



a/b
Auto/Biography Study
Group

**BSA Auto/Biography Study Group
Summer Conference**
***Past, Present and Future: Celebrating 30 Years of the
Auto/Biography Study Group***

13-15th July 2022
Wolfson College, Oxford



Past, Present and Future: Celebrating 30 Years of the Auto/Biography Study Group

Welcome

Dear Friends

Welcome to the 30th BSA Auto/Biography Study Group Summer Conference, taking place at Wolfson College, Oxford 13th – 15th July 2022. In this document you will find a programme overview, a full programme plus abstracts, a delegate list and some useful information about Wolfson.

It will be so nice to see you all. Here's to a stimulating and enriching conference.

Very best wishes

Gayle Letherby and Julie Parsons, 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 13th July

14.15-14.50	Registration. Coffee, tea and cake (The Buttery)
15.00-15.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
16.00-17.00	Keynote (Yvonne Anderson) (Auditorium)
17.00-17.20	Auto/Biography Review (Carly Stewart)
1900-late(r) (Bar open until 22.30)	Pre-dinner drinks, card bar (on the lawn, weather permitting). Dinner (19.45) and drinks and card bar, THE HALDANE ROOM

THURSDAY 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 3)
13.00-14.00	Lunch (The Haldane Room)
14.00-14.50	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
14.55-15.45	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and 3)
15.45-16.15	Coffee, tea and cake (The Buttery)
16.15-17.05(17.30)	Academic Presentations (Seminar Rooms 2 and The Buttery)
19.00-late(r) (Bar open until 22.30)	Pre-dinner drinks, card bar (on the lawn, weather permitting). Dinner(19.45) and drinks and card bar, THE HALDANE ROOM

FRIDAY 15th 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 Buttery) CONFERENCE ENDS

Programme

WEDNESDAY 13th July 2022

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

15.00-15.50 Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2

Metaphysical Women: When Elizabeth met Ludwig

Dennis Smith

Chair: David Clark

Seminar Room 3

Beach-Babes: Childhood within coastal communities.

Amanda Norman

Chair: Judith Chapman

16.00-17.00 KEYNOTE (The Auditorium)

Children's voices: constants, continuities and change

Yvonne Anderson

Chair: Julie Parsons

17.00-19.20

Auto/Biography Review (the journal)

Carly Stewart

19.00 - Pre-dinner drinks on the lawn, weather permitting (card bar).

19.45 - Dinner and drinks (plus card bar) THE HALDANE ROOM

THURSDAY 14th July 2022

8.00-9.00 Breakfast - The Main Dining Room

9.00-9.50 Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2

'Life into art and art into life': Drawing two female artists from their canvases

Julie Greer

Chair: Jenny Byrne

Seminar Room 3

What is gained and what is lost? An auto/biography of autobiographical writing genres

Jackie Goode

Chair: Aidan Seery

9.55-10.45 Academic Presentations

Seminar Room 2

Who is to blame for the pox? Victims and perpetrators in 19th century fiction

Agneta Rahikainen

Chair: Anne Chappell

Seminar Room 3

The Magic of Social Life: A Self-Other Study of Conjuring

Brian Rappert

Chair: Ellen McHugh

10.45-11.15 Coffee, tea and biscuits THE BUTTERY

11.15-12.05 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Life experience and research merge as a cruel twist of fate: sex offending and neurodivergence Chrissie Rogers Chair: Gayle Letherby	Writing Autobiography as a Collaborative and Self-Reflexive Process David Clark Chair: Michael Erben

12.10-13.00 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
The plasticity of future life and autobiographical studies Aidan Seery Chair: Julie Greer	My counter narrative explored Christine Ann Lewis Chair: Rebecca Pardo

13.00-14.00 LUNCH (Haldane Room)

14.00-14.50 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Asexual epiphanies – Rewriting the past and crafting the future from the omnipresent vantage point of realisation Landa Love Chair: Julie Parsons	English Life and Leisure and its auto/biographical significance Michael Erben and Jenny Byrne Chair: Ewa Sidorenko

14.55-15.45 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
On My Way Home Jim Mitchell Chair: Chrissie Rogers	Transitional Objects in Early Childhood (Early Education and Care Contexts) Amanda Norman Chair: Karin Bacon

15.45-16.15 Coffee, tea and cake THE BUTTERY

16.15-17.05 (or 17.30 for the workshop) Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
We made a thing! Auto/Biographical reflections on making and community Julie Parsons Chair: Jackie Goode	The Magic of Our Lives (WORKSHOP, maximum 12) Brian Rappert This session is a workshop (75 minutes) with a maximum of 12 participants (sign up Wednesday/Thursday AM)

