



a/b
Auto/Biography Study
Group

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

SEASONS

15th - 17th July 2026

Venue Reading, Reading



BRITISH
SOCIOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

BSA Registered Charity Number: 108023

SEASONS

Welcome

Dear Friends

Welcome to the Summer 2026 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 useful information about Reading Venues. All presentations and lunch and dinner will be at **Park House** this year. **PLEASE** also read the accompanying Delegate Pack for details on location of accommodation, meeting rooms and car parks. **NB: if you require a parking place you will need to print off the permit in the Delegate pack.**

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

Very best wishes

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

Venue Reading



This year, we are 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 again to be a success for our group for this year's conference.

The Programme at a Glance

WEDNESDAY 15th July

14.15-15.10	Registration. Sandwich lunch plus coffee, tea and cake (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)
15.10-16.00	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
16.10-17.00	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
19.00-late(r) (Bar open until 23.00)	Dinner in Meadow Suite, Upper, Park House. After dinner drinks (not included in conference fee) Park House

THURSDAY 16th July

7.30-9.00	Breakfast Park East
9.00-9.50	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
10.00-10.50	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
10.50-11.20	Coffee, tea and biscuits (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)
11.20-12.10	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
12.20-13.20	KEYNOTE: Mark Price 'A time for every matter': seasoning a life narrative Meadow Suite, Upper, Park House

13.20-14.10	Lunch (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)
14.10-15.00	Academic Presentation (Meadow Suite, Upper Park House)
15.00-15.30	Coffee, tea and biscuits (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)
15.30-16.20	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords)
19.00-late(r) (Bar open until 23.00)	Pre-Dinner Conference Drinks (included in conference fee), followed by Conference Dinner MEADOW SUITE, UPPER, PARK HOUSE After dinner drinks (not included in conference fee) Park House

FRIDAY 17^h July

7.30-9.00	Breakfast Park East
9.20- 10.10	Academic Presentation (Meadow Suite, Upper Park House)
10.20-11.10	Academic Presentations (Meadow Suite, Upper & Blandfords, Park House)
11.10-11.40	Coffee, tea and biscuits (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)
11.40-12.30	Academic Presentation (Meadow Suite, Upper, Park House)
12.30-13.30	Lunch (Meadow Suite, Lower, Park House)

CONFERENCE ENDS

Programme

WEDNESDAY 15th July 2026

2.15-15.10 Registration. Sandwiches, Coffee/tea and cake Meadow Suite, Lower

15.10-16.00 Academic Presentations

Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Seasonal and Daily Rhythms in the Personal Diary - Paula Vene Smith	Spring into Summer: constructions of 'hospitaleness' within transient seasonal encounters in an Italian city'- Jackie Goode
Chair: Jeni Nicholson	Chair: Lisa Moran

16.10-17.00 Academic Presentations

Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
A life in three seasons: Loss, hope, and enduring in Ama Adhe's The Voice that Remembers - Julie Fletcher	'Ladies' of Strongly Worded Letters - Tracey Collett and Gayle Letherby
Chair: Derek Morris	Chair: Jeremy Burchard

19.00 Dinner (with drinks) **MEADOW SUITE**
After dinner drinks **PARK HOUSE**

THURSDAY 16th July 2026

7.30-9.00 Breakfast – PARK EAST

9.00-9.50 Academic Presentations

Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Seasonal rituals and their autobiographical significance - Yvonne Anderson, Jenny Byrne, Judith Chapman and Jeni Nicholson	Seasoning a Life: Temporal Shifts and Accountable/ Dialogical Storytelling - Derek Wesley Morris
Chair: Tracey Collett	Chair: Paula Vene Smith

10.00-10.50 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Seasonal rituals and their autobiographical significance - Yvonne Anderson, Jenny Byrne, Judith Chapman and Jeni Nicholson	A Season of Waiting. Parenting Emerging Adulthood - Ewa Sidorenko
Chair: Tracey Collett	Chair: Carly Guest

10.50-11.20 Coffee, tea and biscuits Meadow Suite, Lower

11.20- 12.10 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Nature and the Seasons of our Lives - Jeremy Burchardt	A time to live, a time to die, surviving the time in between - Hazel Wright
Chair: Anne Chappell	Chair: Mark Price

