

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

Engaging with Living Differences, Natural Inclusion and Re-imagining the Universe Luminously (We are vital inclusions of one another's worlds of darkness throughout light and light in darkness)

"It isn't just visible people at the table; the future is also at the table. I'll say to myself, 'Okay, I want to hear what you who are invisible have to say. I want to listen into that space.'" Not to the visible, not to the space of the present, but the space of the future, the space of the invisible. If you're simply open and quiet with such a picture, things start to come in, first, a little bit inarticulately, but you get a presentiment that something's emerging. Then something new will come. If you speak concretely out of that space, and if you're with a good group of people, they hear it as if it's spoken from a different space. That's my experience. They shift their attention; they redirect.

They can tell when you're speaking out of your conventional consciousness. And they can tell, by the feel of it, when something unusual has happened. They're picking up what it is in your voice".

Introduction

In this weave the intention is to demonstrate how insight into my vital bicultural complementation, proffered novel engagement with living contradictions, natural inclusion and life position theory. I also continue to give evidence of what I am doing to communicate the African Voice in ways that are authentic, African and at the same time understandable to diverse peoples and the academy. Further, I am still reaching out in reach of my fullest co-creative future possibilities and Divine self included with and including the Divinity of Nature, as I imagine the universe luminously.

I have already noted how embrace/engagement with The Paut Neteru aligns with embodiment of the African Voice as being and becoming valuing Scharmer. It is in this way that the African Voice as embraced in the symbols of the Sankofa bird and Maroon are freed.

I have also noted how including the Paut Neteru as a system of initiation towards a Divine Self in my living theory toolkit (on my loom), and its enjoining with Scharmer's 'path to social emergence' contributes to a sound technology for change from the vantage point of a vital bicultural complementation (an archetypal point for me).

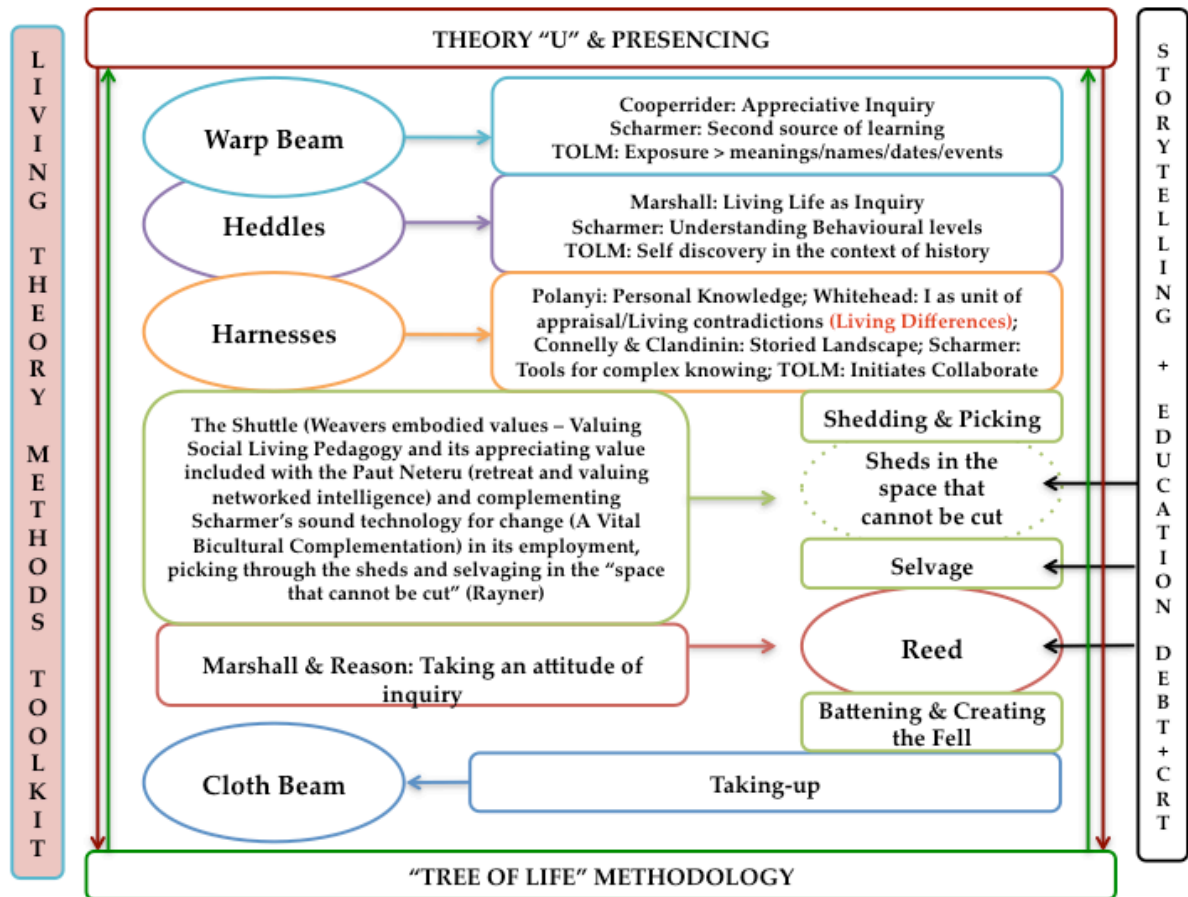
It is in the process of coming to this vantage point that I recognised the opportunity for new dialogue with Whitehead's (1989) living contradictions. From early in my living theory thesis, engagement with living contradictions had caused me concern. At various stages I had sought to advance my thinking on my concerns (see Weave Three and Weave Six). However, I felt that either I was not in a place to give effective articulation of my concern or that my full expression of my concern required further research or self-inquiry on my part.

In rediscovery of the Paut Neteru, I feel now able to advance my dialogue with living contradictions. It is the collectivist nature of African ontology (complementarity of the African Voice), which affords me the confidence to have this new dialogue, which leads to my finding of a complex and transforming self (complete, incomplete and wholesome) living I as integrated opposites as the initial expression of what is surfacing in my imagination. This is a relationally dynamic communication of my living standards of judgement, and I find resolve in reconciling my concerns with living contradictions.

