

Chapter

Jeremiah Jones and the Musical Crusade

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Prologue

Jeremiah Jones and the Musical Crusade is a research case study presented as story.¹ However, while narrative meanings within a story may stand alone, when a story is presented as formal research it will be better served with some explanation, given that the best interests of scholarship may be at stake. In that regard, prior to telling the story of *Jeremiah*,² this prologue serves to support the use of story, and also help orientate the reader to theoretical aspects that were considered in the construction of this story. Nonetheless, the explanation provided does not serve as a justification or claim for validity. I suggest that any evaluation might take place in the form of an individual and community examination of its “resonance”—a more appropriate tool for this type of lifework.³

It is important to note that a cognitive shift may be required when moving from the prologue to the story, because, as Jerome Bruner describes, an explanatory, logical text is a result of a *paradigmatic* construal of reality or “way of seeing” and this is quite distinct from a *narrative* construal.⁴ Despite the difference between these cognitive modes, I strive to present this prologue in as much a blend as possible—*narrative* in that (like *Jeremiah Jones and the Musical Crusade*) it

¹ The original form was presented as part of my doctoral thesis (Cleaver, 2004).

² A self-selected pseudonym—after the popular song Jeremiah was a Bullfrog.

³ Stauffer and Barrett (2009) have described “resonance” in lifework as “an ethical grounding and imperative for narrative work” (p. 20). Resonant work will have four qualities: it is respectful, responsible, rigorous and resilient” (see pp. 19–27 for complete description of these qualities).

⁴ Bruner (1986) identified two contrasting universal human cognitive modes, the logico-scientific or paradigmatic mode and the narrative mode. In addition to “ways of construing reality,” he also described them as “meaning-bearing forms of communication,” “modes of reasoning, knowing and understanding.” He added that although the modes are contrasted and distinct, they are also “complimentary but irreducible to one another” (p. 11). The paradigmatic is dedicated to “truth-finding” and is “the prerogative of science and logic” while narrative reasoning is directed to the situated and contextual ways that humans experience the world (p. 148). I argue that the paradigmatic also aligns with the “cause-effect, hypothetico-deductive system of reasoning” described by Kincheloe (1991, p. 44). In Cleaver (2010) I present further understandings surrounding the narrative and paradigmatic modes.

also tells a story, and *paradigmatic* in that it serves an objective, explanatory purpose.

The original case study project evolved from an issue—an inquiry into how to “research other’s lives.” I planned to present “illuminating portraits” of the musical lifeworlds of five (openly invited, self-selected) school music students who were dedicated and passionately committed to music (Cleaver, 2004). My aim was to understand (and re-present/illuminate) the “lived experience” of each participant in the study. I thought first in general terms—considering how to avoid the reduction and disaggregation of lifeworlds into factual descriptions and concepts that would not value, re-present or model the richness of the arts meanings, qualities, languages, intelligences and understandings that people live, experience and build their lives upon. I then focussed on matters of music and music education in order to consider how people “live inside music” and create musical identities. I assumed that the meaningful relationships people develop with the “qualities of life” are mostly unsatisfactorily represented, recreated or understood through objectivist and explanatory research designs. With this in mind, I explored the researching and *writing* of “lived experience” (Richardson, 2000) using a method and lens designed for more than the extraction of “truth,” facts and concepts. I resolved to acknowledge subjectivity, emotion, imagination and story and to inquire into the contrast between *narrative* meaning when juxtaposed against *paradigmatic* meaning (see Bruner, 1986, 1990). Researching others’ lives became a study in understanding self in relation to the world. To make thoughts, concepts, theories, methods and procedures visible, I began (or was it *continued*) an ontological and epistemological inquiry that became a dialogue with the ideas of an array of thinkers. *I scribbled and scratched, argued and/or triumphed with Husserl, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, Bruner, Rorty and even Descartes and Buddha.*

I turned to phenomenology and the ideas of Husserl (1970) and arrived in a place where “the lifeworld,” “lived experience” and “Being” could be given primacy and placed in the foreground of inquiring attention and awareness (elements which I agreed had been hitherto masked in western philosophy).⁵ Following a trail, I later understood how Heidegger extended phenomenological perspectives by adding an interpretive or *hermeneutic* component that included the *description* of phenomena. As Van Manen (1991), explains, the hermeneutic version of phenomenology “wants to be attentive to how things appear, it wants to let things speak for themselves” and it is also *interpretative* “because it claims that there is no such thing as uninterpreted phenomena” (p. 180; see also Cleaver, 2004, p. 53).

⁵ In the thesis (Cleaver, 2004) I made links from the fields of philosophy to music and the objectivist “masking of experience” within the tradition of Western Art music. Notably, Bowman (1998) discusses how an objectivist understanding of music places it ontologically “outside the mind” and epistemologically as having meaning existing independently of any consciousness. He recognises that the ontological and epistemological gulf between mind and body leads to a detachment from music, as it is “actually lived or experienced” (p. 300). Musical objectivism has been critically discussed by Small (1998) and also Woodford and Dunn (1998).

Early in the inquiry process, Jerome Bruner (1986) challenged me to think about my own thinking and “ways of seeing.” I resonated with his perceptive descriptions of the *paradigmatic* and *narrative* “ways of looking or construing reality” (p. 11). I made meaningful connections to the two modes—or perhaps better to say—a transformation on recognising them as operations of my lived experience. With a particular personal interest in exploring paradox and opposites, I set about using the research journey as an opportunity to explore and compare these distinct ways of perceiving and to reveal how they could be understood through a juxtaposing and contrasting of their operations in action. Reflection upon my own processes became a specific autoethnographic, reflective component that was written into the study (Cleaver, 2004).

I also explored aspects of existentialism and psychology (principally through the work of Rollo May, 1969) and discovered how Kierkegaard and also William James pre-empted phenomenological theory—they both emphasised “the passionate immediacy of experience” (May, 1969, p. 6; see also Van Kaam, 1969) and both philosophers sought a humanistic version of psychology that attempted to counter the analytical, positivist trend in the developing discipline (Cleaver, 2004, p. 49). Existential *uniqueness of individuality* and “experience” now joined “the lifeworld” and “narrative” as focal points in my research view.

