"We must recover our own selves. . ."[1] Cultural justice as ethical issue in Higher Education

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> *When those who have the power to name and to socially construct reality choose not to see you or hear you, whether you are dark-skinned, old, disabled, female, or speak with a different accent of dialect than theirs, when someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.*[3]

Abstract

In discussing the ethical challenges related to 'cultural justice' below, we take as assumptions the moral agency of higher education institutions individually and collectively as a system, as well as the implicit social contract between universities and the societies in which they function. We first argue that globalisation is a homogenizing cultural force to which higher education is subjected, but to which it also contributes. Thereafter we highlight two broad ethical challenges emanating from this, namely globalisation as cosmological narrative of identity formation, and as constituting cultural injustice by forcing people to surrender what is taken for granted. We then translate these two challenges into the context of Higher Education, and close with a brief outline of a curriculum project that attempts to address at least some of these issues.

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1 A quotation from a paper by Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, Professor of African theologies at UNISA, on cultural identity shortly after the first democratic elections in South Africa in 1994 (see reference in Balcomb, 1998).

2 This paper forms part of a larger project in the Centre for Ethics at the NMMU (formerly UPE), relating cultural justice to various societal domains. Papers have been delivered on cultural justice and its implications for African business ethics, tourism studies, internationalisation of Higher Education and religion. The first part of the paper is primarily the work of the first author, whilst the example and analysis of Rodriques and the Sharing Cultures Project stem from the work of the second author. We take collective responsibility for the whole, and acknowledge the constructive criticism by this journal's independent reviewers.

3 Adrienne Rich: *The feminist classroom* (New York: Basic Books 1994) as quoted by Musil 2000, p .91.

Globalisation as force of cultural homogenization

The predominant focus of literature on globalisation has been on the ethical challenges related to the impact of a globalising **market economy**. An emerging theme – and the focus of this paper – is the issue of globalisation as powerful **cultural force**, shaping personal and national identities, social cohesion and human coherence ". . .at the intersection of transnational forces, cross-cutting the local and the global" (Chidester 2003, p.vii). Whereas the economic face of globalisation calls forth issues related to distributive justice, the cultural-technological face calls forth issues related to cultural justice and identity formation (see Kwenda, 2003).

There are as many definitions of culture as there are social scientists. For the sake of our discussion here, two notions of culture will be put forward:

The first is by Clifford Geertz who espouses a semiotic view based on his interpretation that "man (sic) is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun (and) I take culture to be those webs". Culture is therefore an "interworked system of construable symbols" in which social events can be intelligibly described (Geertz 1975, pp.5, 14). These symbols form – through their inter-relation – a cultural map within which people negotiate their identities. In a recent publication on social cohesion, Chirevo Kwenda takes a shorter route and sees culture merely as "our way of life" and "what people take for granted". In other words: "It is that comfort zone within, and out of which, we think, act and speak. If it is our 'mother culture', we do all these things without having to be self-conscious about what we are doing" (Kwenda 2003, pp.68, 69).

Both culture and identity are fluid and hybrid notions: On an individual level, we live in overlapping social territories and migrate amongst different social roles constructed on the basis of who we are and who we are becoming. On a group or national level, this is equally true: cultures and identities are constantly negotiated between 'what is taken for granted'; between what is an assumed network of significance, and a changing environment that might seek to disarrange our symbolic cultural maps.

In an ideal world, such identity negotiations may occur peacefully, in a symmetricity of power, and over an extended period, so that natural assimilation enrich this 'meeting of cultures' and evolving of identities. But we have ample examples in history and the contemporary world that such

processes more than often derail. “We know that for these four words, ‘our way of life’, people are often prepared to kill or be killed. In such instances, it becomes clear that there is a very small step from ‘a way of life’ to life itself. Thus, a threat to a people’s culture tends to be perceived and experienced as a personal threat” (Kwenda 2003, p.68).

