

# “My Emergent African Great Story”

**‘Living I’ as naturally including neighbourhood,  
embodying an audacious Valuing Social Living Pedagogy and  
imagining the universe luminously, as an energetic inclusion of  
darkness throughout light and light in darkness.**

by

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*“What am I doing to communicate the African Voice in  
ways that are authentic, African and at the same time  
understandable to non-Africans and the Academy?”*

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Signature: .....

## Abstract

In answering Schon's call for a new epistemology for new scholarship, my contribution is an emergent African Voice reaching out to the academic and non academic, African and non-African alike, for the fullest co-creative possibilities. It informs on my valuing social living pedagogy, comprising "a unique purposeful recognition, an enhanced relational mutuality and an engaging dialogical praxis". These dynamic relational standards of judgement are at the heart of my 'Emergent African Great Story', created and presented, as if using a dynamic loom (consisting of my theoretical lenses) to create a traditional African Cloth.

Included are Whitehead's living educational theory, Cooperider's Appreciative Inquiry and Marshall's Living Life as Inquiry, together with my own storytelling that affirm the African Voice in my professional practice. However, also revealed is "stuckness" in my receptivity, responsiveness and reflexivity.

I act for profound change and engage with Scharmer's Theory U and Presencing, Okri's seeing Africa through the eyes of a lover, Charles' embodied Ubuntu and Berry's Great Work (now my Great Passion). I embrace "being and becoming" and reconfigure personal and universal dynamics to evidence: What I am doing to improve how I communicate the African Voice in ways that are authentic, African, and at the same time understandable to non-Africans and the academy.

Integrating inquiry surfaces in the source dimension of my social relationship a vital bicultural complementation of Scharmer's "Field" and my "Cloth" in the Paut

Neteru (the Kametic Tree of Life). From this connectivity and engagement with Rayner's understanding of Natural Inclusion, in the 'space that cannot be cut', inescapably, I find that my self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood.

I proffer audacity imagining the universe luminously and making public my "Great Story" which values the communities from which it emerged as well as those larger communities of the modern day, which have lost sight of the depth of our origins.

## Table of Contents

Abstract.....	2
List of Figures.....	7
Acknowledgments.....	12
Dedication .....	13
<b>Weave One: My Emergent African Great Story In the Understanding of Weaving a Traditional African Cloth.....</b>	<b>16</b>
Introduction.....	16
Significant Events in My Living Theory Thesis and My Loom.....	39
<b>The First Stage in the Creation of My Living Theory Methodology Toolkit (My Loom):</b> Warp beam (appreciative inquiry); Heddles (living life as inquiry) and Harnesses (personal knowledge, unit of appraisal and living contradictions) combine .....	41
<b>Nature of Influences/Living Values (the Weft) in My African Great Story: Roman</b> <b>Catholicism and African Humanism .....</b>	45
African Humanism under scrutiny on CARPP programme.....	50
<b>The Third Stage in the creating of my living theory toolkit: The Reed: Securing and</b> <b>Keeping Values under inquiry - Battening (assuring quality), Felling (Quality marking)</b> <b>and Taking Up (Completing) .....</b>	54
Multi-media form.....	58
<b>Weave Two: Acting to Know ‘I’ in my Cloth - Engaging with Living Theory Included</b> <b>With Dialogical Praxis (Storytelling).....</b>	59
<b>Weave Four: Presencing Included in the Loom – Being and Becoming Surfacing in the</b> <b>Weaver’s Learning, Living and Working and the Challenge of Rediscovery in my</b> <b>‘African Birthing’.....</b>	63
<b>Weave Five: Novel Threads of Love In My Cloth – Tapping Family, Seeing</b> <b>Rediscovered African Voice Through the Eyes of a Lover and My Embodying Living</b> <b>Ubuntu and Embrace of the Great Work as My Great Passion.....</b>	66
<b>Weave Six: Mandiani: It’s in Our Cloth to Heal, Protect and Create - From Achievement</b> <b>Gap to Education Debt to the Appreciating Value of the African Voice.....</b>	72
<b>Weave Eight: Transforming the Weaver’s Life Position: Consciously Creating a Selfless</b> <b>Self, Living ‘I’ as Integrated Opposites, Embracing Inclusionality and Other Leadership</b> .....	81
<b>Weave Two: Acting to Know ‘I’ in My Cloth: Engaging with Living Theory</b> <b>Methodology Included With My Own Narrative .....</b>	87
Introduction.....	87
A Unit of Appraisal as My Claim to Know.....	90
Acting to Know .....	92
The First Appreciative Cycle: Who I Am (Identity, Values, Experiences, Attitude, Actions and Claims) .....	99
Being African – a Visceral Connection.....	108
Create Your Own Dance.....	113
<b>Weave Three: My Sankofa Great Story – Maroons and Sankofa Bird as a Twin</b> <b>Appliqué in Celebration of the Africentric Idea .....</b>	135
Introduction.....	135
<b>Weave Four: Presencing Included in the Loom – Being and Becoming Surfacing in</b> <b>the Weaver’s Learning, Living and Working and the Challenge of Rediscovery in</b> <b>my ‘African Birthing’ .....</b>	182
Introduction.....	182

