

ELEVENTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Bristol, UK and Online

Monday 22nd July and Tuesday 23rd July 2024
9:00 am Bristol; 1:00 am Los Angeles; 5:00 pm Osaka

Online pre-conference workshops: Sunday 21st July

Conference Theme:

Murmuration



A WARM WELCOME TO THE 2024 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

on behalf of

Conference Chair: Kitrina Douglas

Organising committee: Jamie Barnes, Tim Buescher, David Carless and Trude Klevan

Conference Administrator: Jessie Ip

IT: Rev Kandis Douglas

We hope that you are as pleased as we all are to be playing a part—a unique and important part—in this years' conference. If you are travelling to be in Bristol, we hope your journeys are smooth and stress-free. We recognise travel is no small feat for many of us nowadays. Whether you are participating in person or online from your particular place in the world, we hope that you enjoy the conference and being part of the ICAE community.

We have as our aim that everyone feels welcome and part of our community. We work hard to create spaces where online mixes with in-person, though this brings a peculiar mix of challenges. Not least among these is the risk of someone somewhere feeling left out. We ask you all to share in the role of including everyone and ask all in-person presenters to please be mindful of those online, and all online presenters to be mindful of those who are at the conference venue. We have done our best to get everything right for ICAE2024—should this not be the case for you please show us consideration as we work to balance the challenges of running a conference with our existing work, family, and life obligations.

In what follows you will find the full conference programme and a list of abstracts (in alphabetical order by author surname). Please note all times are British Summer Time (BST).

We look forward to experiencing your autoethnographic work in the sessions and talking with you during the breaks and lunches.

THANK YOU TO TIM



After serving on the ICAE committee for seven years, Tim Buescher is now stepping away from the role ... but not (we hope) from the ICAE community of which he is an integral and unique member. Tim's many contributions to the conference are too numerous to list – but many of you will have had direct communication with Tim when submitting your abstracts and probably have participated in sessions he has chaired, always with sensitivity and care. Many times, he has helped the rest of us (the committee, that is) stay fresh and on point. All this on top of the day to day demands on his time. **Thank you, Tim!**

CONFERENCE VENUE

Engineers House
The Promenade, Clifton Down, Bristol, BS8 3NB



By Air:

Engineers' House is 8.2 miles from Bristol Airport (15-30 minute drive, depending on time of the day). There are taxi ranks at the airport or a bus service to Bristol bus and coach station in the city centre.

By Bus/Coach:

From Bristol bus and coach station take a taxi or the number 8 bus. You should get off in Clifton Village (the Percival Road stop). The return bus departs from the same bus stop as when you arrive at Engineers' House.

By Train:

Coming into Bristol, use Bristol Temple Meads Train Station. Please put destination as Bristol Conf Ctr which will apply an automatic train ticket discount on the GWR website when coming from various London stops such as Paddington. From Temple Meads take a taxi or catch the number 8 bus outside of the station from the designated bus stop. You should get off in Clifton Village (the Percival Road stop). The Return bus stop is the same bus stop as when you arrive at Engineers' House (the Percival Road stop).

By Car from M5:

Leave the M5 at Avonmouth Junction 19 and follow the A4 Portway exit to Bristol. After approximately 5 miles take a sharp left just before the Clifton Suspension Bridge on to Bridge Valley Road (sign posted Bristol Zoo). At the top of Bridge Valley Road take the 1st right onto Clifton Down bearing right. Follow Clifton Down 0.3 miles and Engineers' House will be on your left just after Percival Road. Parking is available on site.

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

Thank you for submitting your work to ICAE 2024.

Please note the following:

- Your presentation should not exceed **8 minutes** in length. Shorter presentations allow us to schedule fewer parallel sessions (which equals bigger average audiences) and protects time for audience responses and questions.
- If you have a digital/visual component to your presentation (e.g. slide show, or short film etc.) please note **there are no facilities to accept memory sticks** as these can transmit viruses. If you have not already sent your file to the conference administrator, please store it on the cloud for online access.

ONLINE PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Sunday 21st July

The pre-conference workshops provide an additional opportunity to come together in small groups to explore and develop contemporary issues in autoethnographic practice. Through these workshops we hope to create a supportive protective space to develop our skills and understanding while also learning a little about others from different disciplines and backgrounds.

Further information is available at <https://boomerang-project.org.uk/workshops-2/>
To register please visit the website <https://boomerang-project.org.uk/registration/>

Workshop 1: 8:00 – 10:00 am

Swooping and Swirling: Murmuration in action
Gayle Letherby

Workshop 2: 10:30am - 12:30pm

Differently Bodied Beings and Ethnographic Encounters: Act two
Jamie Barnes

Workshop 3: 1:30 - 3:30pm

Resisting Cultural Narrative Entrapment
Alec Grant

Workshop 4: 4:00 – 6:00pm

Black Joy Workshop
Chris & Vince Omni

KEYNOTES

Sociable Solitude: exploring some alternative ways of being and moving with others

Gayle Letherby, Universities of Plymouth, Greenwich and Bath

bell hooks suggests that there are ‘not very many public discussions of love [beyond romantic/erotic love] in culture’ (2001: pxvii). Like her I am interested in more than romantic or erotic love; that is also non-sexual love between individuals and in ‘living by a love ethic’ (2001: p87), with love embedded in a commitment to social justice. In reflecting on the relevance of all of this to my own life I not only consider the significance of social, emotional and network (mobility) capital but also attempt to unpick (at least a little) the complex personal and political relationship between life chances and choices. My intention then with the conference theme of *murmurations* in mind, is, through an autoethnographic lens, to outline and explore some alternative ways of being and moving with others.



Autoethnography in the “Thin Places”

Christopher Poulos, University of North Carolina—Greensboro

In Celtic lore, the world has “thin places” (Gome, 1996) where one might experience a disruption in the ordinary temporal-spatial plane we inhabit. These thin places may provide an entry point, a sort of portal to another realm, a realm of spirit. Going to these places can release us from the everyday world and open us up to a new world of possibility. Sometimes, thin places show up unexpectedly.

Thinking and writing about thin places and liminality in general has led me to wonder about two disparate phenomena in the physical world—so disparate that they may seem entirely unrelated—yet, here they are, popping into my consciousness together, almost simultaneously. One is the echo that I hear when I call out across a distance—the thin trace of my voice coming back to me in little waves across space and time. The other is the murmuration, that oddly hypnotic swirling, twisting, and turning of a flock of starlings, making waves across the sky. Both call to me, both are asking for attention; both seem to come in waves. In this keynote address, I will speak into and through the echoes and murmurations of memory, working my way across the thin places between memory and forgetting, between dreaming and waking, between hearing the voice of the Muse and writing, between pausing and acting, between the sacred and the profane (Eliade, 1957). Come with me as we wander across time, picking up the echoes, the traces, the murmurations of memory...into the alchemy of autoethnography...



CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

All sessions are available online and in person

DAY ONE: Monday 22nd July 2024

8:30 (BST)	<p style="text-align: center;">Online Welcome Join Jessie Ip & Tim Buescher for morning coffee online</p> <p style="text-align: center;">In-person Registration Douglas Suite, Engineer's House, Bristol</p>	
8:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Conference Welcome: Room 1 Kitrina Douglas</p>	
9:00	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 1: Room 1 Panel Title: Murmuration and Mental Health Chair David Carless</p> <p>Chris Saunders, Independent scholar</p> <p>Knut Tore Saelor, Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, University of Southern Norway.</p> <p>Tim Buescher, Nottingham Trent University</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 2: Room 2 Reimagining Relationships Chair Jamie Barnes</p> <p>Queer Murmurations of Love Dipbuk Panchal, Warwick University and Lors, Independent (online)</p> <p>"Enlli Murmuration" Mel Perry</p> <p>Breaking up with my mother: An autoethnographic account of transference and estrangement. Jahnvi Dutta, University of Edinburgh (online)</p> <p>Denial of meaningless metamorphosis: being a nihilist, researcher, and indigenous person in sovereign violence, Suanmuanlian Tonsing, University of Michigan-Ann Arbor (online)</p>
10:00	<p>Changeover</p>	
10:10	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 3: Room 1 Common threads in learning, and the joy of sharing through community Chair Clive Palmer</p> <p>"Getting under the skin of skin": an autoethnographic analysis of institutional change concerning skin health in an island population Glenn Smith, University of Central Lancaster</p> <p>"Floodlights, Camera, Action": An ethnography of performance cultures and team dynamics in football. Danny Lee, University of Central Lancaster</p> <p>"40p a Mile and a Sausage Roll": a song for the Nowhere Men in football scouting Craig Lawlor, University of Central Lancaster</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 4: Room 2 Poetry Please Chair Chris Saunders</p> <p>A murmuration of dancers Landa Love, University of Plymouth</p> <p>Dance set -> Dansette Mel Perry and Tim Buescher, Nottingham Trent University</p> <p>Nyenrode Freek Sanders</p> <p>"Two suitcases and a rucksack" the experience of coming to study in the UK Joshua Eibenschutz (online)</p>
11:00	<p>Morning Refreshments Break</p>	
11:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 5: Room 1 On Writing Chair Tim Buescher</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 6: Room 2 Work In Progress Facilitators: Elyse Pineau, Southern Illinois University</p>

	<p>“Questioning my right to write as I roam” Hazel R Wright, Anglia Ruskin University</p> <p>Conversations Between, Esther Miriam van der Walt, University of Modena and Reggio Emilia; & Peter John Massyn, Independent Scholar</p> <p>Disparate Islands - Dissociation and the Practitioner's Use of Self Shrav Shankar, University of Edinburgh (online)</p> <p>How fragmented can a text be and still be readable – is life continuous, anyway? Rolf Sundet, University of South-Eastern Norway</p>	<p>David Carless, University of the West of Scotland Georgia Thompson, Routledge</p> <p>Who is being punished? Realities and possibilities for mental health among prison officers in the UK Civil Service. Viktorija Soboliovaitė-Janoniene, University of West London (online)</p> <p>“Ladyfolk” Chloe Lamb (online)</p> <p>Murmurs from beneath the Equator: Autoethnography of a Third-Culture Woman Anne-Marie Smith, Liverpool John Moores University</p> <p>Generating Swoopings and Swirlings at Sunset and Sunrise, Mary Garland</p>
12:30	Lunch	
1:30	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 7: Room 1 Panel “What comes before voice?” Chair Jamie Barnes</p> <p>Teppei Tsuchimoto, Nozomi Fujisaka, Aya Hayasaki, Mihoko Motooka, Chihiro Suzuki, Mao Yamaguchi (online)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 8: Room 2 Class & Masculinities Chair Trude Klevan</p> <p>The Space Between: Reflections on white, working-class males and the neoliberalisation of identities – An autoethnographic study Dane Morace-Court, University of Chichester</p> <p>Can a boy be raped? The evolution of autobiography to autofiction Kari Silvola, University of Jyväskylä (online)</p> <p>Classroom Chris Saunders, Independent</p> <p>Inner murmurations of a PhD candidate Freek Sanders</p>
2:30	Changeover	
2:40	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 9: Room 1 Performance autoethnography Chair Bryant Keith Alexander</p> <p>Blodeuwedd: a RE-Perspective Bethan Habron-James, Bangor University & Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester</p> <p>‘Cover Me Now’: Murmuration on Mental Health Research David Carless, University of the West of Scotland</p> <p>A song for Norman Kitrina Douglas, University of West London</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 10: Room 2 Pulse of life Chair Ana Baptista</p> <p>‘Knotworking’ and the role of trust in interdisciplinary groups Tracey Collett, University of Plymouth</p> <p>“Timing is Everything! Reflections on Kairos and Coequality within my Practice as an Educator and Social Being” Paul Stronge, Peninsula Medical School, University of Plymouth</p> <p>“Missing” Pascale Wasching, University of West London</p> <p>Murmu(r)ation” Beth Moran, University of Plymouth</p>
3:30 pm	Break	

3:45 – 4:45 pm	<p>Session 11: Room 1 KEYNOTES Chair Kitrina Douglas</p> <p>Sociable Solitude: Exploring some alternative ways of being and moving with others Gayle Letherby, Universities of Plymouth, Greenwich and Bath</p> <p>Autoethnography in the “Thin Places” Christopher Poulos, University of North Carolina—Greensboro</p>
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DAY TWO: Tuesday 23rd July 2024

8:30	<p>Online Morning Welcome Host Jessie Ip</p>	
8:45	<p>Session 12: Plenary Performance Room 1 Chair Jamie Barnes “Letters to Mama Written in the Murmurations of Life and Death” Bryant Keith Alexander, Loyola Marymount University</p>	
9:15	Changeover	
9:25	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 13: Room 1 Black Movement Chair: Gayle Letherby</p> <p>Black Movements and Murmuration Christa Welsh, Independent scholar</p> <p>Murmurations by the police; dysfunctional belonging and its calls Dipbuk Panchal, University of Warwick</p> <p>Soles of Black Men: A Moving Conversation About Black Men, Black Joy, and Rest Chris Omni & Vince Omni, Florida State University</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 14: Room 2 Meaning & Presence Chair: Julie Parsons</p> <p>“Ways of Knowing: Wakehurst” Jamie Barnes, University of Sussex</p> <p>The Presence of a Beating Heart Trude Klevan, University of South-Eastern Norway</p> <p>Becoming Bird: An extended understanding of ‘self’ through Dalcroze Eurhythmics Rosalind Ridout, Royal Northern College of Music</p>
10:15	Morning Refreshments Break	
10:45	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 15: Room 1 Place Chair Pat Sikes</p> <p>Humour and the operating theatre: A medical student’s experience of finding their place, a collaborative autoethnography Anitha Uthayasooryan & Ana Baptista, Imperial College School of Medicine (online)</p> <p>Be-longing: A search within cultures Tuyết Mai Trần, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Session 16: Room 2 Nomads and pilgrims Chair Christa Welsh</p> <p>Will I ever finish this bloomin PhD – Will The Madonna Method get me through? Emma Astra University of Leicester (online)</p> <p>Narratives from Career Issues: An autoethnography on clients' stories of life and careers. Dione Mifsud, University of Malta</p> <p>Nomadic entanglements and the Professional Doctorate</p>

