



a/b
Auto/Biography
Study Group

**BSA Auto/Biography Study Group
Summer Conference**

HOME

16th- 18th July 2025

Venue Reading, University of Reading



HOME

Welcome

Dear Friends

Welcome to the 33rd BSA Auto/Biography Study Group Summer Conference, taking place at Venue Reading, University of Reading. In this document you will find a programme overview, a full programme plus abstracts, a delegate list and some information about Reading Venues. PLEASE also look at the DELEGATE PACK, which contains important information, and fill in a PARKING PERMIT if you need one.

We are so much looking forward to seeing you all. Here's to a thoughtfully, engaging and stimulating 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

Venue Reading



This year, we are again holding our conference at Venue Reading at the University of Reading. The Venue holds a number of large conferences every year, including academic conferences and large corporate events. The conference team has worked closely with us to identify how best to accommodate our requirements and wishes for accommodation, seminar rooms, dining and bar facilities. We are grateful, in particular, to Laura Robb for her work with us and hope that the Venue proves to be a success for our group at this year's conference.

The Programme at a Glance

WEDNESDAY 16th July

13.30-14.25	Registration. Sandwich lunch plus coffee, tea and cake Palmer 1.08
14.30-15.20	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
15.25-16.15	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
16.20-17.10	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
19.00 – late(r)	Pre-Dinner Drinks, followed by Dinner 19.45 BLANDFORDS and after bar.

THURSDAY 17th July

7.30-9.00	Breakfast Park Eat
9.00-9.50	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and Palmer 1.07)
9.55-10.45	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
10.45-11.10	Coffee, tea and biscuits Palmer 1.08
11.10-12.00	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
12.05-13.05	JACKIE GOODE Keynote (Palmer 1.06)
13.05-13.50	Lunch Palmer 1.08
13.50-14.40	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and Palmer 1.07)
14.45-16.10	INSTALLATIONS with Coffee, tea and cake Palmer 1.08
16.10-17.10	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
19.00-late(r) (Bar open until 23.00)	Pre-Dinner Conference Drinks (included in conference fee), followed by Conference Dinner 19.45 BLANDFORDS and after bar.

FRIDAY 18th July

7.30-9.00	Breakfast Park Eat
9.00-9.50	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
9.55-10.45	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
10.45-11.15	Coffee, tea and biscuits Palmer 1.08
11.15-12.05	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
12.10-13.00	Academic Presentations (Palmer 1.06 and 1.07)
13.00 – 14:00	Lunch Palmer 1.08
	CONFERENCE ENDS

Programme

WEDNESDAY 16th July 2022

13.30-14.25 Registration. Sandwiches, coffee/tea and cake Palmer 1.08

14.30-15.20 Academic Presentations

Palmer 1.06

Memories and experiences in interaction during narrative interviews - Elizabeth Braga

Chair: Amanda Norman

Palmer 1.07

Show me the way to go home - Judith Milburn

Chair: Aidan Seery

15.25-16.15 Academic Presentations

Palmer 1.06

Comfortable shoes? Telling stories of self and other through a pair of shoes - Naomi Braithwaite

Chair: Mark Price

Palmer 1.07

"I Just Felt Numb for Years": Endometriosis, Infertility, and Embodied Disconnections - Maddy French

Chair: Gayle Letherby

16.20-17.10 Academic Presentations

Palmer 1.06

Life Writing: Diaries and Witnessing - Ilana Blumberg

Chair: Mark Cieslik

Palmer 1.07

Writing Home - Mark Price, Jan Bradford, Jackie Goode

Chair: Karin Bacon

Pre-dinner drinks 19:00 followed by dinner 19:45 BLANDFORDS
After dinner drinks Blandfords

THURSDAY 13th July 2022

7.30-9.00 Breakfast – Park Eat

9.00-9.50 Academic Presentations

Palmer 1.06

Happiness at home and living well? Using a wellbeing lens to study happiness and liveable societies in uncertain times - Mark Cieslik

Chair: Ewa Sidorenko

Palmer 1.07

"The Queen of the Tradwives": the role of the home in an influencer's social media content - Alice Myers

Chair: Barbara Myers

9.55-10.45 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Infant rest and sleep routines and rituals within the domestic home - Amanda Norman</i>	<i>A reflection on petty squabbles within the familiar world of work - Tracey Collett</i>
Chair: Judith Milburn	Chair: Carly Guest

10.45-11.10 Coffee, tea and biscuits Palmer 1.08
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11.10-12.00 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Directions home - Ewa Sidorenko and Judith Milburn</i>	<i>Home as a theme in children's literature - Karin Bacon</i>
Chair: Siobhan Moyes	Chair: Terry Martin

12.05-13.05 PLENARY Palmer 1.06
<p style="text-align: center;">Jackie Goode <i>A Life in Seven Moves: stories of loss, grief work and coming home to self</i></p> <p>Chair: Aidan Seery</p>

13.05-13.50 LUNCH Palmer 1.08

13.50-14.40 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Hotel as Home - Aidan Seery</i>	<i>Home abroad: An autoethnography of World War II intergenerational trauma experienced by Canadian Polish Diaspora - Jacqueline Galica</i>
Chair: Gayle Letherby	Chair: Smriti Verma

