

Weave One: My Emergent African Great Story In the Understanding of Weaving a Traditional African Cloth

Introduction to My Living Theory Thesis, Self as Educator in whom the African Voice Surfaced as a “Live” Commitment’, the Meaning of the Traditional African Cloth, Processes of My Emergent Loom and Flow and Form of the Study

“The traditional African weave was not regulated by a specific pattern. The creator of the weave was free to change and alternate the pattern. The goal of the work was to create a large fabric of separate weaves sown together rather than one repeating pattern.”

Introduction

The purpose of this first weave is to introduce my living theory²thesis, which has the overarching title of “My Emergent African Great Story.” This title informs on a transforming self and how I have journeyed as an educator in whom the African Voice³ has surfaced as a “live” commitment.

My living theory thesis can be understood as a response to Donald Schon’s call made in 1995 to develop a new epistemology for the new scholarship (Schon, 1995). The study is the generative result of an intense period of focused action inquiry of some seven years. It is focused on inquiry into the implications of asking, researching and answering my question, “What am I doing to improve communication of the African

² In a living educational theory approach to action research and a human existence, individuals hold their lives to account by producing explanations of their educational influences in their own learning in enquiries of the kind, ‘How am I improving what I am doing?’ They do this in contexts where they are seeking to live the values they use to give life meaning and purpose as fully as they can. The living educational theories of professional educators and other practitioner-researchers usually explain their educational influences in the learning of their students and can also explain their educational influences in the learning of social formations.

³My African Voice is included with a dynamic valuing social living pedagogy inspired by a unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and an engaging dialogical praxis. It is derived from an emergent African humanism (I am because We are) valuing Okri (seeing African through the eyes of a lover) and Charles’ embodied Ubuntu (my living Ubuntu) in complementation with Berry’s Great Work (my Great Passion).

Voice in ways that are authentic, African and, at the same time, understandable to non-Africans, and to the academy?"

I use living theory methodology (Whitehead 2009) with narrative, to create my emergent loom, explicating meanings of embodied expressions of values, as if weaving a traditional African Cloth, representative of "My Emergent African Great Story" ("My Unique Cloth"). In this way I act to know the influence in my learning, living and working, through self-inquiry into my self-identity, my values, experiences, attitudes, ways of working and own claims to know the influences in my own learning, that of others and social formations.

My Emergent African Great Story shows how I set out to inquire into the "makings and un-makings in the making of me", seeking to affirm the African Voice in my professional practice and to improve my professional practice.

However, inquiry into experiences in the Sankofa Learning Centre, though evidencing success, also highlights issues of concern that grew and impacted the development of the initiative and my own health.

My health condition though important masks underlying issues in my learning, living and working, which presents as "stuckness." In challenging this "stuckness", through engagement with living theory methodology I inform on how through engagement with Scharmer's (2007) "Presencing," I discover "being and becoming" in my learning, living and working, whilst reaching out for my fullest co-creative future possibilities.

It is in this way that I was challenged, valuing Scharmer, to apply a second type and source of learning, enquire into my response levels for behavioural change and utilise living theory tools to facilitate access to deep levels of my knowing (Scharmer 2000; 2007).

In my self-inquiry I was also motivated from the sentient awareness of my African birthing⁴ to suspend the traditional influences of the Sankofa bird and Maroon weighted in the past and to rediscover the African Voice, “seeing Africa through the eyes of a lover”, “caring for the Africa in me” (Okri 2004). Alongside this was the appreciation of my living (embodied) Ubuntu (included with Ukuhlonipha, meaning “respect” of the all encompassing kind) valuing Charles (2007).

Further, I was inspired to embrace the guiding principles of intimacy, viability and celebration of the Great Work, valuing Berry (1999), Swimme (1994) and Tyson (2009). This is now my Great Passion.

This is how I embraced the need for profound change in my learning, living and working and set about the reconfiguration of personal and universal dynamics. The ontological commitments extant comprise the foundations for the evolving of an inclusional practice as I enjoin commitment to profound life change to the challenge of rediscovery of the African Voice valuing Okra (2004) and Charles (2007) and embrace the “Great Passion” valuing Berry (1990), Swimme (1992) and Tyson (2004).

I use video narratives to evidence my embodiment of my receptivity, reflectivity and responsiveness, as I learn and communicate my learning in accord with dynamic

⁴African Birthing: My rites of passage event at the Elmina slave fort

relational values and understanding/s. Included in the latter are 'a unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and an engaging dialogical praxis', comprising my 'valuing social living pedagogy.'

A unique purposeful recognition is the idea that I must give attention to each person, as if they and I are the only persons in the room. I must appreciate that each person has a unique and great story to tell. I must be aware that the telling is not only in the person's words. It is in their embodied values and their "unsaid" actions. And I must show that curiosity, engagement, as if fascinated and want to be in their company and know the source of their greatness. It is as if I am in their company and I am richer for that experience. This is part of the Great Work.

An enhanced relational mutuality is the notion that mutuality exists. However, an enhanced relational mutuality is the having or communicating the positive intent to build relationship from a heightened/conscious sense of awareness of the others' story and need. That is, an awareness to hear what the other is saying (even beyond words) with positive intent (sometimes suspending stored memories that have impaired/stalled relationships) in the interests of human flourishing. I sometimes described it as the place that I go to for resource, empowerment, to have that difficult conversation with someone you dearly love. It is the qualities that I use in this event that I extend to those with whom a loving relationship may not be apparent. However, I say that this does not stop me from loving, because "I am because We are." This is a tenet of my living Ubuntu.

An engaging dialogical praxis is the use of story (narrative) to have dialogue (affording unique purposeful recognition and communicating and enhanced

relational mutuality, to be able to give a collective account, to collaborate in enquiry, and co-create relevant solutions to issues requiring new / novel ways of learning, re-invention and regeneration in valuing behaviours and a gate way to deep levels of curiosity, knowing and the “magic” of unity in diversity. This is a transformatory perspective seeking positive and viable (sustainable) change.

A “unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and an engaging dialogical praxis”, is my embrace of Ukuhlonipha, meaning “respect” of the all encompassing kind, which is at the heart of my “valuing social living pedagogy”.

It is my valuing social pedagogy that is prototyped in challenging “stuckness” in my learning, living and working and in the nature of influence of the African Voice symbolised in the Sankofa bird and traditional Maroon, in my evolving relationship with my father (now passed) / and family, and in co-creating with black boys Mandiani’s heal, protect and create strategies toward transforming their ways of being and the mainstreaming of the rediscovered African Voice.

However, the study goes beyond this point, for it is the appreciative value of the African Voice (found in my work in Mandiani and now included in my valuing social living pedagogy, undergirded with the notions of to heal, to protect and to create) that is foundational in inspiring movement out from the marginalised and into the dynamic margins where transformation occurs. In Berkshire Consultancy Limited (BCL) I communicate the vitality of this Voice in diverse contexts.

Further, in retreat on the Accelerate programme for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff and disabled staff, I enquire into the source of my inspiration and social

relationships. Engaging with Scharmer's (2007) "field structure of attention"⁵ - path to social emergence" I gain an insight into the dynamic surfaces of The Paut Neteru⁶, and The Tree of Life is revealed (Amen 1996).

The Tree of Life is an African initiation system leading to a conception of the Divine Self as both including and included by the Divinity of Nature. In this way I "behold" a vital bicultural complementation of "field" – as limitless pool of intangible space and "cloth" – as tangible energetic surfacing. In my inclusion of the Paut Neteru/Tree of Life on the loom (included in the African Voice), in complementation with Scharmer's Theory U, I am able to employ a diverse-sourced sound technology for change. It is in this way that in the 'space that cannot be cut' (Rayner 2011) that the African Voice dissolves freeing the symbols of the Sankofa bird and traditional Maroon that had been suspended. In the dissolving of the African Voice, now included with the Paut Neteru, new dialogue with Whitehead's living contradictions (Whitehead 1989), now appreciated as living differences are considered. Whitehead's notion had been a challenge over the course of my studies. However, in this re-engagement with Whitehead's "living contradictions" (Whitehead 1989), I find a valuable way of communicating the nature of my relationally dynamic and responsive living standards of judgment. It appreciates self as transforming,

⁵Field Structure of Attention: Otto Scharmer in explaining "the field structure of attention" informs that social action finds its origin in a specific source of your attention. He sees four structures for your attention:

- *I-in-me: acting from the center inside one's (organizational) boundaries;*
 - *I-in-it: acting from the periphery of one's (organizational) boundaries;*
 - *I-in-you: acting from beyond one's (organizational) boundaries;*
 - *I-in-now: acting from the emerging sphere across one's open boundaries.*
- The boundaries are determined by the system (the scale) you are referring to."

⁶ The Paut Neteru is a system of initiation. We all start at branch ten, the physical body symbolised by Geb, and through life, with the appropriate cultivation we move progressively up *The Paut Neteru*. The purpose of each step in this "graduated system is to move ever closer to the understanding of the unity within diversity, a knowing possible only through the cultivation of the shared seed-like God characteristics of omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence" (Norman Harris, PhD. *The Paut Neteru as an African Worldview Paradigm*, 2011).

comprising a complete self and incomplete self, in dynamic interaction (more than contradicting, complementing too), making for a 'wholesome unity', and appreciating 'living I as integrated opposites' (now a 'living I' that comprises mutually inclusive complements and so sustains diversity within and as an inclusion of the "space that cannot be cut" (Rayner 2011). It is in further engagement with Rayner that I make this advance in which I find inescapably that my self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood, dynamically distinct but not definitively discrete, as the dissolved African Voice surfaces the prospect of my own freeing. The challenge and dynamism of Whitehead's novel idea (Whitehead 1989) inspired my origination and is an important milestone, signal event, in "the makings and un-makings in the making of me."

It is also in this way that new dialogue with Rayner's natural inclusion is appreciated (Rayner 2011) now that my dynamic and grounded valuing social living pedagogy is included with the Paut Neteru. I engage with Rayner's innovation to attend to residual self-limiting mental models. This is also motivated by my rediscovered African Voice. In the "space that cannot be cut", I affirm an optimistic life position of I'm Ok – You're OK moving from I'm OK – You're not OK, (Harris 1995), and with this conscious intent and new vantage point I find peace in imagining the universe luminously, as an energetic inclusion of darkness throughout light and light in darkness.

Cloth Making in the African Tradition

I have chosen the medium of cloth making, because in African communities textile traditions are of great import. This is so, even though other traditional media, such as, music, dance, or speech seem more copiously documented.

However, research shows with archaeological findings of drawings of looms in tombs in Egypt dated at around 2000 C.E (Clarke 2003) a long tradition of cloth weaving. Archaeologists also evidence findings of linen remnants in Meroe, in northern Sudan and cotton cloth remnants in Egypt from the fifth-century (Clarke 2003). Further there are findings of cloth fragments or parchment fragments that date to the ninth century BCE at the Igbo Kudu sites, in Nigeria (Clarke 2003) and to the eleventh century in the Tellem caves in Mali (Gerdes 1999; Clarke 2003). This is evidence of a tradition of some longevity and substance.

Cochrane (2009) writes:

As many scholars (e.g. Bauman 1992, Keane 1997) have described, telling histories is a way of attributing significance and value to both the past and the present. This heritage gives the objects weavers make greater social value, and gives the weavers themselves greater social value in their community. (Cochrane 2009, p. 9)

In the traditional weaving of cloth diverse materials were used in diverse African communities that included cotton, camel and sheep wool, raffia palm, jute, flax and silk. Predating the development of woven textiles in many parts of Africa though are the traditions of bark cloth production and design. It is a method now rarely used, but some communities use bark cloth, as beddings and cultural dressing. The cloth adorns walls and posts in cultural sites and ceremonies, including shrines. For example, a king of the Baganda or Kabaka, dresses in bark cloth for all cultural functions (Ipulet 2007, pp. 44-47). Early clothing in Africa was also made from treated animal hides, furs, and feathers (Clarke 2003; Khaminwa 2008).

However, through weaving a connection is made with past and present. This is so, even though distinctions between present and past weavers come from the materials

used and objects created. For example, cotton has replaced palm leaves as the most-used material for clothes and bags, in Senegal, yet cotton weaving can still be called 'original' weaving. Cochrane notes that:

New materials do not erase any authenticity drawn from craft's heritage. Weaving has high value because it has a history, but also because it is continuously practised today, among the same communities, regardless of the era and the era's demands. (Cochrane 2009, p. 8)

It is argued that if being modern is serving present-day needs, weavers could not do this without their ancestry.

Throughout Africa vegetable and mineral dyes are used and they include extracts of indigo plants, cola nuts, camwood trees and redwood trees (Clarke 2003; Khaminwa 2008). Dalziel notes that in the Western Sudan "karan dafi" was used to "dye the wool of the Macina sheep for the embroidery in red-brown and amaranth shades which decorates the cloths and rugs of Djenne and Timbuktu" (Dalziel 1926, pp. 225-238).