12.20-13.20 KEYNOTE
Mark Price 'A time for every matter': seasoning a life narrative Meadow Suite, Upper Chair: Geraldine Brown

13.20-14.10 LUNCH Meadow Suite, Lower
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14.10-15.00 Academic Presentations
Meadow Suite, Upper
The Narrative Reconstruction of Emotions in Higher Education (HE): A Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM) Study of Emotional Labour of Female Senior Leaders in Ireland's Technological Universities (TUs) - Lisa Moran
Chair: Ewa Sidorenko

15.00-15.30 Coffee, tea and cake

15.30-16.20 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Lives in Winter: personal accounts of the catastrophic winter of 1947 - Michael Erben	Braiding an autobiographic-memoir – Barbara Clough
Chair: Jenny Byrne	Chair: Julie Fletcher

19.00 Pre-Dinner Conference Drinks, followed by Conference Dinner **Meadow Suite, Upper**

FRIDAY 17th July 2026

7.30 - 9.00 Breakfast - Park East

09.20-10.10 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	
Countering Cyclical Notions of Seasons: Rethinking Shifts in EDI Commitments in the Academia Shavena Vigneswara Kumar and Geraldine Brown	
Chair: Karin Bacon	

10.20-11.10 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	Blandfords
Seasonal Rhythms of Tiredness: Fatigue, Social Time and Embodied Life - Heidi Bickis and Tracey Collett	We are seasons - Aidan Seery
Chair: Jackie Goode	Chair: Yvonne Anderson

11.10-11.40 Coffee, tea and biscuits

11.40-12.30 Academic Presentations	
Meadow Suite, Upper	
Out of Season: Grief, Domestic Time and the Loss of a Constant Companion - Carly Guest	
Chair: Gayle Letherby	

12.30-13.30 LUNCH MEADOW SUITE, LOWER – CONFERENCE ENDS

ABSTRACTS

KEYNOTE

Mark Price

**'A time for every matter': seasoning a life narrative
Meadow Suite, Upper**

I was born in a wintering. Cold. Laid out on the windowsill to catch the faltering sun. Stillness. And then I took my first breathe and arrived. I learned to be of service from an early age. The springtime of schooling showed me too, what it is to lean into discovery and new shoots, but noticing (though not yet understanding), what it is to experience loss and change - and to hide my grief and shame in mulch. A shared car journey 60 years later and a comment from my doctoral student and driver, that at half my age, she was a 'late bloomer', awoke my realisation that (finally) I *am* blooming – and fruiting too.

This seasonal enquiry writes a journeying of temporal resonance and noticing, as my learning to witness, learning to see, nudges me towards a rhizomatic, nesting and now something approaching a well-seasoned skylarking of professional joy. Drawing on Ivor Goodson, Laurel Richardson and Elizabeth St Pierre, and Robert Macfarlane, Elif Shafak and Richard Powers – and charting seasonal lines of flight and desire – the presentation takes a meandering process of distraction and disturbance, experiencing time as 'kairos'. Touchstones and matter that matters (crystals, feathers, and gathered exchanges and encounters along the way) are turned over and shared.

And questions are offered...

- * Where and when and with whom do we find seasonal resonance?
- * What glimmers in our mulch?
- * What matter *matters*?

Mark Price has worked as a playworker, teacher, youth worker, and psychotherapist, before entering academia over 25 years ago. Joining the St Mary's University, London's School of Education in January 2021, Mark also continues in his role as Honorary Fellow at the University of Edinburgh's Centre for Creative-Relational Inquiry. Mark's work at St Mary's includes leading the Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) programme, mentoring staff and early career researchers, and leading St Mary's' partnership with the Mauritius Institute of Education.

Mark's research interests lie in the fields of narrative, collaborative and participatory inquiry and autoethnography, exploring particularly issues of agency, wellbeing, voice, border crossing, and boundary spanning. Mark's teaching and supervision experience centres on qualitative inquiry, creative methodologies, relational pedagogy, partnership working, professionalism and inter-professionalism and transnational learning. He is also a Ceremonies Registrar and conducts weddings and civil partnerships most weeks.