**19.00- Pre-dinner drinks on the lawn, weather permitting (card bar).
19.45 - Conference Dinner and drinks (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	Seminar Room 3
'I thought you'd be over that by now': the personal, the political, the epistemological and the professional Gayle Letherby Chair: Yvonne Anderson	Nostalgia and affinity: Auto/Biographical accounts of place in the experiences of 'grown up children' from military families Anne Chappell, Chris Ince and Ellen McHugh Chair: Agneta Rahikainen

9.55-10.45-Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Back to Brexit. Auto/Biographical reflections on uncertain times Ewa Sidorenko Chair: Dennis Smith	In search of my grandfather: Leopoldo Savignac and Basque Photography in the first half of the 20th century Inés Rae Chair: Jenifer Nicholson

10.45-11.15 Coffee, tea and biscuits THE BUTTERY

11.15-12.05 Academic Presentations	
Seminar Room 2	Seminar Room 3
Backwards and Forwards – Inter-generational Bonds Judith Anne Chapman Chair: Chrissie Rogers	Children have not been heard in their own words or have they? Karin Bacon Chair: Christine Lewis

12.10-13.00 Academic Presentations
The Buttery
Autofiction, biofiction and autobiography on Instagram during Covid-19 Rebeca Pardo; Carla Gracia; Montse Vidal Chair: Carly Stewart

13.00-14.00 LUNCH (THE BUTTERY) and DEPART

Abstracts

Keynote

Yvonne Anderson

Children's voices: constants, continuities and change

"My friends, no one is born a good citizen; no nation is born a democracy. Rather, both are processes that continue to evolve over a lifetime. Young people must be included from birth. A society that cuts itself off from its youth severs its lifeline; it is condemned to bleed to death."

Kofi Annan, in an address to world leaders in 1998.

The universal right of all children to participate in all areas of life affecting them is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), drafted in 1989 and widely adopted throughout the world. Central to children's entitlement to participation is their right to express their views wishes and feelings and to have their voice heard. What happens when we fail to hear those voices?

This is a story about tens of thousands of children, told by two women connected by their involvement in a system that was responsible for large scale abuse.

I became a children's residential care worker in the early 1980s in a largely rural county in the south of England. The experiences of the next four years had a lifelong impact on my life. At around the same time, Jenny was taken into care by the same authority. Without doubt the effects on Jenny's life were also profound and in her case deeply traumatising.

Jenny and I did not know one another at the time. Incredibly, although I was familiar with all the children's facilities in the county and while Jenny was moved between most of the residential homes run by the authority, our paths did not cross until forty years later.

Our experiences converge here. Jenny found her voice after decades of struggle and is fighting for justice for herself and for other children she knew. At the end of my career I am founder of an organisation that exists to help children find their voice and to have it heard. Jenny is courageous and I admire her. I followed my conscience and tried to atone.

Yvonne Anderson PhD

Independent researcher

Founder-director, Mind Of My Own

Karin Bacon

Children have not been heard in their own words or have they?

In the 1937, the Irish Folklore Commission outlined the importance of Oral traditions, describing them as "work of national importance" [Irish Folklore Commission, 1936]. Up to this point little attention had been paid to this kind of oral tradition. At the time of the foundation of the Irish state senior pupils in Rural Elementary Schools were invited to participate in the task of gathering stories and traditions of their local areas. The Commission declared that when this urgent task of collecting is over "a vast store of immensely important material will be available to research". The children were encouraged to gather stories about their and their families' lives. What evolved was a collaborative ethnographic project that put young children central to the process that lead to a Manuscript collection which is recognised as one of the largest collections of its kind in Western Europe. Even in modern post-industrialized societies, the ability to have and tell a story about one's life is important. This skill may have become increasingly important as,

in most parts of the world, we have moved from traditional cultures, where individuals are defined in terms of their social relationships and societal and vocational role to post-industrialized cultures, where individuals move in and out of multiple geographical locations, real and virtual social relationships, and vocational roles across their lifetime [Nelson (2001, 2003)]. This paper examines aspects of the work of the Commission and considers what a similar project may look like a hundred years later where children are seen as objects and subjects in research as well as increasingly as participants and more recently still as researchers.

Judith Anne Chapman

Backwards and Forwards – Inter-generational Bonds

The statement in Barack Obama's 20.01.2009 Inaugural Speech reverberates this conference's title "Past, Present and Future". 'Let it be said by our children's children that when we were tested, we refused to let this journey end, that we did not turn back nor did we falter; and with eyes fixed on the horizon and God's grace upon us, we carried forth that great gift of freedom and delivered it safely to future generations'. Interpreting the message in a naiver form, I felt it could be used to illustrate the explorations of my family's historical background and intergenerational connections. My focus will be a trip that my grandmother made to Burma in 1897-99 on her brother's Steam Yacht 'Fedora'. She was only 19-21, but could have applied these sentiments when undertaking her voyage. Here I am, the future generation, now experiencing the freedom afforded by her extraordinary journey. In a 1899 diary, and with accompanying photograph albums and scrap books, Dorothy recorded her journey back from Singapore. I have subsequently and deliberately undertaken many parts of Dorothy's journey "In my Grandmother's Footsteps". I've visited Singapore, Penang, Ceylon, Kenya and Cape Town to gain an insight into her life and the legacy she left. In this paper, I will illustrate the incentives of exploring unique autobiographical records, in an attempt to broaden an understanding of the impact of historical context and socio-cultural nuances on current and future generational moral comprehension and development.