Tapping a Second Source of Learning.....	187
Tapping a Second Cycle of Learning.....	189
Levels of Behavioural Responses to Change.....	192
Home Educators as Maroons .....	197
Seeing: The Africentric Idea in the centre of all children’s education .....	203
<b>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 .....</b>	<b>215</b>
What Manner of Man is My Father Part 1: Novel Threads of Love.....	226
<b>Weave Six: From Achievement Gap to Education Debt and the Appreciating Value of the African Voice: It’s in Our Cloth to Heal, Protect and Create – Mandiani’s Great Story and I in my Best Cloth .....</b>	<b>256</b>
Help for themselves.....	290
Hopes for the future .....	291
What parents and carers think of Mandiani.....	292
Symposia .....	293
Its SOS Time .....	315
It’s Mandiani Time .....	317
What Manner of Man is My Father, Part Three – Being and Becoming: It’s Mandiani Time (IIb) .....	329
Purposeful Recogniton for Mr. Rowe.....	329
Mandiani in the USA .....	334
To get the greatest value.....	336
Who would benefit most from the visit and who would go.....	337
What Manner of Man is My Father Part Four – II a Danny Boy.....	341
<b>Weave Seven: Surfacing of the Paut Neteru (The Tree of Life), Embrace of Path to a Divine Self Included With and Including the Divinity of Nature and Bringing my Cloth to Field in a Vital Bicultural Complementation .....</b>	<b>343</b>
Discovery of The Paut Neteru .....	371
<b>Weave Eight: The Transforming Life of the Weaver: Consciously Surfacing Self as a Living ‘I’ that Naturally Includes Neighbourhood In Its Dynamic Balancing of Inner and Outer Identity .....</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Weave Nine: The Taking Off: The Future Wanting to Emerge .....</b>	<b>433</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>439</b>
<b>Postscript.....</b>	<b>462a-d</b>
<b>Appendix One: Ready and Inspired to Create My Cloth (My African Great Story) - Look For Me In The Whirlwind.....</b>	<b>464</b>
<b>Appendix Two – Sparrow’s Lyrics .....</b>	<b>485</b>
<b>Appendix Three – Back in the Academy .....</b>	<b>491</b>
<b>Appendix Four – An Intrusive Thought in My Cloth .....</b>	<b>510</b>
Reviewing Comments On The Exploration of an Intrusive Thought.....	538
<b>Appendix Five: Granny and I: Adversaries .....</b>	<b>551</b>
<b>Appendix Six: ‘Being Stuck’ - Shuttle and Weft Not Aligned in Large Fabric: I Can Hear Jack – I would hear jack.....</b>	<b>562</b>

<b>Appendix Seven: Care .....</b>	<b>618</b>
<b>Appendix Eight: My African Birthing .....</b>	<b>621</b>
<b>Appendix Nine: Ways of Being and Doing.....</b>	<b>641</b>

