

**DANCING ON THE THRESHOLD OF TIME: AN ORPHIC JOURNEY INTO
THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE.**

EILEEN MORRIS

THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE
OF PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION

MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

APRIL 2021

HEAD OF DEPARTMENT: Professor Aislinn O' Donnell

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Grace O' Grady

SECOND SUPERVISOR : Dr. Bernie Anne Grummell

Invitation

*Oh do you have time
to linger
for just a little while
out of your busy
and very important day
for the goldfinches
that have gathered
in a field of thistles
for a musical battle,
to see who can sing
the highest note,
or the lowest,
or the most expressive of mirth,
or the most tender?
Their strong, blunt beaks
drink the air
as they strive
melodiously
not for your sake
and not for mine
and not for the sake of winning
but for sheer delight and gratitude -
believe us, they say,
it is a serious thing
just to be alive.
on this fresh morning*

in the broken world.

I beg of you,

do not walk by

without pausing

to attend to this

rather ridiculous performance.

It could mean something.

It could mean everything.

It could be what Rilke meant, when he wrote:

You must change your life.

(Oliver, 2017)

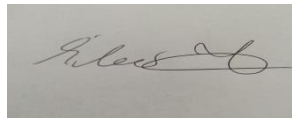
Declaration

I have read and understood the Departmental policy on plagiarism.

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for another degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education.

Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

Signature:

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light grey background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'E. S. B.'.

.....

Date: 16 April 2021

Table of Contents

Declaration	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Images	x
Dedication	xi
Acknowledgements	xii
Abstract	xiv
A Pre-View: What is This Thesis About?	1
Telling a story.....	1
Six Orphic Moments	6
Understanding our selves	9
Why am I doing this Study?	12
Unsolicited stories.....	12
Entangled in old stories.....	13
A rugged Eurydician landscape	13
In search of meaning.....	14
An invisible stage in adult development?	16
Exploring the ‘silenced’ in the second half of life.....	17
How am I doing this study?.....	19
Telling personal, social and cultural Orphic stories	19
Introducing Narrative Inquiry and Autoethnography	21
Embracing other ways of knowing	23
Theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the research	25
Data analysis.....	27
Where and when do we tell our stories?.....	28
Our informal conversations	28
Formatting.....	30
Imperceptible becomings	32
Looking backwards.....	32
Looking forwards.....	33
The First Moment: Being Claimed by the Work	35
An Interlude.....	35
Looking backwards.....	35

Looking forwards.....	36
Signposts for the Moment	37
Claimed by the Work: Part One:	37
Lured into this study	37
My interest in teacher education	40
A synchronous encounter.....	41
How my co-re-searchers were claimed by the work.....	42
Introducing my co-re-searchers	43
Our co-re-searching dialogic spaces	51
Storying ourselves.....	52
Listening to my co-re-searchers' stories	53
Claimed by the Work: Part Two.....	55
Signposts for the journey	55
Putting our stories into context	56
The macrocosm of the female world in the 1960s.....	58
Images of Women in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s.....	61
Wounding.....	69
Caught in the web of discourse	71
Attending to the weight of the ancestors	74
Telling and re-telling our stories- a poststructuralist look.....	77
Female invisibility	80
Alternative stances to the discursive self.....	81
Tentative beginnings in our social constructions.....	89
The language of meaning making.....	91
Shaped by language	91
Imperceptible becomings	94
Interlude.....	95
Looking backwards.....	95
Looking forwards.....	95
The Second Moment: Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation	97
An Interlude.....	97
Looking backwards.....	97
Looking forwards.....	98
The Orphic gap	99

Signposts for the Moment	101
Losing my love of the ‘inner curricula’	104
Tentative beginnings.....	104
Discovering a new storied landscape.....	106
Co-constructing knowledge.	107
Our ‘Oedipal’ selves	109
The weight of our Oedipal stories.....	112
Ancestral reverberations	116
The threshold space of becoming.....	120
Losing the language of ‘Self’	125
The Jungian lens - a language of meaning-making	126
Losing the old language.....	127
Mourning the loss of a language.....	128
The Eurydician call	130
An Invitation to mourn- responding to the Eurydician call.....	132
The same old story.....	134
The language of the dominant discourse	135
The discursive language of ageing.....	138
An Orphic and Eurydician language.....	141
Imperceptible becomings	143
Looking backwards.....	143
Looking forwards.....	145
The Third Moment: Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial.....	146
Interlude.....	146
Looking backwards.....	146
Looking forwards.....	148
Signposts for the Moment	149
At the gap	151
Orpheus’ mourning, for ‘what was’	152
Mourning ‘what was’, in the first half of life	152
Disrupting ontological and epistemological footholds	158
Mourning, at letting go	159
Denying alternative perspectives.....	159
An Orphic essentialist mourning	160

Mourning for myself, denying the loss of the old.....	161
In the Orphic gap of becoming.....	162
The Eurydician call to mourn, and to re-author.....	174
Imperceptible becomings	178
Interlude.....	179
Looking backwards.....	179
Looking forwards.....	179
The Fourth Moment: Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation	181
Interlude.....	181
Looking backwards.....	181
Looking forwards.....	183
Signposts for the Moment	185
An Orphic Covid-19 space.....	187
An Orphic/ Eurydician separation	188
Covid-19 un-foldings.....	190
Meaning-making in Covid-19.....	192
An Orphic/ Eurydician together-ing.....	196
Un-hinging our Orphic stance.....	197
An Orphic separating	198
An event of necessity: separating	201
An Orphic critical stance	201
An Orphic critical stance... into the second half of life	202
De-constructing ageist stories	205
Transforming questions	206
The weight of our ageing discourses	207
The medicalisation of our cultural discourses	211
An Orphic critical stance... on ageing	213
The language of limitation.....	213
Changing our language	216
The logic of either/or	218
The logic of ‘both/and’	219
Orphic spaces and liminal stammerings	221
Imperceptible becomings	223
Looking backwards.....	225

Looking forwards.....	225
The Fifth Moment: Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation ...	227
Interlude.....	227
Looking backwards.....	227
Looking forwards.....	228
Signposts for the Moment	230
Voice without body, body without voice	231
Meaning-making in our intermezzo spaces	232
Surprising emerging stories	233
Silenced stories, stories of recognition	240
Silenced stories, breathing in silent spaces	244
The silent voice of being ‘seen’	254
Questions ... waiting	260
The silent spaces of ‘in-between-ness’	262
Without speech...only reveried silences.....	264
Our Orphic space of becoming	265
Saying the unsayable	268
Imperceptible becomings	269
Interlude.....	273
Looking backwards.....	273
Looking forwards.....	274
The Sixth Moment: The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation.....	275
Interlude.....	275
Looking backwards.....	275
Looking forwards.....	276
Signposts for the Moment	279
Our final backward glance.....	280
Leaving our bounded landscape behind.....	281
Leaving our rigorous Orphic journey behind	283
Leaving a journey of reciprocity behind.....	287
Bringing our Orphic gift-a language of ‘becoming’ with us	289
Bringing the gift of our Orphic intermezzo space	290
Bringing gift of mourning with us	291
My final backward glance of gratitude	291

A transformative final backward glance	293
My final backward glance, at the gift of writing	295
Imperceptible becomings	297
Interlude.....	298
Looking backwards.....	298
Looking forwards.....	298
A Re-view of a Journey through the Six Orphic Moments	299
Interlude.....	299
Looking backwards.....	300
Looking forwards.....	300
Signposts for the Moment	302
A look backwards at the research journey.....	303
Other ways of looking at this phase of adult development	311
Narrative knowing	312
A myth for our borderland stories	314
A key methodological contribution	316
Other ways of knowing	317
Mourning, during this phase of adult development.....	320
Research as therapy and the therapeutic impact of this study	322
Disrupting the deficit narrative.....	323
Addressing issues of validity and reliability	325
Issues of power and authorship in this research	330
Interlude.....	332
Looking backwards.....	332
A reminder about the study.....	332
What I might have done differently.....	332
Looking forwards	333
Advancing this study	334
Parting words.....	334
Bibliography	336
Appendices	386
Appendix 1: A Summary of the Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice	386

List of Images

Plate 1: Housewife of the Year, 1967

Plate 2: Gendering

Plate 3: Traditional Role of Women in 1960s, Ireland.

Plate 4: Traditional Roles of Women.

Plate 5: Women's traditional role in the home in Ireland

Plate 6: A Woman, in my mother's time- with bicycle as her mode of transport

Plate 7: The Headscarf: A Symbol of Invisibility.

Plate 8: Traditional aprons, worn by women in the home.

Plate 9: Male and Clerical Dominance in Public Life.

Plate 10: A Symbol of Male Dominance

Plate: 11: Catholic Church Dominance

Plate: 12: Weekly Mass Practice

Dedication

I dedicate this work of love, loss, mourning and transformation to my mother Eily, and all the ancestors, who called for their *silenced* voices to be heard and their invisibility to be pierced, in this *betwixt* and *between* landscape of the living and the dead.

Acknowledgements

This work has brought me on a most extra-ordinary and unexpected journey since 2016, in the company of my truly inspiring, compassionate and wonderful *co-re-searchers* whose most timely arrival and presence on “this road less travelled” (Frost), has been life-changing. There are no words that will ever express my gratitude to you, my treasured *co-re-searchers*, Tiger, Abby, Butterfly and James, who have helped to make meaning out of this stage of our life’s journey.

Being accompanied on this journey, with my perceptive, intuitive and sensitive supervisor, Dr. Grace O’Grady, who patiently guided and waited with me, for this unfolding story to find its language, has been a wonderful gift. Her gentle, but most insightful touch, nurtured the seeds of writing to grow and eventually flourish, as a narrative writer. I could not imagine anyone else more understanding to accompany me through this journey of *becoming*, Grace. My gratitude is immense to you Grace for your outstanding professional guidance. I also thank Dr. Bernie Anne Grummell, my second supervisor, who very kindly helped to hone this unfolding work. I am so grateful to you Bernie for your most invaluable insightful, sympathetic and encouraging assistance.

Finding myself in the delightful, welcoming company of the staff in the Education Department in the University of Maynooth, has been enriching and inspiring in every way. I wish to thank Professor Aislinn O’Donnell, Professor Sharon Todd, the lecturing staff and all my friends in the Education Department, whose welcome always lifted my heart. To my fellow learners in the PhD cohort of the Education Department at Maynooth University, I thank you for your presence during my re-searching experience, which was enlightening and lots of fun!

On a personal level, I am constantly inspired by and enabled to speak myself into existence, in ways I never thought possible by you Ken, my darling husband. Your most kind, gentle, compassionate loving presence, “imbued with understanding, forgiveness and healing” (O’Donoghue, 2003) has helped me from the day I met you, to write this story of *becoming*. I know that, with your insightfulness, wisdom, love and unstinting support for the past five years, this journey we shared has been enriched beyond my imagination.

To you, my cherished sons Fiachra and Tiarnán, your unfolding stories of creating your own lives have also helped me to attend my own unfinished business, but also opened up new ways of relating and being together, other than the mother/child relationship. This has been a gifted treasure which I hope we will continue to explore and enjoy! Thank you my darlings, Tiarnán and Fiachra, for the great gift of your wonderfully supportive and often times challenging presence in my life, which is always so enriching.

Abstract

Eileen Morris

Dancing on the Threshold of Time: an Orphic Journey into The Second half of Life.

My thesis is concerned with storying the lived experience of being on the threshold between the first and the second half of life, using the archetypal mythical framework of Orpheus and Eurydice, a story of love, loss and transformation. This work produces an alternative knowledge about this stage of adult development, in attending to the process of loss, mourning and letting go. Drawing on the conceptual framework of poststructuralism and social constructionism, the thesis is developed by troubling the legitimacy of our social and cultural constructions, disrupting their power through our storytelling, making visible how we make meaning and create knowledge. It offers an alternative viewpoint to the predominant psychological narrative of “the first person perspective” (Zahavi, 2008:107), to being storied and understood in our social and cultural contexts, “as a product of narratively structured life” (Zahavi, 2008:107), “rather than separated pieces related only to [our] personal psychology” (Etherington, 2009: 228). The autoethnographic expression of this stage of adult development is re-imagined in this thesis, in being situated in the *betwixt* and *between* reveried space of the upper and the lower worlds, the living and the dead, the conscious and the unconscious. It is here, in this narrative space, we bear witness to, and avow each other’s unfinished stories of love and loss, opening up a “narrative of reconciliation” (Ahmed, 2014: 35), freeing us like Orpheus and Eurydice, into our own destinies. In the movement of these six Orphic *Moments*, there is a rhythm often visible and invisible that traces the bitter-sweetness of being on the threshold of time, between the first and the second half of life. Each *Moment* signifies an invitation to accept the Orphic/Eurydician call to “stand in the heat of this transformation fire” (Hollis, 2006, 31), and become deeply immersed in mourning to that place of transformation, with the living and the dead. This study produces a new methodological knowledge of this phase of adult development, through a process of engaging relationally and reciprocally with each other, in becoming witnesses to each other’s stories, enabling “a transformation of the self, from which there is no return” (Butler, 2005: 28). This thesis gestures to an alternative view on how we can re-imagine more expansive ways of living for the second half of life, where “voice is always provisional and contingent, always

becoming” (Grant, 2013: 8), where we can “produce a different knowledge and produce knowledge differently” (St. Pierre, 1997: 613).

*I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence,
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*
(Frost, 1916).

A Pre-View:

What is This Thesis About?

Telling a story

Standing in the gap, the borderlands, between the first and second half of life, I and my fellow travellers tell a story of love, loss, letting go, and transformation. This is a personal, social and cultural story, which draws on myth and theory, offering insight and understanding, into this threshold phase of adult development. This work presupposes that this metaphorical space between the first and the second half of life, is not so much a chronological one, but an arrival at a point where we “are obliged to ask anew, the question of meaning... [the] who am I, apart from my history and the roles I have played” (Hollis, 1993:18-19).

The study stories how this borderland space between the first and the second half of life becomes a place of uncertainty, of dissolution, and mourning, where we lose our previously held ontological and epistemological footholds, and begin to “assume a stance of incompleteness of the self” ((Spry, 2016: 81), in our journey towards ‘becoming’, in the second half of life. It moves away from the essentialist, psychological definition of the second half of life as being fixed, linear, “triggered by

the awareness of finitude” (Weiss, 2014: 558), to one, that invites us “to replace the traditional assumption of individual selves with a vision of self as an expression of relationship” (Gergen, 1999: 117), in re-imagining more expansive ways of living.