Anne Chappell, Chris Ince and Ellen McHugh

Nostalgia and affinity: Auto/Biographical accounts of place in the experiences of 'grown up children' from military families

We have undertaken two recent research projects to explore the auto/biographical accounts of 'grown up children' from military families as an under-researched group. The participants ranged from eighteen to eighty years of age and their accounts were collected through questionnaires and interviews. Amongst other things, their stories included experiences of changing schools, moving house, moving town, moving country, and meeting and leaving places and people. Migration, emigration and immigration are prominent and powerful in the participants' accounts, with experiences that are recognised by them as both challenging and positive. In this paper we explore these experiences drawing on Mason's work on 'affinities' as 'potent connections in personal life' (2018: ii) and the work of Dickinson and Erben (2016: 1) on nostalgia as a 'sense of loss of a once positive experience'. We will explore the participants' reflections on their associations with the different places where they lived, with a recognition of the significance for their present auto/biographical selves.

David Clark

Writing Autobiography as a Collaborative and Self-Reflexive Process

I am a child of refugees from Nazi terror. Following retirement from university teaching, I presented a paper at a Holocaust conference on the journeys of descendants of Holocaust victims to where parents

came from. This led to an anthology about such journeys (David Clark and Teresa von Sommaruga Howard, ed., *The Journey Home, emerging out of the shadow of the past*, 2021). My presentation will focus on the writing process. Firstly, the collaborative nature of such an enterprise. I studied anthropology, while Teresa, my co-editor, trained as a group analyst. We had to learn to work together, respond to each draft and jointly decide on an editorial approach. We worked collaboratively with each individual contributor, mentoring them throughout the writing process. Many first drafts focused heavily on the parental story and on factual travelogues. Teresa, writes about encouraging them to think more deeply about their own experience. 'Many of our authors found themselves having to overcome a life-long tendency, learnt from their parents, of silencing their own thoughts and emotions.' Lapadat, et al. (2010) refer to the emotional load entailed in such memory work. Something is shifted deep inside, affecting self-perception and identity. This is the self-reflexive aspect of the writing process. The result was a greater awareness and acceptance of who we are and who our parents are (were).

References

Lapadat, J.C., Black, N.E., Clark, P.G., et al. 'Life Challenge Memory Work, Using Collaborative Autobiography to Understand Ourselves', *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, March 2010, 77-104.

Michael Erben and Jenny Byrne

English Life and Leisure and its auto/biographical significance

The BSA Auto/Biography study group has seen as a priority the study of specific accounts of individual lives as a way of examining the indissoluble relationship between individual motivations and social influences. One of the very few important works systematically utilising auto/biographical accounts that has figured little in the auto/biographical literature is Seebohm Rowntree's and G R Lavers' *English Life and Leisure* of 1951. This unique study, employing some 220 extracts of auto/biographical case-studies, provided descriptions of the attitudes of a significant section of the general public towards their free-time and leisure activities. The accounts covered a wide range of pursuits and interests including: gambling, drinking, smoking, sexual promiscuity, religious observance and visiting places of entertainment. On its publication the work aroused immense interest not only among social commentators and academics but also among an informed general readership. It was reviewed widely (both positively and negatively) in Britain and in America. It carried a highly appreciative lead review in the *Times Literary Supplement* as well as attracting interest in the *American Journal of Sociology*. The survey was carried out during the bleak post-war days when conditions were harsh, where the energies of war had dissipated and genuine affluence was yet to emerge. It provides a snapshot of people living their daily lives in these conditions. This paper will set *English Life and Leisure* in its historical context, evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and above all recognise the study as a significant, interesting and important work in the auto/biographical canon.

Jackie Goode

What is gained and what is lost? An auto/biography of autobiographical writing genres

As autoethnographers extend their creative approach to the writing of 'novels', do they recognise the work of sociologists who have long been engaged in all things auto/biographical? And now that 'The Sociological Review' has entered the field of fiction, inviting work that "involves intricate and complex sets of sensitivities and sensibilities that require fostering and developing, orientated towards emerging issues as well as the perennial debates"... work that is "considered, reflective and attuned to these sensitivities, that is sociological in style, scope and sensibility – work that imaginatively extends sociology's study of society into fiction", do they recognise any dangers in 'blurred genres' or only strengths? This presentation traces

a path through alternative ways of representing lives in writing – from official reports on the ‘findings’ of qualitative research projects to memoirs and autofictional novels – as a way of questioning the value and effectiveness of different genres. It uses the author’s own ‘career path’ from novice research assistant to failed retiree trying her hand at ‘creative writing’ as a vehicle to illuminate some of the issues involved.