	When hope is more than a murmur for criminal justice affected people Julie Parsons, University of Plymouth	Carol Azumah Dennis, Open University, Kathy Chandler, Lancaster University and Donata Puntil, Birkbeck University
11:45	Changeover	
11:50	Session 17: Room 1 Dissertation and Film Awards (Sponsored by Routledge) Lifetime Contribution Award Curated by Trude Klevan & Christa Welsh	
12:20	Lunch	
1:20	Session 18: Room 1 Spotlight Panel: Writing Philosophical Autoethnography Chair Alec Grant Christopher Poulos Mark Freeman, Julie-Anne Scott-Pollock, Georgina Tuari Stewart, Art Bochner, Shelley Rawlins (online)	
2.20	Changeover	
2:30	Session 19: Room 1 Storytelling in Healthcare Chair David Carless On call and the importance of drinking tea Edwina Morris, University of West London Air of Hysteria, Lors, Independent researcher Storytelling murmurations: Beyond numeric measurements to better patient care, Anika Sahni & Ana Baptista, King's College London & Imperial College London (online)	Session 20: Room 2 Perceptual horizons Chair Tim Buescher Recovery-Oriented Dog Intervention (RODI). How a dog made us change our perception of recovery and flattened our ontologies Knut Tore Sælør & Rose-Marie Bank, University of South-Eastern Norway Neurodiversity, Community and Murmuration Harriet Marks University of Plymouth On the Edges of a Murmuration in a Childhood Imaginary James G. Deegan, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, Ireland (online)
3:20	Changeover	
3:30	Session 21: Room 1 Reflection on being an Articulate Witness: Responding and Reviewing Chair Kitrina Douglas The Eulogy as Spiritual Autoethnography, Carolyn Ellis, University of South Florida (online) The Response, Kitrina Douglas, University of West London Speaking the truth in love: a situational and, hopefully, decolonising, approach to feedback, Pat Sikes, University of Sheffield (online) Articulate Witness: the art and ethics of critical response, Elyse Pineau, Southern Illinois University (online)	
4:30-4:45	Invited Reflections Close	



***** SAVE THE DATE *****

Twelfth International Conference of Autoethnography

Bristol, UK

Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th July 2025

The conference theme will be *“Breathing Spaces”*

We all breathe. We have this in common with each other—and with the flora and fauna of planet Earth. We may take our breath for granted—for a time. Yet breath, the act of breathing, is far from assured. We exist in atmosphere that is precarious, environments that have been violated, cities that are congested, societies driven toward inequality and division, and workplaces that threaten health and morale. ICAE2025 offers *breathing space*; an invitation to story, perform, challenge, theorise, resist or reimagine spaces, relationships, and new ways of being in/for the human and more-than-human world.

KEYNOTES:

Tony Adams

Bradley University, USA

Djenane Oliveira

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

For the latest information visit:

<https://boomerang-project.org.uk>

ABSTRACTS

"Letters to Mama Written in the Murmurations of Life and Death"

Bryant Keith Alexander

This performance is based on a broader book project with Mary E. Weems entitled, *Letters to Mama: Epistolary Autoethnographies Confronting Loss, Memory, and Resolution* in which they use letter writing as a form of doing autoethnography; addressing relational histories and dynamics directed to their deceased mothers. This project recognizes the importance of examining the inner states of knowing the self that informs all interpersonal and intercultural aspects of knowing ourselves in the world, amplifying the reflexive and transformational potential of written and performed autoethnography. In Alexander's solo performance he—traverse murmurations of movements between himself as a queer son and his mother; between their life together, her death, and his living

Will I ever finish this bloomin PhD – Will The Madonna Method get me through?

Emma Astra

At last year's conference, Elyse Pineau said the importance of 'showing up'. If I complete my PhD in 2024, will mark precisely twenty years as a student from start to finish at the same university in the UK. I have seen many changes in the university landscape over the years, as with my body with disability. When I started my university journey, I wasn't categorised as disabled. I have many aspects of intersectionality: disabled, chronic illness, woman, working-class, first in the family to university and a mature student, to name a few. As time progressed, I reflected that such intersectional aspects were my strengths rather than stereotypically perceived disadvantages. That doesn't mean I haven't experienced many 'isms' through my journey, which have deepened as time progressed. The 'academic' culture entrenched like a systemic plague or lifelong COVID epidemic nearly caused me to drop out of my PhD several times. When going to a Madonna concert in October 2023, she placed a screen with detrimental things the media have reported about her through the years. Madonna said, 'The biggest controversy is I've stuck around', catalysing me to develop The Madonna Method within my PhD. More about The Madonna Method: <https://medium.com/@disabledphdstudent/the-madonna-method-13d3b11d1969>

Ways of Knowing: Wakehurst

Jamie Barnes

Early morning and the sun has not yet risen high enough in the sky to break through either the tree canopy at the edge of the wood or the tangled undergrowth bordering the ancient meadow. The air sits cool, damp and heavy, a liquid layer that does not yet afford the warming of cold-blooded bodies. We warm-blooded ones approach, as silently as our clumsy bipedalism allows. We are looking for the legless one, the one that slides through roots and bases of plants, that hides beneath leaves, searching out warm pockets of air, warm pockets of air within which to wrap myself, pockets of warmth that eventually soak inwards, enlivening my muscles, easing them, loosening them, so that, when a rock is lifted and the dark shelter under which I hide is suddenly gone, my body is alive. I slither away. I am a dart in the undergrowth. We warm-blooded peer in, left with just the flick of a tail. One space. Different lands. One moment. Different rhythms. One place. Different worlds. Where might such ephemeral encounters lead? And how might we wrap ourselves into the bodies of others, that this world might appear to us anew, known as it is from a different *place*? For this place is multiple and the bodies that live here are many.

'Cover Me Now': Murmuration on Mental Health Research

David Carless

In this performance autoethnography I draw on my own experience around illness and recovery to explore how writing and performing songs might expand the horizon of possibilities of mental health research. I have in mind Arundathi Roy's (2009, p. xi-xii) concern that "I am allowing myself to be railroaded into offering prosaic, factual precision when maybe what we need is a feral howl, or the transformative power and real precision of poetry." At times abstract and unresolved, at times visceral and scalpel sharp, songs sometimes allow me to get at truths that are otherwise absent from existing discourse around particular terrains of experience. Here, I depend on a song I wrote in October 2023 called "Cover Me Now."

'Knotworking' and the role of trust in interdisciplinary groups

Tracey Collett

This piece for the International Conference of Autoethnography 2024 on ‘Murmuration’ builds on ongoing personal reflexive work exploring my role as a sociology teacher in a medical school. Specifically, I investigate the role of trust in the collaborative work of a large interdisciplinary group.

As a framework I use Yrjo Engestrom’s idea of knotworking (2008). Within social learning theory, knotworking refers to the adaptability of individuals and their ‘in the moment’ ability to tie and untie various threads of knowledge from different areas to accomplish specific activities over time or enable new ways of thinking, doing and being. Based on my field notes I explore two fictionalised examples of trust, one where trust enabled effective interdisciplinary knotworking and one where mistrust appeared to hinder it.

Whilst not a new proposition I propose that continuously choosing to trust colleagues, to ‘think the best’ of them, creates possibilities that can either maintain the status quo or lead to new patterns of activity: to strengthened networks, or new ‘lines of flight’. However, as a political choice, this care-ful style of labour requires ongoing emotion work that can come at a personal cost in institutions that subscribe to traditional (Masculine) ideas of teamwork.

On the Edges of a Murmuration in a Childhood Imaginary

James G. Deegan

Using murmuration as a central and animating metaphor, this presentation draws from a broader performative inquiry into the secret lore and language of deaf children in a state and religious-run residential school. The origin and source of the metaphor goes back to the day when the mother of one of the children used her dancing fingers and waving hands to show a flock of starlings swirling, swooping, and darting, or a black sun, gathering about the folds and edges of a white page in a picture book. Later the child witnessed other children in the playground in his new school using sign language for the first time. In this epiphanic moment, the embodiment of human and non-human beings, boy and starling, travelled from home to school. Research on the deaf lives of individuals and groups describe these moments as the incorporeal or rhizomatic space of a shifting and fluid becoming other. Murmuration is evoked here through found poetry to show the strains of becoming other, with an upper wing and a lower wing composed from social and literary domains, respectively. In this way, the presentation brings forward a critical and political aesthetics of deaf children’s lives and schooling.