Presentations

Yvonne Anderson, Jenny Byrne, Judith Chapman and Jeni Nicholson
Seasonal rituals and their autobiographical significance

Ritual is a universal category of human experience in which vital aspects of engagement include excitement, enjoyment and identification with the social group that creates 'collective effervescence' (Durkheim, 1975 [1915]).

We examine the seasons from the anthropological perspective of ritual. Seasonal rituals mark turning points in the natural year such as solstices, equinoxes, the planting and harvesting of crops. Repeated annually they connect people to the continuity of human life, so that the past and present coalesce in the ritual moment (Bell, 1992).

Increasingly, many of these rituals have become secular celebrations but whether pagan, religious or secular they are frequently enacted through singing, dancing and feasting. Seasonal rituals may be experienced on a grand or domestic scale or somewhere in between the two, but they all offer a common emotional experience and play an essential role in giving meaning to lives by enhancing a sense of belonging and fostering social cohesion.

This paper explores seasonal rituals and why they are an important element in our auto/biographies. Each of us will focus on a specific season and discuss associated rituals that are autobiographically significant, viz: Jeni will talk about Winter, Judith, Spring, Yvonne, Summer, and finally Jenny, Autumn. We will illustrate how seasonal rituals can illuminate an understanding of our individual lives as well as the commonality between human life.

In conclusion we reflect on the multiple conflicting and competing influences on seasonal rituals in contemporary life and argue for their enduring value and purpose in society.

NB: this is a double session

Barbara Clough
Braiding an autobiographic memoir

For my PhD thesis, I am braiding an autobiographical-memoir that uses the unpublished text of my father's autobiography to create an ongoing dialogue with my memoir, separated by the forty-year difference in our ages. In the creative artefact, I alternate time frames and stories in conversation with my father's written work. For instance, I interweave the seasons of our lives: when we are children, adolescents, and eventually, old age. These seasonal changes are supplemented by images that reflect the geographical changes of our lives as well as I travel to the various places where our lives intersected but more importantly, where our lives did not intersect.

Writing his autobiography in his 70s, my father was in the autumn of his life as it were. His story reflects how he remembered earlier times of his life, the springtime of his childhood. I then wrap my memoir around his autobiography, moving back and forth between his childhood and my childhood, etc., up until the present day. I have early drafts of his autobiography and his handwritten edits enable me to reflect on how he changed his own story, adding and subtracting layers of memory. His life story was modified by notes from his writing instructor, and shortly before he died, I also edited a version of his autobiography. In writing my memoir in dialogue with my father's autobiography, I rely on my personal journals, short stories,

government records, and other archival materials that supplement both our stories to create an ongoing dialogue.

Heidi Bickis and Tracey Collett

Seasonal Rhythms of Tiredness: Fatigue, Social Time and Embodied Life

Our paper draws on a shared diary archive to present moments when tiredness becomes visible in everyday activity across the seasons of one year. We aim to bring together two sociological insights often treated separately: that fatigue is socially mediated and bodily experienced. For example:

H: Returning to work after the Christmas break, I remember feeling tired – and tired of being tired – that quiet sense of ‘oh, back to this.’ ... I had been tired over the holidays: visits, guests staying and the negotiations of social life that made sleep difficult. Even deciding whether to bake ‘piragi’, a traditional Latvian bun, becomes a calculation of energy and effort.

T: On the Monday of the Christmas ‘break’ I heave myself into action – positive thinking: a sweep round the shops to get the presents. Up early, make a list, plan a route. ... R wants to come too. ‘Where will we park’? ‘Should we get a food shop while we’re at it’? ‘Can we be back by 2.30’? Planet Rock blasts out while I sit quietly, biting my lip. I am so deeply tired. Yet, to enter into an argument would blow the lid off any chance of recovering quickly.

Through our seasonal fragments we see how tiredness moves through the rhythms of social life – through holidays, family gatherings and institutional calendars. Fatigue emerges as socially produced, bodily lived and mediated by time. So, what appears to be private is in fact structured through the enduring and intersecting conditions of life.

