

***Explorations as the Driving Force***  
**Maggie Carey, Rob Hall & Shona Russell**  
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**Maggie:** And for this little bit now could we talk briefly about one other continuing initiative? – Michael’s legacy around the development of ideas and thinking in the context of what’s happening in the field of social and human inquiry, how he initiated those opportunities for us to get together and talk about ideas in those years before he passed away. Always with explorations being the driving force, not to come to any conclusions or to have to do anything with these ideas necessarily but to see what they triggered and sparked. We had lovely conversations around kitchen tables and dining room tables, at every meal. How are we have been able to continue here, meeting regularly every month with some paper somebody’s found somewhere that is interesting or could be interesting to read.

**Shona:** What are we reading at the moment?

**Maggie & Rob:** Corporal Generosity (Corporal Generosity: On giving with Nietzsche, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas by Rosalyn Diprose)

**Shona:** And before that we were reading?

**Maggie:** A lot on Deleuze, neuroscience, neuro-psychology and the fit with narrative practice (a few sessions on that), the effect of trauma on the body (how we work with that in our therapeutic conversations), lots of topics...

**Shona:** One of the things I like about that is how we’ve been able to quite deliberately invite some younger practitioners into those conversations with us. It’s a bit of a wider network of men and women, all working in the field, to share ideas, not having to come to a final point yet, just the enthusiasm of sharing ideas.

**Rob:** There is that theme again, of being at the point of social inquiry, not coming up with the answers, but being intensely interested in where things are going on, and what they might spark.

**Shona:** So many people recognize the contribution Michael made in that way – if we look at many of the authors that have contributed to what narrative practice has become, they are people outside of our field, and I guess in a way that is what we’re trying to do, to stimulate our thoughts by people outside of the field of social work and psychology.

**Maggie:** And this is giving us even more rich accounts of narrative practices, like this round on “corporal generosity” and the real focus on those experiences of life, our bodies have experiences of life, these stories are not disembodied. What I enjoy is the ways in which these

explorations take us right out into other fields and spark & explore new territory, and how much we seem to enjoy linking it back to narrative practice, what this contributes to practice and what this might give a richer account of practice and ideas.

**Shona:** I was thinking about the intention that Michael had to keep working on recent developments in the field. I think we've been intentional in playing a small part into writing some papers over the last couple of years – contributions to journals that perhaps keep our connection with Michael vibrant about ways about ways we are taking narrative practice forward.

**Maggie:** yeah, and that is ongoing. We are going to spend even more time on some of these particular intentions and themes.

**Rob:** One article or presentation that stood out to me, Maggie was when you presented at the conference in Canada on the Absent but Implicit. The Feedback that came from people how much they felt Michael's presence and ideas in the room...how it was a continuation. That links you and us clearly with Michael's intention of extending that work

**Shona:** Was that the beautiful presentation where Maggie had black-and-white photo of Michael and a black & white photo of Deleuze next to each other? There was a remarkable similarity. That was a brainwave!

**Maggie:** Yeah, I like to imagine them in conversation. They are such lovely inspirations that we as a group have the opportunity to further develop now and, how those inspirations that Michael has given us and continues to give us, thickening the threads and bonds between us and as well as between us and between other people in the field. It's very lovely to have the opportunities for the three of us to reflect on these.

**Shona:** But I would like to acknowledge, the effort you put into that, Maggie,. I think a lot of your work has been continuing to teach in centres outside of Australia. Rob and I know because we know how many days you are not here; how many months of the year that is. It was for Michael too. It demands a lot to do that. I know that it's linked to an intention that you have, which is to continue to share the work that Michael shared with us, to continue to collaborate with other centres. It's very inspiring to think about some of the centres we've been asked to work with, and continue to be. I'm thinking about the one year course in Mexico now, which is now in its second year.

**Maggie:** Yes, that is a course that Alfonso Diaz is facilitating in Mexico and that Shona and I participate in, to do a couple of units. It's such a strongly established and exciting course, to be able to see the level of practice, the degree to which people have the facility in the practice, is very exciting.

**Shona:** One of the things that is so exciting about that—the practitioners in the course are working in very complex difficult circumstances –politically, in community, in therapeutic

work... in every realm of the work. My experience of being in an audience like that, its very exciting, we are almost on the edge of what we know all the time. Therefore, to teach into that context makes narrative practice accountable to those contexts-when that goes well, it's very exciting! It's very expansive. To me that's an example that we are showing that the practices of narrative therapy are accountable in these contexts which are very extending.

**Maggie:** In the context of the work with Aboriginal workers here in Adelaide, We find ourselves on the edge of our learning. It's very exciting.

**Rob:** That is something that was really important to Michael in that work and very important to us as well and in the training course