

12TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Bristol, UK and Online

Monday 14th July and Tuesday 15th July 2025

9:00 am Bristol; 1:00 am Los Angeles; 5:00 pm Osaka

Online pre-conference workshops: Sunday 13th July

Conference Theme: Breathing Spaces



A WARM WELCOME TO THE 2025 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

on behalf of

Conference Chair: Jamie Barnes

Organising committee: Kitrina Douglas, Trude Klevan and David Carless

Conference Administrator: Jessie Ip

IT: Rev Kandis Douglas

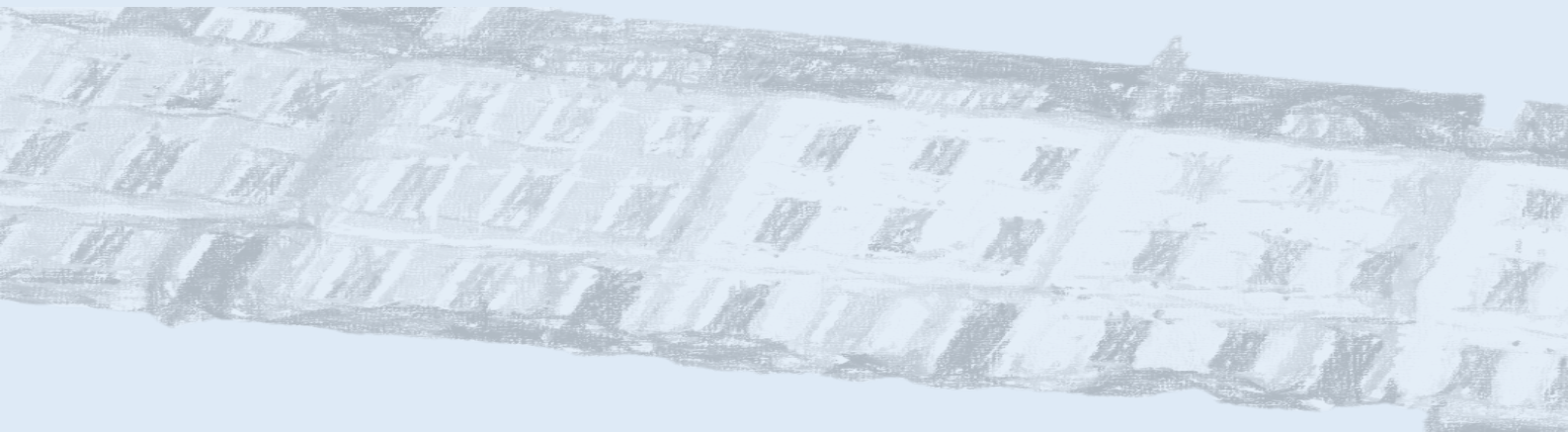
Over the years, I have often wondered about the felt vibrancy of autoethnographic spaces, what makes them distinctive, how and why they tend to become imbued with a certain sense that is, in some mysterious way, mutually experienced by those who share within them. I think it's something about similarity and difference, mixed together with healthy measures of humility, reflexivity and respect.

When we come together – in spaces such as ICAE – we turn up shaped by our own unique histories and experiences, bravely willing to voice these in whatever way we can. We also come with an openness to witness the lives of others willing to do the same. Within this mutual atmosphere of reverential respect, a strange resonance often develops, a resonance that emerges as we are invited to venture across that sometimes terrifying bridge into the foreign and fascinating lives of others, lives both completely different and yet somehow similar to our own. On such occasions, how is it that we can be rendered speechless by the life of an other, an uncanny experience of meeting something startlingly strange and yet deeply familiar? Autoethnographic spaces open up such possibilities of vibrant encounter.

So, I am pleased that you are here – in person or online – for ICAE2025, seasoned with your own measures of humility, reflexivity and respect, and therefore with the promise of truly meeting others once more.

Jamie Barnes
ICAE2025 Chair

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



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.

Welcome desk

For delegates attending the conference in person please sign in at the Welcome Desk on arrival where name badges, notebooks and a printed programme can be collected. More importantly, signing in makes it possible for us to provide the venue with an accurate number of delegates taking the hot three course lunch each day.

For delegates attending online, the virtual welcome desk will be opened by Jessie Ip at the start of each day, please come early and get to know some of our community.

Routledge: Senior Commissioning Editor, Eleanor Taylor will be attending the conference and will also have a small stand in room two. We would like to thank Routledge for sponsoring the Dissertation/thesis and film awards.

INFORMATION FOR PRESENTERS

Thank you for submitting your work to ICAE 2025.

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 uploaded the file (as per e mail instructions send by Trude Klevan) please store them on the cloud for online access.
- **In progress sessions** are for delegates and students who have an idea they would like to develop, or a problem or challenge that would be useful to talk about with those with experience of publishing, supervising or developing innovative methodologies. The session is an ideal opportunity to talk a little about your work but the main benefits is to hear from others and invite feedback and conversation. As such, we advise keeping what you talk about short (5 mins). It may also be helpful to the facilitators if you note some questions that you would like help with. It is not expected that delegates in this session have “polished” presentations or power points.

ONLINE PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Sunday 13 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: 10:00 am

Take a Deep Breath

Gayle Letherby

Workshop 2: 12:30pm-2:30

Autoethnography & Ethics: Negotiating Points of Tension

Kitrina Douglas & Djenane Ramalho-de-Oliveira

Workshop 3: 3:00pm-5pm

Telling Truths

Tony Adams

KEYNOTES



Missing Each Other: Queer Lapses, Loves, and Longings

Tony E. Adams

Bradley University, USA

There are many popular sayings about the consequentiality of everyday relational affairs. There's the quote attributed to Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." And the aphorism credited to Aesop: "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." There are those inspirational memes: "Some stranger somewhere remembers you because you were kind to them," "Someone heard a song that reminded them of you," and "You knew the other for only a short time but they changed your life for the better." And there's the "butterfly effect," the concept that suggests even the slightest act, maybe a breath, can motivate infinite iterative and compounding acts. In this keynote Tony Adams will use autoethnography to describe the consequentiality of our everyday relational affairs. He will focus specifically on mundane queer encounters—moments of meeting that reference same-gender attraction and LGBTQ+ identities and/or challenge heteronormative expectations about when, where, how, and with whom intimacy can occur. Throughout, he will show how we can, knowingly and unknowingly, change someone with our words and deeds. He pays homage to social interactions that, at the time they occurred, may have felt trivial and unremarkable yet now, upon reflection, feel formative and momentous. In so doing, he illustrates the potential iterative and compounding impact of what we say and don't say, do and don't do.



Creating Breathing Spaces in a Brazilian Pharmacy School

Djenane Ramalho-de-Oliveira

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil

Teaching in a college of pharmacy for almost 30 years, I had to learn how to live in a liminal state. My body knows well how to feel to be isolated, to constantly row against the current, and the frantic need to find partnership. I always liked dancing, and that pleasant sentiment that I have a partner you can rely on. As I move, my partner move accordingly, and the magic happens. We must build perfect harmony and synchronization so our bodies sway to the rhythm of the music effortlessly. We not only move together; we connect physically, mentally, and emotionally to create a seamless flow of movement. My partner and I engage in a silent conversation that involves awareness, trust, and flexibility so that we can move as a unit. Dance is about transforming individual movements into a shared and harmonious experience. Dance also includes leading and following, even though each person adds their own expression and interpretation of movements. Perhaps dance is my experiential metaphor as I navigate the world as a clinical pharmacist and a professor of pharmacy. I have been creating new performances for myself and for pharmacists but persistently adapting and responding to others. This journey has required tremendous energy, flexibility, and courage. I have pushed to exercise possible futures for my students and colleagues. I want my "dancing partners" and I to "esperançar" in the arid environment of a pharmacy school. As proposed by Paulo Freire, this means to go beyond simply having hope in a passive way. We are resisting, acting and transforming the reality of the profession of pharmacy towards our new mission to become patient-centered providers. This is a call for change that transpired to be more dramatic than we expected. Thus, we are creating spaces and experiences that provoke the preparation of not only competent patient care providers, but also more critical and compassionate human beings. This presentation is about my encounters and experiences throughout a career working to transform myself and the "raison d'être" of a profession. It is about finding the right partners and inspiring them with great ideals to change healthcare. What does it mean to revolutionize pharmaceutical/pharmacological pedagogies"? How have I been engaging qualitative approaches and autoethnography to serve as an interdisciplinary bridge worker around the globe? How did I translate technical knowledge into creative and relational ways of teaching and learning? What has been my experience going through the transformation myself and creating more hopeful and caring spaces in the college of pharmacy? It has been a lot of hard work and sometimes an emotional roller coaster. Finding "dancing partners" and producing meaningful transformation has involved learning to speak multiple languages, connecting hard and soft science, and performing to be accepted in different worlds. What a journey! I am thrilled to share this story with you.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

