



a/b
Auto/Biography Study
Group

BSA Auto/Biography Study Group
Summer Conference
New Beginnings

12-14th July 2023
Wolfson College, Oxford



BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

BSA Registered Charity Number: 1080235

New Beginnings

Welcome

Dear Friends

Welcome to the 31st BSA Auto/Biography Study Group Summer Conference, taking place at Wolfson College, Oxford 12-14th July 2023. In this document you will find a programme overview, a full programme plus abstracts, a delegate list, and some useful information about Wolfson.

We are so much looking forward to seeing you all. Here's to a stimulating and enriching conference.

Very best wishes

Gayle Letherby and Aidan Seery BSA Auto/Biography study group summer conference organisers
Anne Chappell and Carly Stewart, BSA Auto/Biography study group convenors



The Programme at a Glance

WEDNESDAY 12th July

14.15-14.50	Registration. Coffee, tea and cake (The Buttery)
15.00-16.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
19.00–late(r) (Bar open until 22.30)	Pre-dinner drinks, card bar (on the lawn, weather permitting). Dinner (19.45) and card bar, THE HALDANE ROOM

THURSDAY 13th July

8.00-9.00	Breakfast (The Main Dining Room)
9.00-9.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
9.55-10.45	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
10.45-11.10	Coffee, tea and biscuits (The Buttery)
11.10-12.00	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
12.05-13.05	David Brown, Keynote (The Auditorium)
13.05-14.00	Lunch (THE HALDANE ROOM)
14.00-14.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
14.55-15.45	INSTALLATIONS (The Buttery)
15.45-16.20	Coffee, tea and cake (The Buttery)
16.20-17.10	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
19.00-late(r) (Bar open until 22.30)	Pre-dinner drinks, card bar (on the lawn, weather permitting). Dinner(19.45) with drinks and card bar, THE HALDANE ROOM

FRIDAY 14th July

8.00-9.00	Breakfast (The Main Dining Room)
9.00-9.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
9.55-10.45	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
10.45-11.15	Coffee, tea and biscuits (The Buttery)
11.15-12.05	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
12.10-13.00	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and The Buttery)
13.00 – 14:00	Lunch (THE HALDANE ROOM) CONFERENCE ENDS

Programme

WEDNESDAY 13th July 2022

14.15-14.50 Registration. Coffee/tea and cake THE BUTTERY

15.00-16.50 (Double Session, including comfort break) Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
<p>The Ambiguities of New Beginnings: Austerity and the New Look, Affluence and the Mini Skirt Jenny Byrne and Michael Erben</p> <p>Chair: Terry Martin</p>	<p>Crafting Autoethnography: making ourselves anew/a new/world? Jackie Goode, Jan Bradford and Mark Price</p> <p>NB: This presentation will last between 1 hour and 1 hour 15 mins which will be followed by a general discussion of the relationship between creativity and auto/biography</p> <p>Chair: Gayle Letherby</p>

19.00 - Pre-dinner drinks on the lawn, weather permitting (card bar).
19.45 - Dinner (plus card bar) THE HALDANE ROOM

THURSDAY 13th July 2022

8.00-9.00 Breakfast - The Main Dining Room

9.00-9.50 Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
<p>Love, death and sharing: An auto/biographical approach to re-connecting with others after the pandemic Cheralyn May</p> <p>Chair: Louise Owusu-Kwarteng</p>	<p>New Beginnings: Changing Biographies in a Post-Communist Society Anna Soulsby</p> <p>Chair: Karen Hanrahan</p>

9.55-10.45 Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
<p>“Too Dangerous to Address Girls”, exploring Ethel Snowden’s importance to socialism and feminism in the early years of the 20th century Christine Lewis</p> <p>Chair: Anne Chappell</p>	<p>Chair: Re-enchanting the present. The stories my grandmother never told me Ewa Sidorenko</p> <p>Chair: Yvonne Anderson</p>

10.45-11.10 Coffee, tea and biscuits THE BUTTERY

11.10-12.00 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Places of escape through creative critical reflection Beth Moran	Arturo Barea an involuntary new beginning and its consequences Aidan Seery
Chair: Tracey Collett	Chair: Jackie Goode

12.05-13.05 KEYNOTE (The Auditorium)
AUTO/BIOGRAPHY AND SECOND GENERATION PRACTICE THEORY David Brown
Chair: Carly Stewart

13.05-14.00 LUNCH (Haldane Room)

14.00-14.50 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
The Queen's Wife: written on paper and in bone Joanne Drayton	Mothering-as-new-beginning: Reconstructing my Self through talking and writing Esther Van Der Walt
Chair: Michael Erben	Chair: Beth Moran

14.55-15.45 INSTALLATIONS (The Buttery)
Commuter students' experiences of travelling to and from university Anne Chappell, Emma Wainwright and Ellen McHugh
Teaching Coats: Tracey Collett
Hair Today Gayle Letherby
'Acceptance': Ten years of opportunities for new beginnings: Julie Parsons
From struggling at school to starting a business: Moments of social entrepreneurship participation in the lives of at-risk young people: Carly Stewart, Esther Anwuzia, and Preethi Rajaprakasam

15.45-16.20 Coffee, tea and cake THE BUTTERY
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16.10-17.10 Academic Presentations**Seminar Room 3**