Our story could be *‘likened’* to the mythical tale of Oedipus in some respects. In fact, that would only be half the story. Oedipus only knows himself through the stories others tell him. He *becomes* their stories. We could also find a mirror for part of our own story in Ulysses’ journey towards *becoming*. It is only when he hears the blind rhapsod sing a song honouring his heroic deeds, that he begins to recognise himself. Ulysses “weeps because he fully realizes the meaning of the story” (Cavarero, 2000:17). The people who populate this study, are “collaborators on a journey that will ultimately transform each of us” (Sultan, 2018: 159), where, in the reciprocity of our story telling, “the teller and listener enter into a space of the story for each other” (Frank, 2013: 18). We become “involve[d] in a dynamic process of perpetual resurfacing” (Ahmed, 2014: 160), gifted in our moments of meeting, “over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000: 20).

The tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, of love, loss, and dismemberment, offers a strong mythical frame to understand our experiences as we stand on the threshold, between the first and second half of life. Orpheus is left bereft after Eurydice is killed by an unbidden snake. He stands forlorn in the gap between the under and the ‘upperworld’, in his quest to re-find his beloved. In this betwixt and between space, Orpheus experiences great grief and loss as he is called to *‘become other’*, than *who* he thinks he is. This Eurydician call, not only to *re-search* and *re-find* what was lost, as Gergen (2009) says,

[but], to stand each moment at a precious juncture, gathering our pasts, thrusting them forward, and in conjunction creating the future. As we speak together now,

so do we give shape to the future world. We may suspend tradition, but we are also free to innovate and transform.

p.49.

The Mythical Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice.

The tale of Orpheus-Eurydice is a love story. It is also a tale about Orpheus who played the lyre and whose enchanted voice touched every fibre of your being and wooed you with his magic. His music brought tears to the eyes of his listeners, softening and loosening all the tightly held strings of their ego hearts. When he played, the birds swooped down from the heavens and would sit on the branches to listen to him. The animals would gather to imbibe and breathe into their selves, evoked in the experience of listening to his sweet music. Even the trees would sway and dance in unison to his melodic tunes, often taking up the rhythm again by themselves long after he had finished.

Orpheus fell in love with the nymph Eurydice. Shortly after their marriage, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. The grieving Orpheus refused to play or sing for a long time. Finally he decided to go to the underworld to find Eurydice. His playing enchanted Charon the ferryman, who carried the souls of the dead across the river Styx, into the underworld. Charon agreed to take Orpheus across the river, even though he was not dead. Orpheus's music also tamed Cerberus, the monstrous three headed dog, who guarded the gates of the underworld. Even Hades and Persephone, king and queen of the underworld, could not resist his playing. They agreed to let him take Eurydice back to earth—on one condition. He was not to look back at her, until they had both reached the surface. Orpheus led his wife from the underworld, and when he had nearly reached the surface, he was so overjoyed that he looked back to share the moment with Eurydice. Immediately she disappeared into the underworld for the second time.

Orpheus turned again and ran back into the cave- he crossed the rivers, the orchard and the forest. He did not stop until he reached the River of Forgetfulness. Standing there he shouted her name across the dark, oily water, but there was no answer. He knew he could not return to Hades. So he made his way back to the living world and he devoted himself to his music, which was even more beautiful than ever, woven through with a silver thread of sorrow.

Dionysus looked down at the world and saw all the women whom Orpheus had turned his back on. Dionysus frowned and with his frown, those women were filled with jealous fury, so they began to attack Orpheus with spades, sickles and the blade of a plough and killed him. He journeyed for the third time down the River

of Forgetfulness. He was spirit now and Charon, the ferryman was waiting for him. Persephone felt pity for him and reached out to touch his forehead with the tip of her finger. In that moment, Orpheus' memory returned and now the two lovers may be found in the shadowy kingdom talking, singing and laughing. Sometimes they walk arm in arm and sometimes one goes ahead of the other, but knowing that they will always be there for each other.

Our stories of loss and letting go, nestle in the unfolding mythical tale of Orpheus, which becomes the “symbol that [carries] the human spirit forward” (Campbell, 2008: 7). It offers an “*archai* or a root metaphor” (Hillman, 1976: 99), to guide the “likenesses to happenings” in our stories of love, loss and letting go. Orpheus, “the poet of the border realms” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 11) between the upper and the lower worlds, is both the poet of great loss, and the poet of transformation. This study tells a story of re-finding what was lost, of mourning and letting go, so that a space for new beginnings may unfold. I story how my *co-re-searchers* and I “are always in the middle of a path, in the middle of something” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 28) as we stand in this ‘threshold’. This becomes a metaphorical transitional space, which “resists the binaries that the threshold often seems to imply, and works towards a notion of thresholds as multiplicitous and always present” (Wyatt, 2014: 8). It is also a liminal space on our Orphic journey, which “offers less predictability, and appears to be a more ‘liquid’ space, simultaneously transforming and being transformed” (Meyer and Land, 2005: 380). This *intermilieu* offers an opportunity to *re-member* and *re-find* what is left unfinished and forgotten, as we become spokespersons for the ancestral voices waiting to be heard, by listening to what has been left unsaid, “in the presence of their haunting absence” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 65).

In excavating our stories, we recount how “in what ways the past is still active within us, creating patterns, dictating diversions, diminishing freedom of choice” (Hollis, 2020: 25). Romanyshyn (2013) calls the researcher in this space ‘wounded’, someone

who is burdened and weighed down by the unfinished business of the ancestors. However, it is, in the telling and re-telling of our stories, that we begin to find a new voice, enabling us “to open that wound for inspection” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 111). This begins our journey of *re-searching* and *re-finding* what was lost, and the possibility of personal and cultural therapy. It becomes a work of re-authoring, “as an embodied narrative life composition” (Clandinin, 2013: 38) in the reciprocity of our story-telling, where we make meaning in “think[ing] narratively about them” (Hutchinson, 2015: 10). In this work, I story how I remain close to my *co-re-searchers*, “while stepping back from the relationship” (Kim, 2018: 120), so that I can interrogate “the larger landscape in which my narrative inquiry [is] situated” (Kim, 2018: 120).

Our story telling in this Orphic space between the conscious and the unconscious, the living and the dead, becomes a reveried one, breathing “the mood of mourning, residing in the gap between language and experience” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 6). We inhabit this temporary place of mourning of *in-between-ness*, “where time has no longer a yesterday and no longer any tomorrow”(Bachelard, 1960: 173), as we “invent stammering” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 34), in trying to make meaning of this stage of our lives. We “walk through the ruins [we’ve] already walked through ... walk into the great world [we’ve] walked into ... it’s [now] a nothing, a nowhere” (Moriarty, 1999: 15), to honour the stories, waiting to be heard, as “a way of thinking about experience” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2007: 375). We venture to make sense of our experience from within our social and cultural milieus, “knowing that other possibilities, interpretations and other ways of explaining things are possible” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 46). It becomes a time to look back and a time to look ahead, to determine what remains to be done (Hollis, 1993; Sheehy, 2006; Brehony, 1996; Stein, 1983).

Six Orphic Moments

I draw on Romanyshyn's (2013) *Six Orphic Moments*, from his book, *The Wounded Researcher*, to frame my thesis narratively, defining its progression, in conjunction with a *Pre-view*, to mark the beginning, with a *Re-view*, to mark its conclusion. These six *Orphic Moments* offer a safe and reassuring haven to guide us in our "moment of stasis" (Bishop, 2011: 100), and "give a place for the unfinished business of the soul of the work to tell its dreams and visions of the work" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 13).

Each *Orphic Moment* "come[s] into its own" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76), as it opens up the uncharted territory, where we "recognise the vulnerability and finitude of the other" (Stanescu, 2012: 569). We experience "the condition of mourning as a stumbling and stuttering one, a condition of disturbed ground, or inarticulateness, of disorientation in and about time" (Brown, 2005: 100). In this *in-between* space, between the morning and the afternoon of life, we dwell in this "moment of stasis, when everything pauses before it begins to turn in a new direction" (Bishop, 2011: 100). It is here, in each *Moment* that we, as (Romanyshyn, 2013) says,

are called into speaking by the aesthetic appeals of those unfinished stories, where the word "aesthetic" taps into the etymological roots, which tie it to feeling and sensing, particularly to the sense of hearing.

p.123.

The *First Moment: Being Claimed by the Work* heralds the beginning of our journey of being seduced, almost without knowing, into the fully-embodied folds of mourning. This *Moment* stories how my research takes a turn from its initial question, and moves into the borderlands, "of no-person's land, on the edge of what is possible, betwixt and between the... past and the ...future" (Turner, 1986b: 41). In this space of *in-between-*

ness, my co-re-searchers and I hold the weight of the ancestral history “within earshot of those unfinished tales” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 65) waiting to be told.

I narrate how, through a number of synchronous meetings, my co-re-searchers volunteer to accompany me on this journey, where we linger together in this Orphic reveried space, between the living and the dead, the conscious and the unconscious. I recount how I was lured into the worlds of social psychology, feminist poststructuralism, developmental psychology, and alchemical hermeneutics, inspiring new understandings on how we are constituted. In being claimed by this work, we embark on the painful journey of letting go, where we must pass through, [from] “rage, depression and despair as we experience the repugnance of death ... lett[ing] go of our childish desire for safety or we lose the opportunity” (Gould, 1978: 218).

The *Second Moment: Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation* calls us to let go of “all the safe containers for that reality” (Brehony, 1996: 116), of the “socio, cultural and institutional narratives in which we find ourselves” (Bach, 2007: 282; Chang, 2008), and into which we fit so comfortably. We story how we begin to *see* the ways we are constituted “through discourse, in discursive systems, which often overlap and contradict one another” (Denzin, 2014: 41). Together, we begin to interrogate our cultural stories, into which we are born, and how they inscribe themselves upon us physically, emotionally and cognitively (Davies, 1945).

As we move into the *Third Moment: Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial*, we find ourselves denying this turning point in our lives, refusing to let go of all that we cherished, to accepting “that we are not the masters of ourselves” (Butler, 2006: 21). We share our epiphanic dreams of being summoned, “to slip out of confinement and demand to be seen, loved and honoured” (Stein, 1983: 5). They sow the seeds of a moral imperative to “temporarily suspend a full engagement of life”, and surrender “to

the process of descent and psychological dismemberment” (Goodchild, 2012: 57). In my case, this was to let go of the familiar and follow this unknown rugged path into “the soul of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 68).

Like Orpheus, my *co-re-searchers* and I, seem to struggle to let go of the footholds with which we have become identified in the earlier parts of our lives, in the *Fourth Moment: Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation*. Their unrelenting presence continues to be defiant, despite being overruled. Oftentimes, our conversations betray that defiance in our emotional vulnerability and fragility, under the weight of the old discourses and ancestral voices. This collision of the ingrained “patterns of our ancestors” (Johnson, 2007: 9), continues to cause ruptures on the surface of what emerges in this transition space, towards the second half of life. We struggle too, to make sense of our lives, perhaps like Orpheus, who follows Eurydice into the underworld hoping to bring her back. However, unlike Orpheus, we hear Eurydice’s voice and answer her call and discover, as (Gergen, 1999) attests, that:

Through reflexive inquiry on our ways of constructing the world, and the practices which these sustain, we open doors to emancipation, enrichment and cultural transformation.

p.115.

In “open[ing] ourselves to the questions and problems in which the souls of the dead are caught” (Morgenson, 1992: xv), we free each other “to become fully generative adults” (Morgenson, 1992: xv). We become free to welcome a new space in our lives, where we can attend to prescient existential issues we encounter, in the unfolding of the second half of life. In mourning our losses, we finally succumb and separate ourselves from them, like Orpheus from Eurydice, where she now enters the realm of Orpheus’ imagination.

As we journey into the *Fifth Moment: Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation*, we are drawn deeper into the mourning process, where “hour after hour we wrestle with these spectral presences, those opaque visitors that we all encounter” (Hollis, 2020: 57). In this *Moment*, Orpheus is torn apart following his loss of Eurydice during their ascent. He is dis-membered, every part of him broken because of losing someone he dearly loves. Our painful life-changing work of un-forgetting, remembering, re-finding, and letting go, helps to “break its hold” (bell hooks, 1989: 155) of past woundedness. The haunted, silenced voices of the living and the dead, find their voices in the gaps and pauses of our speech, unsettling our undisturbed remembrances. Our ancestral voices tell us how we “came to be wounded in the first place” (Ahmed, 2014: 33), and how “forgetting [to tell the story], would be a repetition of the violence or injury” (2014: 33). Our shared reveries hold the secret to how past wounds may become healed in the present, and how the present becomes healed, through our storytelling.

Our *Sixth* and final *Moment: The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation* brings us to take our final Orphic backward glance, leaving behind the broken silences “surrounding experiences [unfolding] within cultures and cultural practices” (Holman Jones et al., 2013: 35). We bring with us only what we need to begin again, a “promise born in light” (Kennelly, 2011: 160). At the end of our journey through the six *Orphic Moments*, I take the opportunity to re-view our sojourn, in the *Review Moment*, to ponder on our experience of undertaking this study.

Understanding our selves

In narrating our stories of transitioning from the first to second half of life, I work from an understanding of how our sense of self, and how we make “sense of actions and events in our lives” (Mc Kinlay and Mc Vittie, 2008: 2) are constituted, through our

interactions and influences on each other. Cooley's (1922) idea of the Oedipal looking-glass-self, where we live "in the minds of others without knowing it" (Scheff, 2005: 147), highlights how we often *see* ourselves "from the point of view of others" (2005: 147). We often come to know ourselves like Oedipus, through the stories that others tell us (Cavarero, 2000) and accept them, as if there were no others. We story how our familiar inherited identities emerge from what the French sociologist Levy-Bruhl (1912) calls, the '*participation mystique*' (our 'collective identity', formed by accepted *mores* and societal patterns). These may be understood as bodies of ideas which produce and regulate the world, embodied in the family, education, Church, government, gender roles, media, and inherited ancestral stories (Youdell, 2006).

