

**Do the values and living logics I express in my educational relationships carry the hope of Ubuntu for the future of humanity?**

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A contribution to the Symposium on *How are we contributing to a new scholarship of educational enquiry through our pedagogisation of postcolonial living educational theories in the Academy?* held at BERA 04 in Manchester, 16-18 September, 2004 with:

Paulus Murray – Royal Agricultural College, UK

Sarah Fletcher – University of Bath, UK

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In the proposal for this Symposium we said that:

*In our practitioner-research in higher education we have been influenced by Schon's (1995) call for the development of a new epistemology for the new scholarship. In contributing to this epistemology we will focus on the communicability of our living standards of judgement, our units of appraisal and our living logics of educational enquiry. While we recognise our uniqueness in who we are and what we are doing as individuals influenced by Islamic, Christian, Buddhist and Humanistic values and beliefs we also recognise and experience an inclusional (Rayner, 2002) flow of life-affirming energy from each other. We each experience this energy differently in the expression of our embodied, spiritual and other values and recognise a desire in each other to work with each other's inclusional ways of being.*

*Researching our educational practices in Japan, and the UK we will show how we have transformed the embodied educational values in our educational relationships, into the living, epistemological standards of judgement we use in explaining both our own learning and in explaining our educational influence with those we teach. We will also explain how, in our pedagogisation (Bernstein, 2000) of living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989) within our Academies, we have contributed to the education of these social formations. The explanations will show the significance of a determination to persist in transcending some of the pressures that can push individuals to submit to the reproduction of an existing social formation when living educational values more fully requires a social transformation.*

*Evidence from research into our own educational practices shows that we each are working with the post-colonial intention of not imposing our own values and beliefs on those of others, but of working with the intention of bringing those values that carry hope for humanity more fully into the world and stemming the flow of those values that do not carry such hope.*

*With evidence of our use of ICT in our pedagogy we will examine to what extent we are acting locally and influencing globally in the development of a new scholarship of*

*educational enquiry (Adler-Collins, 2000) through the pedagogisation of postcolonial living educational theories (Murray, 2004) in the Academy.*

The above statements affirm our shared commitment to inclusional ways of being and relating. They explicitly recognise each other's uniqueness and, while being open to question, provide a 'frame' for my self-study contribution to the Symposium. Because of Paulus Murray's influence in the development of my understanding of the postcolonial nature of my living educational theories I draw insights and inspiration from his writings:

*I bring meaning to my career as a scholar-educator as a mixed origin person who has negotiated and grasped the personal and societal understanding of my multiracial identity so that in my account of my Postcolonial Living Educational Theory I thread through the liberating post-structuralist option of storytelling, autobiography and 'writing across borders' how a multiracial identity is performed. This is a unique insight for educators who want to work in postcolonial multiracial ways. By producing a disciplined account of this performativity of multiracial identity I am clearly contributing to the quality of a Living Theoretical accounts of the practice of a scholar-educator. But in showing my journey I am indicating how I pedagogise my experience so that my pedagogic consciousness is more alert, aware as a faculty (facultad, Gloria Anzaldua) of how I am working in postcolonial ways through the supervision of my students, and how I can improve my practice in this respect. (Murray, 2004 e-mail 17/08/04)*

I will keep as close as I can to the above commitments and to the theme of this Symposium on, *How are we contributing to a new scholarship of educational enquiry through our pedagogisation of postcolonial living educational theories in the Academy?* as I seek to answer my question: *Do the values and living logics I express in my educational relationships carry the hope of Ubuntu for the future of humanity?*

I will first provide you with some background into my research that covers the life-time of BERA before answering my question and offering it for your criticism in the following claims to educational knowledge.

- i) My self-study research into my educational practices shows how I have transformed the embodied ontological value of Ubuntu in my educational relationships, into a living, epistemological standard of judgement that can be used to test the validity of my explanations of both my learning and my educational influence with those I teach.
- ii) I explain how, through my educational influence in the pedagogisation (Bernstein, 2000) of living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989) within the University of Bath and elsewhere, I am contributing to the education of these social formations.
- iii) The explanation of my educational influence shows the significance of persistence of courage to be in transcending some of the pressures that can push individuals to submit to the reproduction of an existing social formation, when living educational values more fully requires a social transformation.

iv) Using evidence from my use of ICT in my pedagogy I explain my educational influence in terms of making the possible, probable (Whitehead, 2003) as I pedagogise my postcolonial living educational theories (Murray, 2004). The explanation includes the living logics involves in the transformation of embodied ontological values into living epistemological standards of judgement. The explanation includes the evidence on how I am acting locally and communicating globally in contributing to the development of a new scholarship of educational enquiry (Adler-Collins, 2000) while seeking to carry the postcolonial hopes of Ubuntu for the future of humanity.

