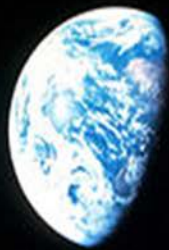


**ShamanSpeak:**

**The Storytellers of the Earth**

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**A thesis submitted for the**

**Master's Degree in Education**

**University of New England**

## Acknowledgements

*“Truth is beauty, beauty truth*

*That is all ye know on Earth, and that is all ye need to know”*

*- John Keats*

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Thanks to the musicians and the Music Crib Studio.

Thanks to Dr Walter Hetzer and Alex Judge for their seeds.

Thanks to Kule and the mountain.

Thanks to the moon and the poets.

Thanks to the Earth.

**n.b.** Throughout this thesis I shall capitalise the following in line with my respect for their role in this thesis: Shaman, Storyteller, Earth, and Mother Nature.

There is a CD attached and also links within each chapter to an online repository of songs recorded as tools of analysis of this Storyteller who wears the robes of a ‘Bard’.

*The lyrical weave within is inspired by the stories that seek always to cultivate the growth of the seed, through the fruit of the tree, to fall once again to the Earth, to once again become the seed.*

– Thank you

Robert J Goldspring, Bard

*An invitation:*

*Please enter this garden awake. Open your senses to the truth and beauty that surrounds you. Stop and smell the flowers, hug the tree, taste the apple, listen to the song, and see it written in the experience of twelve storytellers in the lyric that is woven around you. Immerse yourself in these tales of reconnection, survival, fruition and the organic. The chant for sustainability resounds alongside the poets seeking the source. Life, nature, wildness, Earth. It is the dirt beneath our feet, and our home. Twelve voices are gathered here to tell their individual tales, yet as they do they tell of a common story which has titles such as Green, Ecological, Environmental and a vaguely-named Earth Spirituality, fused with a 'Back to the Earth' philosophy.*

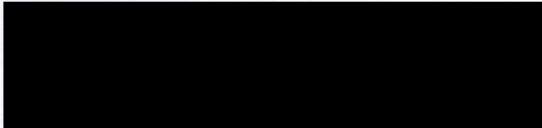
*Please sit here beneath the tree... I have a story to tell:*

### **Candidate's Certification**

*I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.*

*I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.*

Signature

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the candidate's signature.

( ROBERT JOHN GOLDSRING )

## **Abstract**

This thesis, informed by the philosophy of phenomenology, examines the nature of the relationship between Storytellers and the Earth which they speak for. The aim of the study was to explore the essence that draws these Storytellers into a relationship with the Earth. Through reflection on the experience of their connection to the Earth, on their experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth, and on their place within the cycle of the Earth, a story evolved. Their role and relationship as Storytellers was envisioned as a kind of medium between the Earth that was ‘out there’ beyond the wall or edge of civilisation, and the civilisation that they sought to raise awareness within. Drawing on the archetypes of history and myth, the term Shamans seemed appropriate to describe them. From their voice came this thesis *ShamanSpeak: the Storytellers of the Earth*, in which more traditional academic analysis is complemented by a recorded album of songs which the interviewee’s words inspired.

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### **Opening (A Prologue)**

The window is open, I am thinking about song, the Earth, love and the truth. And then, the wind responds in kind and the energy of Mother Nature flows in as a night rain. There is nothing more beautiful or enlivening in nature's story to my seeking soul than the night rain; it is mystery incarnate. How blessed are we to be living on a home that provides life-giving rain to nourish the detritus of old life that contains the seeds of new life. In the night rain, I dance, I listen to the song on the tin roof, I see water rippling across pools in the road or sweeping in a cascade across the path. My brother once said "when the rain falls, you can really hear the shape of the world". In the night, when the sense of sight fades, listening to the Earth in the form of the night rain stirs my soul beyond the place I am in and carries me into the æther, across the mountains, to distant shores, to the edges of deserts thirsting for the elixir of life.

## **Introduction**

This thesis is concerned with an education that is both newly-found and a re-emergence of something which we lost in our pursuit of the future. ShamanSpeak: The Storytellers of the Earth contributes to the field of education in the following manner. Firstly, it seeks a connection to past stories in relationship to Earth - in the myths and traditions that have the voice of nature speaking through them, specifically humanity's evolution from dwelling on the Earth to the current situation of individuals on an industrial planet. Secondly, it seeks to give evidence of current stories in relationship to Earth - heard in the voices of environmental activists who speak of what is 'out there', in concern, outrage and protest. Thirdly, it seeks to stimulate debate, the raising of awareness and activism for easing the burden of the human story on the Earth. As educators, we are woven to inspire towards a listener who is in turn inspired to find their own interweaving. Relationship is paramount in forging a connection to Earth. As Storytellers we seek to inspire the voice of the storyteller within each of our listeners, be they student or audience. Each of us are participants, we all are learners in the story of the Earth. ShamanSpeak attempts to tell the story of the teachers whose subject is simply Earth and the questions arising from the reflections of a globally-conscious mind.

This is a Thesis that educates through opening the window and letting the night wind breeze in, carrying the scent of rain, deserts, forests and oceans. Steeped in the lore of the past, written in the poetics of a more beautiful tomorrow, it seeks to give a perspective of the Earth story today.



## *Poetics*

*This is a Thesis that seeks to weave together the threads of myth, story, environmentalism, and activism. It is, as such, both a Thesis that is informative and creative. The title of poetics is given as an indicator of this creative lyrical element. This is a Thesis that seeks to tell the story of those who seek to draw us 'out there'...*

... I have just returned from 'out there', for it is hard to write about the Earth and not be drawn outside...this is a Thesis about being drawn out there, beyond the 'edge'<sup>1</sup> that we as a civilization have created, to only then return and feel a compulsion to tell the story of what was found beyond the walls of our paradise.

### paradise (n.)

late 12<sup>th</sup> century, 'Garden of Eden', from Old French *paradis* 'paradise, Garden of Eden(11<sup>th</sup> century), from late Latin *paradisus*, from Greek *paradeisos* 'park, paradise, Garden of Eden', from an Iranian source, cf. *Avestan pairidaeza* 'enclosure, park' (Modern Persian and Arabic *firdaus* 'garden, paradise'), compound of *pairi* 'around' and *diz* 'to make, form (a wall)'. (Harper, 2001, Online Etymological Dictionary).

Paradise is not provided as a religious analogy, although religion, being part of humanity's culture, is one thread of this concept. The other threads are 'the garden'- the living biosphere, and 'the wall'. There is irony in the fact that we have walled ourselves in and thus our human paradise has become our own hell with pollution and environmental devastation, whilst the paradise of the living Earth is beyond the walls.

---

<sup>1</sup>Heidegger describes 'earth' as that which appears at the edges of world (Peters M & Irwin R, 2002, p.8)

As this thesis is woven, you will see three threads. Following the old adage ‘A cord of three strands is not quickly broken’ (The Holy Bible - Ecclesiastes 4:9-12), I have three cords distinguished by their form:

Literature is respectively given ‘indented form’.

*The lyrical exploration of data is written in italics.*

My discussion of literature and data is written in regular form.

‘The wall’ and what is outside it, corresponds to the first interview question:

*What is the Storyteller’s experience of the story of the Earth?*

The culture that the story exists within corresponds to the second interview question:

*What is the Storyteller’s experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth?*

The lyrical corresponds to ‘the garden’, and to the third interview question:

*What is the Storyteller’s experience of being within the cycle of the Earth story  
inspired by a response to this simple cyclic poem?*

*Seed*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*Seed*

*The 'Other'*

Beyond the 'wall' of civilization is the 'Other' – nature:

'Standing on the edge of the ocean'

'Standing on the edge of the forest'

'Waiting for the dawn'

'Waiting for the storm'

(Excerpts from research participants)

*The title of The 'Other' is given as an indicator that this thesis seeks to incorporate the mythic psychological in its perspective. In seeking to ask questions of 'Shamanic' relationship with the Earth, this thesis delves into a relationship that goes beyond the creative, and into the vast body of knowledge that underlies our culture.*

Anticipating the immensity and power of something 'other' than oneself, there is at once a humble awe combined with a majestic surge of exhilaration. The above quotes, given by the Storytellers, display the varied places or spaces that were given as places of Earth inspiration. The 'Other', as defined by C.G. Jung (1957) is given a face or a voice here in this place of edges and waiting.

If there was no 'Other' - 'the numinous presents itself as something "wholly other", something basically and totally different' (Eliade, 1987, p.7) - then we would never know

that we are not of the 'Other', yet in the same breath we know that the 'Other' calls to us because we are part of it. To be reminded of this schism brings open the question - Why do we feel separate from this 'numinous'?

If we felt no separation from this numinous spirit of 'livingness' that is nature, would we feel a need to seek it out? Could it possibly be that we are not seeking to go out there, but rather to have out there come within? Jung (2002) stated that 'our task is not to return to nature in the manner of Rousseau, but to find the natural man [sic] again'.

In the words of Arthur Schopenhauer, philosophical predecessor to the phenomenologists:

The nature of things-in-themselves would remain an eternal secret to us, were it not that we are able to approach it, not by knowledge of external phenomena, but by inner experience. Every knowing being is a part of nature, and it is in his [sic] own self-consciousness that a door stands open for him through which he can approach nature (Mercer, 2008, p.72).

Oliver Holmes, in the phenomenological journal of Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, *Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos* (2006, p.144), speaks of Rousseau's search for what he calls 'unity', for a harmony between humanity and nature.

Holmes and Tymieniecka are two scholars in a philosophy which is the 'right hand thread' of this thesis - the philosophy of Phenomenology. I chose Phenomenology for its focus on the lived experience. Collecting descriptions of lived experiences enabled me as the researcher to dwell in the participants' experiences of 'being drawn out there'...

What is the story of the experience of dwelling? Seeking a 'lyrical' response, I turned to the poet Robert Graves:

### *Story*

*There is one story and one story only.*

*Dwell on her graciousness, dwell on her smiling,  
Do not forget what flowers  
The great boar trampled down in ivy time.  
Her brow was creamy as the crested wave,  
Her sea-blue eyes were wild  
But nothing promised that is not performed (1948).*

Graves' focus is on the experience of 'her', of Mother Nature, the weave of the Earth story.

I have chosen my format of weaving the three cords of different elements of the thesis together – the literature, the discussion and the lyrical - inspired by philosopher Jan Zwicky, who seeks a wisdom known as 'Lyric Philosophy':

Lyric art is intimate - when it is good it is always, whatever its medium, a struggle to achieve an integrity of spirit, body, and mind. When we engage with it, we are forced to reflect on the degree of our own integrity, and in so doing, we may be led to see that we must change our lives (Zwicky, 1999, para.5).

Zwicky's work has actual opposing pages, with her thoughts on the left, and passages of philosophy, image of art, and excerpts of culture on the right hand. Similar to this formula, I will seek to interweave the poetic and the analytical with the phenomenological.

The path of the phenomenologists runs from Hegel through Heidegger to Merleau-Ponty and then Van Manen. I have found the most inspiration from the path of Merleau-Ponty. This French philosopher of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, with influences from Husserl and Heidegger, wrote with depth on the topic of perception, notably in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (2002). In his later writings he had a focus on the 'flesh', that is, the flesh of the perceivers, perceiving the flesh of the world around him. David Brubaker, who has written several texts in regards to Merleau-Ponty, the notion of 'flesh' and the sensuous connection to nature, analyses Merleau-Ponty's focus on the flesh below:

Merleau-Ponty cites elemental parts of flesh as natural bases for at least three intertwinings: the principles of reversibility, crisscrossing, and intercorporeity. The reversibility of flesh becomes evident, whenever the sensuous aspect of our surroundings coils back to reveal itself as a personal lining or texture between thought and its objects. Crisscrossing occurs within the element of tangible flesh, for example, when the touch of our right hand upon our left permits a cross-comparison or double indexing that encloses the reversibilities of each hand within a physical mass. Having established these first two intertwinings, Merleau-Ponty argues for a principle of intercorporeity, where the reversibilities and criss-crossings witnessed in our own case become evidence for the existence of other individuals with their own domains of flesh (Brubaker, 2000, p.90).

Merleau-Ponty's notion of the flesh allowed me to explore the experience of connection between the living human being and the living Earth. I chose the quote above for a second reason: Brubaker's idea of the 'interweaving' of Merleau-Ponty's balanced my own interweaving.

When he explains 'reversibility', Brubaker quotes from Merleau-Ponty's *The Visible and the Invisible*:

The visible about us seems to rest in itself. It is as though our vision were formed in the heart of the visible, or as though there were between it and us an intimacy as close as the sea and the strand (Brubaker 2000, p.91).

This 'intimacy' mentioned by Brubaker links with the idea of going beyond the 'wall' to experience the connection with the story of the Earth. When I perceive the Earth, I experience it. I can reach out and touch it.

When he explains 'crisscrossing', Brubaker recounts Merleau-Ponty's analogy:

Although each individual section of a single spherical orange may be regarded as a measurable object joined to similar units nearby, each section retains its own pulpy or juicy interior (Brubaker, 2000, p.92).

Thus, as I am perceiving the Earth, I myself am a sentient separate being. I am the touch that reaches out to the Earth. I am the interconnectedness of culture and ecosystem. The story of the Earth is my experience.

Noting the two phrases:

To experience the connection with the story of the Earth; and

The story of the connection to Earth is my experience;

Poets will notice here a chiasmus.

chiasmus (n.)

In grammar, inversion of word order, 1871, Latinized from Greek *khiasmos* ‘a placing crosswise, diagonal arrangement’.

*Adam, first of men,  
To first of women, Eve.* (‘Paradise Lost’, Milton, 1667). (Harper, 2001, online).

Merleau-Ponty’s inspiration to both Brubaker and this researcher was the paper *The Intertwining – The Chiasm* (2008). Merleau-Ponty’s attempts to philosophise the experience of the ‘crossing over’, opens the door to the exploration of how each of us experiences the ‘Other’ that is our living Earth.

When Brubaker explains the third and joining interweaving of intercorporeity, he states:

Specifically, when I hear someone else utter the word ‘green’, the green described by the other person becomes an analogue of the colour exemplified within my own persisting and elemental whole of visibility. While it is impossible to directly witness or rejoin the visible flesh that is secret and unique to another sentient being, Merleau-Ponty suggests that the flesh of another person is not an absolute mystery. We may find in the immediate visibility of our own secret instance of green a possible sample for the hidden atmosphere that may be presumed to support the sense-perception of green described by the other person (Brubaker, 2000, p.92).

I can never know 'your story', but it does not have to remain an 'absolute mystery'. As I learnt from my travels, the *Quiché* Maya say 'In Lak'ech' - I am another you. From seed to seed we are all part of the same garden, experiencing each other, the Earth experiencing itself.

Each chapter shall have, apart from the excerpts from academia, *lyrics and poems* to illustrate the interweavings of culture and thought - philosophers and the poets telling the story of the humanity and the Earth! The poem below is my favourite, included here to illustrate the point of the Earth experiencing itself through our perceptions:



*One,*

*One,*

*One,*

*The lamps are different but the light is the same  
So many garish lamps in the dying brain's lamp shop - forget about them...*

*Concentrate on essence.*

*Concentrate on Light in lucid bliss  
calmly smoking off its own holy fire.*

*The light streams towards you from  
all things, all people, all possible permutations  
of good, evil, thought, passion.*

*The lamps are different but the Light is the same.  
One matter, one energy, one light.  
One light mind endlessly emanating all things,  
one turning and burning diamond.*

*One,*

*One,*

*One,*

*Ground yourself, strip yourself down to blind loving silence.  
Stay there until you see you are gazing at the Light  
with its own ageless eyes.*

*(Jalaluddin Rumi 1207-1273)*

*Rebel*

So, to summarise:

First research question: What is your experience of the story of the Earth? – relating to ‘going beyond the wall’ and Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the ‘reversibility’ of the experience of the connection of the flesh.

Second research question: What is your experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth? – relating to ‘the culture of the living Earth’ and Merleau-Ponty’s notion of the experience of ‘crisscrossing’ connections of the flesh. The idea that the participants’ experience is the embodied flesh of both the Earth and its experience.

Third research question: What is the Storyteller’s experience of being within the cycle of the Earth story inspired by a response to this simple cyclic poem?

*Seed*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*Seed*

This relates to the ‘*Lyrical Garden of Intercorporeity*’, as experienced by these Storytellers of the Earth in this new path that I call ‘*Lyrical Shamanism*’.

It brings us to the goal of this research: to tell the story of ‘being drawn out there’ to experience the story, to become then a medium of the story as storyteller; to be the storyteller as part of the living story, to finally arrive at the experience of the essence of being part of the story of ShamanSpeak: The Storytellers of the Earth.

## **SunBard – the phenomenology of the experience of a story of a storyteller telling a story about storytelling!**

SunBard is the pseudonym that this author uses in performance poetry and song. It is a name derived from this author's search for roots in his Celtic ancestry. In the Druidic schools a Bard was a storyteller and singer of story. As the Bard progressed in knowledge, further 'degrees' of Ovate - literally 'Those who speak', and Ollam - 'Poet' were achieved. As much as this thesis is a journey in the experience of storytellers, this author's journey as a scholar has been through the use of song, tales and poetry. The prefix of Sun was chosen by a friend who heard Ra in the pronunciation of the author's first name of Robert. I am woven into this thesis as I journey through the experience of being a storyteller amongst storytellers. I listen to their story, yet I am also seeking for 'the story' of the 'Storytellers'. What is the thread that we are all woven up in? Why do we 'speak' for the Earth? Why do we act as Shamans - intermediaries between nature and the consumer world? Why do we weave our words in poetic form to enchant the listener into a landscape of symbolism, reflection and learning? All Storytellers are teachers. All Storytellers are facilitators of the creation of worlds in which the listener may explore their place in the framework of existence. Education is the goal of this thesis, in that it seeks to understand a certain style of educators - these storytelling activist poets - these scholars of nature's song - these Bards of protest - these *Shaman* who *Speak* for the Earth!

Alistair McIntosh (2004) writes in 'Soil and Soul' about the Bardic tradition's 'green consciousnesses'. He speaks further regarding a veneration of nature that dwells in 'mythopoesis', the making of myth - of the construction of reality from story. He quotes Ben Okri who says 'Stories are the secret reservoir of values: change the stories' individuals...and

you change the individuals and nations...if they tell themselves stories that face their own truths, they will free their histories for future flowering’.

The direct action of this author is in seeking to tell the story of those who are seeking to inspire change in the story of individuals and nations and their relationship to the Earth - the story of how individuals and nations have constructed a story of separation, and how a few activists are seeking to call out from the wilderness before it is too late. This author is driven by the purpose that it is essential to be part of a positive change before it is too late. This is a story of an activist speaking about activists as they speak for the Earth. This is the story of a Shaman speaking about Shamans who speak for the Earth. This is a story of a Bardic Storyteller who seeks to know what it is to be a Bard and a Storyteller whose story is this:

*There is only one story – it is the Earth, it is all we have, and if we don’t act soon there will be no Earth, and therefore there will be no story.*

### ***A Note on Chapters***

From Chapter One through to Chapter Twelve each of the Storytellers is given voice amongst methodology and key findings that came through the exploration of the research. The methodology is woven heavier in the earlier chapters as it seeks to provide a foundation for the development of thesis. The key findings came from both the literature review and the interview questions. Many of the key findings were easy to link with each Storyteller as with the variance in teacher, activist, and facilitators there was a good cross range of participants that echoed the key findings. Some key findings obviously reflected more than one participant, yet the Storyteller with the strongest link came to represent the key findings in that chapter.

Thus, Chapter One: Archetypes, Chains and Activists, dealt with the methodology in relationship with the archetypes of Storyteller roles, as well as the factor of all of the Storytellers being activists in some way. The term ‘chains’ was directly related to the individual Storyteller’s response in regard to his own style of direct action activism involving logging blockades and chains.

Each of the chapter titles follows a similar vein. Thus, in Chapter Two: Lyres, Strands and Strings, it is the word ‘Strands’ that represents the poetic style response of the Storyteller. This was in balance with the links to myth and music in the form of the Lyre of Orpheus and the string of the instrument of the Celtic Bards.

Moving through the chapters other threads of influence are explored, such as the poetics of performance, Gaia and the green revolution, the wild, sustainability, Shamans, trees, Mother Earth, the artist’s perspective, wisdom, and the theory of the Ecozoic. All of these threads provided the landscape through which the Storytellers presented their tale.

The last full chapter: Elements, is a different story. This is a chapter of the commonalities prevalent across all the stories told. It is named Elements in reference to the age-old classification of the biosphere into the elements of fire, water, wind and Earth, and is an attempt to encompass the broad perspective that weaves together these Storytellers into one story. It was always my intent to present the various Storytellers as evidence of the many voices speaking for the Earth. Yet as there is only one Earth, there was always going to be a current where these streams combined.

The two chapters at the end are this author's poetic reflection and epilogue. They are more evident to the poetic weaving of this author's response as both Storyteller and blossoming academic. Throughout the process of this thesis I have found my voice. At the end of each of the twelve chapters are the lyrics of a song woven in reflection to each of the Storytellers, combined with a lyrical analysis. I am a songwriter, this is my Storyteller's voice. I believe this finding of voice to be one of the fundamental processes that occurs through the work of a Masters thesis. In the Bachelor we learn the many voices, in a Masters we find our individual Storyteller's voice, and then with a PhD we become one of the learned voices. Dear reader, whichever of these journeys you are on, I beseech thee to hear my voice as I tell their stories. Yet I hope that my voice is just the vehicle and that the journey through this landscape of raisers of Earth awareness will carry you away, as it did me. I have striven to weave a landscape, whereas these 12 individuals in these 12 chapters are the pathways and roads that crisscross the landscape as voices that reveal the reflection of the research questions. In each chapter there is a separate story, a story of experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth, a phenomenological exploration of a journey of, with, and for the Earth. I have sought to weave their words in equal manner to the passion and expression that was presented to me. At the end of each chapter, under the title Ecovison, is a tying together of these threads in summary.

These Storytellers did not just tell me their history, did not just tell me facts: instead they each spoke to me as enchanters caught up in their own and the Earth's enchantment. In their words I heard the Earth, and as such I was Earth enchanted. Yet I am just the Storyteller... the story is theirs. So as you read through these chapters, listen to the story of ShamanSpeak: The Storytellers of the Earth.

## **Chapter One: Archetypes, Chains and Activists**

[Please listen to the first song on the CD entitled 1.Chained]<sup>2</sup>

{ All songs mentioned in this thesis can also be found at

<https://soundcloud.com/sunbard/tracks> }

### **Inspiration**

This is a work of political activism; thus I sought out the wisdom of a political activist to tell his story of being with the sacred cycle of seed to seed. This chapter reveals the story of the Storyteller activist Aron, the story of the chains he hopes to break, and the story of the chains which engage him to the old-growth tree in the logging blockades of his Storyteller activism. Aron is an Earth activist. 'For the Earth!' cry the freedom fighters of the trees as they chain themselves to these giant ancient living beings that allow us to breathe.<sup>3</sup>

Yet this chapter also explores how I came to name him as a Storyteller; thus it explores for the first time how I looked to name all the participants as Storytellers. This chapter is by far the heaviest concerning methodology, for not only does it explain the methodology of seeking a phenomenological exploration of the role of Storyteller; it also introduces the research questions that allowed me to explore the role of the Storyteller of the Earth.

Travelling further with this there is an exploration that seeks to present why the concept of naming each participant in terms of archetype was essential to the essence of the form of this research.

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<sup>2</sup> Best listened to with headphones, as the song was recorded raw, with one room microphone, and as such volume and clarity suffered in pursuit of the experience.

<sup>3</sup> For example, this is how workers at Australia's Rainforest Information Centre usually sign their emails.



Activists, those warriors of the trees, rivers, mountains, animals, skies, and seas, live amongst the living things when they are ‘out there’ on the frontline. Yet there is a compulsion that brings them back to the polis to speak their story. They are mediums, channels of the Earth’s story, they are the Shaman who ‘speaks’, they are the Storytellers of the Earth, and most will not give up, not even when the last whale sings and they hold the last seed. In defiance, they chant ‘You can’t break me<sup>4</sup>’. Mircea Eliade describes Shamans as ‘Technicians of the sacred’ (1989, p.1). In an attempt to seek an understanding of the Shaman, I followed a path based on the two words in the explanation of one of the most renowned anthropological scholars on Shamanism.

‘Sacred’, from a Proto Indo-European root meaning to make holy, leans towards a spiritual approach to relationship with the Earth: whereas ‘technician’ draws its roots from the Greek, meaning craft, and leans more towards an artistic or working relationship with the Earth. When I hear the voices of these Storytellers, I hear people who are working hard to make connections with the Earth, just as Eliade saw the Shaman of his study. Mediums between nature and humanity, when they speak, I hear the voice of the Earth.

### **The Political Activist**

Aron’s primary occupation is as an activist, taking the fight to those disposed to Earth separation, balanced either side of this are his role as a professional lawmaker and his scholarly reflection as an academic. I have named Aron as the ‘political activist’, inspired by the Jungian approach to ‘archetype’:

The archetypes are, as it were, the hidden foundations of the conscious mind, or, to use another comparison, the roots which the psyche has sunk not only in the Earth in

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<sup>4</sup> I have heard these rallying cries from members of various Direct Action Groups that I have encountered, such as the group Still Wild Still Threatened, and the Huon Valley Environment Centre.

the narrow sense but the world in general. Archetypes are systems of readiness for action, and at the same time images and emotions. They are inherited with the brain-structure - indeed they are its psychic aspect... that portion through which the psyche is attached to nature, or in which its link with the Earth and the world appears at its most tangible. The psychic influence of the Earth and its laws is seen most clearly in these primordial images (Jung, 2008, p.53).

Each of the twelve Storytellers reverberated with an energy in their story, which caused me to see them as having roles within the wider world, and even deeper still, within the Earth community. My process of creating archetypes for each of the Storytellers followed three threads.

First, the archetypes are my own Storyteller's reflection. They are not perfect labels, but are rather given so that the Storyteller is remarked upon for the role that they are giving to the Earth. It also shows how varied the term Storyteller can be, having so many 'types' within.

Second, the archetypes are drawn from a lifetime of influence of the myriad of stories, films, and myths that I have been exposed to from teachers and family, who in turn had been exposed to by their own teachers. This is what Jung calls the 'collective unconscious', the repository of all human experience in their relationship with the Earth.

Third, the archetypes are my own attempt at the technician that Eliade spoke of - my attempt to craft a tale for the academic reader that would appeal to their own sense of the story of the collective unconscious. I felt that this tale of fighting for the Earth required heroes in a heroic epic...

All these archetypes are characters in this story, yet they are also heroes in Joseph Campbell's sense:

The hero, therefore, is the man or woman who has been able to battle past their personal and local historical limitations... (to know that) one's visions, ideas, and inspirations come pristine from the primary springs of life and thought (1973, p.19).

These ‘local’ limitations are now international, in this globalised world<sup>5</sup>, and environmentalism has become a global story. A basic knowledge of current events in the world reveals the influence of trans-national corporations and organisations such as Monsanto and the World Bank over the Earth’s resources. This research examines part of that story - the story of Earth activism.

We have separated ourselves from the Earth: witness the destruction and devastation we have caused to this Earth’s living systems<sup>6</sup>. We lost sight of the trees and the woods... and the forests, and the mountains, rivers, oceans...

Yet as all this occurred, still the Earth remained beneath our feet, all around us, within the very DNA of our cells and even in the words we spoke. So if the Earth was in our words, was it not also then in our stories? The question I wish to ask is: when did it become ‘Earth’s Story’ to us? When did we conceive the story of the ‘Whole Earth’ as one system, one story?

The catalyst occurred when astronaut Bill Anders took the first photos of the Earth from space during the Apollo 8 lunar mission in 1968. These photos have become famous under the titles of ‘*Earthrise*’. Although for many years we had known the Earth was round, was a planet, these photos were our first visualisation, and thus true realisation, of the Earth as it existed in the greater Universe - a spinning orb in the midst of the cosmos. This realisation has been called ‘One-World’ awareness (Cosgrove, 1994, p.271).

Is it a coincidence that the first Earth Day was held less than two years later in 1970? And that the environmental movement was energised from around this time? In 1972, the Apollo 17 photographs allowed us to see this shining blue, green and white jewel on the backdrop of

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Stiglitz (2002) for a discussion of globalisation and its discontents.

<sup>6</sup> See Suzuki, D. (1999). *The Sacred Balance* when he speaks of the “brash exuberance over our incredible inventiveness and productivity in this century has made us forget where we belong”.

the starry heavens. It is worth noting that it was the Greek god Apollo who gave the lyre to the great Storyteller Orpheus. Orpheus was said to have such skill that he could charm the birds from the trees and enchant the ocean to be still - he was an original Shaman, a voice of the energy of the Earth<sup>7</sup>.

So, from this day in 1968 when humanity rode to the moon in the belly of the sun-king, the story changed. It had now become a global saga, a world tale, a planetary epic. When the story itself changes, the Storytellers also change. Once the Storytellers were tribal; they later became regional and national, and now have become Storytellers of the Earth. Of course, some of these still tell tribal, regional, and national tales, and these tales remain of immense importance. Yet it is to those who are the voice of the whole Earth that my research is directed.

Before I come back to the remainder of Aron's Story, below is a little about how I found him and the other Storytellers.

## **The Storytellers**

### ***Considerations***

To find these Storytellers of the Earth, I took the following steps. First, I drew up a list of potential Storytellers. I then began researching this list in libraries, on the internet, and in conversations with colleagues, friends and family. I held the notion that this was research based on an Earth view that I needed to expand as much as I could. However, I limited the search to the western world<sup>8</sup>, as I believe it is within these societies where we can find those

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<sup>7</sup> See Segal, C., & Pavlova, A. (1989). *Orpheus The myth of the poet* (p.95). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>8</sup> This is defined as the rise of the industrial, technological, weaponised, spread of Western European influence over the globe (see McNeill 2009).

whom are the main purveyors of the separation that drives the Storytellers to attempt to inspire holism and awareness. By this time I had a long list of people whom I believed fitted the category of those who attempt to inspire awareness as Storytellers of the Earth.

This list included academics, teachers, activists, poets, musicians, artists, politicians, authors, scientists, mystics, and various facilitators of community engagement with the environment. Most of those on the list had email or telephone contact details. Some I had to contact through third parties such as colleagues and friends. I received many positive responses, many questions, a few non-replies, and a few responses similar to 'No thank you, I am too busy raising awareness at this present moment'.

### ***Who***

The first consideration of who to research was related to number. How many Storytellers would give a good cross-section of society to represent fair data? I knew that it would have to be a balance of not too many, as I didn't want to lose individual voices in a large sweep. Balanced with this was the ideal of not too few. In the end I chose 12 whom I thought had good factors for cross reference: 1,2,3,4,6,12.

The second consideration was related to gender. I chose 20 of each gender to approach and stopped when I received confirmations from six of each. This was also balanced with the consideration of age. It was my hope to get a cross-reference of experience in relation to the idea of the Storytellers of the Earth. As my Earth story timeline began with the photographs of the Earth from space for the first time in 1968, it was my hope to get some who witnessed this event and some who were born after this event. As a lover of medieval literature, I was hoping for a fair balance of master, journeyman, and apprentice. The final list contained a

bell curve of ages, with the most being close to my own age and with a few somewhat older, masters, and a few somewhat younger, apprentices.