However, engagement does not end there and in the 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'*. It is in this context Rayner's idea that self-identity, naturally includes neighbourhood, through the inclusion of 'transfigural' (through the figure) space in 'figural' (energetic) flow-form and *vice versa' is of great import in my learning, living and working.*

Figure 48: Living Differences on the Loom



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), as I perceive Whitehead's living contradictions, valuing Rayner, as "living differences". It is in engagement with "living differences" that a living I is

emergent that naturally includes neighbourhood. However, this is not without challenge.

In the creation of my “loom” (living theory methodology toolkit) in Weave One and Weave Four I informed on the “space that cannot be cut” (unlike the threads). It is into this space that the shuttle inserts going back and forth, as the harnesses raise and lower the warp yarns vertically to create forms called sheds to enable dynamic use of the space as the cloth is prepared and created. It is a vital and dynamic inclusion 'within and throughout' as well as 'between' the 'threads' of the weave as 'labyrinthine channels of communication. This is Rayner's natural inclusion and in this Weave I focus on how I am in that space 'beholding the African Voice'.

Over the course of the study 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 (valuing Zajonc) 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. Zajonc in response to Scharmer (2003) says this means finding a way of being a self and, at the same time,

being completely selfless. *Because if I hold onto "who I am," then I can't know the Other, because I'm inert in that sense. I'm too fixed. I can only become the waving of that tree by in some ways completely losing myself. It's the practice of the Buddhist No-self, or the Paulian saying, "not I but Christ in me." We each of us have something that Steiner calls the highest self, within me, the true Self, which is like no-self that I can currently imagine* (2003).

In the Paut Neteru it is the Divine Self and I see something similar in the teachings of the Ausar Auset Society, it their idea 'that Man'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', which dramatizes this for me as follows:

An individual's true identity... is the Self, which consists of Consciousness and Will (Not-Self consists of Energy and Matter) as there is no energy or matter in Man's true Self. Also, every thought, emotion and sensation belongs to the Not-Self and generally represents a manifestation of the Animal Spirit in Man. The Animal Spirit, along with the Mental Spirit and the Divine Spirit, represents a triune view of Man's Being. The Divine Spirit, which is pre-programmed with Divine Law, corresponds to Man's true Self while both the Mental Spirit (Man's intellect and reasoning ability) and the Animal Spirit correspond to the Not-Self. Therefore, failure to control one's emotions, for example, represents a submission to the animal part of Being as well as a waste of one's Life Force.

It is the complementarity in the African Voice, the Paut Neteru's Self and Not Self, Zajonc Self and Selfless that I am inspired to return confidently to my engagement with 'I as a living contradiction'

A Complex Self

I as Weaver is in the 'space that cannot be cut' in the application of my living theory toolkit, brings the past into presence, as I recall where I had reached in Weave Two, in my engagement with Whitehead's 'living contradictions'.

I recalled to memory the following questions:

1. *“Why is the term living contradiction feeling so personally uncomfortable?”*
2. *“Is there some contrariness in me that I need to explore and I am resisting?”*
3. *“ Why does living contradictions, for me, feel so much like a concept for explaining original sin?”*
4. *“Does not living contradictions replay the dualism so central in European thought?”*
5. *“Would not African thought present less of a schism, a more holistic view”*

These questions remained important, however my intimated *contrariness and resistance in relation to its reminding me of original sin and the dualisms in European thought* would recede quite quickly on further consideration. I had sensed from the outset that the African Voice might present less of a schism, a more whole view of understanding self than that offered by the concept of living contradictions. So “living contradictions” was personally uncomfortable, even though I recognised the importance of this concept. My contrariness and inner contradictions explained in Weave Two related to my stuckness was sufficient evidence in this recognition.

Figure 49: Who Am I?



However, even at that time a thought was emerging, which I expressed as follows:

"I am more than a living contradiction. I am a wholesome unity too. I am not one without the other and I certainly do feel that the concept, "living contradictions", is a part of me, but not all of me. In this context "living contradiction" feels more comfortable. Wholesome unity gives the term a balance. Gives it an African feel. Offers a concept that can repair that schism, so integral to the term contradiction. Wholesome unity reminds me of that 'old' concept of the unity of opposites".

'It provides a balance and conditions that contradictory self. It provides the home in which contrariness can be managed'.

This was a telling point for me, and in my appreciation of my embodied African Voice as a way of being and becoming, and now my research into The Paut Neteru, further engagement with 'I as a living contradiction' was "alive".

Complete, Incomplete and Wholesome Unity

As a result of the exploration I arrived at an uneasy acceptance that living contradictions are evident whenever incongruity between embodied values and life actions exists. I say uneasy, because living contradictions did not feel as comprising the whole me. It presented as contributing to a fractured self in the moment and in motion.

However, I was encouraged towards the powerful embrace of the notions of a complete self, an incomplete self and wholesome self (living with integrated opposites), as a challenge to that fracturing. These notions sought to make sense of emergent feelings and ideas that comprised a reframe of living contradictions; a way of understanding self in the moment and in motion (that had alignment with my earlier consideration of appreciative moments and events); and an appropriate platform for inquiry and understanding of the widest living experiences of African peoples – the experience of “living I as integrated opposites”.

These notions of complete, incomplete and wholesome unity - living with integrated opposites are important and have importance for my inquiries. However, I consider that just as important, is how I have journeyed to this place. How I have come to this understanding of “complete, incomplete and wholesome” that is presented in this thesis.

Complete, incomplete and wholesome (living integrated opposites) are used not as a substitute for living contradictions, but to effect a nuance of connectivity, rather than the opposition that I felt was attendant when I was initially introduced to the term. It

is this interconnectedness that is of importance and allows me to state confidently “that the dynamic interplay of who I am, my relationships, what I do and how I do what I do, at any particular give time, is at that time a complete emergent product of my lived experiences. Yet, at the same time who I am, my relationships, what I do and how I do what I do is also reflective of a transforming self and way of being that is incomplete. Together, that complete self and incomplete self, in dynamic interaction (more than contradicting, complementing too), makes for a ‘wholesome unity’ living life (soulfully, purposefully) with integrated opposites¹⁹”. This appeared as a valuable way of understanding my living experiences and seeking explanations for my valuing social “living”.