Julie Greer

‘Life into art and art into life’: Drawing two female artists from their canvases

In the early years after the First World War, two women were born who were to live long parallel lives, on either side of the Atlantic; each making very different social statements, through their work, their opinions and their relationships. May Stevens 1924-2019 and Hilda Margery Clarke (née Thompson), 1926-2022, were pioneering artists; both creating their own artistic path, each expressing feminism in differing ways. In this paper I will present comparisons between the lives of these two women and consider my interest in knowing about each of them; one in my pursuit of her art, the other in a quest to understand her journey. It is with some sadness that I only came to know of both women late in their lives, but nonetheless, each has made an impact on my own life. With access to Clarke’s unpublished auto/biography and drawing on the work of Tamboukou (2010, 2015) who has written about Stevens’ ‘artpolitics assemblage’, I will outline the legacy they leave, showing the way both women merged ‘life into art and art into life’ in their own unique manner.

Gayle Letherby

‘I thought you’d be over that by now’: the personal, the political, the epistemological and the professional

My experiences of loss (and love) and my academic life have always been intertwined. It was a loss – the miscarriage of my, to my knowledge, one and only pregnancy – that led me to sociology and in turn sociology has impacted on the way I do grief. I have studied, written and spoken about loss across my career and one of my earliest presentations, at the first Auto/Biography Study Group conference, included reference to my own miscarriage and my first piece of independent research on the same topic (Cotterill and Letherby 1993). Two further studies of pregnancy loss followed – the first specifically concerned with the experience of young(er) women (Brady et al 2008), the second focusing on online support (Davidson and Letherby, 2014, 2019) – as part of my broader work on non/motherhood. Alongside this I have written a number of related pieces of fiction and memoir. Here I reflect not only on positive engagement with my research and communications on pregnancy loss (and loss more generally) but also on the critique of my auto/biographical approach. This includes allegations of self-indulgence and suggestions that I should begin publications and presentations with ‘health warnings’. I remain frustrated that despite some changes in reproductive choices and experiences, simplistic understandings of disrupted reproduction and nonmotherhood persist. At the same time displays of grief, distress and/or regret from those who do not achieve motherhood in expected ways, or at all, are, just as they were for me 37 years ago, often downplayed, diminished and even dismissed.

References

- Brady, G. Brown, G. Letherby, G. Bayley, J. Wallace, L. M. (2008) ‘Young women’s experience of Termination and miscarriage: a qualitative study’ *Human Fertility* 11:3
- Cotterill, P. and Letherby, G. (1993) ‘Weaving Stories: personal auto/biographies in feminist research’ *Sociology* 27:1
- Davidson, D. and Letherby, G. (2014) ‘Griefwork Online: perinatal loss, lifecourse disruption and online support’ *Human Fertility* 17:3
- Davidson, D. and Letherby, G. (2019) ‘Use of the Internet and Griefwork in Perinatal Loss: motivations, methodologies and making meaning’ for *Women’s Studies International Forum* 74: May-June

Christine Ann Lewis

My counter narrative explored

'Past, Present and Future: Celebrating 30 Years of the Auto/Biography Study Group' My counter narrative, observed. What does narrative inheritance mean for an adoptee who grew up in one life and found another at the age of 47. What I inherited narratively from my adoptive kin provided me with a framework for my identity, through theirs. All was fine, all serene, I travelled my path, parallel to theirs. Yet I was born with curiosity. Or was I. Did my adoptive family narrative inheritance embed curiosity in my life, permanently? I also inherit a counter narrative, an incomplete birth family story, one which I am compelled to observe. The incompleteness of my birth family narrative is an irritation in my mind, a prickly bramble entwining my body, a question without an answer, an immovable act. How can I explore the intersubjective nature of a life not lived, with kin I did not know. How do I see and imagine my future connection to this life? In this paper I seek to make meaning and empathetically create connections that, for me were disconnected. I do this by storying my emotions and interpretations of adoptive and birth kin in photographs. I introspectively explore insights into my incomplete affections about birth kin and my connections with adoptive kin. I hope the actions and connections made in this paper will reverberate in their worldmaking for me and others like me.