Nomadic entanglements and the Professional Doctorate

Carol Azumah Dennis, Kathy Chandler and Donata Puntill

In this presentation we offer a rhizomatic analysis of the relationality that defines PGR journeys through the professional doctorate. Drawing on data inspired by collective autoethnography, we map the nomadic entanglements of Prof Doc PGRs as they negotiate their supervisory teams, other PGRs, and the institutions within which they are embedded. These meanderings allow us to explore PGR identities as they wonder in, out, through and beyond binary confines of expert / novice, insider / outsider exclusive / connected relationalities. This is a generative disruption. It is one that allows us to redefine the assumed linearity of PGR knowledge by diffractively locating it as social, connected and embodied within multiple human and non-human others. We are here attempting to argue the case for ‘doing doctorates differently’, by engaging in a the ‘more-and-other-than-human’ world, pivoting our text around MStems, WhatsApp and the organisational chart.

A Song for Norman

Kitrina Douglas

Norman Denzin, a scholar of extraordinary magnitude, made a profound impact on many of us whose work is performative, qualitative, autoethnographic and relational. His death, in August 2023, brought into focus just how important his leadership has been. In this performance I reflect on some of the moments in my life where “big Norm” made his presence felt and invite you to remember (with me) this amazing pilgrim.

The Response: Standing firm, and the potential consequences

Kitrina Douglas

There a song by Kenny Rodgers (written by Don Schlitz) about a gambler, that goes something along the lines of *you got to know when to hold em, know when to fold, know when to walk away, and when to run*. The same can be said of publishing in academic peer reviewed journals. When writing and performing autoethnography we write and expose our own experiences often using creative methodologies, which adds an additional complexity to the review process. In this paper I share reflections and explore some of the consequences of pushing back, and standing your ground, and the gamble we take in doing so.

Breaking up with my mother: An autoethnographic account of transference and estrangement

Jahnvi Dutta

This autoethnographic inquiry traces my experience of confronting maternal transference and grief through an encounter with a peer on my counsellor training programme. I explore my (dis)embodied experience of accessing my grief from maternal abuse and estrangement which surfaced years later when I came into contact with Natasha, who reminded me of my mother and instantly reactivated my trauma responses. I comment on cultural norms specific to motherhood, womanhood and the insidious competitiveness in female friendships in the Indian context that have followed me to the U.K. I trudge through this marsh in real time, documenting my anguish and fear as I experience it, contrary to what is typically expected of autoethnographic work where we are encouraged to practise vulnerability and self-preservation. This piece is a performance of my hesitations and grief, an advent of closure that I come closer to as I continue to write and immerse myself in my agony, abandonment and the guilt that accompanies the process. I write into fractured timelines, geographies and fears, swerving 'In' and 'Out' of my mind and body as I record my trauma emerge, sweep and sway/release me.

Generating Swoopings and Swirlings at Sunset and Sunrise

Mary Catherine Garland

Murmuration: the noise made by the many flapping wings of a group of starlings in flight, taking to the sky at sunset, swooping and swirling into spheres, planes and waves (adapted from the ICAE11 2024 website).

Reading the above words, sitting at my desk watching pigeons, crows, magpies and starlings, I think of all the words flying in disarray around my head at various times over the past 2.5 years (since finishing my much-loved PhD), which have landed in a file somewhere on a laptop, in the notepad on a mobile phone, on sheets of paper scattered around the house. I think too of Deleuze and Guattari's planes of immanence where I was whisked away by a witch's broom in one of the 'landing sites' in my subsequent book. I would like to do something with those words, I would like them to take flight at sunset (and sunrise) and to swoop and swirl into a post-PhD publication. Presenting the words which have taken flight, swooping and swirling, creating a plane of immanence, this paper tests the water for those words to make themselves heard as a becoming-conference-paper, becoming-post-PhD-journal-paper.

Writing Philosophical Autoethnography (Panel)

Alec Grant, Mark Freeman, Christopher Poulos, Julie-Anne Scott-Pollock, Georgina Tuari Stewart, Art Bochner, and Shelley Rawlins.

Panel Discussion on book: *Writing Philosophical Autoethnography*, Grant, A. (Ed.), 2024, Routledge.

Writing Philosophical Autoethnography is the first volume of narrative autoethnographic work in which invited contributing authors were charged with exploring their issues, concerns, and topics about human society, culture, and the material world through an explicitly philosophical lens. This online panel discussion will bring its editor, Alec Grant, and contributors together to introduce the book, read extracts from their respective chapters, and engage in discussion with conference delegates.

Blodeuwedd: a RE-Perspective

Bethan Habron-James

In 1999, I created a performance piece based on the tale of Blodeuwedd, The Woman Made of Flowers, from the fourth branch of the 11th-century Welsh Mabinogi. It formed part of my final examinations, following two years of study in Dalcroze Eurhythmics, a music and movement pedagogy. The two years had only served to underline the chasm between the musician and the mover in me. In this respect they were painful years. Twenty-five years on, as part of a doctoral inquiry into my body's narrative within my Dalcroze practice, and inspired by choreographer Deborah Hay's concept of RE-Perspective (Hay 2006), I am revisiting the creative process. VHS footage of a rehearsal verifies my memories of feeling overwhelmed and lost both in body and space. I now understand that in choosing the tale of Blodeuwedd, entrapped and anchorless within her alien and strange body, I was grappling with my own somatic story. The play's themes of belonging, freedom and constraint, shame and honour, loyalty to one's lineage, all carry personal resonance. Through the act of witnessing, I invite you to share in a multi-media performative autoethnography, through which I ask, with Blodeuwedd, "what is a body to do?"

The presence of a beating heart

Trude Klevan, University of South-Eastern Norway

I wake up abruptly from a restless sleep, and jerk upright. My husband is sleeping next to. Is he breathing? He is. Breathing means that his heart is still beating. The human heart has one job. It beats. The heart is where life is. Few days earlier, my

husband had been diagnosed with a serious heart failure. More assessments and medical checks were waiting. We didn't know what this actually meant. It was a state of limbo, of insecurity and worry. Of searching for information and understanding, of gaining insight in prognosis and futures. However, in the middle of the night, listening for breath and heartbeats, meaning is subordinate. In this presentation based on my work in progress, I will reflect on how a meaning-focused culture can leave the importance of presence and before-interpreted ways of being in the world out.

Air of Hysteria

Lors

Eighteen years ago, I woke up (Intra-Operative Awareness) during specialist lung surgery – a relatively new lung surgery technology known as VATS (Video Assisted Thoracic Surgery). My piece explores my experience of waking, during surgery. It explores the tensions and relationships between patient and medical professionals. I explore medical “fact” - clearly flawed care of (unintended?) gender bias, being a patient, being human, my immediate responses during the experience of Intra-Operative Awareness and pure survival.

The surgery took over seven hours. I was diagnosed with a rare lung condition post-surgery; Catamenial Pneumothorax caused by endometriosis on the lung.

There are two narratives in this piece – two voices. One of medical fact and reason (straight prose), one of the actual patient experiences (free verse). Myself and dipbuk Panchal will perform the piece.