It is in this context of searching for interconnectedness that I like what Merleau-Ponty (2002) says when he informs that “The world is already constituted, but also never completely constituted; in the first case we are acted upon, in the second we are open to an infinite number of possibilities.... There is, therefore, never determinism and never absolute choice, I am never a thing and never bare consciousness”. (p. 453). I consider that the idea of a complete, incomplete and wholesome self and living with integrated opposites has some resonance with what Merleau-Ponty is saying. However, the living experiences informing these notions are particularly drawn from an African Voice which is a circular one, and where all events are tied together with one another.

For example, the notions of complete, incomplete and whole (with integrated opposites) rings loudly in the depiction of the Yoruba physical world as being of two planes, the upper Outerworld (Orun) and the world of the living (Aye). This universe

¹⁹ Integrated opposites

is often pictured as a sphere. Orun is the home of Oldumare, Creator and Supreme Being. It is also home to the Orisha and the ancestral spirits, Egungun. The heavenly plane (Orun) has two dimensions: simply put, a good heaven and a bad heaven. Earthly deeds and character decide which heaven one travels to when one dies. So though there is difference in destination, however everyone goes to heaven. In traditional Yoruban belief there is no "Hell", nor is there a "Devil" in distinct opposition, to a Heaven and God, respectively (Bewaji 1997; Idowu 1962; Parrinder 1949).

The notion of complete, incomplete and whole (with integrated opposites) rings loudly too, with Obatala, the androgynous Orisha of the Ifa Divination system. This Mother-Father Yoruban deity, credited with the creation of the world and humanity, is sought in ethical dilemmas and the problems of self-discipline. Yet, it is because of Obatala's lack of self-discipline, becoming drunk on palm wine, as Yoruban mythology suggests, that compromised the perfect creation of humanity. Obatala is sometimes depicted as very old, sometimes as quite young too. Additionally, Obatala is depicted as a gentle sky-god, but characterised as Damballah, the primordial serpent as well (Bewaji, 1997; Idowu, 1962; Parrinder, 1949). Integrated opposites are a feature of the Yoruban Divination system.

Another dimension to the living experiences of Africans that has importance here, are those derived from the living experiences of Africans in the diaspora, which I consider describes the circumstance of "living contradictions". Yet, it also describes how through living such a circumstance (living contradictions), enables the appreciation of an alternative circumstance that represents you, living your "living truth", of a complete, incomplete, wholesome self (living with integrated opposites).

This circumstance can be seen in the syncretism of African Theology and Western Christianity occurring during slavery and continuing to present day. It is a circumstance in my view that is the result of oppression, yet offers a challenge to that oppression. During slavery, particularly in the Americas and the Caribbean, African peoples were prohibited from practising their theology and not able to celebrate their religion openly. They were able (allowed) though to celebrate Western Christianity openly (albeit in devaluing ways). So, they used opportunities to celebrate Western Christianity openly. However, through utilising Christian ceremonies and symbols and transforming their meaning so that they are embraced in an African theology, they were also able to celebrate African theology openly. In that way what looks like a celebration of Christianity is really a celebration of African theology.

Natalia Bolivar, one of Cuba's foremost experts on Santeria²⁰, informs that African slaves, because their religion was forbidden, disguised their deities as Catholic saints, a phenomena that persists to this day.

Lucia Newman, CNN, in a news clip (Africa in Cuba – 2007) shows a follower of the deity Yemaya saying "I've been practicing this for 20 years, and I'm a baptized Catholic."

Newman continues, "At Havana's cathedral, many worshippers carry their Santeria dolls as they pay tribute to the Virgin of Charity, Cuba's patron saint, a practice tolerated, though not approved by the Catholic Church. Unlike in Africa, here they don't see a contradiction in believing in both the Yoruba deities and the Christian God."

Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906), in his poem, "We Wear the Mask", also attends to the circumstance of living contradictions through living with integrated opposites (Dunbar, Paul Laurence. *The Collected Poetry of Paul Laurence Dunbar* Joanne M. Braxton, ed. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993). Dunbar shares:

We Wear the Mask

WE wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,
 This debt we pay to human guile;
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
 And mouth with myriad subtleties.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
 Nay, let them only see us, while
 We wear the mask.

We smile, but, O great Christ, our cries
To thee from tortured souls arise.
 We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
 But let the world dream otherwise,
 We wear the mask.

Hence, it is through engagement with "living contradictions" (Jack Whitehead), a valuable way of communicating the nature of my relationally dynamic and responsive living standards of judgment became known. It appreciated self as transforming, comprising a complete self and incomplete self, in dynamic interaction (more than contradicting, complementing too), making for a 'wholesome unity', living I as integrated opposites". This is a distinguishing feature of this new epistemology.

It is this appreciation of self as transforming, comprising a complete self and incomplete self, in dynamic interaction (more than contradicting, complementing