Reference

Rogers, C., 2020. Necessary connections: 'Feelings photographs' in criminal justice research. *Methodological Innovations*, 13(2), <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799120925255>

Landa Love

Asexual epiphanies – Rewriting the past and crafting the future from the omnipresent vantage point of realisation

The asexual identity is unique in the sense that it only started to become an established identity around 20 years ago, largely due to the formation of the online community AVEN (Asexual Visibility and Education Network in 2001). This lack of recognition and representation means that most asexuals came to the realisation that they identify as asexual after some confusion around why they could not fit into normative sexual and/or romantic couples' culture (Carrigan 2011). This auto/biographical work in progress looks at asexual narratives from the perspective of the moment of 'epiphany' (Denzin 2001) when, through moments of self-reflection and social interaction, the participant realises they are asexual. It explores the biographical identity work (Scott and Dawson 2015) that participants do to make sense of their past from this new perspective. The research also looks at how participants progress with their relationships from the point of realisation and asks them to articulate their imagined futures, including how they would like the asexual community and representation of the asexual identity to develop. Due to the sensitive nature of the data, collaborative creative methods such as poetry, art and sociological fiction are being utilised to share participants' narratives, to ensure anonymity and to allow the reader to experientially engage (emotionally, intellectually and bodily) with these narratives.

References

Carrigan M (2011) There's more to life than sex? Difference and commonality within the asexual community. *Sexualities* 14(4): 462–478

Denzin, N. K. (2001). *The interpretive point of view*. In *Interpretive interactionism* (pp. 27-55). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Scott, S. and Dawson, M. (2015) 'Rethinking asexuality: A Symbolic Interactionist account', *Sexualities*, 18(12), pp. 3–19

Jim Mitchell

On My Way Home

To quote Bob Dylan 'I'm a long way from where I should be so I'm on my way home'

To me this sums up the journey many of us are on throughout our lives. I've always thought songs are one of the ways of talking about and illuminating that journey and making sense of the way things are and how they develop and change. I will be performing four songs at the conference. The first two are essentially eulogies to my father and mother. Writing and singing them has helped me to understand the relationship I had with them and the aspirations they had for me. The 3rd song uses Morecambe Bay and its vagaries as a metaphor for my growing up into an adult. I know the bay extremely well and have spent time there at many different stages of my life. To quote Pascal Mercier from his book *Night Train To Lisbon* 'We leave something of ourselves behind when we leave a place, we stay there even though we go away. And there are things in us we can find again only by going back there.' The final song *Coming Home To You* in some ways is a synergy. I use a train journey as a metaphor to illustrate the journey I mentioned at the beginning highlighting key events in my life. By performing these songs live I hope the insights I've had in writing and singing them will resonate with others who have felt the same things as me.

Rebeca Pardo; Carla Gracia; Montse Vidal

Autofiction, biofiction and autobiography on Instagram during Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, several interesting phenomena have occurred around autobiography (Lejeune, 1975, 1991, 2004), autofiction (Dobrovsky, 1977) and biofiction (Lackey, 2015) on social networks, especially on Instagram. On the one hand, the daily life of confinement in a pandemic has been broadcast or shared in the first person in an unprecedented way within a context that leads to talk of Infodemic (WHO, 2020) and Photodemic (Pardo, 2019). However, the autobiographical or self-referential representation of the positive cases of Covid-19 on social networks, especially the most serious ones, does not seem to have been frequent. Therefore, this supposed autobiographical narrative in times of pandemic, especially the visual story on Instagram, poses interesting challenges to the theories of autobiography, autofiction, and biofiction. It must be taken into account that a low visual representation of the death and ICU patients has also been detected in Spanish newspapers during confinement (Pardo, Morcate, 2022). On the other hand, autofiction and biofiction seem to be functioning as an escape route or an alternative journey in the face of restrictions on movement and socialization for much of these years. Various cultural entities have made online calls to honor their funds and a large part of the images that have been generated have been self-portraits that could be considered autofictions or biofictions. In Spain there are also various cases of Instagram users, for example, who have generated this type of narrative on their own initiative. Research in progress.

Amanda Norman

Beach-Babes: Childhood within coastal communities

Informed by Oral History training, Children's Lives Project based in Birmingham, Roberts (2012), a recently completed project (early childhood in the domestic home) and book publication of historical infant care this paper seeks to develop new ground about childhood experiences living in seaside towns. A Froebelian (1782-1852) and dialogism (Bakhtin, 1895-1975) philosophy will inform understandings about blue spaces and {healthy} play. Potentially seeking grants | The National Lottery Heritage Fund the project is currently in its preliminary stage with a pilot being developed. The project seeks to collate the voices of those residents' childhood experiences who have lived by the Dorset Coast from the 20th century to that of

children today. This is considered a timely project in the nexus from past to present and shaping the future to the discourses, both the tensions and advantages about outdoors and how blue spaces contributes to {healthy} play within children's lives. The paper will also include space to include audience contributions about data collection and possible funding streams. The focus of the paper will be from the pilot findings.