Two of the most popular dyeing techniques in diverse communities in Africa are tie and dye and resist dye. However, though cloths are highly patterned and coloured there are also plain woven cloths. They are for leisure use or they can be decorated. Cloth decorating techniques include appliqué designs, embroidery and dyeing (Clarke 2003; Khaminwa 2008).

These techniques are evidenced in my living theory thesis. In my living theory thesis the appliqué technique is used to situate symbols, such as the Sankofa bird, the Maroon and the Tree of Life, and an array of audio-visual clips that afford the sharing

of understandings of the unique surfacings of my experiences in the creation of My Unique Cloth, in its multimedia presentational form.

Embroidery is used as I selvage to secure the Weave (make permeable borders) in the ornamenting/beautifying of the cloth. Dyeing adds diverse colours at every stage in the creation of My Unique Cloth. Each of these techniques proffers an opportunity for unique communal and individual applications in the traditional African cloth. Each method offers a lasting way to record family events such as birth, marriage, geographical location, and spiritual dedication

Shapes, Script and Charms

Shapes as religious symbols, protective script and charms are also prominent in the African textile tradition. For example, the diamond pattern is symbolic of the cycles of life. Each point representing a stage in life: birth, life, death, and rebirth. The circle shape is similarly representative of this cycle.

Protective scripts, in language or symbol form, convey the knowledge, power, and genius of the quilter/weaver and are usually stitched into patterns that are considered sacred and protective. During slavery, members of the Underground Railroad use quilts to send messages. Log Cabin quilts made with black cloth were hung to mark a safe house of refuge. Folk tales also inform on how some quilts marked escape routes out of a plantation and others the stars as a night-time map through the country to freedom.

Hopkinson's *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* (1995) is such a tale (Hopkinson 1995). However, Tobin and Dobard, in *Hidden in Plain View, A Secret Story of Quilts*

and the Underground Railroad, presents research that a secret code really did exist (Tobin & Dobard 2000). My mind remains open, particularly as there are so many stories of the slaves genius, so whether fact or fiction some remarkable events occurred in obtaining freedom.

In the title of each of my Weaves, I would not go as far as to say that they contain protective script, however the energy that has been expended for the titles to both introduce the individual Weaves and proffer deeper meaning linked to the traditional African Cloth, has been important. I wanted to sustain this link as I journeyed in the creation of My Emergent African Great Story. Communicated, for example, in titles are the uniqueness of My Cloth, its ancestral connection, the inclusion of community and family, evidence of resilience, co-creation, the infusion of the love that flows through it, its appreciating value, its inspiration to heal and its spirituality in the embrace of life affirming ways.

The charms are an array of beads, buttons, coins, claws, feathers and shells that are enclosed, or attached to clothing to imbue them with protective or healing powers. In my own imagination my charms would be the Sankofa bird pendant worn with my dashiki with the Sankofa bird printed large. There is also my Mandiani cap presented to me by young people on the project. Irrespective of the occasion, I get a special feel when I wear these items. I also feel people are my charms. Some are always with me to call on for protection or just to be lucky in my memory or photos in my wallet. The spirituality or mythical meaning in traditional African cloth making is important.

Cochrane (2009), for example, tells the story that was told to her of the first weavers of cloth in the Poponguine region in Senegal, the Manjaks. They lived in the forest

and listened well to learn the craft. The Manjaks learned to weave from the jinn, under great danger and with great bravery. Jinn are creatures of fire referenced in the Qur'an. Their often-unpredictable behavior makes any encounter with them particularly dangerous. The weavers who survived the encounter had valuable knowledge, which they shared with others, so that they would all have a way to keep themselves warm by the cloth that they wove (Cochrane 2009, p. 9).

In many African communities the responsibilities for the different stages of cloth production are divided on the basis of gender. However, the tasks vary by region and there have been changes over time. For example, the women in Mali used to dye the bogolanfini mud-cloth, however present day it is mostly the task of young men (Imperato 2006, pp. 125-126). Indigo dyeing among the Yoruba and the Soninke of West Africa is the task of women. Amongst the Hausa traditionally, fabric dyeing among has been the task of men (Dalziel 1926, pp. 225-238).

There is also a long history of commercial textile and clothing production and in Tunisia as early as the tenth century C.E., weavers and dyers had organised guilds to protect their business. Some places were renowned for their quality or patronage. For example, the dyeing pits of Kano in northern Nigeria were famed in the fifteenth century and the city's political elite was important clients for the weavers' and dyers' (Whittlesley 1937). These pits are still in operation today.

Royal patronage as exemplified in the fine raffia-stitched tie and dye produced for King Njoya of Baumun of Cameroon and the involvement of the Asante court in Kumasi (in present-day Ghana) in the supervision of the production of silk kente cloth demonstrates the importance of cloth weaving in African traditions (Blier 2003,

pp. 125-200). Kings would confer prestige and importance to the cloth by the range they choose. They would even compare themselves by how many robes they had and the material. Many different types of patterns were formed in places that specialised in weaving. Textiles were also important as a form of identity with each people/nation having their own unique patterns (Blier 2003).

Dr. Paulus Gerdes, previously professor of mathematics at the Eduardo Mondlane University and at the Universidade Pedagógica in Mozambique, presents a comprehensive work stream on mathematics education emerging from African cultural practices that is instructive (Gerdes 2008). He has been documenting patterns in African weaving and basketry, and the broader implications of these patterns in education and society for some considerable period. It is suggested that basket weaving is arguably and probably as old, and perhaps even older than fabric weaving as an anthropological activity.

However, what is of significance here, is the connection that weaving is an anthropological activity, and not only material weaving, but also weaving as a metaphor for our epistemological and ontological and axiological understandings. I also find this connection important as I situate the telling of My Emergent African Great Story, as if weaving a traditional African large fabric, which is full of colour, of diverse patterns and meaning, informing on my background, where I am from and my values and seeking to give evidence of my unique talent and knowing.

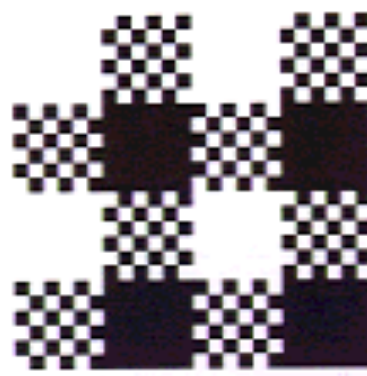
Gerdes notes that the first generations of students who came, after Mozambique's independence in 1975, to the mathematics teacher education programmes believed that mathematics was something 'alien', not rooted in African cultures (Gerdes 2008,

p. 3). However, stimulated by 'cultural rebirth', research on mathematical ideas embedded in cultural activities started. Since then, exploration of mathematical ideas derived from varied African cultural practices has featured strongly in teacher education praxis and research. Gerdes (2008) in *Exploration of technologies, emerging from African cultural practice in mathematics education* notes that:

'Exploring educationally mathematical ideas embedded in and derived from technologies in various African cultural practices may contribute further to bridge the gap between 'home' and 'school' culture...examples come from cultural practices as varied as storytelling, basket making, salt production, and mat, trap and hat weaving' (p. 1).

The examples that Gerdes presents are diverse and traverse many fields of study, and in my own studies I cannot wholly reflect his great contribution, even though that is what it is. I proffer two connections of import to my study (there are many more) related to cloth weaving and storytelling. I have already noted above the eleventh century findings of cloth fragments in the Tellem caves. Gerdes advances my learning in the understanding of symmetric and planar patterns in the cloth in the textiles woven by the Tellem people.

Figure 2: Tellem Cloths



left: Textiles woven by the Tellem people in an area that is now in the Republic of Mali, for example, feature intricate combinations of white and indigo cotton threads to produce symmetric strip and planar patterns of various types.

Gerdes (2001) also analyses the mathematical properties of traditional ideograms and pictograms of the Tchokwe population in Angola. He explains that the drawings

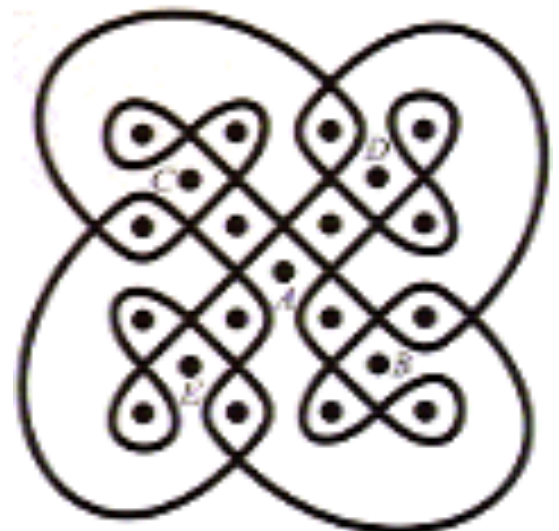
were traditionally created in sand, and were *“used to illustrate stories the men told at evening gatherings, around the communal fires in the village or at hunting camps. Young boys would learn the easier stories and accompanying designs, but only the storytellers, who were highly esteemed for their knowledge, and formed an elite, knew many more”* (p. 1).

“Sadly”, Gerdes continued, “colonialism and slave trade caused most knowledge of the patterns to be lost. Some missionaries and ethnographers saved a few hundred from oblivion, collecting designs and the accompanying stories to keep their knowledge alive” (p. 1).

Below is a typical Tchokwe pictogram of a very particular class of curves that Gerdes call "mirror curves." These curves share interesting mathematical properties, and decided to define the class of designs they generate as "Lunda-designs." The Tchokwe are descendants of the Lunda people, and live predominantly in a region today called Lunda. Hence, the name Lunda-design, for Gerdes, honours the Lunda people as his source of inspiration.

Figure 3: Lunda-designs

right: The following sand drawing illustrates a fable: Sambálu, the rabbit (positioned at point B), discovers a salt mine (point A). Immediately, the lion (point C), the jaguar (point D), and the hyena (point E) demand possession, asserting the rights of the strong. The rabbit, affirming the inviolable rights of the weak, then quickly makes a fence to isolate the mine from all usurpers. Note that only from B can one go to point A, without going beyond the line that represents the fence.



The sand drawing above also tells a story.

Gerdes work evidenced an increasing enthusiasm, engagement and growing socio-cultural self-confidence of pupils, students and teachers in mathematics education.

There is a great deal more that I could say of Gerdes work which over the years has been given high praise for combining in an ingenious way the study of geometry with the visual arts and presenting an important challenge and stimulant to the future of mathematics education in Africa (Gerdes, 1996).

These challenges included the demystification of mathematics in relation to gender and ethnicity, and dissolving the borders between mathematics and popular culture. In his own words though Gerdes (1998) noted that African peoples “are facing the urgent need to awaken and nurture their magnificent creative potential for the benefit of all” (Gerdes 1998, p. backcover). This is my inspiration as I journey, I certainly hope like Gerdes that I am contributing to the valuing, revival and development of African traditions (in the African Voice) and their incorporation into education (learning, living and working).

Powell (1999) says of Paul Gerdes and his work:

“Through him, we learn of the diversity, richness, and pleasure of mathematical ideas found in Sub-Saharan Africa... one will find a fresh approach to mathematical inquiry as well as encounter a subtle challenge to Eurocentric discourses concerning the when, where, who, and why of mathematics” (Gerdes 1999, p. xii).

African Textile Tradition in the Diaspora

The African textile tradition also travelled with the slaves to the Americas (including

the Caribbean) and is part of a rich African cultural heritage. Many slaves were skilled in the art of weaving, and this skill increased their value to the slave owner. Textiles were traded throughout the Americas and the Caribbean, and the traditions of each distinct region were recognisable, but over time they became intermixed.

Figure 4: Black Family Album (Wahlman 2001)



Vlach (1981) writes:

“textile crafts were evidently a central feature of the slaves’ daily routine. Fiber preparation, spinning, and weaving were such familiar chores that many black women, as a matter of course, learned the special skills required” (pp. 149-161).

Twining (1983) gives information about the significance of colours selected by quilt makers in which she includes the “cross” design in the quilts made by women of the Caribbean and South America “where re-affirmations of West African culture are stronger and more obvious” (pp. 66-67).

In Africa today the textile tradition remains strong and weaving as an activity sustains its importance in the African Diaspora. However, it is the point made earlier that traditional cloths were unique to the people/nation/background and in their making, patterns and naming, communicated were diverse meanings, including

spiritual and mythical meanings (Spring 1989, p. 3) that I give focus to here, informing on my own diverse background.