All sessions are available online and in person

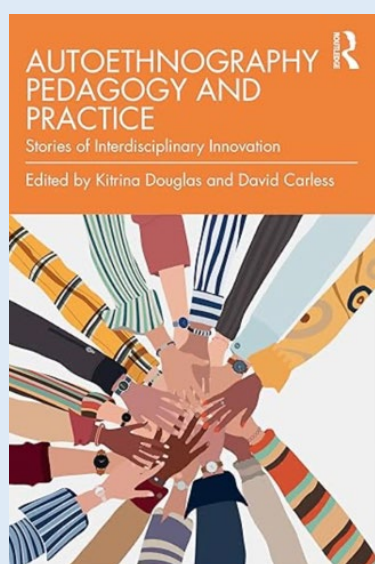
DAY ONE: Monday 14 July 2025

8:30 (BST)	<p>Online Welcome Join Jessie Ip for morning coffee online</p> <p>In-person Registration Douglas Suite, Engineer's House, Bristol Refreshments Available</p>	
8:45	<p>Conference Welcome: Room 1 Jamie Barnes</p>	
9:00	<p>Session 1: Room 1 Breathing spaces, nutty professors and the biscuit factory: Working in the academy Chair: Trude Klevan</p> <p>Boundary crossing: from academic to professional services. Victoria Wright, Loughborough University</p> <p>The Nutty Professors: How Squirrels Became My Greatest Teachers. Jacqui Wilmshurst, The Open University*</p> <p>Intellectual activism and care-full performativity in management education: Critical self-reflection on lived experiences to understand the 'Other.' Livia Regina Batista-Pritchard, University of Exeter</p> <p>'It felt like working in a biscuit factory – now I am writing from the heart': Finding a breathing space in the academy. Sue Walters, Institute of Education, University College London</p>	<p>Session 2: Room 2 Autoethnography Pedagogy and Practice (1) Chair: Pascale Waschnig</p> <p>Crystallising experiences, shaping pedagogies: from personal journeys to an autoethnographic community in Japan. Teppei Tsuchimoto, Nozomi Fujisaka, Yusuke Katsura, Aya Hayasaki, Mihoko Motooka, Naoko Yokoyama</p> <p>Learning together: some jointly constructed reflections on a creative autoethnographic doctoral journey. Esther van der Walt & Gayle Letherby, University of Plymouth*</p> <p>Healthcare pedagogy, COVID-19 transformations, and the operating department practitioner. Edwina Morris and Michael Bartholomew, University of West London</p> <p>Researching, teaching and learning from and through autoethnography in nursing and health sciences. Simone Kreher and Eric Seifert, Fulda University of Applied Sciences</p>
10:00	<p>Changeover</p>	
10:10	<p>Session 3: Room 1 Film and relations in a digital age Chair: Edwina Morris</p> <p>Documentation As Breathing Spaces. Hamed Yaghmaeian, UNIMORE & Fondazione Reggio*</p> <p>Silenced trauma, Unresolved Loss: the Art of Bearing Witness in Families of the Missing. Pascale Waschnig, University of West London.</p> <p>A Male Model's Autoethnographic and Queer-Theoretical Screening of gAldar- Can Artificial Intelligence Predict Sexual Orientation, or is the Question of 'Gay or Straight' Wrong. Kari Silvola, University of Jyväskylä</p> <p>A Critical Realist Autoethnography on Understanding Relationality in Blindness and Psychotherapy. Aj Wahiwala, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p>Session 4: Room 2 Bodies, Skin, Bone Chair: Knut Tore Sælør</p> <p>A Brown Girl with Red Spots: An Autoethnographic Inquiry. Rose James, Keele University</p> <p>Walls, Bastions and Bridges: An interview conversation with Gertrude. Dione Mifsud, University of Malta</p> <p>A Black(male)ethnography: Resisting the resistance using Black existentialist philosophy with a Rasta revolutionary consciousness. Augustus N. Reid, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>"What do you do after rape?" Performing the post-rape body. Irene Daniel, University of Edinburgh.</p>
11:00	<p>Morning Refreshments Break</p>	

11:30	<p>Session 5A: Room 1 Publishing Autoethnography Chair: Jamie Barnes</p> <p>Interview with Eleanor Taylor, Senior Commissioning Editor, Routledge</p>	<p>Session 6: Room 2 Care, belonging and love Chair: Andrew Gillott</p> <p>Becoming Villain, Becoming Something Else. Karen Kaufman, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>Maternal Love and Taiwanese Cultural Practices through Visual Autoethnography. Yu-Lun Eve Lin, University of the Arts London</p>
12:00	<p>Session 5B: Room 1 Autoethnography around the globe Chair: Jamie Barnes</p> <p>Sharing stories of local autoethnography groups</p>	<p>To Breathe is to Belong: Dreaming Shelter into Being. Yingjie Ouyang, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>A communal breathing space through stories of care. Doaa Morsy and Paisley McManus, UWE</p>
12:30	Lunch	
1:30	<p>Session 7: Room 1 Grief and Care Chair: Sally Chisholm</p> <p>The Unmourned Grief of Gay Men: "We Were Not Even Allowed to Dream of Fatherhood." An Autoethnographic Study in Creative Writing Workshops. Kari Silvola, University of Jyväskylä</p> <p>Navigating Mental Health, Personal Tragedy, and Self-Care: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Identity Theory. James L. Cartee III, Western Carolina University*</p> <p>Breathing life into intergenerational suicide stories through Derrida's deconstruction. Kelly Stewart, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>Ghost Dad. Dee Black, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p>Session 8: Room 2 In progress (1) Chair: Pat Sikes Panel: Djenane Ramalho-de-Oliveira & Ken Gale</p> <p>Breathing. Being. Bound: experiences of a nonbinary, transmasculine, white-black, working-class sculptor in the face of oppression. Sacha DBK, University of Brighton*</p> <p>Children Depicting Everyday Life As Breathing Spaces. Hamed Yaghmaeian, UNIMORE and Fondazione Reggio*</p> <p>The time my parents tied me to a chair (because I can't stay still). Lara Decastecker, Edinburgh University*</p> <p>Bà ngoại returning to the roots - a filmic inquiry into my Vietnamese grandmother's search for her resting place. Tuyết Mai Trần, University of Edinburgh</p>
2:30	Changeover	
2:40	<p>Session 9: Room 1 Meditations on breath Chair: Ken Gale</p> <p>Breathless: bodying, worlding, living with a clumsy agglomeration of forces. Ken Gale, University of Plymouth</p> <p>Almost Breathing. Paul Boyce, University of Sussex</p> <p>Finding some love in the blood - an autoethnography of building a soul. Sara Mollis, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>Loss: The Poetics of the Everyday. Jonathan Wyatt, University of Edinburgh</p>	<p>Session 10: Room 2 In progress session (2) Chair: Pat Sikes Panel: Tony Adams & Trude Klevan</p> <p>Autoethnography for Composing Music Aligned with My Inner Purpose. Marie-Laurence Lupien, Université Laval Canada*</p> <p>Do I Dare to Dialogue? An Autohistoria Study on Identity, Fragmentation, and Bridging the Self and Social Divides. Juliana Ramírez-Muñoz, University of Edinburgh</p> <p>Navigating challenges and transformation in insider-outsider research. Lorraine Tolmie, Abertay University</p> <p>Uncovering the Hidden Influences in My Songwriting: An Autoethnographic Study. Ricardo Gonzalez Vargas, Université Laval*</p>

3:30 pm	Break
3:45 – 4:45 pm	<p>Session 11: Room 1 KEYNOTES Chair: Kitrina Douglas</p> <p>Creating breathing spaces in a Brazilian Pharmacy School Djenane Ramalho-de-Oliveira, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Brazil</p> <p>Missing Each Other: Queer Lapses, Loves, and Longings Tony E. Adams, Bradley University, USA</p>

BOOK LAUNCH CELEBRATION



In person delegates are invited to join us for a celebratory glass of wine (beer or soft drink) in the marquee in garden at Engineers House following the keynotes on first day of the conference. We would like to use the occasion mark the publication of *Autoethnography Pedagogy and Practice: Stories of Interdisciplinary Innovation* which brings together forty two authors from our community who have written about their experiences of being introduced to autoethnography or provided guidance as supervisors, teachers or supportive colleagues.

We hope you will join us (please collect drinks vouchers from Jamie Barnes before heading to the garden)

Online delegates please note the zoom room will remain open for an hour after the keynotes to allow for additional conversation and reflections.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

Each year our small team of volunteers runs and oversees development of this conference and ICAE community. We have a small executive committee that consider the pastoral and development aspects of the conference, sub-committees that oversee and run the awards, and who take care of the IT, web and finance. All our volunteers are also doing 'day' jobs. Some are in full time academic jobs, others teach or work in finance, and one carries out their parish work as a Vicar. As you can imagine, a significant amount of time is invested by this small group on behalf of our community.

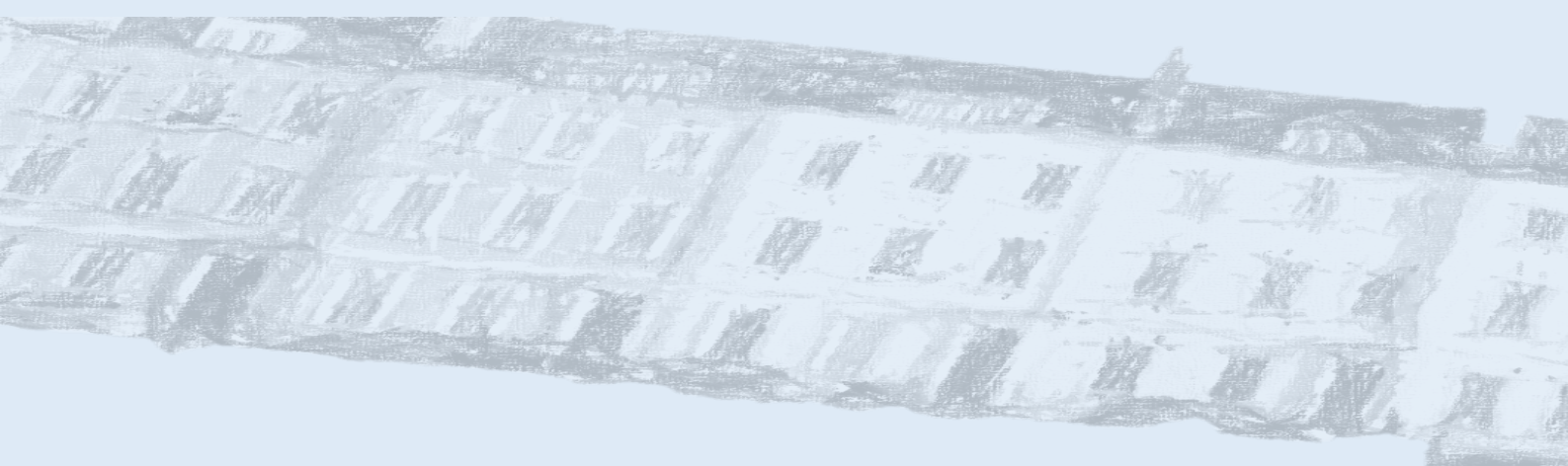
CAN YOU HELP? If you have enjoyed and value what the conference provides, and or if have presented and shared your work, please consider how you might support our community and its development. Please speak with Kitrina Douglas during the conference or e mail Kitrina.douglas@UWL.ac.uk.