In adopting our identity through the lens of the *participation mystique*, we develop "a provisional personality" (Hollis, 1993: 10), one which is 'constructed' by others, about ways of behaving, attitudes towards self and others, and acceptable ways of being in the world. We *become who* we are in the first half of life, through 'others' stories (Jung, 1933; Hollis, 1993; Levinson, 1978; Brehony, 1996; Brewi and Brennan, 1999). We narrate how we story ourselves through those roles, perceptions and stereotypes, which may become like "*the massive weight of Uncle's wedding band [which] sits measuring heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand*" (Rich, 1951: 6). We story how these compounded layers of *received knowledge* and ancestral voices became so ingrained in our embodied selves, that we notice that "we keep watch over ourselves" (Armstrong, 2004: 573). We recount how we live comfortably as part of the collective identity, often held *captive* in our *cultural mores*, manifesting themselves in unfinished stories, which call to be told. We tell a story of *becoming*, as Dyson and Genishi (1994) suggest, to,

help to make sense of, evaluate and integrate the tensions inherent in experience: the past, the fictional with the 'real', the official with the unofficial, personal with the professional, the canonical with the different and unexpected.

pp. 242-243.

In this study, we endeavour to understand how we are shaped by our interactions with others, by interrogating them through a poststructuralist lens, which “folds the limit back on to the core of knowledge and to our settled understanding of the true and the good” (Williams, 2005: 1). In other words, by bringing the “absolute certaint[ies]” (2005: 1) of how we are constituted into question, we disrupt our *taken-for-granted* assumptions. We are summoned to take a social constructionist stance, “provoking cultural dialogues, challenging traditional understandings” (Gergen, 1996: 6), to “break our old shapes and burst forth” (Davies, 1992: 114).

Our unfolding stories “of getting free of [ourselves]” (Foucault, cited in Gale, 2014: 999) evoke Deleuze and Parnet’s (1997) concept of *becoming*. This is essentially a geographical one, evolving and changing in a multiplicity of “orientations, directions, entries and exits” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 2). It is not a historical, linear process, but rather a rhizomatic one, where “we are always in the middle” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 28). Our *becomings* burst through the cracks and fissures “of norms concerning what will and will not constitute recognisability” (Butler, 2005: 30). They become “lines of flight, producing new ways of thinking” (Tamsin, 2010: 148). They may be often imperceptible, as we “stammer in [our] own language” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 4) to deconstruct and re-construct “our self-creation” (Randall, 2014: 234). As we step from this threshold space into the second half of life, we journey with Orpheus into the abyss, and struggle to embrace a new Eurydician alternative call to living,

I welcome your presence dear reader, into the unfolding geography of our personal, social and cultural stories of *becoming*, as we “create something of the embodied, the embedded, the particular” (Wyatt, 2019: 128).

Why am I doing this Study?

Unsolicited stories

While working on my initial PhD research project with student teachers, I found myself in the reverie of writing, almost invisibly storying “a potential child within” (Bachelard, 1960: 101), seeking to be re-found. Her initial imperceptible whisperings entreated to be heard and her outbursts of tears sought “any opening upon life” (Bachelard, 1960: 101) that had been silenced. In this reveried writing space, I realised that she was accompanied by the ancestors, who were also waiting patiently to be re-membered. She stood, like Orpheus, in her fragility, in the vulnerability of our *in-between-ness*, of the under and upperworlds, the living and the dead, waiting. I welcomed her:

*I [have] made a cradleboard for you
my child,
Of the sun's rays I made the back
Of black clouds I made the blanket
Of rainbow, I [have] made the side loops
Of lightnings I made the lacings,
Of river moorings, I [have] made the footboard
Of dawn, I [have] made the covering,
Of light and high horizons and
Of Earth's welcome for you, I [have] made the bed.*

(O' Moriarty, 2018: 238).

Entangled in old stories

Soon the voices began to “imprint themselves with a force that later voices never quite displace” (Frank, 2013: xvii). They began to tell me why I was doing this work in this liminal borderland landscape of adult development. Unsolicited stories began to steal upon me unexpectedly (Brewi and Brennan, 1999; Stein, 1983), almost like the snake which bit Eurydice, as she danced across the meadow in her bare feet, while Orpheus, her new husband, slept. I felt like Eurydice, totally unprepared for that unforgiving bite that called me to consciousness. Initially, I thought that the weight of the ‘collective’ culture was singularly a female issue arising from my own experience. However, I discovered in the course of my study, that both men and women seem to be “caught up in a web of age-old cultural determinations that are almost unanalyzable in their complexity” (Cixous, 1975: 350). I learned that “we become incorporated” (Morgenson, 1992: 32) and entangled, in the web of our shared inherited ancestral discourses, representations, myths, images, symbolic identities, and constructions. This work stories the imperative to attend to the “weight of the history” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 4), which was waiting to be spoken and waiting to be heard. I eased into the fullness of this Orphic story of love, loss and letting go, in “being addressed from that void” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 15) of *in-between-ness*, of the living and the dead, the conscious and unconscious.

A rugged Eurydician landscape

There was nothing in my *worldview*, to suggest that there were any significant developmental milestones to be encountered at my stage of life, “a period of stability and that nothing of great significance occurs until senescence” (Lachman, 2004: 312). It came as a shock to find myself in the midst of an erupting volcano, “a phenomenon that produces itself” (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 12). I had not chosen the turbulence of this

adult stage of development, any more than the turmoil foisted upon the emerging adult during adolescence or the child's *terrible- two's*.

My preconceived belief that the second half of life is a calm sea of tranquillity was truly shattered, where “deeply felt loss, grief and mourning” (Brehony, 1996: 59; Lachman, 2004) overwhelmed me, through this passage of woundedness and discombobulation. My firm and well trusted familiar footholds which had held and sustained me began to crumble. I found myself in a very different landscape, “with the straight path gone missing” (Dante, 2016: 3). I arrived in a place of trouble, disturbance, and eruption and hardly knew what was happening to me and “felt wholly unprepared” (Jung, 2005: 111) for what I was experiencing. It was “a “kind of tectonic pressure which builds from below” (Hollis, 1993: 17), an “outbreak”, “an awakening”, (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 12). A time when “the psyche explodes” (Stein, 1983: 2), “the unconscious erupts” (Stein, 1983: 78; Heilbrun, 1988), when the “inner forces are brewing and bubbling over” (Brehony, 1996: 19). A time when there is “an insurgency of the soul, an overthrow of the ego’s understanding of the world” (Hollis, 2006: 3) when we become “unhinged and lose our footing” (Stein, 1983: 23). This is nothing short of a major eruption, a revolution with little warning, where nothing is stable and vulnerability and fragility are the hallmarks of this period in the life cycle. Old “fragmentary stories” (Hollis, 2013: 14) began to spew out, calling to be heard, voiced and written, by the dead who seem to still dance on.

In search of meaning

I seem to have been drawn to this work, like Spry and hooks “from a space of pain” (Spry, 2016: 25). I looked “to theory desperate to comprehend” (hooks, 1994: 59) my unfolding *symptoms*. I found myself re-examining the various life-span theorists (Erikson, 1997; Sugarman, 1986; Gould, 1980; Super, 1980; Santrock, 1989; Levinson,

1978; Lachman, 2001; 2004; and Jung, 2005), for possible insights into this phase of adult development. I was *au fait* with, and found Erickson's psychosocial roadmap of the various major stages of human development (1997) from infancy, early childhood, school age, adolescence, young adulthood, and adulthood to old age, very useful and applicable to life. Erickson's (1997) roadmap includes a reference to what he calls the seventh stage of adulthood, spanning the period of establishing oneself in the world of work and family (generativity), to its close, when a person may wish to withdraw or retire, when s/he may "experience loss of stimulus and belonging" (Erikson, 1997: 112). He refers to the *stagnation* phase where it begins to come to an end. There may be a sense of loss at this stage, as both the work and family-life landscape begin to change, with perhaps retirement and the children '*fleeing the nest*'. Super's (1976) image of the rainbow to represent the life-span, roles, responsibilities and stages ranging from growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline is helpful, as indeed, is Gould's (1980) theory, which encapsulates a more evolving unfolding narrative about human development.

I discovered that several psychoanalytic and developmental psychological theorists have contributed to the understanding of this transitional or threshold space, as a unique and separate developmental stage, with characteristic changes, tasks, and goals "on creating a satisfying ending to the narrative" (Mc Adams, 1996: 312). I also turned to Jung (1875-1961) for an understanding and insight into this particular phase in one's life cycle. He is considered the father of the study of adult development, from a psychological perspective. He forged a concept of the entire life cycle, devoting particular attention to the second half of life. Jung (2005) uses the metaphor of the sun, to describe each stage of human development having its own particular characteristics and tasks. He cites how the morning sun is associated with youthful emphasis of reaching outwards to the world. It then becomes transformed again at noon time, with

its descent, which “means the reversal of all the ideals and values we cherished in the morning” (Jung, 2005: 109). These could be considered threshold moments, alternating from one stage of development to another, moving from the stability phase of *structure-building* to a transitional or *structure-changing* phase (Levinson, 1978: 57).

The life-span constructs postulated by these developmental psychologists are certainly a way at looking at psychosocial development. The language used, however, in outlining a very definite trajectory of beginning, middle, and ending seems to be linear and essentialist, “leav[ing] psychologists unable to take full advantage of the possibilities of the discursive turn” (Davies, 1998: 134). While these insights and observations are very valid, little light is shed on the turbulence and uncertainty of this unfolding life story of being “ripped or torn out of its contexts and recontextualized”(Denzin, 2014: 28), through grief, loss, and mourning.

An invisible stage in adult development?

As I continued to write and read the literature on this stage of adult development, I began to glean some evidence from theorists, that this phase of adult development is under-studied (Lachman, 2001; 2004; Montero et al., 2013; Becker, 2006; Lachman, 2004; Clark and Schwiebert, 2001), and “research on midlife has not always, or maybe ever often, be guided by theory” (Lachman, 2001: 16). It is noted in psychological literature in particular, that this stage of adult of “identity formation (or maintenance) has been ignored” (Côté and Devine, 2002: 50).

I learned from both the literature and my own experience that the emphasis is very often on specific topics such as the ageing process, biological changes; health and retirement. I was surprised to discover that “less is known about this period than about other age periods such as infancy, childhood, adolescence, or old age” (Lachman, 2004: 307), as I

embarked on this uncharted territory. This under-explored landscape, where “a key set of issues and challenges emerges” (Lachman, 2004: 306), characterised by loss and where new purpose and meaning begin to be tentatively re-constructed (Eisler, 1991), called me “to leave what I [was] doing and go the soul’s way” (Mc Gillicuddy, 2018: 177). Our unfoldings in this gesture of the Orphic backward glance, “provide [us] with a means by which [we] may traverse borders” (Clandinin et al., 2018: 71). We story the silent passage into the second half of life, by disrupting our contextual, inherited narratives and exploring other possibilities for the future. In telling and re-telling our stories, we realise “the complexity of this period” (Lachman, 2004: 325; Becker, 2006) as an important opportunity to develop “a more spacious personality” (Hollis, 2006: 33).

Exploring the ‘silenced’ in the second half of life

This stage of adult development may become a time of narcissistic turning inwards, almost like the adolescent, in our discovery of *who* we are. This is not self-indulgent, but essential in attending to what remains to be done. It is an imperative, as it offers an opportunity to re-vision “our sense of self” (Hollis, 1993: 7), enabling us, perhaps, to live more consciously and more *thought-fully*. The second half of life heralds us to withdraw temporarily from the world, and surrender to “the process of descent and psychological dismemberment” (Goodchild, 2012: 57). If this were the emphasis in the first half of life, it would be worrying and even dangerous, but it becomes almost a duty in the second half of life (Jung, 2005; Montero et al., 2013; Bollas, 2013). The expected tasks of “fulfilling one’s obligations” (Storr, 1973: 83) in the first half, are more concerned with establishing ourselves in the world, separating from parents, finding a job and meeting a partner, before taking the ineluctable and inescapable journey into the

unknown of the second half (Brewi and Brennan, 1982, 1998; Hollis; 1993; Brehony, 1996).

I discovered through my own lived experience, conversations with others, and reading scholarly works on the subject, that this period of adult development is a distinct and specific moment in the adult life cycle, with its own unique features and perspectives (Montero et al., 2013; Brehony, 1996; Jung, 2005; Lachman, 2001). An opportunity is afforded to *re-view* the past, re-imagine the future, and explore new possibilities for creativity and self-fulfilment, from this liminal standpoint (Bühler, 1968; Lachman, 2001; Levinson, 1978; Brehony, 1996). There is also, perhaps, a growing sense of the limitations of one's own omnipotence, an increasing awareness of life not going on forever, that one is ageing, and time is limited (Gabbard, 2013; Elliot, 1965). As I read the literature and reflected on my own experience, it seems as if the gesture of loss and letting go, may merit greater consideration. Theorists allude to the *dis-ease* of this phase of adult development, often manifesting itself in symptoms such as “depression, sexual promiscuity, power chasing, hypochondria [and] self-destructive acts” (Sheehy, 1976: 358; Hollis, 1993). These *symptoms* may be like alarm bells and “emanate from and give symbolic expression to the wounding that has occurred” (Hollis, 2005: 21). However, the cultural construct of this threshold space does not seem to recognise the significance of attending to our unfinished business, of mourning, loss, and letting go.

In this study, we story our experience of being on the threshold, a period of intense re-searching and re-finding what had been neglected or forgotten. We story how we find ourselves, like Orpheus, lost, having relinquished some or all of our professional roles and other identities and summoned to attend to this work of loss and letting go. It becomes a time for re-evaluation and, perhaps too, a reaction to our perceived ageing process (Erikson, 1968; Gould, 1980; Hollis, 1993; Marucco, 2013; Bollas; 2013;

Morganroth-Gullette, 2017; 1997). My *co-re-searchers* and I are offered this opportunity at this stage of our lives, to *re-view*, *re-search*, and *re-find* what was lost, by looking backwards to the past, telling and re-telling the stories. To embark on this Orphic journey, crossing the threshold like Orpheus into the underworld, to re-find what was once already known, but “without knowing it” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 13), is not for the faint hearted. We discover that certainty is replaced by uncertainty and blurred edges, where “one is alone on a pitching ship with no port in sight” (Hollis, 1993: 94), with a “sense of this amputated past and a vague future” (Stein, 1983: 11).

This Orphic space of *in-between-ness*, with no definite moorings, identities, roles, and responsibilities, becomes a place of vulnerability, like the crab shedding or ‘*molting*’ her shell, forcing her to dig deep into the sand and hide until she develops herself a new one. Montero et al. (2013: xviii) call this the “midlife transition pole”, where a person may take courage and climb into the abyss, or avoid it at all costs. I too resisted undertaking this liminal journey, terrified of my “encounter with the unconscious” (Jung, 1965: 181) and perhaps facing what I always knew about “our temporal finitude” (Hanly, 2013: 104). Our resistance possibly arises from our fear and terror of the unknown, of letting go of the *familiar* and the *certainties* of *who* and *what* we are (Brehony, 1996; Jung, 2005). This work is a call to reverie, to “re-enter into contact with possibilities which destiny has not been able to make use of” (Bachelard, 1960: 112) until now.