The fourth consideration of who to research was related to occupation. I wanted to make sure that I had a cross-section of different types of Storytellers, linked also the concept of archetype mentioned earlier. As this Earth story was so global in its scope, it was my hope not only to answer the important question of the essence of the voice of the Earth, but also to highlight how traditional modes of storytelling were not sufficient to cover the scope of the 'global Earth voice'. The literature review provided a highly interesting exploration to look at what constituted an Earth Storyteller. As Haslan states:

Who speaks for the Earth? Paul Ehrlich? Black Elk? Richard Nixon? Gary Snyder? Harry Harrison? Walter Hickel? Native Americans certainly spoke for it long before the first European-Americans began their colonization of this 'new world'. Amerind oral literature continues as a testament to man's interrelationship with the living Earth. Some frontiersmen spoke for the Earth, some few frontiersmen. The progeny of Jean-Jacques Rousseau spoke for the Earth, as have a sprinkling of later scientists and conservationists: Henry David Thoreau through John Muir to Aldo Leopold and Ansel Adams. Robinson Jeffers spoke for it, and William Eastlake, and George R. Stewart, and Rachel Carson. More and more diverse people are now speaking so that the pedagogic challenge is not to find material, but to recognise good material and to present it both accurately and compellingly (Haslan, 1973, p42).

Haslan's recognition of the fact of more and more diverse people speaking for the Earth echoed my own assumption that a variable of many different people has begun to speak for the Earth in these last 100 years. From the roots of indigenous leaders, through philosophers such as Rosseau, poets such as Snyder and Jeffers, and activists like Carson, the voice of the Earth has many voices.

The connection between teacher and Storyteller, and artist/musician and Storyteller, was more straightforward than the connection between activist and Storyteller, and community awareness facilitator and Storyteller. Whilst the first question ‘how does the Earth speak to you?’ was vital in relating the Storyteller’s connection to the Earth, it was the second question that was most vital to the research. The question ‘how do you speak for the Earth?’ was directly related to this consideration. In the end I hoped to have a good cross-section of teachers, authors, activists, biologists, community facilitators, poets, musicians, artists, journalists, geographers, and environmentalists. What was most rewarding to find was that many Storytellers covered two or even three of these roles. The more I explored their stories, the more I found the variable of Storyteller expanded. What I found was that each of the Storytellers, through their roles as Storyteller for the Earth, had at least three different ‘hats’ they wore in relation to their story. This in itself became an important part of my findings. The current common paradigm of separate professional roles was another example of a fractured perception of the planet that I did not see until I listened to these stories. I began searching for Storytellers who used their voice/work/art to raise awareness of a human relationship to Earth. What I found was that each of the Storytellers reflected a complex interweaving of processes that made up the whole. The definition of Storyteller which began in my perception as ‘One who raises awareness through their vocation’, grew to include the multi-faceted approaches that led to both being aware and raising awareness through whatever means provided fruition, be they intense or subtle.

The fifth and sixth considerations became intertwined as I explored them. The fifth involved the scientific/spiritual balance. Again, Eliade’s definition of technicians of the sacred was reinforced. The sixth involved cultural balance. Now we are all Earth beings (at least I do not know of any research that has proved otherwise... maybe life began on Earth from outside...

but for the point of this research, we all come from Earth). So therefore, it may be asked whether there is any need for a culture variable and then, if the answer is yes, of the two hundred-plus nations and countless cultures where do I choose twelve Storytellers? Linking to this was the scientific/spiritual variable. Now this is a most interesting variable in relation to research as a whole. In our present day, science has a direct relationship to the knowledge systems used to understand and interpret nature and Earth<sup>9</sup>. Yet the mystical and spiritual interpretations of nature and Earth have been left somewhat aside due to science's rapid progress. Both have credence as descriptors: mystical - as representing the great unknown without, and spiritual - as representing that great unknown within. Now it was my hope that I could have a range of scientific and mystico-spiritual Storytellers across a scale. The scientific were easy enough to find amongst the biologists, geologists, geographers and environmentalists. The mystico-spiritual search is where the fifth and sixth considerations became intertwined.

And here I return to that question of culture. In early groundwork for this research I looked at my own experiences with indigenous peoples from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Arabia, Ethiopia, and Borneo. I realised that a lot of what I had learnt from them and from my readings about them had shaped my view of the Earth. I also realised that it showed how the dominant paradigm of western culture, of which I was a part, was in a state of separation from the Earth. So this research involves only one culture - the global industrialised western dominant culture – the culture most responsible for the separation from Earth.

Although I have twelve Storytellers, they all have several roles or facets within their Storyteller story. Linking once again to Eliade's technicians of the sacred and Jung's

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<sup>9</sup> I am speaking here of the education system that incorporates Geography and Biology and their combination in Environmental Science.



archetypes of the collective unconscious, I sought to place the Storytellers in roles that would be both conducive to the narrative of this Storytellers of the Earth and would provide evidence of the variables of what it was to be a Storyteller of the Earth.

Some of the roles were straightforward such as poet (one who weaves words to inspire), artist (one who weaves forms to inspire), songwriter (one who weaves sounds to inspire), and teacher (one who weaves facts to inspire). Other roles were a little more vague, but served to cover the varied character of the Storytellers - such as a biologist (one who is inspired by the wisdom of life), activist (one who uses direct action to inspire), scholar (one who takes the time to reflect and be inspired apart from direct action for the Earth - a very important factor within the literature review relates to this role as I see my own experience within this research primarily in this role), and tale teller (one who is the closest to the traditional role of 'Storyteller').

Now that the Storytellers were all assembled I could proceed to the place of Story. The process of this research was not to explore the influence that these Storytellers had on the populace of the Earth, nor was it to explore their effect in saving the Earth. I did not seek to explore political ideologies, nor did I seek to create a quantitative scale of passion or 'greenness'. My aim was to create a story about Storytellers. In my other life, I am an English Literature teacher. From early years onwards we teach the basic fundamentals of who, what, why, where, when, and how in relationship to story. In regards to the Storytellers, in exploring who they were, I wished to know why they felt the need or drive to speak for the Earth, of how they felt when and where they were immersed in the story of the Earth, and what their experience of the Earth story was. In my youth, I had stood on the edge of logging coups with these people, amidst the immensity of the old growth forest. In my University

days I had sat on the duckpond lawn of Wollongong University and listened to these people speak and listened to their bands play. As a teacher I had sat in discussion with these people as they spoke of inspiration, guidance, and humility. I had already had the honour to hear much of the story. I was already humble to the hard work of so many. As Xavier Rudd has sung

*People saving whales*

*And giving your thanks for our seas*

*My respect in the ones in the forest*

*Standing up for our old trees*

*... but there's better people with more good to do*

*(Rudd X, White Moth, 2007)*

I wished to tell the story of these selfless 'better people' speaking of their experience of speaking for the Earth. We know why they do it - because they want to save the Earth. We know what their effect is - people call them hippies, greenies, doomsayers, weirdos, unwashed rent-a-crowd, etc, etc. We see the bliss in their eyes and hear the reverence in their voices and know that there is something sacred in their technician. We see the resolve in their stance and the determination in their actions. Somewhere in between the shallow judgment of the conservatives and the respect of artists like Xavier Rudd there is a story of ShamanSpeak: The Storytellers of the Earth.

My interview therefore was placed on this line between Xavier Rudd and the right wing conservative. I held the sympathy of Xavier Rudd, being a musician Storyteller myself. Being a scholar of history I knew the story of industrialisation, culture, and religion that had led to the economic, social and political ideologies of the commentators who spoke from vested interests. As such I felt that all I could do was to allow a space for a story to be told - with these people being Storytellers, I did not think that this would be too difficult. With three

simple, yet hopefully profound questions covering the what, where and when, I hoped to hear and then write a story that told of who and why. Thus we come to the how.

### *Interview Questions*

What is the Storyteller's experience of the story of the Earth?

What is the Storyteller's experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth?

What is the Storyteller's experience of being within the cycle of the Earth story inspired by a response to this simple cyclic poem:

*Seed*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*Seed*

Each of these three questions shall represent one part of the essence of the Earth's Storytellers. As phenomenology seeks to understand the essence of a 'lived experience' (van Manen, 1990, p.149), I believe that the best path to explore the quintessence of the Storytellers of the Earth is through a story-interview.

This story-interview will have the three questions as places in the landscape of the interview. As the interview develops, I am hoping that the landscape develops other facets which will further develop the story. After the first question is asked, rather than steer towards the other directions, I shall attempt to let the interview/story flow, creating paths as it does so. I shall

only bring in the other questions as points of perspectives to the path that is being followed by the respondent.

With the interview questions ready and my research aimed at the forefront, I set up the times for the Skype interviews. Skype allowed a varied platform of media to allow the Storytellers to tell their story. Some were happy with the video conversation incorporating visual and audio, some just preferred the simplicity of audio. Two Storytellers stated they felt more comfortable writing their responses through the text message approach of Skype, which was most interesting knowing that their usual media for Storytelling was voice. Yet it became clear that there was a difference between Storytelling and talking about Storytelling. The use of text communication allowed for time to balance replies, and for me to ask questions of clarity. When relating to such profound experiences as peoples' connection to the Earth, a lyrical response can provide the researcher with a mode of empathy which embodies relationship to the concepts expressed by participants. As Gilbert states, this 'self-defining confessional genre, with its persistent assertions of identity and its emphasis on a central mythology of the self can provide a measure of experience' (1977, p.444).

Once I had shared the space of the interview with these Storytellers, it was time to hear their story through the notes that I had written whilst listening to the Storytellers. After setting up for the interview I was now at a crossroads with so many written notes, but the goal of the research still distant. To process this information I created a three-tier process of dwelling in the data.

The first process allowed a study by keyword, whereby the interview notes were sifted through to find recurring keywords and then these keywords were used to filter the notes once more. The keywords came to represent the different individual stories that became evident from the research and led to the development of the twelve chapters representing the twelve Storytellers. To attempt to come closer to the medium of the Storytellers, the second process involved a method which brought the filtered interview notes into the realm of story. Writing stories based on the Storytellers brought out the essence of their voice for the Earth. The stories were basic linear stories amidst the landscape of the 'back story' of what has been variously called the green/environment movement. The stories were woven together with the voices from the poets and philosophers who speak for and of this movement. At the end of each chapter, the Shamans 'speak' with voices of Storytellers of the Earth and a picture emerges as to their role as teacher, activists, facilitators and raisers of awareness. These stories are a co-collaboration between the Storyteller and me - just as I was involved in the story that was woven in the 'interview', I too could not be separated from the writing of the story. After all I was a Storyteller, talking to Storytellers about Storytellers!

Seeking to dwell even deeper, and in a balance to the first process of keywords, I then wrote lyrics based on the essence that emerged for each Storyteller. In respect for the hard work for the Earth, and so that their message could be spread even further, I then gathered another crew of Storytellers - this time a group of musicians - to transform these lyrics into song. The keywords that became the lyrics were the final distillation of the essence of each of the Storyteller's stories. Through the writing of the thesis I found my own 'Master's voice' as a lyrical songwriter. I felt that this was my best tool in telling the story of these Storytellers - this was my humble reflection. Throughout the interview and writing process I sought just to listen and then weave. Yet through such powerful processes about such an important subject I could not help but be overwhelmed. The songs were my way of coming back to the surface,

my tool to keep on working through the data. I sent each of the participants their finished song after this process. Each of them responded with a humble awe. The essence of the voice of the Earth in positive vibration!

Through each of these dwelling processes, I hoped to move closer to expressing the essential nature of the inspiration for these Storytellers of the Earth.

*What is the intangible essence?*

### *My Research Explorations*

I seek to explore the mystery that surrounds, moves within, lifts up, inspires, takes hold of, entrances, enchants, carries away, consumes, absorbs and possesses the poet/Shaman/bard/Storyteller of the Earth.

To me it is something that is sacred and yet simple. Something that is sublime and ridiculous. Something that overwhelms, yet gives the bearer wings.

To attempt to analyse it is almost sacrosanct. Yet this is the challenge. For there is a subtle dance, that weaves within and without of the Storyteller. It is a voice in the wilderness - and it does not cry out for help, or cry out because it is lost. It calls as the soul of the planet, reminding us of that of which we are - of our nature, of our essence.

This is a study of the essential nature of the enchantment of the Earth.

This is a study of the subtle weave of the wind that possesses the wanderer.

This is a study of the sacred song that inspires the seeker.

This is a mystery, intangible, veiled, whispered, and which moves like incense in the breeze carrying hope and something that some call spirit - yet that I wish to call story.

This is an exploration of the story of the Storytellers of the Earth.



### **And returning once more to the Storyteller...**

Aron is a community facilitator, a politician and an activist. Aron is a middle-aged man from the Earth. Aron would be classified as a passionate activist who speaks his mind, takes direct action, and seeks to raise awareness. Aron is the man who speaks of his experience of voluntarily being 'chained to a tree' and of his work where he is 'chained to society', and who is so tireless and believes so much in his cause that he bravely states 'you can't break me'.

Aron's story here represents the first of the findings that represent all of the Storytellers - awareness.

Each of the Storytellers represents a part of the triangle of activist, teacher and facilitator. Some lean more to the direct energy of the activist, whilst others are more attuned to the subtle energy of the facilitator. Yet, what all of the Storytellers could have been classified loosely as, even before I interviewed them, and this is why I was able to locate them through various channels, is 'Raisers of Earth Awareness'.

As stated in the previous section in relation to the Storytellers, each Storyteller was chosen because of their ability to give 'voice' for the Earth, thus the title ShamanSpeak. The second question relates directly to the second part of the title Storytellers of the Earth, but the first question we are dealing with does not deal with storytelling, at least not by human beings. The first question deals with the scenario of how the seeds of awareness were originally planted in the hearts, minds and souls of the storytellers.

**The first question: What is your experience of the Story of the Earth?**

Aron's response to this question was vast and beautiful, filled with passionate experiences and life-changing catalysing moments.

'... standing on the edge of a logging coup, the destruction is both mesmerising and devastating...'

'... walking into virgin forest, feeling the pulse of the living Earth beneath my feet, totally immersed in the place I am blessed to be standing in...'

'... touching the moss on the bole of a tree hundreds of years older than me, feeling life touching me...'

When I heard Aron speak, I heard the story of an activist who has been to the edge of the forest, both the untouched primeval (?) rainforest, and also to the edge of the forest's destruction. This was a Storyteller who had been 'out there' and who could speak and shape from what he had seen and experienced.

When I heard Aron speak, I heard the story of a spiritual being that drew his spirituality from an immersion based simply on being on the Earth. A Storyteller who drew inspiration from the awe and humility of being 'out there'.

When I heard Aron speak, I heard the story of a historian and scientist who was aware of the real story of the living Earth. Of the story of growth and ancientness found within the living forest and of its profound effect on us as living beings.

Aron spoke of the Earth in a term called Deep Time, which is a term used in the Deep Ecology Philosophy mentioned later in the literature review of Chapter Twelve. He told me Deep Time is

an awareness of the grand story of the Earth, of the cosmology, geology and biology of the evolution up until the moment you are standing out beneath the sky with rivers and forests beside you. To Aron, there truly is a massive story of the Earth and every time he immerses himself within it, he is experiencing not just his beautiful surroundings, but a history of beauty. There is, in his words, ‘a knowledge of perception that goes beyond most people’s day-to-day lives, and even beyond the span of my own lifetime’. As Aron states, ‘I do not live on the Earth, the Earth in me lives!’

Aron’s awareness is an echo of all of his fellow Earth storytellers:

‘... then I come back down to Earth and I think about all the sadness we have created through our greed...’

Aron’s story is one of place, connectedness and activist, giving a perspective on the great weight of the livingness of which we are a part. Aron spoke of the Gaia Hypothesis (Lovelock & Margulis, 1974) where he stated ‘you cannot help but feel immersed within a pattern of thinking living being’.

As you arch your neck and place your hands on the great trunk to look up to the higher branches, you listen to the song of the wind as it sings in the leaves. While deep down in the Earth the waters of history feed the roots, and around you feel the warmth of the sun bringing the energy of life to the tree, up above the branches move in a rhythm to the free-flowing breeze. The song you hear has echoes of wilderness and beauty which call to activists such as Aron.

### **The second question: Experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth.**

Aron’s response related, more than any other of the Storytellers, to the experience of the Earth story co-existing with his experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth, when he replied:

‘When I am chained to a tree, I am also chained to society’,

And,

‘But no matter what they say or do, they will never convince me that I need to stop my activism, nor that what they are doing to the Earth is right. Like Bob Marley said, you gotta get up, stand up ... and you may break the back of an old blue gum that was standing tall for 300 years, but you ... can’t break me.

### **Seed**

Then from the fruit that is the Earth, one becomes the seed and remembers that always in all ways, the Storytelling is ‘For the Earth!’

As Aron (and others) said:

‘For the Earth I sing my song,

For the Earth to which we all belong!’

### ***Aron’s Story***

The political activist stood with a tear in his eye as he watched the footage of destruction. He turned and spoke:

‘In small steps we will win this battle’.

Within his story, Aron also gave the following ‘steps’ towards a greater goal:

In respect to Earth stories:

‘We are witnessing the end of a geological era, which we have facilitated’.

On being a kind of evolved tree:

‘There is something very humbling about working for trees... sometimes I think how we are just trees that are running around’.

On trees:

‘... the patience to stand in the one place for 1000 years ...’

On the green movement:

‘I am in humble awe of the community actions at Terania Creek, the Franklin, of those first Green Warriors who spoke up for the Earth’.

In respect to the activists with which he works everyday:

‘... they place their life before the system in protection of the biosphere ...’

Explaining the significance of the role of agitator:

‘The laws protect the companies, but the courts and halls of power cannot silence our voices’

In relationship to our society's separation:

‘A lot of people are not looking out their windows, or walking out of their offices, or driving out of their cities and getting out of their cars and being amongst the wild places’.

And in reflection:

‘... I am very humble that I am given the chance to do that, the wild places are just outside my window. My office may be in the city, but my home and most of my work are found in the wild places...’

Whilst his work was global, Aron also worked within a region that held an ancient connection through an ancient people. Inspired by their approach to the Earth story he offered his:

‘... reverential respect for the traditional custodians of the land ...’

Continuing the theme of respect, he spoke of:

‘... great people who have stood in the face of the corporate machine and said, enough!’

And in response to the immensely humble path ahead he said:

‘... peaceful protest, survival of our planet ...’

## Songs

*Songs are an extension of the garden of lyric, yet these words are also snippets of the data given by the participants of their experience beyond the wall. Finally, they are this researcher's Storytelling role.*

When I as a 'Bard' thought of the story of the Shaman Aron, I heard something with a heavy blues rock feel. In a phenomenological respect to music, the following evidence from Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (2002, p.262):

Music is not in visible space, but it besieges, undermines and displaces that space, so that soon these overdressed listeners who take on a judicial air and exchange remarks or smiles, unaware that the floor is trembling beneath their feet, are like a ship's crew buffeted about on the surface of a tempestuous sea.

Without further ado, I present to you the first vessel on that tempestuous sea:

## *Song Analysis*

### *Chained*

The lyrics for this song came from three facets of the conversation with the political activist Aron:

The evidence he supplied that 'direct action' is his first 'storytelling', whereby he speaks for the Earth by chaining himself to a tree;

The evidence that he supplied whereby he said that he is still chained to society, where he must come back to society to tell the story of the forests to raise awareness;

The evidence that he supplied within his passion, to work tirelessly for the Earth, with no fear, mixed with the metaphor of the chains - You can't break me!

This was chosen as the first song on the album as it was the most passionate and intense of the songs. The string rhythm and stirring vocals would be the best to catch the attention of the audience to these Storytellers of the Earth.

The lyrics for this song are the shortest of all the songs. The reason for this is not that Aron did not have a lot to say, but rather that he was a Storyteller of direct action and direct words. These words he gave summed up the delicate and complicated balance he was required to use to enable his role as a politician both within the city and within the forests.

The verse is simple: the metaphor of chaining oneself to a tree in direct action protest is juxtaposed with the metaphor that the activist is also chained to society in their role as a Storyteller bent on raising awareness for the Earth. The verse is repeated to emphasise the importance of this metaphor to the role of Aron as a Storyteller of the Earth.



The chorus is just one line repeated until a guitar riff break. This line of ‘you can’t break me’ is a wonderful metaphor that implies that just like the chain is chosen for its ability to not be broken, so is the spirit of this Storyteller of the Earth unbreakable.

If I was to record this song again I may have added a spoken word from Aron in the breakdown section in the middle of the song, something about his perspective as he stood in the forest at sunrise. Yet I felt that the mood of this middle section of the song without vocals encompassed enough of this reflective feeling after the intensity of the heavier sections.

The harmonica input reminded me very much of Peter Garrett and Midnight Oil in the song *Blue Sky Mine*, marking this as a true protest song. Performance of this song live receives the most energy and applause from the audience. It would be wonderful to perform this song after Aron gave one of his awareness-raising speeches as a Storyteller of the Earth.

The drums and bass have an intense rock and roll energy reflecting the intensity of protest and direct action, whilst the twin guitars provide a reflection of the down and dirty connection to the Earth felt by the activist protester. The vocals are raucous and passionate and reflect the combination of frustration and never-say-die attitude that becomes the voice of the Storyteller who exclaims:

‘You can’t break me’.

*Chained* - full electric band - begins the album rocking - voice of the forest protest:

Drum Kit - Blakjak Davy, Percussion - Kasongo, Bass - Baro, Guitar - SonikArc, Guitar - Tosh, Harmonica - Doc Slyde, Vocals - The Bard.

A song written and recorded with passion and intensity to attempt to give voice to the passion and intensity of those who tell the story of the Earth within the cycle of law, protest and direct action.

**Chained Rattlin Song**

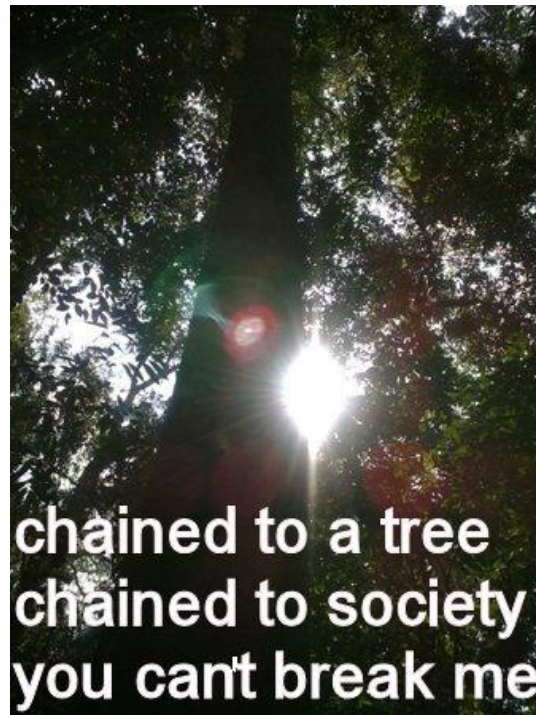
Key A

*Chained to a tree, chained to society**Can't break me*

### *Ecovision<sup>10</sup>: Chained*

The first song on the 'album' is the song entitled *Chained*. It is the story of an activist and politician who uses direct action to raise awareness and save endangered and fragile Earth from unconscious destruction.

The key lyrics for this song were easy to choose, as these are the only lyrics for the song. There did not need to be any more lyrics to confuse the message of this Storyteller image selected is of a lone tree amidst the jungle/forest. The question raised is whether this



tree alone should be saved? Would the sacrifice of this tree amount to any weight to the ecosystem? Or is it rather that this life too is sacred? Identifying with this tree, protecting this tree, saving this tree, is a step towards one's role amidst the forest of life.

<sup>10</sup> Each of the twelve chapters in connection with the Storytellers will have an 'Ecovision' incorporating Eco words distilled from the inspiration of the Storyteller combined with a photograph taken by this researcher and his partner. A visual summary.

## Chapter Two: Lyres, Strands and Strings

[Please listen to the second song on the CD entitled 2. Strands]

### Inspiration

*And maybe there is a god above  
Yet all I ever learnt from love  
Was how to shoot somebody who outdrew ya  
It's not a cry that you hear at night  
It's not somebody who has seen the light  
It's a cold and broken hallelujah*

In 1984 poet and 'lyric Storyteller' Leonard Cohen wrote the song above. It is the song that reminds me most of the story of the poet and 'lyric Storyteller' Pedro. I have chosen the term 'lyric Storyteller' to differentiate from the general term Storyteller, used throughout this thesis to describe all twelve of the participants. The Storyteller Pedro was closest amongst all the Storytellers in definition of his role to the classic description of a Storyteller. Thus the title of *lyric* is used. This chapter tells the story of the Storyteller Pedro, woven together with an exploration of the influence of the Mythic, Bardic and Poetic traditions on all Storytellers, as well as on the process of this research.

Lyrical Storytellers such as Leonard Cohen, Bob Dylan, Neil Young, and countless other storytellers of song have contributed such lyrical poetic truth in response to the 'Earth Song'. It was Jeff Buckley's (1994) version of Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* that opened my ears and heart to the wisdom of this song. The awe that is represented in the speaking of the enchantment hallelujah tells a story of being overwhelmed by the immensity that is the living

force of life. Poets, writers, artists and lyricists have given their word in response to this immensity.

Kocku Von Stuckrad (2002) in his paper *Reenchanting Nature: Modern Western Shamanism and Nineteenth-Century Thought*, speaks of the idea that ‘only the poets should deal with “the fluid” that is living nature’. He quotes Novalis as describing the poet as ‘that true mystagogue of nature who is able to understand the language of the universe... the sacred language’ (p.788).

This is a work of lyrical Storytelling, thus I sought out the wisdom of a lyric Storyteller to tell his story of being with the sacred cycle of seed to seed.

When Hermes fashioned the first lyre, which was then given by his brother Apollo to the son of a God and a Muse, the poetic tale of the poet began. Bards, poets, tale weavers, Storytellers and songwriters have for eons provided the reflection of the human story. Yet these poets too have their own story, for the poet is part of the human story, yet is also apart. To be part is to be of the whole - the body of humanity. Yet the poet is also outside the body, an objective witness who must attain a sense of self-separate from, yet containing, the greater self. This search for ‘self’ is the search for voice. A voice that comes from within yet can be heard without. The self becomes the incantations of the bard, the poem of the poet, the weavings of the storyteller and the lyric of the songwriter. The self becomes the ‘*Song*’.

Exploring the song of the self, various authors have sought to understand the role of both poet and poem. Now we must make a distinction here. The academics who follow have explored the poet and the poem from without. Yet their subjects, such as Walt Whitman, William

Blake, Bob Dylan and Jeff Buckley have also explored the poem and the poet, from within.

Now these academics, whilst also being authors like these poetic souls, are also audience.

These academics have also been enchanted in the weave of magic that is created in the spell of words, as Hiller notes:

The spell of irresistible attraction with which the bards and Druids held their listeners naturally recalls the similar power of Orpheus to move all nature, animate and inanimate, with enchanting song (1984, p.10).

Now the power to be moved is human. Yet the power to move is that of, what Hiller calls, the poet archetype. Orpheus, this son of a God and a Muse, is noted in the western myth that has descended to today, as the originator of the sacred song that moves the audience of humanity (Santilla & von Dechend, 1977). Today's masters of physics can give us an account of the wave modulations that create sound and voice, yet they cannot account for the phenomena that is the story in song that appeals to the soul of the poet and his audience. There is an energy that connects in the form of a triangle between the poet, the audience and that unnameable force which I attempt to describe as a kind of creative, imaginative, passionate, reflective weave. Giving this energy a physical metaphor such as weave allows the poetic to become tangible. Our modern analysis of the poetic realm draws its influence from the Renaissance, which draws further roots from the Greek storytellers. Homeric scholar Jane Snyder draws the connection between the weave and the poet's lyre:

If we look closely at the connection between crafts and poetic activity - a connection which is attested in many Indo-European languages - we find that in the case of the Greek lyric poets the association between weaving and singing is attributable to three specific factors: (1) the Homeric background for using terms derived from weaving as metaphors for intellectual activity, as well as Homer's own association of literal weaving with song; (2) certain linguistic associations in the Greek language between terms related to weaving and terms related to music; and (3) the mechanical parallels between the weaver's loom and the poet's lyre, that is, between striking the 'strings' of the loom with the shuttle and striking the strings of the lyre with the *plektrum* (Snyder, 1981, p.193).

Orpheus was famed for the weave of his poetic song. His lyre was the instrument that created the phenomena of performance in which his voice could then chant the lyric of his inner self - his soul. The etymology of the word *lyric* draws from the Greek *lyrikos* (Harper, 2001, online) which means *singing to the lyre*. Continuing with etymology the word *song* draws its roots from the Proto Indo-European *Sengwhe* which means *to make an incantation* - thus chanting (Harper, 2001, online). To provide one more root to this tree of knowledge, the word *poet* draws from the Proto Indo-European *Qwei* which means *to make* (Harper, 2001, online). The making is the creativity, the incantation is the magic that ensnares the listener in the spell of the weave, and the lyre is the instrument that allows that character we call the bard-poet-Storyteller-balladeer-songwriter to become the Orpheus which can explore the inner realm of the self so as to bring the song-poem-story to the outer world. Scholars have traced this line of poetic story from the oral tradition to the world of print. As Henriksen notes:

Radical dependence of the bard on audience reaction, arguing that this was the model for the epic and folk poet from ancient times up to the rise of print (2001, p.78).

Which he further elaborates with:

The genre of the song or ballad, which was reaffirmed as a vestige of older pre-industrial communal life, with the poet as bard speaking to his community (2001, p.80).

This connection between the outer self of the community to the inner self of the Bard is important is establishing a reason or purpose for the actions of the poet. For there is at first the role of the teacher, the entertainer, who attempts to bring awareness to the group through the power of the signs and symbols within the text expressed. Next there is the role of the Shaman who is the medium for the above-stated reflective weave. Yet there is also the poet

who, like one who explores an unknown realm, drinks deep from the sacred pool at the roots of the sacred tree. There is at once a telling and an expressing which Freidrich explains:

When such a lyric voice erupts - or whispers to us softly - from the epic continuum, it reflects a rotation or a pivoting, or better, a metamorphosis of the poet from being a bard telling *about* epic protagonists, to being the otherwise latently or underlyingly lyric poet who is now expressing himself or herself through the eyes or voice or gestures of one of the epic protagonists (2001, p.238).

The scholars who seek through mythology and history for the Orphic and Bardic sources of the song of the self are replaced by the scholars who seek to find this song of the self in the modern poet. Walt Whitman's famous year mirroring fifty-two stanza poem *Song of Myself* (1978) is a phenomenal example of a poet's exploration of the self in relation to the world in which they exist - a kind of narrative self-inquiry. Tapscott's exploration of Whitman's inspiration of the self explains that:

‘Song of Myself’ contains a strain of images that deals with essentially the same process of deciphering a secret, vital, and ancient language: of translating the hints of the natural life of the Self in the open air (1978, p.53).

I could have chosen many scholars' explorations of many poets seeking of the self, yet Whitman's title seemed most appropriate. Notable poets such as Blake and Keats are renowned for their exploration of the self in relation to nature and the cosmos. Scott places them and others as ‘poets who specialise in dealing with that common humanity whereby we are bound one to another’ (Scott, 1974, p.231).

This binding to one and another again explores the individual self with the communal self. We are all aware of ourselves in relation to the masses, yet it takes a poet to look into their own soul and tell the story that exists there. It is the poet who asks the classic questions ‘Who am I? Who are you? Do I know me? Do I know you?’ Of course this all leads to the concept



of identity. Is not story a question (or answer) of the identity of humanity? Is it not an ontological expression of being? The voice comes from within and Gilbert describes this storied journey as:

This self-defining confessional genre, with its persistent assertions of identity and its emphasis on a central mythology of the self (1977, p.444).