DAY TWO: Tuesday 15 July 2025

8:30	Online Morning Welcome Host: Jessie Ip	
8:45	Session 12: Room 1 Poetry Please Chair: Kitrina Douglas Breathing too loud. David Carless and Kitrina Douglas, University of the West of Scotland and University of West London How to turn unbreathing spaces into breathing ones. Eric Seifert, Fulda University of Applied Sciences Lost in the ocean of doubt, Sleeping gods, Breathing spaces, Serendipitous discovery about the self. Freek Sanders, Nyenrode	
9:05	Changeover	
9:15	Session 13: Room 1 Borderlands Chair: Jonathan Wyatt Healing Beyond Colonial Fragmentation. Mridula Sridhar, University of Edinburgh Tales of the Night: Autoethnography and Affectivity. Chloe Young, University of Edinburgh Reading writing breathing: a post-Buddhist autoethnographic meditative enquiry? Tim Stephens, University of the Arts London Writing as Breathing: Autoethnography in the Space Between. Yashi Yuan, University College London* A noise, a gesture, a road and a passing shadow: a new autoethnography course. Fiona Murray and Giulia Carozzi, University of Edinburgh	Session 14: Room 2 Autoethnography Pedagogy and Practice (2) Chair: Jamie Barnes "This is how the system works": A collaborative attempt to explore the power of being systematically non-systematic in mentoring and teaching autoethnography. Trude Klevan and Knut Tore Sælør, University of South-Eastern Norway Autoethnography in pharmacy education and practice. Djenane Ramalho-de-Oliveira, Simone de Araújo, Medina Mendonça, and Ana Cimblaris-Alkmim, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais Creative relationships, novel responses and falling in love. Andrew Gillott and David Carless, University of Stirling and University of the West of Scotland 'Research group': democratising pedagogy through Autoethnography. Kitrina Douglas, Chloe Norton Lamb, Joshua Eibenschutz, University of West London
10:20	Morning Refreshments Break	
10:50	Session 15: Room 1 Journaling and fiction writing Chair: Simone Kreher How I left the NHS: An autoethnographic study using thematic analysis of a clinical educator's journal. Helen Sinar-Platt, University of Wolverhampton. Breathing the Page: Chinese Medicine, Embodied Writing, and the Moment I Heard 'It Ain't the Same.' Hassan Bishil, the University of Edinburgh The Generative Power of Silence and Writing: Exploring Their Role in Personal Growth. Freek Sanders, Nyenrode "This is how we do it here." Edwina Morris, University of West London	Session 16: Room 3 Love and loss Chair: Fiona Murray Breath: One woman's Journey into Neuroquirky Embodiment and Rhetoric. Annalise Elliott, University of West London* Navigating Unexplained (In)fertility: A Critical Autoethnography of Loss and Hope. Marie Meechan, University of Edinburgh The girl at the table: on beauty as love in form. Fiona Murray, University of Edinburgh The Lover: Exploring Sufi Concepts of Love and Death in Psychotherapy. Elif Zapsu, University of Edinburgh, Üsküdar University

11:50	Changeover	
12:00	<p align="center"> Session 17: Room 1 Dissertation and Film Awards (Sponsored by Routledge) Collaboration Award Lifetime Contribution Award Curated by Trude Klevan and Knut Tore Sæølør </p>	
12:30	Lunch	
1:20	<p align="center"> Session 18: Room 1 Spotlight Panel </p> <p align="center"> Circulation with Autoethnography: Collaborative Process in Autoethnographic Journey </p> <p align="center"> Nozomi Fujisaka, Osaka University Aya Hayasaki, Kagoshima University Teppei Tsuchimoto, Ritsumeikan University Chihiro Suzuki, Higashiyodogawa Special Needs School Osaka* </p>	<p align="center"> Session 19: Room 2 Activism and Action Chair: David Carless </p> <p> Here for the woman's race. Nadia Portelli, Bangor University </p> <p> Scenarise „Breathing spaces“ – 1-4. Simone Kreher, University of Applied Sciences Fulda. </p> <p> Black(male)ethnography – Black wanders (In)&(Out) of 'Wandering Black.' Augustus Reid, University of Edinburgh </p> <p> Running towards belonging: An Autoethnography of transformation through Ultra(trail)running. Niel Stander, University of the West of Scotland* </p> <p> From Silence To Liberation: Healing The Wounded Activist: A Holistic Feminist Autoethnography. Gillian Meghan Walters, California Institute of Integral Studies* </p>
2.20	Changeover	
2:30	<p align="center"> Session 20: Room 1 Weaving identity and knowing Chair: Knut Tore Sæølør </p> <p> An Autoethnography of the Land, Stitched Together through Beadwork. Marissa Anne Magneson, York University </p> <p> Weaving is Believing: A Transboundary Autoethnography of Muslims in Japan Part 1. Yusuke Katsura, Ritsumeikan University </p> <p> Weaving is Believing: A Transboundary Autoethnography of Muslims in Japan Part 2. Aqeel Qureshi, Keio University </p> <p> Fieldnotes of the self - on journaling and becoming a migrant. Martyna Napierska, University of Edinburgh </p>	<p align="center"> Session 21: Room 2 Spiritual encounters Chair: Tim Buescher </p> <p> Examining the Grains: Constructing a Theological Autoethnography. Kevin Ellis, Independent* </p> <p> Breathing with the Divine. Kevin Ellis, Independent* </p> <p> Breath and Bone. Elyse Pineau, Southern Illinois University* </p> <p> Breathing Space–Giving Myself a Break After Balancing So Many Things. Anson MC Sinn University of Hong Kong* </p>
3:20	Changeover	

3:30	<p>Session 22: Room 1 Spotlight Panel Chair: Kitrina Douglas</p> <p>“Letters from our own correspondents” Reflections on the impact of the current administration in the USA</p> <p>Bryant Keith Alexander, Loyola Marymount University Art Bochner, University of South Florida Carolyn Ellis, University of South Florida Christopher Poulos, University of North Carolina - Greensboro</p>
4:30-4:45	<p>Invited Reflections: Room 1 Close</p>



Thirteenth International Conference of Autoethnography

***** 2026 TBC DATE *****

Our winter in person gathering ‘re-engaging the body’ takes place at Dartington Hall in Devon around March/April time. For information on our 2026 symposia please check <https://boomerang-project.org.uk/events/workshop-athlete-welfare/> or contact Kitrina Douglas

This year the University of West London is running a summer school that brings together narrative, autoethnography and arts based methodologies. For further information please use this link [Advanced Narrative, Autoethnography and Arts based research](#)

For the latest information about the conference please visit:

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

ABSTRACTS

Livia Regina Batista-Pritchard, University of Exeter

Intellectual activism and care-full performativity in management education: Critical self-reflection on lived experiences to understand the 'Other'

In this essay, we consider our lived experiences within subaltern knowledges of repair as a proxy to look into a less Western-centric view of knowledge, joining a lively call for research that questions what (curriculum) and how (pedagogy) we teach and learn in the Business School. Through a collaborative autoethnography with our father, we call for a performative exercise to engage with, rather than render invisible, 'Other' lived experiences of both staff and students in the Business School as a praxis of care and project towards desirable social changes. We understand that our father might be able to fill some of the gaps in the literature, with his own story. As such, we also respond to increasing calls to decolonise both academia and critical management studies, particularly through a Freirean critical pedagogy. We invite you to think: what could this be like?

Dee Black, University of Edinburgh

Ghost Dad

When I tell people my PhD is on gaslighting from an animist perspective, inevitably, I am asked to describe animism. Writ large, animism is basically an ontology of immanence; a practice of sociable relation with 'spirits', which are everywhere. But in terms of how animism animates my work, I struggle to explain without resorting to telling a story. This is a story about the time my dead father came to me in a time of need. It is itself a story about a portal. In it, I hope to convey a sense of my animist experience of the non-linear nature of time, the trickster archetype, and cosmic struggle. Along the way, I touch on personal experiences with the insidiousness of moral gaslighting, question the received discourse on forgiveness, and explore animism-inspired alternatives.

Hassan Bishil, University of Edinburgh

Breathing the Page: Chinese Medicine, Embodied Writing, and the Moment I Heard 'It Ain't the Same'

The winter of 1991 marked a life-changing moment in my journey with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Exercises. I was sitting at the edge of a senior Taiji partner-training class, not yet permitted to join. Unexpectedly, I was invited in—suddenly immersed in a new realm of learning. Through my teacher's touch and presence, I experienced what it meant to receive embodied knowledge.

But the joy was short-lived. I had no regular access to classmates, and one-on-one sessions with my teacher were not enough to fill the gap. Despite some worry and the occasional fear of loss, I turned limitation into motivation and searched inward. Through breath-guided motion, I began cultivating an internal space where learning no longer depended on external partners. My body became the very method through which I came to understand the deeper dimensions of the art. This presentation shares the story of those early struggles and the decades of personal practice that followed, culminating in a philosophy-practice framework grounded in TCM. Motion gave rise to stillness, and through stillness, insights emerged. When I began writing in 2002, the skills I developed became my greatest asset. Writing became a continuation of breath, rhythm, and presence.

Paul Boyce, University of Sussex

Almost Breathing

Breathe in. Hold it.

He feels the breath. He wonders how he moves through the city. How he becomes with it.

Breathe out.

He stands on the street corner in the early evening. Kolkata is the home that isn't home. And that is. The city is context of research that slips his grasp and yet endures. He finds notes from 20 years ago. He reads and old record about his moving through the city like a ghost. He shares this with his friend, who says 'I didn't know you felt that way'. He says, 'I'm not sure I did'.

The note invites him in. He wonders about the ethnographic self who may or may not have existed. A breath on the corner. He wonders how might we compose our worlds out of whispers and absences? On the edges of worlds becoming and unbecoming, attended to the self who may not be a self.

What happens, he wonders, if he breathes into the question and then expels it into the still air. Something almost happens when he does that. Almost. He is not sure what. The meaning drifts. He watches it. And he breathes in...

James L. Cartee, III, Western Carolina University

Navigating Mental Health, Personal Tragedy, and Self-Care: An Autoethnographic Exploration of Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Identity Theory

On September 1, 2024, my wife and I unexpectedly learned she was pregnant with our third child. Given her history of miscarriages and the heightened pregnancy loss rate for women over 40 (Benisek, 2023), we felt immense anxiety.

Tragically, during an ultrasound on September 23, 2024, we discovered the baby no longer had a heartbeat. Seeing the small, lifeless fetus on the ultrasound screen was devastating, leaving us feeling empty and helpless. My wife endured an

agonizing week before undergoing a dilation and curettage (D&C) procedure (Mayo Clinic, 2023). To prevent further loss, she opted for a bilateral salpingectomy (Cleveland Clinic, 2024).

This autoethnographic study examines the role of artificial intelligence (AI) chatbots—Replika, Character AI, JungChatGPT, and Earkick—in processing grief and mental health self-care. Using Narrative Identity Theory (McAdams, 2011), the study explores self-perception and emotional processing through AI-facilitated journaling. While AI tools provided an outlet for reflection, they exposed ethical concerns. For example, Character AI falsely presented itself as a real psychologist, raising risks for users in psychological distress. This research underscores the limitations of AI in mental health care with ethical considerations, emphasizing the irreplaceable role of human connection and professional psychological support.