When considering the postmodern notion of “research as story,” I was led to Rorty (1982), who argued for the blending of literary style into social science research. He stated that “if we get rid of traditional notions of ‘objectivity’ and ‘scientific method’ we shall be able to see the social sciences as continuous with literature—as interpreting other people to us, and thus enlarging and deepening our sense of community” (p. 203, as cited in Cherryholmes, 1988, p. 179). From here, I resonated with Barone and Eisner (1997) who describe how the infusion of aesthetic qualities and other literary design features—particularly the “creation of a virtual reality; the use of fiction; and a degree of textual ambiguity” (pp. 73–78) can broaden the landscape of education and social science research. The meanings within narrative texts (or literary text—see Barone, 2000, p. 138), while often ambiguous, are designed to invite reader response; “raise fresh questions and deepen the conversation” (Barone, 2001, p. 170; see also Eisner, 1991, p. 95). In this regard, literary and “arts-based” forms of research serve to invite further interpretation and criticism rather than shut down dialogue and further investigations.

Later, when analysing my collected research data, the interview transcriptions, observations and reflections (“lived experience material”), I focused on searching for what Kvale calls “significances” and “potentialities of meaning” (1996, pp. 4, 193). I later identified these as “phenomenological essences.” As essences, they are not distillations of hidden truths, objective universal principles or pre-established concepts lurking, waiting to be uncovered in the data, but are the researcher’s interpretations of (which in a more constructivist light could be called) the “meaning structures of phenomenon and lived experience.” Actually—it is not a process of *searching* the data, as this would presuppose that essences exist independently. Wittgenstein (1968, p. 43, sec. 92) clarifies this point by saying that we

develop meaning through a *rearranging* process, rather than *digging* beneath a surface reality (see also explanation by Finch, 1995, p. 157). In league now with Wittgenstein, I see that searching for structures of meaning becomes a *language game* that involves rearranging rather than a process of digging *or* searching. This confirms that my inquiry is not a digging into a fixed reality, but that I am, in fact, rearranging understandings to build new meaning. In this way, “essences” emerge from engagement with the data, to form new structures. Continuing the rearranging process—but from within a reality construed narratively—the ingredients of imagination and narrative sequencing are added, enveloping the language game to become story.

Finally—how can one interpret and “use” a story presented as research? As *Jeremiah Jones and the Musical Crusade* aims to cast a broad picture and present a (relatively) non-disaggregated form, the reader is invited to explore interpretive possibilities and develop criticisms and critical insights. The application of personal frames of reference can create further dialogical possibilities. Perhaps one might engage with it as with an art work (I avoid saying “work of art” as this has connotations of value for which I make no claim). With art works we may firstly choose to engage in interpreting the content through our frames of reference (what is the artist “getting at”) and also perhaps question how the “language” and “intelligence” of art is *lived*. Secondly, we may choose to examine the brush strokes of technique, method and design to perhaps question how the “language” and “intelligence” of art is *used*.

Multiple interpretations and perspectives can support the continuation of discussion about important issues in music education and when ideas diverge they may resonate in an agitated fashion. However, I suggest that if we choose to adopt frames of reference that might include an awareness of “the lifeworld,” “Being,” “phenomenological essence,” and the “passionate immediacy of experience”—then we may converge more closely in *sympathetic resonance* as we unmask dimensions of experience and also develop closer, shared understandings about the changing landscape of music, identity in music and music education.⁶

⁶ What about ‘wrestling’ with Descartes and Buddha? The process of researching others’ lives included reflection on barriers between self and other. I could not separate this from prior interest in Eastern philosophy, which traditionally is not separated from religion. Contrasting East and West, I believed that the Cartesian dualism (mind/being/self, as distinct from matter/body/physical world) might equate with separation from Brahman, Buddha nature or the (*real*, egoless) Self. Freedom from the Cartesian trap requires union, Self-realisation or as Wittgenstein states—*the fly is let out of the fly-bottle* (1968, p. 103). Within the trap, the “I am” is in the world. With release, the world is in the Self—but my “wrestling” in that regard is another story.

The Story

I turned into the cul-de-sac. It was a small street of suburban red brick bungalows with low fences, mostly with ragged un-cut grass squares in front, and straggly bushes around borders. The post boxes were makeshift and many of the front gates either had paint peeling off them or were unhinged. I proceeded, driving slowly as children were running up and down the street, throwing ball or skipping rope. I was looking for number 24. I rounded the turning circle at the end of the street, pulled up and parked in front of the house. There was an old car in the driveway so I figured someone was at home. But then I saw the front end was up on blocks—no wheels. I was 10 minutes early so remained in the car, opened the brief case and proceeded to read my notes in order to run through my mind some of the questions I was going to ask Jeremiah. It started to rain and the children ran past. Some looked in the car window, jeered and then ran on their way home. Someone was home. I was being watched. I looked up to see the curtain falling back into place. I thought it better to make my presence known.

I knocked on the door. It opened slowly. A tall man with long hair and clad in denim peered at me, squinting as though the light now coming into the house was painful.

“Yeah,” he said.

“Hi, I am here to see Jeremiah—we had an appointment at eleven. I’m a bit early so . . .”

He brushed me aside to look out of the open door. He looked both ways, up and down the street.

“Come in,” he said, “I’ll see if he’s in his room.” He knocked on a door adjacent to the hallway we were standing in.

“Jay!” He called out.

There was silence

“Jay—someone here!” This time there was a grunt from the room. We waited for a few moments uncomfortably looking at each other. The man in denim smiled.

“I think he’s had a late one,” he said.

The door opened and Jeremiah, holding a towel around his waist, looked at me. There was a moment of non-recognition as he peered through half-closed, sleepy eyes.

“Shit!” he exclaimed.

“Hi,” I said. “It looks like a bad moment. I could go out and get a coffee and come back later if you . . .”

“Ah . . . just give me a few minutes,” he said.

I couldn’t help glancing past him into his room. You could not see the floor for magazines, comics, cassettes, CDs and clothes. There was a stereo, and guitars were lined up against the wall. I nodded and backed away.

The man in denim spoke. “Hi my name is Stu—are you here about music?”

I introduced myself and we shook hands. I mentioned the nature of my business and Jeremiah's agreement to be interviewed.

While rolling a cigarette Stu began to sing Jeremiah's praises.

"He's great isn't he? Always playing that guitar and now getting some good gigs around town. That's where he was last night I think."