My Own Diverse Background

This first weave also introduces me. I was born in Trinidad and Tobago, so “My Emergent African Great Story” includes historical and real travel through slavery, colonialism and post-colonial experiences. I now live in the United Kingdom, and this means also included is my experiences in Mother England. Up to the age of ten I lived in twin island republic of Trinidad and Tobago and except for a short sojourn in Jamaica of five years (1990 – 1995) I have lived in the United Kingdom for over forty years since the age of ten years.

My own diverse background (with its attendant bicultural experiences) is a significant contribution to My Cloth. Interestingly, in each of these three countries (Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and Jamaica) I can make a rightful to claim to citizenship (by birth, naturalisation and marriage respectively). However, I make the choice to be African (or maybe it has chosen me).

Emerging from my living inquires of the influences on who I am, my values, experiences, attitude, ways of working and how I evaluate my success, it is the appreciation of the embrace, and now embodiment of the rediscovered African Voice that is my powerful source and resource in my learning, living and working.

This of course, is not to deny the influence of people, places and living experiences of the countries in which I have lived or to demean their significance and impact on who I am, how I live my values and the nature of how I am in the world (my way of being).

Figure 5: Plantation Life, Wahlman 2001



Indeed, at least in my own eyes, I can be 'Trini', be British, be reasonably Jamaican and in the reconfiguration of my universe objectives, be a citizen of the world and I am each of them in a moment. Still, it is my sense that it has been my 'choice' to be African, which centres me, whilst I appreciate my diverse background.

Kwame Nkrumah is reputed to have made the statement, "I am African, not because I was born in Africa, but because Africa is born in me." However, I have not found any evidence to confirm this association. Still, I have that sense of Africa is born in me and I can own the statement associated with Nkrumah as a personal and

passionate truth for me.

Okri asserts, “Africa is our dreamland, is our spiritual homeland. There is a realm inside every human being that is Africa. We all have an Africa within us” (Okri 2004, p. 1). Again, I can fully embrace what Okri says as a sentimental and soulful proposition.

However, Tyson says, that we should recognise:

“... that the very molecules that make up your body, the atoms that construct the molecules, are traceable to the crucibles that were once the centers of high mass stars that exploded their chemically rich guts into the galaxy, enriching pristine gas clouds with the chemistry of life. So that we are all connected to each other biologically, to the earth chemically and to the rest of the universe atomically. That’s kinda cool! That makes me smile and I actually feel quite large at the end of that. It’s not that we are better than the universe, we are part of the universe. We are in the universe and the universe is in us.”(The Universe, Beyond the Big Bang 2009)

I am with Tyson’s scientific viewpoint too, because I also feel “kinda cool” to know that I am so well connected biologically, chemically and atomically.

So, in my living, learning and working I can now appreciate that Africa is in everyone of us and that the universe is in us too, and that when I say that I am African and embrace world citizenship, I do so in a dynamic, inclusive and optimistic way. On opening my ‘Facebook’ page the following verse introduces me.

I am
*I am my African ancestors
 Evidence of a unique way of being in the world
 I am the slave on the auction block – not one of the captors
 I am there to be sold
 I am the divided world
 Where hate is the only offer
 Yet behold
 I am the future
 I am life’s renewing
 Creating hope - Inspiring
 That’s the nature of my commitment - my call*

For I and for all
Ian Phillips (2009)

Therefore, as creator of my novel and unique Cloth, it is my self-identifying as an educator who made the choice to embody commitment to the African Voice that has been foundational. However, over the course of this study, it is with this self identification that I have had engagement through living theory methodology in its scaffolding, beholding and dissolving in asking, researching and answering the question: What am I doing to improve communication of my African way of being and becoming in ways that are authentic, African and, at the same time, understandable to non-Africans, and to the academy.'

Indeed, "living theory methodology" included with narrative would be my loom to facilitate action inquiry and be put to expansive use in my study.

As noted earlier, fabric weaving is of some longevity and substance in Africa and so is loom use respectively. Across Africa there are diverse looms in use in traditional weaving. For example there are ground and handlooms in use. However, the two main kinds of textile looms in Africa for traditional weaving are the single-heddle loom and the double-heddle loom. The single-heddle loom is used for weaving wide strips of cloth and the double-heddle loom is used for narrow pieces. The double-heddle loom is generally used by male weavers to create richly textured cloth in coloured threads. The narrow strips created are then typically sewn together, and cut into patterns for clothing (Adams & Holdcraft 1992; Khaminwa 2008)..

My Emergent African Great Story is a richly textured cloth and coloured threads are employed. The Weave comprising My Unique Cloth will be sewn together in

creating my large fabric. So, in embracing that the traditional African fabric weave is full of large shapes and strong colours, is asymmetric and not regulated by a specific pattern, and that it incorporates multiple patterning, improvises, utilises appliqué techniques, and is used for record keeping. It has been my challenge to re-discover threads in my African Voice and intertwine them in novel form in creating my African Great Story.

The use of large shapes includes the Sankofa bird, the Maroon, the Tree of Life, the Field (Scharmer 2000) and the Space that Cannot be Cut (Rayner 2011). The bright colours are represented by my use of the rich and deep colours of living theory methodology, the kaleidoscope of colour that is my cosmopolitan background and the fluorescent inserts and luminous presence that is my storytelling and audacious being in my study.

Further, there are places in my Emergent African Great Story where I break pattern in the weaves. Tradition has it that the number of patterns or changes in pattern of a specific cloth, in African textiles, can often directly correlate to the owner's status. Prestige, power, status and wealth have traditional importance for royalty and priests. The traditions of improvisation and multiple patterning also protect the quilter/weaver from anyone copying their quilts/weaves. These traditions allow for a strong sense of ownership and creativity. It is this second point, which has meaning for me. It is not that I am against royalty and priests, but I believe each person has a great story to tell. It is how we bring our own uniqueness into the room, enable our unique voices to be heard and in collaboration celebrate our humanity, our complementation, and our intimacy (I am because We are – is a distinguishing quality of Ubuntu).

It is also believed in some African traditions that “evil” travels in straight lines, and breaks in a pattern or a thread is used to confuse those spirits bearing malcontent and to slow them down. It is also for reason that the spiritual symbols and charms are integrated into the Weaves to protect the interiority of My Unique Cloth. This break in pattern tradition is highly recognisable in Africa and Diaspora in the improvisation of “European” patterns.

Further, when significant developments occur in my study there are breaks in pattern. For example, my move from Sankofa, my African birthing and my move into the private sector are breaks in pattern. It is in this same way that I see my integrous embrace of living theory methodology (Whitehead 2009), engagement with Scharmer (Scharmer 2000) and rediscovery of the Paut Neteru (Amen 1990).

In my living theory thesis, such occurrences are important for it may mean it has been necessary to change direction, retrace my steps, reflect, speed up, slow down, be still or leap forward as a result of new learning, insights and opportunities. It is also in this way that I show challenge of unsatisfying circumstances and valuing Scharmer suspend, redirect, reframe, let go and let come, and as I journey demonstrate creativity (presencing, crystalising, prototyping and embedding) putting into practice new learning (Scharmer 2000).

Additionally, I feel foundationally that that this living theory thesis, as a study, is a break in pattern, in that in its response to Donald Schon (1995) call for new scholarship, it is seeking to introduce a unique African Voice into the academy. It is an appreciative African Voice, celebrating a valuing social living pedagogy fitting for

this time, proffering a vital bicultural complementation, living a “I” that inescapably includes neighbourhood and audaciously imagining the universe luminously.

Indeed, I feel that from the time that I set out to inquire into ‘the makings and un-makings in the makings of me’, an educator embodying the African Voice (Phillips 2000), focused on who I am (my identity), my values, experiences, attitude, ways of working and claim to know influences in my learning, living and working and that of others and social formations that I have re-invented myself. It is in this way that my loom (living theory methodology toolkit) has been put to use in the creation of My Emergent African Great Story.

Here, as I think about commencing the Weave, I conjecture the processes of the loom and its application in creating My Unique Cloth.

Significant Events in My Living Theory Thesis and My Loom

In My African Great Story, my unique cloth, comprising diverse Weaves knitted or sewn together, evidenced are some of the most significant events (warp threads), in the makings and un-makings in the making of me and the nature of the influences (weft threads) coursing through my living narrative/s.

These significant events include my foundational early life experiences in colonial Trinidad and Tobago in a loving extended family, in receipt of a good education, believing in Roman Catholicism, embracing the onset of nationhood and living in a celebratory culture of Calypso, Pan and Mas. I conjecture on a life position of I’m OK – You’re OK (Harris 1976).

The significant events also include my being a stranger in my own education, family, community and work in Mother England. Strange schooling experiences encourage conjecture of a life position of I'm not OK – You're OK (Harris 1976). However, in embrace of disadvantage and rebellion in community I conjecture the life position of I'm not OK – You're not OK, prior to moving to the life position of I'm OK – You're not OK. This is as a result of finding embrace in the African Voice (my African humanism), and feeling at the time a sense of injustice in how the African community is devalued, neglected and marginalised (I explore this life position more fully later in the study).

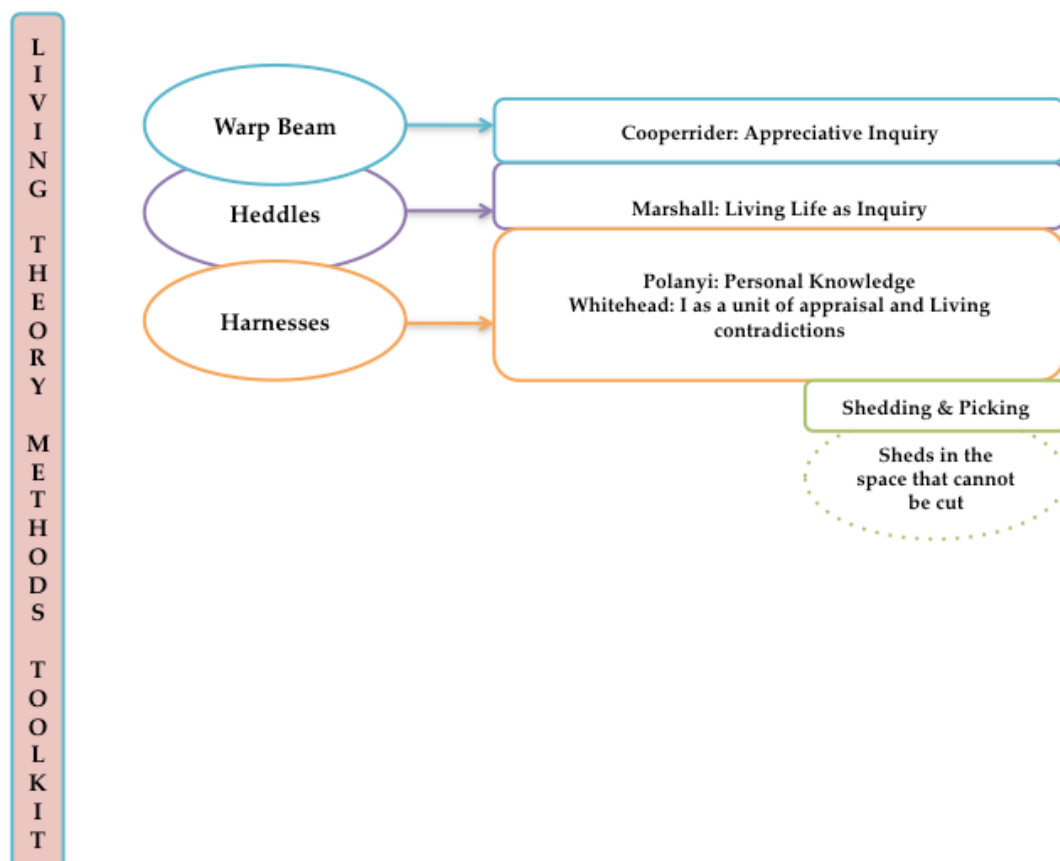
Further, significant events my living family and community on my SOS sojourn in post independent Jamaica, appreciating the Sankofa Great Story as a Maroon Narrative, my integrous engagement with Living Theory methodology and identifying 'Stuckness' in my learning, living and working.

Additionally, as significant events are my building of a life affirming relationship with my Father, My Rites of Passage at Elmina Castle, my appreciating the African Voice as a way of Being and Becoming, Embrace of the Great Passion, and working with black boys to co-create Mandiani's heal protect and create strategies to transform their ways of being. Still, there is more with my finding appreciative value in the African Voice, a vital bicultural complementation in embrace of Scharmer's "path to social emergence" and the Paut Neteru's "Tree of Life" and engagement with Whitehead's living contradictions (living differences). Finally, there is appreciation of Self-identity as naturally including neighbourhood in Space Cannot Be Cut (Rayner 2011) and affirmation of an optimistic life position taking my audacious attitude to my inquiry and imagining the universe luminously.