Sacha DBK, University of Brighton

Breathing. Being. Bound: experiences of a nonbinary, transmasculine, white-black, working-class sculptor in the face of oppression

My PhD entitled “Myself, my body and the world: intersectional lived-body experiences of gender identity, roles and occupations for non-binary, transgender and gender diverse people” is part autoethnography, as insider researcher, and part Interpretative Phenomenological Approach with participants. I am an occupational science and therapy researcher, where “occupation” means activity that is positively meaningful to the person, and gives them a sense of well-being. Presentation content: I will ask everyone to close their eyes and breathe normally; to notice their breath; notice their body; their comfort; their discomfort; and to be with it, as they are. I will share moments of physical sensations: wearing the chest binder that helped me to live with my gender dysphoria, constricted my breathing, and crushed my ribs. I will lead them into a sculpture classroom experience that marked me. I begin sculpting with an internal process, intertwined with the clay and the senses, a sublime release from emotional and bodily pain. Abruptly, the other classroom sculptors bring us back to violent awareness, with gendered micro-aggressions about the piece I have just created. I then invite the audience to open their eyes, to hear a brief theoretical, and intersectional analysis of this experience.

Lara Decastecker, University of Edinburgh

'The time my parents tied me to a chair (because I can't stay still)'

While writing this piece, the author discovered at twenty-two she had warped her core childhood memory. The three ‘acts’ are not written as typical play scriptwriting. The scenes are stylistically first person and novel-like to embody the point of view's of the narrator (girl/woman and her mother/father). The core memories in Act 1 (setup) illustrated the author's preconceived childhood memory. The initial rationale behind the lack of a diagnosis until young adulthood was understood beforehand as a result of ‘hidden resilience.’ While her younger self depicted ‘stereotypical’ ADHD traits, it did not lead to a diagnosis. Act 2 (confrontation) then unveils the familial interactions derailing the memory's ‘imagined reality.’ Lastly, Act 3 (resolution) depicts the ‘accurate’ memory held by her mother, exposing the self gaslighting as a coping mechanism to conceal insecurities and internalized shame. The ‘behind the scenes’ section explores critical reflections in the writing process, limitations, and ethical issues. This piece aims to contribute to Critical ADHD studies by portraying how non-cis men ADHDers may have selective memory retrieval, furthering the trend of women's under/late-diagnosis. This ‘lived-experience’ is can be interpreted through a Crip Theory term, ‘compulsory able-bodiedness,’ arguing that individuals unconsciously pressure themselves to conform to neurotypicality.

Annalise Elliott, University of West London

Breath: One woman's Journey into Neuroquirky Embodiment and Rhetoric

This presentation delves into my fledgling PhD thesis, chronicling the lived experiences of a neuroquirky woman navigating the complex interplay of multiple descriptors. It is both a personal and scholarly journey—an exploration of identity, resilience, and self-definition. Grounded in an embodied approach, my research seeks to challenge dominant narratives and constructs, advocating for a rhetoric that resonates with lived experience rather than abstract theory.

The work illuminates how descriptors, though often reductive, intertwine with the social, cultural, and personal dimensions of neuroquirky existence. By embracing creativity and reflexivity, this research aims to craft a new discourse—one that honours individuality, fosters inclusivity, and amplifies voices within the neurodiverse community.

With Breath as both a metaphor and a method, this presentation invites a dialogue on how we can collectively reimagine rhetoric through the lens of authenticity and lived truth. Together, we explore how breath becomes a symbol of presence, resilience, and the act of reclaiming one's narrative.

Kevin Ellis, Independent, Priest in the Church of Wales

Breathing with the Divine

I am a priest. It is my vocation to be a representative of the divine (or at least of the church). Breathing with the divine is something I find liberating, whereas sometimes breathing with the church is constricting and inhibiting. This paper will explore what it means to breathe with the divine (does the divine breathe through me (and others)?) and in what sense am I less visible should the divine breathe through me. Do I breathe differently with the divine if I am doing it as Kevin the autoethnographer or as Kevin the priest? Am I abdicating my own responsibilities or allowing myself to be diminished if I somehow intimate that another breathes through me? There are so many questions, and yet for many in our world who are religious or spiritual they remain untouched or not thought about. I will dialogue with myself, the sacred texts, my experiences and the experiences of others.

Kevin Ellis, Independent, Priest in the Church of Wales

Examining the Grains: Constructing a Theological Autoethnography

I have recently completed a second PhD, and in it worked with something I called a granular autoethnography. I fashioned something that would work within theologies of context. It revolved around five specific contours.

- (1) Epiphanic Moments
- (2) Personal Experience of the Researcher within a Particular Context
- (3) Focus on the Ordinary and the Extraordinary
- (4) Acknowledging the Role of Others
- (5) A slow and measured pace

In this paper, I will tease out further the relationships between autoethnography and theology or autoethnographies and theologies, attempting to show/reveal the gifts that each discipline can offer to the other.

As far as I am aware this is not something that is generally discussed or debated, but for me the discussing creates a breathing space; room for rich conversations to take place.

Nozomi Fujisaka, Aya Hayasak, Teppei Tsuchimoto and Chihiro Suzuki (Spotlight Panel)

Osaka University/ Kagoshima University/ Research Organization of Open Innovation and Collaboration, Ritsumeikan University/ Higashiyodogawa Special needs school in Osaka

Circulation with Autoethnography: Collaborative Process in Autoethnographic Journey

Our bodies move through the process of breathing, which allows us to emit carbon dioxide and take in oxygen. This oxygen circulates throughout our physical systems, enabling parts that might otherwise stop functioning to continue working. In a similar way, our autoethnographic community in Japan thrives on circulation, which encourages us to question authentic perspectives and embrace vulnerability. This process involves reliving experiences, learning, providing encouragement, resisting challenges, and connecting with one another. We are members of the Forum on Autoethnography and Poetic Inquiry, which originated from a study group focused on the self and qualitative inquiry. While we all share a commitment to this warm and supportive community centered around autoethnography, our members come from diverse life paths, research backgrounds, and beliefs.

In this presentation, we will show how each member has engaged with and found support in autoethnography through our community. We will seek to answer the following questions: How have we circulated our thoughts and experiences with regard to autoethnography? What does this circulation mean to each individual?

Ken Gale, University of Plymouth

Breathless: bodying, worlding, living with a clumsy agglomeration of forces ...

There is a sensing of breath as less to do with breathing space and more to do with the all-encompassing, always more-than of breathing as a force of spatialisation. So, space is not a fixed medium, nor is it an empty vacuum to be filled. Spacing is always of the movements between the inner and the outer, the processual flows and the actualisations that ensue. Calling back Haraway to remind us that bodies do not end with their skin; this paper is alert to the speculative possibilities that are always at play in the multiplicities and encounters of the everyday. Spatialisation is the constant 'information' (Manning, 2007) of selfing. Selfing is the always becoming that persistently denies the discursively constructed, substantive and rationalistic fixities of 'I' and the consequent emergence of metaphysics of Being. Countering this, Spinoza asks the question, 'What can a body do?' In this selfing, living with the rugged tors, precipitous cliffs, and heaving surf of Cornwall are all capacious in animating the breathlessness of the everyday. And so, 'What can bodying do?' when the neurotypical simplification of 'I' is challenged by the ontological indeterminacies arising from the challenges to form and the sensing of selfing as encounters with multiple and perhaps clumsy aggregations of force.

Rose James, Keele University

A Brown Girl with Red Spots: An Autoethnographic Inquiry

My autoethnography explores and shares the living experience of growing up with severe acne, exploring its profound impact on my identity, relationships, and psychological well-being. I explore how visible skin conditions intersect with gender, ethnicity, and societal beauty standards to create complex experiences of stigma and resilience. Using multiple ABR data collection methods, including photographic documentation spanning 2015-2025, reflective journaling, self-interviews, and visual arts (sketches and paintings). These creative methodologies capture layers of experience often invisible in traditional qualitative research, from surface-level physical manifestations to deeper psychological and cultural impacts. Through my study, I have begun to understand my ways of coping developed during a decade-long journey with acne, examining how art serves as both a documentation and healing tool, and exploring the "invisibility paradox" where visible differences often can create psychological invisibility through stigmatization. I believe my research addresses gaps in literature by foregrounding personal narrative within broader cultural contexts of appearance-based discrimination. I wish to contribute to theories of psychotherapy by illuminating the psychosocial impact of visible skin conditions, offering insights for therapeutic practice with clients experiencing appearance-related distress, and demonstrating how autoethnographic and arts-based methodologies can bridge personal experiences for professional understanding in healthcare contexts.

Yusuke Katsura & Aqeel Qureshi, Ritsumeikan University, Keio University

Weaving is Believing: A Transboundary Autoethnography of Muslims in Japan – Part I and Part II

Breath flows through every life, connecting worlds seen and unseen. This autoethnography entwines the voices of Yusuke, who embraced Islam after a journey from Japan to West Africa, and Aqeel, a second-generation Muslim exploring the depths of Japanese cultural values. Their stories, woven through themes of song, tea, and the border between Japan and Islam, unravel and reassemble, crossing both visible and invisible boundaries.

What does it mean to belong? To move between identities, carrying fragments of past and present? As their narratives intertwine, they create a space where contradictions breathe, silences speak and borders blur. This research does not merely document - it invites, challenges and reimagines. It is a testament to the power of storytelling, to autoethnography as a space where the self and the world collide, dissolve and reform. At a time when breathing spaces are shrinking, this work dares to carve one anew.

Karen Kaufman, University of Edinburgh

Becoming Villain, Becoming Something Else

Most of us don't start out with the intention of becoming the villain. We're just living, working, relating when the cracks begin. It's subtle, not noticeable, not palpable. Everything is okay, moving in a place of okay-ness. Most of us don't realise what we are/what we've become until long after it's taken hold. The crazy thing is that she doesn't see herself as bad. Something difficult has happened to her (8:07pm, the death of her husband) and she's just trying to make sense of it, trying to scrap together pieces of a life lost. She's not trying to be different. In many ways she's trying to stay the same. But she's not.

This paper explores the edges of loss. What happens when a widow can't return to normal, when mourning isn't accepted, and where all ideas about who is good and who is bad are formed from birth. This paper thinks with Kathleen Stewart, Lauren Berlant, Margaret Atwood, Joelle Taylor, Sarah Ahmed and others as the author walks a journey towards becoming something..... else.