14.45-16.10 Installations WITH Coffee, tea and cake Palmer 1.08
<p><i>Mon-otony (a board (bored) game): THE DELUXE VERSION -Tracey Collett and Gayle Letherby</i></p> <p><i>The ghost print: visualising home through print - Carly Guest</i></p> <p><i>Belonging in the anatomical community. Is home where the heart is? - Siobhan Moyes</i></p>

16.10-17.10 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Trauma, tipping points and the slippery slope to precarity and home(lessness) for single older women - Barbara Myers</i>	<i>How to feel at home in a house on fire: inhabiting a body at risk - Tania Thomas</i>
Chair: Naomi Braithwaite	Chair: Anne Chappell

19:00- late(r) Pre-Dinner Conference Drinks, followed by Conference Dinner **BLANDFORDS**

FRIDAY 16th July 2022

7.30- 9.00 Breakfast - Park Eat

9.00.-9.50 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Home is where the heart-ful personal/private/public/professional self is..... - Gayle Letherby</i>	<i>Home is Where one Starts From - Terry Martin</i>
Chair: Jan Bradford	Chair: Jacqueline Galica

9.55-10.45 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Coming home to Cornwall - Julie Dayot</i>	<i>The Artist as a Useful Child - Anders Gjesvik</i>
Chair: Tracey Collett	Chair: Terry Martin

10.45-11.15 Coffee, tea and biscuits Palmer 1.08

11.15-12.05 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Literary Influence and the Autotheoretical Impulse in Contemporary South Asian Women's Life-Writing - Smriti Verma</i>	<i>It takes a (digital) village to raise a child. Internet at home and parenting - Ewa Sidorenko</i>
Chair: Jacquie Goode	Chair: Carly Stewart

12.10-13.00 Academic Presentations	
Palmer 1.06	Palmer 1.07
<i>Wanda – a child who survived extraordinary times - Ruth Garland</i> Chair: Anders Gjesvik	<i>Secrecies and Silences at home: childhood memories of the 84-85 Miners Strike - Carly Guest</i> Chair: Maddy French

13.00-14.00 LUNCH Palmer 1.08 and DEPART
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ABSTRACTS

Keynote

JACKIE GOODE

A Life in Seven Moves: stories of loss, grief work and coming home to self

Home is both a capacious and a contentious concept. Capacious in encompassing notions of place, space, identity, power, socio-spatial imaginaries, mobility, dwelling etc; and contentious in some of its manifestations, for example, in relation to home being a haven; or the way it is mobilised in party political discourse; or the notion of a 'homeland', when we know what that can mean in practice; or the shameful incidence of homelessness in the UK. On the other hand, I must admit to feeling envious when reading stories - biographical and fictional - of upper/middle class families who own houses that have passed down through generations; or families who own a house that they go to every summer, laying down idyllic memories for children, who then take their children there ... who take their children, in an unbroken thread.

Sociologically, then, the concept lends itself to explorations of a number of themes such as 'continuity and change'; life-course and turning points; inheritance; movements of various kinds; family formations; the 'unheimlich'; material culture; distinctions between home, house, household and family, between inside and outside, between private and public; and - what I'm exploring here - the potential loss, mourning, grief work and rituals associated with home-making practices. In this presentation, I address these themes by tracing seven moves - physical, material, and emotional - through the use of photographs, diary and journal entries, music, and poems written over many years; and through switching from a first person to a semi-fictionalised third person narrative.

Jackie Goode is a Visiting Fellow in Qualitative Methods in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities at Loughborough University. Her most recent publications are edited collections of Autoethnography, entitled 'Clever Girls: Autoethnographies of Class, Gender and Ethnicity', with contributions from three generations of women who were all first in their family to go to university; and, with Karen Lumsden and Jan Bradford, 'Crafting Autoethnography: Processes and Practices of Making Self and Culture', in which contributors from both 'traditional' and practice-based disciplines describe and explain their autoethnographic activities.

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Home as a theme in children's literature.

Karin Bacon

Many children's stories focus on the idea of home. It is a place (or several places) that evokes many feelings in readers and so it is interesting to consider why and how the idea of home is often promoted or presented in children's stories. This paper examines and critically reflects on how home is understood and discussed in a sample of children's literature. It highlights how challenging concepts relating to home [e.g. shelter, security, family, homelessness, refugees, intercultural understanding etc.] can be addressed using story and picture books in particular.

More particularly, in the presentation I will examine the dominant and recurring ideas about home in six different picture books in English and in Irish (Gaeilge). I will focus on how this depiction has changed over the last 20 years to include how home is currently depicted for refugee children, different family types, different geographical locations in a random sample of publications. The findings demonstrate how the notion of home has become a more fragile, nuanced, and uncertain concept in contemporary children's literature.

References

- Corapi, S., and Short K. (2014), Exploring International and Intercultural Understanding through Global Literature, Longview Foundation.
- Mallett, S. (2004). Understanding home: a critical review of the literature. *The Sociological Review*, 52(1), 62–89.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2004.00442.x>
- Pavonetti, L., (2011). Bridges to understanding, Lanham, The Scarecrow Press

Between Diary and Memoir: Contemporary Wartime Testimony

Ilana Blumberg

As a memoirist and a scholar of life writing living through war, I have recently felt the want of a term for a kind of life writing that exists at the gap between diary and memoir, that I want tentatively to call "here-and-now-testimony." Philippe Lejeune characterized diaries as open-ended: a diary is necessarily written forward, "without the knowledge of where it will end (207). Reading someone else's diary, or one's own diary later, says Lejeune, offers "the feeling of touching time," a total immersion in the present-ness of the present (209). By contrast, the memoir is written retrospectively, with the author typically making sense of a set of events or a period of time that she can organize into meaning from some tentative point of rest and contemplation. Yet I want to describe, and practice, a testimonial writing, deeply rooted in a place that stands as my home, as cataclysmic events of war and the aftermath of grief transform both the space and the moment in history. In today's technological moment, such writing can testify in real time, traversing space in ways that bodies cannot. How can we place this kind of writing generically? How does the immediacy of such testimony alter the way we understand the archive and the writing of history? What sort of afterlife might such testimonies have and to what immediate uses might such testimonies be put? How might we study such writing as a testimony not only of events but of place and the idea of home?