## List of Tables

Table 1: Who I Am .....	101
Table 2: Purpose for being in the World.....	110
Table 3: Positive People.....	257
Table 4: Objectives .....	257
Table 5: Neters .....	380







## List of Figures

Figure 1 In Celebration of my Mother's Life .....	14
Figure 2: Tellem Cloths .....	29
Figure 3: Lunda-designs .....	30
Figure 4: Black Family Album (Wahlman 2001).....	32
Figure 5: Plantation Life, Wahlman 2001 .....	34
Figure 6: First Stage Processes of My Loom.....	41
Figure 7: Second stage processes of My Loom .....	51
Figure 8: Third Stage Processes of My Loom.....	54
Figure 9: Makings and Un-makings in the Making of me .....	87
Figure 10: Who I Am is on the Warp Beam .....	94
Figure 11: Who I Am Spiral .....	97
Figure 12: Who I Am .....	100
Figure 13: Purpose for Being in the World.....	110
Figure 14: My Mother Dancing.....	112
Figure 15: My Own Stories .....	122
Figure 16: Storytelling Included on My Loom.....	124
Figure 17: Who I Am - Living Contradictions .....	125
Figure 18: The Loom – My Living Theory Methodology Toolkit Included with Narrative. ....	140
Figure 19: Sankofa bird and Maroon included in the African Voice .....	151
Figure 20: Connelly and Clandinin Storied Landscape is on the Loom.....	159
Figure 21: Theory U and Presencing .....	187
Figure 22: Theory and Presencing on the Loom.....	188
Figure 23: The Kolb Type Learning Cycle (Learning From the Experiences of the Past) .....	191
Figure 24 The Scharmer Type Learning Cycle (Learning From the Emerging Future) .....	191
Figure 25: Four Levels of Responding to Change .....	193
Figure 26: One Process, Five Movements (Scharmer 2009a) .....	216
Figure 27: Structures of Attention Determine the Path of Social Emergence .....	218
Figure 28: Our Way into the Future - The Eczoic Era (Greene, 2009) .....	249
Figure 29: Carter G. Woodson Memorial Mural Photographed on Mandiani USA Visit 2006 .....	269
Figure 30: Displaying Our Values at the Million More March .....	338
Figure 31: Visit to Martin Luther King Jr. Home.....	339
Figure 32: Educational Exchange Members Outside the White House (USA) .....	340
Figure 33: African and Asian Ways of Being.....	346
Figure 34: Four Components of the Worldview Construct .....	347
Figure 35: Bicultural Competence Model .....	349
Figure 36: Stories of a Glorious Past - Slide 1 .....	350
Figure 37: Histories of a Glorious Past - Slide 2 .....	350
Figure 38: I am - Slide 3 .....	352
Figure 39: Who I am - Slide 4 .....	352
Figure 40: Inquires as vehicles for action – Slide 5.....	353
Figure 41: Out of the black experience.....	354
Figure 42: Reframing – Slide 6.....	355

Figure 43: Discovering Old Hidden Truths – Blowing Myths the Dis-Empower.....	356
Figure 44: Timbuktu .....	357
Figure 45: Tree of Life Methodology and Vital Bicultural Complementation.....	381
Figure 46: African Worldview.....	386
Figure 47: Scharmer's Field Structure of AttentionScharmer's Fied Structure of Attention .....	393
Figure 48: Living Differences on the Loom .....	402
Figure 49: Who Am I?.....	406
Figure 50: Who Am I Now .....	413
Figure 51: Self Identity Naturally Includes Neighbourhood is on the Loom .....	415
Figure 52: Life Positions (Berne) .....	419

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## Dedication

I dedicate this living theory thesis to my mother Madonna Phillips-Smith. She created the “Rebel in Me” and counselled me to “Create My Own Dance.” I also dedicate it to my wife, Tricia Phillips for the lost years, whilst doing this study and also for our new found companionship. Over the course of my study I have grown to be even more “me” in her company, as I have sought her counsel at every stage in this living theory thesis focused on the makings and un-makings in the making of me. When I have been close to calling halt to this living theory thesis, she would remind me that the journey to completion would be much less than the journey that I had already travelled.