It is these signal events to which my living theory methodology toolkit (represented as the loom and its integral components) has been used as a quality process to interpret, reflect and act, valuing Marshall's and Reason's "taking an attitude of inquiry" (Marshall & Reason 1994) to interweave the signal events extant in my living narrative, and surface the influence of my living values in my own learning, living and working, and that of others and in social living formations.

The First Stage in the Creation of My Living Theory Methodology Toolkit (My Loom): Warp beam (appreciative inquiry); Heddles (living life as inquiry) and Harnesses (personal knowledge, unit of appraisal and living contradictions) combine

Figure 6: First Stage Processes of My Loom



The processes of the loom include the warp beam "winding and unwinding" the warp threads (the signal events). It is in this way, that accounting for the signal

events in my living narrative, and the revealing of best qualities are appreciated and valued in the “appreciative inquiry model” (Cooperrider, 2005). Appreciative Inquiry is the study of what gives life to human systems when they are at their best. It is a personal/organisation development methodology based on the assumption that inquiry into and dialogue about strengths, successes, values, hopes and dreams is in itself transformational (Cooperrider, 2005, p8).

Each of the warp threads as it unwinds, passes through the eyes of heddles connected to harnesses. However, the number of harnesses used, and which ones bring what heddles into play is determined by the weave’s pattern and the complexity of the weave. In my weaving metaphor the heddles are Marshall’s notion of living life as inquiry (Marshall, 1999), which challenged me to increase my inner and outer arcs of attention, grow in awareness of the stories I tell about myself and the world and to recognise the nature of my walk (purposes and perspectives) and talk (social discourses) in meaning-making and the shaping of my values (Marshall, 1999, p2).

Marshall’s (1999) ‘living life as inquiry’ complements and is complemented by Cooperrider’s, (2005) “Appreciative Inquiry”, and informs and is informed by Polanyi’s (1958, 1998) “personal knowledge,” Whitehead’s (1989) “I as a unit of appraisal” and “living contradictions” and my own engaging dialogical praxis (my storytelling), each facilitates and co-facilitates inquiry and the gathering of evidence relating to the makings and un-makings of me extant in my living narrative.

Marshall’s ‘image of living continually in process, adjusting, seeing what emerges, bringing things into question’ (p.3) was received as if it was an

intimate comment on how I had lived, and how I am in this moment as I progress my thesis. For example, this is seen in how I would recall experiences of life in colonial Trinidad and Tobago, and inquire as to what is its meaning relating to the event, feeling or call to action in the present. Marshall (1999) says:

“By living life as inquiry I mean a range of beliefs, strategies and ways of behaving which encourage me to treat little as fixed, finished, clear-cut. Rather I have an image of living continually in process, adjusting, seeing what emerges, bringing things into question. This involves, for example, attempting to open to continual question what I know, feel, do and want, and finding ways to engage actively in this questioning and process its stages. It involves seeking to monitor how what I do relates to what I espouse, and to review this explicitly, possibly in collaboration with others, if there seems to be a mismatch. It involves seeking to maintain curiosity, through inner and outer arcs of attention, about what is happening and what part I am playing in creating and sustaining patterns of action, interaction and non-action. (Drawing on systemic analysis I might then, for example, explore what is motivating how I keep things the same or how to expand my behavioural and goal flexibility.) It also involves seeking to pay attention to the ‘stories’ I tell about myself and the world and recognising that these are all constructions, influenced by my purposes and perspectives and by social discourses which shape meanings and values.”(p.3)

In influencing how the heddles follow the ins and outs of what appear to the eye as solid ‘threads’ but are understood more deeply as labyrinthine flow channels of space in space, the harnesses raise and lower my attention in the creation of the weave. The heddles in synchronicity raise and lower the warp yarns vertically to create forms, openings, called sheds to enable dynamic intertwining of the threads in the space that cannot be cut. The creation of the sheds is called shedding.

The harnesses at the outset are Polanyi’s notion of personal knowledge my valuing of his notions of focal and tacit awareness (Polanyi M., 1958, 1998). Whitehead’s ideas, particularly those relating to the individual’s explanation of their learning as a

unit of appraisal and his notion of 'I as a living contradiction' (Whitehead, 1989) are also amongst the harnesses. Both Polanyi and Whitehead reined me in to self-inquire into the nature of the influence in my living narrative, and involved me in my own freeing to express my own influence in my learning, living and working, with others and in social formations, as a knowledge creator. It is this notion of "I as a knowledge creator", that for me which is at the heart of Whitehead's (1989) ideas on "living theories."

Whitehead (2010) says a "living theory is an explanation produced by an individual for their educational influence in their own learning, in the learning of others and in the learning of the social formation in which they live and work" (p. 1).

This emphasises the importance of the uniqueness of each individual's living educational theory (Whitehead, 1989) in improving practice and generating knowledge. It also emphasises the importance of individual creativity in contributing to improving practice and knowledge from within historical and cultural opportunities and constraints in the social contexts of the individual's life and work.

However, though 'living contradictions' challenged me to inquire into how I lived my values in ways that are congruent in my living, learning and working they also encouraged me to position, reposition or change position in my learning, living and working to ensure alignment with my living epistemological standards of judgement.

This is how harnesses are facilitated to play their part in the loom. It is as a creative instrument that 'living contradictions' has been used in helping me to give

explanation and find new meaning and understanding in the communication of my African Voice.

Nature of Influences/Living Values (the Weft) in My African Great Story: Roman Catholicism and African Humanism

It is in this way that I have found the influences of an insistent Roman Catholicism and dynamic African Humanism coursing through some of the most significant events of my life. Living theory methods motivated investigation and brought awareness of their critical impact in my living narrative.

Roman Catholicism heavily overlaid my 'foundational early life experiences in colonial Trinidad and Tobago', and impacted strongly through most of my schooling years in Mother England. It has remained an insistent quality, though in a less powerful form far removed from how it appeared in my early learning, living and working.

In my early living experiences Roman Catholicism had a foundational influence. In *Weave Two*, "Acting to Know 'I' in My Cloth: Engaging with Living Theory Methodology Included with Narrative", I give account of the nature of its impact and its status in my home. I also explore the waning of Roman Catholicism as a powerful source in my living and learning as I embrace a dynamic African Humanism. This inter-relationship is also considered in the story *Granny and I Adversaries* in Appendix Five) informing on my embrace of African Humanism and the move away from the hold of religion. Interestingly, at a later stage in the appreciation of my African Humanism, my Roman Catholicism re-emerges (not to embrace as previously) for it is with a new gaze and with embrace of the notions of liberation theology in engagement with Rastafarians (Barrett, 1977), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970) and *Great Work*, (Berry, 2000) that I begin to appreciate

(study) Christianity anew.

Additionally, I consider the influence of Roman Catholicism in my engagement with living contradictions (Weave Two) where initially it 'stalled' me as I reacted to its appearance as original sin and interpreted the notion as if sustaining a duality evident in European thought.

My embrace of African Humanism and the move away from the hold of religion was as a direct result on experiences in Mother England. By the time I was fourteen years old, and having travelled to Mother England, my Roman Catholicism was on the wane. It would not wholly disappear, but its power 'over' me that characterised my foundational experiences in Trinidad and Tobago would not be regained. It would be lost as I sought responses to the overlay of early experiences on my 'Trinidadianess' in strange surroundings in the UK, which not only compromised my self-identity, but also impacted significantly on my self-confidence and self worth during my early teenage years.

I learned of my place in Mother England (and I am thinking that it was never told directly to me). Yet, I have no doubt that it was felt directly. I learned that I should be grateful for being in Mother England and even if I was treated unfairly, I should accept it, for that is how things were here (the status quo). I learned that I had to be invisible, even though invisibility was never my gift in being the only African child in my primary school, and one of three in my secondary school, none of us in the same year group.

I learned that my way into the 'house' (if I was allowed entrance) was through the

back door. (I would learn that it is in this way the Africans in the Caribbean were first allowed entry to worship in Christian churches. I learned that my wants would be served last, if ever served, and where at all possible, be served separately. I learned that African people had no history, and should be thankful for European intervention into their lives, for they brought order out of the chaos and invention where life's creativity had stalled in antiquity. I learned that I was from a different human gene, if human at all. I learned I was of an inferior intelligence, and even when I demonstrated to the contrary, this was akin to an animal instinct and would not be lasting. The order of things would return. In this order I knew my place.

These experiences made me a stranger in my own learning (my schooling) and situated me without community (disconnected), as I experienced the fullness of the life position of *I'm not OK – You're OK*, (Harris T. , 1995) in my attempt at integration.

The optimism that I had journeyed with from Trinidad and Tobago (embracing the life position *I'm OK – You're OK*) was challenged from my first day in primary school. I as different, I as the outsider and I as the stranger made immediate impact physically, emotionally, linguistically, and overtime, I as being amongst the Others (gradually at first, then seemingly all in a rush) influenced who I am, my values, my experiences, my attitudes and my way of learning, living and working (my way of being).

Physically it was in noticing my 'colouredness', emotionally it was my 'isolatedness', linguistically it was my 'alienness' and in I as being amongst the "Other" it was in my unappreciated Africanness.

Who I am was included with uncertainty, my Roman Catholic values lost their power as guiding principles, my experiences became bounded (self, family and African community), my attitude changed (I am breathing differently now) as 'strangeness' in location, learning environments and living in the wider community made impact through my teenage years and 'growing up.'

The story 'Create Your Own Dance' (Weave Two) gives an account of 'ridicule' in an early experience in Mother England, whilst that spark that had journeyed with me from Trinidad still ignited my passion for learning and living creatively. However, though this story is completed with hope, the signal event of ridicule informed on the nature of experiences that would come more to the fore. At first attempts to create my own dance were lost in my strange surroundings and in my loss of confidence. I was not encouraged to appreciate my difference. I was encouraged to assimilate. I did not create my own dance.

Woodson (2000) notes:

"When you control a man's thinking you do not have to worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him not to stand here or go yonder. He will find his 'proper place' and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary."
(p.xix)

This is how it was with me.

Fanon (1967) would offer me perspective and mental tools in asking the question 'What does the black man want?'

Fanon, in his analyses of colonisation, depicted how it had completely destroyed indigenous cultures, by inventing a false pre-colonial history, ultimately subjugating not only the peoples of Africa, but also more importantly the minds of the colonised. In his writings about overcoming colonisation, Fanon gave emphasis to the importance of espousing a rejuvenated, organic, indigenous culture. He was committed to a complete refocusing on African themes for cultural development (Fanon 1967).

It was also around this time that my passion had been re-awakened with the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968. In that same year the human rights salute of Tommie Smith and Don Carlos on the podium at the summer Olympics would be appreciated as my own call to action (my embrace of African humanism, *My African Voice*).

It was in these circumstance that my African Humanism emerged and blossomed in my latter schooling years and provided a dynamic set of values that impacted appreciation of who I am, my values, the nature of my experiences, my attitude and my way of being in the world. It would be a positive and powerful influence foundational in my growing and development in the “space that cannot be cut” (Rayner 2011), as I learned, lived and worked and be committed to my community (my African community).

From my latter school years to my entry into the Centre for Action Research in Professional Practice (CARPP), over some thirty-five years, my African humanism would be the significant influence in my learning, living and working and in my leadership, social relationships and innovation with others and in social formations.

African Humanism under scrutiny on CARPP programme

However, it is the nature of my embrace of African Humanism that would come under scrutiny when I commenced the CARPP programme. I would enquire into the nature of my influence in my living narrative overtime and at that time and my findings would be instructive as I lived the experiences of my inquiries.

Remember, Cooperrider's (1987) appreciative inquiry is the warp beam provoking inquiry. Marshall (1999) amongst the heddles is living life as inquiry. Polanyi's personal knowledge offers a tacit dimension amongst the harnesses and Whitehead's (1989) unit of appraisal and 'I' as a living contradiction both frames the thesis and inspires inquiry into my values. They each follow the ins and outs of what appear to the eye as solid 'threads' but are understood more deeply as labyrinthine flow channels of space in space.