Although the Shaman-poet is a minority with a significant role, there have been many poets who have flowed down the mighty river of human story. Each has told their tale and sung their song, each drawing on the same source of life and each drawing upon the previous reflection of those who have given their voice before them. Yet if the poet-storyteller has sought for an answer to the question of the self, the answer has never been found. Herein lies the mystery. For ages past and ages hence, the Orphic figure shall pick up the lyre, gaze at the setting sun or the rising moon, look around them at the wilderness or the garden of the Earth and they shall ask of the 'Great Mystery', 'who art thou?' Against the backdrop of this immensity of consciousness the poet can do nothing else but hold on to their identity, their sense of self in the great order of things. Otherwise, the poetic mind that has entered into the world of the subtle could be overcome by the awesome expansive nature of what is so simply known as 'All'.

So then if the song has always remained the same, then what is the poet's role? Kevin

Korsyn's excellent appraisal follows the line that:

Because the poet's preoccupation with selfhood is the anxiety that his precursors have not left him room to become a self, to speak with his own poetic voice; self-consciousness manifests itself as text-consciousness, because 'the poet's conception of himself necessarily is his poem's conception of itself'. The poet seeks to 'name something for the first time' (1991, p.7).

In this tale of poets, this appraisal resounds with such truth. If we seek once more into etymological roots we find that the word *name* draws from the Sanskrit *jna* which means *to know* (Harper, 2001, online). So the poet-storyteller seeks to know something for the first time. What is it that drives a soul to be the first to know something? Is it perhaps a situation where in finding something new the poet is stating, like the universal mystery, I am that!

When the poet has the lyrical epiphany does he not then share it with the audience of humanity, and do we not then grow a little more in our knowledge of self. In looking a final time at etymology, the roots of the word *self* go back to the Proto Indo-European, *swe* which means *separate* or *apart* (Harper, 2001, online).

Here we have come full circle, for in the beginning we saw that the poet soul was part of the whole, yet also apart in its search for self. Yet we have seen that scholars have noted that the Storyteller draws on that common energy that connects us all, both in their means of communication and in their appealing to the mystery of who we are. Could it not then be that the poet's role in the exploration of the self, and in the telling of the story of the self in relation to the all, is not just a question of who am I, but also relates back to the questions of what, why, where, when and how? What is this? Why is it here? Where is here? When did here begin and when will it end? And how do I know that this is here now? Is not the search for the self a search for meaning? The search for meaning is the search for awareness. And the search for awareness is the search for freedom - freedom from the ignorance of living to die. Life is a story and we require a story to explain a story. This research seeks a qualitative approach which allows an exploration of the story within a story.

Following the tale of the Storytellers, scholars move from the bard, through the poet, to the songwriter. Songwriters gained prominence as folk singers as part of the counter-culture. The songwriters search for meaning, for naming something for the first time, for the search for self to become a cry for freedom. Rosenstone states that:

Affirming a strong faith in the freedom of the individual, songwriters have turned their backs on pragmatic reality and have sought freedom in a transcendental exploration of man's internal reality (Rosenstone, 1969, p.131).

Rosenstone is aware that the bardic-poetic-Storyteller's role that has developed into the role of the folk singer is a long tale and that:

A desire for freedom is certainly nothing new. What is different in the songs of the 1960s is the conviction that this freedom should be used by the individual in an extensive exploration of his own internal world. Central to the vision of the song writers is the idea that the mind must be opened and expanded if the truths of life are to be perceived. Thus, the importance of external reality is subordinated to that of a psychological, even a metaphysical, realm (Rosenstone 1969, p.141).

Again we have the philosophy that the poet is seeking to name something for the first time. The 'self' is named as the poet's own internal world. This internal world is the story world - the place of the creative, imaginative, passionate, reflective weave! And this story world has its rivers, its towers, its gardens of Eden and its wastelands. In studying two of the most renowned poet souls of the recent past, Zak explains that:

Hendrix and Dylan gypsy- and hobo-navigated a musical passage of self-invention that led them into borderlands where musical styles, idioms, and traditions overlap (2004, p.638).

The time of the Bards has passed, as has the time of the epic poet, yet it seems that in forty years so has the time of the songwriter/folk singer as the Shaman of song. As Dwyer notes:

Popular song has long since resumed its lowly status in the public imagination, a village idiot to the educated society of art and literature. The often-asked question of whatever happened to the great songwriting visionaries is easily answered. They were simply sidelined by an industry with no time for mind games and a greed for instant gratification (Dwyer, 2008, online).

This tale of Storytellers telling tales about Storytellers will be completed upon submission of this paper, yet the story of the poetic search for self is not. Although Dwyer is correct in his statement that the academic world's disdain, the general public's ignorance, and the money grubbing industrialist's greed has sidelined the role of the Shaman-Bard-Poet-Storyteller-songwriter, this poet is happy to be on the sideline. From here I can see the game clearly, from here I can watch the crowd watching, from here I can see the exit to the stadium and its world that is waiting, from here I can see the sky above me and its endless eternal story. We poets are apart, yet we know that there is no separation. We know that all and the one song are one, and the poets will keep on finding the poets and telling their story. Rolling Stone's Neil Strauss in an interview with the veteran Bard Leonard Cohen reported Cohen's statement that:

‘So much of the work that I hear, there's nothing wrong with it, but much of it has the feel of a slogan or an agenda that has already been written,’ he says. ‘But if you're interested in forming yourself through your work, then you have to keep uncovering and discarding those slogans until you get to something’ (Strauss, 2009, online).

The song remains the same, yet the poet visionary will die and be reborn in the eternal search for self that is reborn with each new story. One of the most phenomenal of recent songwriters, one that could take the title of Shaman, Bard, or poet, or who could sit beside the likes of great visionaries such as William Blake and John Keats, flowed down the eternal river of life too young, yet in his few years on this Earth he found a voice that spoke to many. In seeking to provide a voice for this poet who so recently lost his voice, scholar Oliver Lovesey, in his aptly-titled article *Anti-Orpheus* states that:

In his career, Jeff Buckley searched impossibly, through a kind of transcendental anarchism or a mimicked ‘dance insane’ (as he called it in ‘Dream Brother’) to narrate a similarly oppositional, anti-heroic, anti-oedipal non-narrative or post-narrative, and to outmanoeuvre the historical, emotional and existential pasts inevitably conjured by musical memory (Lovesey, 2004, p.332).

Jeff Buckley, in his search for self, and in his attempt to name something for the first time, may have become the Anti-Orpheus. Yet he still gave voice to the poetic soul, he still sang the song of songs and he still played the strings of the gift given by the Sun God so, so long ago- the story is the same at the end as it was in the beginning. As long as humanity searches for the self of the soul, the lyre of Hermes shall play on.

### **The Writer**

Pedro's academic background led him to work in the publishing field as a professional writer and publisher, and to extend this into the educational realm. Alongside this, Pedro finds time for grassroots Storytelling amongst a circle of eager listeners. Due to these three archetypes, Pedro falls within the sector of professional tale-teller on the circle of storyteller archetypes.

Pedro the author, teacher and entrepreneur spoke in the language of mystery where Earth is 'incomprehensible and unexplainable'. The sense of place within the incomprehensible relates much closer to what the gurus of my own reading such as Jung, Campbell and Eliade have found in their research into the human relationship to cosmos.

Pedro spoke of the realisation of being within the cosmic bubble of the Earth, which he noticed specifically when he was flying between spoken-word engagements.

Pedro the writer also followed the mantra of 'live', even though he lived in a metropolis; he was one of those energised activists who sought the catalyst of change. So when Pedro said 'live', he explained it thus:

I feel like a mountain lion as I walk across the stage, coiled and ready to leap out into the audience and roar in their faces to 'wake up', but instead I transfer this energy into words. I tell them that the Earth is here now, not waiting in the future as some utopian paradise. I tell them that the river has been flowing for millennia, waiting for them to go down to it right now! Then when I leave these conferences, I go home to my desk

and write furiously, as the pen is my weapon against the ignorance of Earth destruction. I look up into the sky and the stars make me think of all the other beings out there with their own Earth.

### **Earth Story**

The writer Pedro was a man of metaphor. His responses wove themselves together so tightly, that by the end of the interview he already had a short story in his mind to elaborate on his perspective of the connections and relationships of life. His short story idea became the basis for the lyric of the song Strands, which you have hopefully listened to already. The poem I wrote based on the words of his interview has not been made into a recorded song, yet each of the words to my poem are found somewhere within the adapted lyric from Pedro's short story.

As we spoke, I assumed that Pedro had his eyes closed as he responded to my questions (he later confirmed this). I imagined the imaginative and poetic mind of Pedro travelling in the realms of his psyche as he explored each question presented to him. At first he did not respond and I could just hear his breath, and the reverberations of a humming smile. His first words in response were 'the strands of life'. From here, he waxed lyrical in a beautiful poetic flow describing the movement and connection and relationship of life, energy, humanity and nature.

He spoke in reverence of how life is 'thriving and dynamic', and of his awe at how all of life is 'interweaving'. Pedro's joy in living was equally matched by his fulfilment at the understanding of the energy of life 'flowing and overflowing'. In an almost Aquarian metaphor he spoke of the waters of the cosmos being poured down onto Earth and flowing out to meet all beings across the landscapes of the living world. 'Everyone and everything is connected', he said. 'These are the strands of life'.

Reflecting this, I return again to Orpheus and Kocku Von Stuckrad:

Artists and Shamans are the virtuosos of a trans-species communication. Like ancient Orpheus, they know the language of nature; they journey into those realms of reality that are veiled to other people (2002, p.789).

### **Lyrical Storyteller**

The writer did not just tell a story. His words here, which I only reflect in song, followed retrospections such as:

‘My writing is like ritual. It is a process which brings my spirit into a trance-like state where I feel myself expanding and the mundane world contract. I feel the trees, the rocks, the atoms in the sky that make it seem blue to our eyes’.

### ***Seeds of a Story***

Knowing his place within the network of life he said:

‘I feel the timber of the desk upon which I write and think of the story of the tree that brought me this gift’.

On being able to tell stories, he spoke of how:

‘Every character that comes through my mind, through my pen, is an activist - a hero who seeks to bring light where there is darkness’,

As to why, he replied:

‘I write for the Earth’.

And:

‘The Earth and its network of webs of fate is my inspiration’.

To being a Shaman:

‘All I ever ask my readers is to listen with an open heart to the message that comes through my characters, through me. I am just a conduit’.

Metaphor:

‘Sometimes when I write I feel like jungle vines, twisting this way and that’.

On stories:

‘What is a story but a space in which to grow?’

On the poetry of life:

‘I sometimes think of the bud, awaiting fruition... and then I just bliss out and wait for the fruit to be there in my hand’.

On hope:

‘I’m never afraid we won’t work it out, if I didn’t think humanity and the Earth didn’t have a hope I wouldn’t waste my time attempting to inspire’.

The story of the Earth:

‘The Earth is a tale billions of years in the making’.

On mysticism:



‘Sometimes I write letters to the eco-fascists, sometimes I write letters to the future, sometimes I write letters to the mindless consumers... then I use them to start my fire. I like to think that they get the drift somehow, somewhere’.

Pedro spoke of the questioning of the self in relation to being a raiser of awareness:

‘Who am I to write this stuff? Do I have any better handle on the wisdom of the Earth?’

And:

‘It’s not just me. I know there are many others creating, hoping, and trying their best to make the Earth our home’.

... and in regards to the end of the story, the writer offered:

‘... Peace, to me, is the river, running free...’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Strands*

A Dylanesque story - weaves a tale of a voice that is woven by fate around the nature metaphor of the tree.

Percussion - Raja, Harmonica, Guitar and Vocals – The Bard.

A song written and recorded with a simple flow like being beneath a big old tree in the forest, feeling the story of life all around you.

The lyrics for this song came from a story woven within the interview with the author Pedro, a story of:

The evidence he supplied based on the metaphor of the tree;

The evidence he supplied based on the interconnectedness of life;

The evidence he supplied based on the human stories that are part of the web of earthly being.

This song was chosen as the second song on the album for two reasons. Firstly, it was a more subtle song in response to the intensity of the first song. Secondly, it was more of a Story from the Storyteller Pedro who is the closest to a traditional Storyteller in this research. It balances the minimalist lyrics of the first song which concentrated more on the mood energy of the music.

If the first song had a Midnight Oil protest song edge, this song was more akin to Bob Dylan's Storyteller approach. I found this song very interesting in terms of Pedro's approach

to interweaving a human story with the nature metaphor of the tree and its connecting strands.

In the interview, Pedro wove this inspiration for me by typing it up as a story which I then turned into lyrics with his help. It was a wonderful songwriting experience.

The lyrics are just one extended poem in traditional folk style, all verses, no chorus. It all leads up to the last lines being the summation of the ideas of the Storyteller:

*Now everything and everyone's connected*

*These are the Strands of Life*

The musical balance is between the folk guitar and folk vocal balancing with the harmonica. The guitar/vocal is the Bardic Storyteller whilst the harmonica provides the mood energy reflecting the voice of the Storyteller. The harmonica was played simultaneously with the guitar with a Dylan-style brace adding to the live feeling of the Storyteller sharing his story.

<sup>11</sup>The idea of 'everything and everyone's connected', with phrases such as interwoven and strands of life, compelled the style of the song towards a dual mode of lament and ballad. The lament spoke of the loss of connection between humans and the Earth, whilst the ballad told a tale of redemption. The idea of lines of connection was a metaphysical perspective on the energies that connect everything and everyone. Even in his words, the Storyteller Pedro wove a tapestry akin to the tapestry of life on Earth.

## Strands

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<sup>11</sup> If I was to record this song again, I would change nothing as I respect its simplicity telling such a complex story. Yet, if I had a violin player at hand, the temptation to add its colour to the lament would be strong.

## Key B

*Let me tell you a story  
I was wandering around  
My head was in a fog  
Or was it in a cloud?*

*I was going from place to place  
Disconnected from it all  
I needed to find a rope  
To keep me from a fall*

*I was sitting in a park  
Finding my peace under a tree  
Then wandered up an old Gypsea woman  
She sat down next to me*

*She began to talk about me  
And all about my life  
And how in a previous one,  
We lived as husband and wife*

*Together we thrived  
Our love overflowing  
In this park we lived,  
Our spirits interwoven*

*Stagnation came between us  
A dynamic life we did need  
We suffered the gypsy curse*

*The warnings we didn't heed*

*A mob descended and took you  
She said with a tear in her eye  
They say you murdered a baker  
And that was how you came to die*

*She got up and kissed me  
Tenderly said I miss you so  
She left me sitting under the tree  
Not knowing where to go*

*About an hour later  
I realised something was amiss  
That gypsy took my wallet  
When she gave me that farewell kiss*

*I began to walk around  
not a penny to my name  
Then caught a whiff of something  
That gave me a hunger pain*

*I stood in front of a baker's shop  
A sign staring at me  
Went in and asked the lady  
If she had a job for me*

*The woman behind the counter  
Was walking in a crutch*

*We deliver bread by bicycle*

*The pay is not that much*

*So I took the job, and a loaf of bread*

*And worked there every day*

*Happily delivering the bread*

*For that measly bit of pay*

*I fell in love with the baker*

*She was a little older than me*

*The first time we made love*

*Was in that park, under that tree*

*We'd been married for a year*

*We were sitting by our tree*

*She told me she was pregnant*

*Then walked up the old gypsy*

*She gave me back my wallet*

*Everything was still in there*

*You needed some help my dears*

*Now everything is square*

*See, it was me who took your father*

*She said to my wife*

*For some bread and a couple of dollars*

*And it cost me my husband's life*

*Now everything and everyone's*

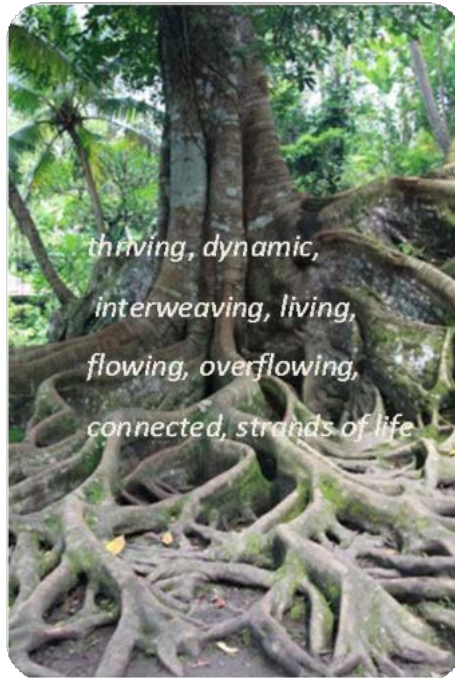
*Connected on this earth*

*Hopefully some wrong we've done  
Will be cleansed by this birth*

*First she kissed both my cheeks  
Then she kissed my wife  
Everything and everyone's connected  
These are the strands of life.*

***Ecovision: Strands***

The second song is  
song of an author,  
interweaving  
Earth. The key  
are all strong  
derived from  
image of the roots  
observation. The



entitled *Strands*. It is the  
a writer, an observer of the  
stories of humanity and  
lyrics were chosen as they  
metaphorical language  
observation of nature. The  
again reinforces this  
question remains, are we

aware of the shaping of our language through observation of the natural world that is  
our Earth?



### **Chapter Three: Song, Sub & the Poetics of Performance**

To begin, van Manen when discussing Merleau-Ponty's work writes:

As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. To summarise a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem IS the result. The poem is the thing. So phenomenology, not unlike poetry, is a poetising project; it tries an incantive, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world (van Manen, 1980, p13).

And then the words of van Manen:

Language that authentically speaks the world rather than abstractly speaking of it, is a language that reverberates the world (van Manen, 1980, p13).

[Please listen to the third song on the CD entitled 3.Sub]

#### **Inspiration**

The reverberation van Manen speaks of makes me think of sound, and therefore song. The 'Song of Life'! This chapter tells the story of the performance poet Ryley woven together with an exploration of the concept of the poem as song, through such processes as protest and Shamanic incantation. The process of presentation of research findings via keywords begins to find its strength in this chapter via the exploration of the concept of connection to Earth as Source - something the Storyteller Ryley named as 'sub' - that which dwells and courses beneath.

Ryley is a poet, a musician, a teacher and an activist.

Ryley is as close to a Shaman as I came in this study - his approach the most ecstatic and transcendental. His inspiration was the most spiritual in its outlook; his passion was the most forthright in words; his drive the most evident in anger towards the destruction of the Earth.

His was the most representative of the far left mystical/spiritual side of the metaphorical tree of Shaman Storytellers.

Ryley said he saw the ‘cosmic perspective in the billion suns of creation, and we are here gifted with this life... but they don’t see it’.

And then after a few seconds’ pause he responded to his own creation with:

‘I want to rage, wage war, and destroy their Babylon machines’.

Ryley’s story is one of space, connectedness, mystery and wilderness.

In the passage above, van Manen’s interpretation of Merleau-Ponty mentions ‘incantation’, which is a word drawn from the roots of song. These Storytellers incanted me with their wisdom and their words, and I did feel the primal telling of the Earth’s voice. How beautiful for a philosopher to speak the words ‘an original singing of the world’. It draws me out of my self the same way that the rain scented wind draws me out through the window into the ‘Other’ that is nature. I hear the myth of the Dreaming, the history of the Druids, and the protest songs of activists.

Australian musician and activist Xavier Rudd’s (2007) song, Land Rights, is the song that reminds me most of the story of Ryley, the poet lyricist musician.

Although Ryley is much closer to the realm of punk than Xavier in his musicianship, his ‘voice of the people of the Earth’ resounds alongside Xavier’s as he sings:

*Because it was sacred, because it was home  
 Because these were feelings, from so long ago  
 They listened to the spirits, that came up strong  
 They all pulled together, to sing their song*

Activist musician poet lyrical Shamans such as Xavier Rudd, Zac de la Rocha, Ben Harper, John Butler, Michael Franti and Max Cavalera, all speak of the same influence to their role as lyrical Shamans - Robert Nesta Marley.

In his fight against oppression, Marley sang of the power of truly listening to the Earth:

*... There's a natural mystic blowing through the air  
 If you listen closely now, you will hear (Robert Nesta Marley 1975).*

Marley's mix of positive vibration in the music, with the negative diction of the fight against oppression, is the platform in which the lyrical Shaman of the current fight for the Earth has based his explorations.

The system that oppresses both the Earth and the seeker within it is named by Marley as the 'Babylon System', based on religious and cultural influences in the realms where the monotheistic paths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam have prospered.

It's all there in 'Babylon System' by Bob Marley. The song condemns the uncompensated labour that was slavery. It demands repayment or reparations. It includes the metaphor of the 'winepress' drawn from the Book of Revelations: 'We've been treading on the winepress much too long'. Marley sings. But where the 'winepress' in the Bible is the place where souls are refined, presumably by the treading of God, in 'Babylon System' it is the slaves who both labour and are themselves trampled. It is not God but the system that presses upon them, that oppresses them, squeezing out of them the wine of freedom. They must rebel to regain it: 'Got to rebel, got to rebel now', Marley sings. Babylon is a system built upon slavery (Winant, 2004, p.1).

What both Ryley and Xavier Rudd have in common with Marley is the concept of freedom, freedom to truly live on the Earth, the 'right' to be connected to land and the spirit.

### **The Poet**

Ryley was, first and foremost, a poet - a weaver of words to instil inspiration and reflection with the listener and the speaker. Weaving his words with music, Ryley was also a songwriter. For his 'day job' (his words), Ryley worked in an educational institution providing pathways to learning to disenfranchised youth. As a result of these three archetypes, Ryley's position on my circle of archetypes fell within the sector of poet-teacher.

Ryley the poet's words of lament echoed a deep sadness in the awareness of all of the Storyteller's relationships to the experience of the story of the Earth. Below is a poem spoken spontaneously by Ryley in his interview:

*I am subtle  
Yet the Earth is more so  
Therefore I strive to listen  
To her song  
So that maybe tomorrow  
I will not be such a sledge hammer  
Pounding on the temple of the Earth*

### **Experience of Earth story**

For Ryley, the poet's experience of the story of the Earth is a mixture of simple appreciation of the gift of life and a complex analysis of the immensity of the intricacy of a planet that exists as one super organism.

‘... When I look at a leaf I see the tree, you know, that whole spoonful of soup thing - I see life...’

‘... Gaia, billions of organisms existing together, each spoonful of the soup teeming with life, its mind-blowing. Sometimes I just sit back in awe of it all...’

### **Of being a Storyteller of the Earth**

Ryley is a poet, an activist and a musician. Sometimes he separates these worlds, sometimes he combines them. He says that when he is on stage ‘waxing lyrical’, he feels consumed by the weave of the beauty of the words combined with the truth that he is delivering. His ‘guru’ is Zac de La Rocha of the band Rage Against the Machine. Like Zac, he expounds on the oppression of indigenous peoples, the disenfranchisement of the poor and the lies of the elite, yet his most passionate lyrical venom is delivered against what he simply terms ‘Earth killers’. From subjects ranging from animal cruelty and veganism, through forest destruction and loss of habitat, to the alien techniques of Monsanto, Ryley delivers a passionate and well-researched attack. With his sonic weapons of guitar and voice he is a 21<sup>st</sup> century warrior bard, chastising the ignorant and rousing the apathetic towards activism for the Earth - as he states in one of his unpublished songs:

*The people of the Earth will build an embassy,  
To protect these sacred shores,  
While the moneymen and the politicians,  
Will try to break the sacred law,  
Will the people cry not anymore?  
Will the people cry not anymore?  
Only with Unity shall we endure!*

### **Seed Tree Earth Seed - Place within the cycle**

Ryley, like Jack, responded with a poem, but Ryley's poem is his own - a gift to this thesis:

*Third eye, looking within  
Pineal seed  
Roots in my heart  
Let it bleed  
Tears in my eyes, looking,  
Without  
The Earth  
Is dying, there is  
No fruit, no seed, no tree  
And as we wither in the unforgiving sun  
Will the poor be the shade for the rich?  
Where will we be when She leaves?*

### **Enchantment**

The poet Ryley said 'up from below' when he spoke of the source of life, but he did not see it as being a one-way current. He said that there was an energy source of life within him that was always seeking to connect to the core source of Earth's life energy. He envisioned it as the tree of his nervous system, always seeking to grow roots, to go 'down from within'. He said that he experienced this mostly in states of bliss, be they in meditation, in yoga, in sexual union, in musical exhilaration, or in states of sublime beauty, they are all about 'threads, roots, connecting, source, the core, sustaining'.

Ryley loved both poets and poetics - in his interview he quoted from the following Keats poem:

*When I have fears that I may cease to be  
 Before my pen has gleaned my teeming brain,  
 Before high-piled books, in charactery  
 Hold like rich garners the full ripened grain,  
 When I behold upon the night's starr'd face  
 Huge cloudy symbols of a high romance,  
 And think that I may never live to trace  
 Their shadows with the magic hand of chance,  
 And when I feel, fair creature of an hour,  
 That I may never live to see thee more,  
 Never have relish in the faerie power  
 Of unreflecting Love-then on the shore  
 Of the wide world I stand alone and think,  
 'Til Love and Fame to nothingness do sink.*

(Keats 1848)

Ryley is a poet who comes 'out from the edge', but who also seeks the energy of the Earth that comes 'out from the edge' - the edge of the cliff, the fringe of the forest, the shore of the ocean, the dawning of the sun, the twilight: these are the places on the borders of our psyche.

The more one slows down to the rhythms of the Earth, the more one begins to see and feel that life in its myriad forms is 'going from everywhere'. Ryley was ecstatic in his offering of the wisdom that if you lower your eyes just enough the light changes to reveal the sky to be a tapestry of wavelengths that produce utter wonder in the observer.

When attempting to describe the constant creation of life, Ryley said that what inspired him most was how life could at one point be 'simultaneous, unfolding, the pattern, twisting and turning'. Again another delimitation I had to place upon myself - this concept was something I myself had explored - the lure of following this path of how life could be unfolding whilst turning within itself simultaneously was so overwhelming I lost myself in it.

I want to speak now of another delimitation that Ryley inspired when he mentioned the 'ambrosia, soma, realisation forming, Shamanic, immersion, wild nature storming!' When Ryley mentioned these words I was dumbstruck by their awesomeness. I wanted to speak to

him for the seven days straight until I collapsed in ecstatic agony and then attained nirvana beneath the 'One Tree'. Here was a delicate point - for my Master's title was ShamanSpeak - and when I began I did see these Storytellers as our modern versions of Shaman, and I still do. Yet as the research grew I knew that I could not explore the depths of the Shamanic mind and still maintain the path of the research which was 'inspiration'. The ambrosia, the nectar of the gods, is spoken of in myth as well as in anthropological study. It is the subject of my favourite myth, 'the churning of the milky ocean', the Hindu creation myth whereby the Asuras and the Devas (demons and gods) coil the serpent Vasuki around the world pillar representing the axis of the Earth and the yogic spinal column and nervous system. In the Hindu myth it is Amrita that is the nectar that is formed, whilst from my experience in listening to gurus I have learned that in the process of yoga a hormonal secretion from the pineal gland is released at states of ecstatic transcendence. Whilst the mythic correlation to biological fact is a profound representation of Shamanic story, it is not Shamanic story that is the focus of this research. As has been stated already, story is a powerful tool for learning, but what I am concerned with is the Shaman herself - the medium who stands out from the edge and witnesses 'wild nature storming'; as the electricity of the thunderstorm rolls over the forest canopy, the Shaman is listening to the voice of nature speak. The poet within is inspired by the mythic mystic energies and cannot help but create the poetry to create the ShamanSpeak!

This identification of nature then allows the poetic process of reverse personification and the poet Shaman can become the story of the rain, 'and water falls, (as) down through the earth it flows, deeper and deeper seeking the source'.

The source, one of the two dominant keywords of the findings, is the keyword in relation to the differences in the poetic inspirations of the Storytellers of the Earth. The other keyword, sustainability, has less difference between Storytellers in its description. Source and



sustainability represent either side of the tree of research in Earth speak - sustainability leans more towards explaining the ecology/environmental/scientific process of relationship and inspiration; source leans more towards the mythic/mystico/spiritual process of relationship and inspiration.

Myth, mystery and spiritual relate to the realm beyond empirical analysis - a world of the deep human psyche and its questioning of existence, the 'other' and the unknown. Like profound and sacred inspiration it comes from deep within the subconscious:

'Up from below

It rises'.

### ***Ryley's Story***

A small crowded stage, cluttered with leads, instruments and musicians, is the focus point for a gathering of souls enjoined in an evening of community action. They are of various ages, yet predominately in the early twenties, of university age. Their attention is drawn to the front of the stage where the lead singer has begun to read a poem:

*Earth, I am looking for you  
 Yet my eyes are blinded by corporate greed  
 Earth, I am listening for you  
 Yet I cannot hear for all the media lies  
 Earth, I am seeking for you  
 Yet my feet are chained by apathy  
 Earth, I am fighting for you  
 For far too long, have I ignored your cries*

### *ShamanSpeak*

Apart from the lyrical poetic, Ryley responded with these lines, which when read in a linear fashion, ‘speak’ of the varied dimensions of his Storyteller role. Like the quote by Merleau-Ponty at the beginning, I will not summarise them at the end, but rather ‘speak’ of how they and his other words in direct response to the research questions helped me shape a response in lyric and song.

Ryley was confident, yet he had doubts:

‘Am I preaching to the converted?’

As he spoke directly of his role of Storyteller:

‘... when I’m singing I’m out there with the forest giants, or the giants of the deep...’

Of his relationship with inspiration:

‘You get great lyrics from what the lying spindoctors say in moments of confrontation with activists challenging their dominant paradigm with direct questions’.

Of his response to the idea of his part in the protest movement:

‘... direct action? How is this for direct - fuck off and find yourself another planet to poison and destroy, you corporate consumer freaks of nature? Haha, did ya like that, ‘freaks of nature’... mutants! But not the Darwinian mutation of adaption... the mutants of sci-fi,

sludge crawling, radioactive spewing, monsters of toxicity... make sure you write that... I'm going to put it into a song... Monsters of Toxicity!'

Revealing personal attitudes:

'I am a vegan... I sing about veganism, because it's the act that has the most possible effect for a better planet... You would be amazed at how much of the planet's resources go into producing a steak for the rich fascists that sit in their bubbles of banality'.

On humour amidst confrontation:

'I spew truth through my megaphone and wait for the denialists to challenge me... but they don't. I'm not sure if it's because they don't have an answer or if they don't have a megaphone'.

On the important questions of living:

'I wonder sometimes why we all haven't just stopped working and sat down in the street and told them they can run their killing machines themselves'.

And:

'I also wonder why we all don't just walk out the door and out onto the beaches, into the forests and hills, and start again... now don't get me wrong, I don't mean a hippie retreat to primitive living, eating moss from cave walls. I mean we go out with our tools and our minds and live 'amongst' the trees. You know that feeling, when you are camping, or have a fire on

the beach and everything is perfect, you feel alive, and you think ‘why aren’t we living this close to nature all the time?’”

On his role on Earth:

‘I want to bring the tower down’.

On being a musician, poet, lyrical Shaman:

“... when I hear my voice through the speakers, I feel like an alien: then I feel the beat beneath me and it electrifies me, then I feel one with the music... I feel like a Shaman... I feel like I’m bursting with the energy of life... it’s fucking awesome bro...’

So after this amazing story, what can I say? Instead, I give you my experience of his story, in the mode that I am most adept at being a master in: Song.

### *Song Analysis*

#### *Sub.*

The lyrics for this song came from the magical shamanic mind of Ryley the poet, and the:

Evidence he supplied regarding the connection to the source of nature's poetics;

Evidence he supplied regarding how he found the threads connecting in natural patterns;

Evidence he supplied regarding what is to be found in a Shamanic immersion into wild nature storming!

Sub - folk acoustic band - gets a little experimental - poetic philosopher's voice.