How am I doing this study?

Telling personal, social and cultural Orphic stories

This study brings us to ponder the lived experience of this *structure-changing* life event, through storytelling. We find ourselves telling and re-telling our stories “so that the past is seen as giving birth to the present and the future” (Mc Adams, 1996: 312). The

essential thrust of this stage of adult development lies in our capacity to develop a “full flowering of the personality” (Brewi and Brennan, 1982: 3), challenging us to deconstruct our inherited assumptions and discourses, to becoming creators of our own lives (Gould, 1978; Hollis, 1993; 2001; 2003; Vaillant, 1977). My *co-re-searchers* and I become “involved in co-constructing previously untold stories, by asking curious questions that help thicken and deepen existing stories and invite [us] into territory beyond what is already known to [us]” (Etherington, 2007: 600). We begin to realise that the values and ideals of the first half of life are reversed (Jung, 2005) and are no longer fit for purpose, “the sun having lavished its light upon the world, the sun withdraws its rays in order to illuminate itself” (Jung, 2005: 111). Our stories inhabit an Orphic space of reappraising our existing life structure, considering new possibilities and re-authoring alternative stories for the second half of life (Levinson, 1978: 317).

Weaving the strands of the theoretical and methodological literature

Our unfolding stories of ‘*becoming*’ weave a rich tapestry of theoretical and methodological literature from the *First* to the final *Sixth Moment*. In each *Moment*, I draw on the fecundity of the theoretical literature about this transition phase of adult development, by blending the psychological, sociological and cultural insights through our collaborative storytelling “which lends itself to a blurring of research and therapy practices” (Speedy, 2008: 11). We story and deconstruct how we are “spoken into existence” (Davies, 2003: 14) and how we come to “write the world into existence as if [it] were [our] own” (Davies, 2003: 14). Through our shared storytelling we “burrow” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 11) into our own stories and “broaden” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 11) them out into the cultural and sociological, showing how the landscape of our epistemological footholds are constructed and interrogated through a feminist poststructuralist gaze. Through telling and re-telling our stories, we offer an

alternative and distinctive viewpoint to the essentialist psychological hegemonic discourse and language, of how we make meaning in the second half of life. In drawing on the Orphic tale, we are enabled to gain insight into and give witness to this threshold space between the first and the second half of life, through acknowledging its losses but also its potential for transformation.

Introducing Narrative Inquiry and Autoethnography

In the course of our journey in this Orphic space of disequilibrium, loss, and mourning, we discover the power of the language of storytelling, not only as stories in themselves, but more so in the telling and re-telling, where we “meet up with [ourselves]” (Cavarero, 2000: 17). Human beings are narrative, “storytelling organisms” (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990: 2), so discovering narrative inquiry as “a first and foremost way of thinking about experience” (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006: 479) is a new and refreshing way to look at research. We are all drawn to stories, telling them, hearing them, reading them, and writing them. Narrative inquiry, with its roots in Dewey’s (1938) philosophy of experience, is regarded as a collaborative method of reflective thinking, which enables us to create connections through telling and sharing our stories. Clandinin and Connolly (2000) also assert that narrative inquiry research is always autobiographical and offers “a way of understanding experience” (2000: 20) with the self “always present” (Richardson, 2000: 930). It is a process which is “relational” and collaborative between researcher and participants, as described so beautifully by Clandinin and Connolly (2000),

...over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and

retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated...narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

p.20.

Here, the researcher "also serves as a subject of the research" (Gergen, 2009: 237), providing a new perspective on how knowledge is created "bring[ing] experience and interpretations into play, into a field of action, in a specific here and now" (Schiff, 2012: 33). Autoethnography as a research methodology is a genre of writing, of storying, with its initial focus on the personal accounts of the author (*auto*) and analyses (*graphy*) them in order to understand cultural practices (*ethno*) (Ellis, 2004; Ellis, Adams, and Bochner, 2011; Ellis and Bocher, 2000; Holman Jones, 2005; Read-Danahay, 1997, 2009). This means that our own personal experience is always expressed "within a story of the social context in which it occurs" (Reed-Danahay, 1997: 9), "provid[ing] an avenue for doing something meaningful for [ourselves] and the world..." (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 738). In this sense, autoethnography becomes an invaluable methodology to hear and narrate stories of our lived experience, making visible the invisible and, in the case of this study, the often *unrecognised* loss and letting go that is associated with this stage of adult development. This practice of storytelling, as suggested by Clandinin and Rosiek (2007: 35), is "an old practice", where:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they are and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.

p.477.

Autoethnography is ‘highly personalised’. As Schubert (1986) states:

The individual seeks meaning amid the swirl of present events, moves historically into his or her own past to recover and reconstitute origins, and imagines and creates possible directions for his or her own future.

p.33.

Autoethnography goes beyond the “writing of selves” (Denshire, 2014: 33), opening up “a more fully embodied field of qualitative research, and offer[s] less certainty and more vulnerability” (Ellingson, 2006: 308). In our relational storytelling space, both *re-searcher* and *co-re-searchers* draw on the richness of our “lived experience” (Richardson 2000: 931), permitting us to be “truthful, vulnerable, evocative and therapeutic” (Ellis, 2004: 137), in our story of un-forgetting and re-finding what was lost.

Embracing other ways of knowing

I draw on alchemical hermeneutics in our unfolding stories of *becoming*. This methodological layer is *one* of being addressed by the text. Its origins, *hermeneia*, “points back to the mythical god Hermes, the winged-footed messenger” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 219), a god of knowledge, of transitions, of mischief. In this thesis, a space is created for the alchemical hermeneutics, a term coined by Veronica Goodchild, and connected with the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics. It draws on the psychology of the unconscious by Carl Jung, described as, “an active place of wisdom, deeper than [our] conscious knowing” (Hollis, 2005: 254). This method posited by Romanyshyn (2013) opens a place for storying *other ways of knowing*, such as intuition, dreams, other imaginal voices, and the presence of the unconscious in the research.

In this place, we are in the presence of the mythical figure of Hermes, who lingers and loiters in the reveried spaces of our *in-between-ness*, often making visible the invisible

in our stories. It is a place where the researcher is questioned by the work, where she “lends an ear to the work and as a witness opens herself to being radically and continuously addressed by the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 234). The researcher is encouraged to be ‘guided’ by other ways of knowing, very similar to Romanyshyn’s (2013) approach to research, with the *soul in mind*. It is where the living and the dead attune to each other in the liminal Orphic space and where the murmurings and the susurrations of the ancestors are attended to. It embodies a language of reverie, of imagination, of the invisible, the once *known*, the lost. It is a “method of re-creation arising out of the reciprocity between the researcher and the ancestors” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 271), where we listen attentively and sympathetically as they “unveil what is hidden” (Corbin, 1998: xl).

Alchemical hermeneutics offers a layer of understanding in how we interpret and embrace other ways of *knowing* in research, and makes a space for the inclusion for the “subtle unconscious connections” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 222), which (Hillman, 1976) describes as,

the middle position, that is neither physical and material on the one hand, nor spiritual and abstract on the other, yet bound to both of them”

p.68

It is a liminal place, the ‘middle’ between the conscious and the unconscious, where I, as researcher, stand with Orpheus in the gap, “attuned to what is said and what is always left unsaid” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 220), and where subtle connections are made between the two. It is a place of ‘*knowing*’ from an imaginal perspective, where Hermes, the messenger between the upper and lower worlds, guides the researcher through the unfinished business of the work “into intelligibility” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 220), helping to make meaning out of the experience.

Theoretical and philosophical underpinnings of the research

To guide us on our Orphic journey, I turn to social psychology to draw on a theoretical conceptual framework for understanding how “the “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is” (Nietzsche, 1960: 903, cited in Zahavi, 2005: 101). In other words, social psychology asserts that the concept of “the interdependence of self and other” (Burr, 2015: 216) is fundamental to our understanding of how we are constituted. Social psychology sheds light on our Orphic story, recounted in this study, as it “is especially interested on the effect which the social group has in the determination of the experience and conduct of the individual member” (Mead, 1934: 1). Our understanding clearly posits the *self* as “thoroughly social” (Burr, 2015: 216), emerging and *becoming* from, and through, the interactional cultural and social milieu into which we are embedded. In other words, we are born into a social milieu and in “concert with others, we discover the language and stories of life” (Schiff, 2012: 41), by which we are influenced and shaped. Although we each develop our own realities, an emphasis is placed on the collective generation of meaning “through repeated interaction with others”, such that “we come to know the stories of our community, what a story is, and how to tell such stories” (Schiff, 2012: 41).

While the creation of our cultural, relational and linguistic social constructions helps us to create the world in which we live through social agreement, the difficulty emerges when those creations become acceptable ways of being, which, if left unquestioned and unchallenged, become a *taken-for-granted* reality. We become the authors of our own facticities “but at the same time experienced by them as if the nature of their world is pre-given and fixed” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 13). They are then no longer social constructions but become the “given tradition of construction” (Gergen, 2015: 28), which are important in assisting us in living together as a society. However, they may

result in our becoming caught up in a web of constriction and confinement, rather than opening up alternative ways of living meaningfully.

It is in this context, of our social and linguistic constructions, that I draw on the critical feminist poststructuralism lens, to interrogate the “constructs of culture, self, and positions of agency” (Speedy, 2005:283) and their attendant language. Our Orphic space of *in-between-ness*, gives us permission to de-construct our social, cultural and linguistic “structures designed by others” (Speedy, 2005: 288), opening up a language of possibility and generating new ways of thinking and *becoming*. Our new tentative poetic language begins to speak the unspoken, the silenced, as a gesture in resisting the “established assumptions and social constraints” (Speedy, 2005: 285). As we tell and re-tell our socially constructed stories, we begin to de-construct our cultural ‘givens’ and the tightly compressed layers of ‘*knowing*’ in which we become straight-jacketed (Hollis, 1993; Jung, 1930). We disrupt for the first time, our “imprisonment in a world of our own construction” (Wild, 1995: 191). In encountering poststructuralism, we begin to be enabled, as Davies (2006) says,

to see [ourselves] in all its shifting, contradictory, multiplicity and fragility, and also to see the ongoing and constitutive force of the multiple discourses and practices through which it takes up its existence. It is through making that constitutive force visible that [we] can see [the] ‘*self*’ as discursive process, rather than a unique relatively fixed invention.

p.91.

This liberating discovery opens up new possibilities for *becoming*, with the introduction of social constructionism. Its premise builds on social psychology that all knowledge and meaning are constructed from the interactions between human beings, as “they engage with the world they are interpreting” (Crotty, 1998: 43). However, social constructionism emphasises that there is *no* one given reality, but instead there are

several constructs of reality even about the same phenomenon. Equally, a social constructionist perspective embraces “a picture of a person as multiple, fragmented and incoherent” (Burr, 2015: 162), who emerges in the multiplicity of interactions. By seeing our ‘*selves*’ through this lens, we begin to let go of the burden of the fixed, essentialist, bounded view of *self* as “a self-contained entity” (Gergen, 2009: xvii) and begin to embrace the fluidity, the changing nature and multiplicity of ways of *becoming* and knowing.

As a relational researcher, I draw on a social constructionist epistemology, where every person’s reality is honoured and respected and where knowledge is created “in the service of enhancing human experience” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 40) in the social context (Sultan, 2019). The theoretical foundations of poststructuralism and social constructionism, gift us with a framework, to critically *re-view* and *re-gard* our social constructions. Adopting these critical theoretical positions invites us to become critically reflective, as we navigate the fragile landscape of “retain[ing] some notion of agency and see [ourselves] taki[ng] up, or resist[ing] positions within discourse” (Burr, 1999: 116), in our stories of love, loss, and letting go.

Data analysis

“I came to theory, desperate, wanting to understand” (hooks, 1994: 59) this threshold space, probing a multiplicity of theoretical insights from poststructuralism, social psychology, social constructionism, developmental psychology and alchemical hermeneutics for insight. I use these to inform our unfolding stories and data analysis, which reflects my position as a *re-searcher*, who “conceives her role as collaborator rather than an interpreter” (Josselson, 2007: 548). A space is provided in this study, through the Orphic framework, to give voice to our individual stories within our collective ones, perhaps tentatively licensing us “in fits of nostalgia” (Stewart, 213: 60),

to forge a link between ourselves and the world, the living and the dead, the past, the present, and the future. We examine both the individual and society, in order to get a broader understanding of the topic and a greater understanding that there is no one true reality or absolute truth (Derrida, 1982).

This social constructionist perspective cites that all “narratives sit at the intersection of history, biography and society” (Liamputtong and Ezzy, 2005: 132). Therefore, our shared stories reflect on our “socially constructed meanings on our experiences by others” (Hunter, 2010: 45), of growing up in Ireland in the 1960s. In my analysis, I immerse myself in listening to our ‘informal conversations’, endeavouring to hear multidimensional and embodied reflexive nuances. I draw on the theoretical literature and our shared stories, to gain an insight into this personal, social, and cultural experience. In the folds of the work, I give voice to the “weight of the history”, which has been waiting to be told and heard, through “purposeful attentiveness to the inhabited silences” (Mazzei, 2007: xvii), in the gaps and pauses of our informal conversations. We begin to *see* that “silence [becomes] a transgressive source of information” (Mazzei, 2003: 357), about our hegemonic discourses and practices, of a particular time and place, and how in those moments “the soul of the work shines through” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 9).

Where and when do we tell our stories?

Our informal conversations

It is in this thesis, I engage in ‘*informal conversations*’ with my five co-re-searchers, “over time in a place or series of places” (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000: 20), where we tell our stories over lunch, in my home, or if we travel, in a quiet hotel space, or as we approach our closing conversations virtually, because of Covid-19. Our journey begins in April 2019 and continues until May 2020. Our conversations embrace some of

the characteristics of the counselling relationship of congruence, unconditional positive regard and empathy between the research partners, where there is “an ethic of care and responsibility” (Clandinin, et al., 2018: 199). We are empowered and transformed by the genuine open dialogic space, where our experience “is like a mutual unveiling, where each seeks to be experienced and confirmed by the other” (Jourard, 1968: 2).