The dichotomies represented by Jewish versus Palestinian, Hutsis versus Tutsis, Catholic versus Protestant; Serbian versus Croatian, America versus Islamic fundamentalists are the violent results of derailed identity negotiation coupled with cultural acts of threats and resistance.

These regional cultural negotiations are both intensified and mondialised (*le monde*: French) by the Janus face of cultural globalization. Like all globalisation processes, this one is equally ambiguous and even contradictory: **The globalisation of culture is on the one hand a huge homogenization process, whilst at the same time fostering a celebration of cultural difference and fragmentation.**

The romantic idea of multi-culturalism is betrayed by a globalising process that creates a mirage of differentiation, but in fact is an encompassing force toward “Vereinheitlichung”[4] (Raiser 1999, p.37). This creates a depersonalised mass society typified by “mass communications, mass consumption, homogeneity of patterns of life, mass culture” (De Santa Ana 1998, p.14). Here the economic, technological and cultural intersect in a deadly asymmetrical negotiation: “You can survive, even thrive, among us, if you become like us; you can keep your life, if you give up your identity”. With reference to Levi-Strauss, “we can say that exclusion by assimilation rests on a deal: we will refrain from vomiting you out (anthropoemic strategy) if you let us swallow you up (anthropophagic strategy)” (Volf, 1996, p.75).

Globalisation – seen in this way – acquires an ideological nature as *la pensee unique*, aspiring to be the only valid view, “. . .imposing itself as the paradigm to which all other cultures should be adjusted” (De Santa Ana, 1998, p.16).

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4 Conrad Raiser (1999, pp.32ff) points out three central challenges for humanity in the 21st millenium: a life-centered vision (*lebenszentrierte Vision*) to replace a destructive anthropocentrism; the acknowledgement of plurality, and facing the inner contradictions of globalisation. He verbalises one of these contradictions as the simultaneous process of “Vereinheitlichung von Lebensstilen und kulturellen Formen” and the “Anstrengungen” caused by a defence of “einheimische Kulturen, religiöse Traditionen (und) ethnische und rassische Identitäten” (Raiser 1999, p.37).

Where previous forms of cultural subjugation (like colonialism) were spatially confined and time-bound, the commercial homogeneity of a consumerist culture expands itself with the aid of the newest and fastest technological communication.

Higher Education institutions (in this case universities) are obviously not exempt from globalisation as "the insistent metaphor" (Muller, 1997, p.196) or "the new master-signifier" that shifts the world and its arrangements (Cloete and Muller, 1998, p.540). Universities are both 'object' and 'subject' of exclusion/co-option by assimilation:

As 'objects' these institutions fall within the ambit of commodification and are increasingly forced to adopt a consumerist attitude to knowledge: Headed by CEO's they are to 'produce' knowledge of an applied nature for 'clients' who need to be instantly ready for the 'real world of industry'.[5] As 'subjects' and drivers of globalisation, the more privileged institutions harbour both the power of dominating epistemological paradigms (presented as **the** canons of science that serve as benchmark and ideal for all others) and are powerful carriers of Anglophone culture that on the surface seems to be tolerant of differentiation, but in fact requires homogenisation (and cultural injustice) for the sake of efficiency.

5 There are many examples of this world-wide. For the situation in the Commonwealth, see Lund (Ed.), 1999, and for a general view of reengineering universities in terms of 'production' and 'distribution', see Tsichritzis 1999. Look at the poignant quotation from *Finance Week* (22 Oct 1999): "The University of the Free State has a new entrepreneurial philosophy – which implies fresh thought on course composition. Private sector partnerships and international links are now deemed vital. Perhaps most important of all, the student is now treated as a client." Heidegger and other language ontologists make the vital point that "die Sprache ist das Haus des Seins": If you change the language, you change the very nature of the institution. This is not to deny the legitimacy of so-called entrepreneurial universities, but merely to point out that their very development may be linked to the fact that "the global finance markets now constitute the centre, in relation to which all other activities. . . occur on the periphery" (Cloete and Muller, 1998, pp.540-541).