Mothers' voices within the Epistolary mode: Evaluating the nexus of historical and contemporary letters from The Women's Cooperative Guild Maternity in the early 20th century and The Mothership Writers Group of the 21st Century in beginning their new experiences as a 'good enough mother' within England

Amanda Norman

Chair: Judith Chapman

19.00- Pre-dinner drinks on the lawn, weather permitting (card bar).
19.45 - Conference Dinner with drinks (and card bar) THE HALDANE ROOM

FRIDAY 16th July 2022

8.00-9.00 Breakfast- The Main Dining Room

9.00.-9.50 Academic Presentations**Seminar Room 2**

'I'm Doing it My Way' A Sociological Auto/Biography of a newly appointed Associate Dean for Student Success

Louise Owusu-Kwarteng

Chair: Christine Lewis

Seminar Room 3

Lives re-imagined: the teaching vocations of former nuns **Karen Hanrahan**

Chair: Jenny Byrne

9.55-10.45-Academic Presentations**Seminar Room 2**

'If I can't dance I don't want to be part of your revolution(s)': on working together in and outside of the academy **Gayle Letherby and Tracey Collett**

Chair: Karin Bacon

Seminar Room 3

Retirement **Terry Martin**

Chair: Mark Price

10.45-11.15 Coffee, tea and biscuits THE BUTTERY

11.15-12.05 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Trail blazing? Primary School Curriculum reform – opportunities for new beginnings Karin Bacon	Saying Goodbye: ‘Grown-Up’ Children from Military Families Anne Chappell, Ellen McHugh and Christopher Ince
Chair: Cheralyn May	Chair: Ewa Sidorenko

12.10-13.00 Academic Presentations
Seminar Room 3
The transformative power of research: a journey from the margins to the House of Lords Geraldine Brown
Chair: Aidan Seery

13.00-14.00 LUNCH (THE HALDANE ROOM) and DEPART

ABSTRACTS

Keynote

David Brown

AUTO/BIOGRAPHY AND SECOND GENERATION PRACTICE THEORY

The gradual rise in the use of what has been termed 'second generation' practice theory (Schatzki et al 2001) is increasingly evident across the social sciences. Its development has been particularly prevalent in the area of sustainability research (Shove and Spurling, 2013), although more recently this focus has begun to broaden to include a wide range of themes and issues including physical activity, health and technology practices to name a few. In short, any area where researchers are ultimately interested in what we actually do, and the externally referenced consequences of that doing, can benefit from a practice theory approach, due to the way it isolates and interrogates the so-called attitude-behaviour split (Haluzá-Delay, 2008) and also how it focuses on social change as a fundamental concern (Schatzki, 2019). While initially, this may seem antithetical to the ideational focus of auto/biographical enquiry, this does not mean that people's beliefs and knowledge around the things they do have become unimportant to practice theory researchers. On the contrary, better understanding the meanings and perceived competencies surrounding a given practice remains critical to 'intervention framing' (Spurling and McMeekin, 2015) as well as identifying aspects such as the fossilisation and revitalisation of practices (Shove & Pantzar). In addition, practices can be affective (Reckwitz, 2017), and used to anchor our routines and our identities (Swidler 2001). Moreover, they have increasingly have been shown to impact upon the deeper formation of our embodiment (Maller, 2017). When looked at in these various ways, the focus on practices as both entity and performance (Schatzki, 2000) refreshes the idea of a bridging concept in the study of relations between the individual and society, agency and structure. Indeed, Schatzki (2000: 14) summarises "the attribution of order to practice nexuses differentiates practice thinking from both the individualist and traditional nonindividualist camps." However, identifying and locating practices in society, amongst social groups and individuals is not easy and this leads us back to auto/biographical approaches. I want to argue that auto/biographical approaches combined with a practice theory lens offers a powerful way of identifying what we do, with why we do it and the impact that doing has on us and the world around us. Re-imagining C-Wright Mills' (1959) sociological imagination through second generation practice theory allows us to revisit the relations between biography, history and society and re-invigorate our engagement with a wide range social issues and themes.

References

- Haluzá-DeLay, R. (2008). A theory of practice for social movements: Environmentalism and ecological habitus. *Mobilization: An International Quarterly*, 13(2): 205-218.
- Mills, C. W. (2000). *The Sociological Imagination*. Oxford University Press.
- Reckwitz, A. (2017). Practices and their affects. In A. Hui, T. Schatzki, & E. Shove (Eds) *The Nexus of Practices* (pp. 126-137). Oxon: Routledge
- Schatzki, T. R. (2001). Introduction: Practice Theory. In T. Schatzki, K. Knorr Cetina and E. Von Savigny, (Eds). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory* (pp. 10-23). London: Routledge.
- Schatzki, T. R., Knorr-Cetina, K., & Von Savigny, E. (Eds.). (2001). *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schatzki, T. R. (2019). *Social Change in a Material World*. London: Routledge.

Shove, E., & Pantzar, M. (2005) Fossilisation. *Ethnologia Europaea*. 35, 1-2: 59-63.

Shove, E., & Spurling, N. (2013). *Sustainable Practices: Social Theory and Climate Change*. Oxford: Routledge.