“40p a Mile and a Sausage Roll” - a song for the Nowhere Men in football scouting

CRAIG LAWLOR and Clive Palmer

My research delves into the lived experiences of professional football scouts, and part of my back story is, I was one of them. Years on, a valuable dimension of my becoming a doctoral researcher on this topic has been performing my data in song. My field notes transformed into lyrics and musical score, with my trusty guitar, I invite you to listen and share in my lived experience of scouting and making sense of the Nowhere Men. My phenomenological study has explored what it means to ‘be’ a football scout. Through encounters with the Nowhere Men in the field, my autoethnographic accounts, observations and unstructured interviews have enabled me to probe how the Nowhere Men attribute meaning to ‘becoming’ and ‘being’ a football scout. My research takes the reader into the scouting underworld, laden with existential ambiguity, anxiety and conflict, inviting us ‘onto the terrace’ to explore what it is like to ‘be’ a scout. My song, ‘40p a Mile and a Sausage Roll’, reveals the pittance scouts receive for their gruelling, lonely hours spent on the road in search of a ‘gem’, a footballing ‘genius’ or in some cases for them, life's meaning.

“Floodlights, Camera, Action”: An ethnography of performance cultures and team dynamics in football – THE VIPERS

DANNY LEE and Clive Palmer

My presentation plunges into the performative world of characters in non-league football, where my PhD research is situated. Adopting the role of Team Manager as Storyteller, I will give an account of THE VIPERS, who are a sub-set of players within the football team I was immersed in, during an extensive period of fieldwork. Two infographic artworks guide me through the tale; ‘The Last Soccer’ explaining the context of my research, followed by ‘Dressing Room Transitions’ where we discover the masks behind which otherwise mild-mannered individuals find new freedoms to act out their alter-egos whenever they step onto a football pitch. Donning the mask in the dressing room, players get their ‘game face’ on, which for THE VIPERS is licence to elevate physical tackles into physical attack, wherever the ball may be. Infographic 2 is also a pictorial autoethnography of my roles in life, as a researcher and as a professional within the football world. The episode when THE VIPERS revealed themselves came 6 months after my honeymoon period of entering the field, when I was totally lost in the field. Exiting the field was challenging, but now achieved, allows me to tell this tale.

A murmur of dancers

Landa Love

This collaboratively produced poem, ‘I’d Rather Dance’, offers a window into the erotic experience of a flock of dancers moving in swirling, sensual, communal intimacy.

It encapsulates my autoethnographic PhD research, which explores non-sexual eros and intimacy through the lens of erotically embodied asexuality. Within this research the participants and I came to understand our experiences through a shared somatic sentience, in which we discovered the murmur of nonsexual erotic connection and aliveness.

The statement ‘I’d Rather Dance’ offers an alternative to that proffered by the Asexual Visibility and Education Network; ‘I’d rather have cake’, alongside the cake emoji in the colours of the asexual flag, which is offered as an icon of asexuality.

Neurodiversity, Community and Murmuration

Harriet Marks

As a PhD student, I am exploring the extent to which the lived experiences and perceptions of autistic individuals Assigned Female at Birth (AFABs) and/or those who identify as autistic women are impacted by their female sex and/or gender. In this paper, I explore autistic women's/AFABs' lived experiences of social interaction, friendship and virtual communities. This includes autistic communication challenges and preferences such as experiences of stimming, 'info-dumping' and directness. I cover masking of communication differences and heightened social expectations towards females. If selected to present at the ICAE, I would share an infographic made on Canva during my paper, which would feature poetry, a collage made by me and a painting by my friend. We both feel we are probably autistic and their painting would represent the idea that birds of a feather may flock together in terms of autistic and/or neurodivergent individuals potentially befriending each other. Before hearing about this year's theme, I had not heard of 'Murmuration', however, Elyse's message to find a flock to fly with felt particularly pertinent to me. My paper covers this idea in relation to autistic lived experiences of 'coming out', visual and auditory communication styles and autoethnography.

Narratives from Career Issues: An autoethnography on clients' stories of life and careers.

Dione Mifsud

This presentation will attempt to illustrate my experience as a counsellor working with clients having career issues, and how their real-life events have a bearing on career choice and how they may later revisit their original decision and re-direct their career trajectory towards career goals that may have been present but were obfuscated because of traumas, beliefs and fears. I will illustrate this by using my experiences in counselling supplemented by my own life experience to illustrate how people may choose careers as a direct result of situations and events in their lives rather than through a cognitive choice. However, working through their personal issues may help them to tweak their choices. I will be using a narrative approach and will draw on my 34 years of experiences to address the subject.

"Murmu(r)ation"

Beth Moran

What happens when those murmuring voices,
Those questioning and concerned voices, become less and less?
More and more infrequent?
And then... finally stop.
Just another empty home, decaying memories.
Growing wilderness where roses of love still bloom.

.....
Shapeshifting skies, drawing our eyes to the swirling masses, chattering classes.
Synchronicity assured, as we are lured in their frenetic world of beauty.
If we could only aspire
That bird on a wire
Not murmuring, not rationing but moving as one.

Sunset starlings safe and warm with strength together, flight and feather.
Voices blending, flight that's free and won't be tethered.
Warning off the threat of harm
Doing so with innate charm
Not murmuring, not rationing but moving as one.

This performance reflects on the recent loss of a missing neighbour and friend, through their experience of ill health and subsequent dissonance between my professional decision-making and social role. This loss leads me in pursuit of the whereabouts of my old friend and considers the vagaries of my social work profession. Society could learn much from the murmuration of birds. Coming together to keep each other safe rather than living in relative isolation. Why are we waiting to be spirited away?

On call and the importance of drinking tea

Edwina Morris

I am a grandmother, and academic struggling within the neoliberal environment. My subject is healthcare and in particular the operating theatre. I have over 40-year experience as a nurse, working in the operating theatre. The story I present here is my first experience of being "on call" as a student. On call duties are extensions of the working day and working hours far

exceed the normal day time shift. In my student days, on calls allowed the operating department to be open out of hours, with students covering these shifts. Although students today aren't required to be on call, it remains normal practice within the health care industry for fully qualified staff. This practice exploits staff and exposes patients to unnecessary risk. The short story combines fear, and humanity with a dash of dark humour.

The Space Between: Reflections on white, working-class males and the neoliberalisation of identities – An autoethnographic study

Dane Norris

This paper offers a reflective and reflexive examination of the lived reality of a group of young white, working-class males engaging in secondary education in England at a time when this population is widely recognised as the lowest attaining ethnic group within British schools. The construction and performance of intersecting social-class, gender, ethnic and national identities is considered, as well as the process through which socially constructed narratives inform identities and aspirations. Evocative autoethnography is then employed, with the researcher occupying both insider and outsider perspectives (the space between), to offer reflections on working-class habitus and, in particular, classed and gendered codes that underpin expectations of manhood in post-industrial culture. Findings from the study identify the emergence of a culture of hyper-individualisation amongst the white, working-class males in this study and a belief in the meritocratic ideologies of neoliberalism; a working-class masculinity which values the individual entrepreneur over the collective and has depoliticised participants to the extent where a focus on the spectacle and performance of success has replaced individual and collective investment in community.

Soles of Black Men: A Moving Conversation About Black Men, Black Joy, and Rest

Chris Omni & Vince Omni

In 2016, Tricia Hersey, the Nap Bishop, launched the Nap Ministry - "an organization that examines the liberating power of naps and believes that 'rest is a form of resistance.'" Seven years later, Dr. Chris Omni blended key elements of the Nap Ministry with her background in public health and foreground in art education to create something special for Black men. Why? Black men have been known to prioritize their productivity over their personal peace of mind. Sadly, the efforts they pour into achieving their various levels of personal and professional success do not directly equate to any greater protective factors when it comes to their overall health outcomes (McGee, 2015). For these reasons and many more, Dr. Omni created and held space for Black men to be present with Mother Earth as an active demonstration of Black Joy and rest. Join us as we watch a "loud" silent film about Black men who were invited to let BE-ing be enough as they participated in a nature-based walking art experience. Following the film, you will hear directly from one participant as he shares what it was like to pause the demands of his day to focus on himself.