The ethical issues

What are the ethical issues, one might ask. Enough work has been done on the ethical issues related to the casino economy[6] of digital capitalism. In this paper, we wish to argue the case for **cultural justice** and outline the ethical issues in the following two broad themes: First the moral significance of cosmological stories in shaping identity and values; second the unequal burden of suspending or surrendering 'what is taken for granted'.

Cosmological stories and narrative moral identity

Various narrative ethicists (from Richard H Niebuhr to Stanley Hauerwas) have argued for the dictum: *Agere sequiter esse*. What we do, is a result of who we are. And who we are, is determined by the narrative communities in which we are formed.

The mass culture of a globalising world is a powerful narrative agent that contributes significantly to moral formation. Its values become **the** values, the way things **are**; the way **everybody** acts. The mass culture of a globalising world is a powerful narrative agent that contributes significantly to moral formation. Its values become **the** values, the way things **are**; the way **everybody** acts. From a moral perspective "it is possible to argue that the real challenges embedded in globalisation concern not so much what we **do**, but who we **are**, who we are becoming. . ." (Smit, 2000, p.15, emphasis original).

Let us accept with Ninian Smart (1973), and David Tracy (1981, p.159) that the role of religion is to construct a comprehensive view of the world by framing parts of reality in the context of that which transcends reality (i.e. ultimate reality). Let us accept with Larry Rasmussen that "we are incorrigible storytellers" (Rasmussen, 1994, p.178) and concur with Thomas Berry that religious cosmologies are designed to answer identity questions like: Who am I? Who are we? Where are we going? "For peoples, generally, their story of the universe and the human role in the universe is their primary source of intelligibility and value" (Berry, 1998, p.xi).

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6 "Like any casino, this global game is rigged so that only the house wins." Fidel Castro in a speech to the South African parliament. See Chidester, 2003, p. 10.

On these assumptions one could argue that **globalisation in its cultural garb usurps and misplaces the role of religion by constituting its own cosmological narrative**.[7] What is at stake is not merely the physics of our information age, but its metaphysics, “. . .its significance to individual and social morality. . . and its consequences for the formation, maintenance and alteration of personal identity” (Arthur, 1998, p.3, see Smit 2000, p.15). Homogenization takes on the proportions of an autonomous force governing the lives of individuals and communities (De Santa Ana, 1998, p.19).

The notion, for example, that what Africa (or Eastern Europe or Latin America or Iraq and Afghanistan) needs, is only more development aid and physical infrastructure, is fatally flawed and may in practice result in the intensification of resistance and loss of hope in ‘democracy’. What needs to be restored and cultivated, is a **culturally mediated reconstruction of the self** in a personal and collective sense. In political terms, the African Renaissance for example is as much about economic development as it is about a post-colonial restoration of cultural pride and selfhood “. . .to counter the excesses of European modes of being-in-the-world” (Comaroff, 2002, p.80).

The crucial insight – missed by most development agencies – is that restoration of being not only precedes economic restoration, but – at least in an African situation – is **the precondition** for economic survival. Being precedes bread (Balcomb, 1998, p.71). Why? Because in a situation of scarce resources, you need a view of identity that resists economic greed and self-referential individualism**. What you require is a notion of identity as identity-in-community which undergirds redistribution patterns that in turn guarantee physical and economic survival. You need the survival of (the) community in stead of the survival of the fittest.**

But then you need a cosmological story that builds on local narratives and express ‘what is taken for granted’ to exactly sustain such communities in

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[7] To a certain extent globalisation as encompassing cosmology reflects the moral tendencies of both modernity and post-modernity. According to Zygmunt Bauman, globalisation - as autonomous force against which you apparently can do nothing but to be swept along - does “shift moral responsibilities away from the moral self, either toward a socially constructed and managed supra-individual agency, or through floating responsibility inside a bureaucratic ‘rule of nobody’” (Bauman 1995, p.99, see Volf 1996, pp.21ff). But like post-modernity, globalisation creates a climate of evasion of moral responsibilities by rendering relationships “fragmentary” and “discontinuous” (or should we say “virtual”?), resulting in disengagement and commitment-avoidance (Bauman 1995, p.156).

which moral formation can take shape. If not, globalisation in the name of 'development aid' will do the job for you.