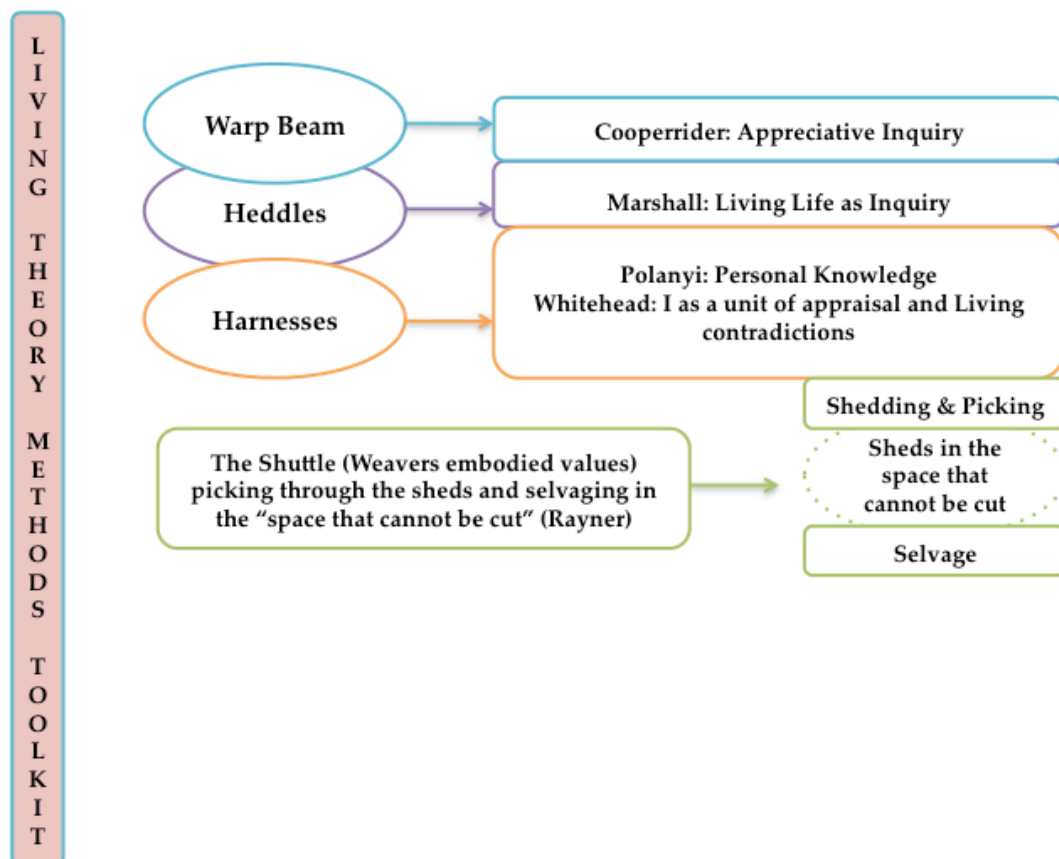
Cooperrider (1987) on the warp beam commences the inquiry process starting from strengths. Marshall on the heddles complements Cooperrider and is focused on the inner and outer threads. The harnesses in co-creation with the heddles creates a raising and lowering amongst the heddles, which in synchronicity, raise and lower the warp yarns vertically to create forms, openings, called sheds. The creation of the sheds is called shedding and this enables the dynamic intertwining of the threads in the space that cannot be cut (Rayner 2004, 2011).

The second stage in the creation of my living theory methodology toolkit (My Loom): Shuttle (head, heart and spirit of the weaver) picking as intertwining, making use of the sheds as dynamic flow channels and selvaging as scaffolding embodied expressions of relational values in the "Space that Cannot be cut"

It is the shuttle storing the weft (embodying the values of the Weaver in complementation of head, heart and spirit) that inserts into the space that cannot cut

to pick (intertwine), move through the sheds (use space dynamically), selvage (affirm boundaries) and in the creating of Weaves that correlates to the dynamically relational embodied expressions of the Weaver.

Figure 7: Second stage processes of My Loom



However, here I recall Paulus Gerdes writing about basketry and symmetry and how in "twilling, a form of plaiting whereby the strands in one direction may go over or under more than one strand in the opposite direction; the weaving is not always 'over one, under one.' The 2/2 twill indicates the 'over two, under two' weave. The 3/3 represents the 'over three, under three' weave... and diagonal zigzag lines are visible that make angles 45 degrees with the (horizontal and vertical) weaving directions. However, when the regular twill is interrupted at certain places of the fabric, other designs may be visible" (Gerdes 2001, p. 87).

This is the dynamism of the weave in form and improvisation, and as the shuttle in a single crossing from one side of the loom to the other makes a pick. So, I pick as I journey in the creating of my African Great Story. However, as I pick, I move through the sheds surfacing in the space that cannot be cut to proffer dynamic expression. I am able through the dynamic inclusion within and throughout, as well as between the threads, as labyrinthine channels of communication, to make vital use of the space that cannot be cut in the creation of the Weave. On each side of the emergent Weave to prevent it from unravelling a selvage, a boundary is created that has to be appreciated in its dynamism. These boundaries frame the context within which my experiences are unfolding. They are to a great extent boundaries that are fluid, for if they were set (fixed), I would become “stuck”, possibly forever, within their frames and context-bound. I would be without any need for curiosity beyond the individual Weaves, or appreciation of complementarity with other Weaves.

For Rayner (2004), inclusionality is an awareness that space, far from passively surrounding and isolating discrete massy objects, is a vital, dynamic inclusion within, around and permeating natural form across all scales of organisation, allowing diverse possibilities for movement and communication. I feel as if I am in that space and that space is me. This is my first sense of presence in My Cloth.

Correspondingly, boundaries are not fixed limits - smooth, space-excluding, Euclidean lines or planes - but rather are pivotal places comprising complex, dynamic arrays of voids and relief that both emerge from and pattern the co-creative togetherness of inner and outer domains, as in the banks of a river (Rayner 2004). It is in this way that the selvages have importance for me in the creating of my cloth, for as boundaries they are not fixed. I can enjoin my different weaves in diverse forms

through knitting/ sewing and I love the definition of selvage that says it is a border consisting of “an ornamental fringe at either end of an oriental carpet” (Soukhanov, 2004). This gives me the idea that though it secures an edge of the fabric that is being woven so that it will not ravel or fray, it is also a place where exciting things can take place. The selvage for me secures the story being told and is also a place where I can become excited by an idea and do something different.

Therefore, in the space that cannot be cut, as I weave dynamically and creatively, communicating the Cloth of my life (that is my Emergent African Great Story), as I selvage I can pause, create prose forms like a poem, a song, a short story, a drama piece or a combination of these forms. I can ornament - celebrate the beauty in what I am doing. This is the value of the selvage in my Emergent African Great Story.

Hence, I can pick (journey) in diverse form, move creatively through the sheds (openings) and erect permeable selvages (boundaries) as I weave. Yet in that same place I can find time for reflection and ornament as I utilise my unique talent (relating to what I bring to the pool). It is a talent that I use foundationally in the creation of my weave, and in my contribution to the weaves of others. This is my second place of presence in My Cloth.

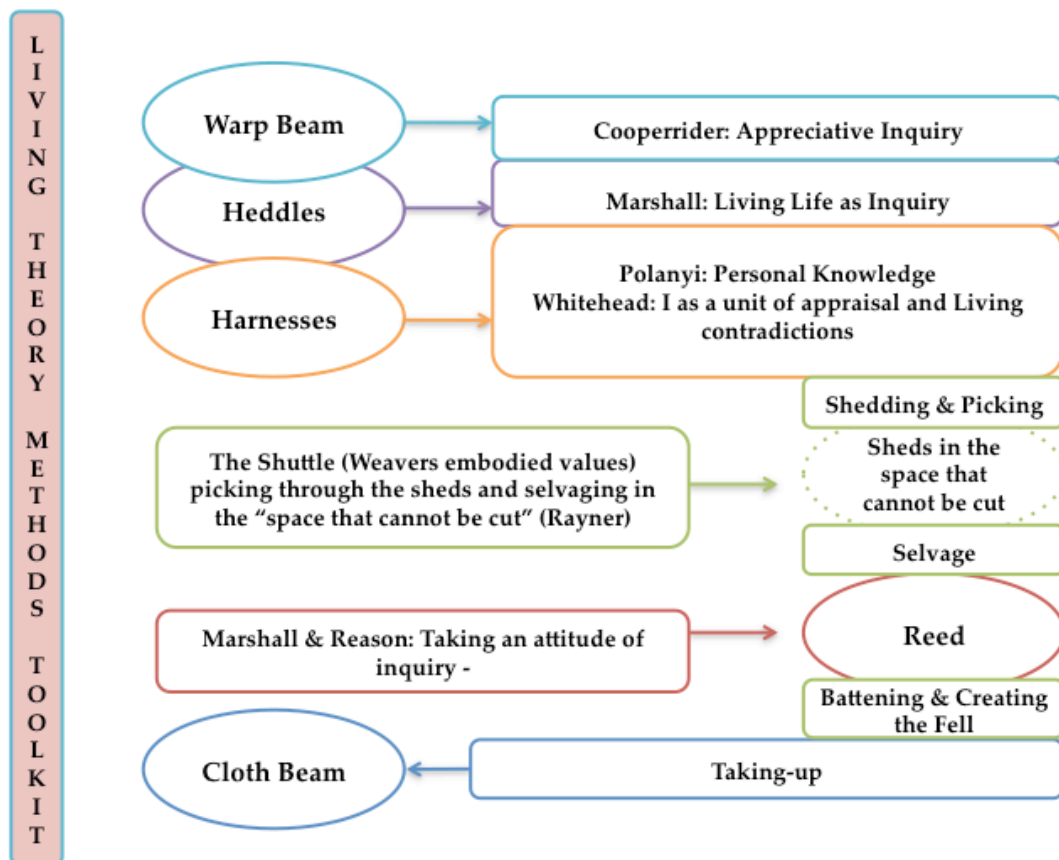
As I reflect now I can see how I have added to each of the Weaves through knitting/ sewing my diverse threads comprising the narrative of my signal events, and know that patterns do change, the complexities do increase and the boundaries do change. I can make the choice to do the Weave differently or continue on in similar ways. There are diverse possibilities for movement and communication across my living narrative as I explore its meaning, and can even join the dots (Jobs,

2005) of signal events in my learning, living and working. This is very like I am doing now, when I can see form and evidence of my co-creation in contributing to the widest community in using my understanding of the traditional African weave, as a metaphor to communicate My African Great Story.

The Third Stage in the creating of my living theory toolkit: The Reed: Securing and Keeping Values under inquiry - Battening (assuring quality), Felling (Quality marking) and Taking Up (Completing)

It is in this context that the reed performs another of the important processes of the loom. The reed presses or battens (assures and builds quality) with each picking operation by affirming the integrity of the weft (presence of the Weaver’s values and curiosity), in the creation of My Cloth.

Figure 8: Third Stage Processes of My Loom



It is in this way that the weft threads in the shuttle are separated (making them distinct and assuring their legitimacy of purpose) and kept untangled (validating their authenticity and the Weaver's humility), whilst the warp is intertwined. The reed (gives direction) is an influence on the shuttle, as the Weaver's presence surfaces (is fully participant) in the weaving of the Cloth. This is third place of presence in My Cloth.

The fell is the marking of a significant point in the creating of the cloth. I am thinking that battening can be seen as part of the quality assurance process and the fell is the quality mark. It is a milestone in the forming of the cloth. The milestones in any journey, as in My African Great Story, are evidence of distanced travel and of significant development related to lessons learned, of insight and of sense-making.

These milestones are integral to the creation of the cloth. The fell as a quality mark and milestone is also a signal for the newly constructed Weaves (my Chapters) to be wound on to a cloth beam. This process is called the "taking up," and at the same time, each newly constructed Weave (new Chapter) is wound on the cloth beam, the warp threads must also be let off or released from the warp beams. (and marks the completion of the weave and demonstrates that the quality standard has been sustained). This can be seen as the completion of an action and reflection cycle, the beginning of another, or indeed a time for rest, stillness, meditation, and reflection.

It could also be a time to tell the story of how the Weave was made and its contribution to the Great Story of the Weaver. The reed, as part of my 'story weaving' loom, is represented by Marshall and Reason's (2007) notion of "taking an attitude of inquiry". They inform:

'In our action research community's debates about quality, we often use the notion of 'taking an attitude of inquiry' as something we are seeking in our own practice and that of others whose work we coach and assess. What does it mean? How can we do it? How can we tell if others have done it well? We see reflection as a key action research quality indicator, but also recognise that it is not easy to talk about. It is ephemeral, more difficult to grasp, demonstrate and account for than, for example, quality criteria about whether a specific methodology has been well conducted. We suggest that taking an attitude of inquiry is a condition for quality that applies in conjunction with, and underpins, other advocated research approaches.

The notion of taking an attitude of inquiry implies opening our purposes, assumptions, sense-making and patterns of action to reflection" (p. 369).

Marshall and Reason (2007) proffer that these are challenging aspirations and suggest that certain 'qualities of being' are significant in enabling this potentiality.

Cited are 'curiosity, willingness to articulate and explore purposes, humility, participation and radical empiricism' (p. 369).

I self-inquire:

(Whitehead, 2004) (Whitehead, 2004)

- Am I curious?
- Have I a willingness to articulate and explore purposes?
- Is humility included in my embrace?
- Am I participant – present in my own research?
- Have I that radical empiricism?

