one that offered a clear conscience and a sense of rightness.

Willem too argued that everybody had their own way of doing things and this should be preserved. His vision was that of a number of cultures existing alongside each other, hopefully, in some form of harmony.

> *We as the SRC have taken the prior step in understanding the cultural diversities that we have. And um, um accommodate other people in their… in their different cultures. What is effective to a black person? What is effective to a white person? What is effective to an Indian or a ... or an Asian person?*

Later he made an apparently contradictory point when he said:

> *...what we are doing is, there is a situation being created to accommodate all cultures. Integrating them into one culture.*

In offering an example of how the integration into one culture was being done he spoke about spring day and about getting all types of students to celebrate that day. He argued that the aim was to build a "Blomme Pride". Unfortunately, he seemed to be unaware that the notion of spring day is in itself culturally specific

and may not necessarily be the best means to create "Blomme pride". More significantly, he did not interrogate the "one culture" that was meant to accommodate all. Whether this was an 'old culture' that was simply going to include black people in its expression or whether it would take on fundamentally new culturally expressions was not spoken of.

While the efforts to Africanise what have been historically white activities (like Rag, for example) may have social benefits, the need to develop new traditions that are rooted in a new ethos and a new cultural identity appears to remain a point of struggle. Dean Y made an explicit distinction between assimilation into a prevailing culture and creating a new culture:

> I think it would be wrong to think that the people who come in need to be assimilated into the culture. I think that you have to interrogate what it is you learn and say how can we make these people feel a part of what is going on, and of course they bring views and so on which may be different from the prevailing views in the department and those have to be given equal, no equal is the wrong word, but they have to be given serious consideration. I don't see it as a process of assimilation at all because I mean, I think that what we need to look at is to say in what way does a diverse group of people actually enrich the activities of a department. That's really the question that you have to be asking.

Despite his correct political stance, Dean Y's language usage of "… how can *we* make *these people* feel a part of what is going on" gives substance to the attitude of assimilation into a prevailing culture rather than developing new cultural practices rooted in the diversity of people's at the university. Unfortunately, the notion that traditions can be as old and as young as we make them, and indeed the traditions of tomorrow are set today, appears to have escaped the logic of transformation at Sonneblom University.

Speaking though silence: quietly resisting transformation

The strong bond between language, religion and race was something that the university was consistently aware of. This was manifest in the careful way in which it has trod the middle path with respect to the language issue. Sonneblom University does not claim to be an English medium institution. Neither does it claim to be Afrikaans medium institution. At the end of 2003, Afrikaans speakers enjoyed a marginal numerical majority. Since a series of mergers, this situation has shifted in favour of English speakers. However, no change in the language policy appears to be on the cards for the moment. The English/ Afrikaans dualism has consequences for the way in which students position themselves on the campus. Princess, a black student leader seeking to encourage other black students in her residence,

> … usually say to the black students in the residences, the main thing that gives you problems is that you are so … allergic to Afrikaans to an extent that even the things that involves you, when you see it's in Afrikaans you are not willing to read it. If it's Afrikaans then it's for white students. Then they feel if it's written in Afrikaans then it has nothing to do with black students. And you come and say to Afrikaans student, because it's written in English it has nothing to do with Afrikaans speaking students.

What Princess articulated was institutional cultural schisms created through language. All notices in English were for the attention of English speaking students only and were consequently about events that English-speaking students were interested in, and the same logic applied to Afrikaans notices. Of course, the unspoken corollary was that since no notices were offered in any of the other nine African languages, by linguistic omission, they were not part of the cultural fabric of the institution. While the official policy with respect to language served to placate both English and Afrikaans first language speakers, it did little to address those who are neither English nor Afrikaans first language speakers, but who are mainly African students. Although this practice may make sense in terms of the academic activities of the institution, it neglected the cultural aspects of student life. In effect the division between English and Afrikaans has served to obscure other cultural differences that live on the campus. That this dual approach to language, and implicitly to race and culture, has complex nuances was highlighted by Princess when she spoke of how students were allocated rooms in the hostel. She pointed out that black and white students did not

share rooms because, according to the university administration, they come from different cultures.[4] Yet, she argued, the simplistic equating of race, language and culture in a form of liner connectedness obscured the complexities of the relationships between cultures, race and languages.