Perhaps the following case study – based on actual events – conveys this journey of identity and life 'in between stories' in a way that arguments are unable to do:

> *My brother Sipho and I grew up in a rural village in the Limpopo province of South Africa. My father was a farm labourer and my mother a domestic worker. They were both functionally illiterate, but had a keen sense that the education of their children was of paramount importance. By the time we reached high school age, the whole extended family contributed to send the two of us (one year apart) to a former model C school in Pretoria. After matriculation we both attended university – again with the material and emotional support of the family. This support was not so much a contractual than a familial, moral issue. It was is a form of 'donation' that everybody tacitly knew would one day return – though in no exact manner like in written contracts – to assist parents in their old age and make the same possible for other siblings after us.*
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> *The eventual graduation festivals were huge family affairs with praise singers, pap and slaughtering of goats.*
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> *We both were excited to land our first jobs – I with my degree in humanities in the academic administration of the university in Port Elizabeth; Sipho with his B Com. at an international consulting firm in Johannesburg. We never openly spoke, but took it for granted that we send a monthly amount 'back home', and visit at least once a year.*
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> *After about eighteen months Sipho's contributions dried up. The next year he did not return for his annual visit. What is more: When my grandfather passed away, he did not attend the funeral. I took the courage to talk this over with him and soon realised that he had embraced the yuppie life-style of Egoli, the City of Gold: designer clothes (from Carducci to Billabong and Man about Town), a red BMW 318i and a townhouse in Fourways.*
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> *He now traverses a different world. He has embraced different values. We feel not so much a sense of betrayal, but of sadness to have lost him. He has become a different person. Though, in the eyes of most, he is a highly successful person; a sign that the new South Africa is really opening opportunities to create a new black middle class.*
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> *And I am not sure that he would ever want to return to our village. Due to its location in the mountains, it is called Tshilapfene, 'the place of the baboons'.*

Surrendering what is taken for granted

In a perceptive essay referred to several times above, historian of religion, Chirevo Kwenda (2003, p.70), explains the notion of cultural (in)justice as follows:

> Where people live by what they naturally take for granted, or where the details of everyday life coincide with what is taken for granted, we can say there is cultural justice – at least in this limited sense of freedom from constant self-consciousness about every little thing. Cultural injustice occurs when some people are forced, by coercion or persuasion, to submit to the burdensome condition of suspending – or more permanently surrendering – what they naturally take for granted, and then begin to depend on what someone else takes for granted. The reality is that substitution of what is taken for granted is seldom adequate. This means that, in reality, the subjugated person has no linguistic or cultural 'default drive', that critical minimum of ways, customs, manners, gestures and postures that facilitate uninhibited, unselfconscious action.

The injustice lies in the unequal burden and stress of constant self-consciousness that millions of people carry on behalf of others without gaining recognition or respect. In fact, they are objects of further subjugation and humiliation that vary from physical violence to subtle body language that clearly communicate that you are stupid and do not know 'the ways things are done or said here'.