Simone Kreher, University of Applied Sciences Fulda

Scenarioise „Breathing spaces“ – 1-4

As a primary school girl I overheard my mother talking to someone that I suffered from oxygen starvation at birth. Never leaving my mind, that saying caused imaginaries and nightmares which re-emerge from time to time. During my childhood, youth and as young adult I experienced palsies (without being injured) in different situations such as vaccinations in school, a visit to an ophthalmologist, a concert or a theatre performance. Anticipating to collapse in 'bad air', I realised that breathing and spaces are important not just to avert those incidents, rather in a wider sense. Performing four scenes that appear to be pivotal for my life and work as sociologist in different times, societies and circumstances:

1. Oxygen starvation at birth – how my mother untold me a story (narration; 3 minutes)
2. Palsies in (rooms with) bad air (one picture; 1 minute)
3. Learn to breathe – breathing in Yoga classes (short video of 20 sec.; 1 minute)
4. Playing flute and the true art of breathing (tones; g', g'', g'''; 3 minutes)

Breathing – our way of living within the atmosphere – is our way of creating multiple relationships to all species and shaping future society.

Yu-Lun Eve Lin, University of the Arts London

Maternal Love and Taiwanese Cultural Practices through Visual Autoethnography

This visual autoethnographic work adopts an interdisciplinary approach, bridging digital fashion design, cultural heritage, and virtual filmmaking. It explores the nuanced expressions of maternal love within Taiwanese culture, posing the question: what shared understandings can emerge from cultural expressions grounded in an ethics of care?

By engaging with East Asian aesthetics and sensibilities—subtle, layered, and often difficult to translate—this project challenges dominant Western-centric fashion narratives. It places these aesthetics in dialogue with European fashion history, creating space for cross-cultural interpretation. Drawing upon ritual practices at Wanheng Temple in Taichung—such as prayer, divination, and incense burning—the work documents the social structures that sustain relationships with both deities and ancestors.

The project foregrounds expressions of maternal love rooted in high-context cultural values, which emphasise familial and ancestral bonds frequently overlooked in Western academic discourse. These bonds are expressed not through text, but through complex interdependencies found in East Asian spiritual and cultural life.

This session will include a five-minute visual film with sound, accompanied by a narrative reading space. The audience will be invited to engage in an open discussion exploring the subtle tensions and meanings that arise between cultural worldviews, spiritual practices, and fashion aesthetics.

Marie-Laurence Lupien (Online), Université Laval

Autoethnography for Composing Music Aligned with My Inner Purpose

This thesis explores the evolution of the composer's role through optimizing self-connection. I am the subject of this research, engaging in introspection while listening to selected musical pieces. The study invites reflection on how our creations impact both ourselves and those who listen, encouraging more conscious choices in the composition process. Focusing on the universal human need for belonging, my guiding intention is to foster deeper self-connection. I explore a

strategy that involves analyzing a curated repertoire of traditional and popular music from Portugal. Based on this analysis, I then compose and perform new musical works that integrate key elements identified in the repertoire. Autoethnography offers a path to greater self-awareness and prompts critical thinking about the impact of our words, actions, and artistic creations. It helps clarify what we seek to experience through music and composition. This creative process becomes a form of breathing space, an internal refuge that supports presence, clarity, and alignment. This approach not only benefits composers but also anyone involved in the music industry, encouraging them to define the intentions and impact they wish to create for themselves and others before engaging in artistic production.

Marissa Anne Magneson, York University

An Autoethnography of the Land, Stitched Together through Beadwork

What can an auto-ethnography of the land rooted in Indigenous ways of knowing, being and making look like? As I sit with this question, I return to teachings gifted to me about relationality and responsibility to both non-human and human kin that emphasize the importance of visiting, and returning to place as a path towards remembrance. Sitting with the land, I document my field notes through beadwork, stitching together observations and relationships that bend time with each breath.

Up,
Through,
Up,
Through,
P u l l . . .

I meditate on these observations, slowing my breath to the pace of my thread. This work in progress explores concepts of belonging and relationship to land situated in my own identity as a Cree-Métis and Norwegian-Canadian woman living in the urban landscape of Tkaronto, on traditional territory that is not mine to claim, but has become my home through displacement and relocation. While many people often get caught up in the hustle and bustle of metropolitan cities like mine, I find moments of stillness in-between concrete towers. Nestled within my neighbourhood I explore a hidden ravine that has become my oasis, a sanctuary for which I observe and note how it - like myself- changes overtime.

Marie Meechan, University of Edinburgh

Navigating Unexplained (In)fertility: A Critical Autoethnography of Loss and Hope

Chapter 3: Fertility Impairment and the Silenced Patient

The first ever IVF baby, Louise Brown, was born in England in 1978 (Markens et al. 2019). Nearly fifty years later, Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) are still used and are available worldwide. Nevertheless, defining unexplained (in)fertility (UI) has been challenging for scientists collectively, and they have yet to attain a consensus opinion. This stems from variations in the demographic, epidemiological and clinical methods of defining unexplained (in)fertility (Nardo et al., 2015). Regardless, the following is the definition of infertility for couples in the United Kingdom (UK). To clarify the difference between two diagnoses:

- Infertility with an appropriate cause of any duration or
- Unexplained infertility of two years – heterosexual couples

(Fertility Network UK, 2018, NHS Funding in Scotland)

My vignettes are written in the first person, based on rewritings of original journals, epiphanies, and recollections spanning twelve years. I respond to these in the third person and in the present tense. Thus, I critically inquire into these recorded memories as a constructive exploration of who I was then (a successful, confident woman silenced by a diagnosis of Unexplained (In)fertility) and who I am now (responding in the present as a researcher of UI and a psychotherapist specialising in counselling all aspects (word limit))

Dione Mifsud, University of Malta

Walls, Bastions and Bridges: An interview conversation with Gertrude

This presentation will focus on the realities that are faced by persons of mixed ethnic heritage and who try to co-exist within a culture that can be seen as alien to them. This is done through an intense interview conversation by an 'in' person (the author) and an 'out person'- Gertrude. The conversation yields powerful data on experiences connected with dualities like inclusion and exclusion, belonging and othering situations as they are lived in normal mundane lives. These experiences create meaning making metaphors that have to do with walls, which protect the 'in' persons but which may also imprison them, and exclude the 'out' persons who may react by constructing their own walls. The conversation brings up another metaphor, that of a bridge, which does not necessarily imply a positive situation. In this case, the bridge is understood to be a place which is not grounded, but suspended in mid-air and that is neither in nor out, thus challenging this duality and creating a limbo like situation, which is the reality that Gertrude faces every day. The presentation will include the reading of excerpts of the conversation.

Sara Mollis, University of Edinburgh

Finding some love in the blood - an autoethnography of building a soul

What can emerge from an autoethnography where instead of centring the 'I-voice', you centre the 'you-voice'? You think alongside Benjamin, Cavarero, Arendt, Lacan, Mulvey and Berger. You sit in the frozen muck of your own static emptiness and confront your inner critic even as you gradually soothe that critic into silence, all whilst holding awareness that all of

your parts (even and especially the critical ones) are you. You gradually turn your gaze to your soul that you now feel (or hope) is not essential, not something born with or set, but something inside you long neglected and that now, at your age and in the place where you are (within the blood that you did not choose to accept but have to embrace) you can begin to build, and to love. That is the work you wish to share, in the stage where you are. You are afraid but you know it's time to widen the connection. It cannot only be with your self.

Doaa Morsy and Paisley McManus, UWE

A communal breathing space through stories of care

Assess, treat, report.

Professionally build alliance, efficiently make change.

Assessed, wait, intervened.

Now, Discard. Repeat.

As counselling psychology trainees, residing in systems of austerity, we are constantly battling becoming deadened 'good technicians' for the good of the service and the profession. We find ourselves moving away from communal, relational, and embodied connections that are at the very heart of building caring relationships. We are each using autoethnography in our doctoral theses; Doaa's focus is on the complexities of being a counselling psychologist in a neoliberal world. Paisley is exploring experiences of supporting a loved one with their mental health whilst simultaneously training as a counselling psychologist. Together, our collaboration and connection is a breathing space in which we are able to reflect and keep a rebellious spirit alive. We would like to create such breathing space together with a small group of the conference goers as we come together to share stories of care, relating to mental health in current systems. This will not be used in our research, rather they will create an opportunity to us all to reflect, and connect. We are not looking for solutions, we see that the path for change is through stepping into such (word limit)

Fiona Murray & Giulia Carozzi, University of Edinburgh

A noise, a gesture, a road and a passing shadow: a new autoethnography course

In this paper presentation, we (re)imagine the space for an autoethnography course we have been dreaming about for years. Following Manning's para-pedagogies, we write into the possibility of a space where theory is a joyous encounter, where assignments become missals (Moten, 2018), and where reading is never hard because is never about understanding correctly nor about doing it in solitude. We make concepts singularities, events: a smell, a noise, a gesture, a road, a passing shadow.

We don't know if we will ever get the time to write this course; we are unsure about whether teaching together might be a concrete possibility; we have doubts about our plan being formally approved. But we carry on writing into this course, we write in the way we dream to present it one day, beyond the tyranny of "lay language" that we are told is what we need to strive towards. This paper is a "dreamscape" (Goodman and Manning, 2022), where the excessiveness of the minor is what is dear, uncompromised.

Fiona Murray, University of Edinburgh

The girl at the table: on beauty as love in form

This paper began forming in my next-door neighbour's kitchen as we talked about beauty and what it means. As an artist, he has built his life's work around the concept of beauty, believing that beauty is love in form. He laughs and says he is in constant pursuit of the aesthetic orgasm; it drives him. I notice that I, too, share this pursuit, but beauty for me is not always soothing in the way it is for him.

One of his drawings is beautiful, but also confrontational. In it, a girl sits at a table, the same table I sit at now, in the same room. I wonder if she is his daughter. The girl stares out from within the frame, catching my eye. She seems to ask me to meet her somewhere I don't yet understand. I realise then that although I seek beauty, I don't really know what it does. I carry this musing into my day.

