

CONCLUSION

In the introduction I proposed these as standards of judgement for the representational form of my inquiry:

- It has to communicate to the heart as well as the intellect of the reader
- It has to tell stories that assist the reader to follow the flow of my discoveries inquiry and claims to know
- It has to be both precise and allowing for the reader to discover their own meanings through engaging with it
- It has to be of value to people concerned with decolonisation
- It has to be an inclusive text that offers hopes to people from the variety of social positions
- It has to go beyond text and include communicative forms of representation of extended areas of knowledge as well as extended ways of knowing. These extended forms can include video, pictures, stories intuitive 'presenced' knowing as well as quantitative hypothetico-deductive (Reason, 2005) Academic writing.

I suggest that the communicative form of this thesis has been such that I have met these standards of representation.

In the sections of this thesis I hope to have shown that my research approach has been rigorous, truthful and valid. I hope to have shown how my knowledge claims are rooted in the experiences that I have described in the narratives I have shared. I hope that bringing in to consideration, knowledge gained through a living practice of Ubuntu offers the Academy ways of evolving its role as a social and political force that can legitimise the lives, perspectives and knowledge forms of groupings that have historically been excluded or devalued.

For People of African origin I hope to have shown that it has been possible for me to live a productive life, characterised by a sense of love and life affirming energy, whilst earning a living, raising a son and contributing to transformational educational, employment and social formations through my embodied practice of Ubuntu. I hope to have shown the value of considering our situation through endogenous *and* inclusional lenses and taking action based upon that which reveals itself through that gaze, not from that which we are given from the perspective of the interests of others masquerading as objective knowledge.

Practitioners will decide what they understand the implications of this research to have been for themselves. I hope that they will see value in stepping out of more traditional forms of inquiry and creating individual accounts that can generate new possibilities. I also hope that they understand the importance of an approach that goes beyond individual acts of human kindness and seeks to influence the restructuring of the forces that maintain oppressive, exploitative, colonial relationships between peoples whilst embracing and respecting the humanity of the 'other'.

I have been seeking to evolve a theory of action/being for myself that can empower and enable others to seek other paths for our development as a species on this planet. In this

process I have moved from somebody who saw himself as outside society, holding a particular oppositionally idealised notion of 'society'. I have moved towards engaging, inside the network of relationships between people in which I work, with elements of that world to support, what I consider to be positive, change. It is a much more messy and challenging reality as I am forced to question and reflect upon so much of what I considered foundational to my identity.

I have arrived at a way of thinking that is distinct from that which seeks to create a disconnected other; a return to an imagined past in which peoples existed separately. History shows us that peoples of different 'races' have always interacted. My own notions of my identity have been challenged as, through my inquiry, I have come to see past the barriers that separate and take tentative and dangerous, salacious steps into my part of the common whole. I have come to a position at which I view the myth of separateness of peoples, reinforced by the stories of the 'discovery' of Africa for example, as if there was a time when 'we' existed without dealing with 'them', as fundamentally dangerous. I am struck by the extent to which this tendency within Black 'strategisers' matches Newtonian atomistic theories so fundamental to the modern European worldview that Capra (Capra, 1983) delineates.

In my moving away from notions that there are clear lines and boundaries between things, between peoples I have tried to evolve congruent strategies that embody and are congruent with the values I seek to live by. The holistic both/and approach for example means that though I am not for integration into the existing status quo I am also, at the same time, not for separateness. I am for a belief in our common humanity and for recognising and valuing the differences and contributions that all people have made to human civilisation. I have an emerging belief in us co-evolving a world order in which we can live in a state of wellness, together. For that to happen action needs to take place separately and together. This is a moment of great opportunity. Engaging in my inquiry has helped me arrive at a position in which I feel able to celebrate and contribute to the movement of humanity towards sustainable peace and justice locally, nationally and globally.

I have had to challenge some of my own beliefs and have not managed to always arrive at positions of clarity or comfort in my journey. I have engaged with those who say that if I cannot give them alternatives then I should (essentially) keep my mouth shut. There are those who experience my constant questioning as negative and I have worked to find inclusional, appreciative forms of expression that can embrace their concerns without accepting patterns of human and organisational behaviour that reinforce inequity on a local and global scale.