David Brown is a Professor in the Sociology of Sport and Physical Culture Cardiff School of Sport, Cardiff Metropolitan University. David's research interests concern the development of interpretive sociological understandings of the body-self-society relationship in the fields of sport and physical culture. Currently his areas of research focus include exploring cultures of combat as transformative physical cultural practice and relationships between sports, physical culture and sustainability. Previous research has included enquiry into a range of sporting and physical cultures including, male bodybuilding identity and body projects, the corporeal (and gendered) socialisation in surfing culture and Higher Education sports cultures and physical education teacher education.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Karin Bacon

Trail blazing? Primary School Curriculum reform – opportunities for new beginnings

Since the advent of Ireland's political independence 100 years ago there have been three major changes to national curricula in primary schools in Ireland, namely in 1922 (updated in 1926), in 1971 (the 'New' curriculum) and in 1999 (the 'Revised' curriculum). This paper examines some key insights from an analysis of 100 years of curriculum development and implementation in Ireland [Walsh, T. 2016]. During this period, influences on the curriculum evolved from a colonial, to a nationalist to a child-centred perspective and each had a particular impact on the design, content and delivery of the curriculum in schools. These evolving influences also affected the role of the teacher, the concept of the learner and the nature of how learning is transacted in schools. In this paper, I examine not only these changes but map my own educational journey at these times of new beginnings. The 1971 Curriculum was introduced the same year that I entered primary school. The 1999 curriculum was introduced as I returned from teaching abroad and took up a role with the Department of Education and Science to work in curriculum development. This paper is now written as the Primary Curriculum Framework is launched [2023], the latest iteration of Irish Primary education.

References

Department of Education. [2023] Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools. Dublin: Department of Education.

Department of Education and Science. [1999] Primary school curriculum. Dublin: The Stationery Office.

Department of Education. [1971]. Primary School Curriculum: Teacher's Handbook – Part 1 and Part 2. Dublin: Department of Education.

Walsh, Thomas (2016). 100 years of primary curriculum development and implementation in Ireland: a tale of a swinging pendulum, *Irish Educational Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/03323315.2016.1147975

Geraldine Brown

The transformative power of research: a journey from the margins to the House of Lords

It is commonly accepted that research that is co-produced can operate as a tool to reduce the power imbalances that traditional forms of research can reproduce by 'offering the potential to resituate those residing in the margins, bringing them into the centre of knowledge produced about (by) them' (Harding, 2020:1 and Brady et al., 2012). Drawing on a recently completed study, in this paper I share how co-production is an effective gateway for thinking about our everyday lives and a catalyst for self-reflection, understanding and change. The transformative power of co-production is that it can be a site for self-actualisation for those already marginalised within wider society, and far too often hidden in traditional research practices. The study, *Ethnic Minority Communities, Crime and Gambling Harms* was commissioned by The Gambling Commission on Crime and led by the Howard League for Penal Reform. The study was co-produced with peer researchers with lived experience of gambling harms working

collaboratively with academics and supported by representatives from a third sector gambling treatment and support service (Brown et al, 2023). The research carried out, over a 12-month period, created a safe space for the team to engage in a dynamic process of dialogue and learning. The study encouraged a sense of community and a shared ethics of care between all involved. Peer researchers' engagement went beyond generating research findings that would contribute to changes associated with the gambling industry and policy response to gambling harms as it also presented a 'redemptive' opportunity and a site for reparation, personal growth, which facilitated new ways of knowing, doing and being.

References

- Brown, G. Trebilcock, J., Harding, N., (2023) *Lived experiences of gambling, gambling-related harms, and crime within ethnic minority communities*, London: Howard League for Penal Reform
- Brady, G. Brown, G. and Wilson, C. (2012) 'Young mothers' experiential knowledge and the research process' in Barnes, M. and Cotterell, P. (eds.) *Critical perspectives on user involvement*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Harding, N. (2020) 'Co-constructing feminist research: Ensuring meaningful participation whilst researching the experiences of criminalised women', *Methodological Innovations*, 13(2): 1-14.

Jenny Bryne and Michael Erben (Two linked papers)

The Ambiguities of New Beginnings: Austerity and the New Look, Affluence and the Mini Skirt

Two differing New Beginnings it would be hard to imagine than the arrival in 1947 of Christian Dior's New Look in an impoverished Paris and the arrival of Mary Quant's Mini Skirt in the cheerful, affluent London of 1968. That these were significant cultural episodes and important events in social and economic history has been well and justifiably rehearsed. The New Look caused a sensation. Its Paris debut after the recent Nazi occupation and accompanying austerities had a remarkable effect on dress choices internationally. The launch of the Mini Skirt in the mid 1960s too had a dramatic influence but of a different kind to that of the New Look and was a fashion, that in many ways, it supplanted. The Mini Skirt arrived in a society without food shortages and well-removed from the shadow of World War Two. It was taken up by the Baby Boom generation with ease and alacrity and for whom the fact that their elders raised complaints served only to increase its appeal and ubiquity. The New Look and The Mini-skirt affected the lives of British women in a variety of ways and it is the purpose of these companion papers using autobiographical and biographical accounts of the time to examine what cultural meanings and what sartorial influences the New Look and the Mini Skirt had for British women.

Anne Chappell, Ellen McHugh and Christopher Ince

Saying Goodbye: 'Grown-Up' Children from Military Families

There is a growing interest in the experiences of military families. The ongoing foci in research, policy and practice is on serving members of the military, veterans, and their families, including school-aged children (Walker, Selous and Misca, 2020). The Office for Students noted that children from military families face 'equality gaps and support needs' (OfS, 2020: p.36) and the government's Service Pupil Premium funding has been given to schools since 2011 to support the specific challenges these children face (MoD, 2021). Their childhoods are often characterised in discourse as both homogenous and deficit. However, we know very little about these childhood and educational experiences from the perspective of those now grown up: they are notable by their absence.