This thesis responds to these questions in relation to the quality and presence of the inquirer in the research. It is in this way that my living theory methodology toolkit (represented as the loom and its integral components), as noted earlier, has been used as an inquiry, meaning-making and quality process (provoking curiosity, inquiring into purposes, a demonstration of humility, participative in my own inquiry and a practice of radical empiricism) valuing Marshall and Reason, 1994. Indeed, as I interweave (interpreting, reflecting and acting) the signal events extant

in my living narrative, and surface the influence of my living values in my own learning, living and working, and that of others and in social living formations this quality process is integral.

In Appendix One, entitled “Ready and Inspired to Create My Cloth (My African Great Story) – Look for Me in the Whirlwind”, I open with the following poem:

I greet with awe the morning sun,
 For this may be the day of days
 When some small word of mine could lure
 A mind to probe uncharted ways.

Preparedness,
 Ella A. Frye, *The Clearing House*,
 Vol. 40, No. 9 (May, 1966), p. 558

I also in Appendix One share my readiness to complete my studies and prompt willingness to inquire out of the box and beyond the beyond (evidence of my curiosity). Further, I inform on how my intentions have changed over the course of my study and this has included changes in my purposes and commitments (this is my willingness to explore my purposes) and how I hold myself to account attesting a loving spirituality (this is my embrace of humility). Additionally, I show how being proud to be African and taking an audacious attitude of inquiry through the utilisation of my living theory methodology toolkit, included with my own narratives (I am present in my own research through my studies), as I create My Emergent African Great Story, as a traditional African Weave.

It is in this way that I bring about profound change in my learning, living and working, and give evidence about what I am doing to communicate the African Voice in ways that are authentic, African and at the same time understandable to non-Africans and the academy (it is in this way that I proffer a radical empiricism).

Each Weave makes a distinct contribution to my African Great Story in its own right, yet on its own (though complete) it is an incomplete representation of my African Great Story. It is only when the diverse Weaves are knitted / sewn together to create my Cloth that is My African Great Story, that the individual weaves are truly celebrated.

Multi-media form

The knit of my African Great Story (living theory thesis) comprises its multi-media form. There are the poems I am my African Ancestors (Weave One), 'I am and I am not' Weave Two), 'I Explode' (see Appendix Four), 'I Made the Journey' (Weave Four), 'Simultaneous Thoughts' (Weave Four) and 'Black Men Rules OK' (see Appendix Six). There are also the short stories 'Create Your Own Dance' (Weave Two), 'Intrusive Thoughts' (Appendix Four) and 'Granny and I Adversaries' (Appendix Five). Further, there are video presentations (the result of collaboration with my son, Kamau Phillips) focused on What Manner of Man is My Father. It has five parts and I say more on each part, together with the other items noted above, where I give evidence of their significance in the relevant weaves.

In my eyes, the valuing of this Emergent African Great Story, is as much in its' living, as it is in its telling through diverse presentational forms. Words though important, could not wholly communicate the nature my embodiment of the African Voice. Prose forms and audio-visual representations communicate more clearly my living narrative and my embodied African Voice as a dynamic and inclusional way of being and becoming. Video narratives in the form of digital video clips adds another dimension, as I seek to understand influences in my learning, living and working, that of others and social formation (Whitehead, 2004a and 2004b).

Further, I have not journeyed on my own. There have been some great companions too numerous to mention all of them. However, Kamau Phillips and Kwame Phillips have supported me in gathering much of the audio-visual material in the study. Additionally, Kamau has been a co-inquirer in the focus on 'What Manner of Man is My Father', which underpins so much of this study. The interviews with family members (Novel Threads of Love) in the UK, USA and Trinidad and Tobago, the videoing of my storytelling in Turning Point (Storytelling and Emergent Valuing Social Living Pedagogy) and the gathering of images of me across diverse Mandiani sites have been critical in inquiry, sense-making and presenting evidence of my living theory thesis.

Form and Flow of the Weaves

The form and flow of the Weaves (I have already informed on Weave One) are as follows:

Weave Two: Acting to Know 'I' in my Cloth - Engaging with Living Theory Included With Dialogical Praxis (Storytelling)

In this weave I act to know Who I am with universal intent, as I construct my living theory methodology toolkit applying Whitehead's (1989) frame of what constitutes a unit of appraisal. I am setting out to gather evidence of when I am at my best, affirm high quality and the African Voice in my professional practice and seek improvement in that practice.

It is in this knowledge creation, affirmation and improvement project that I demonstrate value in Polanyi's (Polanyi M. , 1958, 1998) personal knowledge to interpret, present and validate my knowing; engage with Whitehead's (1989) "unit of appraisal" to frame inquiries into the influences in my own learning, that of others

and in social formations; and utilised Cooperrider's (2005) appreciative inquiry to start from a position of strength with my originating focus to the fore.

I am inquiring into the makings and un-makings in the making of me, an educator affirming the African Voice in my professional practice.

My first inquiry is "Who am I?"

I reframe this instantaneously to "Who I am" asserting self-knowledge.

It is in this way that I am able to delve into my own perception of self and find the important features of identity, my values, lived experiences, attitude, ways of working and my claim to know the influences in my learning. I share meanings of some of these features and their influence in my lived experiences in family, school and community.

I also explore and discern my purpose for being in the world and conjecture about what I am doing to help others find their purposes. My purpose is to do good, to teach and be a catalyst for my community.

Further, in this Weave, I present my own story, (Phillips 2000) "Create Your Own Dance", to give account of a significant event in my lived experience, as well as to evidence of a novel way of inquiry. It is like a 'double stitch' (to inquire and to account) in the creation of my Unique Cloth. Storytelling emerges powerfully in my living theory methodology toolkit, and its placement in my loom is affirmed as I confirm that my shell (the African Voice) is still intact.

Early engagement with Whitehead's (1989) "living I as a contradiction" commences in this Weave, and though I am challenged by this idea, I am convinced of its value in enquiry into my professional practice, as I compose the poem "I am and I am not" and appreciate a "mutli-layered" self.

Further, in this Weave as I review the centrality of self-identity, being African and living theory methodology to my studies, "An Intrusive Thought" (Appendix Four), as if out of nowhere surfaces in my imagination. I follow the thought recalling Harris' (1904) story, Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby, and the nature of its storage in my memories. This is a story recalled from childhood and simultaneously, I recast the story in my identification with the Tar Baby and also explores my lived experiences of discrimination and fighting back. "I Explode for the Tar Baby" (Phillips 2001) is a poem demonstrating my commitment to the plight of the Tar Baby and the challenge of injustice.

Giving consideration to another "emotional rising" completes the weave. I am focused on Mayfield's (1970) "Makings of You", which punctuates my thinking, as I recall the lyrics of his song and make association with my inquiry into the "makings and un-makings of the making of me. Mayfield song is a "soulful love" song and I share my thoughts on its meaning for me, as I acknowledge Marshall's (1999) influence on me in awakening an insightful self.

Weave Three: The Sankofa Bird and Maroon as a Twin-Applique in My Unique Cloth – African Voice Included with Living Theory Methodology in Centre of the Room

In this Weave focus is on the emergence of the Sankofa Learning Centre, how I got involved and the background educational conditions that challenged parents/carers

of children of African heritage to radical action. I also inform on the diverse experiences of the co-creators of the Sankofa Learning Centre, how they were motivated in the interest of their children to act for change and to meet the challenges with which they were confronted.

Further, I share what the name Sankofa meant for me, why I subscribed the term Maroons to depict the actions of the co-creators (I am included) of the Sankofa Learning Centre and the significance of our embrace of the educational model of “home education included with the “Africentric Idea.”

Additionally, I engage with Connelly and Clandinin’s (1995) storied landscape, to consider threads of sacred, secret and cover stories in the practice of the home educators.

It is with this background that I begin to tell the Sankofa Learning Centre Great Story, which is framed as a collective endeavour (I am because we are) and in the context of peoples of African heritage resistance to oppression in the UK. It is in this way that I want to depict the actions of parents in the Sankofa Learning Centre.

I also share one of my own stories in which the tradition of resistance to oppression in the UK is in the background. It is Appendix Five, *Granny and I: Adversaries*” (Phillips 2001). It is focused on a “coming of age event that challenges the “good’ relationship that I had with my Grandmother. It also tells of my distancing from Christianity and embrace of African humanism.

In completing the Weave I inform on some of the successes of the initiative. However, even in our success, issues were emerging that would have a decided

impact on the Sankofa Learning Centre's long-term growth and development. This was particularly so, as a business idea and the sense of sacrifice all the co-creators embraced in wanting the initiative to succeed. Actions that brought success early on, would impact to our demise later. My own ill-health would surface as a concern, I would find stuckness in my learning, living and working and would lead eventually to my leaving the Sankofa Learning Centre.

In Appendix Six, "being Stuck" – Shuttle and Weft Not Aligned in Large Fabric (I can hear Jack – I would hear jack) shares of this period. It is my transfer paper to the PhD programme. It is highlighted, because it is the background to the following Weave and gives evidence of my thinking and actions pertaining to "stuckness" in my PhD studies, relationship with my father and work in the Sankofa Learning Centre.

Weave Four: Presencing Included in the Loom – Being and Becoming Surfacing in the Weaver's Learning, Living and Working and the Challenge of Rediscovery in my 'African Birthing'

In this Weave I give evidence of how I acted to transform 'stuckness' in my learning, living and working, which surfaced as a lack of clarity as to what I am doing in my study, closed mindset and a compromised and limiting view of community, inclusionality, and indeed my own African Voice (in how I embraced the values extant in the traditional Maroon and Sankofa bird).

In relation to my study Dr Graham Van Tuyl had asked the question: Ian, I love how you write. However, what are you doing in your studies? I would find an answer and Jack Whitehead our tutor would help in thinking through and offer a complement of the Great Work. I would follow up and research this complement and embrace the work of Berry (2000). However, I was not satisfied with how I had

communicated what I was doing in my studies. My self-inquiries would evidence “stuckness” across diverse life cites.

In this Weave I share how my increasingly integrous engagement with living theory methodology and the inclusion of Otto Scharmer’s (2007) ‘Presencing’ and ‘Theory U’ in my living theory toolkit (my loom) were of importance in my recovery. The promise of release proffered in Scharmer’s twin challenge extant in “Presencing”, was to ‘shift to another vantage point, and to embrace in a very real way my ‘highest future possibility’ and to ‘let it come into the present’.

In applying Scharmer’s notion of the ‘tapping of a second source of learning’ to my living theory toolkit evidenced is “being and becoming” in my learning, living and working in a practical way in the operation of my loom. This brings about profound change in my wisdom (the weaver’s wisdom) and my loom, and effected is a ripple effect through my Cloth in its improved application.

It is with this awareness/gaze that I am inspired to return to the messy loom table, tangled weft and inoperable shuttle. I found new motivation and my feelings of lacking the capacity to advance the Weave receded at a pace. I knew I would need support. However, importantly, commitment to the resolve of my condition remained high, as I had continued as a conscious activity through my ‘stuckness’ the gathering more and more information, reflecting on that information, and seeking to discover what actions were needed to transform my unsatisfying situation.

I practiced the discipline of bringing one’s full Self into presence and to use of one’s highest Self as a vehicle for sensing and bringing forth new worlds (Scharmer 2000)

downloading past patterns, seeing events with fresh eyes and sensing from the field opportunities for reframe on the downward swing of Scharmer's U.

In this way I found a fiercely protected self in engagement with Charles (2002), see email exchange, Appendix Seven – Care for more detailed account. I also noted my own low level response to behavioural change as I inquired into my condition in Sankofa and an African Voice weighted in past as I sought to access my deep levels of knowing. The need to open the flow channels was incumbent, as I appreciated being and becoming in my learning, living and working.

With Scharmer's notion I deep dive, I retreat and evidence a directional focus on Sankofa as a business in relation to ideas of self-sufficiency, independence and sacrifice extant in the Africentric idea. I also find that my own embrace of the African Voice compromises my practice of community, limits my embrace of inclusionality and is weighted in the past. Further, this has implications for distress across the Sankofa Learning Centre and indeed my own health, I conjecture that how I embrace the African Voice cannot progress the initiative. In retreat into view comes my African birthing at the Elmina slave fort, which is appreciated as a rites of passage event as I access deep levels of knowing.

Emergent in these practices is important tacit territory affording data to support my challenge for profound quality change in my ways of being. Scharmer's 'presencing' is foundational and is a new influence in the grain of my Weave. I am motivated from the sentient awareness of my African Birthing as a rites of passage event to rediscover my African Voice. It is in this way that I able reconfigure personal and universe objectives, as I appreciate "being and becoming in my learning, living and

working. Further, I see value in embracing the Great Work as my Great Passion. I commit to profound change and for the African Voice and Great Passion to be in the room in complementation.