Stu said I could wait in the front room if I liked. He ushered me through, saying "Scuse the mess," and left to go to the kitchen to make coffee. The front room, what would have been the lounge or drawing room of any normal house, was, in this case, a rehearsal pad. A drum kit was set up and dominated the floor space. The open fireplace was packed full of what looked like unburned fish and chip papers and remnants. There were beer cans lying around the room and the smell of the smoke of a thousand cigarettes permeated the carpet and curtains.

I was surveying this scene and imagining a rock band rehearsal in this small room with guitar amplifiers and the drum kit in full flight when Stu put his head around the door.

"Er, could you do me a favour." His face was screwed up in an apologetic grin. "Do you mind just moving your car a little way down the street? It's just that the neighbours and the landlord . . ."

I obliged, not wishing to seem surprised but also not wanting him to feel the need for further explanation. As I walked out of the front door I saw my dark green Ford Falcon and suddenly it took on a rather "official," ominous look standing there in the empty street.

When I returned to the house I could hear Jeremiah singing in the shower. Stu and I chatted. We drank coffee as he told me the story of the breakdown of his marriage; how his wife took off with the kids, wouldn't let him have access to them and how he had subsequently gone downhill.

When Jeremiah surfaced we made plans to drive to the university campus and conduct the interview in the Student Union café where he could also get some breakfast.

As we drove off down the road, Jeremiah said, "Gotta move! I hate living there. It's not inspiring, not good for my creative juices."

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As I gathered notebook and audio-recorder and got into my car—heading to that first interview with Jeremiah, I couldn't help but think about the journey of inquiry that had brought me to that point of preparedness for the "lived experience material" collection phase of the research project. I became acutely aware of the theoretical complexities of preparation and how I had searched and researched in order to epistemologically and ontologically underpin my very core in order to prepare for a focus on *story*, whilst simultaneously attitudinally attending to *phe-*

nomenological lived experience.⁷ (In addition to the words “searched and researched” above—*please read*—deliberated, mused and mulled, ruminated, reflected, revised, meditated, pondered and played devil’s advocate between my own ideas. I also walked in the forest to clear my head and to allow the arising of serendipitous visualisations and notions. I scribbled and scratched, argued and/or triumphed with Husserl, Heidegger, Kierkegaard, James, Wittgenstein, Bruner, Rorty, Descartes and even Buddha,⁸ to name but a few whom I referred to—although I didn’t reference the last two in my doctoral thesis!. Additionally, while I wanted it to appear to Jeremiah as though we would simply be having a friendly discussion about his musical lifeworld—how would I be able to relax, feel welcoming and more like a musician/friend than an academic, a stranger who had arrived loaded with a suitcase full of theoretical agendas? Weren’t we simply just going to have a chat about his musical life?

Methodologically and theoretically, my purpose was to *illuminate*, through my own developing phenomenological and narrative lens, the musical lifeworlds of a sample of “dedicated school music students.”⁹ While Jeremiah had volunteered to take part in the research he presented as an entirely different case from the other four participants because, while he *was* studying music at college, he had returned after time in the workforce and was currently existing as a part time “gigging musician.” My plan was to conduct three, roughly 30-minute, informal interviews with each student participant and single informal interviews with the parent/s of each participant and also with their school music teachers (although later, Jeremiah asked me not to contact his parents). All interviews were audio taped and later transcribed. Vital to my understanding and the storying process was the opportunity to observe each of the participants while in musical performance. These performances were either video or audio taped. My field and reflective journal notes formed an important source of narrative and phenomenological lived experience material (data) and my plan was to meet the participants in suitable contexts or mutual grounds on each occasion.

It is at this point that the journey continues.



Jeremiah and I found a table in the corner of the Student Union’s cavernous glass-walled cafeteria. On the other side of the room a television was broadcasting a cricket match. A few students sat watching the match, however, apart from the commentator’s voice, the place was fairly quiet. The coffee wasn’t good, but the sun streaming through the window onto our table helped to warm the atmosphere.

⁷ Sources for phenomenology and phenomenological research included Merleau-Ponty (1962), Husserl (1970), Wertz (1984), Okrent, (1988), Van Manen (1990), Moustakas (1994), Sokolowski (2000) and Solomon (2001).

⁸ This point is described in the Prologue.

⁹ Cleaver (2004).

As I set up the tape recorder I reflected on Jeremiah's offer to participate in the study. At one point I had doubted his suitability for the study for, at 21, he was not a "regular" school student having spent 2 years in the workforce. However, he posed an interesting "case," because, although he lived in an apartment and had left school at 18 to work in various jobs, he had decided to return and complete a music course at Riverside College. Interestingly, although "at school," Jeremiah classed himself as a professional musician, and as the singer, songwriter and guitarist in a working band, he was actively engaged in either playing "gigs" around town, or at least always hunting for them.

I began by asking Jeremiah how he saw his musical world.

"Well I think of myself as a musician but what that really means is that I just play music and get paid very poorly . . . Ha! But basically music is what my life centres around. I love it—I love all aspects of it. It's an amazing thing you know—it really is. Ah . . . not sure really where to go from there. Strange really because I had all these good ideas when we were walking across the car park."

I remembered some of Jeremiah's earlier spontaneous remarks as we walked to the café.

"You said it gets into your blood and . . ."

"Yeah . . . it does," he said suddenly picking up the train of thought. "It gets into your blood . . . it's . . . well look, I have been involved in heaps of jobs. When I first left school, in the few years before going back to complete Year 13 at Riverside, I got into all sorts of things like office admin and all those sorts of boring jobs where you sit behind a desk and type things into a computer all day. But the whole time this music I was getting into . . . studying, it just got bigger and bigger."

He thought for a moment and backtracked through his life.

"I started when I was 18—when my Mum bought me a guitar and it sort of went from there. It was just in my blood . . . it was starting to slowly take over everything, I mean . . ."

"It consumes a lot of your . . .," I interjected but he bubbled over.

"It consumes *everything*. As I was saying to you earlier, in the car park, that when it is in your blood it courses through your veins and gives you an almost a . . . divine sort of . . . an idea that there is something bigger out there. It's like the music that I create, or the music I play that other musicians have created . . . makes me feel that there is a bigger world out there and it sort of . . . it calls out . . . it becomes something that consumes you. It's a *big deal!*" he said, concluding with great emphasis.