Jeremy Burchardt

Nature and the Seasons of Our Lives

Many diarists observe and record nature’s seasonal changes with close attention. As Mary Ellen Bellanca (2007) argued, tropes such as ‘first seens’ and ‘first heards’ – the first daffodils, the first cuckoo – feature recurrently in such diaries. In this presentation I will trace the meanings and affective power of seasonality to four contrasting diarists to each of whom it was vitally significant: the Devon guidebook writer Beatrix Cresswell (1861-1940), the Hampshire artist Katherine Spear Smith (1885-1920), the Bolton GP John Johnston (1852-1927) and the Bristol bookshop worker Fred Catley (1911-2004). Although all four cared deeply about the seasons as markers of constancy and continuity, and as a sort of open door between humanity and the natural world, they differed greatly in which seasons and which aspects of the seasons they responded to most strongly, and in the ways they integrated seasonality into their sense of self. I will argue that these differences arose mainly from character, personal circumstances and landscape setting, which meant the seasons offered different affordances (Heft, 2018) to each diarist. Responses to the seasons were also powerfully and sometimes poignantly inflected by age, although class and gender differences are less obviously apparent, no doubt because of the small sample size. For these diarists then, the profound affective significance of the seasons seems to have derived from their power to connect highly personal traits, motivations and concerns with the wider universal life of nature beyond ourselves.

Tracey Collett and Gayle Letherby
'Ladies' of Strongly Worded Letters

The internet tells us that we are both in the Autumn phase of life (50-75); a period of 'reflection, repeating the benefits of earlier efforts and stability'. In some versions of the seasonal lifecourse timeline one of us is in the Winter phase but she/we resist that. A reaction somewhat relevant to our presentation.

We are prepared to accept the age related stereotypical vision of us as 'wise and warm' and yet we reject the related view of us as 'peaceful and mellow'. How could we be given that there is still so much to be energised, and in some cases, 'grumpy' (another supposed age-related trait) about.

In our presentation, through a series of individually written and jointly composed letters, we share some of our passions, own up to a few things that really, really upset us and name and shame some traditions and practices that we believe definitely do need to be challenged. We accept our positionality and we know that our auto/biographical experiences across the lifecourse are significant to who we are and what concerns us now. In our letters we acknowledge the impact of our past Spring and Summer lives as well as speculating on what might bother us in the coming Winter. Yet, whilst the seasons are the context within which we write our missives, our main focus is that which we suggest ABSOLUTELY NEEDS TO BE SAID.

Michael Erben

Lives in Winter: personal accounts of the catastrophic winter of 1947

After the Second World War and the exhilaration of victory Britain found herself in difficult times. – there were still food shortages, rationing was worse than during the years of conflict, the destruction by bombing was everywhere and people were exhausted and very often unwell. Then there arrived the brutal winter of 1947 and any sign of post-war recovery came to a grinding halt. Additionally, there was a crisis in fuel and power. Everything stood still and was frozen. Nineteen-Forty-Seven was from every angle the worst year in British post-war history and not something that those who experienced it were to forget.

This paper examines the Winter of 1947 from personal accounts. A three-way data-set has been employed:

1. Interviews by the author with persons who remember the 1947 Winter,
2. Mass-observation respondent reports relating to the 1947 Winter,
3. Diaries and memoirs relating to the 1947 Winter.

Julie Fletcher

A life in three seasons: Loss, hope, and enduring in Ama Adhe's 'The Voice that Remembers'

Across seven decades of exile from their homeland, Tibetans in the diaspora have engaged in the gathering, translation and publication of modern Tibetan auto/biographies in English.

By the decade of the 1990s, and coinciding with a global boom in testimonial, minority, and postcolonial autobiographical forms, the practices of gathering, translating and co-authoring Tibetan life stories were sufficiently established to support the production and publication of three internationally best-selling, full-length testimonial narratives. Collective in purpose, and collaboratively produced, these accounts narrate the lives of three exemplary figures of Tibetan resistance: 'Ama' Adhe, Palden Gyatso, and 'Ani' Pachen, whose lives spanned a crucial period in modern Tibetan history, and who each spent decades as political prisoners before escaping for the freedom of exile in India.

This paper examines issues of loss, hope, and enduring in Ama Adhe's *The Voice that Remembers*. Adhe

speaks of her life as being lived in three seasons: the happiness of her childhood in free Tibet, the darkness of invasion, resistance, and imprisonment in occupied Tibet, and the renewal of hope and freedom in exile. In her “testimony to the living and the dead” Adhe both looks back, remembering those who have died, and looks forward, beyond the seasons of her own lifetime. Narrating a lifetime of active resistance, her autobiography becomes an enduring form of ongoing resistance, speaking to the younger Tibetan generation of persistence and survival. She writes “unlike grass, which can be wiped out in a strong wind, we Tibetans are as the earth”.