> *In 1999 when I went to admin looking for a room there was a double room where a white student was alone and I told them there's a double room with one student. They told me no. I just don't know if that is stipulated in the policy of the university or is the way the admin people see it as an easy way to do it. My argument was how can you put a Pedi speaking person and a Xhosa speaking person [together]? They are both black but they've got different cultures.*

The point that race cannot be simplistically equated with culture is evident in the example above. That the race often acts as a euphemism for culture serves to obscure the complexities implicit in the concepts of race and culture.

According to Princess in the past rooms were 'shaded', in other words, set aside, for black students, but this practice was taken up with the appropriate authorities and it came to an end. However, the university still will not allocate black and white students to share a room in the residence. She pointed out that she did not know whether the separation of black and white students on the grounds of 'culture' was university policy or not, and went on to argue that if this were so, then such policy had not been strictly adhered to.

> *The big question that I have now which is an assignment I have to find out if this is in the university policy to say we cannot mix different cultures, therefore if that is in the university policy it has already long back been broken because we can put a coloured student and a black student in the same room. We can put a Xhosa speaking and a Pedi speaking person, they've got two different cultures.*

Princess later went on to say how pleased she was when she saw white people in the university choir who sang in other languages.

> *I had an opportunity this year to go watch this choral choir when they were performing the last time. When I looked at them there's only one white guy in the choir. But then one thing I liked about it is that they didn't only sing African songs, they sang almost all languages, including whether it was Portuguese which at the end of the day it brings that thing to say, and it was not only black people there, we had white parents, we had different people who came to watch and I asked myself at the end of the day what does a white person understand in black song. Only to find that there was a programme where they translated all those Zulu, Tsonga, Venda words in English. I say it does reflect that rainbow nation one way or the other though somebody might not understand it but it does ... So it's all about being given an opportunity to learn and an opportunity to exercise it.*

While the diversity on the campus has been described in positive terms, there is an accompanying recognition that the acceptance and assimilation of diversity as part of the fabric of the culture at the institution is still a long way off. According to Dean X,

> *... there's still a lot of fear and mistrust particularly between cultures ... when you see how students conduct themselves in their own activities, student activities. That would be reflected by an attitude of avoidance, you avoid other racial groups, you don't necessarily interact with other racial groups and we are trying by all means to encourage racial integration.*

He went on to illustrate what was being done in the hostels as well as other student structures to encourage the racial integration of students. The point was also made that all SRC election posters were first screened by the office of the Dean of Students for possible racial slurs and other potentially discriminatory comments before they could be made public. At this level integration was understood to mean being linguistically politically correct. At another it was about having black students join student representative structures and black and white students sharing living spaces.

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4   The university does not have a policy that prevents black and white students from sharing a room. However, this rarely happens.

For instance in our residences, we are trying to have all racial groups represented in all the corridors in all the residences, within a res, at corridor level, there are corridor activities, we're hoping that through these corridor activities people will then have an opportunity to interact. But it will take time, I must admit, but I think that is a starting point and we are trying to have also the student, there are these leadership structures, being racially represented. The position is, student leadership structures as well as the placement of students in the residents should be based on the actual demographics of our student population at the University of Sonneblom ... (Dean X).

The Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor made the point that it was not surprising that racial integration was not an easy task.

I would think that there could well still be people who don't, who have not accepted the fact that we are operating in a new environment, new political dispensation, democracy and so on. But you know this is .., anyone who tells you that is only at Sonneblom University doesn't understand South Africa, so in a way it's not helpful that there are people like that. All I'm saying is that it's a problem that you will have in an institution such as ours but it's a South African problem, that we are still struggling with not only finding each other but trying to figure out what the past was about and having all kinds of problems. [There are] the people who would resist change. They may not do so in ways that are demonstrably negative but people find different ways of resisting change, behaving negatively towards things that they disapprove of. So ja, I would be very surprised if there weren't people who felt that they had good reason to do that.

He made the point that resistance to change was to be expected and that there were various ways in which people choose to resist change. Although the advisor speaks of the resistance towards transformation and not ambivalence towards transformation, it does not preclude ambivalence to transformation. Indeed, if anything, it points to a likelihood that even in quarters where transformation is positively articulated and promoted, feelings of ambivalence may prevail.