### **Some contextual background to my educational research including the 30 year life-time of BERA.**

During 1971, while teaching full-time at Erkenwald Comprehensive School in Barking, London, and studying part time for my Masters degree in the psychology of education of the London Institute, my view of educational theory began to change. During my initial teacher education at Newcastle University (1966-67) and in the Academic Diploma Course in the philosophy and psychology of education, at the London Institute (1968-1970), I had come to understand educational theory as being constituted by the disciplines of the philosophy, psychology, sociology and history of education. As I engaged in a self-study of my own educational influences with my pupils, between 1967-71 I came to reject this approach as it denied one of my fundamental assumptions in my own educational theory and that was that any valid educational theory which claimed to be explaining my educational influence should relate to my explanation for my educational influence. Paul Hirst one of the main proponents of the old 'disciplines' approach to educational theory acknowledged a similar mistake in 1983 when he said that much understanding of educational theory will be developed:

*"... in the context of immediate practical experience and will be co-terminous with everyday understanding. In particular, many of its operational principles, both explicit and implicit, will be of their nature generalisations from practical experience and have as their justification the results of individual activities and practices.*

*In many characterisations of educational theory, my own included, principles justified in this way have until recently been regarded as at best pragmatic maxims having a first crude and superficial justification in practice that in any rationally developed theory would be replaced by principles with more fundamental, theoretical justification. That now seems to me to be a mistake. Rationally defensible practical principles, I suggest, must of their nature stand up to such practical tests and without that are necessarily inadequate."*  
(Hirst, 1983, p. 18)

I look back on much of my learning on this programme, with a most impressive group of professional educators in the philosophy of education, as a great educational experience. However, in 1971 I did experience as colonising the desire to replace the principles I used, to make sense of my educational practices, by principles drawn from disciplines other than educational enquiry and practice. I am using the word 'colonising' in the sense that I experienced a policy and practice of power as seeking to extend control over my thinking about educational theory. I connect this meaning of colonising to the more general meaning of colonialism as the policy and practice of a power in extending control over weaker peoples

or areas. During 1972 I came to a decision to move from teaching in a comprehensive school to becoming an educational researcher in higher education to see if I could contribute to the reconstruction of educational theory with a postcolonial intent.

Since coming to the University of Bath in 1973, hence over the life-time of BERA between 1974-2004, I have sustained what I see as a postcolonial commitment to contribute to the regeneration and testing of educational theories in a way that includes the embodied values of educational practitioners as practical principles that are necessary inclusions in the explanatory dynamic of an educational theory. To distinguish the educational theories, which are generated from disciplines of educational practice and enquiry, from theories constituted solely by the meanings between propositions in 'disciplines of education', I have called them living educational theories. This idea of living theories connects with a question asked by the Soviet Logician, Eduard Ilyenkov (1977) in his book on dialectical logic when he asked, if an object exists as a living contradiction what must the thought be (statement about the object) that expresses it. The significance of Ilyenkov's question about the nature of the thought that can express living contradictions in language can be appreciated in the light of Karl Popper's rejection of theories that contain contradictions between statements (Popper 1963, p. 317). One of the characteristics of living theories is that they contain 'I' as a living contradiction. Ilyenkov did not answer his question before he died and in my view his intention to produce a 'written' logic rather than a 'living logic' was an obstacle to answering his question. He became trapped within the logical form he needed to transcend in order to answer his question. Hence my interest in living logics in educational theories.

Because I see an educational theory as an explanation of the educational influence of individuals and social formations that includes learning to live values more fully, I attach great importance to those values that appear to me to carry hope for the future of humanity. Paulus Murray has been most influential in extending my understanding of colonialism and postcolonial theorising to include critical race studies and other postcolonial theories and his question to me continues to motivate my enquiries:

*Where is the evidence of the critical engagement with the ideas of critical race theorists, critical racial theorists and post-colonial theorists in the formation of the identities and practices of individuals you are working with? Where is the evidence of your influence in respect of alerting them to enhancing the quality of their work by making themselves familiar with these epistemologies? (Should you/they when they can get their PhDs/do their AR writing without making reference to the critical knowledge?) (Murray, 2003 e-mail correspondence)*

In this contribution I am continuing to extend my understandings of how to live postcolonial values more fully and take Erasmus' point about the importance of an affiliation with Africa:

*..... with the construction of whiteness having been a colonial project, discriminatory and racist, ethical imperative - necessary participation in a liberatory project - is that of affiliation with Africa. Coming to terms with these facts is one of the most important and difficult challenges for coloured people. Coloured black and African ways of being do not have to be mutually exclusive. There are ways of being coloured that allow participation in a liberatory and anti-racist project. The key tasks to develop these. (Erasmus, 2001, p.16).*

I am seeking to extend the influence of postcolonial values and insights into my educational enquiries and practices. My claims to educational knowledge below include my claim to be developing my understandings of how to enhance the flow of the ontological value of Ubuntu (Murithi, 2001) from an African cosmology, in the education of social formations.

These understandings of how to enhance the flow of the value of Ubuntu include insights from Rayner's (2002) work on inclusionality. They include insights from Joan Whitehead's (2003) work on making the possible, probable, in my learning how to test the validity of my belief that enhancing the flow of Ubuntu carries hope for the future of humanity.

1) My self-study research into my educational practices shows how I have transformed the embodied ontological value of Ubuntu in my educational relationships, into a living, epistemological standard of judgement that can be used to test the validity of my explanations of both my learning and my educational influence with those I teach.

On the front of Paulus Murray's homepage is the welcome:

*By visiting, I hope to share with you some of my passion and spirit in Ubuntu - "Umuntu ngumuntu nagabantu" ~ 'A person is a person because of other people'* (Murray, 2004 [http://www.royagcol.ac.uk/~paul\\_murray/Sub\\_Pages/FurtherInformation.htm](http://www.royagcol.ac.uk/~paul_murray/Sub_Pages/FurtherInformation.htm))

In his analysis of Ubuntu: an African Assessment of the Religious Other, Louw writes:

*The decolonization of Africa, of which the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa is the most recent example, has led to a greater recognition of the wide variety of religions practising on its soil. When confronted with this plurality, and the corresponding plurality of claims to truth or credibility, believers often resort to absolutism. The absolutist evaluates the religious other in view of criteria which violate the self-understanding of the latter. The religious other is thus being colonized by a hegemony (i.e., an enforced homogeneity) of norms and values. This paper deals with an assessment of the faith of others which transcends absolutism without resorting to relativism. More specifically, it aims to show that an African philosophy and way of life called 'Ubuntu' (humanness) significantly overlaps with such a 'decolonized' assessment of the religious other, and that this assessment can therefore also be explained, motivated or underscored with reference to the concept of Ubuntu. (Louw, 1998)*

In seeking to enhance the flow of the ontological values of Ubuntu, be embraced by them and to transform them into living epistemological standards of educational judgement I want to justify my claim that the spiritual ground of my educational relationships can be understood in the terms of Louw's notes when he says: *The South African Governmental White Paper on Welfare officially recognises Ubuntu as: "The principle of caring for each other's well-being...and a spirit of mutual support...Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being"* (Government Gazette, 02/02/1996, No.16943, p.18, paragraph 18—quoted by Broodryk, 1997a:1). (Louw, 1998)

Murithi (2001) added to my understanding of the values of Ubuntu in his analysis of practical peacemaking in Africa and his reflections on Ubuntu:

*The wisdom of this process lies in the recognition that it is not possible to build a healthy community at peace with itself unless past wrongs are acknowledged and brought out into the open so that the truth of what happened can be determined and social trust renewed through a process of forgiveness and reconciliation. A community in which there is no trust is ultimately not viable and gradually begins to tear itself apart. With reference to the notion of I am because we are and that of a person being a person through other people, the above process emphasises drawing upon these ubuntu values when faced with the difficult challenge of acknowledging responsibility and showing remorse, or of granting forgiveness (Murithi, 2001)*

Can I justify my claim that self-study research into my educational practices shows how I have transformed the expression of embodied ontological values of Ubuntu in my educational relationships, into living, epistemological standards of judgement that can be used to test the validity of my explanations of both my learning and my educational influence with those I teach?

The educational practices I have in mind are those in which I demonstrate a sustained commitment in my supervision of the doctoral research programmes of practitioner-researchers who are engaged in educational enquiries of the form, 'How do I improve what I am doing?' In particular I am focusing on the values of Ubuntu in which:

*...Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity.*

A successful doctoral submission at the University of Bath must satisfy the examiners on the grounds of originality of mind and critical judgement, the extent and merit of the work and matter worthy of publication. My desire to live a productive life in education has been focused on supporting practitioner-researchers in accounting for their lives and learning in terms of the values that they believe carry hope for the future of humanity. In each living theory thesis at <http://www.actionresearch.net> individuals have expressed their originalities of mind in their transformation of these ontological values into epistemological standards of critical judgement as they clarify their meanings in the course of their practices in their educational enquiries.