I want to assist processes that contribute to evolving patterns of global relations that are characterised by an honest approach to tackling some of the key issues that affect us as a species. I suppose one way to put that is that the problems of the environment are also problems generated by the logic of the particular (colonial – Eurocentric) path to development that we are taking. My study has also been a search for ways of working with people in which they feel valued, empowered and able to think more widely and take action more effectively in relation to the key issues facing us at this time.

In adopting this position I am in agreement with Gilroy (2001, pp 151-167) when he argues for 'race' to not be 'racialised' and seen as something separate from humanity's endeavour to move forward, but placed in the context of patterns of thought and behaviour

that exclude particular groups of people from fair access and benefits.

I have seen how actions that have been expected to create one outcome have created another often frighteningly different reality. I have seen political leaders express great human ideals and yet when they gain positions of ostensible power repeat many of the same mistakes of their predecessors. I have described how I have tried to find explanations for this that liberate and inform productive action that can “make a change that actually makes a change”.

Final thoughts

I have tried in this thesis to answer my question of “How Can I bring Ubuntu As A Living Standard Of Judgment Into The Academy? Moving Beyond Decolonisation Through Societal Reidentification And Guiltless Recognition” It seems appropriate, as the written text comes to an end, to leave the reader with two visual narratives that embody my Ubuntu way of being.



[\(CD-Concl Clip 1.mov\)](#)

In this video I am articulating to a community gathering to celebrate our elders a message that recognises and praises our achievement as a community. I am trying to project recognition of our past and present achievements not just as a way of contradicting negative messages and the cynical responses they can generate. I am also doing it because I want to contribute to speaking a different future for us into being through recognising the positive achievements that constitute a potential future in the present.

My message is praising every body in the room. I am honouring my father and describe how he used to ride his bike 15 miles each way across London to work to feed his children. I state that the elders in my life are my parents. My father never ever shirked his duty and there are many other Black men who have done the same.

As I turn my attention outside of the family I am speaking to our interconnectedness and the need to celebrate all the women who have done so much to keep our community alive and help us be where we are today. I say that everybody here who is an adult is an elder and all have a responsibility. I'm trying to re-inscribe the message of responsibility to community. I tell the audience that I'd like to congratulate them and to remind them that every generation has had concerns about the generations that are coming up and been concerned and yet every generation has made it. Every generation has struggles through trials and tribulations and have made it. We must never lose sight of that and we must never lose sight of hope. Our young people are part of a tradition in which we as a people have demonstrated that we have risen up time and time again and we will do it again and our young people will be that future and I am proud of them today. In this articulation I am drawing from African traditions beautifully captured by Ben Okri when he speaks of the leader being somebody telling stories that can lead people towards the achievements of their dreams.

I am also pleased to see myself looking good. I like the jacket of the suit and the way that I am moving reveals a reconnected self that is proud, humble and happy as he exists in relationship with and through others and becomes who he always wanted to be because of that. In my body I see an enjoyment, a living energy that is celebratory in physical movement as well as in the content of his speech. I love my smile as it praises and invites inclusionary relationship and collective transformation. I love the sense of belonging and I know that as I speak there are people looking at me with pride and affirmation, not just because of what I say or how I look, but because we are one and they are smiling and loving themselves.

Given the communal nature of Ubuntu I think that it is appropriate to finish with the words of somebody who has been a friend, elder, co-inquirer and an inspiration in my life for over thirty years, Ian Phillips. Here are the words that he crafted in response to my speaking at the Elders Ball and the Eulogy at a service before my grandmothers funeral.

LIVING UBUNTU

At the elders ball Eden embraces his audience. His love is transparent as he celebrates giving recognition to the collective achievement of his community. His love is assertive as he celebrates his father activities...telling stories of how he held his responsibilities positively, of his resilience journeying to and from work on a bicycle no matter the weather and of his power. Eden celebrates his father's action as a performance standard that models a positive way of being in itself, but also contradicts prevailing stereotypes. In engaging in this way Eden makes connections, builds relationships and evidences an Ubuntu way of being that is loving, intergenerational, restorative and alive.

Eden in making the eulogy at his grand mother's funeral in his words and embodiment of his love for his grandmother mirrors her actions, her energy, her style and makes connection with his audience engaging them and celebrating them with his recognition of their beauty. His communication is personal ... it is social ... Living, if just for a moment, his grandmothers way of being and recalling with

others her worthiness. Enjoining and celebrating a life well lived. His is an Ubuntu way of being.

Ian Phillips 28.01.2007



[\(CD-Conc2 Clip 1.mov\)](#)