Reference: Lejeune, Philippe. *On Diary*. Jeremy Popkin and Julie Rak, eds. Durnin, Katherine, trans. Biographical Research Center-U of Hawai'i P, 2009

Memories and experiences in interaction during narrative interviews

Elizabeth dos Santos Braga

This presentation aims to bring up a discussion about specific aspects involving teacher formation in an ongoing qualitative and collective research: the collaborative character of the investigation and the conducting of narrative interviews by the teachers themselves. This research is undertaken in one of the 58 Unified Educational Centres (CEUs) in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, which have been part of an important policy to promote public facilities in the periphery and reduce criminality and social exclusion. Through the principles of ethnography, discursive and micro genetic analysis, we observe and investigate practices developed in the Educational, Cultural and Sports units, mainly analysing ways of experiencing places by agents from the three schools within the CEU and its relationship with local communities. One of the methodological procedures is the narrative interview which takes place during teachers' meetings, after a period of study and preparation of an interview script. In each group, one or more teachers interview one or two colleagues, concerning life stories and education trajectories. Taking into consideration Vygotskian and Bakhtinian approaches to development, language, and constitution of subjects from intersubjective dynamics, as well as Freirean ideas on political emancipation through education processes, we focus on concepts and aspects such as the interview as a particular way of mediation, collective and meaningful memory, dialogue, and *perezhivanie*. For this presentation, we focus on passages of some teachers' narratives concerning their childhood and homelands and the links created between them and their experiences in the present.

Comfortable shoes? Telling stories of self and other through a pair of shoes

Naomi Braithwaite

"They make me feel comfy. Safe, to a degree. I don't often feel good when I'm in social situations and a lot of my clothes can get fidgety and uncomfortable as a result (even if they aren't really). But, that never happens with my shoes." (Jon, 2023)

This extract comes from my research project, The Virtual Shoe Salon, established in 2020, which documents relationships between young people and self-identity, as communicated through their footwear. The salon asks respondents to submit a photograph of their shoes, and to write a narrative response about what the shoes mean to them and how wearing them makes them feel. The project applies a crowd sourcing, digital, open approach to collect data from students at Nottingham Trent University, and since 2020 over 800 photographs and narratives have been voluntarily submitted, documenting very personal and emotive experiences of self-identity during the Covid years and beyond.

Jon's narrative emotively communicates the stabilising role of shoes in securing his own sense of self and confidence. This desire for safety, comfort and security, alongside individuality and the need to 'fit in', have been repeatedly documented across the salon's respondents. Content analysis of the written narratives has revealed that for these young individuals the shoe is more than just a shoe. Through its materiality it offers a home not just for feet but for the individual and their sense of self and well-being. Presenting findings from the salon, the paper will explore what shoes reveal about the self and other.

A reflection on petty squabbles within the familiar world of work

Tracey Collett

This auto/biographical presentation builds on previous musings about working in neoliberal, interdisciplinary, higher education related to interpersonal relationships, emotional labour, power and affect. Specifically, it is an exploration of social activity under circumstances that are fast paced, driven, subject to constant change and above all, familiar. I am a sociologist employed by a medical school. My starting point is a series of daily diary entries describing five days at work in February 2025.

My diary ramblings reflect most weeks at work and are characterised by conflict. Initially, I am surprised by the blurring of boundaries between the private and the public, between back and front stage. But then myself and colleagues spend most of our time in our offices: work can feel like a second home, so why should that feel surprising? We know each other well. There are allegiances, and support, concerned corridor conversations, anxieties, shorthand codes and generalised ideas about others (not always pleasant). I am ambivalent about my working relationships. I know I play a role in all this. I trust my colleagues but then I feel hurt, it's emotionally draining.

Can I/we move above petty squabbles so that we can be our best selves as a team, for the students, for patients? Should we? How much tension is inevitable? My quest for understanding considers the managed heart, the dangers of framing work as a battle, suggestions from the self-help literature and ideas that from the field of management and leadership. Yet still something is missing, thus I turn to the sociological for answers.

Happiness at home and living well? Using a wellbeing lens to study happiness and liveable societies in uncertain times

Mark Cieslik

This presentation draws on two biographical projects that explored the notion of 'living well in uncertain times'. Using narrative accounts, biographical and social network data it illustrates the collaborative efforts of interviewees to live well despite the everyday challenges of life in austerity Britain. Good wellbeing for many involved a sense of 'being at home and socially connected' through neighbourhoods, friendships, employment and families. Wellbeing was influenced at key biographical moments by experiences of illness, care and loss and as roles evolved with ageing, framed by class/gender processes. The narratives document how some interviewees engaged with activities like mindfulness, hobbies and physical exercise to enhance wellbeing whilst others because of fallibility and poor access to resources/opportunities struggled to develop healthier and happier lifestyles.