Weave Five: Novel Threads of Love In My Cloth – Tapping Family, Seeing Rediscovered African Voice Through the Eyes of a Lover and My Embodying Living Ubuntu and Embrace of the Great Work as My Great Passion

In this Weave it is with conscious intent that I sought to illuminate my blind spot, inquire into my interior condition and connect with the source dimension of my leadership and social relationship through engagement with Scharmer's U process with its integral five movements (co-initiating, co-sensing, co-inspiring, co-creating and co-evolving).

I reflected on Scharmer's innovation for some considerable period, and found in his notion, that 'effective leaders seek first to map the field or inner space from which they are operating', a spark for further cycles of inquiry.

What Manner of Man is My Father?

I tap the collective to listen with my heart to the treasured voices of others as I continue to find a way out of my stuckness through purposeful dialogue (rule reflecting), and continuing engagement with Scharmer's innovation towards profound change in my learning, living and working. I show appreciation of the valuing and loving network of family, and give recognition to the life affirming mutually adjusting relationships. It is with this motivation that I collaborate with my son, Kamau Phillips, in inquiry into 'What Manner of Man is My Father'.

The audio-visual record is entitled, “What Manner of Man is My Father” and as noted earlier is presented in five parts. It affords the communication of some new voices (novel threads of love) in my living theory thesis, gives evidence of my embodiment of the African Voice (in Turning Point and in community) crystallised as my valuing social living pedagogy, its prototyping in diverse forms in Mandiani and my focus on transformation and change.

In this Weave, What Manner of Man is My Father Part 1: Novel Threads of Love contains the following video clips:

I. Stories About Loving Relationships in Childhood

- a) Loving Bond (Part1 Ia)
- b) Heck of a Guy (Part1 Ib)

II. Stories of School, Family and Values

- a) Ian as a brother (Part1 IIa)
- b) Ian as learner and protector (Part1 IIb)
- c) Life Ethic (Part1 IIc)
- d) Hides Behind Humour (Part1 IId)
- e) Ian influence on another (Part1 IIe)
- f) Family Ambassador (Part1 IIf)

III. Sensitive Side

- a) A Relaxed Ian (Part1 IIIa)
- b) Education and Emotion (Part1 IIIb)
- c) Respected by Elders (Part1 IIIc)

- d) Maintains Own Space (Part1 IIIId)
- e) Wise Old man (Part1 IIIe)
- f) Purposeful Storytelling (Part1 IIIf)

Threads of Love show my mother speaking of our loving bond (Part1 Ia) and telling stories of me in school in the UK. My aunt informing on how I was in school in Trinidad, my relationship with Papa Leo (an elder) and how I 'live' family (Part1 Ib). Anthony my elder brother gives insight on how I am as a brother (Part1 Iia), my way of being (how I think deeply on human issues - Part1 Iic) and my role as ambassador in the family (Part1 Iif). Peter my youngest brother informs on my role as 'protector' (Part1 Iib), my life ethic (Part1 Iid) and the nature of my influence on him and family (Part1 Iie). My eldest son, Kwame informs on the significance of his education and the sharing of emotions. My cousin Lenise informs on me in relaxed mode, how I maintain my own space, how I am seen by elders, that I am a wise old man and have talent as a storyteller.

These treasured family members with their threads of love show that they care for me and also offer me redirection, as I sense (shifting the place of perception to the current whole) and co-sense (tap the collective) with open heart and thoughts of reframing my learning, living and working. These new voices also inspire my presencing (shifting the place of perception to the source of an emerging future), as I awaken my will to embrace profound change – letting go and letting come.

My collaboration with my son proffers our building of a new relationship as co-inquirers, and his involvement facilitates the gathering of important data from the collective (family members). This assists in growing relationships with family in

dynamic form, helps me to find re-direction in my learning, living and working (a way out of my 'stuckness') through their challenges that encourages further enquiries into Self and Work and affirms the relevance/signals of the importance of the focus of my living theory thesis, which I remind is as follows:

What am I doing to improve communication of the African voice in ways that are authentic, African and at the same time understandable to Africans, non-Africans and the academy?

The novel threads of love from family warms my heart, and their challenges particularly, relating to how I reveal or do not reveal myself and how I do my work in a 'heroic' manner is brought into focus as my will awakens to embrace the necessity for profound change in my learning, living and working.

In this weave I also engage with Scharmer's innovation (presencing), alongside the challenge of rediscovery of the African Voice from the vantage point of the sentient awareness of my African birthing at the Elmina slave fort which leads to the reconfiguration of personal and universe objectives. Early in my study I sought to find out whether my African Voice (my shell) was still intact, and discerned my storytelling (influence and talent). Now valuing Scharmer, and appreciating my African birthing I acted to rediscover my African Voice in complementation with the Great Work (Berry, 2000). I have given a hint earlier in my study of how I began to research the Great Work, later in this Weave I share how this research developed and led to my embrace of the Great Work (Berry, 2000) as my Great Passion.

In rediscovery of the African Voice I agree with Ben Okri when he says, 'Africa is our dreamland, is our spiritual homeland. There is a realm inside every human being that is Africa. We all have an Africa within us' (Okri 2004). I also agreed with Okri that:

“Africa has been waiting, for centuries, to be discovered with eyes of love, the eyes of a lover. There is no true seeing without love. We have to learn to love the Africa in us if humanity is going to begin to know true happiness on this earth (Okri 2004).”

This, for me, was inspiring counsel.

Charles (2007) also proffers inspiring counsel in his note that “I know about my Ubuntu way of being through the increasing awareness gained through my reflective practice”. This is an important steer as I acted to rediscover the African Voice. A reflective practice would characterise my approach. However, I was also intrigued by Charles (2007) indicating, “Ubuntu... is founded on centuries of a tradition that traces its roots back to ancient Egypt”. This would add fuel to a groping that was already emerging as a substantive thought. It is this possible foundational connection between Ubuntu with Egypt that I would also find in my studies. Therefore, in my Emergent African Great Story my embrace of The Paut Neteru later, as an African source and sound technology for change, is valued in this possible connection.

How I came to embrace the Great Work is also shared in this Weave. I have already noted how Jack Whitehead stimulated interest in this direction in his interpretations of my reflections, writings and communication in tutor group meetings. I did not wholly appreciate the direction in the moment. However, research of the Universe story would advance this interest as I found meaning in the Great Work, viewed its surfacing in my practice and consciously acted for it to be in the room in complementation with the African voice as I sought profound life change. The Great Work (Berry, 2000) is now my “Great Passion.”

Further, I conjecture whether Africa is the birthplace of our modern humanity and the significance of this in the celebration of the ‘Universe Story’. It is noted that this

view is contested. However, my imagination is not stilled.

In this Weave is also the second part of the audio-visual presentation *What Manner of Man is My Father*, titled, *Storytelling and Emergent Valuing Social living Pedagogy*. There are three video clips as follows:

- a) *Telling My Story (Part 2a)*
- b) *Success, Beauty and Power Part 2b)*
- c) *African Values (Part 2c)*

The first two are of events in *Turning Point*, whilst engaging in a storytelling session. The third I am participating in a welcoming event for a young person celebrating his entrance to the village as a rites of passage event. In the first of the clips (*Telling My Story*) I am storytelling and I can observe a unique purposeful recognition in how I am storytelling about the pictures that I am sharing. I can also appreciate an enhanced relational mutuality in the room that is contributing to the quality of the learning environment and communication in the room. Storytelling is our engaging dialogical praxis. I ground these qualities as my valuing social living pedagogy.

In the second clip (*Success, Beauty and Power*) a student rises from the gathering, giving evidence her beauty and power, to pose provocatively a request for me to sing. I oblige, and once again my valuing social living pedagogy and the quality of its influence is extant in the exchange. I see live intimacy (sense of community and enhanced relational mutuality), celebration (human flourishing, unique purposeful recognitions) and viability (communicated in our simple human communication and social relationship in our storytelling). It is in this second sighting of what I see in *Turning Point* that I ground and affirm as my valuing social living pedagogy the complementation of the African voice and the Great Passion (as above).

The third video welcoming Anthony (a child/young person) to the village once again evidences a valuing social living pedagogy in an intimate celebratory event (a rites of passage ceremony) where I am utilising an engaging dialogical praxis to share African values. As I complete my welcome the chair articulates the mutuality extant in the event.

These clips break new ground in evidencing and affirming qualities/values critical for understanding my dynamic relational standards of judgement. This has significance for explicating the influences in my own learning, that of others and in social formation. It is in this way that the second part of the audio-visual record, *Storytelling and Emergent Valuing Social Living pedagogy*, is important as I seek to illuminate my blind spot and engage with that incipient field quality, which determines how the world comes into being through our individual and collective patterns of action and thought. The use of video technology is critical in support of my observation of me, of the values I live, their embodiment and nature of their influence.

Weave Six: Mandiani: It's in Our Cloth to Heal, Protect and Create - From Achievement Gap to Education Debt to the Appreciating Value of the African Voice

It is my valuing social living pedagogy that is prototyped in the co-creating and co-evolving of Mandiani's heal, protect and create strategies for transforming black boys lives (the focus of the following Weave) with conscious intent.

The intent in this Weave is to make public the Mandiani Great Story. I want to evidence how Mandiani grew from complex origins to prosper as an education service of quality (included with the African Voice) for black boys (connecting in

diverse ways to an African origin). Integral is Mandiani's scoping and framing within the funding regimes of the Children's Fund and the Young People's Development Programme (shaped by the Every Child Matters agenda and the Children Act, 2004), and the novel inclusion of the African Voice in the shaping of its services. It is in this way that we in Mandiani would say that we 'seized a window of opportunity to do good work'.

We would offer a year-long personal development programme, included with the African Voice, which built on the boys self-esteem through participatory action research methods and a community development approach that engaged the boys, their parents, professionals working with them and members of the wider community.

However, this personal development programme did not stand on its' own. We worked with parent / carers on joint challenges, parent-teachers' fora and quality time events. We also worked with professionals working with black boys on training events, symposia and residential. Further, we engaged the widest community in support of the boys' growth and the development of strategic community actions and partnerships through fora and symposia.

A heal, protect and create strategy and commitment emergent in our learning undergirded Mandiani's co-creation and co-evolvment, and my embodied valuing social living pedagogy was 'prototyped' in my leadership and social relationship across the initiative.

It is Mandiani's heal, protect and create strategy and my valuing social living

pedagogy that are under scrutiny in this Weave, as I evidence how our heal, protect and create strategy worked to co-inspire, co-create and co-evolve Mandiani on the upswing of the 'U', valuing Scharmer's innovation. I also evidence how a unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and engaging dialogical praxis contributed to my leadership, social relationship and innovation in my participation in an emergent action learning community, as I continued with my integrous engagement with living theory methods, inquiring into my Self and Work (Purpose).

In the context of my engagement with living theory methods, I show how through engagement with Ladson-Billings notion of the education debt, and embrace of critical theory included with the African Voice (my reframe of critical race theory), facilitated is a shift in my perspective on educational inequity. I travel from the place of focus on underachievement and disadvantage to embrace Ladson-Billings education debt and find in the living experiences in Mandiani the 'appreciating value' of the African Voice.

The 'appreciating value of the African Voice builds from the notion that it has value in itself, in transactions and in inspiring new learning. This is evidenced in our work with boys in Mandiani derived from interrogation of Annemarie Turnbull's (2006) case study, part of the on-going participative action research (PAR) evaluation of the Lewisham Children's Fund (LCF).

Turnbull's (2006) case study explored perceptions of what Mandiani as a service was intended to do, what was liked and disliked about it and what impact it was believed to have had. This my interest in the case study that gives evidence of the impact of

Mandiani's personal development programme for black boys from the voices of the boys, diverse school staff and parents/carers.

The third part of my collaborative audio-visual presentation What Manner of Man is My Father, Mandiani Time, is comprised of five sections and nine video clips. Of the sections four are on my work in Mandiani and the other in collaboration with my sons is the demonstrating of a unique purposeful recognition for Mr. Rowe (my father-in-law and my sons grandfather) at his passing ceremony. The sections and video clips are as follows:

I. Schools Programme

a) Teachers Voices

II. Being and Becoming

a) SOS Children Voices

b) Mandiani Time

III. Purposeful Recognition Mr. Rowe

a) Mr. Rowe

IV. Elders Ball

a) Elders Arrival

b) Mutuality (Dr. Eden Charles)

c) Purposeful Recognition (Jackee Holder)

d) Elders Dancing

V. Mandiani in the US

a) Commitments for Success (Part 3 Va)

These clips shows teachers communicating the impact of Mandiani's work (Ia) at a Mandiani's Heal, Protect and Create symposia under the heading of Schools Programme. Being and Becoming show two moments when I am in my best cloth.

One, is at the SOS Children's Village in Jamaica with SOS Children Voices performing impromptu (singing my songs (IIa)). The contrasting event is my presentation at a Mandiani symposium (IIb). A longer version of this presentation is Part Five of *What Manner of Man is My Father*, also called *Mandiani Time* and demonstrates my storytelling talent so important in who I am.