In my educational enquiries I am seeking to enhance the flow of the values of Ubuntu from the ground of living my postcolonial spiritual values in my educational relationships. In providing the evidence in the living theory section of [actionresearch.net](http://www.actionresearch.net) that such values have been legitimated in the knowledge-base of the Academy in the form of living epistemological standards of judgement, I am offering for public criticism and validation this evidence-based belief that I am moving towards the full realisation of my postcolonial intentions. Part of this realisation includes using Bernstein's insights on the pedagogisation of knowledge in seeing the importance of recontextualising living theory texts from their place in a university library

into the curriculum of organisations (Farren, 2004; Leong, 2004; Laidlaw, 2004; Murray, 2004, Adler-Collins 2004; Hartog, 2004.)

It may help you to evaluate the validity of my claim about moving towards the full realisation of these postcolonial intentions by comparing the Appendix to my BERA Presidential Address, where no practitioner-researcher had yet to receive a doctorate for a self-study of their own educational practices, with the Appendix to this paper which gives the web-based locations for accessing some 17 living theory doctoral theses of practitioner-researchers who have graduated since 1995.

2) I explain how, in my pedagogisation (Bernstein, 2000) of living educational theories (Whitehead, 1989, 1993, 2004) within the University of Bath and elsewhere, I am contributing to the education of these social formations.

Given what I have said about the educational process of transforming ontological values into the living epistemological standards of judgement one can use in the living educational theory accounts of one's life of learning and enquiry, I hope it is clear why I am stressing the importance of influencing the education of social formations through living educational theories. I am identifying the processes of enhancing the flow of the values of Ubuntu in a particular social context with a postcolonial project for the education of the social formation of that context. I am increasingly drawn to the use-value of Bernstein's ideas on pedagogy, symbolic control and identity, in highlighting the importance for the education of social formations of pedagogising living theory accounts. All I can do in the limited space of this presentation is to point to the evidence from particular contexts in which living educational theories are influencing the education of a social formation and connect this evidence to an explanation of my educational influence. (Whitehead, 2004, Leong, 2004; Laidlaw, 2004; Williams, 2004, Hartog, 2004, McNiff & Whitehead, 2004, Delong, 2002)

3) The explanation of my educational influence shows the significance of persistence in the courage to be and the support of others in transcending some of the pressures that can push individuals to submit to the reproduction of an existing social formation, when living educational values more fully requires a social transformation.

In the *Growth of Educational Knowledge* (Whitehead, 1993) I provided the evidence which showed that the conclusion of a Senate Working Party on a Matter of Academic Freedom was justified in the claim that I had persisted in the face of pressure, to publish my ideas and that a less determined individual might have felt constrained! It does take 'courage to be', to persist in the face of the disciplinary power of organisations such as a University. My colleague Alan Rayner (2004) continues to provide inspiration from his courage to be in sustaining his enquiries into inclusionality and in holding open a curriculum on life, the environment and people for some undergraduate students in the University. My former colleague at the University of Bath, Sarah Fletcher, has analysed the significance of her courage to be in responding to the pressures that undermined her research programme into the mentoring of best practice research studentships (Fletcher & Adler-Collins, 2004). I am thinking of the courage to be that Tillich describes in relation to the power of being itself. Not, I hasten to add with the theistic or gendered interpretations of Tillich but with the life-affirming energy and passion for the values of education.

*“Faith is not a theoretical affirmation of something uncertain, it is the existential acceptance of something transcending ordinary experience. Faith is not an opinion but a state. It is the state of being grasped by the power of being which transcends everything that is and in which everything that is participates. He who is grasped by this power is able to affirm himself because he knows that he is affirmed by the power of being-itself. In this point mystical experience and personal encounter are identical. In both of them faith is the basis of the courage to be.”* (Tillich, 1962, p,168)

Sustaining one’s courage to be and the values of Ubuntu in the face of power relations that could stem the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity is closely linked, in my experience, to the significance of making the possible, probable (Whitehead, 2003). In seeing the creation and testing of living educational theories as a postcolonial project I think that the evidence I have presented demonstrates that individuals working within particular contexts have accounted for their learning in their educational enquiries in terms of values that carry hope for the future of humanity. A postcolonial project with global intent must address the issue of making such possibilities probable. It is one thing to demonstrate in a particular context that something is possible. It is something different to understand how to spread the influence of such possibilities in a process of social transformation of making the possible, probable. While continuing to support the transformation of local contexts as necessary to the education of social formations, through the creation and testing of living educational theories, my own enquiries into making the possible probable, are focusing on the educational influence of the interconnecting and branching networks of communication provided by the internet in support of postcolonial projects.