However, as I complete my thesis my mother has passed, and I am so pleased that she knows that I am on the way towards completion. I informed her on my submitting of a substantive part of my study a few days before her homeward journey. My accomplishment made her happy.

In her pomp, when my mother walked the world, there was celebration in the universe. Her earthly journey was royal – and with Divine intention. “So sweet her face, with poise of an angel’s grace, in her natural mien, in her own sense of being, and rightful place was that of loving, passionate and powerful African Queen.”

She was a revolutionary, bending the system to purchase her own home before the age of 35. This was accomplished at a time when few women, much less a single black woman, bringing up four boys, would have been hard to imagine. She fought school exclusion, school underachievement, the sus laws, challenged the police, accessed private schooling in the fierce defence of her children and still found time to pray. Hers was a blessed and wholesome way.

She was the village’s dream reader, the sage, the storyteller, counsellor, seamstress, healer, nutritionist, caterer, party-maker, artist and much more. She was a sterling contributor to our struggle, full of fun and laughter and with perspective. She knew her roots and her purpose.

Like Sojourner Truth she had her underground railroad for those journeying to the UK from Trinidad and Tobago. Edencourt Road, our home, was an ‘enlightened and loving stop’ for so many who sought new foundations in a strange land. It was also a healing place for teenagers at odds in their own family to find extended family.

Aunty Donna to many and Mum to an expansive company, she rarely asked for anything so self-sufficient was she. Formidable as friend or foe, she was never afraid, if it occasioned, to tell you about your so and so. And yet in less than a moment later she would be more that your willing mate or mother, showing great love. This was no fallen angel - her mission on earth was sanctioned from heaven above. Fly Madonna fly as all fierce angels do on their homeward journey.

You are the inspiration in my writings. You and no other created the rebel in me, with a love so strong that hate would find no entrance and it is you that counselled for me to create my own dance that is my unique and special life. Fly Madonna fly as all fierce angels do on their homeward journey. Fly Mum.

**Figure 1 In Celebration of my Mother's Life**

*IN CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF*

*Madonna Phillips Smith*

5TH MARCH 1952 – 25RD MAY, 2011



**FUNERAL MASS**

St Mary's Roman Catholic Church  
Wellesley Road, Croydon, CR0 2AR

Friday 3rd of June, 2011, 10.AM

Followed by Committal at Croydon Cemeteries & Crematorium,  
Mitcham Road, Croydon, CR9 5AT

## My Mother<sup>1</sup>

### *She Created The Rebel In Me*

It is to my mother  
That I give full praise  
For it is to her and no other  
That created most thankfully  
The rebel in me

My mother placed love  
At the centre of my heart  
So principled, so true,  
That doubt could find no entrance  
Hate could have no chance

In man she would say,  
Lies our only hope  
No disrespect to God,  
No alliance with the devil  
Take life in both hands,  
Let love be your guide  
Human nature is a wonder  
Let love be your teacher

My Mother shaped my mind  
Endowed with a will  
So unbending, so strong  
For care was its foundation  
To yield had no approbation

To me she would say  
Boy, your mind is a treasure  
To be protected and preserved  
For courage is never blind  
It is the base from which you act  
In the interest of humankind  
Let injustice take no hold  
Show care, be bold

My mother was the inspiration  
Of the fighting spirit in my soul  
She ensnared in my being  
a positive self image, self worth,  
confidence  
In the shaping of my very existence

Son, she would say  
Let no one tell you different  
Life is for living  
It's there to be enjoyed  
Let your spirit be free  
As all men should be  
And freedom your choice  
Permit your soul articulation  
Emancipate your inner voice

Boy, it was from my body  
That your body came forth  
Miraculous, divine, unique in design  
A physical entity evidencing  
Wonderment in creativity

And in quiet to me  
she would say

Boy, your body may only be a shell  
But what a precious vessel  
Care it well  
For therein is your heart,  
Mind body and soul  
Make a wholesome unity  
Expiate for Humanity

It is to my mother  
That I give full praise  
For it is to her and no other  
That created most thankfully  
The rebel in me

<sup>1</sup> Created by Ian L Phillips (1998)