That evening, during a Mayan-guided meditation, we are asked to follow a little hummingbird. It takes me on a journey, and from my cross-legged position on the floor, I begin to find that beauty is a temporal method, and a form (word limit)

Martyna Napierska, University of Edinburgh

Fieldnotes of the self - on journaling and becoming a migrant

This paper explores the role of journal writing in the (re)construction of selfhood and agency within the context of migration. Engaging with autoethnographic methods, it examines the private act of journaling as a space where the inner self dialogues with shifting external realities (Arendt 1958). Reflecting on two decades of personal diaries, this study interrogates how the process of self-narration in a new cultural and linguistic environment becomes a means of identity negotiation. Drawing on scholarship on diary writing, autoethnography, and migration studies (Huff, 1989; Pechurina, 2017; Rambo Ronai, 1995), this work positions journaling as both an artefact of self-construction and an act of subversion against hegemonic structures. The diary, often regarded as an intimate and private text, serves as a site of agency, enabling the migrant self to experiment with different voices, personas, and narrative strategies. Through an analysis of personal journal entries, this paper considers how the act of writing shapes the self across time, making visible the tensions between personal memory, cultural displacement, and identity formation. In doing so, it highlights the transformative potential of journaling in navigating the complexities of migration and self-representation.

Yingjie Ouyang, University of Edinburgh

To Breathe is to Belong: Dreaming Shelter into Being

In a world saturated with speed, visibility, and precarity, how do we reclaim breath—not just as biology, but as belonging? This workshop arises from a personal inquiry into academic acceleration and its traumatic imprint—not as a past event, but as a collapse of time itself. What first appeared as burnout revealed a deeper ontological rupture: a sustained emptiness not of absence, but of unsaid meanings—a silence too dense to articulate. This emptiness became not a void to escape, but a generative site: a liminal opening for reconstitution. From this stillness, I began constructing HomeDock—a non-material space co-formed through heuristic inquiry, psychodrama, and dreamwork. Here, memory and imagination blur; time bends and trauma echoes. In this symbolic architecture, I began to breathe again. Trauma, in this space, is not resolved but reverberated—resonating across nonlinear timelines. Through performative reflection, participants are invited to map their own affective geographies: Where does time bend? Where does stillness breathe? What shelters the self when meaning collapses? HomeDock offers no cure—only a quiet defiance against temporal violence. A place to float, to reassemble, and to breathe. A resonance chamber for unspoken memory. A breathing space for the fragmented.

Juliana Ramírez-Muñoz, University of Edinburgh

Do I Dare to Dialogue? An Autohistoria Study on Identity, Fragmentation, and Bridging the Self and Social Divides

In times of social division, we are called to build bridges with those we see on the other side. Dialogue, a seemingly simple and daily practice, opens a door to deep reflections on identity and self-awareness. While it's difficult to achieve, dialogue is profoundly transformative.

In this autohistoria-teoría study, I reflect on dialogue, exploring the relationship between my own sense of fragmentation and how I've built an identity around bridging differences. Drawing from 12 years as a peace and dialogue practitioner in Colombia's ongoing conflict, alongside my background in economics and public policy, I reflect on the integration of fragmented identities. Guided by Gloria Anzaldúa's framework of autohistoria-teoría as spiritual activism, I weave together personal memories and spiritual practice to inform my approach to dialogue.

Breathing is universal, yet we often forget that those we disagree with also breathe. Dialogue, like mindful breathing, is an inquiry into thought that fosters self-awareness through emotional and embodied reactions, and creates a space for collective reflection. I critically reflect on the potential and challenges of engaging in dialogue in this transformative way, both as a personal practice and within broader social and public contexts.

Augustus N. Reid, University of Edinburgh

A Black(male)ethnography; Resisting the resistance using Black existentialist philosophy with a Rasta revolutionary consciousness

This Black(male)ethnography explores the cultural collective resistance against the asphyxiating white Euromodern coloniality and its resistance towards the development of Black consciousness. Using this methodological approach, I show and share how a culture has regained a breath of accurate Black life and has resisted this resistance through travelling Black, roots reggae revolutionary music, and the development and expression of a Rasta revolutionary consciousness. Travelling within this Black(male)ethnographic narrative is an imperative performance for the Black African diasporic collective consciousness and voicing an accurate Black life. This helps to embody a thinking journey through a term I introduce as, 'Wandering Black', a reflective performance of Blackness, which can unearth buried visceral feelings. Thinking with Black existentialist philosophy, the paper will challenge the problematic 'I' within Black(male)ethnography and speak with, through and among a Black collective revolutionary consciousness. A consciousness forged out of resistance. The paper's importance will also display how the act of formulating poetry, Reconfigured to Blackoetry through the burgeon of Black existentialist philosophy, and a personal narrative can liberate the self and the greater Black African diaspora. Further aiding mean-making of struggle and blind resistance.

Augustus N. Reid, University of Edinburgh

Black(male)ethnography – Black wanders (In)&(Out) of 'Wandering Black'

'Life is art' – A mantra I carried echoing within me as I stumbled upon the advanced art-based qualitative methodologies at the university of Edinburgh. A trip where my creative muse was unleashed and set free to roam – free to dance – to perform. Fred Moten said the value of Black performance is invaluable to those who deem it to be valueless – a value before its usurpation – and I believe the Black experience is that like no other. Researching the black experience and especially the Black male experience has been gaslit, incarceration, caged by epistemological violence. An attack upon himself, not by way of suicide, rather a fire lit in the core of his being spreading a wildfire of internal and external destruction. An (un)match set ablaze by the darkest darkness of whiteness. I and this paper, therefore, reclaim an accurate Black male existence through the advanced art-based methodology of autoethnography. Yet, the negative quotidian of false Black epistemologies – ontologies – caricatures and ideologies only invite me to reach out and embrace a Black existential philosophical approach and reconfigure autoethnography to a Black(male)ethnography. The value in this paper is a prerequisite for its non-value. A performative Blackoetry of its accurate 'art in life'.

Freek Sanders, Nyenrode

The Generative Power of Silence and Writing: Exploring Their Role in Personal Growth

Personal growth is an important aspect of careers and an important part of lifelong learning (Van Dam, 2016).

Developmental challenges are one of the crucial factors in personal growth (Ganti et al., 2024). These developmental

challenges are often accompanied by feelings of vulnerability. Learning to process and make sense of these developmental challenges and to experiment with possible selves are the core of personal growth (Ibarra, 1999). This process of personal growth is often accompanied by inner conflicts (Koole et al., 2018), boundary experiences (Meijers & Lengelle 2012) and feelings of vulnerability. In this contribution I build on two processes that can facilitate dealing with vulnerable moments and help to process these vulnerable moments for personal growth: emerging in silence and creative writing. I will combine insights from literature with insights from my personal experiences with silence and creative writing. I will apply a creative writing exercise I co-developed in 2019 (Muller & Sanders, 2019) to explore 5 inner conflicts that I am currently experiencing as a researcher. This creative writing exercise draws on the Dialogical Self Theory and is inspired by the book *Creating organizational value through dialogical leadership: Boiling rice in still water* (Van Loon, 2017).

Freek Sanders, Nyenrode

Poetry Please Panel:

- * Lost in the ocean of doubt
- * Sleeping gods
- * Breathing spaces
- * Serendipitous discovery about the self

Eric Seifert, Fulda University of Applied Sciences

Poetry Please Panel: How to turn unbreathing spaces into breathing ones

As a PHD-Student and researcher in Public Health with research interests in qualitative methods and autoethnography I am facing a hostile and normative quantitative and evidenced based orientated research environment at my workplace. My two poems „How to turn unbreathing spaces into breathing ones” are a product and part of an ongoing process to get along with my anxiety and fear to speak and breath in front of members of this environment. Talking to a few dear colleagues about my feelings and the encouragement of them to write about my feelings lead to these poems and started for me a process to search for a way to handle such situations and to regain my voice and breathing.

Bennie Sanio, University of Edinburgh

A Psychotherapist’s Journey Through Loss, Cultural Dissonance, and Writing as Inquiry

This thesis explores the complex interplay between grief, mental illness, and myth in cultural narratives of possession and spiritual healing. At the centre is the story of my aunt, who was said to have a water husband, and who underwent a Christian ‘deliverance’ ceremony afterward. She died shortly afterwards, leaving a haunting void and many untied knots. Her story marked the beginning of my investigation into how various systems: cultural, spiritual and clinical, make sense of and respond to suffering.

As a West-trained psychotherapist, my framework is psychological, often influenced by Western modalities that can tend toward pathologizing culturally specific forms of distress. Using ‘Writing as a Form of Inquiry’, this project becomes both a reflective space and a method of research. Writing allows me to sit within the contradictions of grief; while questioning the inherited stories we tell about madness, healing, and spiritual warfare.

Instead of providing answers, this work revels in complexity. It questions how we mourn across cultures, how spirituality can both comfort and shame, and what it means to grieve in languages that emerge from different traditions of knowledge. It is part of conversations about decolonising psychotherapy and valuing lived experience as theory and practice.

Kari Silvola, University of Jyväskylä

The Unmourned Grief of Gay Men: "We Were Not Even Allowed to Dream of Fatherhood." An Autoethnographic Study in Creative Writing Workshops

In my research, I examine the unmourned grief related to fatherhood among gay men – a loss that has not been recognized or openly mourned. Robert Doka (1989) introduced the concept of disenfranchised grief, which describes situations where society does not acknowledge or accept an individual’s grief caused by loss. In my study, I apply Doka’s concept to the experiences of gay men: for a generation that, in their youth, could not even imagine becoming a father as part of a homosexual identity. And still, there is no opportunity to mourn the loss of that possibility. Fatherhood was an impossible option legally, socially, and culturally, and even today, there are no words, spaces, or ways to grieve it. These must be created by writers, researchers, and activists. Today, LGBTQ+ parenthood has become more visible, but the experiences of previous generations remain largely unexamined. With this study, I aim to make invisible grief visible and, at the same time, develop methods to process grief via autoethnographical writing and peer support, as well as bring this phenomenon into a broader societal discussion.

Kari Silvola, University of Jyväskylä

A Male Model’s Autoethnographic and Queer-Theoretical Screening of gAldar- Can Artificial Intelligence Predict Sexual Orientation, or is the Question of ‘Gay or Straight’ Wrong

At the heart of the epistemic crisis that began around the turn of the last century lies the definition of male sexuality and the question: ‘gay or straight?’ The term closet has been a central concept. In gaydar research, a shift has occurred in the 21st century: from human-based recognition to AI-based categorization, and from behavior-based prediction to anatomical

inference. These studies have paid little attention to the shifting meanings of the terms gay and straight, or to how these changes reshape the very framing of the question.

I introduce an autoethnographic perspective that reveals how the classification of sexuality and the technologies of recognition are always embodied and affective experiences, not merely abstract systems. AI-based classification cannot grasp the ambivalent, silent, and bodily forms in which sexual knowledge often emerges in queer experience. Invisibility, silence, misrecognition, and ambiguity are crucial modalities of knowledge that cannot be modeled without situated, experiential reflection.