4) Using evidence from my use of ICT in my pedagogy I explain my educational influence in terms of making the possible, probable (Whitehead, 2003) as I pedagogise postcolonial living educational theories (Murray, 2004). The explanation includes the living logics involved in the transformation of embodied ontological values into living epistemological standards of judgement. The explanation includes the evidence on how I am acting locally and communicating globally in contributing to the development of a new scholarship of educational enquiry (Adler-Collins, 2000) while seeking to carry the postcolonial hopes of Ubuntu for the future of humanity.

My postcolonial project is grounded in a scholarship of educational enquiry that is focused on understanding how to enhance the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity and with stemming the flow of values that do not carry this hope. I am making the assumption, while being open to its criticism, that the future of humanity is related to the creation and testing of the shared accounts of learning (living educational theories) in educational enquiries of the kind, ‘How do I improve what I am doing?’ This is consistent with Kilpatrick’s (1951) view that educational theory is a form of dialogue that has profound implications for the future of humanity. The first step, in the pedagogisation of living educational theories, was to place them on the web in the domain name [actionresearch.net](http://actionresearch.net). This resource provides the evidence that such theories can be created from a scholarship of educational enquiry that is grounded in questions of the kind, ‘How do I improve my practice?’ It also provides the evidence of their legitimation in the Academy as original contributions to educational knowledge. While each narrative of learning takes a unique form and is formed from a unique constellation of values each thesis clarifies the meanings of the



practitioner-researchers ontological values in the process of their emergence in practice. This process of clarification transforms the experience of embodied values into living and publicly communicable epistemological standards of judgement that can be used in evaluating the validity of the claims to educational knowledge.

The living logics in the explanations of learning emerging from living contradictions provide the dialectical form of reason necessary for the meanings of the values and standards to be comprehended by others. Within these explanations insights from propositional theories are evaluated and used in terms of their value in moving the educational enquiries forward in enhancing the flow of values that carry hope for the future of humanity.

The explanations includes the evidence on how we living educational theorists are acting locally and communicating globally in contributing to the development of a new scholarship of educational enquiry (Adler-Collins, 2000) while, in my case, seeking to enhance the flow of the postcolonial values of Ubuntu for the future of humanity. In scholarly work there is often a tension between the need to deconstruct influential propositional theories using canons of scholarly discourse and the expression of originality of mind that can help to move forward a field of enquiry and form of knowledge. For illustration I draw on Ifekwunigwe's (2004, p. 19) points about her editing of a text on Mixed Race Studies. She says that it should encourage readers to think critically about the origins of the concept of 'mixed race', its re-invention in more recent times and ongoing debates concerning its conceptual limitations and political potential. She points out the texts highlight but do not resolve tensions, continuities and problematics associated with both the old 'biological' discourses' of 'hybrid degeneracy' and the 'psychosociological' discourses of 'mixed race' individuals as 'maladjusted social types' as well as newer social, cultural and political applications of 'mixed race' and later 'multiraciality' as shifting, contingent, complex and multi-layered identity markers. She says that all three interwoven and historically located perspectives rupture allegedly stable racialized faultlines and at the same time (paradoxically in the case of the latter two approaches) reinscribe 'race' – a term she points out is predicated on scientifically dubious criteria. Living in a society with its colonial history of institutionalised racialism raises profound questions for those who wish to account for themselves and their learning in terms of enhancing the flow of the values of Ubuntu. We can deconstruct the colonial history of institutionalised racism with the help of scholars such as Ifekwunigwe so that we can better understand how to live our contradictions in a postcolonial project that makes the possible, probable, in living more fully the values of Ubuntu. What such scholars show is just how foolish it is, for the effectiveness of a postcolonial project, not to take into the accounts of learning to improve practice, the most insightful postcolonial theories of the day on the nature of the power relations that are sustaining and reproducing institutionalized racism. I am thinking of improvements in practice that are related to living educational theories in which it bears repeating that:

*Each individual's humanity is ideally expressed through his or her relationship with others and theirs in turn through a recognition of the individual's humanity. Ubuntu means that people are people through other people. It also acknowledges both the rights and the responsibilities of every citizen in promoting individual and societal well-being (Louw, 1998).*

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## APPENDIX

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