Although there is scepticism about wellbeing research and the happiness industry, I illustrate how a wellbeing lens generates valuable insights into perennial sociological concerns. The struggle to live well is implicated in the making of identities, the unfolding of biographies and the interweaving of agential and structural powers.

I reflect on my own experiences of poor wellbeing as an academic sociologist and how these inspired my curiosity about ordinary people's efforts to live well in difficult times. Interviewees offered many insights into the small steps towards healthier lifestyles – cultivating awareness, attention and social connection – striving to be at home in everyday life.

Coming home to Cornwall

Julie Dayot

Home was mamie Simone, my French granny. When she left, home became grief. I escaped grief by leaving home (Brittany), and come to this country. I moved homes away from home – about 17 times, as a metaphor for my sense of homelessness and my endless search for belonging. I found home away from home, in foreign places and people, a few times – before feeling homeless again. Homelessness and uprootedness became my second home. Eventually I had to return home. The grief was still there, unprocessed. Unshaken. And unspoken. Raw and silent. I cried, and I escaped, time and again. Moving to Cornwall felt like coming home. Home from the other side of the channel from home. Home of my ancestors, some of whom came from the Celtic nations. Grief was still expecting me. Like an old friend. But it was no longer silent. It was screaming, loud. And it was ready to be heard. In grief I found my trauma. And in facing my trauma I found my home, within me.

This talk is about a journey of escaping, feeling home away from home, getting lost, returning home, and finding home within. It is accompanied with songs and videos... about home.

“I Just Felt Numb for Years”: Endometriosis, Infertility, and Embodied Disconnections

Maddy French

What does it mean to feel at home in our bodies? The body is central to our identity and selfhood (Grosz, 1994) and serves as a means of experiencing the world around us (Merleau-Ponty, 1945). For the most part, we are not consciously aware of our bodies until something disrupts its equilibrium (Leder, 1990). Some disruptions, like learning a new skill, arise through choice, while others, such as chronic illness and pain, are beyond our control. For those navigating endometriosis and infertility, the body that was once a home can become an unsafe place to inhabit.

Drawing on my work-in-progress doctoral research, this paper explores how prolonged and invasive medical interventions disrupt participants’ connections to their bodies. Participants describe distancing themselves from their bodies and learning to numb and dissociate from their embodied experiences. This paper will investigate the embodied impact of medicalised trauma and consider how embodied methodologies, such as body mapping, can serve as tools for understanding and reconnecting with the self. Through body mapping, we can engage in a process of ‘sitting with the embodied self’ to reclaim and return home to our bodily experiences.

The session will conclude with an interactive body mapping workshop. During this workshop, participants can reflect on their connection to their body and creatively express this connection through body mapping. No artistic experience is required—only a willingness to engage with the process. All materials will be provided.

Home abroad: An autoethnography of World War II intergenerational trauma experienced by Canadian Polish Diaspora

Jacqueline Galica

Poland is referred to the “bloodlands” of World War II (WWII) since it is the location where so much conflict occurred. As a result, the prevalence of WWII post-traumatic stress disorder is higher in Poland than in Western Europe. These prevalences illuminate the mental health effects of WWII among those with first-hand experience; however, little is known about how these psychologically traumatic events influence the wellbeing of successive generations, known as intergenerational trauma (IGT). Given that immigrants with severe exposure to violence have higher rates of trauma-related disorders than other immigrant groups, studying IGT of WWII among Polish diaspora is important. As a first-generation Canadian whose paternal grandparents emigrated from Poland in 1959, I use Chang’s autoethnography as method to document my IGT and IGT healing. Data is collected from internal sources (i.e., personal memory, self-observation, and self-reflection) and external sources (i.e., interviews, archival records, photographs, visits to historically relevant sites, a scoping review) across two contexts of home: Canada and Poland. Data will be synthesized into a narrative summary and preliminary findings presented at the conference. This study is useful to illuminate how narrative methods and cultural learning can be used to support IGT healing and navigate one’s sense of home across international borders. Findings are relevant to academic audiences interested in autoethnography of a not-yet examined population: Polish diaspora in Canada. Findings are also useful for clinical audiences to understand how narrative methods, an easily adopted, economical intervention, can be used to support individuals experiencing IGT.

Wanda – a child who survived extraordinary times

Ruth Garland

Wanda Wistrich (1932-2024) was born a Polish Jew in Krakow. Her father, a doctor, was the youngest of six, most of whom lived in the city. In August 1932, when she was seven, the extended family left Krakow in four cars, heading East. It was ostensibly a holiday, but as the Nazis swept through one half of Poland and the Russians the other, it became a long journey East by goods train, ending in Kazakhstan, USSR. The family returned to Krakow in Spring 1946, and Wanda left Poland on her own for Britain that winter on a boat carrying 80 young people. She was 14.

I am Wanda's daughter. Following the death of Ken, my father, I recorded six interviews with her in the summer of 2021, and two more in 2023, when she had been diagnosed with Alzheimer's. The first set covered the period from her return to Krakow in 1946 to her arrival at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, where she met Ken, an Englishman, and non-Jewish. The last interviews explored the escape from Poland. Her recollections are startlingly vivid and combined with her emotional 'return' to her frightened 7-year-old self at night during her final year, tell the story of a love for life with a shadow from childhood that could never be banished.

This is a work in progress that draws on family and other historical evidence, to create a podcast featuring people like Wanda who survived extraordinary times as children.