Jackie Goode

Spring into Summer: constructions of ‘hospitableness’ within transient seasonal encounters in an Italian city

This presentation builds on an earlier autoethnographic paper of mine in *Sociological Research Online* entitled ‘Eating Out Alone as Gendered Sociality in Public Spaces’. This new paper draws on concepts such as a ‘third place’, the ‘gathering power’ of places, public space as a ‘world of strangers’ and the notion of an ‘urban interaction order’ to illustrate constructions of ‘hospitableness’ in Siena, where I lived for 3 months last year, from late Spring to early Summer. The paper will examine these theoretical concepts; paint a picture of the place; present a series of vignettes of interactions that formed part of the informal ethnography of the city conducted during the stay; and finally share reflections on how commercial hospitality venues become transformed into ‘hospitable spaces’.

Carly Guest

Out of Season: Grief, Domestic Time and the Loss of a Constant Companion

For 11 years my dog, Fox, provided the temporal and spatial rhythm of my days — he set my morning routines, was the reason walks happened in particular places at particular times, the figure around which home was organised. When Fox died in February 2026 something in the ordinary mechanisms of time and space stopped making sense. This paper explores what happens to domestic time, space, routine and selfhood when an animal companion is lost, and how creative practice — specifically writing, drawing and printmaking — can become a way of navigating a grief that wider culture can often refuse to take seriously.

Drawing on auto/biographical narrative and responding to the Auto/Biographical Reflections on Death and Loss Across the Lifecourse writing project (Centre for Death and Society (CDAS), University of Bath, led by Gayle Letherby) the paper takes the conference theme of seasons as both metaphor and method. Fox's lifespan marked chapters of my own life; his death has left me feeling stuck outside of season — a temporality no longer feels organised around the same daily landmarks. The walks we took, the routines we kept, the objects he left behind — a lead, a bowl, a bed — are considered here as repositories of biographical time.

The paper reflects on how poetic and fragmentary auto/biographical writing, alongside drawing and printmaking as a form of slow, physical remembering, offers a means of sitting with grief that resists linear resolution.

Shavena Vigneswara Kumar and Geraldine Brown

Countering Cyclical Notions of Seasons: Rethinking Shifts in EDI Commitments in the Academia Authors

Shavena (PGR) and Geraldine (Director of Studies) established a supervision relationship within the Race Xchange Initiative. Race Xchange is a partnership between Coventry University and the University of

Warwick, created to investigate barriers in higher education, aiming to increase access to PhD study and improve the experiences of students from minoritised backgrounds. Geraldine was part of the team that laid the initial groundwork for the RaceXchange initiative. Shavena is one of six PGRs funded by RaceXchange Studentships. Having benefited from the resources allocated to her project, she is now nearing the completion of her PhD.

However, as James Baldwin reminds us that transformation is neither inevitable nor cyclical; it does not follow the certainty of the seasons but must be actively shaped by confronting the conditions that influence it. The progress of RaceXchange has not followed a straightforward pattern of growth and renewal. Instead, it has occurred amid an unstable Higher Education environment and a retreat from broader commitments to equity, diversity, and inclusion. What might once have been perceived as an opportunity for a steady process of cultivation, nurturing, and harvest operates in a climate where the potential for transformation remains partial, contested, and incomplete.

In this context, Shavena and Geraldine engage in a dialogue — one that not only considers mentorship and intellectual development but also examines the conditions under which such work becomes possible. Attuned to Baldwin's assertion that "nothing can be changed until it is faced," their conversation seeks to directly confront the shifting institutional climate, exploring how evolving priorities limit possibilities for collective change both within and beyond academia.

Lisa Moran

Seasons of Continuity or Real Transformation? Female University Leaders' Experiences of (In)Equality in Irish Universities

This paper examines whether recent developments in Irish higher education represent substantive transformation or recurring seasons of continuity in gendered inequalities, focusing on the experiences of female university leaders. Drawing on biographical narrative interviews with ten senior academic women using BNIM, the study explores how structural and social inequalities persist despite policy interventions. Over the past decade, successive Irish governments have introduced measures to advance gender equality, including targeted leadership programmes, the Senior Academic Leadership Initiative (SALI), and institutional policies designed to increase women's representation in senior roles. While these initiatives have contributed to visible progress, such as a rise in female university presidents, their impacts on everyday experiences within promotion systems, recruitment practices, and institutional culture remains underexamined.