This paper will share research that explored the auto/biographical accounts of 'grown-up' children from military families aged between eighteen and eighty collected through questionnaires and auto/biographical interviews. The paper examines their social experiences of moving from place to place, drawing on ideas about everyday life, affinities, belonging and nostalgia. Reflections on the impact of their experiences on their lives, and those around them, provide a challenge to the characterisations of homogeneity and deficit. The evident complexity highlights the vital importance of further research with these 'grown-ups' to develop more detailed and nuanced understandings, generating knowledge to inform policy-making and provide support for those children who are currently having similar experiences, their families, and the adults working with them.

References

- Ministry of Defence (2021) Service Pupil Premium: what you need to know [accessed 12th April 2023]
Office for Students (2020) Transforming opportunity in higher education: An analysis of 2020-21 to 2024-25 access and participation plans. London: OfS.
Walker, Sealous and Misca (2020) Living in our shoes: Understanding the needs of UK Armed Forces families. London: MoD

Joanne Drayton ***The Queen's Wife: written on paper and in bone***

My intention is to take memoir in a new direction. Therefore, *The Queen's Wife* (Penguin: 2023) is made up of three strands woven together. The main arc is an autobiographical thread. The other threads explore my partner's Māori whakapapa, or ancestry, and mine is a search for tribal objects—principally, the Lewis chess pieces. The three strands are bound together by the rules of the chess game, which is both metaphor and materiality. What is most unusual about the concept of *The Queen's Wife* is that it goes beyond the page into the world of objects. It is a story written both on paper and in bone.

At my first biography conference at King's College London (2009), I was asked how I would go about writing an autobiography. I said that I wanted to carve my story in lines incised on bone. I had already begun carving a response to the Lewis chess pieces, and felt these objects were emblematic of my heritage. The more I worked on them, the more their story became interwoven with mine. The game of chess with its oppositional premise, strict hierarchy, patriarchy, heterosexuality, rules, strategies, taboos—victories and losses—resonated. Ultimately, carving these pieces, and a Māori side, became the inspiration for a written life-text, which would become an all-consuming conversation between words and objects.

This paper explores the carving of a post-colonial chess set, the writing of a memoir, and their relationship to memory and longing for a connection to the past.

Jackie Goode Jan Bradford and Mark Price **Crafting Autoethnography: making ourselves anew/a new/world?**

The concept of 'New Beginnings' provoked revisiting themes that emerged in our new edited collection(1). Our three linked presentations explore these themes.

The collection includes a variety of creative practices (writing; dance, drama/composition; stitching/knitting, drawing/collage; photography; walking; museum curation), offering illuminating accounts of autoethnographic 'making'. What is striking is how much the pandemic and the constraints it imposed on our lives, figure in these accounts – bringing the ways we make ourselves and wider culture into focus, through altering our experiences of temporality.

Through an interplay between our individual and joint narratives, we examine constructions of time, raising questions such as whether the idea of 'new beginnings' is predicated on Chronos - 'chronological' linear time, punctuated by sequences such as beginnings/endings/new beginnings; past/present/future; and how far lockdowns offered Kairos - moments of recognition, opportunities for new departures.

Writing independently, contributors' accounts mysteriously echoed each other in describing experiences of: 'losing track of time'; time 'out of joint'; movement, stillness and 'stuckness'; 'a pendulum swinging backwards and forwards; nostalgia; past, present and future existing simultaneously; departing from a well-worn path to an elsewhere that allowed 'dreaming', 'imaginings', 'dwelling'.

If being held in 'limbtopia', experiencing time in looping configurations, saw us re-evaluating ourselves and our social worlds, what are the implications of the 'opening up' in which we are now – still - engaged, for beginnings of new worlds?

Reference

- (1) Goode, J., Lumsden, K. and Bradford, J. (Eds.) (2023) *Crafting Autoethnography: Process and Practice in Making Self and Culture* London: Routledge

Karen Hanrahan

“Nun, done”: Former nuns’ experience of leaving and life after the convent

No study exists in the Irish context which explores the testimonies of former nuns, particularly those who entered religious life pre-Vatican II (1962-65). Drawing on my interdisciplinary doctoral project, which adopts a life history approach to foreground the life stories of Irish nuns who left the convent, I consider the role that education played in developing their sense of agency, enabling them to transcend pre-conciliar beliefs around obedience to which they had been conditioned and helping them to cope with change. Education enabled movement, socially, geographically, spiritually, and psychologically, and for some these shifts within the self ultimately engendered a move beyond convent walls. A key consideration is how wider structural change, such as Vatican II and the Free Education Scheme in Ireland (1967), led to shifts within self and community. Life history methodology is a particularly appropriate means to understand the intersection of institutional and personal experience and the tension between the collective and the individual which characterised religious life in the pre-conciliar era. One of the striking themes emerging from the women’s life stories is their steadfast commitment to their teaching vocation, and those who left retained this professional identity after leaving. For many who broke their vows, years of infantilisation made adjusting to secular life a significant challenge – mentally, socially, emotionally and financially. Few were supported in this transition. As the daughter of a former nun, I am afforded a unique auto/biographical perspective within the research as I consider how my narrative inheritance is bound up with my mother’s new beginning.