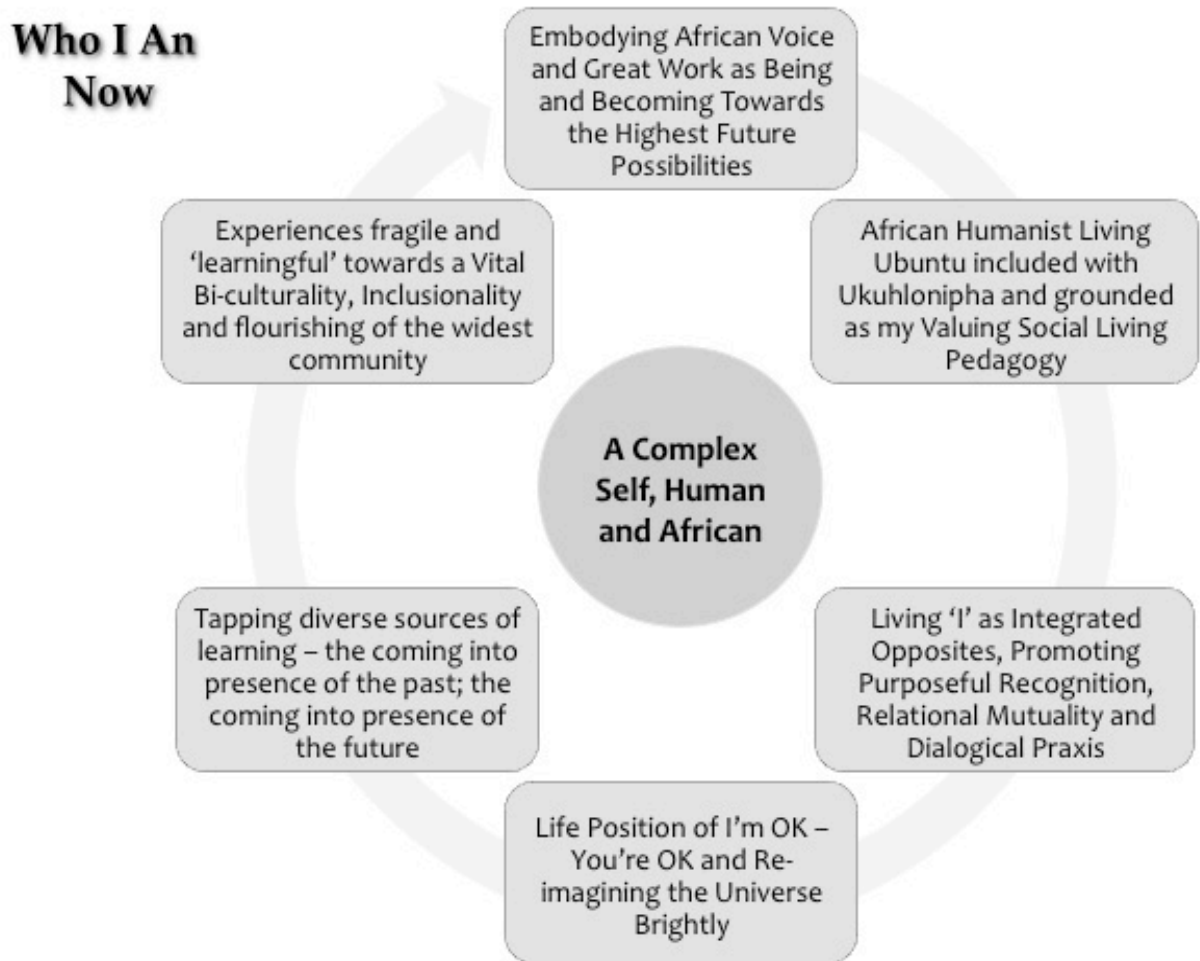
too), making for a 'wholesome unity, living I as integrated opposites', which would make important links across my learning, living and work sites/experiences.

I have already noted how embrace/engagement with The Paut Neteru ('Maat is: Today as Yesterday, Tomorrow as Today') aligns with embodiment of the African Voice as being and becoming, valuing Scharmer. It is in this way that the African Voice as embraced in the symbols of the Sankofa bird and Maroon are freed.

I now make connection with the complementary nature of the African Voice and the concept of the Self and Not Self important in the Paut Neteru, in dialogue with I as a living contradiction. I find the African Voice (as complete, incomplete and wholesome, living I as integrated opposites), undergirded by its appreciating value.

This affords a new premise for reconciling my challenge of living contradictions (debate, to tough talking to dialogue) and the opportunity for continuing profound quality change in the weaver's learning, living and working, and the influencing of others and social formations. It is in this way that I bring the past into presence acknowledging my complex self (my being), and bring the future into presence in my transforming self. I find peace in self, in my conscious awakening, to who I am in the 'now world'.

Figure 50: Who Am I Now



Natural Inclusion

In the now world I also deepen embrace of inclusionality. Earlier I noted on Rayner's natural inclusion. I also gave appreciation of his networked space. Now I amplify his recognition of 'space cannot be cut, as a post dialectic evolutionary logic and understanding of 'natural inclusion' ... which changes currently predominant perceptions of self-identity from 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, I am also initially challenged by Rayner (Rayner , 2011.) when he says "discrete perceptions of self and group are a profound but unnecessary source of psychological, social and environmental conflict, which aligns with the Darwinian notion of 'natural selection' as the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life."

The challenge is on two counts for in my focus on the African Voice, I feel that though I am offering a perception of self and group. However, it is not the intention to convey discreteness. Neither is this embrace of the African Voice the result of 'an inversion of priority from seeking sustainable, co-creative evolutionary relationship to striving for supremacy.'