The Artist as a Useful Child

Anders Gjesvik

The themes of childhood and home are pivotal in biographies of artists, often serving as foundational narratives that shape their creative identities. Which specific relations and happenings do the biographer use to explain the development of a unique creativity? This author's hypothesis is that the biographer is searching for struggle in the child's homely surroundings and reinforces them to explain the development of a certain creativity that later in life blooms as artistry.

Biographical accounts frequently emphasize early experiences, familial dynamics, and the socio-cultural environment of the home as key influences on an artist's aesthetic sensibilities and thematic preoccupations. D.W. Winnicott's (1971) theory of creative play highlights the role of early imaginative experiences in fostering artistic sensibilities. This paper will argue that childhood is a historical, cultural and personal construction, shaped by both the biographer and the object.

By doing a narrative analysis of eight artist biographies about authors and painters, this paper argues that childhood and home function as narrative devices that not only explain artistic development but also contribute to the mythologization of the artist's persona. The paper will investigate whether the narratives adapt to the expected roles as respectively author and painter.

Secrecies and Silences at home: childhood memories of the 84-85 Miners Strike

Carly Guest

This presentation draws on interviews with people from striking families who remember the 1984-85 UK miners' strike as children, a and auto/biographical reflections. It considers how family stories and secrets shape memories of the 1984-85 Miners Strike and how these are located in the home. The home emerges as a site that was vital to the management and negotiation of the strike and these omissions and absences continue to characterise the memories of the strike in adult retellings. This paper considers the context of the family home, family stories and the importance of family secrets in adult memories of childhood experiences of the strike, suggesting that looking at absences, silences, secrets and the known and unknown can reveal the many ways in which the strike was experienced and is narrated and remembered.

Home is where the heart-ful personal/private/public/professional self is.....

Gayle Letherby

I have spoken about 'home' before at Auto/Biography Conferences. At the 2023 Christmas Conference I began by stating:

In this 'retelling', and with reference to my home and my home town, I tell a story of the connections between love, legacy, space(s) and place (incorporating both 'belongings' (as in things) and 'belonging' (as in having an affinity

with)) and reflect on how my relationships and experience has shaped my personal, social and political self.

Here I continue these reflections, alongside my other recent thinkings, and writings, on solitude, loneliness and living alone. In addition to being the space where I relax and revive my home is also the place where I do much of my work: which includes writing, online teaching, mentoring and more. I work with others in this space too, especially with two particular friends who know each other and joked together recently about which of my cushions they prefer to prop them up when writing. Across my career I have often – both in terms of working practices and research interests and method/ologies – done things a little differently to the expected academic norm. Similarly, in reflecting on what ‘home’ means to me, although I appreciate the problems that home-working can bring for some, personally the blurring of private and public in my daily living spaces, and even my bedroom, works for me. My home then, is, in addition to being one of the spaces and places where I feel most comfortable, my most favourite office ever.

Home is Where one Starts From Terry Martin

With these words, T S Eliot, in his incomparable poem Four Quartets, provided the eminent psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott with the title of his book of collected essays: Home is Where We Start from: Essays by a Psychoanalyst. Home is both a psychological and a sociological concept; we need houses to put our homes in. Both the physical form (flat, bungalow, detached, etc.), and the context or environment of a house/home can have profound psychological consequences. Both these aspects can have a considerable impact upon the extent to which we feel at home in our houses, and the ease with which we can form those social bonds crucial to our psychological and spiritual well-being. These bonds create within us the essential feeling of belonging, without which we can feel homeless and uprooted. When we are away from home for long periods of time we can often feel homesick and may not feel we belong in our new and perhaps still unfamiliar environment. Gregory Coles in his book No Longer Strangers: Finding Belonging in a World of Alienation, says: The human creatures seem to think conformity is the key to belonging, even though the ones most obsessed with fitting in appear least comfortable in their own skins. The phrase “comfortable in their own skins” captures the deepest, existential aspect of belonging, and by implication its opposite, the feeling of being an outsider, gazing in on everyone else who do belong. Coles goes on to introduce the useful concept of lingering:

The people we linger with are the people we grow to love. There is no deep belonging without deep lingering. Lingering stands in stark contrast to rushing. We refer to a lingering taste; something that, remains beyond its appointed time, and also to lingering doubts when something doesn’t seem quite right. As sociologists Peter and Brigitte Berger and Hansfried Kellner demonstrate in their classic work The homeless mind: modernization and consciousness, social trends since the industrial revolution have hardly been conducive to feeling at home in the world. Émile Durkheim, the founder of the discipline of sociology, wrote about the importance of social capital and social cohesiveness, and in his landmark study, Suicide: A Study in Sociology, suggested a direct correlation between the rate of suicide in a country and the extent of social cohesion. He also wrote of the widespread experiences of anomie and ennui that can lead to social unrest.

In my paper I propose to examine and critique the concepts of belonging, lingering, social capital and social cohesiveness and to offer a constructive way forward to enhance our experience of being at home in the world.

Judith Milburn Show me the way to go home

The journey home is the one we make the most often in our lives. What and where we call ‘home’, however, will change materially and emotionally under the influence of many factors, personal and otherwise. Likewise, we make our way home by different means, in different circumstances.

We may long for home or dread it, go home to recover or in 'defeat', go willingly or be sent. We may not be able to leave home, or not be able to get home. Or we may be caught in a vortex between different homes and what they represent.