Gayle Letherby and Tracey Collett

‘If I can’t dance I don’t want to be part of your revolution(s)’: on working together in and outside of the academy

We have both, independently and with others, long been interested in collaboration within an institution (the academy) that publicly supports such work whilst in reality often works against it. Thus, we challenge (alone, with others and together) traditional definitions and myths of working and learning in higher education. With particular reference to our working practices although on paper our relationship is that of mentor (Gayle) and mentee (Tracey) in reality it is much more complicated. So, Gayle is indebted to Tracey for facilitating and supporting Gayle’s need to work, both financially and psychologically, and Tracey, who works in an environment that is not always enriching and can be very hierarchical, is grateful to Gayle for her support and affirmation.

Our relationship extends beyond the academy and in meetings we move in and out of academic talk. Alongside discussions of joint research, conference organisation and journal editorship there is space for each of us to discuss our own separate intellectual endeavours and professional concerns and also the personal and the political. We share confidences about friends and family; chat about films, books and food (a lot); despair the political challenges we all face and (most recently) motivate each other in our exercise goals.

Our collaborative working relationship and our friendship has led to new, professional, personal and political, beginnings for both of us and greatly enriches our work and home life-balance, supporting each of us in our intellectual, emotional, political and physical daily ‘dances’.

Christine Lewis

“Too Dangerous to Address Girls”, exploring Ethel Snowden’s importance to socialism and feminism in the early years of the 20th century

Edge Hill University has recently opened access to its archives, as the first non-denominational teacher training college for women (1885), this new beginning was key in the discovery of notable alumni. One such remarkable former student was Ethel Annakin/Snowden (1881-1951).

Ethel was a Socialist, a campaigner for women’s suffrage, for temperance, and a lifelong believer in pacifism. A member of the Fabian Society, the Independent Labour Party, and The Women’s Peace

Crusade, she gained a reputation for being a powerful and passionate speaker, her “inspirational style” was referred to as “sparkling with epigram, bright with humour and satire, and sympathetic with pathos and feeling” (Cross p.68). Given these qualities and talents we may ask why Ethel Snowden is largely absent from contemporary publications and why her influence seems fundamentally ignored by history. Perhaps her marriage to Philip Snowden (later Viscount Snowden) MP and Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour Government (1924) overshadowed her own importance to women’s socialist history. A woman of beauty and grace as well a strong opinion, Ethel Snowden’s lectures could arouse feelings of admiration, and could empower audiences through her conviction, yet her oratory also prompted remarks of being “too dangerous to address girls” (Washington Times 1908).

This paper seeks to explore the cultural and political beginnings of socialist writing directly aimed at women, through Ethel Snowden's first publication 'The Woman Socialist' (1907). In this publication Ethel speaks thoughtfully and directly to supporters and opponents of socialism, and to future socialist women.

References

Cross, C., 1966. *Philip Snowden*. London: Barrie & Rockliff.

Snowden, E., 1907. *The Woman Socialist*. G. Allen

Washington Times 8th September 1908 <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026749/1908-09-08/ed-1/seq-7/>

Terry Martin ***Retirement***

Retiring from full-time employment is one of life's significant new beginnings. It can be a welcome release, but also deeply traumatic as daily habits of a lifetime cease, and new routines have to be created. For many it presents an opportunity to embrace new challenges and opportunities. Many take up volunteering for charities or other worthwhile causes. Others take up new hobbies and interests. In this paper I shall draw upon my own troubled autobiographical experience and the experience of a number of former colleagues and friends to identify those factors which characterise the often complex transition.

There is also a social dimension to consider in which demographic considerations play an important role. In an aging society in which increasing numbers are opting for early retirement there is an increasing burden upon the younger generation, still in paid employment. Falling birth rates and difficulties in acquiring a home of their own are exacerbating an already fraught situation.

Retirement is a kind of loss and can be experienced as a bereavement for which grieving is necessary.

Cheralyn May ***Love, death and sharing: An auto/biographical approach to re-connecting with others after the pandemic***

My ResM research focuses on the mental health of middle-aged (defined here as between 35-55 years) single adults in Cornwall during the Covid-19 pandemic. This group has been under-represented in pandemic literature, and my study has been designed to give a voice to this group using the Voice Centred Relational Method (Gilligan et al 2006), and consequently gain a deeper understanding of the role of social circles and space in coping with the pandemic. This is set within an auto/biographical approach that acknowledges how my own experiences shape my interpretation.

My presentation is a reading of an auto/biographical piece written in response to my data gathering process so far. At the centre is a personal story of a death of a friend who fell ill during the lockdowns. I talk about my own difficult experiences of relationships during the pandemic and the link with my mental health. Despite the difficulties, my research shows that the pandemic has provided the opportunity to reflect and to begin new processes of connecting with and supporting others. Weaved into this are reflections on the impact that interviewing in a reflexive and transparent style can have on the ability of the interviewee to feel heard and understood.

While the pandemic is not the main feature of the story I present here, it is the backdrop, and without it

many aspects of my story would not be the same. This also has ramifications for how I ask people to consider their own narratives of well-being.