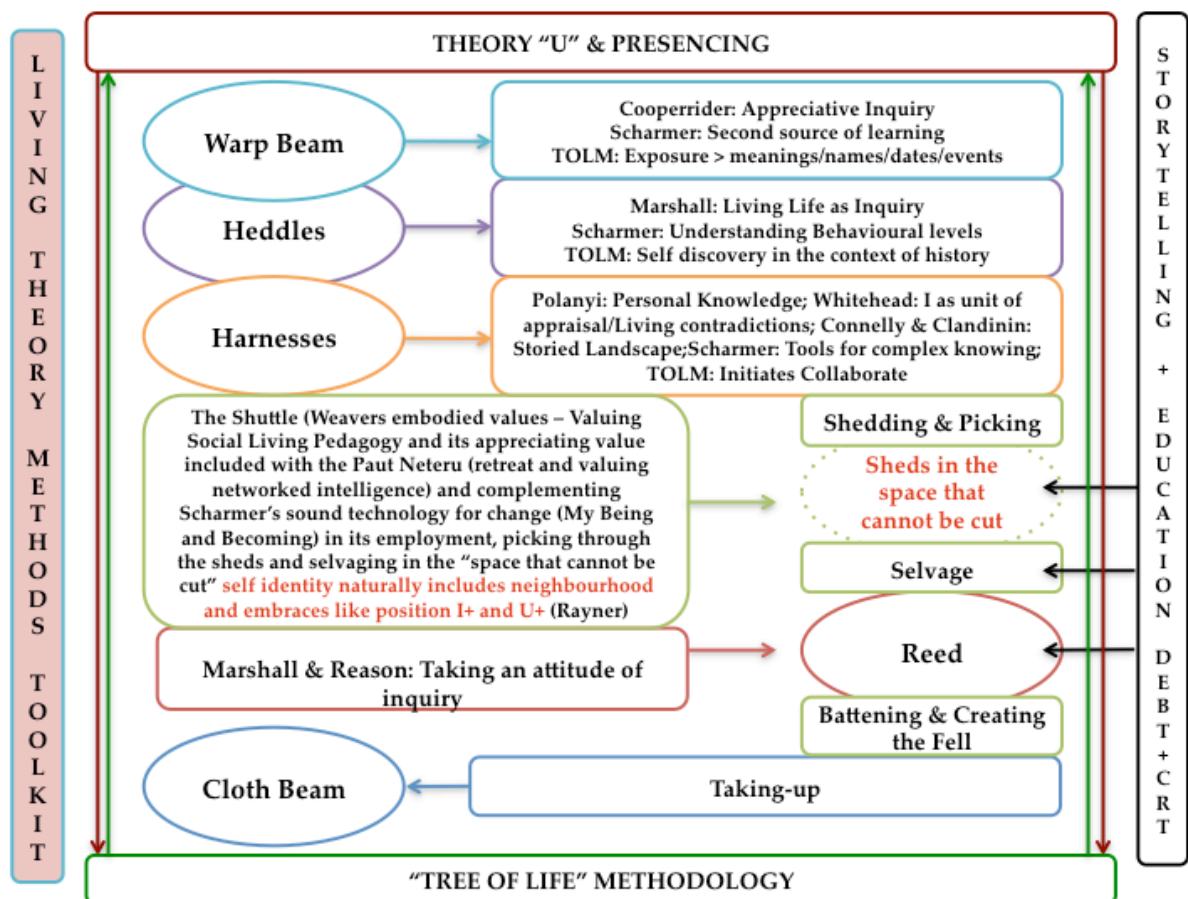
I can see how discrete perceptions of self and group and the striving for supremacy can 'both give rise to' and be 'reinforced by adherence to discontinuous, objective logic within almost every endeavour of what has come to be regarded as civilized human life: science, mathematics, religion, language, education, economics and social governance' (Rayner, 2011). I can also see that at "the heart of this logic is the supposition that any distinguishable identity can be completely cut free, as an 'independent singleness', from the space it inescapably includes and is included in" (Rayner, 2011).

Therefore, I concur wholly with Rayner, that 'there is no consistent evidence for this supposition and it does not make consistent sense.' Indeed, I find great resource in Rayner's thinking that the "fluid boundary logic of 'natural inclusion' ... regards space as a limitless receptive (non-resistive) 'presence of tangible absence' vital for

movement and communication, not as an 'absence of tangible presence' that puts distance between one thing and another" (Rayner, 2011).

Here, my sense of challenge dissipates and there is a stirring in my own imagination, as Rayner continues: "Correspondingly, biological and cosmological evolution is understood as *'the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context'*. Self-identity, in this context, naturally includes neighbourhood, through the inclusion of 'transfigural' (through the figure) space in 'figural' (energetic) flow-form and *vice versa*."

Figure 51: Self Identity Naturally Includes Neighbourhood is on the Loom



In this stirring of my imagination I recall my narrow embrace of community and limited appreciation of inclusionality and how I acted to discover Berry, Swimme, DeGrass-Tyson. In their work I would increase my own learning, find the Great Work and find new universe objectives. It is in this way I made an important link in my advocacy for the African Voice and the Great Passion to be in the room. It felt like a natural development, as I embraced the Great Work (My Great Passion) and enjoined personal objectives and universal objectives in a new commitment integral to my valuing social living pedagogy.

Intimacy, celebration and viability, the guiding principles of the Great Work were embraced and I involved self and work in the New Story. Berry noted in the New Story on how the Copernican revolution changed our whole sense of our spatial orientation in the universe. No longer was the earth considered the center of reality. He also noted that in a similar manner, the Darwinian revolution was altering our sense of time. He noted that, "for the first time it is dawning on human consciousness that the earth is part of an irreversible developmental sequence of time. In other words, life has evolved from less complex to more complex forms. Species did not always exist as they are now; they are derived from early life forms. In other words, the earth in all its parts, especially in its life forms, was in a state of continuing transformation" (Berry 2000). This is the first implication of the New Story. We live not simply in a cosmos but in a cosmogenesis.

Secondly, as this reality of developmental time begins to dawn on the human community a realisation of the subjective communion of the human with the earth likewise begins to be felt. As Berry expresses it: "The human emerges not only as an earthling, but also as a worldling. We bear the universe in our beings as the universe

bears us in its being. The two have a total presence to each other and to that deeper mystery out of which both the universe and ourselves have emerged." (Berry 2000) This subjective presence of things to one another is one of the most distinctive features of Berry's thought. (Berry 2000) has suggested that the importance of the awareness of the subjective dimension of the universe story cannot be underestimated. Indeed, he writes: "...the reality and value of the interior subjective numinous aspect of the entire cosmic order is being appreciated as the basic condition in which the story makes any sense at all." (Berry 2000)

Berry states, then, that to communicate values within this new frame of reference of the earth story we need to identify the basic principles of the universe process itself. These are the primordial intentions of the universe towards differentiation, subjectivity, and communion. Differentiation refers to the extraordinary variety and distinctiveness of everything in the universe. No two things are completely alike. Subjectivity is the interior numinous component present in all reality also called consciousness. Communion is the ability to relate to other people and things due to the presence of subjectivity and difference. Together these create the grounds for the inner attraction of to the presence of subjectivity and difference. Together these create the grounds for the inner attraction of things for one another. These are principles, which can become the basis of a more comprehensive ecological and social ethics that sees the human community as dependent upon and interactive with the earth community. Only such a perspective can result in the survival of both humans and the earth. As Berry (2000) has stated humans and the earth will go into the future as one single multiform event or we will not go into the future at all.