Bodhran - Seanachai, Flute - Doc Slyde, Vocal - The Bard.

A song written and recorded in as close to Shamanic as I found myself in the path of this research.

This song was chosen as the third song on the album for three reasons. Firstly, it was perhaps the most unusual of the songs in its musical style of percussive guitar, Bodhran drum and flute. Secondly, its lyrics were the most unusual and therefore needed to be brought into the mix early on to provide an angle of perspective differing from the general folk protest feel of most of the other songs. Thirdly, it provided the third of four musical approaches to the recording - this time in the folk band style. Songs one and two followed the approaches of rock band and ballad respectively, whilst song four followed various traditional perspectives.

The lyrics for this song were chosen from the flowing poetry of Ryley. His diverse perspectives allowed him to float between passionate protest and a seeker of Earth's deeper mystery. The lyric cycle follows a journey style where it flows from a beginning down

through a depth, only to rise again to the beginning at completion. The lyrics are as close to Shamanic as I came in this thesis as they weave visual and tactile metaphors of Earth experience.

The musical balance of this song is threefold. The main rhythm of the percussive guitar builds up and down with the vocals following the lyric cycle. The Bodhran drum patiently builds with the intensity of the song. The flute operates on an aetheric level, winding its way like the breeze above the heavy earthly metaphors and the earthy percussive elements. In the end all the elements combine in the song's otherworldly Shamanic crescendo with the Shaman Storyteller's voice reaching the edge of the balance between melodic vocal and primal exaltation.

If I was to record this song again I would record it outdoors, hopefully somewhere near a waterfall or the sea to capture the primal power evoked in the lyrics.

The passion of Ryley's poetic nature is captured in this song. It has a connection to source, a grasp of his core philosophy of intense relationship centered on an unbreakable core (Earth's core), and a realisation of the practice of sustaining one's direct connection and relationship to the energy of Earth.

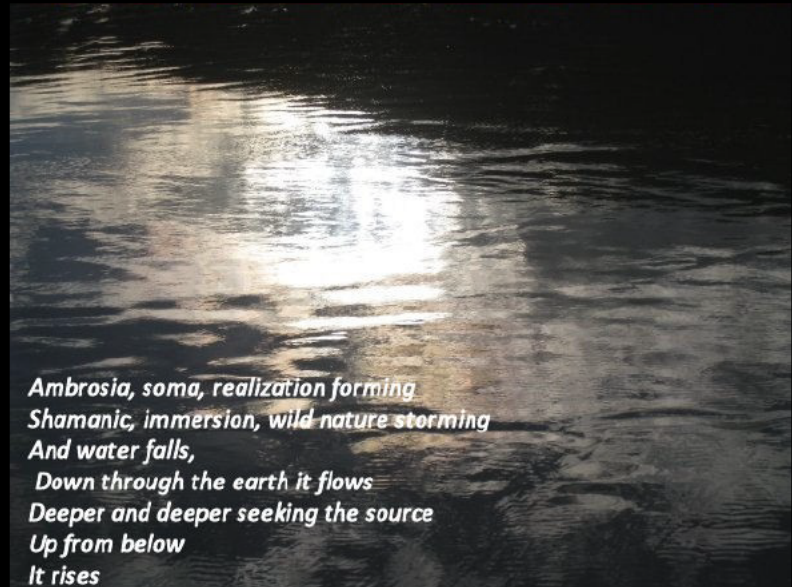
Source, the core, sustaining

Threads, roots connecting...

**Sub Source Sistence Song***Key E**Up from below**Down from within**Threads, roots, connecting**Source, the core, sustaining**Out from the edge**Going from everywhere**Life, simultaneous, unfolding,**The pattern, twisting and turning**Ambrosia, soma, realisation forming**Shamanic, immersion, wild nature storming**And water falls,**Down through the earth it flows**Deeper and deeper seeking the source**Up from below**It rises*

### *Ecovision: Sub*

The third song is entitled *Sub*. It is the song of a passionate poet and musical activist who has travelled far, and committed himself with words, music and actions to the plight of Mother Earth. The key lyrics for this song were chosen for the combination of the powerful visual image



*Ambrosia, soma, realization forming  
Shamanic, immersion, wild nature storming  
And water falls,  
Down through the earth it flows  
Deeper and deeper seeking the source  
Up from below  
It rises*

mythos of the shamanic introduction. The image selected was chosen to represent the immensity of the unconscious and its connection to deep primal archetypes. The question raised concerns the influence of nature in the heavier darker deeper realms of our psyche.



## **Chapter Four: Gaia, Green and the System**

[Please listen to the fourth song on the CD entitled 4.Green]

“Feel it in the one drop” sang Bob Marley (1979) as he, with his band the Wailers, was  
 “Playing a rhythm resisting against the system.”

### **Inspiration**

This chapter is about the ‘movement’ that is resisting against the system that is damaging the Earth. This chapter tells of how ‘green’ is not just the colour of the uniform, but is rather deeply influenced by both academic and natural experience. Scientific, mythic, political, social and artistic threads are woven in the story of Jewel and her biologist path amidst the Gaian green system. Apart from the ‘system’ of the industrial corporate consumer machine, the Earth and the Cosmos are filled with countless ‘systems’ which promote a ‘positive vibration’ for life to flourish.

The eco-system is the most obvious, along with the living system of our bodies. Using bio feedback and intelligent adaption these systems are an interconnected network that are given various metaphors of description such as ‘the web of life’.

In 1996 Fritjof Capra wrote

What we call a part is merely a pattern in an inseparable web of relationships...the perception of the living world as a network of relationships... has replaced the building as the metaphor of knowledge (p.37).

This idea of the living world has slowly begun to be spoken of in the scientific and academic world since the publication of the Gaia Hypothesis by James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis in 1974. The idea is that the Earth is a “physiological system because it appears to have the

unconscious goal of regulating the climate and the chemistry at a comfortable state for life”  
(Lovelock, 2006, p.15).

Earth, Gaia, the biosphere, this frequency of living, the vibration that has led some characters in this Earth play to be labelled ‘greenies’. Those who seek a sustainable connection to the source of life, our planet, a relationship that requires regulation and respect, are named by the colour of the trees and plantlife that they seek to protect.

### **The Biologist**

Jewel, the biologist was an academically trained professional biologist who had also worked at times within this field in academic institutions. Yet her love of the biosphere took her out into the wilds where her role of activist grew. As a result of these archetypes, Jewel speaks as a humble activist when she says:

*The companies can't take  
what the Earth freely Gives  
I walk on the Earth  
And the Earth in me Lives*

Jewel, the biologist, sat with a serene smile on her face as she slowly sipped her tea and repeated the word ‘green’ as though she were relating a religious experience. She spoke of:

‘...walking paths of green...’

‘...caressing leaves of green, picking herbs and salad of green...’

‘...lying down naked in fields of green...’

‘...being mesmerized by the billion shades of green...’

### **The story of the ‘green’ Earth**

Jewel and I spoke at length of the words deriving from her path, bio and logos. Logos, a much contested and presented word in the realms of general philosophy, means word (Harper, 2001, online). Bio means life (Harper, 2001, online). So Biology means the ‘words of life.’ Jewel by her very path spoke and studied the words of life, the meaning of life, the signs and symbols of life. Jewel could read the DNA of a flower and could interpret the schemata of a leaf. Yet for all her fine attention to detail, it was the overarching vividness of the ‘green’ of the Bio that was her chosen Logos. Jewel used an example of the cover of Pink Floyd’s album cover with the rainbow spectrum and the line of green standing out as a heartbeat with its telltale signature graphic wave pattern. Jewel explained that the green is what you would be taken by if you were an alien coming from the dark side of the moon, explaining the brilliant blue of the oceans and the white of the cloud masses would be the first seen but once the vivid green was picked up on their scanners it would take priority as the living energy of the Earth. Jewel told the simple story of how the green of the bio comes between the blue of the ocean and the yellow of the sun. Her love of life and of colour saw a tangent in the conversation where Jewel spoke of the purples and oranges of flowers and the rich loam of the varied browns of the soil, yet within the spectrum of light her focus always returned to the vibrant and vivid and living green. ‘Chlorophyll’ said Jewel with awe ‘now that’s a story worth telling, photosynthesis, the manufacture of nutrients from the light of the sun is a phenomenon that no matter how many times I study it I am overwhelmed with the

immensity and magic of the biosphere. James Lovelock and Lyn Margolis were correct – Gaia lives!’

Whereas the enchantment and the subtle relate to inward experience, this section of the seeker relates to the Storyteller in the stage between inner reflection and giving voice to their perceptions. The seeker walks the path in search of authentic experience of the nature of reality.

So this spiritual connection, bordering on the divine was present in all the Storytellers. When Jewel spoke of ‘a connection, a relationship and a harmony’, she was using her background in science to describe a feeling that crossed into the spiritual. There is at once, a forging of symbolic metaphor to place the self in perspective, and, an almost ecstatic union with that which is beyond. Thus the following lines of, ‘within this blessed space,’ now place the Storyteller within the sphere of the environment, rather than reaching out to it.

This seeking to become part of, rather than apart is symbolized by such repeated metaphors of the river of life ‘I am flowing free’ or the tree of life ‘we all become the tree.’ All the Storytellers resonated with similar reflections to Jewel’s words of not just recognizing a source, but of maintaining a constant connection, a constant immersion. Awareness of this relationship reflected awareness of the systems of life where ‘from the fruit that is borne, we find the seed.’ This awareness that the seed comes from the fruit fallen, to then become the tree that bears the fruit, that in turn falls bearing the seed is an intensely humbling experience of relationship and connectedness within a cycle that each of the Storytellers were both humble and in awe of. Although mostly inspired towards this angle of reflection by the response to the third interview question, this understanding of being within the continuous cycle of life was brought up by many of the Storytellers even before the third question was asked. I myself was humbled by the Storytellers humility. I myself was in awe of their awe.

Jewel's story is of living earth, identity, ecology and conservation.

'I walk out of my door and walk out into the Earth and I am home.'

Jewel, the biologist, held a very thorough understanding of living 'bio' of the Earth. Her knowledge of living systems and bio-feedback loops was a wonderful story to listen to. With this scientific knowledge in place, Jewel then extended into the experience of actually walking amongst these living systems 'amidst the shades of green' in her role of raising awareness for forest communities.

### **The experience of the 'fruit of the Earth'**

Following from this combined platform of the scientific and the experienced, Jewel extended her story further to include an almost mystical approach, when she stated that in relation to the 'fruit of the Earth' she sees her place in her lyrical response 'I am the seed.' By the end of her story, Jewel envisioned a hopeful future in which all humanity lives in an ecologically aware way and 'Living together on the Earth, we all become the tree'

Jewel's Storytelling held a beautiful aspect, with such descriptions as 'I walk on the Earth and the Earth walks in me'. Yet there was also the passionate protest where she stated that 'the companies can't take what the Earth freely gives.'

At the core of Jewel's response was language that was reflective of the core of my research. Jewel spoke of: connection, relationship, harmony with nature, freedom, and being immersed in the sacred space. In finality she was humble in her statement, reflective of many activists I have met and my own that we are 'children of the Earth' – linking with her earlier words about the many beautiful shades of the living green – it was easy to write the lyric:

*Children of the Earth*  
*Amidst the shades of Green*  
*From the fruit that is borne*  
*We find the Seed*

Jewel spoke of her work story: A laboratory, a biologist sits at her microscope. Countless books on biology, biosphere, bioethics and biofeedback surround her. Beneath her gaze a specimen of life receives her wisdom and her question:

‘Chlorophyll, life source to the planet, what is it that makes you so living, giving us the gift of life?’

### ***Jewel’s wisdom of life***

A scientific perspective:

‘...living, breathing, cycles of relationships, billions of years in continuum...’

An artistic perspective:

‘...watching a seed grow, there is an energy around it of sunlight, soil and a vibrancy that only be described as green...’

On the ‘Company Sin’: (John Butler, 2004)

‘The stuff these companies get away with in the name of progress is devastating. The Earth is not our laboratory, how far can the experiment go before they find out there are no brakes on the train, and that there is just an endless decline?’

On grounding oneself:

‘...I walk out in the rain and reconnect to the sky...’

And,

‘...I walk out on the earth with my bare feet and reconnect with the Earth...’

And,

‘...I raise my hands up to my side, close my eyes and just listen to life...buzzing...’

In regards to the question of how?

‘How is life under threat? How did it come to this?’

Immersion:

‘...standing in the waves, surrounded by beauty, giving thanks to life for the experience...’

And on being part of a ‘movement’ known as green:

‘We danced on the tables to rhythm of musicians who were playing the greens, not blues’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Green*

The lyrics for this song came from the wonderful metaphor of the Biologist and Activist Janine's Earth connection story, and:

The evidence that she supplied regarding how she found a connection based upon immersion within the ecosystems of the Earth

The evidence that she supplied how she found a relationship based within the cycle of life – seed, tree, Earth...seed

The evidence that she supplied how she found a harmony related to the giving and receiving of right living within the Earth.

Green – traditional accompaniment - drops down into a more jazzy feel – voice of one who is devoted to being amongst the Earth

Percussion – Raja, Bass – Baro, Mandolin –Seanachai, Guitar – Mr. Reed, Guitar & Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded in a positive frame inspired by the wonderful metaphors that connected science and spirit in relationship to the Earth

This song was chosen as the fourth on the album due it to being the first of the traditional accompaniments. This song was an acoustic folk/jazz fusion. This song also has a beautiful metaphor of walking amongst the green which fits at this place in the album as a symbol for the listener now walking alongside the Storyteller on the Earth.



The lyrics follow a cycle of verse/verse bridge verse/verse. This served to allow the metaphors of the experience of being out amongst the forest combined with the metaphors of becoming the tree from the seed to fall either side of a more metaphysical bridge section with words such as connection, relationship and harmony.

The musical balance for this song was between the acoustic jazz guitars and vocal balancing with the trad/folk sound of Celtic or Gypsy mandolin. An acoustic bass and Djembe drum added to the simple acoustic sound.

If I was to record this song again I would add some more gentle percussive elements such as shakers to bring out the acoustic folk/jazz style of the song.

This song's elements begin to open the door to the metaphor of 'walking barefoot on the Earth'

I walk on the Earth, and the Earth in me lives.

***Green Rhythm Song****Key D*

*Fruit of the Earth  
Amidst the shades of Green  
How Beautiful is this  
And I am the Seed*

*The companies can't take  
What the Earth freely Gives  
I walk on the Earth  
And the Earth in me Lives*

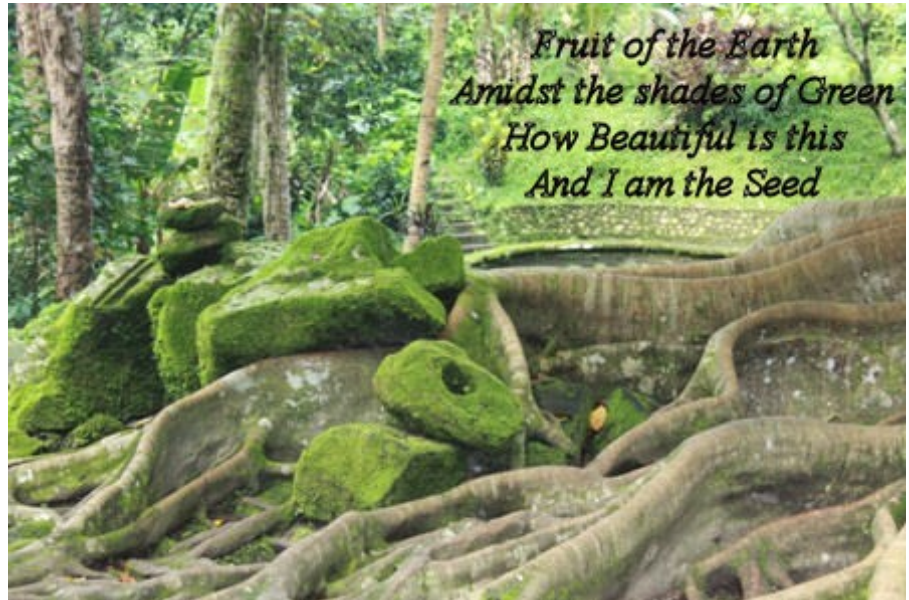
*A Connection  
A Relationship  
A Harmony  
Within this Blessed Space  
I am Flowing Free*

*Children of the Earth  
Amidst the shades of Green  
From the fruit that is borne  
We find the Seed*

*Planted in our dreams  
With passion becomes reality  
Living together on the Earth  
We all become the Tree*

### *Ecovision: Green*

The fourth song is entitled Green. It is the song of an activist and biologist who knows the sacred story of the Earth and its beings from the cellular to the rainforest. The key lyrics were chosen as they represent



both the beauty and resonating truth of nature's cycle in which we all exist. The image was selected for its shades of green, and its representation of the story from seed, to the immense roots.

## **Chapter Five: Scholars Speaking for the Wild**

The forest is simply stunning, remnants of the wild world from which we all come. It's why we put pictures of forest and wildlife on our walls, not chainsaws and bulldozers (Brown 2007, online).

[Please listen to the fifth song on the CD entitled 5.Wild]

### **Inspiration**

This chapter delves deeper into the academic concepts surrounding the philosophical system surrounding the Environmental thought and action. In my review of literature I sought to situate the phenomenon of the 'Storytellers of the Earth' with reference to both philosophical and scientific texts. A recent and fascinating field of scientific literature is that of eco-composition, which:

Addresses the current environmental crisis as a potentially catastrophic biospheric event that demands our consideration and action, identifying the ecological relationships between humans and surrounding environments as dependent and symbiotic. It recognizes the decline of nature both discursively and materially (Dobrin & Weisser, 2002, p.574).

Eco-composition draws on the roots of eco-philosophy. The writers of eco-composition attempt to bridge the gap caused by many years of focus on industrial progress at the cost of nature and our relationship to nature. It is the path whereby the voice and the footsteps of the activist are heard together. As noted by Scarce (2006, p.17),

It is a philosophy not only of thought but of action as well – of praxis, the union of philosophy and activism.

Merging philosophy with action is at the heart of this research. If this research can provide some critical knowledge based on the wisdom given by Storytellers of the Earth, I hope it can

help us move towards the liberation described by van Manen, “Critical knowledge aims at emancipatory practical action, self-determination, and liberation (1977, p. 226)”.

There has been much written about those who act for the Earth. As such there is a Story of the activists of the Earth. Yet for those who speak for the Earth so that others may hear and change their practices, there is a limited voice within literature.

Australian academic and activist Peter Hay emphasizes the importance of the scholarly activist:

In fact, absence of a theory/practice nexus is extremely serious and, if not overcome, likely to prove increasingly debilitating for the movement. We may have done well enough hitherto, but if ecological values are to inspire a wider proportion of the population than has thus far been achieved it will become necessary for those values to be made coherent - in other words, for the ideological potential within alternative paradigm values to be teased out and made explicit. But until those values are put into mutually reinforcing, systemic relationship, 'environment' will remain, for most, a single issue which they may or may not accord a high priority. It will not become 'an alternative way of seeing', capable of structuring our politics, our economics, and the fundamental assumptions by which we individually order our lives (1992, para.11).

This alternative way of seeing is a shift in perspective away from the dominant anthropocentric paradigm which has caused a separation from the Earth that we are created from, live on, and whose future is essential to us all. Thus we are all activists for our future.

James Whelan a long term community activist and academic, speaks of the need to create articles for Activist reflection, to

Inform and inspire: they allow activists to reflect on movement strategies and to recognize the historical significance of their campaigns (2005, p.6).

Reflection within the individual takes time to occur and time to write about it, if the latter occurs at all. Ian Cohen (1997, p.2) states that:

History is coloured by the people who record. Often it is those with expertise in communication far removed from the events who tell the story. Many front-line activists are too busy or lack the skills to tell the story of recent events.

This ‘Scholar Researcher’<sup>12</sup> seeks to record the stories of varied Storyteller activists to tell an Earth story, adding to works such as *Speaking of Earth*, a collection of environmental speeches assembled by Alon Tal (2006). One speech is by David Brower, an esteemed member of such organisations as the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and the Earth Island Institute. The quote below is evidence that Brower is no stranger to metaphor with this reference to the Earth as a lonely island in the dark of space. In his speech given in 1992, he provides another metaphor, inspired by the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Adlai Stevenson, who said:

We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent upon its vulnerable reserves of air and soil, all committed for our safety to its security and peace, preserved from annihilation only by the care, the work, and I will say, the love we give our fragile craft.

And then Brower’s response:

Another thing we need, As Adlai Stevenson pointed out, is love for the fragile craft Earth and all its inhabitants. We haven’t been good about that. One small way we could show love, would be not just to criticize somebody who’s done something we don’t like, but to thank somebody who’s done something we do like (Tal, 2006, p.168).

I thank David Brower, and Rachel Carson, John Muir, Aldo Leopold, John Keats, Bob Brown, John Seed, Marty Branagan, Peter Hay and all the scholars and activists who love the Earth through their actions and words. I thank the twelve Storytellers of this research who love the Earth through their actions and words. These three words mentioned above: care, work, and love, speak of three different paths that have been mentioned by all the

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<sup>12</sup>Thanks for the term to Peter Hay (1992, para.10)

Storytellers. If we have adapted social systems to care for one another, and we have adapted systems to work towards a balance within our minds, is it too much to ask that we can learn to love our fragile craft, this Earth, our home? Many visionaries have asked this same question.

Peter Hay, in an earlier 1987 paper, classified Activists into five stereotypes:

The Steppenwolf – those who are more at home in the wilderness

The Politico – those who are at the forefront of advocacy and community action

The Wildebeest – the skittish sometime follower of the movement

The Bookburner – those who employ action and not words

The Scholar – those who seek some reflection in regards to the paradigm shift required.

In 1992, Hay reflected on the role of the Scholar:

It seems to me that those timid souls, our 'scholars' with their much-maligned 'head stuff', are important here. It is they who must realise the philosophical, political and economic potential contained within the alternative paradigm. It is they who must hammer into shape a critique of prevailing ways of doing things and a coherent vision of the world as it could and should be. In the identification of first principles much has already been achieved. But until someone starts building bridges between our thinkers and doers this will remain of little real import. It is no accident that socialism achieved success by keeping theory and practice in close tandem (or, to use a favourite socialist word, in a 'dialectic' relationship) (para.12).

Whelan (2003, p.4) states that “some academics are considered to have wittingly or unwittingly exchanged career opportunities for their autonomy to participate in public discourse.” My focus, as a kind of activist-narrator, is to build on my experience as a community activist and Storyteller, and bring this experience into the academic theatre, in an

attempt to build bridges between academia and activism. Dr Mutuota Kigotho, a scholar of oral narratives and the narrative experience, states that

The point made here about life experience is significant. People use narratives, whether written or oral to reflect both on their past and their present. Experiences of the past are meant to assist explain the present. It is expected that mistakes made in the past will be corrected and lessons learned will help shape the future.

The communicative aspect of the definition is equally crucial. A narrative involves a teller, a tale, or a message (or moral) and a listener. Language provides the channel through which the narrative is passed on to the listener (2002, para.71).

### **The Activist**

Justine's roles of frontline activist and tale-teller of activist stories was balanced by her professional roles in ecology and psychology.

Continuing the path of passionate activists, Justine's phrase "older than I can imagine" echoed a humility that was found within all of the Storytellers.

A small gathering of passionate activists involved in campaigns alongside Justine sat in various donated pieces of furniture listening to a news broadcast of government approaches to conservation. The community activist waited till the end of the broadcast and then spoke:

'We now know what we are up against and what angle the government is presenting to maintain their electoral balance with the conservatives and their monetary balance with big business. Our role is to raise another perspective, one that benefits the forests, the forest creatures and the people who want to live within an old growth eco-system rather than an industrial revolution style tree plantation system'

### **Wild Earth story**



Justine told a story of a person who had spent countless hours in direct action, both within the hallowed forest valleys, and in the profane halls of government and big business.

Her most repeated words were ‘powerful and wild’, thus their prevalence within the lyric of the song Wild. Rhyming with this, but only spoken once in deep humility were the words ‘I am but a child - of the Earth’. Combined, these two phrases sum up the raw and far-reaching scope of Justine’s response to the research. Justine had lived and worked in two powerful, wild places – the mountain forest and the southern ocean coast. Her voice was the most ‘outdoor’ voice of all the Storytellers. She spoke engagingly of ‘raging water’, ‘eagles soaring’ and ‘wind in the trees’.

Despite all this time in the wilds, it had not dampened her response to her surroundings. Rather, it had brought her perspectives of needing to ‘respect the sacred space’ and of nature being ‘older than I can imagine’ and thus promoted the humility of being a ‘forest child’ and a ‘child of the Earth’.

### **Storyteller of the Earth story**

Her response held the most marked difference between experience of the Earth story and experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth. Justine was the epitome of what I could not find in my search through literature. As a Storyteller, Justine is fully aware of her responsibility when she states:

*Have to tell their story*

*The vision of the activist*

*Connecting*

*Have to tell its story*

*The experience of the forest*

Justine is fully aware of the complexity and fragility of her Storytelling and the need to ‘Hold on’ to what is important. She spoke of the range of emotions that occur within this spectrum – awe, grief and delight being the most prominent.

She gave probably the most straightforward and powerful description of a Storyteller of the Earth when she stated ‘I am the voice for those who cannot speak, I speak for the wild’.

### **Growing Seeds**

To which she added ‘the awesomeness of the forest dawned on me most significantly when I was walking the path with my children running ahead of me.’

And then, ‘I try to think each day what I can do to raise awareness for the Earth.’

Till finally, ‘We can’t wait, it will be too late’, she said.

Whether it is called paradise, the Garden of Eden, the sacred space, the Dreaming or the wild untameable nature, it is all of the one essence –what poet John Keats called the Truth and Beauty of life(1884). It is this essence that is the primary goal of my research - the intangible essence that gives voice to the Shaman.

Wilderness is that which is untameable, beyond the reach of civilization – it is the story that is unheard except in the whispers that call the seeker from inside the city out into the great yonder. All of these Storytellers tell stories of the Earth. Yet what is of utmost significance is to explore what gives them their voice in the wilderness.

Incantation is a very interesting word that draws its roots from the Sanskrit *kan* – meaning song (Harper, 2007, online). It is the root of the word ‘incantation’, yet also of the words

‘chant’ and ‘enchanted’. The links here between song and magic are exactly what I was attempting to explore – that there was a kind of magic lulling song that called the storyteller – a voice in the wilderness, if you may?

From the experience of these interviews I came to an understanding that there is a subtle dance, that weaves within and without of the Storyteller. It is a voice in the wilderness – and it does not seem to cry out for help, or cry out because it is lost. It seems to call as the soul of the planet, reminding us of that which we are – of our nature – of our essence. Justine told a story of passion and protest.

### *Seeds of Hope*

In regards to hope:

‘We are standing here at the entrance to a new possibility, one that doesn’t involve the slow degradation of the Earth’

On the Story of the Green Protest Movement:

‘In the beginning, I remember we were so few’

And,

‘...working for the Earth...’

On the subject of ‘ferals’<sup>13</sup>,

‘They come out of the forests, and into suburbia...but you can still see the forest on them...’

On the Earth story:

‘...campaigns, slogans, stickers, rallies, chants, protests, these are all stories for the Earth...’

In regards to myth and logging coops:

‘...it was wrecked, like a monster had come by and laid waste and moved on...’

In respect to living:

‘...where else would I wish my children to be? But in the wild!’

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<sup>13</sup> ‘Ferals’ was a term that grew with the Environment movement as a descriptor used in disdain by the conservative establishment, yet with pride by those who exhibited the qualities of forest dwelling, simply clothed, barefoot radicals

## *Song Analysis*

### *Wild*

The lyrics for this song came from an inspiring interview with the activist Justine, and:

The evidence she supplied based on her humility at being a child of the Earth

The evidence she supplied regarding her respect for sacred space

The evidence she supplied about being a voice for the Earth

Wild – full electric band -picks right back up, high energy shamanrock – voice of a lifetime of service to the Earth

Drum Kit – Blakjak Davy, Bass & Vocals – The Bard, Guitar & Vocals – Mr Reed, Guitar – Sonik Arc

A song written and recorded in full respect and energy reflecting the energy and respect that is given by the Activists for the Earth

This song was chosen as the fifth song for the album for it is the heaviest song and its immense energy could only be contained within the middle of the album. Following the cycle of rock/gentle/folk/traditional, this song was the first in the cycle as a rock song balancing with Chained at song one and Mother at song nine.

The lyrics for this song were basically word for word as they came from the interview with Justine. Some work was needed to balance the rhyme yet this story of Justine's own Storytelling followed the same path of this song. The first verse encompassed her vision from her mountain home to the ocean, whilst the second soared above the trees to a spiritual

perspective in the sky. The long chorus then spoke directly of the reasoning and inspiration of being a Storyteller of the Earth.

The musical balance for this song was driven by the big chunky bass line amplified by the heavy guitars and thundering drums. The passion of the Storyteller's perspective was evoked in the intense vocal of the singer.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>If I was to record this song again I would make it even heavier with some bigger amps and effects. Listening to this song makes me want to go out to the forest and speak for the wild!

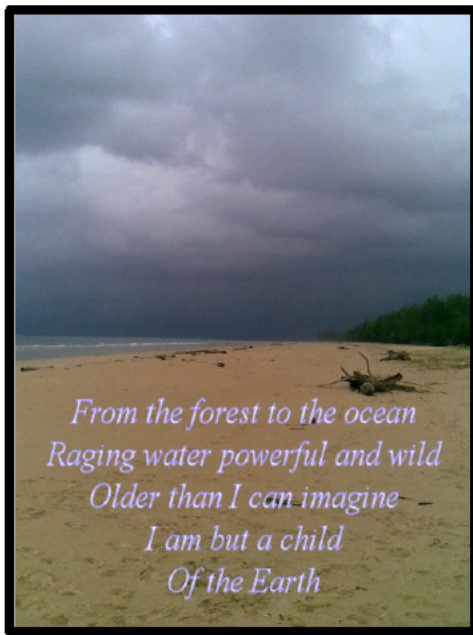
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**Wild Folk Song***Key F*

*From the forest to the ocean  
Raging water powerful and wild  
Older than I can imagine  
I am but a child  
Of the Earth*

*Wind in the trees  
Eagles soaring powerful and wild  
Respect the sacred space  
I am but a child  
Of the Earth*

*Have to tell their story  
The vision of the activist  
Connecting  
Have to tell its story  
The experience of the forest  
Hold on  
In awe and grief and delight  
I am a forest child  
I am the voice for those who cannot speak  
I speak for the Wild*

***Ecovision: Wild***

The fifth song is entitled *Wild*. It is the song of an activist and community facilitator for the raising of awareness in regards to the local biosphere. It is truly the voice of one who speaks for the wild. The lyrics were chosen to represent the combination of the intensity and the innocence that comes from open and sustained relationship to the Earth. The image chosen represents the stark intensity of the wild that awaits us.



## Chapter Six: Home, the Source and Sustainability, Here

[Please listen to the sixth song on the CD entitled 6.Here]<sup>15</sup>

### Inspiration

This chapter steps further into the scientific theatre of activism and scholardom, this time via the story of the geographer Yolanda. This chapter reveals a deeper understanding of the core concept of sustainability and the management of our home, our only source of life.

Bron Taylor, in his phenomenal account of the environmental movement '*Dark Green Religion*', speaks of:

... the critical mythos (of the movement) including the conviction that most people used to live sustainably but that a fall from an Earthly paradise occurred, resulting from agriculture, hierarchy, patriarchy, monotheism, technology and capitalism, all of which disconnect us from nature and produce greed, indifference and injustice(2010, p.183).