Amanda Norman

Transitional Objects in Early Childhood (Early Education and Care Contexts)

This paper will discuss a project [funded by the Winnicott Trust, 2022] being currently developed and contributes to a timely connection between the understanding and application of therapeutic approaches within early educational contexts. Winnicott's (1951) 'good enough' parent and the relationship between the young child and primary carer is discussed in relation to the value of Transitional Objects, those inanimate teddies, blankets that have personal meanings and are an extension to the child's external world. In sharing an understanding of Winnicott's, work, positioned in the mid-20th century it examines the continuing relevancy when caring for young children in contemporary educational and care contexts. The project will be of interest to those wanting to further understand early childhood, their relationship, and realities with the external world. By connecting theory from past to present and shaping the future it reveals the tensions of young children cared for in an arguably low touch, high technological culture, compounded by living within and beyond a pandemic. The findings will contribute to a contracted book publication with Routledge (2023).

Julie Parsons

We made a thing! Auto/Biographical reflections on making and community

In this paper I use an auto/biographical approach to reflect on an ISRF funded group project entitled 'Making Communities – an exploration of community building and collaborative approaches to re/integration after punishment'. The main aim of this three-day event was to explore the ways in which academic work, arts and activism can come together through 'making'. Over three days (in the present) we drew upon our experiences (of the past), whilst facilitating learning (for the future). Specifically, our inquiry into the affective and emotional aspects of building and sustaining communities, was facilitated to mirror some of the processes that have been used effectively in these communities, and/or when engaging in arts-based participatory research. Notably we participated in a 'Vox Session' methodology pioneered in the Distant Voices project (McNeill and Urie, 2020; Urie et al, 2019) to provide a safe space for an affective engagement with the self and others in creative practices of meaning-making and song writing. Six of us came together over three days at the end of March 2022, academics, practitioners, and researchers, all with lived experience of working alongside people in the criminal justice system from a range of settings, but who had never worked together as a group before. Moreover, we had different levels of expertise and experience in creative and collaborative processes. Indeed, this became an experiment in the power of community making, that ultimately enabled relative strangers to feel safe enough to engage in creative, collaborative work and produce a song.

References

McNeill, F., & Urie, A. (2020). Collaboration before collaborative research: The development of 'Distant Voices.' *Methodological Innovations*, Volume 13, Issue 2, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2059799120937270>

Urie, A, McNeill, F, Cathcart Frödén, L, et al. (2019) Reintegration, hospitality and hostility: Song-writing and song-sharing in criminal justice. *Journal of Extreme Anthropology*. Epub ahead of print 22 August. DOI: 10.5617/jea.6914.

Inés Rae

In search of my grandfather: Leopoldo Savignac and Basque Photography in the first half of the 20th century

I am in the archive with the copy of the journal which contains the portrait of Franco which Savignac (my grandfather) took in 1939 for the National Propaganda Service. In the image 'El Caudillo' looks tired, it is the end of the civil war and he is triumphant. Gone are Savignac's creative, pictorial, carefully composited images of the 1920s. He is now an established studio portraitist in Madrid but as an immigrant he has to prove his worth. He moves from the red zone to the nationalist zone on the strength of a report from his landlady who states that he has 'observed good socio-political behaviour'. I consider the tensions of that time in order to understand the need he may have felt to protect his family and at what cost.

To go to the archive and study the documents there is to be complicit in the ways in which the information is organized and what it represents of the past as well as for the present. What is not there is just as interesting... the fragmented status of my grandfather's photographic practice echoing his own immigrant status.

The paper will reflect on practice as research and how to theorise pilgrimage, utilising auto/biographical writing and photographic work in response to discoveries as well as what remains unknowable. This includes how photographs are taken, made, preserved, archived and written about in different ways (phenomenological, haptic, embodied). Bringing my writing and image making together will include imagined conversations between journeys, images, archive and text.

Agneta Rahikainen

Who is to blame for the pox? Victims and perpetrators in 1900th century fiction

Many authors have processed diseases and the myths around them in their works, and thus given us a personal and historical perspective on them. In this way, literary fiction is a treasury of experience, not only over a course of illness but also over human suffering and over the feelings, it creates. Fiction examines concepts such as guilt and shame, and personal responsibility when it comes to the confrontation between the ill and the healthy. Guilt and shame are closely connected to illness perceived as self-inflicted, such as sexually transmitted diseases like syphilis or HIV. Today, there is a similar discussion about Covid 19 in situations where the person has chosen to remain unvaccinated. Syphilis is a very literary disease; it is about Eros and Thanatos, i.e. about sexuality and death, the most central theme for artists and writers since antiquity and perhaps even further back. The disease is central, above all, to the decadent literature from the latter part of the 19th century, which revel in the grotesque and morbid, but it also occurs in other literature and art, and then not infrequently in coded form. Many male authors had personal experience of the illness and blamed the prostitutes; others had a more nuanced view on victims and perpetrators. Early feminist writers went even further and discussed the impact the illness had on not only women but also on children and families.