The findings suggest that, although formal indicators point to a new season of change, gendered dynamics continue to shape women's professional lives across enduring institutional practice. Participants described engaging in sustained emotional labour, strategically managing emotions to navigate male-dominated governance structures. This persistence of embedded norms indicates that policy alone is insufficient to disrupt inequality. Consequently, despite an official narrative of transformation, women's experiences reflect overlapping seasons of continuity and constrained change in Irish HE.

Derek Wesley Morris

Seasoning a Life: Temporal Shifts and Accountable/Dialogical Storytelling

This paper engages with the theme of Seasons through a methodological and auto/biographical inquiry into how a life is narratively reworked across shifting temporal, political, and moral climates. Drawing on a book-length project that became the forthcoming book *Doing Research with Documents of Life*, it develops accountable/dialogical storytelling through Documents of Life (DoL), critical sociocultural autoethnography, and an auto/biographical/historiographic novella. I examine how seasons operate not

merely as life stages but as epistemic and ethical conditions.

The project traces my mobilisation for the Iraq War through official orders, institutional texts, and national mythologies, before moving through seasons of reflexive re-reading, fictional reconstruction, and relational memory work.

Across these shifts, storytelling becomes a seasonal practice: identities harden, fracture, decay, and are reconstituted under new interpretive weather. The “reflexive military man” yields—unevenly—to a “reflexive sociologist,” marking a transition from monological narration to dialogical accountability. Rather than presenting life as a linear progression, I conceptualise seasons as refractive intervals in which authorial habitus, memory, and institutional power realign. World-made, research-made, and dialogically produced documents register these transformations differently, revealing how narrative authority shifts across contexts.

By situating personal war experience within broader ruling relations, memory politics, and historiographic invention, the paper argues that seasons are not merely metaphors of growth or decline but conditions that shape what can be known, voiced, and ethically claimed. In this sense, seasoning a life is less about maturation than about remaining accountable to the shifting temporalities through which stories are told and retold.

Aidan Seery

We are seasons

One consequence of post-humanist and post-colonial thought and theorising in the last years is the emergence of ecobiography, or eco-auto/biography, as a particular genre of life narrative. It highlights the new or renewed realisation that human lives, histories, stories and memory are intimately connected with the natural world and environment in which these take place. It is argued that human selfhood has to be seen and interpreted as enmeshed with all other life on the planet and its weathers and climates. As Sarah Wright claims: ‘physiologically, biologically, emotionally, and culturally—we are seasons’ [Wright, 2024, 84]. This radical claim goes far beyond a recognition of environment and nature as a backdrop to a subjective mind writing of experiences in the world, by requiring that we regard embodied existence as not clearly separable from ‘a strictly bounded outside’. The eco-autobiographical self is, in this view, a porous entity, marked by fragilities and relationships and commitments beyond the human and societal. This view, while challenging to western, rational perspectives on subjectivity and self, is not foreign to many indigenous world-views.

This paper examines some of the philosophical and auto/biographical research implications of the work of Sarah Wright, David Macauley, Luke Fischer and Jessica White that could shape future auto/biographical writing.

Wright, S. (2024). *Becoming Weather: Weather, Embodiment and Affect*. London: Taylor & Francis.

Ewa Sidorenko

A Season of Waiting. Parenting Emerging Adulthood

This paper examines the phenomenon commonly described in everyday language as “failure to launch”—the increasing tendency for young adults, including those up to age 30, to struggle with attaining economic and social independence. While popular discourse and much psychological commentary often attribute this trend to individual shortcomings or parenting failures—highlighting factors such as prolonged dependence, avoidance behaviours, emotional immaturity, and co-occurring mental health difficulties including anxiety and depression—this paper approaches the issue from a broader sociological perspective. Drawing on auto/biographical reflections on parenting through the phase of emerging adulthood, I argue that these

patterns are better understood within the context of profound structural shifts over the past three decades. Rapid economic, cultural, and technological changes have reshaped the landscape within which young adults come of age, producing what Twenge (2017) identifies as a “slower path to adulthood” among the iGen. By situating personal experience within these wider transformations, the paper challenges deficit-based narratives and reframes “failure to launch” as a socially produced, rather than individually generated, phenomenon.