Murmurations by the police; dysfunctional belonging and its calls

Dipbuk Panchal

I'm almost 30 interviews into my PhD fieldwork. It has been more than 20 years since I wore the uniform. I still have nightmares of my time in the police. I wake up scared, disorientated, anxious, worried, preoccupied and forgetful. I wake up, and despite reality, I still see my nightmare. What's going on?

As a scrutiny panel member, I meet with the police each month. Generally, the meetings are horrid. I see the structural way marginalised communities are complicit in their oppression. We are over-policed and under-protected, yet we agree to the injustice so that we might escape suspicion.

My Master's thesis took a selection of 6 vignettes from over 90 instances of racism during my time in the police. I'm struggling to re-write it into a proposal because I relive the moments. Despite this, with each police infection, I feel the draw of the blue Sillitoe check. This autoethnographic investigation will examine the incantations of the callings to rejoin.

Queer Murmurations of Love

Dipbuk Panchal and Lors

We operate in heteronormative cisgender patriarchy. We are quiet disrupters. We aim to investigate and celebrate via interjections between two nomadic minds. We respectfully look at the same things differently. There is an authenticity in how we as individuals share our world. We don't require movement of our position for our kinship to hold each other. We want to explore the possibility that friendship could be more important than romantic love. There are anomalies and inconsistencies. Who decided how we should love? This is our curious journey of queer love. Our shared core values are humour, empathy, kindness, difference of opinion and sensitivity. We have each other's back. Our nomadic lifestyles provide our familiarity with each other. To each other we are home. We will be applying the works of bell hooks, Ana Machin, Elizabeth Day and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and others.

When hope is more than a murmur for criminal justice affected people

Julie Parsons

In 2016 the Photographic electronic Narrative or PeN project was launched at LandWorks, an award-winning prisoner resettlement charity based in Devon, funded through an Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) mid-career fellowship award. The original aims were to share photographs and narratives created by trainees at LandWorks and to engage supporters and the wider community with their desistance journeys (see <https://penprojectlandworks.org/>). After eight years the PeN project is firmly established at LandWorks and I regularly conduct 'interviews' with people there, over 160 to date. In this presentation I creatively reflect on the storying that we do together, which is a sensory process of bearing witness. Our conversations touch on three areas firstly the route to LandWorks, which incorporates a range of social harms (past), reflections on the placement itself (present), and their hopes and/or aspirations (future). There is an emergent self-reflexivity and self-awareness engendered through this activity, with the creation of a blog post making these journeys visible, for themselves, others, and the wider community. This demonstrates that their stories are worthy of being seen, heard and shared. They have value and this is vital in sustaining hope in a better future for those continually harmed by criminal justice processes.

"Enlli Murmuration"

Mel Perry

Ynys Enlli (Bardsey Island) is a thin place, off the North Wales coast, a destination for many kinds of pilgrimage. I have been visiting the island for almost thirty years and it continues to teach me how best to live in a C21st world of social, economic, spiritual and environmental threats. On Enlli I find places where I can sit alone, hidden from the mainland, almost marooned in the Irish Sea, hidden from sight within the island, I take myself as far into the liminal littoral places as my less-than-youthful corporeal self can go. Here I am closer to Dublin than Bangor, far from home, yet at home. I meet strangers who join me as part of this island's flock. Through the veil I can see more clearly. I am closer to God maybe, through the veils of dazzling sunshine and wispy cloud, beguiling mist and cries of wind in tide and current. I invite you to join my Enlli Murmuration which will comprise a combination of my Enlli-inspired poetry and reflections on the significance of a wild place and what it offers us.

Dance set -> Dansette -> Dans/Set

Mel Perry and Tim Buescher

Our beats move us, our rhythms move us. We have dialogued with and through our poetry for over two years. We have shared our poems of family histories and we have explored the personal significance that we find in creating this space. Last year Tim's piece about the Boys Brigade prompted a response from Mel about the Brownies, weaving the two texts together. As part of his MA in Creative Writing at NTU Tim produced a set of poems on rhythm in fidgety male relatives. Hearing this at Lapidus International's Creative Bridges conference in September last year Mel responded with a Benny Goodman-inspired number. Across the three hundred miles that separates us, we call, resonate, murmurate with our beats, our moves, our rhythms.

Articulate Witness: the art and ethics of critical response

Elyse Pineau

In this poetic essay, I reflect on the responsibilities of bearing witness to another's work, especially in situations where one is called to respond immediately and publicly. Drawing upon skills honed through decades in undergraduate performance classrooms, I highlight four qualities I believe undergird artful and ethical critical response: the labor of undivided attention, the humility of deep listening, the courage to speak with spontaneous passion, and the commitment to uplift the spirit of the other.

Becoming Bird: An extended understanding of 'self' through Dalcroze Eurhythmics

Rosalind Ridout

Sitting at the piano, my fast quavers send the children darting through the space, flying in and out of each other. Later, slow, smooth music moves a community of fluidity as members respond to the nuances of the flock. As their murmuration duets with my music, we become "one common rhythm that throbs with an intense collective life". Through music and movement, the boundaries between self and other become blurred, and we become bird.

As a Dalcroze Eurhythmics teacher, I use movement, sensory awareness, and social interaction as an approach to music education. As we tune into our bodies, share space, and work together, we learn about ourselves as a whole. This understanding of the 'whole self' extends beyond the ego; it goes beyond even our relationships with other people: it is the understanding and embedded experience of our inherent connectedness with the more-than-human world. My autoethnographic PhD research project explores my practice as a music teacher as I interweave ecoliteracy and Dalcroze, shaped by a more-than-human worldview. This paper draws on the birds that have shaped both me and my teaching along my research journey, and questions how they can enhance our understanding of ourselves.

Storytelling murmurations: Beyond numeric measurements to better patient care

Anika Sahni & Ana Baptista

Murmurations are a natural phenomenon where flocks of birds fly in synchronisation. Metaphorically murmurations represent unification, much like the medical profession which moves together to promote consistent care. However, as medicine is rooted deeply in the sciences, our flocks sometimes struggle to change the 'tune' of their synchronised movements to incorporate interdisciplinary perspectives.

In medicine, the importance of storytelling for patients is recognised as "narrative-based medicine", which aims to promote empathy and individualised care. While the value of narrative-based medicine is recognised, it can sometimes be overlooked in favour of scientific measurements of illness. Additionally, the importance of storytelling for physicians and medical students is rarely discussed. This study explores the value of storytelling for 3 groups; patient, physician and medical student, using collaborative auto-ethnography of a fifth-year medical student and a medical education researcher based at Imperial College London UK. Through the analysis of the lived experiences of the student studying medical humanities and attending clinical placement, we reflect on the value of storytelling as a tool for connection, catharsis, expression, and learning. We argue that these uses of storytelling come together to form 'murmurations' that swirl and shift towards the overarching goal of better patient care.

Recovery-Oriented Dog Intervention (RODI). How a dog made us change our perception of recovery and flattened our ontologies.

Knut Tore Sælør & Rose-Marie Bank

Allegedly named after a dog show judge, Rodi was never an intervention. In this duo-autoethnography we explore how sharing parts of our lives with him has influenced our perspective on recovery and what matters when push comes to shove. Experiencing health problems has influenced us both, and certainly had an affect on what may be described as a family assemblage. Our joint ventures and having the privilege of a common non-human-animal friend have also altered what we think of the world at large.