This time I was reluctant to interrupt his train of thought, but he paused and took a drink from his bottle of Coke.

I continued. "Music has a lot of meaning for you . . . in terms of commitment to it and to personal expression? Do you want to express yourself through music? Is that important?" Suddenly I felt concerned that I was sounding too intellectual, too academic. But he straightened up, paused and looked at me with eyebrows raised.

"Yes! It is . . . what is the point if it's not personal? I mean if you are up on stage or even in your bedroom or a backyard somewhere, and you just strum along and

go through the motions then it's not music. Other people may hear it as music but to you it's not—to you it's just an action you are going through. It's like . . . breathing and blinking—something you just do. So you have got to feel it, you have got to . . .”

He paused, sat back in the chair and thought. Immediately he bounced forward again, hands and elbows flat on the table, continuing with intensity.

“It comes down to the dynamics of the music. If you are just strumming through it the same—every bar—then it becomes bland and boring. You can be there just doing the simplest task, like being on stage playing rhythm guitar in a band. But you need to make it come alive. You are not just playing rhythm guitar to yourself—you are playing in a band. Not just strumming along. Playing in a band means you are contributing to a greater thing than you alone could do in music. It's not just about getting the most air-time or getting on with bands or getting people to say, “Wow, what a fantastic musician!” but just contributing to something that is bigger . . . and sometimes that means less of *you* and more of *them*.”

His eyes sparkled and he broke into a smile as he added –

“But sometimes *you* are the star. It is a matter of give and take.” As he looked at me the smile turned to a wry grin.

At that point I began to feel more relaxed (or perhaps it was relief) knowing that sitting before me was someone who had plenty to talk about. Little direction or prompting would be needed from me for Jeremiah had an open attitude, a detailed music story and a willingness to describe it. It appeared he had constructed a well-defined “identity in music”¹⁰ and had feelings, ideas and perspective about music and his role as a musician. However, I was still getting to know him and felt a certain reserve—of “treading on toes”—and my questions proceeded cautiously, attempting to probe carefully.

“So, spiritually music is important to you?” I asked.

“That is the *biggest* part. That is my job! I feel for me at least . . . I feel it is like a divine call almost. It is something I have to do. If I don't do it . . . then I know I am going to be lost.”

The notion of music as a divine call and again his exhibition of a passionate approach intrigued me.

“Could we look at that . . .? I mean we can question or analyse ourselves to a point where it becomes unproductive . . . but do you actually really question that in order to find where that drive comes from? It's great to think that it's divine, lovely, and spiritual, but . . .”

“Yeah, yeah! I think about it all the time! Sometimes I am forced to do that. I'm sure *all* creative people do that. They think, “I have got this, where does it come from?” You know . . . it is a basic human need to know and I believe it comes from God. I believe that God is very much involved with music. Perhaps not *all* music

¹⁰ See Macdonald, Hargreaves and Miell (2002) for detailed explorations of musical identity and identity in music.

but most music. He couldn't have . . . I think He just doesn't want the kudos for some . . ." He cut himself off with a spontaneous laugh.

"So you have a faith . . . music comes from a spiritual place?"

"It does. It has to . . . I mean . . . for me, God created music . . . and it is a beautiful . . . most fantastic art form . . . it's wonderful. My basic outlook on it is . . . I have written songs. They are good songs; they are songs that have mattered to people. And my basic philosophy behind recording an album is, well I have got these songs—let's record them—not just for the sake of recording, but because, well, why else would I have the songs—why else would I write them? Unless they were going to be recorded—unless they were meant to be . . . almost . . . you know what I mean? It's like musicians who write songs and don't perform them—you think, "Why did you write them?" Did you write them for yourself? That's great but you wrote a song that is meant to be 'out there' for people to hear."

We continued, expanding Jeremiah's notion of the divine in music and the "job" that had been "assigned to him." Souls were touched by music and it was important for him to reach out to them through his songs. A zealous approach to music and an appreciation for the divine in it had begun 3 years earlier when he had been invited to be the lead singer in the band at the Stillwater Christian Centre. There he had his first "taste" for sharing music and "reaching out" with it. It was also there that he recognised that he could use his good singing voice and where he became serious about music, singing and guitar playing. It was then no coincidence that while singing in church that the quality of his voice and good musical ability were viewed as blessings—as gifts from God.

"So you really see it as a gift" I said, wishing to hear more.

"Yes, it is a gift. I feel blessed and *extraordinarily* lucky to be able to sing. From my perspective, I have met so many people who have wanted to sing and it is all they want to do and . . . so I see it as my obligation to sing. It is now my job because I have been given something that these other people who want to do it can't do, but I have got this thing so, it is like . . . well if you have got it then use it. If you don't use it then why have you got it?"

"Have you had to work at it?" I asked. The teacher-self came to the fore seeking to know about developmental matters.

"No—I have *always* been able to sing. That's why all my friends have called me a bastard—for so many years—because I have always been able to sing. My voice has got richer, and better, and fuller in tone now, and it sounds a lot better than the early days. It was always something I could do."

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Jeremiah Jones stopped writing in the little exercise book on the coffee table, put the pencil behind his ear and leaned back on the couch. He reached for the guitar lying next to him. As he played a familiar chord, he thought, "I love this guitar." He listened to the crisp resonance, feeling the vibrations in his chest.

He returned to the song he was working on. It wasn't coming together. He began to feel tense. "Damn it—come on, you have got to change this. Chuck it away—start again," he thought. "You have got to get personal! I mean . . . you can write songs about 'yellow submarines' or something—songs that are just going to make someone smile but you still won't have touched them. People are just going to walk away thinking, "What a quirky song!"

He questioned how he wanted to write and to sing. He started to feel agitated, and demanded that this issue be resolved. He thought about what it meant to wear your heart on your sleeve and to put yourself on the line. It's like playing on stage. Pretty much putting yourself on the line up there so you may as well go the rest of the way. Make it personal, about real things—about things that matter . . . about questions of life . . . about pain . . . about . . . not just, "Oh I broke up with my girlfriend and I'm really blue!" That just doesn't feel creative. Yeah! I am an intense person—I can't help it. He laughed to himself. That's great! Probably why I am gonna be a good songwriter! I am a good songwriter! But it is like . . . you can't write a song about pain unless you are in pain. But God knows I've been there . . . really felt it. I'm not just an observer. I know what it's like to hurt, love, and I've had my share of confusion . . . Have I been confused? Been lost too. I know my songs won't come off as being childish or naïve. I am not going to write about being flowery and happy and all that simple rhyming stuff. Yeah, that's the problem. At the moment you are not being honest with it, you are being an observer and an on-looker and it is just not right. It doesn't make sense. Come on! You want to be able to touch another human being. It doesn't matter how—in any way, shape or form. I don't care whether they say, "Oh, I bloody hate that song! That is a piece of shit!" I just want to move them—to get a reaction.