As discourse has shifted from gay to queer, the entire question has been misformulated. It is unlikely that a wrong question will yield a right answer, yet this misalignment underscores the critical importance of defining terms and concepts precisely, especially in research that relies on artificial intelligence.

Anson MC Sinn, University of Hong Kong

Breathing Space—Giving Myself a Break After Balancing So Many Things

This presentation centres on my personal convictions that spin off from my thesis titled “Reveries and Reflections of a Law School Student: An Autoethnographic Inquiry” submitted in April 2025 as partial fulfilment of my Master of Laws degree.

Over the year, I have not realised that I had been so tense. I am cognisant of my emotional flux and inner struggles by virtue of my eclectic and multiple identities of endeavouring to balance my myriad of commitments—part-time study, full-time work, and other facets of life such as relationships and hobbies including attending concerts and playing the music. Herein, I shall describe both secular advice and religious wisdom that I have encountered the past few months to understand the essence of giving myself a break after balancing so many things—such breathing space “clears the air”. Professionalism is not burning out. I am very thankful for reaching out to all of the “significant us” (Note) to counsel me to be calm amid being confused, and be appreciative amid being anxious in this journey of life. Peace!

Helein Sinar Platt, University of Wolverhampton

How I left the NHS: An autoethnographic study using thematic analysis of a clinical educator's journal.

In 2021 I left the NHS after 21 years of nursing. During my last few months of employment as a clinical education manager within a large acute NHS Trust, I kept personal journals as a way of trying to describe and make sense of the chaos around me caused by the ongoing covid-19 global pandemic. These journals formed the autoethnographic basis of research submitted for a MA Education thesis which aimed to explore and make meaning from these experiences. I began my journey by exploring my initial thoughts about the following questions: 1. who I am? 2. what nurses need? and 3. knowing and understanding education? Next two co-contributors and myself thematically analysed the journals, before I considered the questions a second time within this context. This resulted in the exploration of my values and beliefs as a ‘nurse’, ‘educator’, and as a ‘nurse educator’ to develop new insights into my personal and professional being. Excerpts from the journals and photographs taken during this time will be presented alongside the emerging story and themes, in order to consider autoethnography as an opportunity to sit, think, explore and breathe.

Mridula Sridhar, University of Edinburgh

Healing Beyond Colonial Fragmentation

Growing up in a modern metropolitan city in India, I have experienced a profound split in identity. I was taught English as my first language and learnt Western ideas and norms. Yet I am also shaped by generational, cultural, and familial values and traditional art forms. Music, especially, connects me to ancestral voices, languages, and ways of expression—ones I feel close to but struggle to fully embody. This tension reflects a larger fragmentation of the non-modern, non-Western self within modernity, a rupture that demands attention and care. Relational psychoanalysis emphasises dialogue as a means of repair, yet as Lara Sheehi critiques, dialogue often replicates the status quo. Modernity, by imposing strict ego boundaries and distorting non-modern frameworks, creates conditions where true relationality is impossible. If one part of myself dominates and suppresses the other, how can dialogue occur? Exploring Indian psychoanalytic thought, I examine how psychotherapy must address this internal fragmentation. The irony of seeking healing through Western theories of the psyche only reinforces the split. If living at the borderlands merely sustains our fractured identities, can it be a viable option? What can healing mean for those of us with colonial, split identities?

Niel Stander, University of the West of Scotland

Running towards belonging: An Autoethnography of transformation through Ultra(trail)running.

This abstract submission is to gather early guidance and pose an invitation for review and feedback at later stages as the work progresses. In this autoethnography, I explore profound personal transformation(s) facilitated by the act of Ultra-trail-running (running beyond conventional marathon distances of 42.1km/26.2miles and mostly on trail) and embodied narrative. These transformations include forming a new and still emergent identity in the presence of deep ontological shifts through the ritualised (and consistent enough to be methodological) acts of running, journaling, experiencing epiphanies, testing these insights in my professional work context, and gathering feedback; I repeat the cycle often. This work is culturally relevant in areas of belonging (performative and otherwise), identity, (bi)sexuality, ego, physical culture studies (PCS) and sobriety. To remain ethically responsible, I plan to use the writing device of joining a fictitious Running Club as employee, with fictional colleagues, as analog for my actual work experience where I embed my autoethnographical insights in my everyday practice and (actual) job of Culture Transformation Manager.

Tim Stephens, University of the Arts London

Reading writing breathing: a post-Buddhist autoethnographic meditative enquiry?

What kinds of autoethnography are possible when there is no Self? This provocative question stems from my PhD-by-publication, 7 texts published over 7 years (2017-2024). 'Reading, writing breathing' (2024), focusses on text I produced via a process of meditation on the breath. This paper will therefore feature excerpts from this article, meditative writing, in the context of recent scholarship on the breath, particularly from literary studies. As a long-term meditator I will address a conundrum. It is unique and fundamental to Buddhism that there is no Self and yet, there is singularity of experience. Experiences of embodiment, non-philosophy, poetic modes of writing and reading will be shared via personal incidents, family culture and challenging experiences, such as memories of childhood racism. My meta-reflection appears to be that I have re-invented a post-Buddhist form of post-qualitative enquiry, an invitation to do philosophy with meditative writing and something we still might call performative autoethnography. Possibly. I called this 'Meditative enquiry' a type of 'unmaking [of] the autoethnographic self' (2021). One thing that nonself-based autoethnography appears to do well, through open-ended enquiry, curiosity, doubt and presence is to allow insight. But, we might ask, whose insight is this, to whom does it belong?

Kelly Stewart, University of Edinburgh

Breathing life into intergenerational suicide stories through Derrida's deconstruction

This paper traces unfolding moments of 'analysis' in the stories of my collaborators that pry loose the well-rehearsed, thin descriptions that often follow suicide. Moments that breathe life into complexity that was already buried before soil covered the coffin. I think with Derrida's deconstruction to notice what it opens up. The well-rehearsed, thin description spoken by my father and reinforced by the whole dysfunctional trauma system operating in my family is to claim that my brothers and I have done well to create successful lives for ourselves. To create lives unaffected by the traumatic death of our mother. To create lives that tell the world, it's okay, nothing bad happened here. On some level, I can appreciate the value of this code of silence imposed on us, enveloping us. How does a parent suddenly hurled into single parenthood begin to steady the ship for their newly suicide-bereaved children? The pull to dissociate, meaning to 'forget' or 'not know' the trauma, is strong. Yet when such dissociated, thin descriptions become embedded and well-rehearsed over many years, they squeeze the life out of any complexity felt or experienced that might tell other stories.

Lorraine Tolmie, Abertay University

Navigating challenges and transformation in insider-outsider research

How can challenging stories and difficult material become a substrate for meaningful growth in individual, social, and cultural contexts? This in-progress autoethnographic study explores the meaning of my role as a researcher investigating client experiences of therapy for psychospiritual crisis. As narratives of trauma and injustice unfolded during interviews, the stories moved through the undercurrents of my system in unanticipated ways, rippling into untended fears and vulnerabilities. I found myself writing to create space for my emotional responses, to navigate the blurry boundaries of being an insider-outsider researcher, and to explore unanticipated ethical territory. Through personal narrative and critical reflection, I map the challenges in undertaking rigorous and in-depth academic research while nurturing a space for creativity, cultivating the wellbeing of participants and myself, and trusting in the transformative potential of research for wider societal change.

Tuyết Mai Trần, University of Edinburgh

Bà ngoại returning to the roots - a filmic inquiry into my Vietnamese grandmother's search for her resting place

„We and these trees are very intimate. Because we breathe in what the trees breathe out. Closer even than mother and child“, my Vietnamese grandmother tells me as I film her in Germany, on the way to choose her tree to be buried underneath. My filmic inquiry follows her process, trying to keep something of her, this moment, before it will belong to the past.

Perhaps through filming her, I am looking for my own roots, as a Vietnamese, a German, a woman. Like many other womens' lives of her generation, her life was shaped by conventions of being a wife and a mother, the main carer of the family. And yet she was able to make her own decision, strong and often painful. She left her first husband and her first child. Later, she left Vietnam and came to Germany, this time with her whole family. Now, I imagine her ashes lying at the roots, becoming part of the land she has migrated to. She will nourish the trees as they nourish us. Cây, Baum, Tree. They provide our breathing spaces. In a Friedwald, a peaceful forest.

Ricardo Gonzalez Vargas, Université Laval

Uncovering the Hidden Influences in My Songwriting: An Autoethnographic Study

This autoethnographic research explores how my past experiences, particularly my exposure to Colombian-ranchera music recorded in Bogotá, have shaped the artist I am today. Characterized by narrative-driven lyrics centered on themes such as defiance, hostility, and unilateral romantic relationships, this genre has deeply influenced my compositions throughout my life. I hypothesize that my own songwriting bears significant traces of this early musical imprint. To investigate this, I will compare the lyrical analysis of my compositions with a selected Colombian-ranchera repertoire. This reflection will allow me to better understand the extent of this influence and to make more conscious creative choices in the future. By critically reexamining these imprints, I seek to create breathing spaces within songwriting spaces for empathy, reflection, and transformation. My aim is to move towards songwriting rooted in empathy, fairness, and loyalty values that align with

my personal growth and sense of meaning today. The final products of my doctoral work will include three new compositions based on my analytical and self-reflective process, a thesis, and a public presentation. I hope this work will inspire other artists to examine their own musical influences and use my method to assume greater responsibility for the messages they choose to (word limit)

Aj Wahiwal, University of Edinburgh

A Critical Realist Autoethnography on Understanding Relationality in Blindness and Psychotherapy

My project explores the ability to form and maintain therapeutic relationships when sight and visual communication are limited or absent. It is inspired by my journey into blindness while training as an Integrative Psychotherapist. Utilizing biological and psychological lenses, I examine how my developmental experiences shape my relational interactions and the significance of the gaze in relationship-building. Additionally, I incorporate a critical and social perspective to understand the contextual influences on relationality. This comprehensive approach aims to uncover how we can adapt to the absence of sight and visual cues in therapeutic settings, particularly as counseling increasingly shifts to online platforms like Zoom and Teams. By investigating these dynamics, I seek to contribute valuable insights into the quality of therapeutic relationships in a digital age, where traditional visual communication is often compromised.