Here again we see reference to the loss of the 'Garden of Paradise'. Yet more significant is the notion that the garden was a place where people lived sustainably. When I interviewed the geographer Yolanda, we discussed the history of the green movement, and how there have been various Earth Summits and United Nations-sponsored studies on sustainability and sustainable development. Yolanda was not such an advocate of development, rather just of Sustainability. She told a whole story, from John Muir, Aldo Leopold and the establishment of National Parks in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, through to Rachel Carson and her ground-

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<sup>15</sup>This is best listened to with headphones, as the song were recorded raw, with one room mic and as such volume and clarity suffered in pursuit of the experience.

breaking book *Silent Spring* and its expose of the deadly chemicals we are polluting our Earth and bodies with. She spoke of being a student when the Bruntland report came out, and of the massive groundswell of energy that grew in student activism, the focus on the teachings of Indigenous Peoples and connection to the land, of the vegetarian movement, of return to the land and Permaculture, the ‘Whole Earth’ catalogue and protests against nuclear proliferation.

So many of the participants mentioned the term sustainability in their story that it stood out as one of two keywords that were the peaks in the landscape of this collective story. Yolanda also used the other word – source.

Yolanda was one of the few who mentioned source in balance with sustainability. In this case, source became part of resource. Yolanda spoke both scientifically and spiritually about how our resources come from The Source:

The source is not a magical religious place, it’s just the Earth, but it’s the only Earth we have, it might be eternal in its continuum, but we have the power to end that, and that scares the life out of me.

Yolanda’s views on sustainable connection to the source and management of the Earth’s resources spoke of the home in which we dwell. This home we call Earth, Gaia, The Planet, and The World which we are seeing both under threat and as a whole system in need of our awareness.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Yolanda’s story echoed the views of the Conservation movement. If I could tell the whole story, I would just be re-writing Bron Taylor’s magnificent tale of Dark Green Religion. I am indebted so much to writers such as Bron Taylor who have taken the Scholarly Activist role so profoundly. Being swept up in the green movement since high school, I was aware of the writings of Suzuki and the actions of the Earth

These poets, professionals, artists, activists, scholars, songwriters, tale-tellers and teachers are the bardic Shamen who are the medium of connection and awareness, the voices of the wilderness that inspire us to dwell deeper to seek answers to our separation from the Earth.

How we view land is important for conservation. Taylor quotes the words of Aldo Leopold:

Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect (2012, p.32).

### **The Geographer**

Yolanda has led a life equally balanced between the realms of activism and education. She provides reflection on this balance within her role as a scholar. As a result of this she falls on the balance of teacher-activist with an emphasis towards the scholar.

Another powerful woman - mother, geographer, teacher, environmental scientist and tireless campaigner for Earth awareness - Yolanda told her Earth story along the lines mentioned earlier regarding the rise of the environmental movement following the Apollo space program's first photographs of the Earth. Yolanda vividly remembers the publication of the Earthrise photos and was an upper secondary school student when the first Earthday was celebrated. She was a member of Greenpeace within its first year of founding and was active throughout her university years as a member of several environmental organizations.

'There was a sense of both urgency and excitement; of a waking up to what we already knew was there. We were like children in the garden, yet wise women of the tribe. We were a

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First! Crew, yet it takes these observant scholars like Taylor to shape the story to continue the empowerment of the Activist. It is wonderful to read through and say 'YES! That's the story!!'

circle, we were family. There was a feeling of sweet surrender, of opening up to Mother Earth. We were fighting for all our truth. We truly were Warriors of the Rainbow.'

Yolanda's responses to the three research questions are woven together below in her summation at the end of her interview.

### **Seeds of an Earth Storyteller**

'The living Earth was part of me as a young girl, walking the meadows, crossing the creeks, watching the dragonflies dance and listening to the frogs sing. Then I lost sight of it for a while until I came to university and was caught up in the midst of a revolution of consciousness. Suddenly everything was more real, the environment came back into focus. It was then that I began to act. Speaking, protesting, creating and devoting myself to raising environmental awareness. I saw myself, not as Yolanda, but as a blade of grass, a river flowing, a dragonfly dancing, a frog singing, I saw myself as part of the living Earth.'

Yolanda then paused and spoke of the frustration that balanced the beauty and said, 'Sometimes I am impatient for change to occur.'

The geographer Yolanda was a perfect mixture between Storyteller and teacher as she told the tale of the environmental movement.<sup>17</sup> She did not hold back as she laid the story out with all the barbs of the truth at humanity's acts of ignorance. She spoke of the current paradigm

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<sup>17</sup> Even if I wasn't convinced of the need for ecological dialogue in response to a "planet in peril", I would have ended our conversation thoroughly impassioned to act!

of self satisfaction and turning within. Whether it was with an iPod and being ‘wired for sound’ or an iPhone as a ‘device in your hand’, Yolanda decried the consumers who ‘throw away after their supermarket sale’, and the capitalists with their polluting toxic smokestacks who use the excuse of ‘people have to pay their bills’, to explain their devastation. Yet by far her most vehement attack was for the ‘social net’, of people locked into the endless spiral of social commentary in their computer screens:

‘...they don’t see the world outside, their eyes are glued to the screen reading some inane dribble of someone else who is doing nothing to save the Earth....they don’t see the whales dying, or the turtles trapped in the fishing nets, the babies dying of poisoned blood or the forests of the third world devastated for immediate profit!’

I felt so gifted to hear Yolanda’s Storytelling first hand. She was not concerned with the fact that she was preaching to the converted in her interview with me. She just told the same story she lived in every moment, every day, when she asked me ‘Are you walking on the ground...Are your feet on the land...and Robert, did you see the sunrise today?’

A true eco-warrior, Yolanda had all the Storyteller’s techniques combined with a knowledge of argument and rhetoric when she stated that she was ‘not going to live in fear of mean corporate politics... and right wing dirty tricks’, and like so many of my Storytellers, was just ‘keen to be living....pure, green and free.’

Yolanda asked me to close my eyes and told this story:

‘The students gathered on the beach with their matching hats and shirts, wearing their gloves and holding their empty bags in which to deposit the litter of the unaware. Their teacher

looked around smiling at her crew, aware of the immense influence of action and education.

Yet it was not these themes that moved her voice:

When you walk along the beach collecting litter, I don't want you to just see the litter; I want you to see the sand beneath. Look at the tracks of the sea snails, the patterns of the crab's house building, the paths created by sandworms – remember that this beach is a home. Every night when you go to sleep, millions of crabs, on thousands of beaches scuttle up and down on their own journey. Remember that this is all of our home!'

Geography comes from the Greek terms meaning Earth and Recording (Harper, 2001, online). Yolanda's recording of the Earth was inspiring and well researched. Yet beyond the Geographer, she also spoke personally of riding the wave to save the Earth, her home.

### ***An Earth Recording***

On activism:

'Every little action helps...recycle, vegetarianism, riding your bike to work, fixing the leaking tap, solar panels on your roof'

And on non-activism:

'Every little action hinders...throwing away those plastic rings on water bottles, the resources needed to produce beef cattle, trucks instead of trains, water consumption in nuclear plants'

In relation to connection, she said:

‘Being away from the ocean or the forest for too long, I feel all dried up, like I am shrivelling up like one of their plastic wrappers in the sun’

In regards to ignorance, she offered:

‘It’s absolutely horrible what we have done to our oceans, overfished, polluted and then ignored’

Never one to take a backward step in her passion for the Earth:

‘Someone needs to tell them to where to go...the problem is there is only one planet, and I wouldn’t want to subject another planet to their ways’

On conversations with the mud-slinging spin-doctors of corporate consuming capitalism:

‘They ask ‘who are we to speak up for the Earth’, I tell them ‘I bloody live here mate, that’s why!’

On greenies:

‘Whoever said we were an unwashed rabble must have chemicals in their nose. Those hippy girls smelt like sunflowers and those Earth warriors had the scent of the rich soil of the forests.’

In relation to the story of the Earth:

‘One of these days there is going to be a massive shift...we have awareness of climate change, but that’s still in the sky...when it hits the Earth the meteor of realization is going to be epoch changing’

And,

‘When I wake up and still hear the birds singing, I know the story isn’t over yet.’

In respect to the garden of life:

‘I put on my boots, walk out into the garden, do some work, then I take my boots off, sit on the Earth and let the garden work on me’

And now once again to the music - song number six in this ‘album’ reflection of these Storyteller’s stories. I have felt blessed to tell you these stories, and I have felt blessed for my musical ability as it has allowed me a conduit to allow the immense emotions created in the process of this research to be released in a cathartic and productive way. Before you listen any further please allow another Bard to speak of the same enchantment I am hypnotized by -

“Music is endless and even though I’ve heard a whole bunch of music from so many different places and fallen in love countless times with all kinds of different music. There’s still something about it, I guess it’s called Freedom.”

— Jeff Buckley, Live in Chicago DVD, 1997.



## *Song Analysis*

### *Here*

The lyrics for this song came from a passionate conversation with the geographer and environmental activist Yolanda, and was:

Based on her immense knowledge of the life forms of nature; and

Her humble realization of humanity's devastating path across the Earth; and

Her passionate dedication to protect.

Here –acoustic - folk song – voice of one who speaks their truth for awareness

Percussion – Raja, Guitar & Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded in a gentle and positive mindset in respect to the tireless work of environmental advocates.

This song was chosen as the sixth on the album due to its gentle nature as a balance to the intensity of Wild. This song is an acoustic ballad with just guitar vocal and light percussion.

This song also with its title 'Here' has the journey arriving at a gentle space on the path. Yet the lyric itself is not gentle, but is rather a powerful attack on the dominant paradigm of modern consumer lifestyle.

The lyrics follow a three verse evolving nature. The first verse has its questioning lament, whilst the second moves towards a challenge, with finally the third combining both the question and the challenge and ending with a finality in the statement:

*I am living here*

The musical balance for this song was between the simple acoustic guitars and light percussion balancing with the melancholic yet passionate vocal. The simplicity of the drumbeat was like a heartbeat to this song.

If I was to record this song again I would possibly add a female vocal to bring out the ballads lament.

This song evokes an energy of the protest ballads of the 1960's, an innocence that is still relevant and needed today.

## Here Being Song

*Key F*

*Wired for sound  
But are you walking on the ground  
Device in your hand  
Are you feet on the land  
Supermarket sale  
Yet have you heard the whales  
Are beaching themselves  
Trying to get you to sit up and take note*

*Consumer throw away  
Did you see the sunrise today?  
Hooked into the social net  
Sea turtles drowning in the net  
Smelter smokestack pays the bills  
How many babies killed  
To keep your economy rolling  
And your dollar afloat?*

*Is this place your home  
Or are you just dying here  
Cause I'm keen to be living  
And I am not going to live in fear  
Of your mean corporate politics  
Your right wing dirty tricks  
I'm livin clean I'm livin green*

*I am living here*

*Ecovision: Here*

The sixth song on the album is entitled *Here*. It is the song of a geographer and environmental educator who has vast experience and knowledge regarding the raising of environmental awareness at a

community level.

The key lyrics for

this song were

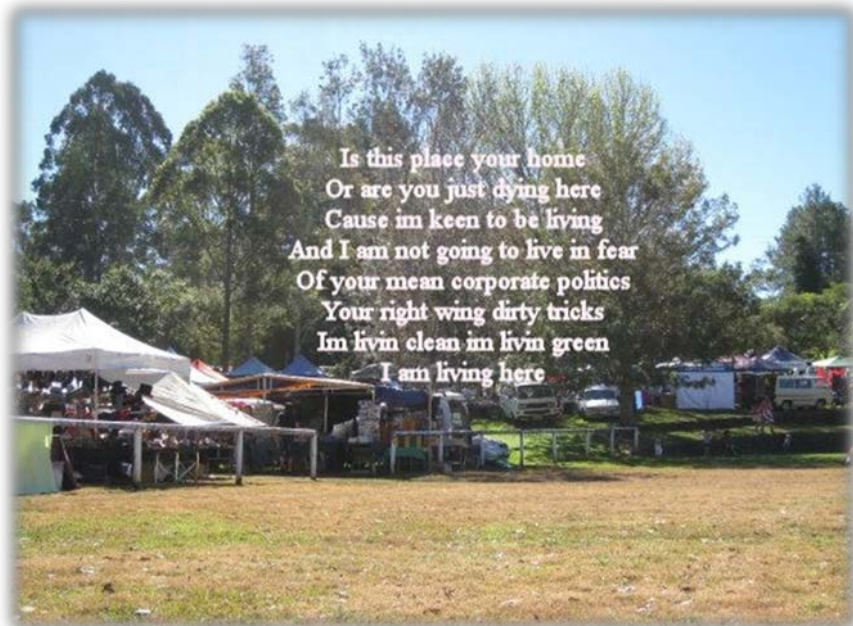
chosen in regards

to two facets:

Yolanda's concept

of home and living

here; and



Yolanda's passionate fight against the corporate deniers of environmental destruction. The image selected is of a community market, with tents, stalls, kombi vans, open fields and trees standing tall. The question raised is in regards to the notion of community living, in contrast to the suburban model of consumerism sustained from individual nuclear family boxes – of whether this mode of separation versus that of disconnection is an issue in regards to our relationship with the Earth.

## Chapter Seven: Heard; Poets, Shamans and Bards...

*Hear the voice of the Bard!  
Who Present, Past, & Future, sees:  
Whose ears have heard  
The Holy Word  
That walk'd among the ancient trees.*

*Calling the lapsed Soul,  
And weeping in the evening dew;  
That might control,  
The starry pole,  
And fallen, fallen light renew!*

*O Earth, O Earth, return!  
Arise from out the dewy grass;  
Night is warm,  
And the morn  
Rises from the slumberous mass.*

*Turn away no more;  
Why wilt thou turn away?  
The starry floor,  
The wat'ry shore,  
Is giv'n thee till the break of day.*

*(William Blake, 1794, Songs of Experience)*

[Please listen to the seventh song on the CD entitled 7.Heard]

### Inspiration

This chapter is a history of the actors.

The middle of this thesis begins with a poem by a mystic, that speaks of the ‘Holy’ or sacred word found amongst the ancient trees. This poem speaks of it being the ‘Bard’ who hears this sacred word, yet it could just as easily be a ‘Shaman or Mystic or Earth Warrior...’

Due to my mode of communication, my weaving of word and song and my Irish roots I have been named Bard by many. I truly seek a connection to my roots and to the Earth story through this title, this role...this is my voice, my archetype. Thus I have attempted to tell these tales in a poetic style, a sonic convergence of bardic weaving and Folk/Reggae/Blues/Rock n Roll.

The Bards were the Druidic “Master-Poets” (Graves 1948), speaking their ‘truth’ in relationship to the network of human and non-human stories around them. In what I believe is a remarkable convergence – the word truth draws its roots (no pun intended) from the Proto-Indo-European *dru* (Harper 2001) – which also gives us the word tree, Druid and door. This remarkable convergence continues further with the fact that the ancient Celtic *duir* was the name given to the oak, and the fact that doors, and doorways were commonly made of oak. The Druids were Storytellers of the Earth and were known as ‘they of the oak’. Their sacred oak groves were the places where nature and the spoken word were kept sacred. The highest gift amongst the ancient Celts was that of eloquence (I have kissed the Blarney Stone!). Bres, a ruler of Ireland before the arrival of the Celts, was renowned for his meanness; he was deposed, not by physical violence, but by the first poetic satire ever composed in Ireland (Rojcewicz, 2001, p.215).

Returning back to the Shaman Storytellers, Bron Taylor draws on the wisdom of environmental phenomenologist David Abram to inform of the path of the Shaman as one who viewed the “surrounding physical world as an active participant in our perceptual experience... (which was) consonant with the Gaia Hypothesis, and with the Gaian

implication that perception itself is a communication, or communion, between an organism and the living biosphere.”(2012, p.212)

Shamans are named by Taylor as the ecologists of tribal societies engaging the forces of nature.

Von Stuckrad (2002, p.777) says that “the central leitmotiv of contemporary western Shamanism is nature.” He then quotes Horowitz, who names Shamanism as animism “as the way life is experienced – a perception of the world as it truly is, with all things alive and in connection.” He speaks of how the speaker and listener can have their perception altered by the voice of these modern Shamans. Finally he quotes the lyrical Shaman Gary Snyder:

The practice of shamanism in itself has at its very centre a teaching from the non-human, not a teaching from a medicine man, or a Buddhist master. The question of culture does not enter into it. It’s a naked experience that some have out there in the woods (p.788).

The experience of the modern Shaman is found in the same place as Eliade’s classical Shaman –the Earth. This history of Earth experience began in pre-written times, moved through the agricultural and industrial ages and then in 1968 we saw the Earth when we left the Earth. Snyder again on this historical crossroads:

From The etiquette of freedom (Snyder & Harrison, 2010, p.12)

Gary Snyder: The Blue Planet image came from satellite photography. Stewart Brand picked it up and put it on the cover of the first Whole Earth Catalogue and said, “Our whole sense of the planet has changed because we now have this picture of the planet Earth from outer space; this is one Earth; this is where we live.

And echoed by Jules Pretty in The Earth Only Endures, (2007, p.14)



In the 1960s, a single novel photographic image captured the world's imagination. Apollo astronauts returning from the moon were able to photograph our Earth in the middle of dark, empty space. Here was a lonely blue-green planet, just the one of them, with a clear boundary. If something went wrong, there could be no external solutions, no rescue by the cavalry riding over the hill. We would have to solve our own problems.

It is my belief that that the crossing of the threshold in the Apollo mission is an example of the idea of Merleau-Ponty and the flesh, specifically the idea of crisscrossing, of crossing over. If the earlier period before the Apollo mission echoes the Merleau-Ponty idea of reversibility spoken of above "intimacy as close as the sea and the strand" then leaving the intimate Earth and seeing it as Snyder's 'Blue Planet' opened up the idea that as I am perceiving the Earth, I myself am a sentient separate being. I am the touch that reaches out to the Earth. I am the interconnectedness of culture and ecosystem. The story of the Earth is my experience.

Snyder is a poet and a philosopher; here one of his poems elucidates the Earth experience:

*Earth Verse*

*Wide enough to keep you looking*

*Open enough to keep you moving*

*Dry enough to keep you honest*

*Prickly enough to make you tough*

*Green enough to go on living*

*Old enough to give you dreams*

*Gary Snyder (1996, online).*

*Thus bringing us to Merleau-Ponty's third interweaving, that of intercorporeity - of the Earth experiencing itself through our experience.*

The Earth, Merleau-Ponty says, in interpreting Husserl, is the ‘ground of experience,’

‘The stock from which objects are engendered.’ The Earth is in a way prior to all experience and encompasses in advance ‘all further possibilities of experience.’

It is, he says, ‘something initial, a possibility of reality, the cradle, the base, and the ground of all experience.’ The Earth is therefore not an object confronting a subject, correlative to him, but is rather a ‘pre-object.’ It is not contained in space but is rather the possibility of space; ‘it is not a place in the sense that worldly objects have a place. The Earth is our source [souche], our Urheimat. It is the root of our spatiality, our common homeland’. (Madison 1981, p.212)

*In reflection to this ‘common homeland’ mentioned, I give you the words of Kass, the historian speaking of his home, of living local in a global world:*

‘I work local and speak to those I see & I give away money every two weeks to those who fight every day.’

Even though Kass’ interview lasted no longer than any of the other interviews, it seemed to last much longer. The depth of his answers gave me the feeling of being within a great ocean of myth and the “laughter and tears of history’s comedies and tragedies”. His perspective on the “currents, ebbs and flows” of both the Earth and humanity’s story aligned with both anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric approaches, and evoked an Earth story that was part geologist, part ecologist and part social historian. Kass’ breadth of knowledge was firmly rooted in the ancient soil of the mystery of pre-human history. He took me right back to the formation of the Earth and took me out into space to see “our world turning”. He took me through the “tides of history” up to the beginning of humanity’s dominion over the planet. It was here that the beat and tone of his storytelling changed. Although he spoke of the marvel of humanity’s story, he was pained as he spoke of our “ignorance and rage”. His voice dropped as he asked several times “who is listening?”

Kass spoke of a philosophy where we as humans have shut ourselves away from the world. Through fear of scarcity and untameable nature, we built walls around our towns and fields and built silos to store more and more food. We began to keep livestock in confined spaces leading to an even further separation from the wild creatures that we inhabited this Earth with. Out beyond the walls of our towns Kass reminded me that “the birds and the Shamans still sing nature's song”. Yet within the walls all that we have left of nature's song is our many words in which we get caught up in. Out of touch we do not know the rhythm of the Earth, we do not know “where it will we go”, nor “where we will go”. Our very nature seeks to break out of the confines of our own delivering. As Kass states, “the truth is shouting from within our words”. He gave many examples, which delimitation must prevail upon as the linguistic shaping of our nature will lead me down many paths. I will just give one “be natural.”

Kass, being a master of comedy and tragedy within the scope of history, did not remain in doom and gloom. His wit and his vegetarian nature wove the threads of cruelty to livestock and not listening to nature's song when he seriously yet humorously asked “are you one of the He(a)rd?” [Kass typed both the words Herd and Heard in the Skype toolbar to show his example].

When these Storytellers told their story I heard their voice – the tool with which they enchanted through their subtle craft seeking to inspire the mystery of the Earth as Storyteller.

### **The Historian**

Kass has worked for many years in educational institutions and devotes much of his time to research reflecting his work. In another mode of reflection Kass weaves the words of his

experience into song. The combination of these three archetypes leads to Kass falling within the sector of scholar-teacher in the circle of archetypes.

Kass and I spoke of the flaw in the western world's Earth connection. Of the flaw in our (the western human experience) understanding of the filter mechanism whereby we relate to the Earth/environment/land. The filter is known by various terms such as the Norse-Celtic Fate or the Indigenous Great Spirit, and in the western model – this is the place of the mythical-spiritual realm of gods and religions. All of these are supernatural symbolic realms used as an interface between ourselves and cosmos. Cosmos, being macro, as in stars; or micro, as in the infinitesimal world of the unseen bacteria. As a tool of interface, these symbolic realms are useful in creating a bio-feedback loop allowing experience to translate into communion and reflection and learning. Yet, in the West (and possibly other regions – but my experience is limited to my own inherent culture), the interface/filter has become deified...and thus the delimitation is necessary. We lose our Earthly self in theological philosophical arguments. Somehow the 'spirit' became more important than the environment it was supposed to help us commune with. Thus, there is a need to re-establish the real role of spiritual connection and thus switch on the bio-feedback loop. My own lyrical shamanic response to the discussion with Kass is for us to establish that the place of spirit as an interface is a type of story – a meta-language to allow communication between the human being and their environment. Thus spirit=story. If we can realize that spirit is necessary as a tool, and not be lost in deification, then we can relate once more to Earth in a complete relationship. I have included this 'finding' here in the middle of this thesis as evidence of some of the 'answers' the participants gave to the dilemma facing us. Although this thesis is about the experience of connection to, and the telling of the Earth story, there was always an element in the telling that spoke of a future where the Storyteller's role would end and that the Earth would be in balance.

### **Seeds of myth**

In relation to Storytellers responses to the questions raised above Kass, the historian, teacher and philosopher, spoke of the mythology behind a 'sense of place', the sense of place within the incomprehensible, relates much closer to what the gurus of my own reading such as Jung, Campbell and Eliade have found in their research into human relationship to cosmos.

### **Earth work**

Kass spoke of being in this moment with the river of time flowing into you, and which he says he noticed most when he rose with the sun, standing on the shore watching the waves with his surfboard under his arm.

Kass told the following story of his 'work' for the Earth:

As he sat behind his scholarly desk, he tapped his pencil on the notepad before him. He makes a habit of using only pencil on his recycled notepad paper, he says it slows down his thoughts and makes him write more deliberately. He is not a fan of computers, or of CDs, but prefers the light scratch of the vinyl record combined with the scratch of graphite on paper. A meditative man, he ponders much before speaking:

As a student, your role is to be open to the world around you, and not just this immediate world of today, but the world of tomorrow and yesterday. Who are you becoming, where are you coming from. The tides of history brought you here and the currents that flow today will take you somewhere new tomorrow. Do you know the Earth upon which you stand? Do you know that the water that flows in the river beside us may one day be fought over like the gold that sits beneath some lonely distant mountain? Where are you going?

## *History*

Kass, the historian, scholar and teacher told a story of a being who had travelled much in the fabled realms of written lore, yet who sought solace in the majesty of nature.

On being and place:

‘I own a little block of land, on an island, its covered with trees, and plants, and a myriad of creatures live there, sometimes I come and sit amongst them, it’s like a sanctuary, I feel humble knowing that my work has given me the ability to give them timelessness’

In regards to connection:

‘Dylan said: “Nobody feels any pain, tonight as I stand inside the rain”. I think of that every time I am in the rain...of how we have cut ourselves off, made ourselves numb. The rain brings it back’

On time and its record:

‘...So long...so so so long is the story of the ocean, the beach is its recording...’

On being a beach bum philosopher!

‘I stand and look at the ocean, and hours pass and I am sitting with my feet in the sand and I am a world away, on distant shores’

On experiencing the story of the Earth:

‘...early morning, pre-dawn, surfboard, walking out through the swell...’

Song of the Earth:

‘...it’s been a long time since the rock we are spinning on began to roll”.

In respect to the greatest show on Earth, in which we are merely players:

‘Save my soul? Why?? It will always be here, as Einstein said, energy can never be created or destroyed, it just changes form. Better to save the Earth so that my soul can keep coming back here...being part of a Jovian moon may be cool, but I think this place has the best seats in the house...and what a show...The Earth is a great director.

This stage, has had songs, poems and stories...yet no play. Yet as a play within a play...

*Earth:* Being a planet, there isn’t a whole big crowd to talk to around the neighbourhood.

*Sun:* I have a big neighbourhood.

*Galaxy:* The further you spin...

*Universe:* Immense eternal pattern, life is one big unfolding lotus flower

*Me:* Stages within stages, plays within the play...’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Heard*

The lyrics for this song came from the inspiring conversation with the historian Kass, witnessed:

Through the evidence he supplied based on the tides of history.

And the evidence he supplied regarding the question of whether or not we turn the pages to learn from our mistakes.

And finally the evidence he supplied of the truth shouting from within our words.

Heard – folk acoustic band - moves back up in pace with a bluesy feel – voice of one who has deep perspective

Drum Kit – Raja, Percussion & Vocals – Diva, Dobro – Doc Slyde, Bass – Baro, Guitar – Mr Reed, Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded with a sense of history!

This song was chosen as the seventh on the album due it to being the second of folk band songs. This song was driven by the guitar and slide combination crossing several genres of folk. This song was also the first to introduce a female vocal. This song moves from the gentle ballad of being here to the place of the

*Shaman who speaks from beyond the cities' walls*



The lyrics follow a cycle of verse/verse, bridge, then into the repeated epic chorus ending.

This allowed a journey from the questions of where it will go and who will move beyond their fear, through to the final question of who is listening?

The musical balance for this song was between the meandering slide Dobro and acoustic guitars balancing with the beautiful duo of female and male vocals.

<sup>18</sup>The effect the slide Dobro and tambourine created in this song was the closest I felt musically to the Shamanic edge spoken of often with this research. The ebbs and flow of the music was enthralling to be part of. I heard...

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<sup>18</sup> If I was to record this song again I would possibly shorten it to focus its energy for the listener, yet I am kind of endeared to its meandering length.

**Heard Song***Key D*

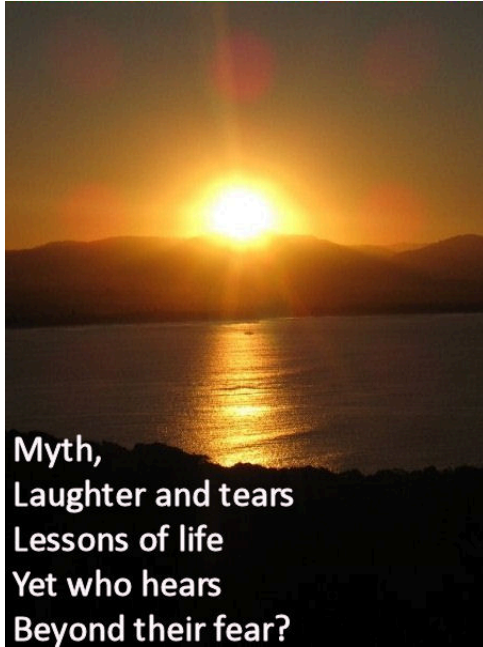
*Currents,  
Ebbs and flows  
Tides of history  
Yet who knows  
Where it will go?*

*Myth,  
Laughter and tears  
Lessons of life  
Yet who hears  
Beyond their fear?  
A story of us all  
On a world turning  
Yet do we turn the page?  
Or do we stay stagnant and die  
Destroyed by our ignorance and rage?  
Who is listening?  
Who is listening?*

*To the shaman who speaks from beyond the cities' walls  
To the bird whom with nature's song calls  
To the truth shouting from within our words  
Who will never hear?  
Who has already heard?  
Are you one of the Heard?*

***Ecovision: Heard***

The seventh song on the album is entitled *Heard*. It is the song of an academic, a teacher who specializes in history, who knows well the ebbs and flows of humanities relationship to Earth.



The key lyrics were chosen to represent the facets of history such as

Myth and the comedy and tragedy of life's drama that we get caught up in, yet the question remains, who is listening. The image selected was chosen for its links with the sun god Apollo. It was Apollo who gave the gift of the musical lyric with his gift of the lyre to Orpheus. This metaphor of myth represents the vibrational level of life resounding

within the human sphere. The question remains, do we listen to life?

## Chapter Eight: Trees, Sun and the Story Beneath

[Please listen to the eighth song on the CD entitled 8.Wild]

### Inspiration

So, the key to this chapter was in regards to: The storied differences within the participants with a focus on the mystical side of responses. The quotes were woven within small stories to give evidence to how simple facts from differing beings could start to present a picture of connections.

Alastair is a craftsman, an artist, a teacher and an activist. Alastair was one who worked with the subtlety of the artist to plant their seeds within the living spaces of those who may as yet not be awake to what is going on in their home, the Earth.

Trees figure quite a lot within this thesis...so I will start this chapter with a tree.

Many cultures have myths of the 'World Tree.' This World Tree connects Earth with the cosmos. The roots of my story draw on the wells of Norse, Germanic, Jewish and Celtic culture whose World Tree's are generally oak or ash. Yet seeing my blood and bones were formed from the soil of the land known as Australia, I will tell this story...

*Here in this 'Great Southern Land'  
Between the ocean shore and the desert sand  
Amidst the bushfire haze and the cicadas hum  
Sitting here beneath this Old Blue Gum  
The grey green leaves whisper in the breeze*

*The roots reach deep for the waters beneath*

*The gumnut seeds await the fires release*

*The trunk I lean on brings my soul peace...*

## **Nature**

Nature is the fruit that the tree of life bears.

Nature comes from the Sanskrit root *janati* , which means "begets, bears."

Drawing once more back to that myth of the garden...Nature bears the sacred fruit, just as mothers bear sacred children, and the Earth? What sacredness does the Earth bear? Nature bears both us and all life. And what do we do with nature's gifts? Some receive them, some steal them, some mine them, some say they are all mine, some protect them, and some seem to be doing their best to lay them all to waste. Is this natural? What is our nature?

It is my belief that we have always told stories to understand our nature. Story had its predecessor in the language of myth.

I was inspired by reading the wisdom of Riddington and Riddington (1970) who stated that:

Mythical cosmologies are not the attempts of savages to explain in fantasy where empirical knowledge of reality is absent, but are rather the opposite - statements in allegorical form about knowledge of the interrelations between what we would call natural (objective), psychic (psychological), and cultural (learned adaptational) aspects of reality. (Riddington & Riddington, 1970, p.49).