Jeremiah played the D chord again. Now something was happening. This time he had to move rapidly between singing, writing and strumming the guitar because a flow began that he couldn't stop. He started to sing the words "I am afraid . . ." over a simple three-chord pattern and he could see the form developing before him. The moment was powerful for he knew what he wanted to say and he knew how he wanted it to sound. In the early hours of the morning the song was complete. "I am now a real songwriter!" he thought as he sank back on the sofa. He was tired, drained, but content knowing that he had not only written the song he wanted, but had discovered a direction with which to take his song writing.

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The Student Union café was filling up. Someone dropped a plate at the checkout. The clatter was accompanied by loud cheering. At that point Jeremiah was confirming the power of music in his life.

"It dominates you—it gets in your blood and it calls out. You can ignore it but it just keeps calling and from a muso's perspective you just feel you have to follow because if you don't you are just going to drive yourself crazy till you do and if you

don't you will be bored brainless." He laughed loudly, sat back and took a swig of Coke.

I thought about Jeremiah's passion for music and had a stabbing moment of reflection of my earlier musical life. I saw my own intensity while seeking to grasp some of the opportunity music could offer. I had passionately connected my life and the guitar together, seeing learning and discovery stretching like a long road over the horizon. There had been the creation of an emotionally based musical identity and matching personal "story." These manifested outwardly as a striving, a need to share what was inside—through music. Additionally, I momentarily recalled the social and professional challenges that I had confronted and the decisions I had faced, and saw how similar ones were relevant to Jeremiah's life now. Also, an important, transformative moment in my musical life suddenly came to mind and I projected this train of thought into the present. I asked Jeremiah to describe an experience that may have been transformative—a musical turning point for him.

"I wrote a song called 'I am Afraid.' It was the most intensely personal song I had ever written. Simple . . . three or four chords in the whole thing . . . it was just a very simple thing. It penetrated something in me that just . . . and something in me just wrote it . . . or to put it another way, it just came out and sang itself. I wrote that 3 or 4 years ago and I still sing it now. It was a huge change of direction! That's when I suddenly realised what I wanted to do with music. And that was to touch people. I wanted to get inside their lives . . . even if just for a moment . . . even for a few minutes . . . for them to hear a song and to touch their pain and say, 'You are not alone!' That was the point of it all. I mean it is a horrible feeling in the world, to be alone. There is an avenue there to help someone feel just a little bit better, I guess. To hear on a personal level . . . to hear that something you have written has made someone break down and cry. Or to hear that somebody has been helped. Or that they feel that they are not alone anymore. Or that, in some way their life has been enriched by something that I have done. It *boggles* my mind. I mean some of the songs I have written I have got testimonials back from people saying that if they hadn't heard that song then they didn't know what they were going to do with their life. Suddenly it turned their life around. A guy I knew was going to commit suicide then he heard a song I had written and he said it changed that."

I sensed pride and satisfaction emanating from Jeremiah as he spoke. He had been buoyed by achievement. The goal had been to "reach" people with his music and he had had dramatic confirmation of success. Not only was he reaching people, he was effecting positive changes, giving meaning to lives. This was spurring him on to greater things.

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Jeremiah had always believed he was destined to be an artist in some form or other although the purpose of his life had taken a few twists and turns. At one stage, comic book art was his main focus, as he had an extraordinary ability to draw cartoon-style. He was also interested in drama. Interestingly the comic art and drama

were linked through one point of contact—a teacher who promoted both. This point surfaced when I asked Jeremiah about important influences in his life.

“One of my biggest influences wasn’t a musician it was Sam Peters—my drama teacher. He had the biggest influence upon me that anyone ever did. He taught me to dream—and to think outside the square that I live in . . . to think about bigger things and more important things in life.

“How specifically did he do that?”

“He just *did!* It is not like he said, “This is how you do it! Gave me the twelve-step program . . . but he just did . . . he inspired the socks off me. Taught me to be better than myself or to . . . to . . . he really encouraged me in everything I did.”

“That was your drama teacher . . .” I began, but Jeremiah continued, anticipating my interest in the issue.

“Ah, he gave me a comic book . . . actually he gave me about 2,000 comic books! But that is what really started me off. It was comics. That is what started me being creative. Until then I was rather boring and bland. But um . . .” he broke off into a laugh.

“So you are into art as well?” I asked.

“Comics are great!” He replied. “They are another source of inspiration. And movies—I knock off lines from everywhere. It’s like . . . I’m very creative and original with my lyrics but sometimes I can get an idea from anything”.

But eventually it was music that took the predominant place in Jeremiah’s life. His creativity is now channelled into song writing, recording, and performing at local venues and the inevitable “hassle for gigs.”

A broad picture of his musical identity was forming as he had given a detailed and passionate introduction to his musical world, and how he saw himself. He had included thoughts of his own creativity, which had included his interest in comic art, and the important inspiration and influence of his drama teacher. We would eventually move on to talk about his earliest memories, his school music experiences and the influence of his family. But for a moment, we paused while Jeremiah took the wrapper off a round of sandwiches and tucked in to them, and while I turned the tape over and checked the recorder. It gave me a moment to reflect . . . about the rather unusual set of events that had occurred . . . how I had driven earlier that morning, to the outer suburbs to meet Jeremiah . . . at his house . . . seen him in his lived space, organised around his musical life. The echoes of my own musical life were now present in the room with us as we sat there. The researcher is *really* living inside the research now! I thought.

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The sun had now moved away from the table and the students watching the cricket match got up to leave, clattering chairs, cups and plates. But others replaced them and a queue was forming at the counter as it was turning to lunchtime. I had changed the tape in the machine and Jeremiah, happy to eat and talk was set to continue his musical life-story.