References

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Paula Vene Smith

Seasonal and Daily Rhythms in the Personal Diary

Research has revealed biological mechanisms by which diurnal cycles and altered daylight length produce significant effects in the human body. While health-conscious individuals can now incorporate knowledge about circadian and seasonal rhythms into their wellness practices, scholars have been slow to apply these ideas toward keener understanding of the deep structure of life-writing texts.

The personal diary, to a greater degree than other autobiographical forms, is expected to organise itself around “dailiness” (as shown by diary, journal, and tagebuch all containing the root-word for day), even if in practice the frequency of entries may not adhere to this convention.

If natural cycles affecting the human body give rise to common diary topics—such as daily remarks about the weather—it is equally the case that each diarist perceives external surroundings through a highly personal lens. How they describe weather, landscape, and seasons can offer clues to the writer’s interior or emotional experience even in a diary that rarely engages in overt self-disclosure.

Jeremy Burchardt applied a “holistic lifetime perspective” to analyse eight lengthy unpublished British diaries. He concludes that landscape descriptions “can be understood as a mirror reflecting the psychological, situational, and cultural influences pervading our lives, as we variously absorb, resist, and accommodate to them.” Placing his research alongside a brief study of an American diary kept by 19th-century Mormon church leader Emmeline Wells, this paper will discuss how close reading of diary entries that focus on external description of seasons and weather can illustrate unacknowledged tensions that shape the diarist’s interior life.

Hazel Wright

A time to live and a time to die... to everything there is a season

Despite me evoking the binary opposites of living and dying the focus of my recent work more accurately relates to the fuzzier, messier period that ultimately spans these seasons. It witnesses the time when an

elderly relative, losing her grasp on life, is following a path so poorly marked that neither she nor those in attendance can see which way it is going or how long it will be before it peters out completely. In this, this season of dying, time itself is elastic; long and interminably drawn out even while it seems to be frantically spinning out of control. It is a season of imperceptible change, unevenly punctuated by dramatic shifts, a virgin voyage into territory unknown. For me, it was a season of confusion: I both knew and did not know that my Mother was dying, yet her advancing age made this a logical outcome. Concerns about how to cope going forward made coping in the present much harder. I did not want to be, am not cut out to be, a carer; especially not for my mother around whom I had always been wary. I survived by walking briskly, often at night; and by writing, by letting strong emotions melt into words on a page, by returning to them later to sieve for understanding and encapsulate my 'reality' in verse. Now I would like to share some of these 'texts to laugh or cry over' to fulfil my intention to tell it as it was.

DELEGATE LIST

First Name	Last Name	Institutional Affiliation
Yvonne	Anderson	Anderson UK Consulting
Karin	Bacon	Marino Institute, Trinity College Dublin
Heidi	Bickis	University of Lancashire
Geraldine	Brown	Coventry University
Jeremy	Burchardt	University of Reading
Jenny	Byrne	University of Southampton
Judith	Chapman	Independent Scholar
Anne	Chappell	Brunel University of London
Babz	Clough	Oxford Brookes University
Tracey	Collett	University of Plymouth
Michael D A	Erben	University of Southampton
Julie	Fletcher	Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia
Jackie	Goode	Loughborough University
Carly	Guest	University of Northumbria
Shavena	Kumar	University of Coventry
Gayle	Letherby	University of Coventry
Ellen	McHugh	Brunel University of London
Laura	Minogue	St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK
Lisa	Moran	Edge Hill University
Derek	Morris	University of Edinburgh
Jenifer	Nicholson	Independent Scholar
Amanda	Norman	University of Winchester
Magali	Peyrefitte	Brunel University of London
Mark	Price	St Mary's University, Twickenham, UK
Ewa	Sidorenko	University of Greenwich
Aidan	Seery	Trinity College, University of Dublin
Paula Vene	Smith	Grinnell College, Iowa, USA
Hazel	Wright	Anglia Ruskin University