Combining these three categories resulted in:

Natural – corresponding to the environment we perceive. (akin to Merleau-Ponty's

Reversibility)

Psychic – corresponding to the mind that is perceiving (akin to Merleau-Ponty's Crisscrossing)

Cultural – corresponding to society that interweaves between the environment and mind (akin to Merleau-Ponty's Intercorporeity).

This then enabled me to draw up three columns in my note taking process in which to gather information in regards to the Storyteller and their relationship to essence.

Some of the literature fell squarely into one column, while some others blurred borders and fell into two. Yet there were some authors who in my eyes understood the essence of storytellers and blurred all boundaries.

One such is the esteemed phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty who said in

*Phenomenology of Perception*:

The myth holds the essence within the appearance; the mythical phenomenon is not a representation, but a genuine presence. The daemon of rain is present in each drop which falls after the incantation, as the soul is present in each part of the body.

Every 'apparition' (Erscheinung) is in this case an incarnation, and each entity is defined not so much in terms of 'properties' as of physiognomic characteristics (Merleau-Ponty, 2002, p.338).

Merleau-Ponty explored the phenomenological notion of essence and the notion of myth, yet what inspired me most was his use of the word – incantation.

***Wild(er)ness***

The archetype of wilderness...the garden...that which we came from <sup>19</sup>

And moving further into the archetypal garden... Seeking further I realized that the most prominent archetype of the nature archetypes was the tree. (I know so much of this thesis is land based, yet I myself am land based, I do like swimming, surfing and sailboats, we could go with the archetype of the wave?)

From previous personal research I knew that the tree also played a vital role in myth:

Like the trunk of a tree, the world-pole is something through  
Which life flows. If a man or woman — a shaman, a hero, a  
Prophet — would ascend to the heavens or descend to the underworld,  
Here is the stairwell. Here the adept can powow with gods and animals,  
Even merge with them, as all of us used to do at the beginning of time.  
(Eisenberg, 2001, p.1).

The Shaman, the hero, the prophet...

And what does the prophet say? Well if prophets are like Shamans, and Shamans and prophets both 'Speak', and then if we can call Alistair the Craftsman a Shaman and a prophet, his Shamanic prophecy is:

We've fucked it all up, there I've said it, we're fucked...and if that's too doomsday for you, if you want a little hope, I'll say this 'act now or we're all fucked'

We must act on hope. So how do we act? As activists we need, what Shamanisms most esteemed guru Mircea Eliade (1998, p.101) quotes from the influence of Malinowski saying, "a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality, the story beneath!"

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<sup>19</sup> With all respect to the worlds indigenous people, I know that many of them are still 'out there', and that as such the concept of Wilderness is alien and maybe even offensive to them, I mean no disrespect. Wilderness in my definition means that which is still Wild, still thriving, still free.

A new ecological green paradigm!!!

Is this not the aim of religion, science and philosophy? In this research I have touched on religion and culture, and crossed the bridge between poetics and science. Yet it is to the philosophy of Phenomenology that I have sought most for a methodology in placing the story in 'context'.

Iain Thomson (2004, p.383):

Phenomenology enables us to work through these environmental problems because of its ability to allow the values inherent in nature to speak.

And exploring deeper,

The basic phenomenological principles meant to undercut and replace our environmentally-destructive mind/world and fact/value divides.

And then to the influence of Merleau-Ponty

That certain pro-environmental values are 'always already in the world' and so simply await the appropriate phenomenological approach in order to be discovered and made the basis of a new environmental ethics.

And then to the actual words of Merleau-Ponty (2002, p.347)

Just as nature finds its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, so behaviour patterns settle into that nature, being deposited in the form of a cultural world.

### **The Craftsman**

Alistair the craftsman is a professional carpenter with a vast knowledge of timber. Yet his heart is more drawn towards the art of working with that which nature provides through



natural means. His reflection on his craft and its source gave him a tale-teller's edge. The combination of these three archetypes saw him fall within the quadrant of tale-teller-professional.

‘When I rise before the sun, I listen to the silence and I hear the voice of the Earth’

Alastair's story is of the Living Earth, connectedness, logic and resource.

The craftsman Alistair said ‘Enduring and magnificent’ when he spoke of the Earth. Being a craftsman of timber, his main metaphor in relation to Earth was the trees which fell into the rivers to make their way down to the oceans to become the driftwood of his craft. As such, the great trees of the forest were also enduring in their upright stance and their boughs reaching for the sun and their roots seeking into the soil for nutrients and water. Like the Earth and the trees:

Alastair saw himself as part of the cycle – a recycler of Earth;

Alastair saw himself blessed to be within the cycle of Earth and tree. Alastair was inspired as the tree rose from the seed to then fall after its journey “rising and falling”, to then fall into the river and into the ocean and rise again on the waves onto the shore and then into his workshop, ‘falling and rising.’

Yet his inspiration was even deeper for like a poet he found the mystery of seed tree Earth and seed ‘subtle and overwhelming’. He spoke of the ‘journey in their story’ from seed to seed in reverence and awe. He attempted to highlight this in his craft, exemplifying both the ancientness and the budding new life beauty of a tree in his pieces of art and furniture.

As he shaped with his hands he also shaped with his words for he too was a storyteller who used his words to weave. He spoke of the truth he hoped to bring into people's homes by bringing in that beauty of which he was just the final shaper:

*Beautiful and true*

*Shaped and shapers*

*Shapers and shaped*

Alastair is something of a philosophical mystic who was inspired by the connection between the sun, the Earth and living things. In a way, his 'vision' of the Earth was as the 'vessel' that caught the elixir of the sun and through a magnificent alchemy created the substance of life. The source and what sustains were inseparable in his eternal cycle – it was the Earth that was the connection between the source of the sun and the living nature that sustains life. There is a story here – a simple triangle of cause, flow on, and effect - The sun, the protagonist; the 'stage' of the Earth; and the living Earth. Here a connection and a separation are made, and a question – is the Earth the rocky planet of elements that the sun manipulated to bring life, or is it the living biosphere that is the Earth? If these keywords of source and sustain are joined, maybe it is both?

If this is a story about 'Life' then its source will be found in the sun, or even further in the heart of the galaxy and even beyond. If this is a story about life on Earth, the sun is just one part of a complex delicate web that sustains our living here. At this moment, beneath the sun, it seems this web is somewhat out of balance. Therefore the Storytellers of the Earth have raised their voices to tell the story of the Earth. Some are passionate like wildfire, some are as subtle as the candle flame, some are bright like new day dawning, and still some are humble when they are found placing their hands on an ancient Eucalypt trunk and looking up they say

‘When I stand in their shadows

I know the power of the sun’

### **Experience**

Alastair the craftsman’s experience of the story of the Earth is a mixture of humble awe of the existence of life and a philosophy that made me think of the well thumbed pages of a yellowing mellowing favourite novel – practical and profound in its beauty.

‘Come on brother, you gotta just sit back and blow out and the awesomeness of the fact that we are living here, orbiting that star.’

And,

‘Each ring in the timber is a ring in time, we don’t tell the stories, they do!’

Alastair is a craftsman, an artist and an activist. Sometimes he separates these worlds, sometimes he combines them. He says that when he is working timber, ‘shaping the shaped’ sometimes he feels like jumping up on to the table he is making and shouting for joy at the celebration of his work. Yet sometimes it is he that feels like the timber is shaping him and he just loves to lie his cheek along its surface and close his eyes and feel its story .He feels honoured to have been given these gifts of driftwood and he resembles Herman Hesse from Siddhartha when he states ‘There is a story of a river...’ This river is the one that runs from the mountains carrying his tree trunk down to the ocean to be washed and tumbled until it is deposited on the beach for him to find. The river is his business partner. It is wonderful to hear him talk of trees and sun, ocean and river.

He is passionate about the destruction of the environment and his chief enemy is the oil industry. The way he presents it, there is a massive imbalance between spending huge amounts of money and expending huge labour and mechanical resources to drill deep down in the Earth for the remains of trees; versus rocking up to the beach on a Sunday morning and dragging a log through the dunes by bare hands (he of course stated that his 4WD runs on vegetable oil recycled from restaurants). With his works of art he tells stories of beauty, yet if you chance to meet him at the markets he will share you some of his 'river' of truth. One of his works of Art he shared was a carved seat entitled simply as, 'Peace'

### **Seed Tree Earth Seed**

Alastair laughed heartily at this poem and his first response was to say 'I see you are into recycling also'. He then laughed again and said 'seed, tree, river, ocean, beach, my workshop, your living room, chucked in the jungle, Earth, seed'. Yet his humour was not misplaced here for three reasons I gathered.

Firstly, Alastair is one of the only participants who used humour in their response. Alastair exhibited the bravest at overcoming the great melancholy that all Storytellers exhibited in response to the suffering of the Earth.

Secondly, his humour was a subtle attack on the 'consumer throw away' society we live within.

Thirdly, and perhaps most significantly, is that Alastair was humbly relating his place within the cycle of things. There needed to be no great philosophy from one who had already asked the same question of the questioner in his own way.

### **The Storyteller within the Cycle**

...the vision shifted one final time, a lone figure walked along a deserted beach. His sight was focused on the edge of the surf where a large tree was caught on the sand. As he slowly approached this once great life form his demeanour took on an air of awe and respect. As he reached the tree his hand reached out reverently to caress the timber and he spoke:

‘...ever living, ever giving Earth, thank you for this gift of life...’

Alistair was a craftsman who used the gifts of the Earth to tell his story, yet he was also reflective:

### ***Reflections***

In regards to trees talking:

‘...the light, the grain, the patterns within the timber...they guide my work, they tell they story...’

In regards to the journey of the tree:

‘When I sit down on a chair that I have made, I feel the hardness of the tree standing tall, I feel the coolness of the bark on a winter’s morning, I feel the life force that creates such complexity.’

The Greenman:

‘...one of my first pieces was this ancient root system of a great tree which I turned into a kind of primeval throne thing, it still sits in my workshop and my kids climb all over it, imagining they are elves...when I sit in it, after some hard work and a few ales I think of myself as the Greenman, lord of the wild...It is amazing how our myth and stories reflect our nature base, yet our reality doesn’t don’t you think?’

Joy:

‘...early morning, walking along the beach, I see it in the distance, rolling in the surf, my next project...you can’t imagine the joy I feel...I’m like a little kid...’

Priorities:

‘I once got my 4WD stuck in the sand, and the surf was coming in. I saved all the driftwood and my tools and left the vehicle to the waves...lucky for it an army crew came by and pulled it out.’

Recycling:

‘I would love to make a guitar for you from recycled timber, and then when you play your songs, you would be playing a recycled vibration.’

On giving thanks:

‘Someone once gave me way too much money for one of my pieces, no matter how much I protested, he persisted. So I took the money and buried it in the sand of the beach. (The money here is that plastic stuff which won’t biodegrade {but that’s another story}). I often think who received the gift of that driftwood!’

On the art of sea captains:

‘All the tables and chairs in my home are made from driftwood, some of my work and some of others. It looks a bit like an old sea captain’s cottage but I like to see it as living work of art.’

The craft:

‘After I drag a tree in out of the surf, I sit on it and think of the journey it has taken. Then I grab my monstrous chainsaw and begin carving...even right at the beginning I am carving, whittling away...I love whittling.’

Recycling again:

‘...bury me at sea, set fire to the boat like the ancient Celts used to do...recycle me!’

### ***Song Analysis***

#### *Sun*

The lyrics for this song came from a flowing dialogue with Alistair, the craftsman, and:

The evidence he supplied based on the awe with which life was realized;

The evidence he supplied based on the knowledge of life's journey; and

The evidence he supplied based on the knowing of being both shaper and shaped.

Sun – traditional accompaniment - blues/folk like trad. song – the voice of one who works hard in their journey on Earth

Percussion – Mr Reed, Bass – Baro, Mandolin – Seanachai, Guitar & Vocals – The Bard

A song recorded with roots!

Standing opposite the mandolin player as I sang this song live I truly felt like a Gypsy standing in the shadow of a great Gum tree, feeling the power of the music of life. YERRA!

The story of the Earth is like the song Sun with its weaving instrumentation representing the combined weavings of the Storytellers of the Earth.<sup>20</sup>

This song was chosen as the eighth on the album due it to being the second of the traditional accompaniments, this time being driven by the mandolin. This song was the most traditional folk of the songs. By now the journey has reached a place outside the city in a great meadow beside a towering gum tree and the wanderer sits in humble awe.

The lyrics are one long verse and then a powerfully repeated chorus mantra. This served to bring the voice of the Storyteller from the poetic response to nature's immensity towards a place of immense euphoria.

The musical balance for this song was between the beautiful mandolin and the vocal. Simple percussion, guitar and bass provided a warm background.

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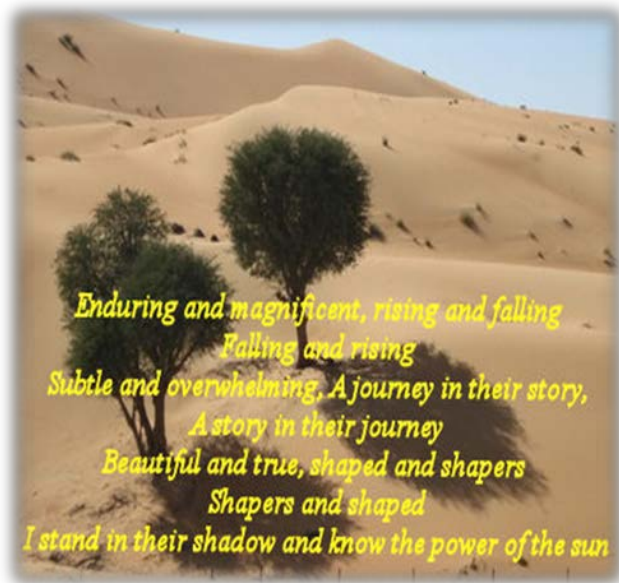
<sup>20</sup> If I was to record this song again I would love add a violin as the song built up towards the Celtic folk reel at the end.



**Sun Light Song***Key C**Enduring and magnificent, rising and falling**Falling and rising**Subtle and overwhelming, A journey in their story,**A story in their journey**Beautiful and true, shaped and shapers**Shapers and shaped**I stand in their shadow and know the power of the sun*

### *Ecovision: Sun*

The eighth song is entitled *Sun*. It is the song of a craftsman who shapes the gifts of nature,



yet it also the song of a craftsman who knows the story of his gifts – this craftsman knows more than just his tools.

The key lyrics are the entire lyrics for this song, for being a craftsman, Alastair was a man of few, yet selectively chosen words. The lyric process was impossible to separate – all the lyrics flowed

towards the final metaphor. The image

selected presented three essential elements: the tree and its shadow; the resilience of life in all environments; and the beautiful shaping of the desert landscape by the master craftsman, the wind.

## Chapter Nine: Mother Earth Connection

[Please listen to the ninth song on the CD entitled 9.Wild]

### Inspiration

This chapter is dedicated to Mother Earth

I have named Naomi, the Mother, due to the wisdom she presented regarding her role as an Earth reconnection facilitator, a Women's Rights activist and her beautiful wisdom regarding bringing new life into this world. Naomi also spoke strongly of her hearth...she even typed it out for my like this hEarth, and explained her perspective of living local, based on the local community, her home, and her garden. When she spoke of living local she spoke of buying seasonal produce from farmer markets, and going to the small local dairy farm to buy raw milk and make her own yogurt, cheese etc. When she spoke of her home, she spoke of the vibrancy and colours of the fabrics of the world she had collected in her travels, seeking to understand a little more about living on this planet. When she spoke of the garden, she spoke in two facets; the first was to tell the alternate creation myth of Eden involving Lilith and her equality to Adam, and of pre-Hellenic myths whereby the Mother Goddess was praised in respect to the abundance of life. Finally she spoke of her own garden...and of meeting the goddess she named Mother Earth there.

In respect to Naomi's role as Earth reconnection facilitator, below are two excerpts from two other workshop facilitators. The first is from Clea Danaan from her *Sacred Land* reconnection through sacred gardening workshops. The second is from Joanna Macy from her *Coming Back to Life* reconnection workshop.

When you think of activism, protest marches or checks sent to non-profits may come to mind. However, there is another branch of the activism tree, one that grows a little

slower but perhaps a little stronger. Engaged stewardship of the land through organic, intuitive gardening slowly but deeply affects our world...as you heal the land, you heal yourself” (Danaan, 2007, p.4).

The web sustains you bones and blood and skin, concocted so intricately out of the food you have eaten...out of the grains, vegetables and fruits...the soil that yields the grain for your bread, the boughs of the tree that bears the oranges of your juice...the hands that plow, sow, reap...they are all of your body now (Macy, 2009, p.211).

The awareness of place and the sense of space and the wonder at the ‘grace’ of Mother Nature’s cycles are found all throughout this thesis. Although this thesis is about the Storyteller’s of the Earth, it can also be seen to be about these ‘Shamans’ who connect to place in order to hear or feel or know the Earth. Although this thesis is about human Storytellers, it can also be seen to be about those who ‘speak’ with a voice with a purpose towards an understanding of the space that we inhabit. And although this thesis is a perspective of a researcher standing on the outside, attempting to look into the worlds of these Shamans who speak for the Earth, it can also be seen to be about the researcher’s attempt to understand how these Storytellers are humble parts of the Earth’s enduring cycle of being.

### **The Mother**

Naomi, the facilitator of women's empowerment was a wonderful mixture of teacher, professional and artist. As an artist she used words, images, jewellery, and the fabrics of nature and humanity to clothe her storytelling. As a professional she used her academic skills of depth counselling to look at the roots of emotional connection. As a teacher Naomi worked in educational institution inspiring young women towards empowerment in themselves and

academia. As a result of these three archetypes, Naomi's place on the circle of archetypes fell on the balance of teacher and artist, with an emphasis towards the poetic.

Naomi, the mother, teacher and facilitator brought colour to the conversation when she spoke of the blood of the land connecting with the blood in our veins. Naomi spoke candidly of the power of women and menstruation and its physical reminder of Earth connection. Naomi spoke passionately and powerfully about the awe of child bearing and child birth for women and its immense confrontation with the perspective of reality.

Amidst all the blood and pain there is an amazing connection with the substance of life, flesh and bone and blood are woven together to create a living being, breathing in the first blessed drops of the elixir of life

Her interview was both enchanting and starkly real and I walked away looking down at my arms and feeling the power of the blood surging through my veins.

### **The Earth is spoken of as being:**

The Earth, the world, life, A place of life, place, space, the ground, matter, the middle of nowhere, within the perspective of time, always changing, being created, separate from a false reality, the forest, the context, separate from emptiness, the planet, everywhere, stable ground, quiet background, setting, the set, that which gives, the created, created form, realm, source, the place of everyday life, environment, land, nature, society, here, the wild, the place of mystery, the Goddess, Gaia, Mother Earth, home.

By far the most common term used to describe the Earth when relating through the first question of “what is your experience of the story of the Earth”, was source

Source is a beautiful, yet strange word in its etymology. Source comes from the Latin

*sub+regere.*

Sub = up from below

Regere = guide/straight

So, source = straight up from below

(Harper, 2001, online).

As noted in the literature review, source was not the word chosen by earlier exponents of the enchantment of the Earth. It was rather words like interconnectedness and interrelatedness. These Storytellers, who were in a constant relationship of awareness with the Earth, went a step deeper in speaking of a relationship to a source amidst the interconnected.

Again a story from the Storyteller to end, this time by Naomi:

‘The first time that I saw her, I saw her not as my child, but rather as a mother. I saw her in the pain and joy of childbirth, in the constant creation of giving, as part of this living Mother Earth.’

I saw her in the story she told of her work:

.... The storyteller walked into the circle of gathered souls, a fire burnt brightly beside her, illuminating the boughs and branches above. The night wind whispered in the leaves and the distant suns created a story across the arc of the heavens. The gathered souls grew quiet from their murmurings....and then the storyteller spoke:

‘When I speak for the Earth, I speak for the blood that courses through my veins, for the rivers that carry the tears of days gone by, and for the morning dew of tomorrow. I am connected, we are connected, but we have forgotten.’

As you look up to the branches of Gaia Hypothesis and Mother Earth you cannot help but think that each is of the source yet just viewed in a different light. The Storyteller Naomi speaks of the eternally recurring mother

Naomi, facilitator of Women’s and Mothers Circles, wise to the ways of the Goddess and the rites of pre-Christian Earth based religions, spoke with such beauty and conviction that I walked away humble to have experienced such a profound and enduring philosophy.

Her words constantly came back to the words of the Mother, The Goddess, Gaia, Mother Earth, and various world cultural names for the mother being. She spoke of the need for respect and gave some lines from a poem by Drew Dellinger (1998)

*She's the truth at the root of reality  
The elements of my bones  
are left over from the swirling stardust of a supernova  
Made by the Earth and the Breath of the One  
Rain's in the veins in the flames of the sun's  
In the heart each part contains the sum of the whole  
Earth Body, Earth Spirit, Universe Soul  
Word to the Mother  
You gotta love her*

*We've gotta get back to the Mother  
We've got to get back to the Earth  
We've gotta get back to the Mother  
We've got to get back to the Earth*

Naomi's words spoke of the need for connection to source and of acknowledgement of the cycle of seed tree fruit and seed within nature and within ourselves. She spoke passionately and enduringly of the representations of the Earth within our bodies – Of blood and womb and new life sprouting.

Naomi's reverence for life brought her to speak of places on the Earth was abundant and fertile like the forests and the oceans, and where life was fragile and hardy like the mountains and the deserts. Her voice rose with rigour and humility when she spoke of being in the desert when the storm clouds drifted in to provide the essence by which life could be sustained.

'The mother provides' she said. 'You do not have to seek, life will come to you.'

It is like the song Mother with its chaotic guitar and vocal representing the frustration of the Storyteller of the Earth.

The Globe-Terra-Gaia-Mother Earth-The World-Planet. It is this last term which I will explore here. For the word planet comes from the Greek '*Planasthai*', which means 'wanderer'

My story as a researcher, being a Storyteller of the Earth, has been a journey across the surface of the Earth, weaving amidst the cultures and sub cultures of humanity, being blessed by the myriad stories of the beings of the living Earth. Whilst hitch-hiking the lonely roads of civilization my experience has not just been one of overwhelming mystery. For as I have studied the seasons and the turning of the stars, my mind has also dwelt in the science of this turning Earth, or as the scientists name it, this planet. As a wanderer in space, I am the same as billions of other wanderers in the fabric of time and space - orbiting a star, part of a galaxy, which itself is part of a super cluster....yet it also different, for the Earth is 'our home', it is the place where 'we dwell'.



And this place where we dwell is in peril, and we could spiral into despair, Naomi recognized this, yet with her final words she echoed the sentiments of all the Storytellers, when she said,

‘Yet I do not give up hope.’

*Naomi’s voice*

In regards to the reason we are separated:

‘The Earth, the planet on which we live is a wondrous place with imposing diversity, maybe that is why we separate ourselves and create this illusion of superiority.’

About the most practical way forward:

‘I appeal to the space within individuals, and small groups, for I know that corporation controlled governments will grant no appeal.’

In respect to perception:

‘From our birth, till the die we fade, this planet provides us the beauty of nature, but I’ve noticed so few people are thankful for what they have been given.’

The human perspective:

‘...so much greed and fear, denial and mindless destruction...’

On the very important question of what is required of us all:

‘I’m not saying that we should give up everything, but doing one small thing could help planet Earth preserve its natural state.’

On the way...to here:

‘Where are we? Where are we going? I’m going to planet Earth, where I have always been...maybe the machine of progress needs to wake up to where it is, then maybe it wouldn’t be racing ahead to its and the Earth’s destruction.’

About walking on the Earth:

‘...step by step...’

The garden:

‘Plant a seed, let it grow...if every being on this planet could do this, maybe we can help the Earth restore her natural state.’

Blood of the Earth:

‘The Earth has a story that runs deep through our veins.’

Scale, purpose and intent:

‘The result of not knowing who you are can lead to doubt your ability to know the scale of your actions, the purpose of your actions and the intent of your actions...Act from a place of knowledge of your self in relation to nature...this is Buddha nature...Buddha means wisdom...The Buddha sat beneath a tree...He was an activist, without chains!’

On being a Storyteller of the Earth:

‘...some listen, some ignore, and some rise over the face of the crowd and tell their story...’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Mother*

The lyrics for this song came from a beautiful open hearted conversation with the Hearth Mother Naomi, and:

The evidence she supplied regarding a respect for the Earth as a creative being;

The evidence she supplied regarding the sustainability of the Earth; and

The evidence she supplied regarding the Earth as source.

Mother – full electric band - folk rock – voice of the goddess

Drum Kit – Blakjak Davy, Percussion – Raja, Bass – SonikArc, Guitar – Mr Reed, Guitar & Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded with a depth of soul and hope.

This song was chosen as the ninth on the album due to number nine being the Goddess number! This song is an acoustic rock song. This song brings the humble journey to a place of respect to the source that sustains!

The lyrics follow a three verse cycle. This served to allow the metaphors of the experience of Mother Earth to build in poetic intensity.

The musical balance for this song was between the intense vocal and the full band sound.

21

## **Mother Earth Song    *Key Am/C***

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<sup>21</sup> If I was to record this song again I would ask it to be sung by a Goddess!  
I love the end of this song....sweet!

*Mother*

*Respect*

*Blood*

*Connect*

*Womb*

*Grows*

*Life*

*Flows*

*Mother*

*Sustains*

*Desert*

*Rains*

*Seed*

*Sprouts*

*Life*

*Shouts*

*Mother*

*Source*

*Rivers*

*Course*

*Fruit*

*Birth*

*Tree*

*Earth*



### **Ecovision: Mother**

The ninth song is entitled *Mother*. It is the song of a community facilitator and an empowerer of matriarchal connection to Earth and self. The key lyrics were chosen as they were the first words of the Storyteller, enunciating the Earthy metaphor of the mother in connection to the mother.

The image selected was chosen for its dual representation of the Mother – both Earth and Woman.

## **Chapter Ten: The Drawing; the Artists Perspective**

[Please listen to the tenth song on the CD entitled 10.Veil]

### ***Beyond (inspired by quotes from the participant Kaylee***

In regards to litter/garbage/refuse/trash/the discards of a throwaway society:

‘...when I'm walking along the beach I think...why?’

### **Inspiration**

‘...it happens when I go for a swim, when I walk in the bush, when I' driving in the country...there's so much beauty here...’

On there being something more:

‘...it's not just that either. It's the connection!’

Experience:

‘As for my experience of speaking for the Earth, I can only tell you there was a time I felt disconnected and lost, but through a lot of hard work of getting in touch with my heart and soul, the Earth & the Universe spoke to me and that now I truly feel grounded and blessed by all it has to offer.’

Story and the Earth:

‘...I’m guessing the Universe and Mother Earth are asking me to reach out...to belong...’

Activism:

‘...across the globe, bringing out the better side of people here...’

Home:

‘We live in a little two bedroom shack (decked out all hippie like!), but Rob....the view....it's awesome! We can see the beach where we swim most days...’

The sound of sunshine:

‘...friends, family, laughter, sunshine, music, freedom, challenges, stimulation, beauty, art, nature and a lot of love is all around. People, here on this Earth also deserve this happiness...’

There is something that draws these artists in, before they can give something out. There is something that overwhelms, enchants and moves through. In the words of the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1816) in his poem *Kublai Khan*:



*And all should cry, Beware! Beware!*  
*His flashing eyes! His floating hair!*  
*Weave a circle round him thrice,*  
*And close your eyes with holy dread!*  
*For he on honey-dew hath fed,*  
*And drunk the milk of Paradise.*

Whether it is called paradise, the Garden of Eden, the sacred space, the Dreaming or the wild untameable nature, it is all of the one essence – It is what poet John Keats (1884) called the Truth and Beauty of Life. It is this essence that is the primary goal of my research - The intangible essence that gives voice to the Shaman who speaks.

### **The Artist**

Kaylee was first and foremost an artist with her focus on her paintbrush, eye and canvas. Yet she also found time to bring this passion to the walls of the educational institution. Balancing this she found reflection in her role as a songwriter. The combination of these three archetypes led to Kaylee falling within the sector of artist-songwriter within the circle of storyteller archetypes.

### **A Story of Kaylee's work**

In a small cottage overlooking the ocean, the evening breeze comes in off the ocean and stirs the curtains, making the candles flicker. Standing looking out at the ocean, she allows her vision to be drawn out into the waves, and then further still, to the horizon and the last remnants of the days light. She then turns to her children and speaks:

‘No matter how hard we try, we will never replicate that with our art. But that’s OK, that’s not our role. We are the vessel which seeks into the beauty of the Earth and then allow ourselves to be a vessel to provide it reflection.’

This is a study of the mystery, intangible, veiled, whispered and which moves like incense in the breeze carrying hope and something that some call spirit – yet that I wish to call story. Simply put, the spirit is the objective reflection of meaning – story is the objective explanation of the subject of life and its essence.

In regards to the role of the artist and the concept of mystery, I would like to speak about the idea of enchantment. Enchantment is linked to a world mentioned early in the research- incantation – incant equals chant...the song. The song that calls from nature, from out there, the song of the desert wind in the streets of the city, the song of the scent of the ocean that carries up to the cottages on the hill. It is the song of the Kookaburra that calls you out to witness the rising sun.

Curry (2012, p.78), speaks of enchantment as follows:

Enchantment is irredeemably wild; as such, unbiddable; and as such again, unusable. This is not at all to say enchantment has no effects, of course; they can be life-- --changing. But they cannot be controlled. By the same token, enchantment can be invited but not commanded. (Artists know this; the best materials, the most skilled writer, painter or musician, a stellar cast – none of this guarantees a performance that truly enchants.) In contrast to anything that can, at least apparently, be manipulated mechanically, enchantment entails not mastery but existential equality; not dictation but negotiation; not programme but discovery. It follows that any attempt at a programmatic use of enchantment necessarily converts it into something else, no matter how similar that may appear to be, and its handlers want it to be, to the original. Let me repeat: enchantment cannot be used, no matter how good or progressive the cause, because any attempt to do so, being will---driven and instrumental, is already disenchanting.

Inspiration can be received from the Earth, to inspire the artist, activist, Shaman, Storyteller...but the question of how it can be then reflected upon and then channelled through the artist is difficult to ascertain by both artist and researcher. Curry turns to the wisdom of three philosophers to attempt an understanding. Two of these have already been mentioned in this thesis. Merleau-Ponty and the theory of embodiment he named flesh and David Abram and his concept of eco-phenomenology. The third scholar is Val Plumwood and her philosophy of 'self-in-relation' or the ecological self.

...enchantment also partakes of a non-anthropocentric animism, or what Plumwood called 'active intentionality', in which subjectivity (the quality of being a subject) manifests in ways which transgress the official boundaries between human/non-human, animate/ inanimate, as well as spiritual/ material. (Curry, 2012, p.78)

The embodied flesh of the experience of the ecological self allows the Storyteller Shaman activist artist to speak of their connection and reflection.

### **Kaylee speaks:**

In regards to philosophy:

'...no more words about words...just living art, art as living...'

In regards to governments and corporations:

'You can't stop us from knowing the Earth.'

On the subject of the artist reflecting the world:

‘Every age, the Earth changes...yet with this atomic age we looked like being the last age...despair came into my work.’

About protest:

‘I’m a soul rebel, a renegade...I’m inspired by protest art...the voice of the people, speaking for the voice of they that suffer injustice, be they people, trees, whales...’