Reference

Gilligan, C., Spencer, R., Weinberg, M. and Bertsch, T. (2006) 'On the Listening Guide: A Voice-Centered Relational Method. In: Sharlene Hesse-Biber, and Patricia Leavy eds. 2006. *Emergent Methods in Social Research*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE

Beth Moran

Places of escape through creative critical reflection

This paper explores new beginnings within my academic career, both as researcher and lecturer. I share my developing understanding of research as a creative endeavour through successful completion of a professional doctorate in Education. This opportunity enables me to create new knowledge by developing the methodology of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to incorporate an autoethnographic turn as an alternative to bracketing. The research explores the lived experience of social work students and their emotional engagement with practice learning. I capture and present voices of student participants through creative means. As part of the data analysis, I consider their responses and synthesise these with my own, to present poetry and prose. This lends itself to creative performative research as a means of dissemination, so producing the third hermeneutic of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.

This methodological development has influenced my teaching when encouraging creative critical reflection. I utilise research artefacts in the forms of poetry and prose, to encourage a greater appreciation of the lived experience of student social workers and their engagement with emotional challenges during practice placements. Students are encouraged to co-produce and create their own artefacts in order to problematize their practice learning opportunities. Aligned with my research, students interpret and make sense of their emotions through I-poems, representing themselves through attention to first person statements. Doing so enables creative critical reflection with which to build places of escape, where students can negotiate emotional stress in a safe and supportive learning environment.

Amanda Norman

Mothers' voices within the Epistolary mode: Evaluating the nexus of historical and contemporary letters from The Women's Cooperative Guild Maternity in the early 20th century and The Mothership Writers Group of the 21st Century in beginning their new experiences as a 'good enough mother' within England

In this paper the author examined two collections of letters written by women about their new experiences of becoming a mother. Both sets of letters were published in the public domain with the dual purpose of raising awareness about the personal experiences of becoming a mother as well as culturally contextualising their collective circumstances. The first collection of 160 letters were written by The Women's Cooperative Guildswomen's Group and titled, *Maternity: Letters from Working Women* (1915). The other collection of 277 letters were published by The Mothership Writers Group and titled, *Born in Lockdown Report* (2020). Whilst the two collections of letters come from different generations of women, unique in their contents and styles, similarities about how they articulated and conceptualised their new beginnings as a mother were evident. Both sets were thematically analysed and crystallised around three overarching themes. The first of these, selfhood as mother, related to the ways in which women abandoned their own self for a time during the transition of birthing and caring for their infants and then reconstructed a new identity, a new beginning. The second theme explored the expansion of the self insofar as women incorporated children into their identities and their own sense of agency during their role as mother. The third theme explored ways the women as mothers felt relationships and the community influenced their identities. Both collections used the art of letter writing, in capturing their autobiographical experiences as a new mother.

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Louise Owusu-Kwarteng

'I'm Doing it My Way' A Sociological Auto/Biography of a newly appointed Associate Dean for Student Success

'I'm doing it My Way' uses 'auto/biography' to reflect on my transition into a new role – that is, Associate Dean for Student Success in my faculty (Liberal Arts and Sciences). Firstly, I discuss how auto/biography encourages reflections on our subjectivities, which, in this case includes my personal and professional identity, and how this shapes how I undertake this role. An auto/biographical approach also enables exploration of how others have helped shape our journeys/stories (Brennan and Letherby 2017). Therefore, I describe the extensive level of support from key mentors, including my academic research mentor; previous line manager, deputy vice chancellor and vice chancellor.

Associate Deans are 'located between management and academic staff' and as a result, it is 'a role arguably fraught with complexity'. (Floyd and Preston 2016:264) I would add to this, by suggesting that in some instances, the emphasis on operational aspects and processes, means that there is limited time and/or opportunity to use creativity and expertise. In this paper, I discuss how I have navigated these issues. I reflect on a 'Stories Project' I am leading, whereby students share their experiences/stories of life at the university, via podcasts. I highlight the joys of adopting an auto/biographical approach and in continuing to work so closely with students. to produce something that reflects my expertise, which makes my current role more enjoyable.

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Aidan Seery

Arturo Barea an involuntary new beginning and its consequences

Arturo Barea 1897-1957 was a Spanish writer, journalist, and broadcaster who was exiled to France in 1938 and then to England in 1939 following the Spanish Civil War. Born in Badajoz into a family with a background of poverty, he was fostered to an aunt and uncle who had the means to provide him with an education that transformed his prospects. Politically active from early adulthood, he was a member of Union General de Trabajadores [UGT] and was instrumental in the founding of the Clerical Workers Union in 1931 while working as a clerk in the Spanish Patent Office. He was active in the Spanish Civil War on the Republican side but was not a member of the Communist Party, a fact presented difficulties in addition to the victory of Nationalists and led to his exile with his wife to France and then to England. There he began an new life working for the BBC's World Service. He is considered one of the most important Spanish exiled writers, but his work is no longer widely read even though his three-volume autobiography 'La forja de un rebelde' [The Forging of a Rebel] was considered at the time one of the finest of its genre in the twentieth century. This paper considers his autobiography under the lens of the various 'new beginnings' that permeate the life-story of this important voice of the last century.

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Ewa Sidorenko

Re-enchanting the present. The stories my grandmother never told me

Growing up in late 1960s communist Poland I was surrounded by vibrating echoes of the war; the city still wounded with bullet holes, men on crutches, free-floating war stories, black and white films, and children's games; an organic, collective, living memory (Halbwachs, 1992). Yet in my small family, war stories were absent. In those pre-internet days silences offered a much tighter wall around painful secrets. I knew the basic facts: my grandparents had been arrested by the Nazis for resistance activities. Grandfather was killed and Grandmother survived a concentration camp. Even then, sensing fragility in my mother, I knew the war held the key to understanding the present.