During our moments of meeting, my *co-re-searchers* and I, seek to understand and make sense of this deeply felt human experience which “has its constitutive meanings within a culture” (Mc Adams, 1996: 307). By telling and re-telling our stories, we co-construct “versions of reality interactionally” (Holstein and Gubrium, 1995: 79). This collaborative knowledge production, occurs in the context of how our experience is “shaped, expressed and enacted” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 43), thereby shedding light on the cultural and social milieu of time and place. This study recounts our stories of *becoming*, which “allow for growth and change” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 71), liberation and transformation, involving a “painful shedding of hidden childhood assumptions” (Gould, 1978: 335). By not only re-membering the stories and re-telling them, we enter into a process of ‘*becoming*’ (Connelly and Clandinin, 1990),

where people are both living their stories in an ongoing experiential text and telling their stories in words as they reflect upon life and explain themselves to others. A person is, at once, engaged in living, telling, retelling, and reliving stories

p.3.

My thesis narrates stories of resistance, of struggle, of letting go and of loss, shared with my *co-re-searchers*, in our journey towards *becoming*, during our moments of meeting. In our *intermezzo* spaces, we step into the uncharted waters of these well-embedded stories which call to be told, and begin to tentatively embrace different perspectives on life. We story how we slowly separate from “personal conformity” (Jung, 1953-1979:

1095), while remaining connected to the collective, in our journey towards re-authoring our lives. We discover that to *become*, “is never to imitate, nor to ‘do like’, nor to conform to a model” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 2), but to discover unknown aspects of ourselves which have been dormant. In this Orphic space, we begin to embrace our own child “who will lead us out and beyond into the new again and again, in spite of all the threats and losses of aging” (Brewi and Brennan, 1999: xi). Our little child helps us to become “more compassionate, more reflective and less tyrannized by our inner conflicts and external demands” (Levinson, 1978: 5) and guides us to:

*Be the thing you see:
You must be the dark snakes of
Stems and ferny plumes of leaves,
You must enter in
To the small silences between
The leaves,*

John Moffit (1962)

Nevertheless, this journey is never as easy as it seems, as my *co-re-searchers* and I endeavour to make present and visible our emerging stories, to gain “permission to be *who one is*” (Hollis, 2013: 38) *becoming*, “through connecting the autobiographical and personal to the cultural and social, by privileging concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness and introspection” (Ellis, 2004: xix).

Formatting

I give voice to my own story and that, of my *co-re-searchers*’ stories, in a poetic, font style, there are also insertions of...

poetry,
personal narrative vignettes,

dreams,
ruminations,
aligned
to the right
in italics,
by the author,
in Lucida handwriting.
to depict the time and effort,
given in my generation,
to mastering precise, decorative handwriting in primary school,
between,
the blue and red lines.
As a child,
I loved to spend endless time,
perfecting this style of writing,
forgetting the world around me,
My 'child' self,
has called for this style of writing,
to remind me of her spontaneity and creativity,
from which these vignettes have emerged,
and also to remind me,
that she is the one,
who has called me back,
to re-member and re-find,
what was lost,
in the course,
of the first half of life.

poetry,
personal narrative vignettes,
dreams,
ruminations,
aligned
to the left
in italics,
by my co-re-searchers,
other poets,
authors.
In Lucida handwriting.

There are also boxed *italicised* texts, to depict shared conversations with my co-researchers, excerpts from the researcher’s journals, and emails from my co-researchers and my supervisor, Dr. O’ Grady.

Imperceptible *becomings*

I invite you my reader, to linger with me at the end of each Moment, in the company of Orpheus, the poet “whose mythic presence accompanies [us] and whose music re-connects [us]the soul to its original calling” (Romanyshyn 2013: 268), and where stories of imperceptible ‘becomings’ “learn to speak... [knowing that] to learn to speak, is to learn to say” (Moriarty, 2020: 17).

Looking backwards

In this opening *Pre-view*, to these six *Orphic Moments*, I begin to tell a story about love, loss, and letting go, mirrored in the beautiful tale of Orpheus and Eurydice. I tell how we weave a tapestry of the faded past, bringing it into the light of the present, as we meander backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards through time and place. Our stories, embedded in “the ways in which organizations, identities and knowledge are

socially constructed” (Cunliffe, 2008: 128; Shotter, 1993) are challenged, by our poststructuralist feminist gaze, which places “power relations under erasure” (Speedy, 2005: 284). This Orphic gap charms us into reflecting on our experience and stories under the insightful theories of developmental psychology, alchemical hermeneutics and further expanded by a social constructionist relational stance and “embodied action with others” (Gergen, 2009: 138). I introduce Romanyshyn’s (2013) *Six Orphic Moments*, which serve as a scaffolding, not only for my thesis, but also for our storytelling in our *intermezzo* spaces, evoking the mythical tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, a tale of love, loss, and dismemberment. In this *Pre-view*, I offer a little glimpse of how each *Moment* serves as a guide, in our unfolding experience of mourning, loss, and letting go, in this *betwixt* and *between* space, heralding new beginnings:

*Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one had only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it.*

(T.S.Eliot, 1969)

Looking forwards

In the *First Moment of Being Claimed by the Work*, I invite you the reader, to join my co-re-searchers and I, as we recount how we were lured and charmed into this work. I narrate how my initial research project resisted my conscious intention and how I find myself on this Orphic journey “looking backwards, towards what has been forgotten or left behind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76). I tell you the story of my synchronous encounters with my co-re-searchers, who become my wonderful re-searching companions and how

we co-construct meaning in this threshold Orphic space, between the first half and the second half of life.

The First Moment:

Being Claimed by the Work

An Interlude

Looking backwards

In my *Pre-view*, I welcomed you, my reader, to accompany my *co-re-searchers* and I, on our journey into our six *Orphic Moments*. I tell you what my thesis is about and how I draw on the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as the archetypal background, for storying our experience of journeying into the second half of life. I outline what I am going to do in this study, the reasons for doing this work, and how I am going to do it. I ask the Eurydician question “*Who*”, which takes on a different meaning in this threshold space, as we begin to re-story “the meaning of identity [which] remains patrimony of an other” (Cavarero, 2000: 22). I tell you how I draw on Romanyshyn’s (2013) *Six Orphic Moments*, to frame my thesis, defining the progression of our unfolding stories of love, loss, mourning, and letting go.

And will the flowers die?

And will the people die?

And every day do you grow old, do I

grow old, no I’m not old, do

flowers grow old?

Old things - do you throw them out?

Do you throw old people out?

And how do you know a flower that’s old?

*The petals fall, the petals fall from flowers,
and do the petals fall from people too,
every day more petals fall until the
floor where I would like to play I
want to play is covered with old
flowers and people all the same
together lying there with petals fallen
on the dirty floor I want to play
the floor you come and sweep
with the huge broom.*

(Kennelly, 2004:58)

Looking forwards

The tale of Orpheus and Eurydice is a beautiful love story, telling how Eurydice is enchanted and “stir[s] to total hearing just when Orpheus s[ings]...” (Rilke, 2009: 189). Charmed by his music, Eurydice is transfixed by his melodies, which “awaken[s] the soul to its forgotten inner melody” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51). Mesmerized by Orpheus, the poet of “anamnesis, the poet of un-forgetting” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51), it is, as if Eurydice’s own *lost-ness* and *forgetting*, are *re-membered*. Perhaps it is Orpheus’ music which lures her towards the presence and the absence of Hades “the god of the invisibles...often referred to as the unseen one” (Hillman, 1979: 27-28), the inexplicable, the ultimate and inevitable final call in a journey of love, loss and letting go. Eurydice’s demise, as a result of the snake bite, sets Orpheus on an unexpected and life-changing quest.

My story of being lured and charmed into this work finds its resemblance in this Orphic story. Romanyshyn (2013) draws on Hillman’s (1976) treatise, of situating our own life stories into the archetypal patterns of mythical tales. He (2013) applies this principle of

likeness also to the research process, where the research could take a turn away from what the researcher, like Eurydice from Orpheus, into something different. Romanyshyn calls this “research with the soul in mind, where the topic chooses the researcher, as much as, and perhaps, even more than, she chooses it” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 4). This means that, though the researcher may be working consciously on *her* chosen topic, “the work one is called to do is an *other*” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 59). My thesis tells this *other* story of loss and letting go. I invite you, my reading companion, to linger and loiter with my *co-re-searchers* and I on this Orphic journey from this threshold space.

Signposts for the Moment

This *First Moment: Being Claimed by the Work* is divided into two parts, highlighting two aspects of this journey. *Part One* stories how I was lured into this work and cast under an Orphic spell. I recount how my initial project with the Professional Masters in Education (PME) students begins to fall apart and how I am, as researcher, also “swept up in the process of falling apart” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 48). It also narrates how my *co-re-searchers* are lured into this work, on a journey of *becoming*, and how we find ourselves lingering in this Orphic space, listening to the hauntings “of the invisible world” (Hollis, 2013: 3) in our language, and in our embodied selves. *Part Two* tells another story of being *Claimed by the Work*, which I will tell you about as you enter it. Welcome!

Claimed by the Work: Part One:

Lured into this study

Like Eurydice being seduced by Orpheus, I was charmed and lured into this study through the portal of my interest, in teacher education. One wet Saturday morning in June 2016, I happened to be listening to a person deliver a training presentation to school placement tutors, about reflective practice, as part of the students’ professional

training. Suddenly, I found myself feeling very hot, like Archimedes in the bath, on discovering the principle of buoyancy.

There it was,

This was it.

I began

to write furiously,

words scattering,

all over the page

I couldn't stop them,

I wrote and wrote,

*catching glimpses of a
dream,*

*writing the threads of the
story down before they
slipped away!*

*hardly able to contain the
excitement*

*running out of the
building,*

*energy pulsing through
my body,*

to the train station,

*on a very wet Saturday
morning,*

*couldn't wait to spew it
out to my dearest life-
partner,*

Writing,

the pen wouldn't stop,

*scribbling all over another
blank page,*

*going over and over what
it was I discovered, what
inspired me.*

*"You know, I now know
what I want to do" I told
him excitedly,*

*"I want to explore
something about how we
can hear the inner voice
in our role as teachers".*

I couldn't wait

to begin.

(June 2016)

The conversations that ensued focused on teasing out an unanticipated research possibility. I felt it was incumbent upon me to follow my intuition, a form of tacit knowing, "*know[ing] more that we can tell*" (Moustakas, 1990: 20). My subsequent correspondence and meeting with Dr. Grace O' Grady (Programme Director of the Guidance Counselling Programme, NUI, Maynooth), heralded promptings of new beginnings. These synchronous happenings, when "forces come together in time and space, to provide just what is needed" (Adrienne, 1998: 108) were remarkable. I am with Illeris' (2014) stance, about the strong desire amongst adults in the second half of

life, to engage in learning, which he says, is often characterised by a “personal libidinal motivation” (Illeris, 2014: 91). He also suggests, that this desire may have something to do with identity, which, in itself, paves the way for transformation and may extend beyond the realms of the cognitive, to include the emotional and social elements.

My interest in teacher education

My interest in this study was timely, as the practice of self-reflection, is an integral part of current second level, student teacher training. My initial passion to undertake this research emerged from my own belief, about the importance of attending to one’s *inner landscape* (Palmer, 1998) or *inner curricula* (Ergas, 2017). The purpose of the research was to examine how the creation of a space for self-reflection, as part of the teacher training experience, could provide a platform for personal and professional growth. My emphasis was a Deweyan one, reflecting on experience, evaluating it, and finding “ways of recreating it are indispensable conditions of growth” (Skilbeck, 1970: 13). I was excited about the notion of personal growth going hand in hand with professional growth and was passionate about the transformative nature of reflective practice, if taken seriously in a person’s life. However, after almost a year and a half of developing this area of study, and having been granted ethical permission, my research began to resist my initial intentions and “twist and turn away in an *other* way” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 47), as reflected in my journal entry below:

18th July 2018: Journal entry.

How am I feeling about my PhD work? Well, reluctant, really! I just want to get away from it. I just want a break. I am in a state of grief. My sons have left the country and I don’t know who I am any more. I am grieving their loss. I am not sure what I am going to do with my research PME students- or what is it I want to research? My energy is elsewhere. This is troubling me- the more I read, the more confused I become. Ken (my husband) in his usual wisdom, recommends looking at my own journey, and asking myself, what it’s about, as it may offer

some clarity. So what story do I want to tell? Maybe the one about living out of others' stories and not my own? What is my song? Where is my own voice?

A synchronous encounter

I was introduced to *The Wounded Researcher*, by a faculty member, at a most timely and synchronous moment. He must have recognised my falling apart, both personally and in my research, from our conversation in the corridor. His suggested reading *The Wounded Researcher*, which was a life-changing gift and has become my bible for this study. Romanyshyn (2013) speaks to my experience of being lured into this study, for reasons other than my own conscious ones. I was so relieved that I was assisted in finding a language “adequate to my experience” (Freeman, 1998: 465), “by forging a deep and abiding connection between [my] own life history and [my] research and writing” (Bochner and Ellis, 2003: 508). I began to see how my research story and, indeed, my own personal story are ‘like’ the Orphic myth, of love, loss, and transformation.

This language enabled me to *see* that I had assumed a position in this gap space, uniting “what is oldest and newest” (Mc Gahey, 1994: 6), in the continuum between the first and second half of life. This mythical metaphor melds the old and the new, the backward glance to the first half of life, and forwards, to the second. It represents a non-binarian space of uncertainty where “something is exhausted, something is lost and irretrievable, and something to replace it is not apparent” (Hollis, 2020:3). The threshold position calls for a different perspective, a different worldview, a letting go, like Orpheus, of what ‘was’ and becoming transformed, in this narrative space. Being in this Orphic space of shifting sands has been both a challenge and a joy.

Who better than Orpheus to be my mythical guide, as I story this journey of love, loss, and re-finding what was lost? Who better than Orpheus to hold all the confusion and

turbulence of this re-authoring space? After all, he is a poet of un-forgetting, of remembering, of memory, where, in this space, Orpheus “awakens the researcher to the song of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51), and to what is calling to be done. This Orphic position invites a critical stance in looking backwards, of storying and re-storying the inherited social constructions which serve us well, but, perhaps, unknowingly, limit and confine us.