Sporting and supporting difference: a note of celebration

With respect to sport the notions of difference and diversity took on an overtly celebratory tone.

... as far as rugby is concerned in our residence league, we have the quota system ... One leader of ... residence proudly said that this quota system assisted them, they have a good player, who's very excellent and he's a black guy, so that assists ... we have to put measures in place and that also assist because there is still that notion that soccer would be for blacks, rugby for whites, but we are trying to get around that and it's by way of encouraging students to participate in various sporting activities (Dean X).

It is uncertain as to whether the dean's enthusiasm was because the student was a good player or because he was black. The advisor gave further substance to the need for an inclusive approach to diversity when he made the point that diversity needed to be "nurtured", not simply recognized, and that such nurturing was a complex, difficult and long process.

It's about nurturing diversity, creating opportunities for it to strive and there are many things that the institution has to do in order to be able to achieve that. That means working very hard on the broad fronts of equity, employment equity, access, internationalisation particularly within the African continent, it's already happened, I mean it's happened very substantially so it's not like it's a new thing that's going to happen ... it has ultimately to worry about what happens in the laboratories, in the classrooms and so on because that really is what transformation, that word that I don't like using because nobody knows what it means, is ultimately about. And I don't know any South African university that has started that job, so we're fiddling around with numbers and the complexion and the genders. But real business of learning and teaching and so on is still untouched and that's where the real issues are hidden.

The member of council gave an interesting interpretation to the notion of diversity. She observed that there was an increasing age diversity among students and that the university was no longer necessarily a place

for young people only. In recognising other forms of diversity as well she made explicit reference to the need for difference and diversity to be accorded respect.

> *... to have room for the middle-class students. And even for the students who may not have all the intellectual challenging worth. But he has to have ambitions and dreams of his own. And students who are prepared to make an effort. I have seen people who work, probably not really students with the highest IQ, but through shear perseverance achieve a wonderful success. And if we do not provide for diversity also at that level, not only races and gender and all the other things, but also on the basis of different inborn um, talents ...*

She went on to say that the balance between difference, individuality and academic value needed to be sustained as part of the ethos of the institution.

A picture that emerges is that much effort is being made to make student structures racially representative. Such structures include the SRC, the student radio station and the numerous sporting organisations that form part of student life. These may indeed be changes that, for now, given the numeric majority of white students, do not significantly threaten the historical hegemony of white students. A question that seems to require greater attention is whether racial representation implies racial assimilation and absorption into the ethos of the institution. While students of different races are consciously included in student structures, they appear to remain separate in the informal and private associations they choose.

> *In the hostels we do relate and we are one family. You go to the dining hall, though at times there are spots which you can identify with, there are dominantly white spots and dominantly black spots but we haven't had fights like it happened previously, when you find a black student slapped the white student in the dining hall (Princess).*

The assertion of being "one family" resides in the recognition of their commonalities, that they belong to a residence, that they share the goal of being a good residence, that they have a shared identity. Such bonds are forged though the wearing of uniforms among first year hostel students that identifies them with a particular residence and the desire, as to be the best residence. At the same time racial signifiers of difference remain an essential part of student behaviour and the choices they make. Such signifiers are also visible as one walks around the campus. It is obvious that students choose to socialise in racially homogenous groups and that only a few have ventured out of the safety of homogeneity and commonality. Indeed, implicit in Princess's observation above that they do not fight is a sense of achievement that peace prevails. There was a distinct pride among other respondents as well, particularly the dean of students and the council member, that there were no significant incidents of violence at Sonneblom University. There appeared to be consensus too that the conservatism coupled with the strong tradition of hierarchal control has probably contributed to the level of peace and stability that prevailed on the campus.

Although the wearing of uniforms for hostel students may have positive spin-offs, Dean Y took a different view when he made the following comment.

> *I understand why it's done, I understand that it's done in order to give people a sense of belonging and being part of a particular group and so on, but on the other hand I think that what the university should be about should be about freedom and the exploration of people's ideas and so on, and I think there's a certain tension there that needs to be resolved.*

Perhaps the tension that Dean Y speaks of gains more substance when one notes that the council member argues that a special feature of the university is the balance it achieves between individuality and the aspiration to become a world class university. Yet Dean Y observed that individuality is stifled through such practices as first year hostel students wearing a uniform. The point that emerges here is that while on the one hand there is a common acknowledgement of the need for individuality and for international recognition, not surprisingly, there is not sufficient consensus as to what road the university takes to get to this point. It is possible that the logic of historical materiality and the logic of transformation are likely to enjoy a conflicting yet mutually beneficial relationship for some time to come.