Conversely, the way home could be our journey through life towards a sense of equilibrium (or at least an acceptance of creative imbalance) and of peace with and acceptance of oneself. For Ginsburg (1999) home is less about 'where you are from' and 'more about where you are going'.

In examining over 60 years of homecoming (as part of a broader PhD focus on 'Women of a certain age', both to express and celebrate self, and to explore the extent to which this process, creative and academic, can give voice to find a common voice), I seek to explore these themes, and consider to what extent how we find the way to go home - happily or less happily - may tell us more about our personal journeys and how we find our own way through the world.

Trauma, tipping points and the slippery slope to precarity and home(lessness) for single older women **Barbara Myers**

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine the gendering of class with ageing and precarity across the social world and social spaces that individuals interact with in the contextual setting of our home Aotearoa New Zealand. A socio-structural intersectional approach is drawn on using a life story methodology to make visible the stories of differently positioned single, older women.

Several interrelated themes emerged from the stories. Separation and divorce was generally the initial tipping point into precarity. Poor mental and physical health, ongoing provisioning responsibilities, a lack of formal qualifications leading to part time precarious work, often forced the women out of their homes and into the rental market. Such was the extent of their cumulative disadvantage, the women could not envisage a future...either good or bad.

This paper provides a novel lens to examine how the gendering of class intersects with ageing, producing lines of privilege and (dis)advantage for single, employed, older women, who over time experience precarity at multiple levels of life's domains.

We argue that it is time the stories of these older women, are told. To do so we can in some way use our voices and inspire others to follow, by asking different questions to "oppose the unequal present" and "radically re-imagine a more socially just yet-to-be future," (Janssens and Zanon, 2021, p.16).

"The Queen of the Tradwives": the role of the home in an influencer's social media content **Alice Myers**

This paper examines how the home is represented and complicated in the social media content by a "tradwife" influencer. Influencers are social media figures who create and share autobiographical online content for commercial purposes. "Tradwives" are a subgenre of lifestyle influencers who promote traditional gender roles and values in the representation of their lives as wives and mothers. In this paper, I focus on content by 'Ballerina Farm,' aka Hannah Neeleman, the so-called "Queen of the Tradwives". Neeleman lives in Utah on a farm with her husband and eight children and shares her homemaker lifestyle with her 10 million followers on Instagram and TikTok respectively. I argue that representation of the home and adjacent domestic activities in Neeleman's social media content is central to her "tradwife" persona, in ways that simultaneously reinforce and challenge traditional gender roles. I locate Neeleman's content in existing classed, gendered and racialised histories of traditional womanhood in the US. Subsequently, I consider how the idea of the home has been repurposed in digital life narratives such as Neeleman's on social media. Then, the paper turns to the contradictions of the label "tradwife," questioning the extent to which this is a misnomer. First, by considering how the commercial pursuit of influencing complicates the notion of traditional womanhood. Furthermore, I assess how the boundary of public/private is persistently breached in the

publication of Neeleman's "tradwife" content, subverting the notion of traditional womanhood as sequestered and private in its affiliation with the domestic.

Infant rest and sleep routines and rituals within the domestic home

Amanda Norman

This project is informed by both professional information and often contested commercial advice about rest and sleep routines and rituals, both in England and internationally within the domestic home. The paper presented will share alternative scholarly considerations by exploring rest and sleep routines and rituals within a Froebelian lens, with reference to his publication 'The Mother Songs, Rhyme and Stories', contributing to the wider narrative about unity and connectedness during rest and sleep routines and rituals.

Friedrich Froebel (1782 - 1852) was a pioneer of early childhood education and the kindergarten, studied from an early educator's perspective. My research offers a new perspective in the light of a Froebelian philosophy to the wider connections of infant restorative care during rest and sleep rituals, with infants in the domestic home. In securing a British Academy grant this paper will share the initial findings of the interviews carried out with mothers about their experiences in the domestic home when caring for their infants. A focus in this paper will be the human and non-human materials interactions in the domestic home. Some preliminary analysis will also be included, with the long-term objective of publishing a monograph in 2026. By arguing for the relevance of a Froebel approach to the introduced term, 'Restorative Care' during rest and sleep in the home I will be introducing how interactions, and transitional approaches build and maintain positive healthy relationships, contributing to, as well as challenging the existing advice and literature within rest and sleep praxis.

Writing Home

Mark Price, Jan Bradford, Jackie Goode

In this collaborative presentation we explore the experiences, processes, expectations and resonances conjured up in 'writing home'.

Together, we talked about home as an extension of the self – but also ambivalent feelings of containment versus suffocation. We thought about home-makers and home breakers; a 'family' home; a 'broken' home. We brought to mind 'keeping the home fires burning' – for young soldiers writing letters from 'the front' to homes never to be returned to. And we are conscious of all those losing their home right now, through war and enforced migration.

And so where do we feel 'at home'? Is home a place or a state? Or is home to be found in motion – 'wherever I hang my hat'? Or is home experienced in relationship? In this presentation, we write to homes we've left, or lost; homes we hope for, imagine. We write of place and space, time and memory, of self. Our 'letters home' are to each other; to lost homes; to imagined homes, to you.