On a regional and national level, these forms of exclusions (Miroslav Volf reminds us) range from domination and indifference to abandonment and ultimately elimination. From the 'inside' this exclusion results from being ". . .uncomfortable with anything that blurs accepted boundaries, disturbs our identities, and disarranges our symbolic cultural maps".[8]

The 'fall of the Berlin wall' or 'end of the apartheid regime' are designations of many societies that moved from oppressive political systems to greater civil liberties after 1989. What is sometimes underestimated, is the massive identity renegotiation processes in the 'post-liberation' period, often leading to an upsurge in ethnic violence and loss of social stability. Like we saw in the previous section, questions of culture and life-in-community then arise with

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8 Volf 1996, p.78, and note the interesting debate about the wearing of Muslim head scarves in European schools, as well as the heated debate about 'European identity' in the light of Turkey's possible entrance into the EU. Talk about disarranging cultural maps!

great urgency. Because it takes tremendous courage and political wisdom to (for the first time?) assert 'what we take for granted' and to act unselfconsciously after decades of identity- suspension and -suppression.

Shortly after the first democratic elections in South Africa that ended 46 years of minority rule, African theologian Tinyiko Sam Maluleke, made the following incisive observation:

> Issues of culture are again acquiring a new form of prominence in various spheres of South African society. **It is as if we can, at last, speak truly and honestly, about our culture.** This is due to the widespread feeling that now, more than at any other time, **we can be subjects of our own cultural destiny**. . . .The reconstruction of structures and physical development alone will not quench our **cultural and spiritual thirst**. On the contrary, the heavy emphasis on the material and the structural may simply result in the intensification of black frustration. We do not just need jobs and houses, **we must recover our own selves** (Maluleke in Balcomb, 1998, p.70, emphases added).

Whereas the struggle against apartheid or communism or imperialism or Americanism forced and still force a kind of uniformity of resistance, and is aimed at **the right to be 'the same'**, the post-liberation struggle aims at a restored subjectivity and agency with **the right to be different.** In the ethical terms of this section: **the right to live unselfconsciously.**

This has been echoed three years later from a different perspective by Miroslav Volf:

> In recent decades the **issue of identity** has risen to the forefront of discussions in social philosophy. If the liberation movements of the sixties were all about equality – above all gender equality and race equality – major concerns in the nineties seem to be about identity – about the **recognition of distinct identities** of persons who differ in gender, skin color, or culture (Volf, 1996, p.23, our emphasis).

Let us make this argument about culture and distinct identities more concrete. It is quite remarkable to see how much emphasis is placed on **language** in the process of identity re-negotiation. For the sake of the broader argument in this paper, 'language' should be read as metaphor for 'culture' in its various symbolic expressions.

On a first level, language itself plays this exclusivist role. To this we will turn in the next paragraph. On a second level, a 'language of exclusion' is created

by naming or labelling the other in a manner that takes the other outside "the class of objects of potential moral responsibility" (Zygmunt Bauman as quoted by Volf, 1996, p.76). This does not only justify exclusion, but in fact necessitates it. "The rhetoric of the other's inhumanity **obliges** the self to practice inhumanity" (Volf, 1996, p.76; original emphasis). Like supporters of the linguistic turn, one could state that exclusion is equally language-sated. Words do kill.

But in a more subtle way , language itself – as in 'mother-tongue' and 'foreign' language – plays an exclusionary role. In a remarkable essay,[9] *Aria: A memoir of a bilingual childhood*, Richard Rodriguez recounts how he grew up in Sacramento, California, in a Mexican immigrant home in a predominantly white suburb. During his first few years in school, he struggled with English, but managed to move between the language of the public (English) and the private language of the home (Spanish). "Like others who feel the pain of public alienation, we transformed the knowledge of our public separateness into a consoling reminder of our intimacy" (Rodriguez, 1982, p.23). He eloquently spells out life in two linguistic and social worlds:

> But then there was Spanish: **espanol**, the language rarely heard away from house, the language which seemed to me therefore a private language, my family's language. To hear its sounds was to feel myself specially recognised as one of the family, apart from **los otros** (the others). A simple remark, an inconsequential comment could convey that assurance. My parents would say something to me and I would feel embraced by the sounds of their words. Those sounds said: I am speaking with ease in Spanish. . . I recognise you as somebody special, close, like no one outside. You belong with us. In the family. Ricardo. (Rodriguez, 1982, pp.22-23)