Conclusion

The data from this study shows that the words *difference* and *diversity* may be used to create a mask of inclusion while asserting sameness. This is particularly so when these words remain an act of language rather than a strong practical commitment to embracing differences.

The way in which the language of difference is used to explain separateness in the religious structures of the university, the cultural and student structures or even in the residences, is apartheid speak. Weiler points out that one of the examples of ambivalence to change is ambivalence towards whom and what is included and excluded. The white student leader is unequivocal about inclusion and exclusion: anyone who supports the white Afrikaans way of doing things is welcome in his organisation. He can espouse a myth of inclusion because he is confident that practices of exclusion are firmly in place. That this is indeed so is what allows him to say that a student who is not happy with the way things are at Sonneblom University is welcome to leave. Inclusion is therefore about acceptance of what prevails and more significantly about the way things have always been. In a similar way the black student leader finds a pious explanation for exclusions and inclusions in the Christian organisations at the university. The demeanour of apartheid is evident in the way in which she willingly accepts racial separation of their religious structures but feels strongly about the conflation of Xhosa and Pedi cultures by white administrators. Yet she is pleased that black and white students can live together in the residence and present a picture of a happy family. While it may seem intuitive that Princess would be more demanding and accepting of transformation, this is not necessarily the case. Ambivalence towards change appears to be rooted in the apartheid past of both students. Similar examples of ambivalence to transformation and change may be found in the apartheid speak, indicated in the Report of the Ministerial Committee on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions (DoE, 2009).

> What was most feared about integration was the loss of 'their hostel culture' — long-standing traditions going back to their 'forefathers'. The significance of this is major in a context where the Afrikaner community has lost political power and has come to perceive racial integration as but the first step in an inexorable process leading to the eventual loss of culture, language and access to economic resources (2009:82).

As Weiler (2005) predicts, the discomfort of the losses and the fear of more losses in future could further promote and preserve ambivalence.

The study suggests that it is no doubt difficult to change institutional culture (the taken-for-granted, everyday practices or 'the way we do things here') to reflect a commitment to meaningful integration and therefore social cohesion in terms of belonging. This finding is consistent with the observation made by Vandeyar (2009) in her study of the schooling sector. While the management members interviewed, not surprisingly, seem to have engaged with issues of transformation on a deeper level, this does not seem to have filtered down to the two students interviewed. As the Ministerial Report (DoE, 2009) points out, compliance with a focus on achieving a numerical target of inclusion would by no way guarantee sufficient transformation. Becher (1988) makes a similar point when he argues that without deeper commitment, whatever change appears visible and substantial on the front stage, could easily be superficial and symbolic, engaging little change at the back- or understage. On returning to Weiler's construct of ambivalence, the continuation of strategic usage of ambivalence to explain resistance to transformation, and in the case of Sonneblom, to re-affirm difference, would by no way lead to true transformation, except that "at its best, ambivalence in academia provides the very space for alternative answers without which the process of inquiry would remain a rather sterile affair. At its worst, ambivalence provides a comfortable excuse to avoid asking the hard questions and finding the hard answers" (2005:190).

It was argued in the co-author's unpublished doctoral dissertation (XXX, 2008) that universities should acknowledge and embrace ambivalence as it is often such contradictions that can open up spaces for conversation and interaction among a university's stakeholders and that might yield additional avenues of development for the university. Similarly, Weiler's makes special note of Bauman (1991) in concluding that "once declared to be a mortal danger to all social and political order, ambivalence is not an 'enemy at the gate' anymore. On the contrary, like everything else, it has been made into one of the

stage props in the play called postmodernity" (1991:279 and 2005:178). The question to be answered then is whether the acknowledgement and embracing of ambivalence toward diversity and difference at Sonneblom University can present valuable opportunities for transformation? We suggest that creating such opportunity would mean building bridges between the language of transformation as articulated by the members of management and the two student leaders who were interviewed. While both sectors seem to use similar words to talk about transformation, what emerges is a language that offers a mask of inclusion at the expense of transformation at Sonneblom University.

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