Brian Rappert

The Magic of Social Life: A Self-Other Study of Conjuring

This presentation recounts a four-year study to learn and perform entertainment magic. In the tradition of self-studies, I used my immersion into an activity as a novice as a basis for considering how practical reasoning and embodied skills were acquired. In particular, in this talk I want to examine entertainment magic as entailing the interplay of notions of 'self' and 'other' in the tradition of Symbolic Interactionism. Noteworthy in this regard is that entertainment magic is a staged activity involving mutually monitored

deception. While magicians might proffer all sorts of verbal and non-verbal explanations for their feats, audiences are likely to be suspicious about how both can function as techniques of subterfuge. Magicians, in turn, craft their performances in anticipation that at least some eyes and ears are primed for tell-tale signs of chicanery. How these overall expectations meet each other – and in doing so make magic – has been a recurring topic for my study. Through recounting some vignettes of my experiences associated with questions such as: - How can instructors teach students to recognise what actions are natural? - How can instructors teach students about the limits of human perception through acts of perception? - How can the performance of magic rely on simulations and dissimulations by audiences and magicians alike? In doing so, I elaborate how learning magic engenders a sense of moving closer to and away from appreciating the experiences of others as well as one's self.

Brian Rappert

The Magic of Our Lives (WORKSHOP, maximum 12 participants)

Interested in a hands-on, highly interactive session that uses magic to reflect on social life? It may sound strange, but...Over the past few years I have been learning entertainment magic as a way of furthering some of my intellectual interests associated with secrecy. In this session we will use the play of concealment, disclosure and deception in magic to discuss the role of concealment, disclosure and deception in our daily lives and in the lives of magicians. My hope with developing this kind of show is to promote a spirit of curiosity in audiences that encourages enquiry and critical reasoning. I hope to see you there.

Chrissie Rogers

Life experience and research merge as a cruel twist of fate: sex offending and neurodivergence

In the 21st Century new criminal justice policies have emerged that are aimed directly at individuals who have been convicted of a sex offence. These carceral logics are based on the notion that individuals are characterised by some fixed and stable predisposition to commit sex crimes. Along with public calls for tougher sentencing, 'new penology' that focusses on retribution rather than rehabilitation and moral panic, criminal conviction can carry disadvantages long after release. Funded by Leverhulme Trust I carried out 43 in-depth life-story interviews and photo-elicitation with neuro-divergent offenders who were diagnosed with a learning difficulty and/or other mental health challenges, mothers of offenders who fit within these categories and education/health professionals. However, by a cruel twist of fate, I found myself having to work through objective and arguably abstract notions of incarceration and harm alongside deeply emotional personal circumstances. For perpetrators of sex offences, the ongoing and long-term consequences are significant including stigmatisation, homelessness, surveillance, abuse, mental ill-health and registration. But so are the life changing impacts of rape and abuse for the survivor and their families. Still, I find carceral enclosures did not/do not always make sense, and collateral consequences for sex offenders are significant, as formal consequences include, policy and legal requirements, but informal consequences around social control limit community participation and are often implemented by friends, family, employers and local community members. Notably in the aftermath of punishment it is likely consequences fall into the informal category and are often unintended and long lasting. Narratives indicate that whilst any sex offending is unacceptable, the historical, social, educational, and situational context is largely ignored. Yet, how does one work through such emotive experiences and remain true to the empirical data and oneself as the personal merges with the research data.

Aidan Seery

The plasticity of future life and autobiographical studies

In 2017, the journal *a|b: Autobiographic Studies* published a special issue on the theme of 'What's next? The Futures of Auto/Biography Studies'. The issue contains 77, mostly very short, contributions by a/b scholars mostly from the perspectives of the Americas, North and South, with some European contributions. As might be expected, a large number of possible future themes and possible methodological changes and innovations are presented in the papers. In this paper, I want to take up just two or three of these ideas and suggest that they may also play a role in the future of a/b studies on this side of the Atlantic but also to expand on the prediction that the future may lie also in contexts and languages outside the European and anglophone world and to suggest secondly, that we may well see some fundamental theoretical discussion about what we conceive or construe 'life' to be and how we might, in the future, understand its continuity or not. A key impetus to this second suggestion is work already underway on the thought of Catherine Malabou. Some of the central ideas that we hold on the differentiation between interior and external life and their interplay is challenged in her writings. The relationships between mind, the symbolic realm of language, biological life and social and political agency are likely to be re-imagined in the future in a way that will have an impact on how we do our work as autobiographical researchers.