But this juxtaposition of a double identity was shattered by a simple request from the teachers (nuns at the Catholic school) that, in order to improve their academic performance, English should be spoken at home. This led to a ambivalent outcome: a growing confidence in public, but a devastating silence at home:

> There was a new silence at home. As we children learned more and more English, we shared fewer and fewer words with our parents. Sentences needed to be spoken slowly . . . Often the parent wouldn't understand. The child would need to repeat himself. Still the

[9] This essay has been used with great effect in the Sharing Cultures Project. See discussion below.

> parent misunderstood. The young voice, frustrated, would end up saying, "Never mind" – the subject was closed. Dinners would be noisy with the clinking of knives and forks against dishes. My mother would smile softly between her remarks; my father, at the other end of the table, would chew and chew his food while he stared over the heads of his children.

What followed was first a "disconcerting confusion" (29). Then, as fluency in Spanish faded fast, a feeling of guilt arose over the betrayal of immediate family and visitors from Mexico (30). Thereafter followed an understanding that the linguistic change was a social one where the intimacy at home was traded for the gain of fluency and acceptance in the public language. "I moved easily at last, a citizen in a crowded city of words" (31).

But the ambiguities remain. This is evident from the end of the essay where Rodrigues describes the funeral of his grandmother:

> When I went up to look at my grandmother, I saw her through the haze of a veil draped over the open lid of the casket. Her face looked calm – but distant and unyielding to love. It was not the face I remembered seeing most often. It was the face she made in public when a clerk at Safeway asked her some question and I would need to respond. It was her public face that the mortician had designed with his dubious art (35).

It was – in the terms set out above – the burdensome face of someone who constantly had to surrender what is taken for granted. You can keep your life, if you give up your identity. You can keep your culture, as long as you hold its values and customs, its 'things taken for granted', with diffidence. This cultural diffidence is a disposition that causes people either to be ashamed of their culture or to simply ignore it as irrelevant in the modern world (see Kwenda, 2003, p.71).

These powerful images from a single life and immigrant family is a metaphor, a simile, a parable of national and trans-national processes of cultural injustice. In *The political economy of transition* Tony Addy and Jiri Silny (2001) reflect on the changes that occurred in the ten years from 1989-1999 in Central and Eastern Europe. They make the interesting observation that the 'market Bolsheviks' (economic advisors who advocated the move to a full market economy in one jump) not only harboured a blind faith in policy prescriptions from 'the West' to be applied unaltered to 'the East', but also showed "little respect for indigenous knowledge and practice" (2001, p.503). The rapid privatisation of former industries was carried out "in a way which did not

respect positive cultural and ethical values within the region. Under conditions of globalisation, the process tended to block creative responses" (2001, p.505).

In a bizarre example of exclusion by elimination, the application of rigid market rules meant the literal closure of what Addy and Silny call "cultural industries": "For example, rich traditions of film-making were lost and historic theatres, orchestras and other artistic companies were decimated. It would take a great deal of time and money to rebuild such industries and cultural assets" (2001, p.505).

In the context of homogenizing globalisation, this elimination process is condoned in the name of economic advancement.

The challenges for higher education

We commenced this paper by referring to the moral agency of higher education institutions and the implicit social contract between, for example, universities and their respective societies. In the light of the exposition above, we can now provisionally translate the ethical issue into challenges for higher education:

Insofar as universities are **moral agents**,[10] they form an integral part of the "narratives" that shape identity and moral character in individuals and communities. In this regard they have a duty to be an exception in post-industrial societies, to resist a narrow economist definition of relationships, and to be "the sort of institution where relationships are subject to definition in terms which include reference to values". In other words: "What would it profit a Vice Chancellor if he (*sic*) were to fulfil the highest performance indicators and lose his university's soul?" (Sutherland, 2000, pp.40, 42).