I had been intrigued by his bravura, his sureness of purpose and his evangelical desire to move people and to comfort the lost and lonely with his music. He had shaped his musical life into a kind of vehicle through which the power of music would flow. He saw himself as a music conduit, channelling what was good in this life and exuding it to others and fulfilling the purpose that had been bestowed upon him.

I then thought about Jeremiah's musical journey and how he had arrived at this moment and how he had constructed such perspectives.

"What are your earliest memories of music?" I asked.

"Earliest memories of music—Oh crikey! That's going back a while! It has always been music for me . . . I have always loved music. I was born in the eighties so I didn't really have much good music to listen to." He laughed, took another bite of his sandwich and paused to both chew and think.

"I think one of my earliest memories of music is of songs like "Get out of My Dreams and Into My Car"—that was an awful song but—more to the point—sixties music had the biggest influence on me from a early age. There was a radio program called "Six O'clock Rock" on a popular FM station and Mum introduced it to me when I was 10. I thought it was the best thing since sliced bread. It sort of shaped my love for music from an early start. It got me really sucked in and it wasn't till I was about 16 or 17 that I got interested in other types of music."

"What was the role of music in your early family life? You said your mother introduced you . . ."

"Ah! Yes—she just loved sixties music and she wanted me to like sixties music too because my brother liked Heavy Metal." He laughed. The laugh was a playful mocking of his brother's musical taste and judgement. But then suddenly he became more serious.

"The family hasn't really played a big role—you know—we haven't been the sort of family that sang carols round the piano at Christmas time. But we've all got a love for music—everyone in my immediate family loves it. My older brother is a fantastic guitarist. He is about twenty times the guitarist I am—but he seems to think I am better than he is so . . . but I don't think so." He laughed again.

"Are any other family members musicians?"

"Ah no! My older brother Ben sort of is but he doesn't get a chance to much these days—he is married with a full time job . . . sort of . . . didn't keep the faith."

"Your parents weren't musicians?"

"No," he said. There was a pause. I reflected for a moment but wanted to know more about his family influence.

"Please talk about your early influences . . . probably . . . sounds like your mother was an early influence . . ."

"Yes, she was, but importantly so was Ben, my brother."

"He played guitar before you?"

"He played guitar *years* before me. I didn't even pick it up until I finished college the first time. I mean, I was eighteen—the first time I picked up a guitar—ever!"

"What stopped you getting into it before?"

"I don't know! I had always wanted to but I was lazy—you know I was an artist. That's another thing! I write—not just songs but I am a writer and an actor, an artist. I am into all that sort of stuff. I just didn't really have time to seriously get into music before then. I thought I wanted to be a comic book artist back then and I was drawing comics with my best mate. Basically, I didn't really give the music a look until I got . . . because I have always been able to sing and that is one thing that has just remained the same ever since I was young. I was singing in plays or singing everywhere and it was something that was very big in my life."

"How do you describe your singing voice?"

"I love it. It's something I get a lot of confidence about. I think it's pretty rusty and probably has a long way to go."

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We then moved on to talk about Jeremiah's education and school music associations. The discussion evolved into other areas that I considered important in providing insight into his musical world. His impressions of self were revelations of his character and showed how music was used to reinforce self-confidence.

"Well from about kindergarten to grade three I banged sticks against things. And that was fun! But my big breakthrough came when I played Oliver in the school production. And also in primary grade five I sang in another production."

"Is this where you discovered you had a 'voice'?"

"No. I *always* knew I had a voice," he said confidently, and broke into a mock child's voice "*I can sing! I can sing!*" And as I would sing they would all go. 'Wow, he can sing' and I thought I was king . . ."

"You were not shy as a child?" I said, perhaps stating something that was now becoming obvious.

"No" he said laughing aloud, as if it too should have been obvious. "God, no! Probably it is why I am at where I am at now."

"You started early . . ."

"Not really it is just that I'm confident—I get in people's faces and they hear me whether they want me or not. Oh gosh!" He laughed again. "I was very precocious as a kid. I was in a production in Grade 5 . . . again in Grade 7 . . . I was in a couple . . . I could always act and sing and always be cute enough for the directors to like me. It was great. Musically I started out playing clarinet in Grade 7. I went on to saxophone in Grade 8."

"You did formal study like, sight-reading and . . ."

"Yeah! This was in the music classes. But I was bloody good at it. I got upgraded to 1st Saxophonist in the band—in Grade 9. Started doing it in Grade 10 until . . . they tried and make me 2nd Saxophonist in the band and I kicked up a stink because I was much better than the other person was. And it pissed me off—as it would. It wasn't about being a prima donna it was just about—the other saxophonist was not as good. And I wanted to be 1st Saxophonist because the music was better."

“Do you still play saxophone?”

“No! But I wish I still did because it is a brilliant instrument. I like clarinet more though now. I wish I had stuck with that because it is a beautiful instrument. I dropped out of school bands in Grade 10. That was the turning point where I stopped doing music till after college. So there were three years of not doing music but then I could still always sing. That was when I got involved with the band out in church and stuff . . .”

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“Jeremiah, have you enjoyed the theoretical aspect of music?”

“No!”

“No! So for instance . . . with classroom music . . . the theory sessions . . . you haven’t enjoyed that?”

“I have been good at it. I understood it. It was easy for me to understand it . . . I don’t know why. It just came very easily.”

“But what don’t you like about it?”

“Restricting!” Jeremiah countered in an emphatic tone. “You play a piece of music, paying attention to dynamics and timing but essentially . . . I am always thinking of something deeper . . . what was involved when Mozart or Beethoven wrote pieces of music . . . or . . . and they had to write them down. And we see how they wrote them down. But essentially in doing so . . . or when they died, the magic part of the music was lost because it would never be played the same . . . or right ever again.”

“So you are talking about the limitations of notation?”

“Exactly! It is like when you go to the movies and you see this fantastic movie with special effects that make you shiver but then you see the documentary about the making of the film and it loses the magic. It is like the theory sucks the joy out of the music in a way. Because before then it was just some cool triplet but now it has got a name and now it has a whole bunch of theory behind it. It’s like *whoa!* It is not fun any more. Before it was something that happened accidentally, something that someone did one day that made something magical happen.”