Decades later I came across what I call my family archive. Boxes of letters, diaries, notes, photos, fragments of lives that miraculously survived. Since that discovery I have engaged with my grandmother's auto/biographical representations of her concentration camp experiences and have gained insight into the ambivalence and costs of survival. Meanwhile I sought (with difficulties) an appropriate academic framework to make sense of that story. An auto/biographical piece born out of that search (Sidorenko, 2022) began as an attempt to understand survival but gradually took me beyond inter-generational trauma and exclusion, towards a realm of the spiritual, the enchanted and the sacred. In trying to apply understanding (Weberian *Verstehen*) to my grandmother's auto/biographical accounts, I find myself astride sociology and literature (Nussbaum, 2008). As my academic contract nears the end, I look forward to the new beginning of being a full-time writer.

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Anna Soulsby

New Beginnings: Changing Biographies in a Post-Communist Society

The purpose of this paper is to explore how people can develop and change their biographical accounts over time after the fall of communism in 1989. The empirical basis for the paper is an on-going longitudinal study of change in former state-owned enterprises in the now Czech Republic. I have been conducting fieldwork since 1992, interviewing and re-interviewing managers about their lives and work and the relationship of the organisations with the local communities. The research materials consist of interviews that take the form of narratives. Narratives as first-order accounts will have in the mind of the participant their own internal logic or plot as they frame the events of their lives. The accounts are powerful because they are not just representations of past events, they also include an evaluation and judgement of the events. The process of sensemaking, whereby participants construct stories for the interviewer about particular events or choices, comprises a combination of recollection based on memory and the application of retrospective rationality through which the participants current position and views affect the post-hoc interpretation of their past decisions and actions. As the project has unfolded over time, researchers can address the problem of accuracy in retrospective biographical narrative accounts because the previous accounts of participants are available from the earlier interviews. The study has shown that some participants have now modified their biographies in the light of events since the first research visits and seem unaware of how they have changed their biographies.

Esther Van Der Walt

Mothering-as-new-beginning: Reconstructing my Self through talking and writing

While pondering my current Ph.D. study, *Maternal Identity: A Social Construct*, my brother asked whether the demise of my 24-year marriage was related to said study. His question led me to pages of self-reflection, and eventually to this paper.

The birth of my daughter was followed by an episode of severe postpartum depression. I made a family bed on the floor and camped there for six years. I breastfed everywhere. Beautiful from the outside, but on the inside I lost sight of my other parts. I was ONLY a mother, I fulfilled a stereotypical, gendered role. I weaned my second child two months before his third birthday. Oh, the dramatic freedom I experienced in having some of me back! My auto/biographical, social constructivistic, feminist Ph.D. study is an acknowledgement of my story and that of eight other mothers too; a re-visitation of our identities as mothers, permission to be more-than-mothers. This paper explores how my study facilitates my mothering-as-new-beginning; how talking and writing for seven months with the research participants on who we are and what we are doing as mothers, make us do it differently now. The paper talks of the new beginnings our participation in this study brought about.

INSTALLATIONS

Anne Chappell, Emma Wainwright and Ellen McHugh ***Commuter students' experiences of travelling to and from university***

This research focussed on the auto/biographical experiences of commuter students. Given the increasing numbers of students who commute to university, we sought to understand the impact of their experiences compared to non-commuters and examine ways to enhance the support available. The research was based on questionnaires with 117 commuter and 98 non-commuter students, in-depth interviews with ten commuter students, and completed journey photo diaries. The students shared their views on attendance, engagement, facilities, support and travelling. The commuter students outlined the ways in which they negotiate their university lives based on their experiences. The impact of travelling on attendance and engagement was significant for the commuter students. Here we are sharing photographs from the research which highlight the ways in which the students presented and narrated some of their experiences of travelling between home and university.

Tracey Collett ***Teaching Coats***

As individuals teaching sociology to medical students, we are situated on the margins of disparate subjects: sociology, medicine and medical education. Our profession requires us to criss-cross these disciplines yet rarely allows us to be fully immersed in any one. Engaging in this occupational 'edgework' produces a number of risks to our professional and personal identities. However, it also opens up unique spaces from which to observe, experience and analyse the social world as well as to contribute to better healthcare (Kendal, Harden, Kelly and Collett. 2021).

My auto/biography conference installation is one of four teaching coats created by a group of sociology colleagues working in UK medical schools. Our idea to create teaching coats stems from US teacher, Tiffany Poirier, and is based on the book 'The Courage to Teach' by Parker Palmer, (2017). Palmer makes the case that teachers can lose heart because of the troubled and toxic systems in which they work and need to reconnect (with themselves and their students): to reclaim their vocational passion.

My teaching coat depicts the landscape of medical education from my perspective as a sociologist in medical education. It represents the legacy of previous sociologists working in the field, my personal badges (values) and stamps of affiliation (agencies with similar goals). The terrain is covered with branches / roads of knowledge; with distinctive features including the 'fault line of positivity', 'the swamp of interdisciplinarity', 'imposters halt' and 'the mountains of assessment'. 'Hope Springs' is a key feature as is the idea that from 'dust comes gold'.

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Gayle Letherby
Hair Today

Hair today.