Universities' social obligation is therefore to foster and cultivate local symbols, indigenous knowledge and difference, whilst promoting reflection on the complex process of identity negotiation on the edge between the local and

10 This has nothing to do with cheap moralism or the revival of the old notion of Christian-National education. Universities are institutional agents in the narrative of moral identity, and the pursuit of knowledge must be subject to the "central human reality that people are at root valorising agents in quest for the greatest possible well being. . ." (Prozesky, 2000, p.47).

the global without surrendering to the luring power of the latter, nor to idealise (idolize?) the former to the point of ideology.[11]

Obviously the issue of 'diversity' has – in South Africa at least – an apartheid baggage and is always open to political misuse. "At the same time, if we push too hard for national unity by attempting to minimize the real differences that do exist, we will be ignoring the impact of class, economic status, gender, ethnicity, religion, urban prejudice, language, and age on a student's sense of identity. . ." Whilst we dismantle 'separate development', we need to move forward, ". . .building upon the richness of the country's diverse human and national potential" (Badsha and Harper, 2000. p.23).

Insofar as universities are **cultural agents**, they have the social obligation to facilitate 'unselfconscious living' in at least two ways:

First, by creating campus communities (and sub-communities!) that overtly advance high differentiation of cultural expression to both confirm and challenge existing cultural identities. The "range of insecurities created for minorities" will only be addressed if a campus culture is created that overcome "a sense of embattlement and marginalization" (Badsha and Harper, 2000, pp.24, 25).

The ideal of unselfconscious living by the 'things taken for granted' does in no way imply static identities or unchallenged living by the customs of yesterday. This is perhaps the weakness and even danger of Kwenda's view, as it may in fact deny the complex processes of identity formation where an element of 'self-consciousness' is required. But the radical asymmetrical structure of such negotiation process needs to brought into fairer and more open spaces.

Universities should aspire to be such spaces. Where else will the 'leaders of tomorrow' actually experience the journey beyond the self and the own toward 'the other' in a more symmetrical and enriching way, without giving up the ideal of the self in an attitude of diffidence and frustration that might later form the basis for a violent defence of 'the own'?.

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11 There are many examples of how intellectuals and universities designed and served ideologies in the name of "own identity". This ranges from Nazi-Germany to liberal English and sectarian Afrikaans universities.

Second, by seriously addressing issues of 'culture' in the academy. What we have in mind is not merely 'the study of culture' like in anthropology, sociology or cultural studies, but other institutional issues related *inter alia* to languages of instruction and official communication, the promotion of indigenous languages as languages of science, curriculum[12] design (who ask the questions and who determine content?), assessment methods, teaching strategies and exploring new methodologies and topics in research (see Badsha and Harper, 2000).

These issues are complex and fraught with many pitfalls when it comes to practical implementation. But theoretical analyses need to be 'tested' by some form of curriculum and teaching practice. Whilst acknowledging that more integration and reflection are required, we nevertheless venture in giving a short outline of a project that attempts to address at least some of the questions raised here.

The Sharing Cultures Project (SCP) at the University of Port Elizabeth

'Sharing Cultures'[13] is an international online reading and writing academic programme that provides an opportunity for cultural interaction between students from (South) Africa and the USA. Funding for the project was approved by the American Fulbright Organization in August 2001 and officially commenced in January 2002. A total of 60 students identified with academic development needs, but potential for success at university, were selected at UPE and Columbia College in Chicago. They were linked via the internet to an academic curriculum specifically developed around the theme of culture and identity in a global context.

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[12] For interesting work on curriculum transformation, see the contributions in Naude and Cloete (Eds), 2003, and the very instructive volume, *Knowledge, identity and curriculum transformation in Africa* edited by Cloete and others (1997) with special attention to the concluding section written by Muller. He concludes as follows: ". . .curriculum transformation in the new global/local order is not simply about insertion of some local and global content; but involves. . . **a rethink of citizenship and the identity of the learner**. . ." (Muller, 1997, p.199, our emphasis). See also the short reference to Nussbaum's seminal work below. This paper is not able to follow any of the specific issues in more detail.