“Would you describe yourself as an intuitive musician?” I asked, having quickly searched my own feelings about popular music learning styles and also something of the difference between ‘folk’ knowledge and ‘theoretical’ knowledge.¹¹

“Yeah! But I see theory’s place. It’s a definite place but having said that, I am glad I’ve done it.”

¹¹ Bruner (1996) discusses folk knowledge and folk pedagogy. However, put into my own Rumsfeldian terms I recognise that “there are known knowns that we know how we know them and there are known knowns that we do not know how we know them.” I connected this to my own experience of the contrast between intuitive and theoretical understandings associated with musicianship.

“How much has the formal aspect of school music helped or impacted upon your . . .”

“Not hugely! I mean—I have notated one of my guitar pieces, which was actually a satisfying job. Something I had fun doing—trying to put the feeling I felt when I played it . . . onto the page . . . it was difficult—because you never play it the same way twice anyway. For a start, it’s not meant to be.”

“Overall, how do you see school music . . . classroom music? And your class friends, what do you think is the general impression of it?”

“I know musos who enjoy it and I know musos who hate it. I’m a sort of a fence sitter with it. Because I can see its place but I can also wish it wasn’t there because—like I say—it sucks the fun out of it. If you know all the secrets it’s no longer the mystical thing. It’s no longer mysterious because you know exactly how it works, you know why. It was like the other day—a friend of mine, Jonathon, he wrote a song and it had this really nice twist in it because it was in 4/4 but the chorus was in 6/8. And the thing with it was that I understood how it worked. It wasn’t like, “Oh that is a cool thing, how did you do that?” It was, “Oh I can see that you have got it in blocks” It went 1234 123 123. And I could understand how it fitted the music still. And I wished I didn’t. Because I don’t want to be thinking about that while I am listening to this music. I want to be hearing . . . it was overtaking . . . do you know what I mean? Do you understand what I am getting at?”

“You want to keep that side separate!” I said, not wishing to side-step his question, but wanting to keep his perspectives coming.

“Yeah, I want to keep it separate. I wish I could just keep it over there,” he said, pointing to some imaginary place. “Visit it when I need to go there. But otherwise keep myself separate from it because I just want to feel it. If you can’t feel it, it’s not music. It’s just *not!*”

“So of all your classroom music—what would you have changed?”

“Funny thing—after all that I have just said—probably nothing. I enjoyed the classes. Kathy the teacher made it fun—she didn’t make too big a deal out of the theory—she didn’t drill it into us. We could learn it if we wanted to. She was there basically teaching it to us—if we wanted to take it in we were welcome to, if we wanted to discard it—then . . . we would *fail!* Our choice!”

“Well did you have a goal to reach a specific theoretical level?”

“No!”

“So you have been able to follow your heart in your school music?”

“Well I graduated top of the class, so I was happy. It was a good experience.”

“Did your performance mark lift your grade?”

“I think so . . . yeah! I just know I graduated on the top level. There were other people there too. I am not saying I am the best and the brightest because I am not. There were some fantastic musicians in that class . . . like Aaron . . . fantastic guitarist. I have a lot of respect for him. He can kick ass! But no, I wouldn’t change anything—it was good . . . it was fun.”

We concluded our meeting and while walking back across the car park, made arrangements to meet in a month for a further interview. Jeremiah gave me his

mobile phone number and advised me to keep in touch because he would “definitely be looking for a new place to live in the next few days.” I was anxious to complete interviews and observations with him for the year was drawing to a close; he would be graduating from College in a few months. He had also suggested that he might head off to Sydney in the New Year.

Jeremiah wanted to go into town so I dropped him off in the High Street.

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The interview plan with Jeremiah was going astray. Our next appointment turned out to be a disaster. I had phoned him and we arranged to meet on the following Thursday at eleven in the morning. As I parked in front his new accommodation, a small redbrick house on a sunny sloping street near Hobart’s city centre, things didn’t look good. I noticed all the curtains were drawn. I knocked, waited and knocked again—harder this time. No sound. I stepped off the small wooden veranda and was walking through the small iron gate back to my car when the door creaked opened. Jeremiah stood there, again with a towel around his waist. He squinted in the sunlight as he looked at me.

“Oh . . . Hey man, I forgot! I’m sorry but it’s just not a good time right now.”

“Right, OK”, I said, trying not to let my disappointment show. I cursed myself for not ringing first—to remind him.

“Call me soon—we’ll do that interview. Sorry!”

“Are you OK? Have you settled in here?”

“No man, it’s not working out—I’m gonna have to move again—but it’s cool because I think I’ve found somewhere better. Ring my mobile OK.”

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Jeremiah opened the door and smiled at me. This time he was dressed and ready for the interview. It was late in the afternoon. It had been a month since the last missed appointment and I was getting concerned about completing the interviews. I had, however learned news of him through an article in the local newspaper where he featured in a “band profile” segment. He was doing well with a percussionist friend and together they were playing plenty of gigs and had plans to record a CD. As we spoke now, I discovered that there had been a few difficulties in moving into the new house. Finally, a friend with a van had helped him move the bed, guitars, stereo, CDs and comics.

As we went into the lounge area, Jeremiah introduced me to two house-sharing friends. They were just on their way out and their parting words to Jeremiah were a reminder for “the two hundred bucks needed for the house bond.” He reassured them that the money was “on its way” because he was soon to collect the money owed to him from the sale of a guitar. We settled down for the interview. As Jeremiah had “plenty of time and wasn’t going anywhere” I saw a window of opportunity and he was happy to complete “two interviews in one shot.” I recorded 90 minutes

of tape while Jeremiah answered my questions and, importantly, played the guitar and sang. He described how he had “got into song writing” and demonstrated how he composed. He played fragments of ideas and riffs and showed how they had developed into songs. Finally Jeremiah performed some current songs that were destined for the new CD that he would soon be recording. I left the house with the important tape and my observer mind reeling with thoughts and perceptions of the “lived experience material” that I needed to write down.

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I lost track of Jeremiah as his mobile phone number was soon disconnected. However, I later caught an unusual set of fleeting glimpses of him. From the corner of my eye, while driving in a busy street, I saw him flying down the pavement on a skateboard; the tails of a great black overcoat were billowing behind him. The next glimpse was while I was performing at the local folk festival. From the stage, I looked up from my guitar, glanced through the window at the end of the hall to see Jeremiah with a group of musician friends. They were at the signing up point; where musicians put their names down to perform on the “open house” stage. Jeremiah was “hassling for gigs.”