Hopefully not gone tomorrow.

Crowning glory, luscious locks, Rapunzel's saviour, Samson's downfall.

To cut, colour, curl and comb, to braid, cream or shave.

For fashion or political statement? Much, much more than a bunch of keratin.

And what of my own thatch, tresses, locks, Barnet Fair?

Blond, to brown, to various. Now a natural grey.

Always thick; 'like your dad's' said mum, 'no fear of thinning' my hairdressers agreed.

Until a couple of summers ago when first I noticed hairs on my hand when I so much as touched my previously fulsome head-full. Note the earlier reference; 'hopefully not gone tomorrow'.

A trip to the doctor and a hormone test shows nothing amiss. 'Have you been stressed about anything lately?' the GP asks.

In this presentation I reflect on my own lifelong (what else could it be) relationship with hair. Including:

In this film I reflect on my own lifelong (what else could it be) relationship with hair. Including:

- some speculation on the reasons for and the practical impact and management of hair loss,
- hair and wellbeing (for me at least),
- how hair closely connects me to my memories of my significant others.

Previously presented at the **International Autoethnography 18th-20th July Bodies, Territories and Touch** (YouTube Video)

Julie Parsons
'Acceptance': Ten years of opportunities for new beginnings

LandWorks is a resettlement charity that works with people recently released from prison, people in prison, and/or those at risk of going to prison. On July 13th, 2013, the first three people on day release from the local prison and someone on a community sentence, subsequently referred to as 'trainees' started their work placements, on a disused quarry field on the edge of the Dartington Estate in Devon. Simultaneously the project founder and director began a fortnightly blog to keep the people who had backed the project, local people, and supporters far and wide, up to date on developments. Ten years on, several buildings, polytunnels, cultivated fields, thriving enterprises, wood workshops, a pottery, counselling room, resettlement hub, kitchen garden, over 200 trainee placements and 250 blog posts later those first four men are still in touch. Indeed, testament to the success of the project are its trainees and graduates.

Significantly since 2016 they have shared first hand their lived experience of the criminal justice system, what they are doing at LandWorks and their hopes for the future through the PeN project established by Julie Parsons with funding from an Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) mid-career fellowship see <https://penprojectlandworks.org/>, and a short film.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALEj2qIYaxo>. This installation features a book produced to celebrate 10 years of LandWorks, bringing together a selection of 50 of the project directors' blog posts with the voices of those on placement through the PeN project. The book is being sold to cover costs and raise funds for the charity. It is available to buy for £10 payable to LandWorks, Sort Code: 20-67-19, Account Number: 13338541.

Carly Stewart, Esther Anwuzia, and Preethi Rajaprakasam

***From struggling at school to starting a business: Moments of social entrepreneurship participation
in the lives of at-risk young people***

Young people no longer in the compulsory schooling system and yet Not in Employment, Education or Training (termed NEETs) are the focus of government attention in the United Kingdom and the European Union. Though the term for some is problematic, NEETs often include those from low socio-economic backgrounds and rural communities, including coastal regions where youth unemployment and inactivity are high. These young people typically struggle with educational attainment, employment, health and well-being, social inclusion, and positive social outcomes. This situation is widely considered a complex social issue consisting of several factors that have resulted in various targeted interventions. One area of focus has been entrepreneurship education programmes. SPEED-You-UP (SYU) is a social entrepreneurship programme in England, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands that seeks to move NEET young people towards better social outcomes and employment whilst simultaneously responding to the needs and creating value for the community. In this exhibition, we present a snapshot of young people's individual lives and engagement with SYU through narrative voices and photographed moments. Over 1100 young people increased their desire to engage with employment, education, and training, and together they created over 100 community businesses. From an auto/biographical perspective, we hope that SYU has preserved these moments in the memories of young people for the reconstruction and perpetuation of new identities to develop the course of their lives.

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WELCOME and USEFUL INFORMATION from Wolfson College

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We are delighted that you are staying with us. Whether you are coming with a conference, group or independently, you are most welcome!

We hope you find this information useful, in advance of your visit.

Check In from 12pm on day of arrival. Please advise anticipated arrival time if after 11pm, so that we can alert the Night Porter. **Check Out by 10am** on day of departure. Please return your key to the Lodge Reception. Luggage can be stored in The Buttery.

Your Accommodation Your bedroom is a self-contained en-suite single. There is a Kitchen/Lounge area, shared amongst the other 4 – 5 bedrooms in that “set”. Where possible, we allocate sets of rooms to the same conference/ group. Please note that all rooms are up one or two flight of stairs and no lift is available. Your bedroom is provided with bed linens and towels. Please bring your own toiletries. There is housekeeping service on weekdays, with frequency according to duration of stay.

Your bedroom is equipped with WiFi internet, accessed via the site password which you will find in your Bedroom Folder. Please note that we do NOT supply adaptors and there is NO television. The communal kitchens have appliances which will not be available during your stay. Tea trays and kettles are supplied. Breakfast Your reservation includes breakfast, this is served in Hall between 8am – 9am.

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- Smoking is strictly forbidden in bedrooms, inside buildings and on balconies
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There is limited parking available PLEASE CONTACT gayle.letherby@plymouth.ac.uk OR seerya@tcd.ie if you require one.

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Please note that Wolfson College accepts only cashless payments.

Please note that we have a defibrillator at our Lodge and we have a team of first aid trained staff on site that are able to use these.



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