[13] This project is the subject of an MEd –research degree by EC Naude at UPE (NMMU).

To ensure that the programme is taken seriously, the issue of academic credits was negotiated up front via agreements between the UPE Advancement Programme (UPEAP) and relevant faculties. The SCP is an adaptation of an existing compulsory reading and writing module (14 academic weeks) for students in the Advancement Programme to ensure greater internationalization and cultural awareness. This is in line with one of the 'evidences' of an international curriculum outlined by Brenda Ellingboe: "Revising courses to include international, comparative, or cross-cultural elements. . ." (1998, p.207), and Martha Nussbaum's strong argument to develop curricula of a "multicultural nature" (1997, p.70, see discussion below).

The philosophical rationale for this project relates to the academic debate about the ideals and key elements of 'graduatedness'. There are obviously different answers to this question, depending on the philosophy of the writer or mission of the relevant institution. Two examples will suffice:

It is interesting to note that the generic citizenry skills listed by Johan Muller as being "at the heart of 'graduatedness', of what higher education should be providing" are political (negotiational or democratic skills); **cultural (skills of navigating difference)** or economic (productive, problem solving skills) (see Muller, 1997, p.197 in his summary of the arguments put earlier in that volume; our emphasis).

The well-known Martha Nussbaum in her *Cultivating Humanity* argues for a liberal education in developing 'world citizenship'. The latter implies – in an inescapable multicultural and multinational world – three capacities: First the capacity "for critical examination of oneself" in the Socratic tradition on the "the examined life". This often means "a lonely business" and a "kind of exile – from the comfort of assured truths. . ." (Nussbaum, 1997, pp.8). Second is "the ability to see (yourself) not simply as citizens of some local region or group but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern" (1997, p.10). Third there is the narrative imagination which means "the ability to think what it might like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story. . ." (1997, pp.10-11).

How are some of these ideas translated into the curriculum of the SCP? First, the very constitution of the groups were deliberately designed to be highly diverse, representing at one time 12 different languages apart from English. This creates for some students the first opportunity to transcend identity tied to

the narrow confines of the local region. The web-interaction for some who never had any exposure to computers is in itself a ‘self-transcending’ experience.

Second, part of the very delivery entails a substantial sharing of life-stories. This cultivation of ‘narrative imagination’ fosters both discovery of the self[14] in its relativity to others, and a growing ability to be an intelligent interpreter of ‘the others’ story.

Third, as this is a reading and writing course, the very texts[15] read together are carefully selected so that questions of language, identity, and negotiating a way of life in a global context, are implicitly and explicitly brought to the fore. The joint reading-and-response increase critical interaction with the text, critical self-examination and the questioning of others, clearly transcending earlier rote learning patterns in the direction of “intelligent citizenship” (Nussbaum, 1997, p.11).

Conclusion

We hope that our argument above was able to accomplish three aims: 1. That cultural justice (in distinction from procedural and distributive justice) is indeed a crucial dimension of the globalisation process. 2. That higher education has a moral obligation to address cultural justice in a variety of ways. 3. That the heart of the matter is a serious and radical rethinking of the curriculum, including its underlying philosophy, content, and delivery modes.

We need to understand the complexities of ‘world civilization’ if we indeed wish to contribute to civilizing the world.

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14 One student from a previously advantaged background in South Africa wrote: “I now know I also have a culture.” This is an ambiguous statement that might be interpreted as cultural chauvinism, or as positive process of self-revelation.

15 The Rodriques text discussed above, Mandela’s *Long walk to freedom*, Martin Luther King’s speeches, and work by Bessie Head and Nora Hurston , are examples.

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