Ewa Sidorenko

Back to Brexit. Auto/Biographical reflections on uncertain times

Following the 2016 Brexit referendum, together with Dr David Smith I began a project titled 'The impact of Brexit on Polish community members living in UK'. In 2017 we launched an online survey with some 200 responses and, as a result, 14 respondents were interviewed between late 2017 and early 2018. Due to unforeseen circumstances, we were unable to devote the time to complete the project. Thus, the unexplored data, sat waiting until now. I am currently working on data analysis but in a new social context. Data collection took place during intense Brexit negotiations with the risk of UK leaving EU without a withdrawal agreement, or a trade deal was high on the mind of the British public. Brexit was highly divisive with heightened emotions on both sides. Now, in mid-2022, following the Covid emergency, the actual withdrawal from EU by the UK in 2020, and the war in Ukraine, the concern with the impact of the referendum on the Polish community has become a question of history. The data collected captures personal migration autobiographies told in response to disruption of the referendum result; participants' sense wellbeing, strategies for the future, reflections on their identities and their sense-making of the phenomenon of Brexit. The key theme emerging from the data is that of the stress of uncertainty. In this paper, I explore Polish migration auto/biographies following the Brexit referendum by acknowledging my own Polish migrant identity and my subjective position on the issues around Brexit which, has evolved since the interviews. By doing so, I attempt to reflect critically on the way in which the often-unacknowledged auto/biographic self of the researcher interacts through the whole research process.

Dennis Smith

Metaphysical Women: When Elizabeth met Ludwig

This paper is inspired by a fascinating book entitled *Metaphysical Animals* (2022) authored by Clare Mac Cumhaill and Rachel Wiseman. It traces the intellectual and emotional interplay between four Oxford alumni – Elizabeth Anscombe, Mary Midgley, Iris Murdoch and Philippa Foot: all born in 1920-21; all students of philosophy, and all fascinated by themselves, by their speculations, by each other, and by challenging lecturers such as Richard Hare, Ludwig Wittgenstein, A J (Freddie) Ayer, and Bertrand Russell.

The narrative flits like a butterfly between the adventures and reflections of the four main protagonists. It comes to an end, rather abruptly, during the decade after 1945. The book is very much, so to speak, an inside job, showing you what it was (probably) like to 'be there' during these busy transactions. One ends up liking, or at least sympathising with the four central figures but the story is light on broad conclusions. It puts readers at the coffee tables where stories such as those recounted in the book are told. Makes them 'guest insiders'. But what else does it offer? That is to be seen.

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WELCOME and USEFUL INFORMATION from Wolfson College

Events Office email: events@wolfson.ox.ac.uk telephone: 01865 274081

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.

Important Points

- Smoking is strictly forbidden in bedrooms, inside buildings and on balconies
- Pets (other than support dogs) are not allowed within the accommodation or buildings
- No insurance is provided by the College for guests' personal belongings

Transport/ Parking

There is limited parking available as whilst completing their Decarbonisation Project this year there is no onsite parking at Wolfson. There will be a few permits to park nearby (although this does not guarantee parking). The permit is just for if you can find a space.

There is a frequent bus service along the Banbury Road to and from the City Centre. All number 2 buses and the 500 Water Eaton Park & Ride travel close to Wolfson, departing from their respective signed bus stops on Magdalen Street, as does the 14/14A departing from the Rail Station and stopping in Magdalen Street. When returning to Wolfson ask for the St. Margaret's Road stop. For more bus routes and timetables go to <https://www.oxfordbus.co.uk/> or <https://www.stagecoachbus.com>

Covid-19

We will provide hand sanitizer and surface wipes in all of our meeting rooms. All college updates in relation to covid-19 as well as a site risk assessment can be found at the following link:

<https://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/wolfson-and-covid-19>

Fire information

If you discover a fire Operate the nearest fire alarm call point Contact the Lodge on 01865 274100 or the Fire Service on 999 and confirm the fire giving the following details: Wolfson College Linton Road Oxford OX2 6UD Leave the building by the nearest exit, closing all fire doors behind you and report to your nearest assembly point (which our team on site will show you.) Inform a member of staff or the Fire Service of the fire location. If you hear the fire alarm Leave the building by the nearest exit, closing all fire doors behind you and report to your nearest assembly point (which our team on site will show you.) Do not stop to collect personal belongings. Do not re-enter any part of the building until you are told to do so by the responsible person. Do not attempt to tackle the fire.

Additional information

Please note that Wolfson College is accessible for all guests but if you have any concerns or questions, please let Gayle Letherby or Julie Parsons know and they will liaise with the Events Manager. Specific access requirements onto the stage area in the LWA for presenters / lecturers with disabilities should be pre-discussed. Further information can be found on our website: <https://www.wolfson.ox.ac.uk/accessibility-wolfson-college>. We have an onsite café offering hot/ cold drinks and some snacks that is open during weekdays 8am – 4pm as standard.

Please note that Wolfson College only accepts 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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