Okri says Africa in all of us. We should care for the Africa in us. Berry says the universe is in

all of us. We need to care for our universe. Scharmer says inquire in to self and work in reach of highest future potential. Paut Neteru encourages initiates to follow path to a Divine self. In these I find new technology that is freeing, and allows embrace of a vital bicultural complementation to reconcile living contradictions and appreciate a complex and transforming self. It is a self that naturally includes neighbourhood, informing on our biological and cosmological evolution understood as *'the co-creative, fluid dynamic transformation of all through all in receptive spatial context'*, valuing Rayner.

It is with this sense of self that I was encouraged to inquire into my life position and arrived at the place of I'm OK – You're OK and the re-imagining of the universe luminously.

Many times I had done lifelines, particularly on the Accelerate programme, and themes of interest had emerged.

More recently I have been curious about my life position and concerned about the identification that over a considerable period of my adult life I had embraced the position of I'm OK – You're not OK. I wanted to discern the impact of this life position on my living learning and working and shift to I'm OK – You're OK.

Life Positions

Life position, originally described by psychologist Eric Berne (1962/1976) in an article entitled 'Classification of Positions', proffered four life positions: I'm OK, You're OK' (I+U+); 'I'm not-OK, You're OK' (I-U+); 'I'm OK, You're not-OK' (I+U-); and 'I'm not-OK, You're not-OK' (I- U-).

According to Berne, mind and life positions influence the way we see us in relations to other people. It influences the way we see life situations, and the course of actions (defence mechanisms) we choose to solve problems.

- *I am OK, you are OK.* The healthy self-concept. Happy with what you have: strength and weaknesses without being either complacent or egocentric.
- *I'm OK, you are not OK* Feel superior towards others. Loathe others for not being like you, and suspects those who you think are better than you.
- *I'm not OK, you are OK* Feel inferior towards others. Often depressed and guilty.
- *I'm not OK, you are not OK* Sees no hope in life, at all.

Figure 52: Life Positions (Berne)

Life positions	
<p>1</p> <p>I'm OK</p> <p>You're OK</p>	<p>3</p> <p>I'm OK</p> <p>You're not OK</p>
<p>2</p> <p>I'm not OK</p> <p>You're OK</p>	<p>4</p> <p>I'm not OK</p> <p>You're not OK</p>

However, in recent times, new conceptualisations have been presented on life positions. In *The Treatment of Character*, (White 1987) White emphasized how concepts in psychology and transactional analysis had changed, and cited the concept of life positions in this context. White noted that two articles (Berne 1962/1976; Haiberg, Sefness, & Berne, 1963/1976) had described life position as a total life direction or a person's overall life destiny. This is in keeping with Eric Berne life script theme. Berne (1962/1976) stated, "Every game, script, and destiny then, is based on one of these four basic positions" (p. 3).

However, White suggests that this meaning has receded, as 'life positions' is more often associated with Ernst's (*OK Corral*, p. 119, 1971) (Ernst's 1971). Stewart and Joines (1987) (Joines 1987) informing on Ernst view says:

"Each of us arrives in adulthood having written a script based on one of the four life positions. Yet, we don't stay in that position every hour of the day. Minute by minute, we shift between positions."

Woollams and Brown's (1978) mediated that though life positions are fairly permanent and do not change easily, Ernst view could be appreciated as 'feeling states' (p. 120). In this way they separated what Berne and Ernst called life positions, though both used the same terms.

White in his article argues that Berne focused on life position as a character-level idea, and Ernst as a surface-level, minute-by-minute concept (White, 1985a). The surface life position is viewed as temporary and changes many times each day. It may be reflected in the types of ego states or transactions that we use. Such positions can be chosen by free will, or they may be specific reactions to the environment.

Metaphorically, "underneath" these surface positions are the more basic character positions. These are not temporary, but far more permanent; they reflect the individual's basic character. The two levels of life positions are not mutually exclusive. They can influence each other. The character life position will influence the amount of time and the ease with which one adopts a certain position at the surface level. For example, someone who is I-U+ at the character level will tend to use that most often at the surface level, particularly under stress. However, the requirements of various daily situations lead each of us to use all the life positions in our daily lives.

White informs one way to influence one's character life position is by doing things differently in everyday life. If one's character position is I-U+ one can make a social contract to engage in I+U+ behaviour and transactions at work. If one persists with this new surface-level behaviour, the Child ego state will slowly begin to alter its character position to one that is more I+U+.

My intent was to change my character position I+U- to I+U+ by embracing the tenet of reimagining the universe luminously and demonstrate this in my learning, living and working.

However, critical to any change in life positions was the understanding of the concept of OKness. Stewart and Joines (1987) defined OKness as the "essential value" (p. 117) that one perceives in oneself and others. This implies something more than just behaviour. Steiner (1974) gave a more philosophical definition of OKness. He noted on Berne's conviction and "'faith in human nature'" (p. 2) and about the OKness of people. As a result, we all are OK, even those who commit the most

heinous deeds. Such individuals are not responsible for their genes or early backgrounds and thus are OK, even though their behaviour is not.

For Berne, in the process of developing an identity, people define for themselves, early in life, what the meaning and significance of their life is. Some people see life as a basically benign and positive experience and themselves as basically acceptable. Berne called this positive experience of self "being OK." Others decide they are not acceptable (not OK) as human beings and that they will fail in some way. These expectations, based on a decision about how life will be, become a person's existential position. People can feel accepting or not accepting about themselves and others (OK or not OK). This leads to his four main existential positions noted earlier.

The concept referred to in transactional analysis as the "OK existential position" is represented our wider behavioural culture by the concepts of "positive psychology," "flow," "human potential," "resiliency," "excellence," "optimism," "subjective well-being," "positive self-concept," "spontaneous healing," "nature's helping hand," "vismedicatrixnaturae" (the healing power of nature), and "the healing power of the mind."