This Orphic gap is also a place of reverie, a metaphorical place where the conscious and unconscious; the diurnal and nocturnal; the living and the dead, intermingle and speak, and where dreams, synchronicities, reveries, and memories find a place to be heard. In our quest to re-author the second half of our lives, we *re-member* our old stories and old ways of being and become dis-membered in our struggle, to painfully let go of our long-held epistemological and ontological stances, in our search for “alternative ways of being” (Frank, 2013: 117), through our shared storytelling. Our Orphic stories of love and loss are universal and are embedded in our social and cultural contexts, so my work as researcher becomes part of the larger story. This is expressed in my informal conversations with my *co-re-searchers*, in the three dimensional narrative space of sociality, temporality and place, where we give voice to our multiple selves who reside “in both the present and a reconstructed past” (Bach, 2007: 285).

How my co-re-searchers were claimed by the work

In the course of my own deliberations about my PhD journey, I realised that the threshold position, in which I found myself, was not easily understood by everyone to whom I spoke. I certainly felt exposed, at times, in trying to proffer an explanation about my work. The ‘recruitment process’ for my study was intuitive, and happened synchronously, through my informal conversations with others. I was interested in talking to a number of people in my age category, in their sixties, who were able to

‘recognise’ and appreciate the troublesome shifting landscape of this adult developmental stage. I was anxious to engage with participants who demonstrated a level of mindfulness, reflexivity, and an ability to be aware of, and articulate, their lived experience. I was heartened and energised by my participants’ initial engaging conversations, and our mutual recognition of this valid stage of adult development.

My initial conversations with my *co-re-searchers*, were like “moments of meeting” (Schneider and Keenan, 2015), Archimedean moments of recognition. Our conversations were unanticipated, synchronous, and were “enlivened and transformed by encounters with each other” (Schneider and Keenan, 2015: 2). These ‘moments of meeting’ were mutual interactions of attunement, recognition, understanding, and connectedness, which perhaps prompted me to tentatively invite my potential participants to consider becoming my *co-re-searchers*. One of the critical elements was the participants’ interest and willingness to talk openly about their experiences and life stories. This is a deep personal experience, in which not everyone may be willing to participate. In due course, I furnished my willing *co-re-searchers* with the Information and Consent Sheet by email, outlining what was involved in the project, if they were to participate, and received positive responses verbally and in writing.

Introducing my co-re-searchers

I have the privilege of exploring the transition into the *afternoon* phase of life (Jung, 2005) from this threshold, liminal place, between the first and the second half of life, with five *co-re-searchers*. I am choosing to call them my *co-re-searchers* because their involvement in this study is very much an evolving, organic one in co-creating knowledge. They are from different parts of the country and are, or have been, working in professional capacities in education, law, business, and psychology for the duration of their lives. I started out with two male participants and three females, but one male

participant chose to opt out in the very early stage of the research process, due to family reasons, while at the same time, another female self-selected herself to join me on this journey. My chance encounters with my *co-re-searchers* triggered points of connection in our shared stories, from which we travelled onwards together and forged “a spontaneous narrative reciprocity” (Cavarero, 2000: 109). As we commenced our informal conversations, I asked each of my *co-re-searchers* for a pseudonym which would sit comfortably with them, for the purposes of anonymity in the study. Choosing a pseudonym in each case was well considered and almost evolved as part of our unfolding conversations.

My *co-re-searcher*, *Butterfly*, had just retired from running her own business with her husband, for forty years. I had known her in a professional capacity for a number of years, and she seemed most interested in becoming my *co-re-searcher* when I mentioned that I was undertaking this study. It was not until almost towards the end of our informal conversations, that *Butterfly* told me why she selected ‘*Butterfly*’ as her pseudonym. She asserted that it was about breaking free from old stories, places, and heralding new beginnings:

Email to Butterfly

Fri 01/02/2019

Good morning Butterfly,

Well it has been such a coincidence to have had the type of long and wonderfully energising conversation which we had on Tuesday about moving from one stage of life to the next and what it signifies. I greatly appreciate and feel very humbled that you are thinking of joining me on this extraordinary journey- what a wonderful companion! I am attaching my Information Sheet and of course I will always travel to meet you Butterfly, if you consider joining me!

This information might give you some idea of what it is I am trying to capture in the lived

experience of this stage of life. See how you are with it and we will chat again.

Warmest wishes,

Eileen

In conversation with Butterfly, about her reasons for becoming involved in my research.

Eileen: And I think one of the purposes of this research for me, is about finding my own voice.

And I would always kind of, um, maybe, uh, defer to other people.

Butterfly: Join the club

Yeah. Well, I think that was when in one of the bits,

I wrote somewhere.

It was the same thing,

I don't think I ever talk about myself really.

Or if-if you do,

you kind—

I would tend to sort of prefer to be in the background

and listen to somebody else.

So, in a sense when you were saying about getting involved in this

um, that would be one reason.

Curiosity.

Um, first time I would speak about myself-

-um, usually, I prefer not to

and then I suppose as an adventure going forward-

also allowing me to think through the experiences,

-first of all, it could reveal itself as they arise and present themselves

And where Romanyshyn says th-the gaps.

So that's what he's really talking about-

And that these gaps are addressed

and that's where the thinking it through

and then saying, "Well, this is what actually happened."

It was a synchronous moment at her Aunt Mary's funeral, (whom I had known for over thirty years, in my professional capacity), that I met my co-re-searcher, Tiger. We both shared stories of loss and re-memberings about Tiger's treasured aunt and my dear friend, Mary. This event brought us together, discovering that our stories mirrored each other's, but our moments of meeting opened a space to talk about stories of loss, letting go, dying, and death, which were emancipatory. Our meeting was timely, as Tiger was beginning to reduce her professional work to three to four days a week, depending on demand and was beginning to look at alternative ways of being, for the second half of life. Tiger was very clear about her choice of pseudonym at the beginning of our work together, but my discovery as to why she chose it only emerged, as we were asking the question 'so what' in our concluding *Moment*. Tiger told me how she was invited to take the name of a spirit animal as her companion on her shamanic journey.

Email from Tiger

Tue 12/02/2019,

Hi Eileen,

Interesting my dreams began to flow once I read your introductory piece.

My chance encounter with another interested *co-re-searcher*, *Mossy*, emerged as we stood in a queue to collect our robes for a graduation ceremony. It was a moment of recognition, where we shared a language of re-authoring and the challenges it presented. Our energising unfinished conversation left a mark on both of us, as we wished to continue what was left unsaid. It lured my potential participant to have another conversation-taster, and so he agreed to join me on this journey, albeit for a short period.

Email from Mossy

Fri 22/02/2019.

Apologies, for getting back to you, much later than I planned. Yes, of course, I am still happy to be on board as I promised, although I am now over sixty and gone beyond the middle years.

My other male *co-re-searcher*, *James*, was possibly the first to hear my turbulent stories of being in this Orphic space, which was causing upheaval and disruption. A gradual dissolution of certainty became the hallmarks of our conversations, filled with telling and re-telling our stories, in our backward glance. James was charmed by this Orphic invitation and has been my wonderful companion, critical friend, and *co-re-searcher*, on this stretch of road for the past five years. It was not until our *re-search* conversations had concluded that James proffered his pseudonym, which, when he announced it, seemed to fit comfortably and had musical associations for him. James and I shared a common story of being silenced under the weight of the powerful, authoritative parent

and institutions that left us “voice without body, body without voice” (Kristeva, 1977: 15).

In conversation with James, about being a participant.

*James: I think it was probably that, uh, it made me,
gave me food for thought.*

*And made me see that maybe take stock of our lives or,
my own life and maybe that I had been sort of going,
maybe denying these things all the way--*

Eileen: As in what things?

What do you mean by that?

*Just denying,
maybe not going back to look at my own childhood or-
maybe examining it, maybe didn't want,
maybe afraid of her.
And, uh, then, you know,
having to look for it a bit more closely to see-*

My co-re-searcher, Abby, emerged one month after I had begun my field work. I could see that moment of recognition in her face, on that occasion when we met, as I casually tried to articulate the nature of my study, in the context of our conversation. Like my other participants, she self-selected to become involved in my study, by ensuring that she handed me her phone number and email address on a slip of paper, the day we met in April 2019 at a funeral gathering.

Email to Abby

29/04/2019

It was such a great pleasure and privilege to have shared the conversation we had together on Saturday. Ken and I really enjoyed it and as you say, it was so synchronous!!

I am thrilled that you are interested in becoming one of my co-researchers in a topic which abducted me. I am attaching the Information Sheet and Consent form for your perusal and if you are still drawn to it, do let me know and we could arrange to meet and have a chat.

Text message from Abby

Wed 1st May 2019

Hello Eileen, Thank you so much for your text and email. Your research sounds very interesting and I would really appreciate being involved. I've read the attachments and am very interested in exploring further. Again, sincere thanks for this opportunity to be involved.

Kindest regards,

Abby.

Abby had been in a managerial position in the education sector, like myself. Our meeting seemed to have been an Archimedean moment for Abby, to become my companion on this Orphic journey. We found common ground amongst our ancestors, where we *stammered* our way through our stories of *becoming* oftentimes in a “minor language inside our own language” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 4), to find our *line of flight* to find expression.

In conversation with Abby, about self-selecting to participate.

Eileen: Mm-hmm. But I could see your face light up that day ...Whatever I said, there was something, um, that really caught your imagination. It was extraordinary really 'cause you were just-just gripped by whatever it was, you know, by-by that-that moment

Abby: I thought it would be really helpful for me to be involved in this project is,

first of all

because I find the whole area very interesting.

And second of all because I think it's-

I'm at a point in my life

where I'm negotiating a whole lot of new things,

and that it might be helpful for me too to be able to understand myself more

Journal entry July 2020.

This study had led me to recognising the need to give voice to the silenced, fractured unfinished business of my ancestors, from this Orphic place between the first and the second half of life. To my surprise I was brought into a conversation about Abby's experience of feeling enveloped and cradled by her ancestral presence to the present day, while I was aware of my disconnection from them, perhaps because of the weight of the history and our unfinished business. I hear how Abby created meaning for her life, from and through her ongoing connection with her ancestors, while I felt wounded by the weight of their story, alienating myself from their presence. We began to re-connect and look backwards, to make meaning out of our lives while taking courage to situate ourselves in our social and cultural ancestral milieus, while "calling back the dead and dismembered aspects of ourselves" (Estes, 1992: 32).

Similar to my other *co-re-searchers*, *Abby* considered her pseudonym over the course of the year and the name *Abby* emerged for her, after we had concluded our informal conversations. She explains her choice in the following email:

Email from Abby

Sun 02/08/2020

I decided on the name. Abby. In fact it just 'came to me' and when I tell you that it goes back to when I was two years old it seems appropriate. A nice man, a friend of the family, was called Paddy. I could only pronounce his name as Abby. But he turned it around and always addressed me as Abby saying 'and how is Abby today?'

Our co-re-searching dialogic spaces

Being claimed by this work called us into a journey of *co-re-searching*, taking the courageous and transformative Orphic backward glance, in “re-finding what has been lost” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 12), through our shared experience of reciprocity. Our *entredeux* conversational space welcomes research with the soul in mind, where the research ‘*has us*’ as it were, where we inhabit it and are owned by it, through “the idea, the theory, the fact and the data collected” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 9). This storied space, “the aside” (St. Pierre, 2018: 605), is almost beyond our control as researchers, where the “soul of the work shines through” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 9), and the unconscious has an opportunity to tell its side of the story. My field work spans a twelve month period, which offers a welcome opportunity to give voice to the stories, waiting to be told. We take the backward glance to the first half, and forwards to the second, tentatively re-authoring alternative stories, offering “possibilities for reliving, for new directions and new ways of doing things” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 189) and generating “alternative understandings of greater promise” (Gergen, 2005: 40).

Storying ourselves

It is through our story telling that my *co-re-searchers* and I frame our experience and explore its significance and meaning, as we metaphorically stand on the threshold of time, between the first and second half of life. Our stories become ways of *knowing*, of constructing and creating meaning out of our lived experience through telling and re-telling our stories. We position ourselves in the continuum of the three dimensional narrative space, which emerges from the Deweyan notion of experience, of situation, continuity, and interaction. Narrative research is always autobiographical (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000: 20) and offers “a way of understanding experience” with the self “always present” (Richardson, 2000: 930). It is a process which is “relational” and collaborative between researcher and participants (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000),

over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people’s lives, both individual and social. Simply stated, narrative inquiry is stories lived and told.

p.20.

When we articulate or “make *present* life experience” (Schiff, 2012: 41) in our moments of meeting in time and place, we discover almost imperceptibly, that “knowledge emerges from the process of co-action” (Gergen, 2009: xxviii). In other words, through our “shared tellings and understandings of self, other, and world” (Schiff, 2012: 38), we find that we make visible the invisible “aspects of power, status and authority” (Schiff, 2012: 42) which may have been hidden in the undergrowth of the years and need to be deconstructed.

Our narrative inquiry space invites us to journey backwards and forwards; inwards and outwards from the personal and the social “situated within place” (Clandinin and

Connelly, 2000: 49). Our metaphorical dance hails us to take up our positions on the threshold, to *re-find* what was lost in the backward glance and re-author ourselves in the forward-looking gaze. Thus, our auto-ethnography becomes a “balancing act” of a “dual identity” or a “boundary-crosser” (Holman Jones, 2005: 3) where I, as researcher and self, are placed “within a social context” (Reed-Danahy, 1997: 3). I am at once an “an insider and an outsider within the culture I am investigating” (Dyson, 2007: 39), creating a particular view of reality, through our interconnected reflection of our auto and ethno-graphic stories (Richardson, 1995).

In this relational approach to research, I am, as researcher, in the “midst” (Clandinin et al., 2000: 81) of this process, where the personal is, not only linked to the social and the cultural, but also illuminated (Reed-Danahy, 1997; Finley and Gough, 2003) by our collaborative engagement. This autoethnographic approach of understanding means that I am no longer the ‘expert’ in the field of inquiry and it is only in our collaborative telling and re-telling of our stories that we discover the “basis of shared meaning” (Bach, 2007: 282). Our storytelling, instead of being moments of reporting, becomes “more a process of discovery” (Frank, 2013: xvi), where empathic bonds are created and healing occurs.

Listening to my co-re-searchers’ stories

In being claimed by the work, I find myself drawn into (Sultan’s, 2019: 142) “embodied relational” approach to listening to our shared stories, arising from our informal conversations. I become the “holder” and a “transmitter of experience” (Sultan, 2019: 142), as I immerse myself in the data, and “enter the experiences” (Sultan, 2019: 143) of my *co-re-searchers*. I begin to hear the nuances and resonances of the “broader contexts that shaped the personal accounts” (Riessman, 2008: 58) of my *co-re-searchers’* and, indeed, my own experience. I also find myself making connections and resonances with

each person's story; with our shared generational "collectivities" (Frank, 2010: 15) and emerging issues, of being in this Orphic, liminal space, between the first and the second half of life.