Inner murmurations of a PhD candidate

Freek Sanders

Murmuration can mean birds flying in a group. It can also refer to the soft continuous sound of people talking quietly. My PhD research focusses on the inner murmurations of PhD candidates: inner voices that whisper "that draft of the article is not good enough", "what can I contribute as a 52 year old, white, privileged male?", and also "oooooh, that feels like an exciting discovery". Being a doctoral student means "listen[ing] to this world that is in us and that whispers a story to us" (Moulai, 2020).

On the evening of February 2nd, I stumbled twice upon the word murmurations, in line with the concept of accidental autoethnography (Poulos, 2021). The first time was when I read the theme of this years' International Conference of Autoethnography. The second was shortly thereafter whilst watching the Netflix Series 'Maniac'. At minute 31, the English subtitles read: [guests murmuring]. At that moment an inner silence descended upon me. The Japanese call such a moment 'ma': a living pause, where meaning is created and perspectives shift. The inner dialogue quiets and space begets openness (Van Loon, 2017). I no longer doubted and decided to submit.

Three poems

Freek Sanders

I would like to read out three poems; one poem was written in Esalen in 2016 during a work-scholar program in September and October 2016 and addresses writers. It contains references to murmurations and with hindsight fits very well with the theme and autoethnography. The other 2 poems are written based on the theme of the conferences.

Classroom

Chris Saunders

Perhaps our love of seeing starling murmurations represents a subliminal longing for the grace and energy of collective upward social mobility that has become more and more a dream in these neo-liberal times (they're not new and they're not liberal) in which social mobility has become individualised and swerves towards authoritarian murmurations. Classroom is an evocative auto-ethnography centred on my embodied teenage experience of being a witness to my dad's spectacular rise from his working class roots to (temporarily) having a new class of friends and feelings. Classroom is a psychological and social mapping of my relational past as a semi-conscious trans-generational drive to follow a destination to 'better' social and psychological spaces without necessarily ever arriving.

Murmuration and Mental Health (Panel)

Chris Saunders, Knut Tore Saelor and Tim Buescher

This is a panel proposal by Knut, Tim and Chris to discuss their personal experiences of working within the organisational culture of the mental health 'sector'.

The beautiful murmurations of starlings are formed by individual starlings learning the moves from each other to fly in formation creating flowing synchronised patterns above their feeding grounds to appear as one collective body to ward off predators.

Similarly, working in the mental health sector, as with any institution, requires us to learn and adapt to the movement of the organisation and its institutional direction of travel. These three presentations reflect on our respective embodied experiences working within various departments within the Caring profession and asks to what extent, as individuals, have we been shaped by having information on and being in-formation with the organisational culture we work(ed) within. Who or what might be identified as predators or predatory practices by the caring and cared for?

Disparate Islands - Dissociation and the Practitioner's Use of Self

Shrav Shankar

Experiences of trauma can often impact upon a person's ways of relating to the world around them and themselves, manifesting in instances of dissociation and disconnect. Using autoethnography, I seek to weave together my lived experience of dissociation using writing, poetry and visual arts to further inquire into the ways my sense of self - once shattered in childhood - was slowly mourned, rebuilt, reconfigured into its current self. A self that must then use its own fragile coherence to meet and be used by the other in counselling work - as a practitioner, as a person, as me.

Can a boy be raped? The evolution of autobiography to autofiction

Kari Silvola

A Finnish author Märta Tikkanen wrote the novel *A Man Cannot Be Raped* in 1978, addressing sexual violence against women by men in Finnish society during the 1970s. In my autobiographical novel in progress, *A Darkroom of My Own*, I write about the sexual violence from the perspective of a young child and a witness; I explore the consequences of rape on a young boy who stayed physically untouched but witnesses his mother's assault on the spot so close that he could have touched them, also set in 1970s Finland.

Since 2004, after 30 years of the incident, I have processed the boy's trauma by reminiscing, reflecting, and writing about it. Over the course of 20 years, from 2004 to 2024, the text has undergone several metamorphoses, shifting from autobiographical to autofictional form and from private to public, examining issues of intersectional identity politics and masculinity.

Murmurs from beneath the Equator: Autoethnography of a Third-Culture Woman

Anne-Marie Smith

At 18 ½ I was ejected from my childhood home on a tropical island and catapulted into an alien grey place called England. This migration from 20° 17' South of the equator to 54° 00' North is a wound, an end, a beginning, a transition. A bricolage of journal extracts, poetry and images will tell the beginnings of a story of how an island-girl became a chameleon-woman. Borrowing ideas about 'Third Culture Kids' (TCK) (Useem 1950; Pollock and Van Reken 2017) this is a fractured story of her search for home, of loss, of split identities, non-identity and borrowed identities, of cultural shapeshifting, of repairing a childhood wound.

Taking an autoethnographic approach, the personal story is woven into wider socio-political and cultural ideas of race, whiteness, colonialism, belonging and childhood markers.

This story has murmured in between the lines of my journals over the past 40 years.

As a work in progress, I welcome conversation, shared experiences, and ideas for developing this story.

“Getting under the skin of skin” an autoethnographic analysis of institutional change concerning skin health in an island population.

GLENN SMITH and Clive Palmer

My research is about getting under the skin of stories about the skin. I am a PhD candidate on a new doctoral pathway called PhD by Portfolio. PhD by Portfolio is designed to enable career professionals to reflect upon their life experiences, as specialists in their field, and direct new research about things that are already having real impact, in this case, in community health and institutional change, within a distinctive Island Population. I am the Clinical Director/CEO for The Lighthouse Clinic, providing NHS Dermatology Services on behalf of Isle of Wight NHS Trust. As a clinician and manager, my methodological choices around autoethnography offer a refreshing and much needed challenge to the establishment in Health, where statistics and spreadsheets can mask the realities of peoples’ experience of being cared for, often pejoratively. My presentation will give an overview of my research endeavour, couched in the language of skin care across an Island population:

- 1: “Can you get me a mattress?” [A retrospective] analysis of pressure ulcer care.
- 2: “What bandages do I use?” [A retrospective] analysis lower limb care.
- 3: “What’s my lump?” [A prospective investigation] of barriers and facilitators to change in the grassroots provision of tele-dermatology.

Who is being punished? Realities and possibilities for mental health among prison officers in the UK Civil Service.

Viktorija Soboliovaitė-Janoniene

One of the characteristics of the civil service profession has been the risk of chronic stress, leading to occupational burnout. This is a state of weariness depersonalization, and inefficacy, the cause which has been linked to specific jobs demands of a prison officer. Prison officer job demand multi-disciplinary approach to handle the pressure of the large prison population, outdated views, stagnant procedures and naturally occurring occupational stress. Previous research about civil service claim that prison officer job is indeed stressful and presents large survey numbers, others present vague recommendations on how to improve the civil service. Added to the overreliance on nomothetic research insights, the pervading view has been from a male prison officer with little research exploring female prison officers’ mental health. To begin to address the absence of female insights and experiences this research utilises autoethnography, narrative theory, and a storytelling methodology to shed light on mental health and occupational stress at one UK Prison. Data were created through emotional recall and identifying epiphanies that shed light on the mental health. Following Douglas (2015) and Tuval-Mashiach (2017) a narrative analysis of structure and form was used to analyse the stories. Findings revealed that female working in prison had ill-mental health, psychological isolation, and substance addiction, all while feeling a sense of achievement, duty, and a love-and-hate relationship. The study concluded that male dominated prison environment does not accept female sensitivity and introspection, and therefore resulted in resignation.