In transactional analysis, the OK existential position is also referred to as "the universal position" because Berne assumed that "people are born OK"; that is, people have an innate tendency toward health, healing, and a benign expectation and trust of others. This position about self and others is either maintained or lost to a not-OK position about self, others, or both.

Many studies have shown that human beings strongly tend to be selectively positive

in their language, thought, and memory and that people who are psychologically healthy show a higher level of positive bias. The research also indicates that people with an OK-OK attitude are likely to be healthier and live longer. In fact, Tiger (1979) consistent with Berne's views postulated that optimism has driven human evolution and is an innate adaptive characteristic of the species, a part of evolutionarily developed survival mechanisms.

Berne, notes that the OK position can be regained when lost. However the not-OK position is tied to a script and people can base their whole lives on this position. It is argued that over the last centuries there is a positive direction of the human species with greater valuing behaviours on display.

White cites Novey saw OKness as meaning "I am an acceptable human being, with the right to live and meet my needs, and you are an acceptable human being with the right to live and get your needs met." For him, "rights" and "acceptability" are used in defining OKness (White 1994). Finally, Harris and Harris (1985) saw OKness in relation to how individuals assumptions were either OK or not OK, or that as people they did not possess value or worth. Other individuals were assumed to be either OK or not OK and this is presented as a comparison of strength, power, and dependency between a child and his or her parents (Harris and Harris 1985).

Obviously, none of these descriptions of OKness is right or wrong. However, it is Stewart and Joines's definition of OKness (1987), '*essential value that one feels about self and others*' that I use to consider my own life position. In this way, I explore my perception of the value I have for self and others and its influences on my learning, living and working.

Yet I am stirred by White's explanation of the life position I'm OK – You're not OK. White explains that some individuals show 'I'm OK, You're not-OK' behaviour, but their experience of OKness is quite different from what is suggested by the "I'm OK" part of the equation. White argues that the individual feels and believes that they are not-OK, but are trying to convince themselves that others are worse. In such cases the feeling and thoughts about OKness take precedence over the behavioural display.

This was of great import to me, particularly as I had determined for a considerable part of my adult life I had remained in the life position of I'm OK – You're not OK.

White continued that it is generally understood that for someone to believe that another person is not OK, they must at some level believe that they themselves are not OK. He cites Stewart and Joines (1987, p. 123) who said "that I+U- is often a *defense* against I-U+' and recommends that the 'I'm OK, You're not OK' position be described as 'I'm not OK, but You're worse' (I-U--). He says this more accurately describes the internal experience, even though from a behavioural point of view it looks as if the person is feeling I+U-. This assumes that it is not possible to view others as not OK unless one views at least part of one's self as not OK.

White's notes from a therapeutic point of view, it is often counterproductive to suggest to someone that they are I+U-. They may almost enjoy or feel satisfaction at being thus diagnosed. However, to confront such a person with the diagnosis of "I'm not OK, but You're worse" is far less palatable, and the desire for change is often heightened.

I sense truth in White's postulation and this certainly dramatises the theory of life position for

me, as I give account of my feeling/thinking and behaviour over time, as in a lifeline exercise.

I contend that in the years up to ten in Trinidad and Tobago, I am in the life position of I'm OK – You're OK. However, this is occurring in a subtext (for me) of optimism with a lightly felt and semi-transparent colonial imagination emergent.

In the years 10-15, in metropolitan and imperial Mother England, the life position of I'm not OK – You're OK is my disposition, as the nature of my experiences are characterised in attempts to fulfil perceived optimistic home ambitions in a strange / alien schooling environment (Create Your Own Dance) that does not include me.

My later school years 16 – 18 UK was experienced as I'm not OK – You're not OK, as despair clouded my vision in an environment characterised by disadvantage and an internalised conflicted identity. I found difficulty in finding real answers to who I am, my purpose for being in the world and had no sense of belonging in community (I felt as if I was living in an earthly purgatory).

However, I would find self, purpose and community in the African Voice, and I would learn over the course of this living theory thesis that it is the position of I'm OK – You're not OK that has been the pattern in my adult learning, living and working (*Granny and I Adversaries, If I had been included in my own learning, Sankofa as Maroons and stuckness in my learning, living and working - limited embrace of community and inclusionality*).

In acting for profound change in my learning, living and working I would set in

motion unknowingly at first, then consciously to influence/ change my life position. White based on the theories of Mahler (1965) (Mahler 1965), proposes that in the first one or two years of life the infant adopts a life position of either "I'm OK, You're Irrelevant" (I+U?) or "I'm not-OK, You're Irrelevant" (I-U?). In this way he extends Ernst model. White's view is that at birth the infant has no conception of others, so he or she cannot decide if they are OK or not.

Mahler demonstrated how the newborn from birth to 12 months feels omnipotent. The infant sees mother/ caretaker and self as having a common boundary and does not perceive him or herself as being a separate entity. The infant is in a state of twilight existence in which he or she does not seem to know where he or she begins and where the other leaves off. It is only after achieving this strong attachment in the first 12 months that the baby spends the next 24 months endeavouring to become a separate individual. I have no real argument with this even though I have considered that in infancy I'm OK – You're OK was very much how my life position was experienced, as I recalled early life experiences and listened to the voices of others about such experiences. I know there is contestation here from psychologists, and my challenge is not a determined one.

White suggests that the position of I+U is the normal state of affairs at birth and for the very young child. He says this differs from Steiner (1974), who said that at birth we are in the position of I+U+. However, what I get from both is the okayness of the child in infancy.

White also draws on the work of Piaget (1926/1929) to further support his two new life positions. Piaget says that a young child's thinking is animistic, and attributes

consciousness to inanimate things. Piaget says this continues up to the age of six or seven, and then goes through further stages of animism until around age 12.

My recall of memories up to this age straddles experiences in Trinidad and the UK and represents a change in life position from I'm OK – You're OK to I'm not OK – You're OK through most of my schooling years. Near the end of my schooling, experiencing despair, I view my life position as I'm not OK – You're not OK, until I find self and purpose in the African Voice.

The life position that characterises my early embrace of the African Voice is I'm OK – You're not OK. However, this appears to remain unchanged until I act towards profound change in my learning, living and working as 'stuckness' is evidenced in the African Voice.