Taking Letherby and Zdrodowski (1995), Pithouse et al. (2012), Plath (1999) and Stamper (2020) as our touchstones, we trace our nomadic wanderings through gatherings and de-clutterings, through a jumbled cache of letters and found fragments, as we explore meanings of home. In doing so, our woven 'twill', becomes a cloth to wrap ourselves in. Or is it that we are making a vessel, a holder of memories and mementoes rescued, examined, restored? Through our letter writing, we seek... and sometimes find... ways home.

Hotel as Home

Aidan Seery

The hotel as a location for long or longer-term living presents both a challenge and an invitation to investigate notions of home. For instance, the usual consideration of home as private is stretched by the position of the hotel as

a liminal space that is between the private and the public. The idea of stability that is attached to home, in imagination if not in reality, is also undermined by a certain impermanence in hotel living. Familiarity gives way often to isolation, but the hotel can also be a place of refuge, also from a private home. The hotel therefore can provide a locus from which to examine what it means to have a home and to be at home.

This paper will examine some examples of narratives of hotel as home living in the works of the German novelist Thomas Mann and the Irish writer Elizabeth Bowen but will contrast these historical and culturally-situated texts of the early 20th century with a reflection on the reported experiences of a family of Ukrainian refugees who spent over a year in hotel accommodation before they were able to establish a 'home', albeit not in their 'home' land. In my reflections, I will engage with some Foucauldian ideas of space and surveillance to frame the emerging issues.

It takes a (digital) village to raise a child. Internet at home and parenting

Ewa Sidorenko

In classical sociology the family was a site of the reproduction of labour power for the capitalist mode of production (Marxism); primary socialisation and enculturation (Durkheim and functionalism), whilst varieties of feminism considered family a social institution reinforcing patriarchy and gender inequalities. Home, as a field for sociological study is surprisingly new (Boccagni & Kusenbach 2020) and provides opportunities for exploring its relationships, cultures and structures. All three come together to shape experiences of both childhoods and parenting. This paper considers the impact of internet technology on home as a space for the nurturing of children. When in 1982 the cultural critic Neil Postman published his book *The Disappearance of Childhood* critiquing the impact of mass media, primarily television, on children and childhood, it provoked a debate in which many found him conservative and unduly pessimistic (Buckingham 2000). Postman then went on to write, among others, *The End of Education* in 1995 in which he voiced his concern with the failures of US education and the underpinning cultural and social changes. Similarly, other scholars pointed to social changes affecting contemporary culture of education and learning (Ziehe, 2009, Kegan, 2009, Wenger 1998) whilst others focused on the rise of risk aversion and other factors impacting the culture of children's play (Else 2009, Gill, 2007) and wellbeing (Louv 2010, Palmer, 2006). In this paper I draw on auto/biographical parenting experiences of the internet entering our family's home and its influence of relationships with my children and their long-term mental health.

Ewa Sidorenko and Judith Milburn

Directions home

We are two friends and academics, of a similar age but from different cultural, linguistic and national backgrounds, who have known each other for 35 years.

We met as young aspiring writers in a small Thatcherite publishing company; we had to learn to swim in and write about an emerging neoliberal business culture which eventually made us both redundant and set on separate paths. Since then, we have travelled in different directions as part of our personal and professional lives, but have always found ourselves drawn to and engaged in creative writing, in which we have supported each other. In other words, we have found, and shared, our 'directions home'.

Here, through our creative dialogue, illustrated with photographs, artefacts and artworks from our collective and individual personal and cultural histories (which we aim to evolve into an exhibition at a later date), we explore the evolution of our conception of 'home', from our separate childhoods through the milestones of our lives, shared or otherwise, to the present landscape of care and friendship for each other and our ongoing growth as writers.

Drawing on Boccagni & Kusenbach (2020) who understand home as a space shaping identity, emotions and belonging, we reflect on ways in which our evolving friendship has supported our pursuit of authenticity, and a search for a sense of belonging in the world as creative writers.

How to feel at home in a house on fire: inhabiting a body at risk

Tania Thomas

A sociological approach to the study of illness enables a multifaceted exploration of how we understand, interpret, and navigate the social, cultural, and institutional aspects of living with illness. However, research has primarily focused on acquired illness, with the lived experiences of those with congenital conditions remaining underexamined. In the UK, congenital heart disease (CHD) affects almost one in one hundred babies. Adults with CHD are an emergent demographic with specific illness experiences, including that of being 'pioneer patients.' The first successful open-heart surgeries for CHD took place within living memory, and complex CHD cannot be cured, requiring lifelong management. Unlike acquired illness, individuals with congenital conditions have never resided in a body without illness. As a result, dominant typologies of illness narratives and concepts such as unhomelikeness – rooted in acquired illness experiences – are less resonant, failing to fully capture the realities of lifelong illness. Drawing on qualitative, biographical interviews with sixteen adults with complex CHD, as well as the researcher's lived experience, this paper will use the extended metaphor of the body as both a home and a site of threat, deterioration, repair, and ongoing maintenance to discuss how adults with CHD construct and narrate their well-being in the context of lifelong chronic illness. This paper will also suggest congenital illness narratives, exploring how these narratives help make sense of topics such as identity, resilience, precarity and coping when the individual is housed in a body – and powered by a heart – that can only ever be palliated.