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God and music feature together in Jeremiah’s sense of self and they combine together to fashion out his life’s purpose. He had been “blessed” with music and natural talent and was now musically “being in the world” in order to fulfil this blessing. I reflected on his evangelical connection to musical performance and expression and remembered how it had been nurtured at the Stillwater Christian Centre. At our first interview, I had asked Jeremiah to select a pseudonym for the study. He unhesitatingly selected *Jeremiah* explaining that he had always liked the song *Jeremiah was a Bullfrog*. However, despite the reason behind his choice, the biblical reference now strikes me as also relevant for there is a prophetic approach to his musical zeal. He had already comforted the needy and was aware of the power of music to reach people and as a prophet he would continue to help people by leading them from catastrophe to themselves.

Jeremiah is also sacrificing much in order to fulfil his prophetic, musical purpose. Comfort, security and a steady income do not feature in the musical journey to get his songs heard. Where and when will I catch another glimpse of Jeremiah? Perhaps, it will be on an *MTV* music video clip because sacrifice, self-confidence, determination and a degree of bravado are positive steps to “making it in the popular music business.”

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Postscript—to *Jeremiah*

Hey Jay! Wherever you are, I hope you are getting plenty of gigs. I have left for the mainland now, so we may not cross paths again. If you were to ever read this, I just want you to know what I have done here.

Firstly, while this narrative portrait was about you, it is really *our* story. Just as a painted portrait reveals details of the subject, so it can reveal much about the painter. I wanted to make that kind of revelation overt and not so secretive. I didn't want to be a passive observer, *a fly on the wall* as they say in this business.

Can you see how I have re-storied the things you told me? I placed what I thought were important life events into narrative sequences. To help this process, I created specific plot lines¹² that would map something of your musical life. The first plot line included what you told me were (or what I thought were) your significant, deeply-felt lifeworld music experiences, events, episodes, and “happenings.” I focussed on the ones that I perceived were powerful, epiphanic, transformative, or formative moments in your musical life journey. I also sought moments that could be considered “enhancers” of your musical identity. In this plot line I was interested in your descriptions of interpersonal musical relationships, influence of family and teachers, and accounts of *everyday* musical events.¹³ They form a narrative background for the more dramatic experiences, events, and episodes within this plot line.

The second plot line represented your perspectives, opinions, and attitudes toward issues of formal and informal music learning and other particular educational issues.¹⁴ I wanted to learn and also illuminate something of the way you had learnt and what you thought about learning. Teachers out there may be interested, and maybe they can develop further empathy with and for the diversity of ways that people learn. Within this plot line I also wove in some of my own reflections and life experiences. Importantly, I recognised that an inclusion of my practical experience of the educational issues being portrayed would provide readers with a background of my contexts, biases, and the lens through which I look at and value the musical issues we discussed. That all connects to the metaphor of the painted portrait and painter that I mentioned before.

By the way, as part of the project I set out to explore my own narrative and phenomenological ways of thinking in order to understand your musical lifeworld. That's quite a flashy way of saying that there is a storying part of my brain, and I wanted to tap into it as I sorted out all of our interview material and my observa-

¹² Polkinghorne describes plot lines as “organizing themes that identify the significance and the role of the individual events” (1988, p. 18).

¹³ I was interested in how interpersonal musical relationships develop in informal music contexts such as “garage bands” (see Fornäs, Lindberg, & Sernhede, 1995) and also “family scripts” as influencing factors on musical interest and developing musicianship (see Byng-Hall, 1995).

¹⁴ The work of Lucy Green (2001) informed and influenced my exploration of informal and formal music education.

tions while I listened to you playing music—and I’m doing it *even* as I write this now. Also, I wanted to have times in the writing where I wouldn’t add my educationally critical views to the story, but would just present my perceptions of the way you actually “live” your musical life.

I must tell you—I started this whole research project with some self-doubt about my purpose, the reasons to do it and how to manage the methods. You see there is a branch on the inquiry tree where researchers choose to listen to story and observe experience and turn their interpretations into meanings and concepts—mainly so they can be generalised. But working with you here, I decided to turn it around—to find meanings, concepts and experiences and turn my interpretations into story. At the beginning I was not so sure, but now as I reflect back, I see that ending up with story respects our narrative way of seeing and perceiving and it offers a viable alternative to ending up with an array of conceptual ideas and facts.

Jay, I was really interested in the intense and intimate nature of the personal relationship that you have with music. Between us, with this story, we may inspire further dialogue amongst researchers and music educators, particularly about the subjective and the social nature of music and music teaching and learning. I really hope further meanings and understandings about these matters can be generated.

Hey! You must understand that I am not only into narrative! I am into multiple ways that help me to understand lived experience. And by the way, as a result of my experience of writing and thinking about this, narrative not only means *story* to me now, it means *taking subjective ownership of meaning*. Just as you take ownership of the music *you* create, when I am locked into the narrative mode, I take ownership of the meanings I *narratively* create. Just as you want people to be open to their own interpretations of your musical meanings, so they are invited to make interpretations of my narrative meanings. You see, outside of the narrative mode, another way of thinking exists too. In that other way of thinking, we always try to explain things and then assume that our thought constructs exist “out there” in an external world as *truth* (See!—in this explanation I am doing it now!).¹⁵ But in this, our story, I mostly want to share narrative meanings, not propose that they are truths existing in an external world that is independent of me or us. Perhaps it’s because at heart I am a musician. I like multiple interpretations. It all has to do with the nature of self in relation to the world. But, hey! I have another story about the nature of subjectivity and objectivity . . .¹⁶

¹⁵ My exploration of the difference between *narrative* meaning (subjective—concerned with “contextual meaning for the teller of the tale” and which is built on a *personally constructed reality*) and *paradigmatic* meaning (objective—related to “truth”—meaning that is not contextual and that assumes a *mind independent reality*) was a focal theme of the thesis (Clever, 2004). I presented this as a paradox where in a process of self-discovery and reflection I explored these as two aspects of (my) self.

¹⁶ Paradoxically, one story is a deliberate “separation”—the exploration of different “modes of mind” (described autoethnographically in Cleaver, 2010), the “other” story relates to “union”—the engagement with Cartesian dualism described at footnote 5.

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