On separation:

‘Greens, blues, golden hues...paint on my thumb and a tear on my cheek, breathing slowly, feeling complete...at a loss for how to truly experience the vibrations of light all around’

Embodiment:

‘...clouds drifting, my mind drifts...waves flowing, my heart flows...the sun’s rays shine through the clouds, my soul shines...and my body, oh this glorious, uncomfortable, beautiful, awkward body that aches, yearns, is chilled and warmed in its connection to this magnificent masterpiece all around us...’

Lamentation:

‘Life will never let us down...we are the errant children...we have made the world so hard...hunger, war...we lament our loss.’

Final Word:

“...One...”

***Song Analysis:***

*Veil*

The lyrics for this song came from a creative conversation with the artist Kaylee, and;

The evidence she supplied regarding life's mystery;

The evidence she supplied regarding her attempts to creatively capture life's intensity; and

The evidence she supplied regarding the patterns within the Earth

Veil – solo acoustic - very chilled – voice of reflection

Guitar & Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded with a breath of mystery.

This song was chosen as the tenth on the album due to being the only solo song. I had originally intended to do six solo and six with the band, and then went towards all songs with the band. I chose in the end to do just one song of the Storytellers solo, and I chose this song as it was the most delicate. This song is a ballad lament. The journey by now has moved into the place of subtle reflection.

The lyrics move from verse/verse to the heartfelt chorus. This served to build the artistic metaphors of reflection towards the finality of physical, yet never spiritual separation from the Earth.

The musical balance for this song was the simplicity of the vocal and the guitar in the ballad style.<sup>22</sup>

The Story of the Earth is like the song Veil with its vocal lament representing the lament shared by all Storytellers of the Earth.

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<sup>22</sup> If I was to record this song again I would sing it in a duo with a female vocal, singing one verse each before joining for the chorus. This song is beautiful, a wonderful weaving of sonic, poetic, and visual form.

## Veil Song

Key D

*Candles in the fading light*

*The smell of the ocean*

*A gentle mystery that lifts my being*

*The softest smoothest touch*

*Lifts the veil to seeing*

*My fingers moving slowly*

*Over the landscape presented*

*I attempt to capture life's intensity*

*The colours on my brush*

*Wish to, like life, be free*

*I spin, I twirl, I dance*

*In all the patterns and textures (romance)*

*I lay myself down amongst*

*The contours and the curves*

*I immerse myself within*

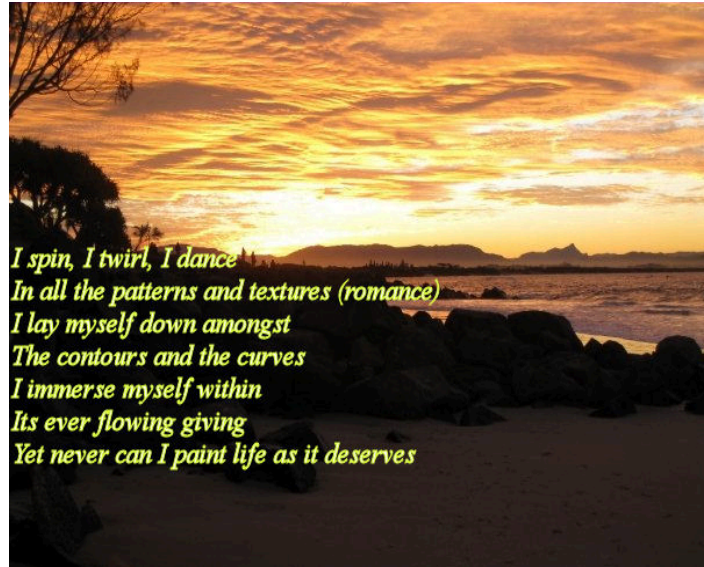
*Its ever flowing giving*

*Yet never can I paint life as it deserves*



### Ecovision: Veil

The tenth song is entitled *Veil*. It is the song of an artist, a creative and passionate being communing with and reflecting the Earth. The key lyrics were selected as they were the final words of Kaylee's story. These words of beauty about the metaphor of the artist's journey lead up to the final words of



honest reflection. The image was chosen for its picture postcard perfection – the immense beauty that the artist and our eye can only ever reflect – not perfect. Humility is beauty in itself.

## Chapter Eleven: Sticks; Fire, Song and Wisdom

[Please listen to the eleventh song on the CD entitled 11.Sticks]

### Inspiration

‘Music makes me dance...and then I feel the Earth beneath my feet.’

Many years ago I read David Suzuki and Peter Knudtson’s (2002) *Wisdom of the Elders*, concerned with the indigenous peoples of the Earth’s ecological wisdom. While hitch-hiking around Australia I came across Bruce Chatwin’s (1988) *Songlines*, concerned with the ecological wisdom of the land of my upbringing. Chatwin states that “the whole of Australia could be read as a musical score (p.14)”. My search for wisdom across this great continent could fill many thesis papers, yet in summary I can come back to a wisdom I learnt from Suzuki and Knudtson. Quoting the work of A.E. Newsome, a wildlife biologist who found

An intriguing congruence of myth and reality...Newsome found that the Red Kangaroo was protected from hunting in the Dreaming sites due to the fact that these sites were places where the Red Kangaroo reared their young in proximity to fresh water and grasses (p.133).

This ancient knowing and respect inspired me so much...I saw right relationship and respect for the living systems of the Earth.

Once again returning to Bron Taylor who says:

One of the reasons Suzuki refers to the world’s indigenous peoples is that he has been profoundly influenced by ethnobiology and ‘traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). TEK inheres in cultural groups who have lived long enough in a given region to acquire intimate knowledge about the eco-systems they depend on (Taylor, 2010, p.153).

The Earth Charter echoes this by promising to:

Reaffirm that Indigenous and Tribal Peoples have a vital role in the care and protection of Mother Earth (Taylor, 2010, p.203).

Louise has had many roles in her lifetime that have led to her being known as a respected wisewoman in her community. Louise is not an Indigenous person to the land or country she calls home, yet her roots run deep and she is respected by the traditional owners of the land and she has worked in various roles alongside these custodians. Thus, whilst not being a wise aunty of the traditional path, she is a wise aunty of a traditional path.

### **The Wisewoman**

Louise is known as the wisewoman for her vast experience in her role in guiding younger generations towards Earth connection. She has worked for many years in educational institutions and devotes much of her time to research reflecting her work. Alongside this, Louise finds time for grassroots taletelling amongst a circle of eager listeners. As a result of these three archetypes Louise's place within the circle of archetypes falls within the quadrant of scholar-teacher.

Louise, the Wisewoman, looked me deeply in the eyes, holding my gaze for several long breaths before she responded, her words chosen with reverence and poetry

‘Of the many years I have turned with this Earth, none has been more beautiful than the last, and if you ask me the same question next year, I will tell you that this year that is dawning will have been the most beautiful. Every moment I am blessed to turn with this Earth I grow

in love and strength like an old gum tree, gaining perspective from the roots of my longings, the branches of my dreaming. If I could paint myself I would stand for an aeon as that ancient gum reaching for the sky in the slow dance of eternal grace of living on this most sacred of living beings, the goddess Mother Earth.'

Then she told me of her work:

The Wisewoman sat beneath an old eucalypt on the edge of the desert. The heat created a subtle murmuring song that lulled the students surrounding her into a trance like phase. Then she began to speak:

For millions of years this desert has sung its song. Human footsteps have crossed it and then been carried away by the wind. The people of this land learnt to listen to the song and know its ways. Then we came across the ocean and brought our rabbits and we didn't listen. Now the elders of this land are trying to remind us with their subtle ways. They told me, and now I am telling you. Tomorrow when we return to the city, I want you to remember.

### **The experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth**

Louise the wisewoman's experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth is a mixture of simple but carefully chosen words to describe the fundamentals of life and a complex awareness of culture beyond the dominant paradigm.

'I tell them about concentric circles, interacting, communicating, learning, growing, and living,'

And,

'Out there...they all look at us and think we are crazy, they think we have no roots, we are just drifting, consuming, asleep.'

Louise is a teacher, an activist and a community facilitator. Sometimes she separates these worlds, sometimes she combines them. She says that when she is before an audience she is inspired by years of her own and others hard work. She feels connected to a legacy of struggle for justice and truth.

Louise states that when she is sharing her wisdom and leading others to seek their own she knows that there is a boundless energy within the land beneath her repeating its ageless mantra

‘...live...’

The wisewoman Louise said “Birth, conscious life and death” when she spoke of the source of life. This was her first perspective, this straightforward statement showed a simple linear approach that allowed a coming from and going to in regards to a source of life.

But this was only the beginning of her wisdom, for she also saw all of these being permeations of what she has called spirit. So when Louise said spirit and explained to me the weavings of life’s journey from and within it I heard a wise aunty from the Celtic Indo-European culture echoing the wisdom of much I had learnt in regards to non-Indo-European lore.

When Louise spoke, a word that seemed like a destination, opened up to being another word that was part of a journey. The word spirit, became part of the same triangle that I myself had been influenced by from my encounters with Indigenous Australia,

‘...the land, the people, spirit...’

The culminating word that these three wove through was again this most profound word

‘...Dreaming...’

And Dreaming transformed into part of the journey within the weave of,

‘...the void, the place, dreaming...’

Louise’s explanation here became a beautiful mixture of the scientific and the mystico-spiritual where she spoke of space, dark matter and dark energy and the spiral of our galaxy and the energy of the galaxy, the sun and space spiralling in from what she called ‘the void’ to come to this ‘place’ we call Earth, and then with a power akin to the archetypal ‘dreaming’, facilitate the creation and sustaining of life on Earth. The core word which connected these three was the ‘fire’ that existed at the core of our galaxy, or the core of our solar system. Louise spoke of the hearth centre in the manner a Wisewoman of a community would, yet expanded it to the size of a galaxy.

‘Life is circles within circles,’ Louise said.

Then the fire became part of the ancient alchemical cross of,

‘...Fire, Earth, Water, Air...’

Many of my Storytellers spoke of this alchemical cross. Here is a crossroads in my research and is both a delimitation I have placed and an answer to one or several of my questions.

First, the delimitation. This ‘alchemy’ opens the door to the semi religious realm of the arcane, the occult and pre-Christian modes of worship. It is not my path within this research to explore these questions.

Yet, there are questions and answers here that open doors that must be walked through to answer the questions of my research. As I have stated earlier in this research, it is my belief that the keyword spirit has become distorted. Where it once was an ‘interface’ between the people and the environment – a story; it has become, via religion, a goal within itself. Spirit

has become god, and there is no interface to the environment. In fact the environment, to many religious doctrines, has been the breeding place of many 'bad spirits', the malevolent forces of nature. Coming back to the wisdom of Louise, and the wisdom of the opened doors, this alchemy of fire, Earth, water, wind includes all the elements of the building blocks of life – plasma, solid, liquid, and gas. Here is evidence that we learn from nature. The story of the Earth speaks to us and we categorize the information given. We make patterns, for we like nature exist within patterns. This is something seemingly obvious, yet there is something very dangerous about not giving credence to these simple, yet powerful attributes of life. I challenge: that our pride and ignorance has made us look for answers deep within the sub quanta and deep within space and time and that simple answers have therefore been seen as childish or been dismissed as faery tales and hokum. Those of us who have been exposed to Indigenous teachings know that the stories of these simple truths are told and re-told for an important reason – to keep these simple truths in the forefront of our consciousness as we go about our everyday living – the wise people of these storied ways say that if we don't tell the stories the world will disappear. This is our role; we are the Storytellers of the Earth.

Louise, like many of my Storytellers has been blessed with exposure to cultures and traditions outside the dominant western paradigm. She exhibits a melancholy not only for Earth connection, but for a culture and tradition of Earth connection. I truly believe that this is what has really come out of this research in terms of combining the key findings of Source and Sustainability in regards to the first two research questions with the poetic responses to the third. These people, these humans, these Earth beings, these citizens of the planet, these members of society, these teachers and tale-tellers, these poets and professionals, these artists and activists, these scholars and songwriters – all of them are seeking to be part of a community that not only has a connection to the Source of Life, that not only has a commitment to the Sustainability of Life, but is a community that Speaks of Life within its

every thought and deed. They seek authentic experience of Earth living – this is why they are drawn to the ancient and indigenous ways, this is why society would classify more than half of them as tree-hugging hippies, this is why they stand on the fringe of what several of them called Babylon. They are chained to society, yet they do not wish to run away into the forest (it is possible that they do!). They seek to live both with the Earth *and* its peoples. They just wish that the majority of its peoples knew how:

*To read*

*The story of the Earth*

*To sing*

*The song of Fire*

*To listen*

*To the Dreaming*

*To know that what connects*

*Is Spirit*

Louise saw a simple symbolism that has resounded strongly with since the moment she told this story. She told a simple story related to a fallen but beautifully recycled part of the tree of life – sticks.

Being an educator she began with:

‘They draw the story with sticks in the dirt.’

Being an artist she then added:

‘They sing the song with sticks played in rhythm.’



Being an advocate of efficiency she added:

‘They make fire rubbing sticks together.’

And finally, being a poet, she made a play on words and spoke with a voice of passion and pain and said:

‘...and we are stuck in the city and we don’t fucking remember!’

### **The Seed**

Beginning with the word fruit she elaborated with vivid alliterative onomatopoeic descriptions of savouring succulent symphonies of mouth watering pleasure, of delightful delectable juices divine, of the full flowing flesh of the fruit, ripe from the bountiful bosom of the goddess who gives of her grace.

From mangoes to blueberries, dragonfruits to passionfruits, Louise provided examples of the majesty of the Earths creations. She then ended with some wisewoman’s humour by stating that if she were a fruitbat/ flying fox she would delight in terrorizing fascist farmers who fence off the abundance of the Earth.

Then with direct intent she stated:

‘Yet, all I can do is my own little drop in the ocean, yet this will grow like ripples in the pond’

### ***Seeds...***

Louise had many drops of wisdom for the Earth:

In regards to listening to the Earth:

‘Sometimes I just stand and listen to the Earth...the trees are good role models.’

In respect to the Earth's reflection:

‘The wind in my face, bare Earth beneath my feet, waiting for the rain to come and sting my face and allow me to feel alive.’

Activism:

‘...so much work to be done...well we have to start somewhere. How about right where you are standing, right now? What can you do right now?’

On perspective:

‘We look at the stars and we see possibilities of other worlds...and this world has become too familiar to us we treat it with contempt.’

In regards to Earth awareness:

‘...standing alone...the Earth spinning beneath me...’

And on the process of our Earth story:

‘So much good has been forgotten,’

And,

‘So much good has been done,’

And,

‘So much good is still required!’

The end of the story:

‘When we arrive there, how will we know it? By the humming vibrancy of life teeming with the fulfilment of itself!’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Sticks*

The lyrics for this song came from a humbling session with the wisewoman Louise and;

The evidence she supplied based on her understanding of the feedback loop of existence;

The evidence supplied based on her knowledge of land, people and spirit; and

The evidence she supplied based on her pursuit of living simply.

Sticks – acoustic folk band - blues rock with an eastern gypsy flavour – voice of one with an ancient perspective

Drum Kit – Raja, Percussion & Vocals – The Bard, Guitar – Doc Slyde, Mandolin –

Seanachai, Bass & Vocals – Baro, Guitar & Vocals – Mr Reed

A song written and recorded that touched on old wisdom and new anger.

This song was chosen as the eleventh on the album due it to being the most Gypsy of the songs, a wonderful mix of instruments and loose playing. This song is a fusion of Romany Gypsy folk and Reggae Blues with traditional Australian Indigenous clapsticks. This song goes back to the edges of the wild and ends with the most intense and volatile response of this research.

The lyrics move from a verse to a bridge to an epic chorus. This served to build from the metaphysical concept of birth, conscious life and death towards the venomous challenge that we don't fucking remember.

The musical balance for this song was between Gypsy mandolin and the intense vocal. The percussion of the drums and clapsticks combined with the rhythmic guitar provided the flow.

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The Story of the Earth is like the song Sticks with its questions regarding our connections representing the challenging nature of the Storyteller of the Earth.

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<sup>23</sup> If I was to record this song again I would add more wild Gypsies!

## Sticks Played Together Song

*Key Dm/F*

*Birth, Conscious Life, Death*

*Spirit*

*The Land, the People, Spirit*

*Dreaming*

*The Void, Place, Dreaming*

*The Fire*

*Air, Water, Fire*

*Earth*

*In this Country they know how to read*

*The story of the Earth*

*In this Country they know how to sing*

*The song of Fire*

*In this Country they know how to listen*

*To the Dreaming*

*In this Country they know that what connects*

*Is Spirit*

*They draw the story with sticks in the dirt*

*They sing the song with sticks played in rhythm*

*They make fire rubbing sticks together*

*But we are stuck in the cities and we don't fucking remember<sup>24</sup>*

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<sup>24</sup>24 Apologies if the profanity offends, yet these were the words of the Storyteller, who also repeated them several times as evidenced in the song.

## Ecovision: Sticks



The eleventh song is entitled *Sticks*.

It is the song of a Community

Activist and Wisewoman of the

environmental movement. The key

lyrics were chosen as they were the

final words in a long and humbling

story of awareness to an ancient

relationship to Earth. The simple

metaphor of the sticks is in fact not

a metaphor, but a reality. The final words may be judged profane, yet I would rather them be taken as frustration and passion. The image was selected for its simplicity of the branches as sticks, and its complexity at the actual visual representation of pattern.

## Chapter Twelve: Sacred Seeds of the Ecozoic

[Please listen to the twelfth song on the CD entitled 12.Seed]

### Inspiration

Thomas Berry in his book *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* speaks of our impact on the Earth:

So severe and so irreversible is this deterioration that we might well believe those who tell us that we only have a brief period left to reverse the devastation that is settling over the Earth. Only recently has the deep pathos of the earth situation begun to sink into our consciousness.

And

We are now experiencing a moment of significance far beyond what any of us can imagine. What can be said is that the foundations for a new historical period, the Ecozoic Era, have been established...the distorted dream of an industrial technological paradise is being replaced by the more viable dream of a mutually enhancing human presence within an ever renewing organic-based Earth community (Berry 1999, pgs.199-201).

### The Elder

Jack is known as the elder for his vast experience in regards to storytelling for the Earth. His main focus is as an Activist, taking the fight to those predisposed to Earth separation. He inspires and reflects upon this time in his role as a songwriter. Drawing on his academic skills, he works professionally in psychology and ecology. As a result of these three archetypes he falls on the balance between tale teller and activist with an emphasis towards the professional storyteller.



Here in the circle of the last Storyteller, I had planned to tell of the ‘deepest’ held beliefs I had in regards to the Earth Story. For just as Jack is the eldest Storyteller, I sought to find a way to tell the whole environmental back story –from myth, through the Gaia Hypothesis, Deep Ecology, Indigenous wisdom, Earth reconnection workshops, Jungian psychology, the science of the Web of Life and the green movement.

Yet this thesis is not just about the green movement. Bron Taylor, author of *Dark Green Religion* is a scholarly activist who has already told the linear tale of the green Movement - this thesis is about the voices of the green movement...the Shamans who ‘Speak’ as Storytellers of the Earth. Hopefully throughout this thesis I have told enough of this story to place this research in perspective. Yet there is still room for some final wisdom from those poets and philosophers of the Earth story. These are the ‘Shamans’ who have ‘spoken’ the story up until now, and are the ‘back story’ to what I have come to call through the process of this research the green environmental story.

In her book *Sacred Gaia*, Anne Primavesi speaks of a spiritual and scientific connection to Earth.

Most writers on the subject of sustainable living, treat the ‘environment’ as ‘something out there’, separate and detached from people and their works (Primavesi, 2000, p.85).

And,

The dynamic system we call Gaia, which supports differentiation in life forms arising from natural drift and symbiotic fusions. Together with their environments they form the matrix which sustains the capacity for life within the world we inhabit: (Primavesi, 2000, p.169).

This spiritual and scientific crossover has allowed us to place 'our selves' in perspective to the living systems of the Earth. It has allowed us to reach out and connect in to the Earth in a deeper way. As Merleau-Ponty spoke of the idea of our perceiving the living Earth, so too are we perceiving the story of the living systems of the Environment.

Gurus of Deep Ecology, Arne Naess and David Rothenberg in their book *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle* speak of:

The international, long range ecological movement began roughly with Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*...and it is now clear that hundreds of millions of years of evolution will come to a halt if large areas of wilderness are not established and protected. Wild areas previously classified as 'voids' are now realised to be of vital importance and intrinsic value. This is the example of the kind of consciousness change that strengthens deep ecology" (Naess & Rothenberg, 2001, p.210).

Philosophies such as Deep Ecology have sought to dwell deeper into the phenomenal world that we inhabit and formulate a framework that allows for humanity and the Earth to thrive and regenerate together. As we reach out and connect, we realise that what we are doing to the Earth what we are doing to ourselves. As Merleau-Ponty spoke of the idea of the perceiver being part of the living Earth, so too are we the perceiver who is conscious of our part to play as Storytellers for the Earth.

Drengson and Inoue in their anthology of the Deep Ecology Movement say:

The seeds of an effective and radical ecocentrism live in those who somehow awaken to the exhilaration of being human in harmony with the rest of nature...although grounds for despair are all around, there are also signs of hope. The environmental movement has broadened and deepened with astonishing rapidity. The Green movement is a significant presence in the national politics of many countries. Environmental groups supporting direct action, such as Earth First!, Sea Shepherd, and Greenpeace often have significant support from the general public (Drengson & Inoue, 1995, p.275).

Once awakened, the path is either to deny, fall back asleep...or to Act. The seeds have been planted, the 'green tree' has grown...where to now?

Onwards into the Ecozoic!

In the following final chapters, I find my own song in relation to the story of the Earth, as well as four perspectives in relation to the three research questions, with the fourth being the essence that connected the three questions. Yet here in this final Storyteller's chapter there are also some threads coming together. Each chapter has had references to various philosophers and poets of the Earth's story woven together with the wisdom of the Storytellers. This is the final tale of the Shaman's who speak for the Earth. Thus, before beginning Jack's story, some references to the twelve lyrical shamans. Through the voices of each hear the environmental back story of which I am also part.

### *Seeds of the Storytellers experience of Earth*

'...I listened to Midnight Oil as a kid, then I started reading Mythology, then came History...'

(The historian)

'...Gaia, the first time I heard the name it resounded with me like a bell, I had to paint her. She was on my wall all through University, so many people would sit beneath her and gaze in reverence...'

(The artist)

‘...I attended workshops such as the Council of All Beings, Goddess Reconnection...’

(The mother)

‘...travelling across the landscape of Australia... meeting with other activists involved in protecting their local and regional wild places...this is how it began for me...’

(The community activist)

‘...being part of an activist organisation, a crew involved in direct action...’

(The political activist)

‘...attending gatherings of the Earth tribe...’

(The wisewoman)

‘...dancing to the rhythms of musicians who are tapped into the positive vibration...’

(The poet musician)

‘...seeking better ways to understand our nature...’

(The biologist)

‘...writing the story of the Earth...’

(The author)

‘...scientists using myth...The Gaia Theory...’

(The geographer)

‘...I learnt how to work with nature camping as a kid...’

(The craftsman)

And so finally to Jack, the elder, the philosopher of Deep Ecology and Earth warrior who saw the Earth as mystery, and who understood that the Earth is in your garden and who said:

In regards to connection:

‘I water my plants, I watch them grow, and when they are ready I bring them to my kitchen and prepare the most delicious feast for my friends and family, I then go back out and water the new plants that have grown from the seed of the others...it is very humbling.’

In regards to the seeds of the green movement:

‘When the police came and we were singing songs and smiling they had to retreat and come back with new tactics...the shift had begun.’

In respect to working for the Earth:

‘I have read so many books, written so many papers, spoke to so many people, helped so many process their feelings of despair...only the Earth knows how much I have truly given.’

As a methodology against being politicized:

‘Some people like to call themselves green, yet maybe there is still a sense of us and them in that term...it gives them something to attack. There is only one Earth, so if we are all from the Earth, should we then not all be *for* the Earth?’

In relation to the story of the Earth:

‘Mystery is beautiful and untouchable, that is where the wisdom of the Earth is.’

On the process of re-connection:

‘Don’t let the state of the world get you down, humanity is just a little lost. We are capable of such amazing things, we just need to forgive ourselves and use our amazing capabilities to live ‘with’ the Earth, not ‘on’ the Earth.’

On going ‘out there’:

.Let yourself be amazed at the magnificent interweaving of the Earth’s systems.’

Wisdom to the upcoming seeds of the Earth activism:

‘Go and tell them...the forests, the mountains, the rivers, the oceans, the deserts, the beaches, the tundra and the jungles were never theirs to chop down, mine, dam, overfish, pollute and transform into systems of industrialisation.’

In regards to the continuum of activism:

‘When they come to take my garden, I will have seeds in my pocket when they cut me down, then I will become the detritus for these new seeds to grow...I am a revolution!’

And finally in respect to the Earth:

‘My love and appreciation speaks to the Earth herself - my love and respect for the flow, the line, the rhythm, the relationship of layers, the sheer expanse sends a silent prayer for gratitude from all beings privileged to share such an overwhelming beauty and lover as is our Earth.’

Jack, the community elder, facilitator and musician spoke often of the word ‘continuous’ in his perspective of the Earth story - a continuous flow of energy from the Earth, from the past, from the sun.

Being a Storyteller held an almost joyous approach to words with each of the Storytellers. I could hear the rise and fall of their voice and the rhythm of their breath as evidence that this

was experience that they each loved. It was so blessed to hear each of them talk about story whilst telling a story. I was enchanted, I became entwined in their subtle tones, I was the seeker within the landscape of their words, I was overwhelmed by their living mystery, I was a storyteller, listening to the story of a storyteller.

Again, to end, a story, this time told by Jack:

‘Back in the sixties we were children, yet wise to the Earth song. Today we are wise elders, yet we still hear the Earth song, maybe not with as much simple joy, but now rather with a familiarity of an old old friend. When I walk with my children and my grandchildren in the forest, I am watching each of them as they connect to the Earth, but I am listening to the voice of my Earth Mother as she sings the song that enchanted my heart so long ago, and then I am a child again, and I smile.’

Jack gave the following fragment of poem as a response:

*Out of the mother; and through the spring exultances, ripeness and decadence; and home to the mother”. – Robinson Jeffers*

There is something that is both sacred and profound and that is beyond the human mind that comes through in the interviews with each of the Storyteller’s of the Earth – in fact it is found more, not so much in their actual words but in the subtle nuances between the words – the pauses, the letting go of the breath, the words that produce the smiles and concerned expressions. The quote above from the poet Robinson Jeffers was given as the final words by Jack in response to question three – the response to the question of their place within the Earth cycle from the poem ‘Seed/Tree/Fruit/Seed’ – a poem for a poem! This poem produced one of the most profound discussions of the interview sessions. This discussion focused on



the line ‘the fruit rots to make Earth’ – which produced the word detritus – Detritus draws its roots from the Proto-Indo-European *trawan* – meaning a twisting or turning – a turning of the Earth, not in the sense of the World turning, but of the turning of the soil.

Detritus is the soil is the Earth is the ground is the dirt. Is dirt dirty? Is the ground just what we stand on? Is the Earth just dirty soil on the ground? Is it dirty because it is rotten? Is rotten bad? All these questions were discussed and what came out of it so strongly was there is a real misunderstanding of the process of decay and regeneration. Humans and their garbage dumps out of the sight of the civilization (but never out of smell if you are downwind!) See rotten as bad. Maybe those who are gardeners and composters know something of the joy of rottenness, but it came to my own attention that I myself had left the detritus/soil/Earth/dirt out of the poem of process. I was so taken with the fruit from the tree producing the seed for the next tree that I, and all but one of the Storytellers, had failed to recognize that there was a key component of the process missing. It was a case not of ‘not seeing the wood for the trees’ but rather of ‘not seeing the Earth for the trees!’ This mystery of the process of regeneration must surely be one of the most sacred realizations that can be experienced by the human mind – for after all – ‘It’ is life!

I seek always to remain close to the Earth, with my heart open, speaking with my true voice for the future of this place, our home

Jack tells his story of living Earth, identity, mystery and environment.

Then as the breeze becomes still the silence speaks of the schools of Conservation and Resource Management that are the basis for the Environmental movement evidenced in Storytellers such as Jack.

Then as the crown of this tree catches the last rays of the sun and the rain begins to fall and swirls downwards through the branches on the breeze to fall like a mist upon your face, you hear the Storytellers of the Earth in your heart and you realize the power of the role of those who choose to be the voice of ShamanSpeak.

Jack said “...

*For the Earth*

*I sing my song*

*For the Earth*

*To which we all belong”*

When Jack spoke to me, I heard in his Story that his experience was...

*For the Earth*

*Direct action given*

*For the Earth*

*That which in me is living*

When I asked Jack what was his experience of the Story of the Earth, he responded within the realms of...

*For the Earth*

*I seek mystery*

*For the Earth*

*That which is true beauty*

And when I asked why, he said things like....

*For the Earth*

*I deeply connect*

*For the Earth*

*For she is perfect*

... For the Earth...I sang Jack's song!

The first question deals with the scenario of how the seeds of awareness were originally planted in the hearts, minds and souls of the storytellers.

The first question: What is your experience of the Story of the Earth?

The environmental elder stood upon the rock and looked out into the valley below. Around him, members of an environmental workshop looked at their surroundings, breathing in the forest, and waited for the elder to speak:

‘I bring people here to help them remember. To remember walking on the Earth, to remember the effort of climbing up to a place to observe the Earth. To remember the feeling of their breath realigning with the rhythm of the forest as they gaze out to a perspective of the Earth that few people take time to remember.’

The second question deals with the scenario of how the seeds became a strong tree that held the convictions and beliefs that allowed them to be storytellers of the Earth.

The second question: What is your experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth?

Jack said:

‘It’s what I do every day, from before sunrise, till after sunset, sometimes beneath the moon and stars, sometimes in the rain, sometimes in my garden, sometimes in my songs, sometimes in the food I eat, sometimes in the circles in which I gather.’

The third question deals with the scenario of how the tree realised its place in the cycle of life.

The third research question was a response to the poem

*Seed*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*Seed*

Jack laughed and then replied ‘how about, just Earth?’

## *Song Analysis*

### *Seed*

The lyrics for this song came following a humbling experience with the community guru Jack, and:

The evidence he supplied based on direct action;

The evidence he supplied based on Earth connection; and

The evidence he supplied based on the mystery.

Seed – traditional reggae accompaniment – last actual song on the album, meant to be cruisy feel – voice of one who works for the Earth because that is what is love and light

Drum Kit – Blakjak Davy, Percussion – Kasongo, Bass – Baro, Guitar – Tosh, Percussion & Vocals – Diva, Percussion – Raja, Percussion, Whistle and Vocals – Mr Reed, Dobro – Doc Slyde, Guitar – SonikArc, Vocals – The Bard

A song written and recorded for those who work for the Earth by those who sing for the Earth.

This song was chosen as the last on the album due it to being the song which I believed held the final notion of ShamanSpeak – for the Earth I sing my song! This song is a traditional Reggae accompaniment driven by the guitar. At the end of the journey the Storyteller comes to a place to

Which we all belong

The lyrics follow a cycle of verses. This served to allow the metaphors of Earth relationship to be built upon.

The musical balance for this song was between the Reggae guitar and the full band with multiple vocal and percussion.

If I was to record this song again I would record it live in front of a crowd to bring up the positive vibration.