Scharmer's Theory U is foundational as I engage with a second level of learning and discover being and becoming in how I am in the world. I become aware of movement in my learning, living and working, and in appreciation of my African birthing see the need for change in the African Voice. I also embrace change in my (personal and universe objectives), as I enjoined advocacy of the African Voice and the Great Work in the interest of the widest community.

In crystallising my vision in Turning Point I find my valuing social living perspective, and in its prototyping in Mandiani co-evolve our successful heal, protect and create strategies (undergirded with rights, responsibilities and accountabilities).

However, though Mandiani's work makes strides towards the mainstream. It is this

stirring in me that motivates me to move to BCL. I make this move aware of the appreciating value of the African Voice and in recognition it is this quality that I want to communicate to non-Africans and the academy.

In BCL I am still very much in the margins. However, work on the Accelerate programme is a veritable testing ground for bringing in the new. It is in research stimulated by experiences in Accelerate that I find the Paut Neteru that is foundational in freeing the African Voice (the African voice as being and becoming). It is enjoined with Scharmer's Theory U as a sound technology for change and evidence of a vital bicultural competence.

The embrace of the Paut Neteru with its complementarity allows new engagement with living contradictions and I find 'living I as integrated opposites'. I also in appreciation of journeying to a Divine self, find in the space that cannot be cut, that my self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood. I am because we are.

However, it is a self-identity that I hold lightly, for I now know the propensity for change and the importance of the selfless self in encouraging and inspiring change in the other. I have found my okayness, in seeing the okayness of the other. If I cannot see the other as okay, then I am not OK.

Therefore, I have some agreement with White. I'm OK – You're not OK can be interpreted as I'm not OK but you are worse. It is for profound change that this life position is placed on the loom. On the warp beam I am seeking the best that can be and in search of the highest future potential wanting to emerge – I'm OK – You're OK. Living life as inquiry I am noticing how in my inner and outer arcs new

behaviours towards my objective are emergent.

I am also telling stories of my change in diverse situations/programmes as I share the importance of life position theory (for example on Emotional Intelligence workshops, Authentic Leadership workshops, Diversity Workshops and Leadership programmes). I am telling secret stories, and as I tell them they are no longer secret, for they reveal the real me. I am telling stories about letting go and letting come as I act with renewed optimism, “living I” in ways that comprises mutually inclusive complements and so sustains diversity within and as an inclusion of the ‘space that cannot be cut’, and inescapably my self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood. I proffer now an audacity beyond my inquiry, it is in my learning, living and working as I imagine the universe luminously.

I also share my concerns relating to African Voice and the Great Work, as I act for change embodying my valuing social living pedagogy. I am able to do this in a way that I am not thinking wholly about context, as Theory U and the Paut Neteru dissolve, for I am in the space that cannot be cut. In this space I am able to co-inspire, co-create and co-evolve with others in diverse environments and my vital bicultural competence can connect with the voices of others, without losing my own voice, all of us adding value and appreciating unity in diversity and complementation.

My self identity naturally embraces neighbourhood and is now held lightly, it has room to breathe and selfless is transformed into my fullest my self emerges knowing in the space that cannot be cut there is always room for us all to grow and create for our human flourishing. Still I reach out for my fullest co-creative future possibilities and continue on my path toward a Divine Self included with and including the

Divinity of Nature and work with others in their diverse search focused on Who is Self and What is my Passion?

It is in this way I use the influence in my learning, living and working, and that of others in social relationship, as I do good, educate and be a catalyst for change knowing Who I am and my purpose for being in the world. This is my way now as an emergent consultant in presenting my fullest self and passion “living I” comprising mutually inclusive complements and so sustaining diversity within and as an inclusion of the ‘space that cannot be cut’, and inescapably and consciously my self-identity naturally includes neighbourhood. I proffer now an audacity beyond my inquiry, it is in my learning, living and working as I imagine the universe luminously.

So those moments give a lot of positive energy to a group. There’s a feeling of originality, can-do, and collaboration. Nobody takes ownership, because the idea could have come from somebody else across the table. But emptying out, emptiness, and working with the invisible have become part of what I do when I’m working with groups.

It is in this way that I have also presented this living theory thesis.

It is a selfless disposition that I share as I evidence what I am doing to communicate the African Voice. The non-African Voice and the Academy is alongside and I am wanting to here their counsel on the future. I recall memories of the CARPP community, Jason act to learn about Elmina Castle and share his learning. Graham friendship and Challenge; Jack seeing of the great Story in my writings and sayings. Teachers in my work in Mandiani. My work in Mandiani. My work in BCL.

Engagement with diverse groups in Accelerate.

It is from here, from this place, in this moment that I begin to imaging the universe luminously.

This has been the nature of my inquiry into life positions. Indeed, this has been the nature of my living theory thesis as I have inquired into my African Voice.

My engagement with living theory advances both as I seek to answer the question: What I am doing to communicate the African Voice in way that are authentic, African and at the same time understandable to non-Africans and the academy?

I am inquiring into self and Work to proffer the best explanation of the nature/influence of my African Voice in my learning, living and working (VSL). I am evidencing how I came to know this dynamic Voice, and how I have journeyed with it through varied and important stages of my life – the journey is not at an end. I use the traditional African Weave to tell this journey of love, resilience and human flourishing in a complex world where the future that awaits is of celebration, intimacy and viability.

I evidence the value of the African Voice in my own learning (in its value in itself), in building community (in transaction) and in its knowledge creation for our modern world (its vital bicultural competence and appreciating value).

I also evidence how I have with my African Voice to shift from the I in me world and I in it world to the I in you world and I in now world, valuing Scharmer. Further I show how I bring my cloth in the form of the Paut Neteru as I follow the path of initiation to a divine self through history, building community

In this concluding section of the Weave , I want to show how there is a shift in the Weaver's life position from I'm OK to You're not OK as I sought to communicate the African Voice from the vantage point of I'm OK – You're OK.

Learning and Share (no longer hidden). I am no longer hiding.

Listen to me.