

## **Review of Jerome Thamsanqa Gumede's Doctoral Thesis, An Auto-Ethnographic Enquiry: Critical Reflection on the Influences in the Development of a Black African Male Educator**

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### **Abstract**

Jerome says that he hopes that his thesis will change mindsets for those unfamiliar with the life in South Africa during and after Apartheid and in the midst of the HIV&AIDS pandemic. To do this, he demonstrates the influences on the personality of a Black African Male Educator, himself, in a self-study using narrative enquiry, Living Theory methods and auto-ethnography. He describes the negative influence of the formal Apartheid education: "A type of education that had a skewed value system that was anti-personal development, but pro-development of the 'employee/servant/slave mentality.'" (p.11)

He shares his childhood experiences as a herd boy, learner, clerk, teacher-training student, teacher, High School principal and a Governance and Management coordinator in Ugu District. An extensive review of the Republic of South Africa's National Curriculum Statement in Life Orientation Grades 10–12 is included as well as ways in which the beliefs and values in the thesis can help learners to make their beliefs and values explicit in their learning. His personal beliefs and values, principally ubuntu (humanity) and ukhlonipha (respect), and the Critical Cross Field Outcomes of the curriculum are used to demonstrate the relationship between these values and outcomes in the development of his personality.

In addition to the English language text, he has written in isiZulu to demonstrate the value of the mother tongue in expressing inner feelings in auto-ethnographic research. For example, part of the title of Chapter 3 is entitled “Izinkolelo zami, okusemqoka kimi kanye namathalente ekukhiqizeni njengezipho kwabanye My Beliefs, values and talents in the production of gifts to others.” (p. 38)

The thesis brings this reviewer much to think about. It makes the argument that herding (of cattle) and induku (a martial art like karate) are forms of knowledge that have not been included formally in education but have been influential in personality development. Another part of the thesis that was educative for me was his descriptions of the rituals associated with death. He shares that between 2004 and 2008, there were eight HIV&AIDS related deaths in his immediate family (and many others in his neighbourhood), all of which demanded that he attend day-long vigils, funerals and rituals that are performed after the funeral. However, he found the processes productive for his learning, such as time management skills.

In this thesis, he focuses on the impact that beliefs and values have had in his life and that of others and advocates for increased awareness of life as an African, “I hope that my study will help to decolonise the minds (Ngugi, 1986) of those who tend to look down upon everything that is African in origin. I hope to make my readers aware that every culture has a role to play in the universe, and in the development of human personality”. (p. 9)



**Video 1. Jerome Thamsanqa Gumede introducing his thesis**

<https://youtu.be/h2sS2Y2RXww>

## References

**Gumede, J.T.** (2011). An Auto-Ethnographic Enquiry: Critical Reflection on the Influences in the Development of a Black African Male. Retrieved 7 December 2017 from <http://www.actionresearch.net/living/gumede2011.pdf>