“Timing is Everything! Reflections on Kairos and Coequality within my Practice as an Educator and Social Being”

Paul Stronge

Whatever the precise mechanisms enabling the enigmatic and sublime phenomenon of murmuration these clearly revolve around a profound sense of timing. This expresses itself at once on individual and collective levels – an exquisite synchronicity that strikes us as almost miraculous. The birds seem to know not only when to go, but when/how to go together. More exactly, how to co-ordinate their unique flight times at a micro-level to produce a dynamic and interactive macrocosmic display.

Taking inspiration from this, I will explore aspects of my own far clumsier efforts to perform and negotiate timing – to map and mould it to that of the other – within my job teaching medical students and more widely. My emphasis will be on timing rather than time itself and on its intersubjective aspects rather than the more private, conventional framing of ‘time management’. Paradoxically perhaps, I’d argue an ethnographic approach is especially fertile here because, while I can never fully inhabit your time-experience, I can describe my attempts (like a good starling) to anticipate it. I will contrast three concrete settings where this happens – working with individual students, contributing to organisational change, and being a citizen under the shadow of impending environmental catastrophe.

How fragmented can a text be and still be readable – is life continuous, anyway?

Rolf Sundet

The start point is a process of rejection; the rejection of a manuscript experimenting with autoethnography. Three rejections can lead to questioning oneself both as a practitioner, academic and person and it can evoke stubbornness. How explicit to be about aims, connections and continuities when writing a text? Must an evocative autoethnographic text confess its evocative aims and tell what is supposed to be evoked? Wouldn’t evoking irritations, given the lack of coherent meaning in

the text, be a good result? Is life a coherent, connected and continuous event? What about the fragmented and disconnected parts of life. Are not these important parts of a life to be enjoyed, feared, rejected or pondered upon?

The paper has three parts; two about childhood experiences and one about questions related to family therapy. No attempt was made to explain the connections between the parts. The workshop will invite a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses of meaning making, coherence and connections in our life. What does our doing do when we demand that life is meaningful? What do we demand of reality, and what if reality demands that we best take the fragments, discontinuities and lack of coherence that we get?

Denial of meaningless metamorphosis: being a nihilist, researcher, and indigenous person in sovereign violence

Suanmuanlian Tonsing

This paper delves into my journal entries as a foundation for memoir writing, starting from April 2023, when state-sponsored ethnic violence erupted against the minority indigenous Zo tribe along India's border, to whom I am a cultural member, on the pretext of being illegal immigrants. I was stuck in Delhi, India, because my ethnographic site for the summer of 2023 was inaccessible due to the violence. Instead, I found my 'self' turned into a content moderator overnight, debunking tens to hundreds of pieces of misinformation on X. Targeted online in June, I was compelled to return to the US for my safety. Here I am, a 'nihilist' moderating disinformation due to my Zo membership, while pressured to adhere to the University's requirements to complete my research during the summer. My memoirs reflect on i) the experience of being a 'nihilist' and crafting meaning on X through my content as an indigenous person within the regime of 'sovereign truth', and ii) the struggle of navigating through the constraints of my institution's research expectations to produce 'capitalistic meaning' on time. I interpret my experience as a confluence of multivalent meanings challenging the fundamentals of my nihilistic state, denying 'meaningless metamorphosis'.

Be-longing: A search within cultures

Tuyết Mai Trần

"So, here you are
too foreign for home
too foreign for here.
Never enough for both."

(Diaspora Blues, Ujeoma Umebunyo)

From this friction with its pain, something new can emerge.

This "new" feels risky but needed, to go beyond established cultural and artistic forms.

I am born half Vietnamese, half German.

I write, and film, intertwined, fragmented.

Artist Mika Sperling writes: "I found myself looking mostly for my own place within all of this."

The search of my own artistic form reflects my longing for a new form of being within rather than between two cultures. I read and write, speak and listen in English, German and Vietnamese, different accesses to the world, each distinguishing something different. Within that, always a possibility of seeing differently, of living differently. And sometimes, a friction that pains.

When I film and take photographs, I belong to the moment. The camera a silent witness that gives space to all that does not fit together.

What comes before voice? (Panel)

Teppey Tsuchimoto, Nozomi Fujisaka, Aya Hayasaki, Mihoko Motooka, Chihiro Suzuki, Mao Yamaguchi

Inspired by the theme of the conference, 'murmuration', we begin to consider the process of voice formation. The murmur, the sound, noise, or the bodily sensation itself has no form - yet we can generally recognise the presence of its dynamics, which comes before the voice. What can we name it? How can we express it? How can we live better with it? Throughout the panel, we juxtapose and constellate our fragments of experience to access such a complex field.

Humour and the operating theatre: A medical student's experience of finding their place, a collaborative autoethnography

Anitha Uthayasooriyan & Ana Baptista

7:30am.

I've just entered the hospital.

I'm in surgery today; I'm already preparing myself for the disappointment on the surgeons' faces when I can't answer the never-ending questions or the irritation they feel when I'm in the way.

Getting changed into scrubs and placing the heavy weight of the stethoscope around my neck; it's a monotonous routine.

Expecting to enter the cold, harsh theatre.

But it's completely different!

The room seems so bright and warm; I hear the foreign sound of laughter echoing. I see smiles in everyone's faces, swimming in the sea of blue. Their eyes light up, welcoming me into the theatre, gathering me into their circle; the first time I've ever felt seen and acknowledged as a medical student. As the surgery progresses, they teach me the content relevant to my course and the inside scoop of medical school.

Taking off the now lighter stethoscope, it seems that birds of a feather do flock together, humour just seems to bind all these birds together.

With this collaborative autoethnography, an undergraduate medical student and a medical education researcher want to explore how humour (unexpectedly experienced in an expected place) impact on sense of belonging and learning.

Conversations Between

Esther Miriam van der Walt & Peter John Massyn

Abstract removed on request from authors

"Through the Prism of Missing"

Pascale Waschnig

University of West London

I go into the sensitive, emotional terrain of mental health, loss, and the lingering consequences of unanswered questions. On the 11th anniversary my mother's disappearance, who was suffering from Alzheimer's. "Through the Prism of Missing" captures the lingering wounds and unsolved sorrow that remain, even a decade after the disappearance. It is a call for empathy, understanding, and transformation, calling you to walk in the shoes of those trapped in the never-ending cycle of longing and loss, leaving an indelible mark on your heart and mind.

Black Movements and Murmuration

Christa Welsh

This evocative blackgirl auto-ethnography explores my embodied experience of living through numerous Black social and political movements during the 60-70s in Britain and Grenada with specific reference to black style, black music and the political and cultural movements focused on social equality and justice.

"Questioning my right to write as I roam"

Hazel R. Wright

Observation, introspection, imagination, creativity; skills I could 'hone alone' when global and local events curbed social interaction. I roamed and wrote of moments seen on daily walks. I storied the lives of people so encountered; enjoyed the creativity this allows. Now I dive into my own pond, seeking my authentic voice. I roam my past and present life, driven by frustration with my elderly mother's increasingly daft, difficult, defiant behaviour. I write compulsively to shed the stress of the constant demands I cannot meet. I polish the words, turning them into stories, into poetry and prose, into articles that I want and do not want to publish. I am not yet confident of my right to write as I roam like this. Is it fair to her, to our friends and family and do I dare to bare my soul so publicly? The phrase 'publish and be damned' echoes in my skull, giving shape to the consequences I fear. I wonder, is it ever so? This I need to test, share, explore, discuss with others who so write. Do we have the right to write as we roam if the content is not ours alone? That is my question.