I hear stories about our shared struggles to *un-learn* and let go of the long-established, embodied stories and language of our ancestors, as they make themselves felt in our lived experience. I hear how "our acceptance of early parental requirements that we act so as to please others, at the expense of our own needs and desires" (Hochschild, 1983: 194) has cost us dearly. Being claimed by this work opens up stories about how perhaps the dominant parent seems to epitomise or mirror the "physical, discursive, emotional, political and social landscapes in which we [were] subjected" (Davies, 1945: 61), at that time in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s. It also enables me to hear the tales of the silenced, invisible parent and child, who are calling to become "speaking subjects" (Davies, 1945: 61). I also hear the impact of being weighed down by those stories inscribed upon us and by the lingering ancestral threads in the present, waiting to be voiced through us.

Telling and re-telling our stories invites us to re-construct new ways of talking about ourselves and society, and "construct[s] new maps and perceptions" about our "relationships to the world (Frank, 2013: 3), which, as Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assert, involves "a reflexive relationship between living a life story, telling a life story, retelling a life story, and reliving a life story" (2000: 71). In re-constructing our stories, we begin to speak for ourselves, as "an act of breaking free from the first story, or at least, instigating new possibilities for what that story will be allowed to do" (Frank, 2010: 5). We begin to *see* how we become witnesses for our ancestors and discover that they look to be released from the burden of their unlived lives, in our stories of un-forgetting, which are woven into our inherited storied landscape.

My mother’s invisibility and early demise always troubled me and I felt in some way that she was asking me to give voice to that invisibility. Stories of agency, of social practices and discourses, which hemmed women and men of my generation in, emotionally, physically, socially and cognitively, began to spew out. These stories urgently needed to be told as I walked on the rough and rugged Orphic space. In being claimed by the work, we are called to linger a moment with them and answer the “questions that they left behind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 63); painful stories of un-lived lives; of separation; sadness; grief; cultural repression and oppression. Without being claimed by this work, we would never appreciate or even *see* our *lines of flight* “in the dispossession” (Butler, 2005: 37) of this Orphic space of *nowhere*, where we can begin to give an alternative “account of [ourselves] that is partial, haunted by that for which [we] can devise no definitive story” (Butler, 2005: 40).

Claimed by the Work: Part Two

*The stories we tell,
about our lives,
are not necessarily those lives
we have lived,
but those stories become our experience,
of those lives.*

(Frank, 2013:22).

Signposts for the journey

In *Part Two*, we are also *Claimed by the Work*, into taking the Orphic backward glance at the cultural discourses of growing up in Ireland in the 1960s, where we tell and re-tell our stories of our inscribed selves, and get glimpses of how they still continue to breathe in the present. I draw on the concept of social constructionism based in social

psychology, and, most particularly, the seminal work of Berger and Luckmann, and Gergen's more contemporary approach, to advance an understanding of how knowledge is produced. They posit that "the reality of everyday life presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world I share with others" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 37) and that all knowledge, even the most *taken-for-granted*, is created and maintained through our social interactions.

To understand our socially constructed world, I draw on poststructuralism, which sheds light on ways in which our dominant cultural and social discourses can trap us in "conventional meanings and modes of being" (Davies, 1990: 1), or in our *taken-for-grantedness*. It elucidates how we speak ourselves into existence through these discourses, "as if they were [our] own" (Davies, 2003: 14) and "troubles the edges between the constructs of culture, self and positions of agency" (Speedy, 2005: 284), in how we come to understand ourselves. Through telling and re-telling our stories, we shine a light on the shadows of our discourses by which we are shaped and bring them into question, enabling us to re-imagine other possibilities.

I further strengthen the notion of how we make meaning in our lives, drawing on Gergen's social constructionist approach, which "invites a certain humility about [our] assumptions and ways of life, fosters curiosity about others' perspectives....and [a] mutual probing for possibilities" (Gergen, 2015: 27). This means that our *taken-for-granted* notions can no longer be assumed to be true and "are human constructions born within culture and history" (Gergen, 2015: 3)

Putting our stories into context

In being claimed by this work, old silenced "forgotten stories leapt out into consciousness and long forgotten details [come] vividly to mind" (Davies, 2006: 18), of

growing up in Ireland from the 1960s onwards. Lured and charmed by Orpheus, I was awakened from my slumber, to re-find what was neglected, forgotten and lost, before it is too late. With Orpheus, the poet of “un-forgetting” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51) and inspired by Eurydice’s question of ‘*Who*’, we come face to face with the challenge to dissolve “old psychological [social and cultural] structures” (Stein, 1983: 108).

The conceptual framework of social psychology speaks into how we are constituted in our social system of interaction and meaning making together (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). It embodies the language of our ancestors, inscribed on our landscape and on our bodies which are inter-connected, and to which “individuals cohere” (Davies, 1945: 17). We learn the art of *knowing* from our mothers, and are well positioned to read the landscape into which we are born (Davies, 1945). We learn that all knowledge, including the most basic, *taken-for-granted* common sense knowledge of everyday reality, is derived from and maintained by social interactions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). We construct and make sense of our subjective reality, by developing a shared meaning and understanding of different concepts through our use of language (Gergen, 1991). Not only is our knowledge socially constructed, but it is also reflected in the agreed *mores* of a particular culture and historical context in which it is fostered and accepted. This includes a set of ontological, epistemological assumptions and practices in which knowledge becomes acceptable. In this paradigm, it is assumed that this is where the absolute Truth exists (Kuhn, 1962), which becomes an acceptable version of reality, defined by certainty (Burr, 1995). It is in this context, that our own ontologies and epistemologies come into being.

As a result, whatever acceptable discourses are in *vogue*, in a particular culture and time, become the foundation of how we are subjectified, as reflected in my generation, where people were constricted and oppressed, by the weight of a powerful patriarchal

Church and State. These “patriarchal structures...“cross temporal, cultural, and social boundaries” (Murphy, 2020: 1) in which women were arguably invisible, highlight how language contributes to, and safeguards them (Spender, 1982, 1983; Daly 1978). Words, such as ‘he’ or ‘man’, with which we are very familiar, emphasise masculine power and promote a masculine view of the world. This disadvantages the woman and asserts that she exists *only* in relation to the man, and, therefore, is seen to have no subjective power in her own right (Fanon, 1986; Irigaray, 2002; Ingram, 2008; Cavarero, 2000 and Friedan, 1963).

The macrocosm of the female world in the 1960s

I grew up in the socially acceptable world of women being repressed and subject to the dominant-submissive male relationship, a dictum upheld by the law and Catholic Church. The home was considered to be ‘the woman’s sphere’, yet, to take a representative example, under English common law in force in Ireland, when a woman married her legal identity merged into that of her husband. Her property, whether earned or inherited, passed under his control to dispose of as he pleased, and the law gave him full authority over her and their children. Women were supported legislatively by the 1937 Irish Constitution, to feel that the best way to serve society, and, indeed, be fulfilled was to be both wife and mother, which expected her to carry out her duties in the home.

Her identity was aligned with her place in the family and her duties were to her husband and children.

Her husband was the authority figure and his word was final.

She navigated that oftentimes turbulent path of invisibility with a dutiful meekness.

She was confined to the home to carry out those duties and in so doing had no other identity.

She loved to dance.

We often burst into our Lughnasa dance, around the kitchen floor, to the music of the weekday sponsored radio programmes.

Like many women of her time, my mother did not work outside the home and was ‘a kept woman’, with no personal income, voice or access to public life, which Betty Friedan (1963) calls, “the feminine mystique” (Friedan, 1963). This challenged the widely shared belief in the 1950s that “fulfilment as a woman had only one definition for American women after 1949—the housewife-mother” (1963: xi–xx). They were dependant, “struggled alone” (Friedan, 1963: xi), and were shadows in a male world, invisible.

My mother was a woman in the 1950s.

She was about 30 years of age then

lived in a rural setting,

a housewife

married into a house of in-laws

mother-in-law, and three other brothers-in-law.

Her first daughter died,

she reared four children,

milked cows,

fed calves.

a small petite woman,

*whom I didn't know very well.
But what I do know is,
that she was invisible in the world,
in which she lived.
Her untimely death,
marked by a life,
of
invisibility.*

We felt powerless, voiceless, invisible, trapped, and confined too, like the female characters in *'Dancing at Lughnasa'*. Like them, my mother, sister, and I occasionally burst into dance around the kitchen floor as a means of escape, so that our bodies could forget and achieve some 'freedom' through performance and reclaim "albeit temporarily, the space of confinement" (Jacobsen et al., 2014: 240). Dance, for us, was a "way of having [our] voice heard beyond language" and a means "towards finding a voice for ourselves finding ownership and agency over our own lives" (Comyn, 2015).

At that time, the woman was not able to see the "fellow being" of man as the "other in partnership of reciprocity and equality" (Horton, 2004: 90). Her status impacted negatively most especially on the children (boys and girls included), because of the nature of the relationship (Stanley and Wise, 1993: 62; Firestone, 1970; Rush, 1974; Brownmiller, 1975). It was a hostile place for women, a place where the Catholic Church was the bastion of power and where men, in general, enjoyed complete power in both the home and in society. The woman was very much a second-class citizen where she had no identity except as a wife and mother (Friedan, 1963), as depicted in some very familiar images of my generation. Some of the cited images highlight how, as Murphy (2020) declares,

the media [also]produces and portrays particular versions of the world, and particular versions of women and men. These portrayals encompass and reproduce a particular ideology from which there is no escape.

p.1.

Images of Women in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s



Plate 1: Housewife of the Year, 1967

Source: <https://www.thejournal.ie/women-1960s-ireland->



Plate 2: A symbol of the traditional Role of Women.

Source: Fund it: Modern Wife, Modern Life Exhibition. (2015)



Plate 3: A Symbol of the Traditional Role of Women

Source: Women’s Museum of Ireland (2015)

The Modern Wife



Plate 4: Traditional Roles of Women.

Source: Novum, Washing-machine-Brochure-1964



Plate 5: Women's Traditional Role in the Home.

Source: Life before and after electrification, ESB Archives.



Plate 6: A Woman, like my mother, with her bicycle.

Source: Women's Museum of Ireland (2015)



Plate 7: The Headscarf: A Symbol of Invisibility.

Source: 100 years of Irish Fashion in 10 key pieces, Irish Times (2013)



Plate 8: Traditional Aprons, worn by Women in the Home.

Source: Vintage-1950s-Mrs-Mop-Tie-back-apron.

The woman's domain was in the home with no other way to “dream about herself, except as her children's mother, her husband's wife” (Friedan, 1963: 45), which was mirrored in society's publications and competitions such as the *Housewife of the Year*

Competition. In this cultural setting, women were perceived as fragile, selfless, and dependent on the husband, which perpetuated the cultural discourse of masculine power and authority. The impact of the division of work into fe/male tasks is outlined very clearly by Arensberg and Kimball (1968), who argue that, for a man to be involved in women's work, was considered to be "the subject of derisive laughter"... while a woman's smaller hands made it *natural* for her to be a better hand at milking cows" (1968: 4). Curtin et al. (1987) trace and map out the social differences between men and women in Ireland from the 1920s onwards and outline the associated influences of Church, State, and family. Gender roles were clearly defined, where "women remained invisible or were treated unproblematically" (Curtin et al., 1987: vii), until the emergence of the Women's Movement in the 1960s:

Journal Entry July 2017

There were strong demarcation lines between the work done by men and women in our house. More often than not, women were expected to attend both the hearth and barn. The girls' tasks were focused on cooking, cleaning and washing which were considered unimportant by the males. On Saturday evenings, our job as girls, was to locate all the family members' good shoes and line them up on newspaper to be polished. This weekly ritual in preparation for the big social occasion of the Sunday mass rivalled any reputable fashion parade. Parents and children were immaculately dressed in their best outfits – my mother in her lilac woven 'costume' dainty black suede wedged heels and a hat from her hat collection box.

A study by McNabb (1962) refers to the gender ranking in families of the 1960s, which asserts that boys were more 'favoured' than girls (1964). Equally, some of the outcomes, highlighted by Block's (1984) longitudinal study, emphasised the socialisation of boys and girls, the latter being encouraged to "develop *roots* and the boys to develop *wings*" (Radtke and Stam, 1994: 90), as exemplified by the following personal story:

We all attended the local national school as it was called, about a mile away from our family home. However, my parents/ father decided to transfer my older brother to the local Christian Brothers' school about six miles in the opposite direction, to finish his sixth class. A new glistening gold bicycle with all the bells and whistles was purchased for him. He coveted his gold-plated prize for himself like a dog with a bone, and despite endless begging for a 'go' on his prized possession, his resolve was defiant and unfaltering, leaving us feeling bruised and silent.

Discourses are embedded in both the written and oral forms and in the physical layout and practices of our institutions, schools, churches, and courts of justice with our individual identities defined and governed by them (Weedon, 1997). Our traditional *taken-for-granted* discourses and the way we make meaning are produced and reproduced, through our use of “long standing traditions of language” (Gergen, 2015: 36), which become the acceptable norm. Butterfly and I reflect on this landscape as we recount our personal stories of growing up in the 1960s, where we acknowledge how this *way of being* mirrored the macrosystem of the cultural, political, educational, religious, and social backdrop, at the time. Our conversation alludes to how we can now *see* that everyone was complicit in maintaining this accepted reality, thus possibly rendering us all ‘stuck’.

In conversation with Butterfly.

Eileen: And the last couple of years have allowed little you know glimpses into that world, through the work I have done, through the writing and the reading and uh- but it's just that kind of uh, as a woman growing up in Ireland, as a girl growing up in Ireland and my mother as well. There was invisibility about us. I don't know how- what it was like in your house

Butterfly: Yeah, there would be to a certain extent my father, my father it was his way or the highway.

Yeah, he was the boss,

And he wanted you to know,

he eats his lunch every day at one o'clock,

And the whole and usually father has been seen,

The house sort of revolved around him,

And that- but that was a very Irish thing at that time.

Patriarchal power, embodied in the Church, was represented by the powerful presence of the black-clothed, cassocked, frocked clergy who ruled their parishes, reflected in the following familiar images of this power structure in Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s:



Plate 9: Male and Clerical Dominance in Public Life.