The purposeful recognition divides my work in Mandiani to show celebration of this great man in our lives, our own collaboration and evidence of my storytelling.

The video clips comprising the section on the elders ball show the young people welcoming elders to this event (IV), Dr. Eden Charles talking about his father (IVb), Jackee Holder talking about her family, stories and getting us involved (IVc). The final clip in this section is of elders dancing and having fun (IVd). In Mandiani we would call this a quality time event demonstrating in a practical way "valuing social living". The clips are presented to show the nature of my influence and leadership in my commitment that events such as these were an integral part of Mandiani's functioning. In the same way our educational visit to the USA (Ve) have to be viewed. However, the focus here is on commitments for success and this has been seen in the partnership of parents, the schools and Mandiani.

These activities in the clips relating to Mandiani are offered outside of the school setting and are of significance in facilitating dialogue, sharing good practices, having fun, galvanising support for our work and 'retreat', with young people, family, professionals and the wider community. They also inform on our dynamic social formations (vehicles for inquiring and strategising), which highlight our decided way of working within Mandiani, characterising our cherishing of a community

development perspective. This is the undergirding of our effective partnering relations with diverse individuals and organisations. Much energy was used in facilitating these wider relationships co-creating and co-evolving emergent and dynamic social forms and formations directed to the interest of black boys.

Turnbull's case study and Mandiani Time provide two strong storied threads in this Weave. They give evidence of Mandiani services and the nature and influence of my leadership, social action and innovation across Mandiani. In both, I am able to appreciate my valuing social living pedagogy in action.

I also conjecture that the African Voice is a gift to the universe (its in the room – use it), it values living community (I am because We are) and proffers bicultural experiences (enabling being at ease and with no loss of self) important in living in a diverse, modern and complex world (I in now). In finding the “appreciating value” of the African Voice, it is if I am compelled to move out of the margins of the marginalised, to engage in the margins wherein mainstream decisions occur. I decide on movement to the private sector. It is a difficult move to step away from Mandiani.

The fourth part of What Manner of Man is My Father, Change and Transformation, gives evidence of how I grow in this change. It comprises the following clips:

1. Modelling Change

- a) Mandiani Change and Transformation (Part 4 Ia)

- II. Continuing Storytelling Influence

- a) Danny Boy (Part 4 IIa)

- III. A vital Bicultural Complementation

a) We are Our Own Great Story (Part 4 IIIa)

IV. Ubuntu in Egypt

a) Callum on the Nile (Part 4 IVa)

The clip (Ia) gives focus on my change perspective at a Mandiani event and (IIa) the nature of my continuing influence in Mandiani giving purposeful recognition to Daniel Pink on his departure from Mandiani. These video clips complete my focus on Mandiani.

The video clips giving evidence of my continuing work with black boys on the Ubuntu Social Living leadership project with a young person rapping about his educational visit whilst in Egypt and that focused on my emergent vital bicultural complementation is for the completion of Weave Eight.

It is in my continuing integrous application of living theory methodology (my loom) that I am able to shift from the margins of the marginalised to the margins of the mainstream to sustain perspective and practice in the I-in-you world and I-in-now world. I am also able with the 'appreciating value of the African Voice and the coming into view as a groping of my own source of origination of my own leadership and social relationship that I make the move to Berkshire Consultancy Limited with confidence. It is if as I am compelled to act, but it is also a choice that I make.

Weave Seven: A Vital Bicultural Perspective in the Weaver's Weft: Bringing my Cloth to Field

In Mandiani the substantive shift to operate at levels 3 (I in you) and 4 (I in now) is sustained, however in my own learning, living and working there is a stirring in my

imagination, as I embrace the flow encouraging my own development in commencing the position of principal consultant in BCL.

The flow is for continuing change in Self and Work, and now embracing the 'appreciating value' of the African Voice, my move to BCL is appreciated as a compelling journey reaching out to my fullest co-creative future possibilities (modeling the future wanting to emerge in my own learning, living and working), and building on a rich seam in my experience (consultancy in organisational and leadership development) functioning in the margins where important decisions are made (in the mainstream).

In this way I seek consciously to shift my own influence in organisations at the margins to what are considered mainstream organisations, improve communication of the African Voice and Great Work as complements to the widest community, and continue to deepen research and reflection on the source dimension of my leadership and social relationship through further engagement with Scharmer's field structure of attention.

In the process I explore new influences in my learning, living and working (MBTI and 360 feedback), prototype new ways of communicating the African Voice and Great Work as one (African and Asian Ways of Being and Histories of Success), and initially as a groping, I rediscover 'The Paut Neteru' (the Tree of Life), an initiation system included with the African Voice in original and dynamic form focused on the path to a Divine Self including and included by the Divinity of Nature.

The new influences assist in building on my own confidence to be impactful knowing self. The prototyping of new ways of communicating my valuing social living pedagogy gives evidence of communicating the African Voice to the widest community. The rediscovery of the “Tree of Life “affords the freeing of the Sankofa bird and Maroon, as I connect in a foundational way to the source dimension of my leadership and social relationship in an African context.

There is profound change in the weaver’s weft, as I bring my cloth to the field, and its inclusion on the loom leads to my conscious awakening to the emergence of a vital bicultural complementation in my learning, living and working. Enjoined is the tree of life initiation system and Scharmer’s field structure of attention - pathway to social emergence in a novel and foundational way to inform on the source dimension of my leadership and social relationship as the African Voice, in itself and in complementation is appreciated as being and becoming. It is in this way that I appreciate anew a transforming and purposeful self (being and becoming) and the effective communication of my embodiment of a valuing social living pedagogy to the widest community in ways that are authentic, African, and at the same time understandable to non-Africans and the academy, integral to my learning, living and working.

I share my becoming in BCL with a poem celebrating its 15th Anniversary to close the Weave and in a Learn and share session show the emergence of my vital bicultural complementation of Scharmer’s sound technology for change and the Tree of Life.

This development is a platform for reconciliation of I as a living contradiction, embrace of inclusionality valuing Rayner, and adoption of the positive life position – I’m Ok – You’re OK (imagining the universe luminously).

Weave Eight: Transforming the Weaver’s Life Position: Consciously Creating a Selfless Self, Living ‘I’ as Integrated Opposites, Embracing Inclusionality and Other Leadership

In this weave the intention is to demonstrate how the surfacing of my vital bicultural complementation of my cloth (now included with the Paut Neteru) and field (valuing Scharmer’s innovation), and their foundational influence in accessing the source dimensions of my leadership and social action, continued to inspire profound change in my appreciation of ‘Who is Self’ and ‘What is my Work’.

It is in applying this perspective that afforded is a new dialogue with Whitehead’s living contradictions. In rediscovery of the Paut Neteru, I am able to embrace the collectivist nature of African ontology (complementarity of the African Voice) and an epistemology structured by a both /and logic which conceptualizes dualities as complementary expressions of a single reality.

It is with this understanding that the new dialogue with living contradictions emerges, and leads to my finding of a complex and transforming self (complete, incomplete and wholesome), living I as integrated opposites (and now a ‘living I’ that comprises mutually inclusive complements and so sustains diversity within and as an inclusion of the ‘space that cannot be cut’). This is a relationally dynamic communication of a complex self and my living standards of judgement, and in this way I find resolve in reconciling my concerns with living contradictions.

In this Weave I also deepen embrace of inclusionality, valuing Rayner, through advancing my understanding of biological and cosmological evolution as “the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context”.

I embrace the idea that “space cannot be cut, as a post dialectic evolutionary logic and understanding of ‘natural inclusion’ ... which changes currently predominant perceptions of self-identity from that of discrete to dynamically continuous” (Rayner 2011). This maps well against my appreciation of self as transforming, comprising a complete self and incomplete self, in dynamic interaction (more than contradicting, complementing too). However, it is not without challenge.

Earlier in this Weave I conjectured on the space that cannot be cut as a labyrinthine network. In this Weave I focus on how I am in that space. This living theory thesis is about the ‘beholding of the African Voice’ and I have sought to evidence what I am doing to communicate the African voice in ways that are authentic, African and at the same time understandable to non-Africans and the academy.

Hence, I have shown its representation through experiences (in itself). I have also added meaning to the experience with new thinking, because the old thinking is inadequate (in transaction). Further, I have shown how I have in my learning, living and working been transforming and building relationships (creating knowledge).

In this transforming and building of relationships in various places I have had to set aside or suspend my representations of the African Voice (Who I am) and find meaning through the co-presencing of myself and the Other. Scharmer drew from Zajonc the response that this means finding a way of being a self and, at the same

time, being completely selfless (Scharmer 2003). I see something similar in the teachings of the Ausar Auset Society (2011) in the concept “that (One's) entire Being is a composite made up of the Self and the Not-Self, as both are required in order to exist in the physical world.” In the similar manner the same point is shared by Amen in his noting that “the lower principle that unevolved (One) identifies with as his/her self (the 9th sphere) is not (one's) true self, neither is the 8th sphere one's true will”(p. 102). This is not seen as a negation of self. In my view it contributes in its dissolve to my fullest self as I appreciate a complex self living a “I” that is, having a self identity that naturally includes neighbourhood, embracing a selfless self, as I am reaching out to my fullest future co-creative possibilities and Divine self included with and including the Divinity of Nature (all contributing to my true self).

I continue inquiry into my life position and focus on my long-held frame, which I share, is I'm OK – You're OK (Berne 1976). I challenge self to move towards I'm OK – You're OK as a relevant and optimistic vantage point in my continuing development. It is in this way that I am empowered audaciously to imagine the universe luminously, as an energetic inclusion of darkness throughout light and light in darkness, as my journey continues and this living theory ends?

The two remaining clips of What Manner of Man is My Father Part Four, Change and Transformation are placed on the loom. In Ubuntu in Egypt the person rapping is Calum. He is on Isis' Ubuntu Social Living Leadership programme and his rap is on his educational visit to Egypt. I am one of the co-creators of this programme.

The second clip is of me focused on sharing my vital bicultural complementation in a BCL Learn and Share, entitled “We are our own Great Story”. I am not hiding now.

Weave Nine: The Taking Off: The Future Wanting to Emerge, Embedding Learning and Living Theory Methodology

In this Weave I complete my large fabric by taking it off the loom and winding it on to the cloth beam. I inform that scrutiny of the quality of the weaves have been attendant through the process and continues in completion. The order of the weaves are the choices that I have made in presentation of what I consider is its best design communicating what I am doing to improve how I communicate the African voice in a ways that are authentic, African, and at the same time understandable non-African and the academy. As all decisions go, this is open to challenge. There are some pieces in the appendix, which may well have been included in the main Cloth, and on another occasion I may well do so when telling My Emergent Great African Story.

However, I say I am happy with what has been created and Weave Nine accounts that in this living theory thesis I set out to improve my professional practice as an educator and to affirm the African Voice in that practice. I say that this has been accomplished; however, the journey has not been how I would imagine it would be or had anticipated.

Initially, I acted to improve my classroom performance, communicate more effectively the Sankofa Learning Centre curricula and build my own leadership capacity and influence in the education of children of African origin. In this act I also wanted to ensure that my African Voice was present in my professional practice, and that through inquiring into the “makings and un-makings in the making” of me.

I would affirm the African Voice in my professional practice and secure that my “African shell was intact.”

Further, I share that I found that all events, to some degree contributed to my growth and development as I focused on their valuing or devaluing of me. Even though this was no easy assignment, it proved a useful, for in this way I could recount my loving early life experiences in colonial Trinidad and Tobago, estranged schooling and community experiences in Mother England, feelings of exclusion in the academy and in work, aspects of my successful career development and my Jamaican sojourn. I can also now inform on what is a large part of the substance of this living theory thesis that is my experiences in the Sankofa Learning Centre, my evolving relationship with my father and family, the co-creation of Mandiani and my role as emergent consultant in BCL.

What has been foundational is the need to be part of the picture (to be included in your own learning); to be part of an experience that has value/relevance to what I am doing; to be challenging and stretching; to be enable the surfacing/knowing of your values and your influence; and environment in which to thrive.

Important for me was to appreciate being and becoming in learning, living and working (the prospect for change exists); awaken my willingness to embrace change and to be integrous in inquiry; inquire into interior condition – interrogate blind spots and field structure of attention; appreciate the African Voice in itself, in transaction and in inspiring new learning; appreciate being and becoming in African Voice in the symbol of the tree of life; enjoin tree of life and field structure of attention in a vital bicultural complementation that embraces re-engagement with living contradictions, progress natural inclusion in the space that cannot be cut

(where self identity naturally includes neighbourhood) I'm OK - You're OK is my intent as I proffer audacity beyond my inquiry, imagining the universe luminously.