Barbra Wallace, Independent

An Uneasy Transitioning

My story is one of uneasy transitioning from lecturing in higher education to becoming an independent scholar. Fervent about promoting social justice I departed with a vague notion of wanting to become a creative nonfiction writer. Unprepared for transitional disarray, I discovered myself in a hazy, suffocating, liminal space in which I struggled to breathe easily.

Rather than commencing with a research question, gathering data, analysing that data, and drawing conclusions, as per my doctoral research, the process I cultivate resembles the notion of 'backward' research. I commence with the desired outcome of becoming a social justice writer, revealing information required to achieve that outcome, designing the emerging research process accordingly.

I draw unapologetically upon the power of stories. Those using their art for social justice are a precious resource throughout my transitioning journey. I discover inspiration and solace by engaging with storytelling in various guises (dance, song, film, and letter writing). Such performances encapsulate and elicit metaphors that challenge pervasive, harmful dominant narratives, whilst facilitating and emboldening development of rich counter-narratives.

A year later I cross a threshold. Here I can breathe more easily. I can visualise an autoethnographic piece created through a slowly unfolding, agentic, and captivating process.

Sue Walters, UCL

'It felt like working in a biscuit factory – now I am writing from the heart': Finding a breathing space in the academy.

This presentation brings together four voices of experienced practitioners and researchers who work in the field of Creative Writing for Therapeutic Purposes (CWTP) and in Higher Education (HE). The voices speak to the question, 'What is your relationship with research?' and reveal together the ways in which they have found their way through the restrictions and heaviness of research in the academy towards spaces, in community, where they can breathe and flourish. The presentation is made in the form of a performed script that brings together, and intercuts, the four voices sharing the movement from restriction to openness and 'writing from the heart' and the importance of community in this. The voices all arise from a research project, conducted as a Narrative Inquiry, into CWTP practitioners' and researchers' relationship with research. The presentation will be an edited version of the performed script focusing on the journey from restriction to expansion and being able to breathe.

Pascale Waschnig, UWL

Silenced trauma, Unresolved Loss: the Art of Bearing Witness in Families of the Missing

The emotional impact on families of missing people is profound yet often misunderstood or overlooked. Every year, an estimated 170,000 persons are reported missing in the United Kingdom, with long-term psychological and emotional consequences for their loved ones. Despite the high prevalence of grief and trauma, these families frequently do not seek help, owing to a lack of understanding and suitable frameworks among mental health providers.

This study looks at moral injury and hermeneutical injustice, or the harm produced when people are denied the resources, they need to make sense of their experiences, in the setting of ambiguous loss. Using art-based and narrative methods, the project offers different ways to understand and represent these complex emotions and histories. The aim is twofold: to amplify the voices of those affected, and to integrate their lived experience into medical, nursing, and psychotherapy education. By combining visual and narrative material into training, the study hopes to encourage more empathy, recognition, and compassion in care, emphasising the need of therapeutic frameworks that address the unique issues of loss without closure.

Jacqui Wilms, The Open University

The Nutty Professors: How Squirrels Became My Greatest Teachers

I share my home with eleven squirrels. This is not a hoarding situation. Since 2020 I run a licensed sanctuary for rescued Eastern Grey Squirrels who cannot return to the wild. A painful end to a corporate job abroad, then lockdown in a new

home in an unfamiliar town, led me to seek new ways to use my time and to make the most of my sudden 'captivity'. I became a foster carer for a local wildlife rescue. In the first few months a multitude of animals came and went. Then there was Nala, a three-week-old squirrel with a disability. She was going nowhere, and everything changed....

Through multispecies autoethnography, I explore how the squirrels in my care have brought about the most profound learning and change in my life so far. Rich learning that expands, and often defies, the content in biology and veterinary textbooks about them; their needs, their capabilities, and their fierce individuality. Also, wisdom that I had sought for years through academic learning, professional training, therapy, and other people. The relationships that I have with these squirrels have changed my relationship with myself, my own healing, and with others - human and more-than-human alike.

Victoria Wright, Loughborough University

Boundary crossing: from academic to professional services

Through an assemblage of images and text, I present my boundary crossing as a long-standing academic (from further education lecturer in colleges to over fourteen years working in a university as a Senior and later Principal Lecturer) to my current role as an academic developer in Professional Services and within a different UK university. Drawing on Wenger's (1998) communities of practice and Foucault's (1975) delineation of the visible and sayable, I will interpret my positioning within the organisation and in the field in which I now work (academic development). In doing so, I will interrogate concepts derived from the communities of practice premise i.e. of legitimate peripheral participation, movement along a trajectory and membership/ belonging through socially situated learning (Wenger, 1998). It is through this interrogative stance that I will re-explore feeling 'thrown' out of my self (my 'thrown identity', Peim, 1993). The nature of my boundary crossing has led to moments of other or being othered and belonging as transience (more fluid at times, less certain). The presentation therefore shares some of the sociocultural and discursive practices of the spaces I now traverse in my role.

Jonathan Wyatt, University of Edinburgh

Loss: The Poetics of the Everyday

"I sit on the grass, cradled by an elm, held up by the earth, shrouded by branches and leaves, one September Monday as life comes and, in the end, goes. One final breath." These are words - and breaths - of and about loss. They are about the everyday of loss, how lives come and go on ordinary afternoons, while dogs run and children play, while the sun happens to shine, cyclists cycle, and runners run. Life passes as you sit in the arms of a tree and, well, a life passes. This is a presentation about the everyday of loss and how it opens to the poetic, how the poetic allows loss space to breathe.

Hamed Yaghmaeian, UNIMORE and Fondazione Reggio Children

Documentation as breathing spaces

Reggio Emilia Approach (REA) as Carla Rinaldi develops is Autoethnography in Education

If autoethnography is a form of life, seeking those who made their lives with similarities helps to find signs of kinship. Even if they stand under different sunshades, their roots are connected. i.e., I stand for diversification versus specialization in scientific fields.

The REA draws attention to the reciprocal characteristic of teaching. Documentation plays a central role within this pedagogical paradigm, be it teachers observing and documenting student's works or interaction(s) between student(s) and teacher(s), be it communication with families, experts and stakeholders, or teacher(s)' individual thought process, i.e., multiple layers of autoethnography.

Carla Rinaldi, the honorary president of Reggio Children Foundation, has dedicated her life to vivify the REA and to underpin its participatory and dialogic aspects. It is her understanding of REA that is my focus here. The emphasis she has placed on the topics of (pedagogy of listening), (childhood as quality of thinking), (dance between convergent and divergent thinking), (connection between documentation and assessment) are equivalents for autoethnography in education.

I undertake dissecting documentation-reflection; ways it makes children's meaning-making processes visible. i.e., breathing spaces to revive scaffolding and empowerment inside educational paradigms.

Hamed Yaghmaeian

Depicting everyday life as breathing spaces

The value of everyday life through art education for pedagogy of integration

The density of confusion, complexity and alienation of everyday life in our "modern" world, result in a false sense of familiarity which in turn produces a fundamental obstacle to cognition. It is here that the representation to transfer our ephemeral experiences through photography and narrative mediates the understanding functions of the social world. Photographs slow down the frantic pace of our instantaneous experiences and provide breathing spaces for reflection, where we can contemplate and renarrate our stories. It is a road to the diversity of micro-level experiences and aesthetic dimension guarantees open-ended communications.

This research aims to problematize / valorize everyday life through (visual-narrative-documentaries) and bring it into the classroom. The contemplation on everyday routine - social life of things, can give us vision about our quality of life and to what extent aspects of this "quality" have been instilled into our minds; thus, sub-narratives gain identity and consistency. I attempt to document my reciprocal process with students, and through frequent review and reflection, provide an occasion to crystallize through epistemology of autoethnography, to establish "Photographic Practice" as an empowering process for pedagogy of integration – problem-based Learning.

Yashi Yuan, University College London

Writing as Breathing: Autoethnography in the Space Between

In this paper, I reflect on writing autoethnographically as a form of breathing space in the affective, epistemic and discursive. Growing up bilingual and trained within a Chinese educational system steeped in historical materialism, and later immersed in Anglophone poststructuralist traditions, I have long inhabited a state of intellectual in-betweenness. Writing in the first person without justification sourced from the other momentarily freed me from internalised projections of academic authority - the deeper assumptions about who I am, what I believe, and what kind of epistemic subject I am allowed to be.

What haunts me is the gaze that reads my work through a pre-formed ideology: as too loyal to certain frameworks, or insufficiently critical in Western terms. These judgements reflect embedded histories of ideological conflict, colonial legacies, and misrecognised intellectual inheritances; as well as assumptions about what counts as knowledge, and whose voice is legitimate. The act of writing autoethnographically allowed me to surface, rather than silence, the multiplicity of voices I carry. I propose that breathing spaces are not found, but made in the fragile act of resisting discursive norms where tension harbours: dialogic, contradictory, nonlinear, where I sit with competing epistemologies that shape and trouble the self.

Chloe Young, University of Edinburgh

Tales of the Night: Autoethnography and Affectivity

Nightlife environments, often sexually and socially effervescent, can prime individuals to behave in certain ways. In this paper I suggest that the lens of affectivity can help us to make sense of such forces by going one step beyond what is merely felt and exploring the realm of the unconscious and of the passions, emotions, and moods that all play a role in shaping our world around us. Vague, and yet often incredibly intense, affect is thus the sensation that a feeling then expresses (McCormack, 2008). But this paper will ask how is it that we research such intangible intensity? Through the lens of the nightclub, I will explore how autoethnographic methodologies offer an embodied way of knowing that speaks to affectivity's relationship with the mind and the body. I will explore how nightlife autoethnographies can provide a way of making sense of the unique personal and the social, political and cultural in a way that balances analysis with emotion. This is done to advocate for autoethnography as a powerful way of holding space for the tales of nightlife that would otherwise go untold.

Elif Zapsu, University of Edinburgh, Üsküdar University

The Lover: Exploring Sufi Concepts of Love and Death in Psychotherapy

In Sufism (Islamic mysticism), one needs to be in love to enter the path of spiritual actualization, for love is said to be the primary way to break free from the chains of the 'ego.' In this process, love and death are intertwined in an unrelenting embrace, each triggering the other, ending in an eternal state of being where all is experienced as 'one.' In this paper, auto-ethnography and fiction blur the Magic and the Real to form a medium for literature-based research to blend with the colours of lived experience. As Sufi concepts of love and death are explored, the relationship between these concepts will depict a release of collective conditions, related judgments, and emotions as a healing process. The extent to which one can integrate what emerges from the inquiry into person-centred literature on the self and psychotherapy is considered; suggestions are made for a Sufi-inspired therapeutic avenue.