Literary Influence and the Autotheoretical Impulse in Contemporary South Asian Women's Life-Writing

Smriti Verma

Meena Kandasamy, writer of the autofictional novel *When I Hit You* (2008), elaborated on the centrality of literary influence on her work in a 2008 interview. She quoted a long list of writers from what she calls as "the English tradition", citing African-American poets such as Gwendolyn Brooks and Langston Hughes, Virginia Woolf, Vladimir Nabokov, Joseph Conrad, Toni Morrison, and prominent Indian novelists like Rushdie and Arundhati Roy. When asked later if Tamil Dalit women writers like Bama and Sivakami have also influenced her work, Kandasamy dismissed the possibility of using the category of influence for her relationship with them. This is because, as she says, influence is "a label that sits comfortably only with someone who is quite a distance away from you." Kandasamy's tradition stretched beyond her subject position, far and wide, and involved a nexus of writers both marginal and otherwise.

The interview also threw open the politics of writing in English as opposed to one's mother tongue and exemplified postcolonial debates around language, literature and articulation. Kandasamy's firm reliance that writing in English will and has allowed her "voice to reach the corridors of power" echoes Chinua Achebe's belief in the ability of English to carry "the weight of [his] African experience" in 1965.

This paper will unpack the category of literary influence and lineage in South Asian women's life-writing and the ways in which it problematises notions of home, belonging, and authorship for the contemporary woman writer of the region. In the process, I will study the presence of the autotheoretical impulse and citational gesturing as a way for the writer of world literature to move away from the margin and take stock of the literary centre.

Installations

Mon-otony (a board (bored) game): THE DELUXE VERSION

Tracey Collett and Gayle Letherby

The first iteration of Mon-otony followed our paper “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”, delivered at the Summer 2023 Auto/Biography Conference ‘New Beginnings’, now published in Auto/Biography Review. In the papers, and the game, we highlight some problems with, and challenges to, traditional definitions and myths of working and learning in higher education, and offer alternative ways of being in academia. Our 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 daily ‘dances’. Our hope was that through Mon-otony others would join us in challenging working practices that are less rewarding and that can impact on our personal selves and home life and identities in negative and destructive ways. This was indeed the case and we were encouraged that participants at last year’s A/B summer conference embraced Mon-otony with us and offered suggestions on how we might develop it. We like to think then that the deluxe version of Mon-otony, which highlights more challenges, and offers more potential ways to resist professional, intellectual and personal care-lessness is ‘back by popular demand’. If you agree please join us in playing the game (again).

The ghost print: visualising home through print

Carly Guest

This is a proposal for an interactive printing workshops that invites participants to explore the themes of the conference through the printing of images of 'home'. The ghost print is a second, faded print in the monograph printing technique. Like the processes of remembering and storytelling, it is often a partial, distorted, faint reproduction of the original image, it is that which is left behind and left over in the printing process. Drawing on her work-in-progress zine 'Baby Bird', Carly will share printing techniques with workshop participants and they will be able to produce their own print of 'home' during the session. Materials will be provide, workshop participants will be asked to bring an image to work with (more details on what to bring can be provided if selected).

Belonging in the anatomical community. Is home where the heart is?

Siobhan Moyes

Six smiling, partially dissected, heads balanced on their necks atop a gleaming metal gurney in a dissection room. These generous body donors had welcomed me to my anatomical home, and a new direction for my career. My new home was not always so welcoming. Learning was complicated by the ‘noise’ of eponyms, archaic terms and an immediate focus on fine detail. Feeling like an outsider, I decided to make it more welcoming for others. Years later, with George Floyd's murder fresh in my mind, I realised how superficial this welcome was. I had not thought to question the ubiquitous anatomical ‘norm’ of the white, able-bodied, cis-gendered and predominantly male. Were my curricula inclusive, fair, and aspirational? How can people feel like they belong if they don’t see themselves? My recent diagnosis of ADHD gave me further opportunity for reflection. Was my home was built to support neurodiversities either? My positivist research background left me ill-equipped to address these issues. Standing on the edge of belonging, questioning my long held assumptions and values left me adrift. Frustrated at my ignorance. Angry. Then resolute. The team and I can be the change we need. We can do all we can to learn how to make our home more welcoming. Because home is where the hearts (and all other anatomical structures) are. This installation is a visual representation of the work we are undertaking towards inclusive, accessible and representative anatomy, globally.

DELEGATE LIST

First Name	Surname	Institution
Karin	Bacon	Marino Institute of Education Assoc. College, University of Dublin
Ilana	Blumberg	Bar Ilan University
Jan	Bradford	Word-by-Word Limited
Naomi	Braithwaite	Nottingham Trent University
Anne	Chappell	Brunel University, London
Mark	Cieslik	University of Northumbria
Tracey	Collett	Plymouth University
Elizabeth	Dos Santos Braga	University of São Paulo
Julie	Dayot	University of Exeter
Madelaine	French	University of York
Jacqueline	Galica	Queen's University, Kingston, Canada
Ruth	Garland	Goldsmiths University
Anders	Gjesvik	Oslo Metropolitan University
Jackie	Goode	Loughborough University
Carly	Guest	Northumbria University
Gayle	Letherby	University of Plymouth
Terry	Martin	University of Southampton
Judith	Milburn	University of Greenwich
Siobhan	Moyes	University of Plymouth
Alice	Myers	University of York
Barbara	Myers	Auckland University of Technology
Amanda	Norman	University of Winchester
Mark	Price	St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK
Aidan	Seery	Trinity College Dublin, University of Dublin
Ewa	Sidorenko	University of Greenwich
Carly	Stewart	University of Bournemouth
Tania	Thomas	University of Northumbria
Louise	Venables	University of Plymouth
Smriti	Verma	Oxford University