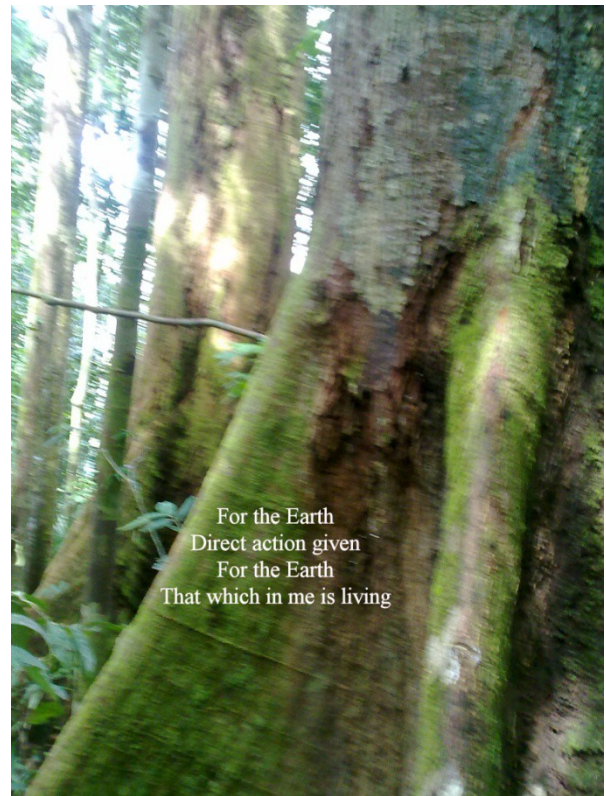
I am eternally thankful to all the musicians for their music, their time and their Mojo magic!

Peace, Yerra! The Bard

**Seed Song***Key G**For the Earth**I sing my song**For the Earth**To which we all belong**For the Earth**Direct action given**For the Earth**That which in me is living**For the Earth**I seek mystery**For the Earth**That which is true beauty**For the Earth**I deeply connect**For the Earth**For she is perfect*

**Ecovision: Seed**

The twelfth song is entitled *Seed*. It is the song of an activist and guru of the environmental action movement. The lyrics were chosen for their direct truth and humility. The image was chosen for its direct truth of living awe and humility of the awe in living as part of something greater than one's self.





### Chapter Thirteen: Elements

As was said at the beginning of this research:

As in poetry, it is inappropriate to ask for a conclusion or a summary of a phenomenological study. To summarize a poem in order to present the result would destroy the result because the poem IS the result. The poem is the thing. So phenomenology, not unlike poetry is a poetizing project; it tries an incantive, evocative speaking, a primal telling, wherein we aim to involve the voice in an original singing of the world (van Manen, 1973, p.13).

This garden, this paradise we have lost, is our Earthly backyard. It is herbs and flowers, vegetables and fruits, the grass, the trees, the shrubs, the weeds. It is the birds, the dragonflies, the bees and the butterflies. It is every living thing that surrounds us.

Mother Earth has never lost us...for we are her children. We just lost sight of the woods AND the trees. The evidence of our separation from true understanding with the planet is found in the pollution levels, the devastation to the Earth's living things, the damage to the ozone layer. Many voices have been raised in recent years, in synchronicity with our realization of our impact. Some voices have been more ardent than others in seeking to raise the awareness of humanity to the story of The Earth.

“The original singing of the world” is the song of the Earth...all cultures have their Dreaming stories. In this global culture, what is our Dreaming Story? All myths and paths of mystery return to here...This one Earth that we once knew as Gaia, and now do once again. We come from ‘Deep Time’ and our Deep Ecological philosophies, biologies and cosmologies speak of a logic and a wisdom founded in the Earth and the Universe.

So what now? How do we return to the garden? Surely the answer is within us, in our voices.

In our art, activism and our academic tomes, we tell a story of:

Seeking reconnection for the Earth's survival, to know again the cycle of fruition, to return once again to the original organic order of 'things in themselves' a primal telling!

The following four poems, lyrics, songs were written in response to the overall stories of the participants. They are not summaries or answers, but are rather a gathering of common themes that relate to the research questions. The themes could be said to be the four quarters of the sphere of the data gathered.

*The lyrics to the songs which are the words of the Storytellers are in italics-*

***The name of the Storyteller is written in bold italics;***

My analysis and explanation are written in regular form.

## Connection

[Please listen to the first song on the EP entitled 1.Connection]

[...a song of inner passion]

*Lying in your bed*– **Researcher**; this line is was included by the researcher as a contrast against the idea of activism

*Demons in your head* – **Ryley**; said this when he spoke about the idea of the ‘daemon’ of the Earth spirit, of the Earth spirit coming to wake you up, getting into your head, your thoughts, staring you in the face until you recognize it

*About what you could have done* – **Yolanda**; said this in relation to the constant feeling of feeling that you could have done more for the Earth

*As the years passed by* – **Yolanda**; echoing the quote above

*You’ve been livin a lie* – **Alistair**; said this when he spoke of modern civilizations disconnection to the Earth around them.

*And now there’s nowhere to run* – **Ryley**; said this when he spoke of the rich and powerful and their greed and how they devastated the Earth.

*The demons in your face* – **Ryley**; echoing the quote above

*Says is this your place*– **Yolanda**; said this when she spoke of the questions she wanted to ask the general populace

*Is this planet your home*– **Louise**; said in simple wisdom

*Cause if you don’t act soon*– **Alistair**; said, still clinging to hope

*It will be as dead as the moon – **Pedro**;* the authors poetic reality

*And no poet will write a poem– **Researcher**;* in response to Pedro

*This is the poem for the Dead Earth– **Jack**;* spoke of the haunting idea of the Dead Earth as a real possible future, being the oldest of the participants there was a stark reality in his words.

*The rhyme of the crime of humanity– **Researcher & Ryley**;* the researcher added rhyme in respect to the songwriter Ryley, yet it was Ryley who spoke straightforwardly of humanities crimes

*This is the lament for the lost souls– **Researcher and Naomi**;* the researcher included the word lament as a description of the sadness encountered in so many of the words of the participants, yet it was Naomi who spoke of gathering lost souls to help them reconnect.

*Who destroyed their truth and their beauty – **Researcher**;* in tribute to the poet Keats and his early influence on the poets who speak for the Earth

*The demon takes your mind – **Ryley**;* echoing the quote above

*Leaves you staring blind – **Kaylee**;* said Kaylee when she spoke of not truly seeing the world around you

*At the world you had failed to see– **Kaylee**;* echoing the quote above

*As you crawl in the dirt – **Jewel**;* said when she spoke of the humbleness of being a biologist

*You feel the pain and the hurt – **Naomi**;* said in response to workshop reflections

*Of this Earth that only wished for you to be free – **Alistair**;* spoke so often of freedom, this had to be included

*What is your story, are you connected – **Many**;* said on many occasions, mostly in relation to the first research question, ‘the experience of the Earth story’

*Are you part of it all, have you reflected – **Many**;* said in relation to their own relationship to Earth

*The demon leaves you lying – **Riley**;* echoing the quote above

*Your heart bleeds into the soil – **Researcher and Justine**;* the researcher added heart, for the passion of these activists, yet the words were Justine’s, in relation to the blood sweat and tears of activists on the frontline

*To give life to the waiting seed– **Jack**;* said when he spoke magnificently of detritus

*As new life flows – **Researcher**;* in response to Naomi’s words about childbirth

*Maybe hope grows – **Naomi**;* said about children and the future

*And brings an end to the stupidity and greed – **Yolanda**;* said in her anger at the corporate consumer society

*And maybe we won’t have to sing the Poem of the Dead Earth – **Many woven with the words of the Researcher**;* said echoing the hope that we won’t end in the nightmare that Jack spoke of.

## Survival

[Please listen to the second song on the EP entitled 2.Survival]

[...a song of coming back to Earth]

*Enveloped by everything – Jewel;* said of the feeling of immersion within nature

*I sing – Ryley;* said of his activist role

*To the Earth my home– Yolanda;* said beautifully and simply

*Immersed with the essence – Alistair;* the craftsman said these words, becoming poetic

*Of her– Naomi;* Mother Earth

*The Earth my Queen – Alistair;* the craftsman said these words as he spoke of being a warrior for the Earth

*Yet they're draggin me out– Aron;* perspectives of a frontline activist

*I scream and shout – Ryley;* the protester

*And go primal– Ryley;* the performer

*I chant and I call – Researcher;* the word chant was included here in respect to the words and songs of the protesters in their marches and at the frontline

*Watch their towers fall – Ryley;* said in response to 'Babylon'

*For the Earth and her survival – Many;* said in response to the second research question of why they speak for the Earth

*Surrounded by all that gives* – **Jewel**; said of the humility of walking in the wild

*I live* – **Yolanda**; said of her being part of the Earth story

*On the Earth my home* – **Yolanda**; echoing the quote above

*The industrial nightmare its foe*– **Kass**; a historians perspective on the enemy of the Earth

*Life grows* – **Naomi**; simple wisdom from the mother

*Flowering through the machine* – **Researcher and Jewel**; the researcher included these paraphrased words from a long story that Jewel told where nature regained its dominance over the machine of capitalism, of the machines of industry breaking down and being the framework through which new life sprouted.

## Fruition

[a song of Shamanic vision]

[Please listen to the third song on the EP entitled 3.Fruition]

*Seeing the Earth as a Seed– **Jack;*** said when he spoke of the Earthrise photos of 1968

*In the Fertile Galaxy – **Jack;*** echoing the quote above

*A living energy– **Jewel;*** said as she spoke of being within the jungle

*It grows – **Naomi;*** said in relation to the word ‘life’

*Spiraling out– **Ryley;*** waxing lyrical about life growing

*Climbing through space– **Researcher and Kass;*** the researcher added the word climbing to echo Ryley and Jewel as they spoke of creeper vines, together with Kass speaking of humanity taking the Earth into space

*Life’s Essence – **Alistair;*** said in relation to standing next to a tree and feeling its energy

*It flows – **Alistair;*** echoing the quote above

*Flowering, - **Jewel;*** a biologist's perspective

*it opens its wings – **Jack;*** said in reverence for life, speaking of watching a butterfly emerging from the cocoon,

*To the Universal light – **Jack;*** spoke of the Earth in relation to the Universe Story



*In all things – **Justine;*** said in response to the life force encountered once one immerses oneself in the wild

*In the natural way – **Alistair;*** said as he spoke of the life cycle of the tree, from seed through to the time it found its way as driftwood to his beach

*It bears new life – **Naomi;*** said in reflection of the Earth as Mother

*A fruition that began – **Many;*** said when they spoke in response to the third research question, the poem ‘seed, tree, Earth, seed’

*As a Seed – **Jack;*** echoing the quote above

## ***Organic***

*[...a story of the organic heartbeat]*

[Please listen to the fourth song on the EP entitled 4.Organic]

*Spiral dance*– **Aron**; said in respect to the poet philosopher Starhawk

*Tribal trance* – **Naomi**; said in relation to the gatherings of Earth warriors in ‘hippy style events

*Feel it in my soul* – **Pedro**; said in response to his reason for being part of grassroots activism.

*Absorbed and amplified at once* – **Ryley**; perspectives of a performance artist

*Fades the digital technology*– **Yolanda**; said in the hope for a return to more simple analogue ways

*It’s Organic*– **Many**; said in connection to the story of the ‘green movement’ that they are part of, linking all three research questions

*It’s like Mythology* – **Kass**; said in response to the words ‘Story of the Earth’

## **Author's Reflections**

### **Beginnings**

At the beginning of the research process, I wrote the poem on the following page, I then transcribed it into song:

[Please listen to the fifth song on the EP entitled 5.Walking Barefoot]

**Walking Barefoot**

*To me,  
The Earth is  
My Home  
My Mother  
The Goddess  
Divine  
The place of Mystery  
That which sustains me  
The Source of Life  
The measureable matter of existence  
Bountiful  
Truth and Beauty*

*That which the modern world  
Does not understand  
Does not respect  
Is not connected to  
Is separated from  
That which we have lost  
And devastated  
And poisoned  
And created elaborate lies  
To deny our responsibility*

*The Earth inspires me  
I am in Awe of its simplicity  
I am in Awe of its complexity*

*I am humble to be part of it*  
*I wish always to immerse myself within it*  
*I find it hard to 'come back' to*  
*Babylon*

*I like walking barefoot*

## **Endings**

At the end of the research process I sang and recorded a song, straight from my heart, I then transcribed it into the words on the following page:

[Please listen to the sixth song on the EP entitled 6.Rising]

**Rising**

*Rising above the Earth  
 Seeing the Earth rise above the moon  
 Not knowing from whence came my birth  
 And knowing it will end too soon*

*But in my time here I will have no fear  
 I will rise up against those who do  
 For they are the ones who seek to devastate  
 And you know, they are only too few*

*Yes they've got the money, they've got the guns  
 They've worked out their system of control  
 Yet we are the poetic lyrical shamans  
 We are the ones who made rock n roll*

*It's all about the freedom to walk our own path  
 Walk down that road, feel the river beside  
 Surrounded by the forests, the oceans, the mountains  
 About that you can never lie*

*In every song I sing I sing for her  
 The one they call Mother Earth  
 She's the one who has been there  
 Within and without me, since the moment of my birth  
 So I will rise like the sun each day  
 I will be the poet and the moon  
 And within each moment, breath and step  
 I will be the one who says that soon;*

*Soon we will reconnect and reflect*

*Soon we shall re-immense within*

*For the Earth and all her beauty*

*We shall always sing*

*We shall always be*

*Rising*



## Epilogue

As a final piece of artistic, Shamanic, activist Storytelling I sat down with my constant researcher's tool – my guitar and wrote some music which reflected where I felt the research was heading next, I chose to write no words, because enough words had been written, yet, following on from the idea of the road ahead, and in respect to one of what I think of as one of the greatest acts of protest for the Earth, I included one more 'ecovision' to echo the feeling of the song composed:

One of my most favourite pieces of graffiti is encountered along the highways of civilization. There, where the super highway has to narrow down to deal with the mountains and rivers and the sign says 'Form 1 Lane' a brilliant brave beautiful soul has taken the courage and imagination to add the letters P and T to the beginning and end of the final word. Thus we are now presented with a much nobler sign of the times

Form1Planet

*Form One Planet (instrumental song)*

[Please listen to the seventh song on the EP entitled 7.Form1Planet]

Photo courtesy of Richard Tipping's art installation, "Form 1 Planet" 1992, permission granted by the University of Newcastle, Australia



For the Earth

It is Our Home

Peace

Robert J Goldspring 2013

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**Appendices**

I - Consent Form for Storytellers

II - Information Sheet for Storytellers

III - Skype Internet Telephone Protocol

IV – Song Lyrics & Musicians

## Appendix I Consent Form For Storytellers

### Consent Form for Storytellers

#### Research Project: ShamanSpeak: Storytellers of the Earth

I, ....., have read the information contained in the Information Sheet for Storytellers and any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

Yes/No

I agree to participate in this activity, realising that I may withdraw at any time. Yes/No

I agree that research data gathered for the study may be published using a pseudonym

Yes/No

I agree to that I could be directly or indirectly quoted in the report of the research

Yes/No

I agree to the interview being audiotape recorded and transcribed. Yes/No

.....

Storyteller

Date

.....

Researcher

Date

## **Appendix II - Information Sheet for Storytellers**

### **Information Sheet for Storytellers**

#### **Research Project: ShamanSpeak: Storytellers Of The Earth**

I wish to invite you to participate in my research on above topic. The details of the study follow and I hope you will consider being involved. I am conducting this research project for my MASTERS at the University of New England. My supervisors are

**Dr Brenda Wolodko** and **Dr Genevieve Noone** of University of New England.

**Dr Wolodko** can be contacted by email at [bwolodko@une.edu.au](mailto:bwolodko@une.edu.au) or by phone on

02 6773 2021 **Dr Noone** can be contacted by email at [gnoone@une.edu.au](mailto:gnoone@une.edu.au) or by phone on 02 67732629

#### **Aim of the Study.**

A phenomenological study of storytellers and their connection to the essence of story, exploring how storytellers connect to their source of inspiration

#### **Time Requirements.**

A phone interview lasting approximately 90 minutes (at my expense) that will be audiotaped/electronically captured.

### **Interviews.**

The interviews will last for approximately 90 minutes. There will be a series of open-ended questions that allow you to explore your views and practices related to your education work. These interviews will be audiotape recorded or electronically captured. Following the interview, a transcript will be provided to you if you wish to see one.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may withdraw from the project at any time and there will be no disadvantage if you decide not to participate or withdraw at any time.

It is unlikely that this research will raise any personal or upsetting issues but if it does you may wish to contact your local Community Health Centre

The audiotapes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's office. The transcriptions will be kept in the same manner for five(5) years following thesis submission and then destroyed.

### **Research Process.**

It is anticipated that this research will be completed by the end of **2010**. The results may also be presented at conferences or written up in journals without any identifying information.

This project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of New England (Approval No. ...., Valid to .././....)

Should you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research is conducted, please contact the Research Ethics Officer at the following address:

Research Services

University of New England

Armidale, NSW 2351.

Telephone: (02) 6773 3449 Facsimile (02) 6773 3543

Email: [ethics@une.edu.au](mailto:ethics@une.edu.au)

Thank you for considering this request and I look forward to further contact with you.

Regards

Robert J Goldspring

### **Appendix III - Skype internet telephone protocol**

#### **Aim of the Study**

A phenomenological study of storytellers and their connection to the essence of story, exploring how storytellers connect to their source of inspiration

#### **Main Research Question**

What is the essence of the inspiration of those who ‘speak’ for the Earth?

#### **Research Interview Questions**

- 1. What is your experience of the story of the Earth**
- 2. What is your experience of being a Storyteller of the Earth**
- 3. What is your response to the cyclical poem**

*Seed*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*Seed*

#### **Sub-questions**

The base questions are:

As this is a conversational interview further questions may be asked to clarify the Storyteller’s responses, such as:

How is your art/profession connected to environmental awareness

What is your role in regards to Earth awareness?



Can you tell me about the inspiration of nature within your storytelling?

Do you feel a connection to the earth's story in your own storytelling?

What is the inspiration that is at the source of your storytelling for the Earth?

Thank you

We begin.....

## **Appendix IV – Song Lyrics & Musicians**

**n.b.** The names of the songs on the actual CD are the working titles the musicians gave themselves in recording and are as such the names the engineer gave to them in the recording process. They still hold the titles given in the thesis within them, yet they may have another word attached. I chose to leave this as it was part of the research process.

**n.b.ii.** The names of the musicians are pseudonyms

*CHAINED RATTLIN SONG*

*Chained to a tree, chained to society*

*Can't break (me)*

*STRANDS*

*Let me tell you a story*

*I was wandering around*

*My head was in a fog,*

*Or was it in a cloud?*

*I was going from place to place*

*Disconnected from it all*

*I needed to find a rope*

*To keep me from a fall*

*I was sitting in a park*

*Finding my peace under a tree.*

*Then wandered up an old gypsea woman*

*She sat down next to me.*

*She began to talk about me*

*And all about my life*

*And how in a previous one,*

*We lived as husband and Wife.*

*Together we thrived,*

*Our love overflowing,*

*In this park we lived,*

*Our spirits interwoven.*

*Stagnation came between us,*

*A dynamic life we did need.*

*We suffered the gypsy curse,*

*The warnings we didn't head.*

*A mob descended and took you,*

*She said with a tear in her eye.*

*They say you murdered a baker,*

*And that was how you came to die.*

*She got up and kissed me,*

*Tenderly said I miss you so.*

*She left me sitting under the tree,*

*Not knowing where to go.*

*About an hour later,*

*I realized something was amiss*

*That gypsy took my wallet,*

*When she gave me that farewell kiss.*

*I began to walk around,*

*Not a penny to my name.*

*Then caught a whiff of something,*

*That gave me a hunger Pain*

*I stood in front of a baker's shop*

*A sign staring at me*

*Went in and asked the lady,*

*If she had a job for me.*

*The woman behind the counter,*

*Was walking in a crutch,*

*We deliver bread by bicycle,*

*The pay is not that much.*

*So I took the job, and a loaf of bread,*

*And worked there every day,*

*Happily delivering the bread,*

*For that measly bit of pay.*

*I fell in love with the baker,*

*She was a little older than me.*

*The first time we made love,*

*Was in that park, under that tree.*

*We'd been married for a year*

*We were sitting by our tree,*

*She told me she was pregnant,*

*Then walked up the old gypsy.*

*She gave me back my wallet.*

*Everything was still in there*

*You needed some help my dears,*

*Now everything is square.*

*See, it was me who took your father,*

*She said to my wife,*

*For some bread and a couple of dollar,*

*And it cost me my husband's life.*

*Now everything and everyone's*

*Connected on this earth,*

*Hopefully some wrong we've done*

*Will be cleansed by this birth.*

*First she kissed both my cheeks,*

*Then she kissed my wife,*

*Everything and everyone's connected,*

*These are the strands of life.*





*SUB SOURCE SISTENCE SONG*

*Up from below*

*Down from within*

*Threads, roots, connecting*

*Source, the core, sustaining*

*Out from the edge*

*Going from everywhere*

*Life, simultaneous, unfolding,*

*The pattern, twisting and turning*

*Ambrosia, soma, realization forming*

*Shamanic, immersion, wild nature storming*

*And water falls,*

*Down through the earth it flows*

*Deeper and deeper seeking the source*

*Up from below*

*It rises*

*GREEN RHYTHM SONG*

*Fruit of the Earth*

*Amidst the shades of Green*

*How Beautiful is this*

*And I am the Seed*

*The companies can't take*

*What the Earth freely Gives*

*I walk on the Earth*

*And the Earth in me Lives*

*A Connection*

*A Relationship*

*A Harmony*

*Within this Blessed Space*

*I am Flowing Free*

*Children of the Earth*

*Amidst the shades of Green*

*From the fruit that is borne*

*We find the Seed*

*Planted in our dreams*

*With passion becomes reality*

*Living together on the Earth*

*We all become the Tree*

*WILD FOLK SONG*

*From the forest to the ocean*

*Raging water powerful and wild*

*Older than I can imagine*

*I am but a child*

*Of the Earth*

*Wind in the trees*

*Eagles soaring powerful and wild*

*Respect the sacred space*

*I am but a child*

*Of the Earth*

*Have to tell their story*

*The vision of the activist*

*Connecting*

*Have to tell its story*

*The experience of the forest*

*Hold on*

*In awe and grief and delight*

*I am a forest child*

*I am the voice for those who cannot speak*

*I speak for the Wild*

*HERE BEING SONG*

*Wired for sound*

*But are you walking on the ground*

*Device in your hand*

*Are you feet on the land*

*Supermarket sale*

*Yet have you heard the whales*

*Are beaching themselves*

*Trying to get you to sit up and take note*

*Consumer throw away*

*Did you see the sunrise today?*

*Hooked into the social net*

*Sea turtles drowning in the net*

*Smelter smokestack pays the bills*

*How many babies killed*

*To keep your economy rolling*

*And your dollar afloat?*

*Is this place your home*

*Or are you just dying here*

*Cause I'm keen to be living*

*And I am not going to live in fear*

*Of your mean corporate politics*

*Your right wing dirty tricks*

*I'm livin clean I'm livin green*

*I am living here*



*HEARD SONG**Currents,**Ebbs and flows**Tides of history**Yet who knows**Where it will go?**Myth,**Laughter and tears**Lessons of life**Yet who hears**Beyond their fear?**A story of us all**On a world turning**Yet do we turn the page?**Or do we stay stagnant and die**Destroyed by our ignorance and rage?**Who is listening?*

*Who is listening?*

*To the shaman who speaks from beyond the cities walls*

*To the bird whom with natures song calls*

*To the truth shouting from within our words*

*Who will never hear?*

*Who has already heard?*

*Are you one of the Heard?*

*SUN LIGHT SONG*

*Enduring and magnificent, rising and falling*

*Falling and rising*

*Subtle and overwhelming, A journey in their story,*

*A story in their journey*

*Beautiful and true, shaped and shapers*

*Shapers and shaped*

*I stand in their shadow and know the power of the sun*

*MOTHER EARTH SONG**Mother**Respect**Blood**Connect**Womb**Grows**Life**Flows**Mother**Sustains**Desert**Rains**Seed**Sprouts**Life*

*Shouts*

*Mother*

*Source*

*Rivers*

*Course*

*Fruit*

*Birth*

*Tree*

*Earth*

*VEIL SONG**Candles in the fading light**The smell of the ocean**A gentle mystery that lifts my being**The softest smoothest touch**Lifts the veil to seeing**My fingers moving slowly**Over the landscape presented**I attempt to capture life's intensity**The colors on my brush**Wish to, like life, be free**I spin, I twirl, I dance**In all the patterns and textures (romance)**I lay myself down amongst**The contours and the curves*

*I immerse myself within*

*Its ever flowing giving*

*Yet never can I paint life as it deserves*

*STICKS PLAYED TOGETHER SONG*

*Birth, Conscious Life, Death*

*Spirit*

*The Land, the People, Spirit*

*Dreaming*

*The Void, Place, Dreaming*

*The Fire*

*Air, Water, Fire*

*Earth*

*In this Country they know how to read*

*The story of the Earth*

*In this Country they know how to sing*

*The song of Fire*

*In this Country they know how to listen*

*To the Dreaming*

*In this Country they know that what connects*



*Is Spirit*

*They draw the story with sticks in the dirt*

*They sing the song with sticks played in rhythm*

*They make fire rubbing sticks together*

*But we are stuck in the cities and we don't fucking remember*

*SEED SONG**For the Earth**I sing my song**For the Earth**To which we all belong**For the Earth**Direct action given**For the Earth**That which in me is living**For the Earth**I seek mystery**For the Earth**That which is true beauty**For the Earth**I deeply connect*

*For the Earth*

*For she is perfect*

*CONNECTION*

*[a song of inner passion]*

*Lying in your bed*

*Demons in your head*

*About what you could have done*

*As the years passed by*

*You've been livin a lie*

*And now there's nowhere to run*

*The demons in your face*

*Says is this your place*

*Is this planet your home*

*Cause if you don't act soon*

*It will be as dead as the moon*

*And no poet will write a poem*

*This is the poem for the Dead Earth*

*The rhyme of the crime of humanity*

*This is the lament for the lost souls*

*Who destroyed their truth and their beauty*

*The demon takes your mind*

*Leaves you staring blind*

*At the world you had failed to see*

*As you crawl in the dirt*

*You feel the pain and the hurt*

*Of this Earth that only wished for you to be free*

*What is your story, are you connected*

*Are you part of it all, have you reflected*

*The demon leaves you lying*

*Your heart bleeds into the soil*

*To give life to the waiting seed*

*As new life flows*

*Maybe hope grows*

*And brings an end to the stupidity and greed*

*And maybe we won't have to sing the Poem of the Dead Earth*

*FRUITION**[a song of Shamanic vision]**Seeing the Earth as a Seed**In the Fertile Galaxy**A living energy**It grows**Spiraling out**Climbing through space**Life's Essence**It flows**Flowering,**it opens its wings**To the Universal light**In all things**In the natural way*

*It bears new life*

*A fruition that began*

*As a Seed*



*ORGANIC*

*[a story of the organic heartbeat]*

*Spiral dance*

*Tribal trance*

*Feel it in my soul*

*Absorbed and Amplified at once*

*Fades the digital technology*

*It's Organic*

*It's like Mythology*

*SURVIVAL**[a song of coming back to Earth]**Enveloped by everything**I sing**To the Earth my home**Immersed with the essence**Of her**The Earth my Queen**Yet they're draggin me out**I scream and shout**And go primal**I chant and I call**Watch their towers fall**For the Earth and her Survival**Surrounded by all that gives*

*I live*

*On the Earth my home*

*The industrial nightmare its foe*

*Life grows*

*Flowering through the chemical machine*

*WALKING BAREFOOT**To me,**The Earth is**My Home**My Mother**The Goddess**Divine**The place of Mystery**That which sustains me**The Source of Life**The measureable matter of existence**Bountiful**Truth and Beauty**That which the modern world**Does not understand**Does not respect**Is not connected to*

*Is separated from*

*That which we have lost*

*And devastated*

*And poisoned*

*And created elaborate lies*

*To deny our responsibility*

*The Earth inspires me*

*I am in Awe of its simplicity*

*I am in Awe of its complexity*

*I am humble to be part of it*

*I wish always to immerse myself within it*

*I find it hard to 'come back' to*

*Babylon*

*I like walking barefoot*

*RISING*

*Rising above the Earth*

*Seeing the Earth rise above the moon*

*Not knowing from whence came my birth*

*And knowing it will end too soon*

*But in my time here I will have no fear*

*I will rise up against those who do*

*For they are the ones who seek to devastate*

*And you know, they are only too few*

*Yes they've got the money, they've got the guns*

*They've worked out their system of control*

*Yet we are the poetic lyrical shamans*

*We are the ones who made rock n roll*

*It's all about the freedom to walk our own path*

*Walk down that road, feel the river beside*

*Surrounded by the forests, the oceans, the mountains*

*About that you can never lie*

*In every song I sing I sing for her*

*The one they call mother Earth*

*She's the one who has been there*

*Within and without me, since the moment of my birth*

*So I will rise like the sun each day*

*I will be the poet and the moon*

*And within each moment, breath and step*

*I will be the one who says that soon;*

*Soon we will reconnect and reflect*

*Soon we shall re-immense within*

*For the Earth and all her beauty*

*We shall always sing*

*We shall always be*

*Rising*

## **Musicians**

Mr Reed: Guitars/Vocals/Percussion

Mr Slyde: Dobro

Mr Tosh: Guitars/Piano/Percussion

Mr Houston: Percussion

Mr Zee: Bass/Guitars/Vocals

Mr Raja: Percussion

Mr Blakjak Davy: Percussion

Mr Kasongo: Percussion

Mr SonicArk: Guitars/Bass

Mr Seanachai: Mandolin/Bodhran

Mr Baro: Bass/Percussion/Vocals

Ms Diva: Vocals/Percussion

The Bard: Vocals/Guitars/Harmonica/Percussion

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<sup>25</sup> The Instrumental 'Form1Planet' is this Bard's non-spoken tribute to the musicians who play the Song of the Earth.



SHAMANSPEAK: THE STORYTELLERS OF THE EARTH

ROBERT J GOLDSRING 2013

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## STORYTELLER OF THE EARTH

The towering Blue Gum tree above him swayed gently in its higher branches in the cool Southern Ocean breeze. Beside his face he could feel its cool smooth bark containing the immensity of its living breathing strength. Beneath his feet the Earth contained the roots of this mighty warrior whom the company men had come to take away and turn into woodchips for some random garden.

As he placed his ear to the trunk he tried to listen to the song of the tree. What he heard it singing within his heart was directed to the company men and their private army of the police force. The tree asked

“Is this place your home? I am living here”.

Like a sudden intake of Ambrosia there was a realization forming within the activist...up from below it rises. He could feel the soul of the Earth reaching out from the depths towards him like some ancient being of Myth, and he shed both laughter and tears and he asked out loud,

“Who hears beyond their fears?”

Closing his eyes again he reached out with his own soul to the thriving dynamic strands of life. He made an affirmation to himself.

“From the Forest to the Ocean I am a child of the Earth”

Looking up once more to the enduring and magnificent being of life that was the Blue Gum that he was chained to he thought of it at first as a seed which now towered so beautiful and

true towards the sky and in its story he beheld the power of the sun. Looking with his human mind and eye he thought of what he would do to keep this memory ingrained within his vision yet he acknowledges his own limitation when he said,

“Never can I paint life as it deserves”.

As the company men and the police advanced towards him with their tools of oppression and economics he called out to the Earth,

“Mother respect”

When the police asked him his name he responded,

“Fruit of the earth I am the seed”

When the newsman asked why he felt the need to protest in this way he looked calmly into his eye and said,

“They don’t fucking remember”

And as the police and the company men swarmed over him and broke the chains that held him connected to the organic living tree whose survival he fought for he felt the fruition of the wisdom that the Earth in me is living and he screamed,

“You can’t break me!”