Source: Irish Photo Archive: facebook.com



Plate 10: A Symbol of Male Dominance

Source: Irish Mirror



Plate: 11: Catholic Church Dominance

Source: History of Ireland .com



Plate: 12: Weekly Mass Practice

Source: Lux Occulta: Word Press.com.

Wounding

The tradition of male dominance in society silenced women's voices, misrepresented their lives, and excluded and repressed them, almost “as a sentence to disappear, but also an injunction to silence, an affirmation to nonexistence” (Foucault, 1976: 4). The patriarchal system embodied a very specific vision of male domination imposing ‘order’

in our world, both at home and in society. A person's position, "constituted through power", or the lack of it, is reproduced by social practices and "gender arrangements" (Radtke and Stam, 1994: 2), as recalled in a personal story:

Whist girl,

*you're talking through
your hat!*

my uncle snapped,

*when I proffered a
comment on the topic of
conversation in hand,*

*amongst the male
members*

of the extended family.

*Such comments to us
girls were quite common,*

*growing up in rural
Ireland in the 60s and
70s.*

*I had no right to have
an opinion.*

It was considered foolish,

and what would I know,

*I was a girl and we knew
our place- to be silent!*

*So, I learned to remain
silent,*

to let the men talk

and argue their point.

I knew my place!

Women, in my mother's generation, did not have a voice, were dependant and shadows in the tapestry of a male creation, and their presence was both invisible and unvalued. This culture of powerlessness through socialisation practices was subtle and normal,

and it was as if we as young girls were culturally prepared for powerlessness (Radtke and Stam, 1994). For women of the 1960s, considering the notion of a long-term career was not one that was ever allowed to take root, and if they happened to be in employment, their post was automatically terminated when they got married.

All has been appropriated by the masculine and a woman's life is marked by invisibility and "in some respects not to exist at all" (Rivkin and Ryan, 2004: 786). This means of course that she "has no ontological resistance, it does not exist, one cannot ask who she is, but what she is" as Cavarero declares (2000: 50). This view is echoed by Cixous, who emphasises "either woman is passive or she does not exist. What is left of her is unthinkable, unthought" (Cixous, 1975: 349). To be a woman under these conditions was to be "voice without a body, body without voice ... but at the cost of her body...under the symbolic weight of a law, paternal, familial, social, divine" (Kristeva, 1997: 15).

Caught in the web of discourse

Admittedly, it is worth acknowledging that, at that time, both men and women were "carriers for patriarchal values and customs" (Radtke and Stam, 1994: 48). They were "caught up in a web of age-old cultural determinations that are almost unanalysable in their complexity" (Cixous, 1975: 350), and which are given voice in this work. Each was straight-jacketed into a coat of inherited discourses, representations, myths, images, symbolic identities and constructions, arising from the relationships into which we are born. We become subjected to these identities and discourses, through the process of socialisation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), characterised by absorbing the values and received knowledge of our parents/guardians, through listening, language, and interacting with others. We internalise these processes as our own, "in a deep, interactive emotional process" (García-Álvarez et al., 2002: 190), and begin to identify

and engage “with significant others in a variety of emotional ways” (Berger and Luckmann, 1966: 131). It is through this process that we assimilate the roles and attitudes of significant others, which become representative of how we internalise society’s norms and cultural traditions:

Journal entry, July 2017

*I grew up in rural Ireland. It always seemed to be cold, dark, dreary and wet. We lived in a farmhouse. Houses were cold and damp; heating was mostly drawn from open fires or a solid fuel cooker which was the heart of many kitchens, at that time. My father was hailed as the ‘boss’ by anyone who called to the house looking to speak to him, and undoubtedly he was also the boss in the family. Mealtimes revolved around him. He was the sole signatory on the cheque book; was the only driver in the family and his word was final! I can **see** now how I internalised his authoritative stance and where I responded accordingly, as the ‘pleaser’. I can also see how like so many people of my generation, I was drawn to religion, to help provide meaning for our life’s journey, which coloured and shaped my worldview for my entire lifetime, until this study.*

Each of my co-re-searchers alludes to the weight and, indeed, the impact of this “a form of life” (Wittgenstein, 1978: 226) on their life stories, as reflected in James’ experience.

*And the way I was brought up in the '60s,
um, and in particular a fear
which I-I found really pervaded my childhood
more in the religious context
where,
uh, I remember,
uh, going to Holy Communion one day.
I must have been eight or nine.
and I could feel the host, um, um,
that the host was going to fall from my mouth
It wasn't put in properly.
And I put my finger up to stop it,*

you know,
falling on the ground
And I remember going down the garden
and I was in a terrible state at home.
And I said I was damned,
I was never going to get to heaven,
I committed a mortal sin
But that was indicative of the fear.
And the priest said,
"Open your mouth."
And it was—
All I could see is this big burly countryman, um,
bullying me and, uh, I just felt—
I could feel the fear
and I said,
"This is awful. It shouldn't be right."
But then I-I didn't have the words,
or the language.
Uh, but I didn't know that you could-
you know,
that it was right to question,
these people were gods in their own way.

James' traumatic childhood experience reflects how we receive knowledge through our social interaction, of what "appears to be" (Gergen, 1973: 311) and what "is desirable" (1973: 311) in our cultural milieu, often so wounding to the child. This particular powerful social stance which as children "we come to internalize or accept" (Butler, 1997: 2), and by which we are constituted. In effect, very often when children

internalise the behaviours of the oppressor and the oppressed in their own gendered roles, they often replicate them in society (Stanley et al., 1993: 95). So the old adage of “*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose*”, the more things change, the more they stay the same thing, (Karr, 1848), unless we disrupt them.

Our stories of subordination, and indeed those of our ancestors, often become the stories, waiting to be told. They may manifest themselves as a ‘wound’, “where the surface of another entity has impressed upon the body, an impression that is felt and seen as the violence of negation” (Ahmed, 2014: 27). It is only through our Oedipal “thread of history as told by others, year by year” (Bachelard, 1960: 99), that we “build biographies” (Denzin, 2018: 37) around those identities we inherit, which *seem* to fit comfortably on the *surface*, but absence is created, in what is neglected, forgotten and lost.

Attending to the weight of the ancestors

In contrast to the explicit patriarchal backdrop of my experience of growing up in rural Ireland, James and Abby tell a tale of their female ancestors’ dominance in the family narrative. They cite stories of their ancestral women, because of their unfortunate circumstances, having to provide for their families, due to the deaths of their husbands. James tells a story of how his grandmother, from a privileged background, seemed to collude with the dominant narrative of that time, to wield the power of her position in order to survive its constraints. James’ experience of growing up in the 1960s was also marked by the weight of his female ancestors’ presence, his mother, grandmother, and aunts, who wielded their power in the family. He stories how his father may also have been silenced by their power and how, perhaps, he never found his own voice in his lived life. He tells how his father would spend hours and hours in the garden as a means perhaps of navigating “how power imposes itself on us” (Butler, 1997: 2).

Stories of resilience and power seem to manifest themselves in their roles, as mothers in the family unit. Abby tells a story of how her great-grandmother evicted from her home after the death of her husband in the 1880s, had to negotiate her way to Dublin to find refuge for the family. She also tells her grandmother's story of unexpressed loss, as she buried her husband, son, and brother of tuberculosis and was left to fend for the remaining members of her family:

Abby

Going from being comfortably off,

to living on handouts,

There's no-there's no time- to grieve.

You have to literally go on- with life

I'm just thinking in the case of my mother's family,

you just kept going,

Eileen: but you have to just, you have the dinner on the table the next day, you know--

And it's probably not relevant,

um, but they had a very tough time when,

when-when everybody died like that-

Eileen: Can you imagine the weight of the grief of that, you know.

Yeah, and literally,

in order to earn a shilling,

*my grandmother had to go back,
and scrub steps in the school,
and my mother had to stay back after school to help her-
and- so if you're doing that,
you haven't time to grieve.*

*No, you don't, you just, as you
said, get the dinner on the
table.*

*Abby: And my other grandmother was taken out of school,
because she had to rear her sisters and her brother.
So she had reared her family of origin
from the age of thirteen
before she ever became married,
and had her own family.*

These women had to negotiate the hardships of being both women in a patriarchal society but who also had to be complicit, in order to survive. Abby's own story of negotiating a very arduous, life-changing personal event in a patriarchal society echoes the stories of her own female ancestral challenges and resilience. Our experience of this social patriarchal system, tells us that "a woman has no legitimate voice. Her voice is either constructed in complicity or resistance" (hooks, 1999: 11), as highlighted by Abby:

*Any words you want to use,
that was packed into tha-that last 20 years,
and there were times I used to say to myself,*

"How am I doing this?"

Abby's feeling, of "*How am I doing this?*", bears resonances of her ancestral stories of stoicism and determination, where they did not have the time to dwell on their sorrow, sadness or grief. Her sentiment is echoed again and again, by my other *co-re-searchers*, whose inherited stories, bear the weight of dominant narratives of survival and conformity, while feeling silenced, at the expense of others' expectations. In these situations, the child in us, learns "nothing in her/his character, no possession s/he owns, no inheritance of name or talent, no work s/he has done is valued for itself, but only for its effects on others" (Reissman, 1950: 49), is reflected on throughout our conversations. Our stories of love, loss, and dismemberment in our lives, find a comforting mirror in the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Like Orpheus, we ask "*How am I doing this?*", but we know that Eurydice represents an alternative story. It may perhaps be, one of resistance, knowing "that if we do not speak as liberators, we collapse under the weight of this effort to speak within the patriarchal confines" (hooks, 1999: 11).

Telling and re-telling our stories- a poststructuralist look

In attempting to make sense of the world we inherited, we begin to explore and examine the nature of knowledge and how it is constructed, through a poststructuralist lens. We begin to *see*, as Burr (1995) suggests, that our identity originates not from inside the person, but from the societal domain and through our relationships. This process, negotiated through significant others in our lives who navigate the objective reality of society, and render it meaningful for us to internalise (Berger and Luckmann, 1991). Our poststructuralist critical look at those "discursive processes through which we become individuals" (Davies, 1994: 83), helps us to re-find what was lost in the "contexts of our subjectification" (Davies, 2006: 19). We begin to give voice to, and

listen with compassion to this wounded, silenced child in us, “who will carry forward the exploration into newness and who will not allow the adult to become stuck” (Brewi and Brennan, 1988: 165). We reassure this little child that our poststructural Orphic position “enables us to *see* [our] fictionality, whilst recognising how powerful fictions constitute what we take to be real” (Davies, 1997: 272) can be challenged, brought into question, and changed.

We learn that it is in telling and re-telling our stories “that we open up the discursive threads” (Davies, 2003: 2) and put them “under erasure” (Speedy, 2005: 284), leading to alternative narratives. We begin to *see* how we were influenced and shaped by context-specific, cultural discourses, defined as “a set of meanings, metaphors, representations, images or stories and statements which produce a particular version of events” (Burr, 1995: 48). We tentatively begin to *see* how our voices and identities emerge from a particular cultural tradition of meaning-making, and through our particular set of relationships. In other words, it is from our relationship with others that our world becomes “filled” (Gergen, 2015: 6) with whatever understanding we have of it. These relationships define how we filter what we know, perhaps omit or include, explicitly or implicitly. Our inherited discourses paint the landscape of what is acceptable in our society, and shape the way we live, though we may not be aware of their impact. I accepted that the structures and practices which formed my identity were part and parcel of growing up in Ireland in the 1960s, but it was only when I stood on this *intermilieu* that they began to irrupt and seek to be interrogated, as reflected in my journal entry:

Excerpt from research journal (July, 2017).

I had always been a very good girl. “Once we begin to take up a position within the categories of ‘person’ to which we have been allocated and see ourselves as belonging to (e.g. ‘bad child’ or ‘good child’), we develop an appropriate system of morals, ideas, appearances and behaviours about what is possible and impossible” (Burr, 1995: 146). I was dutiful; a good catholic; a very good conscientious teacher; chaplain; deputy principal and principal. I was a ‘yes’ girl and woman, a pleaser, a peacekeeper. I became others’ stories of me. I only knew myself as a good dutiful, girl. I baked for the nation, kept everyone happy at all costs, “those ideas and morals provide[d] with metaphors and other ways of speaking about [myself] which reinforce[d] and commit[ed][me] emotionally to identities [I had] adopted. (Etherington, 2007a: 175), but at what cost to myself? I had forgotten myself along the way. My heroic self became too much for me....I couldn’t be the hero any more.... my little child self was very sad and neglected.... she was a very, upset little girl, who wasn’t listened to or heard for a very long time.

Butterfly stories how “the subject is produced and the existing order is sustained” (Sarup, 1988: 29), by taking up and living out of our existing discourses, until we take a critical Orphic poststructuralist glance and “and see the ongoing and constitutive force of multiple discourses and practices, through which it takes up its existence” (Davies et al., 2006: 91):

How my grandmother always said:

“Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today”.

but that becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Because you just keep doing more and more,

and more and more.

You’d say,

well, I don’t want to do it tomorrow.

So, that’s why you become a super woman,

because, who gets through all this mountain of stuff?

You have to do it,

*but don't quit.
and work was number one,
work was very important.*

Female invisibility

I have come to see how the resonances of my mother's invisibility and lack of agency inscribed themselves on my life story and how our shared experience of the unequal male/female relationship left an indelible mark on our bodies. They were pressed down and silenced, so much so, that "that the "we" who accept[ed] such terms, [were] fundamentally dependent on those terms, for "our" existence" (Butler, 1997: 2) as I was, until this research journey granted them transparency. I was one of those silent women, who had very little cognisance of her own capabilities, intellectual or creative, because the power was in the hands of the external authorities, rendering us voiceless and selfless (Belenky et al., 1986). When we begin to *see* and de-construct the social and cultural milieu, with "no place whatsoever for woman in the calculations" (Cixous, 1975: 349), we begin to *see* how the child brings that overflowing suitcase into her adult life:

*When I was growing up,
I could not see myself beyond the
age of eighteen,
upon completing second level
school.
I didn't dream of any career,
except becoming a nun.
I had no image of a future of
myself,
as a woman.
I 'fell' into a college course,*

*through the intervention,
of someone who saw capability and
potential,
enabling me,
to become a teacher.
I found myself,
taking on an adventure
to Dublin,
for my first job in the 80s.
I never expected.
unthinkable,
unimaginable,
for the eighteen-year-old-
an adventure from invisibility,
to recognition,
to 'becoming'.*

Alternative stances to the discursive self

Our dilemma of being caught in the web of conflicting cultural discourses “can be a source of considerable angst” (Barrett, 2005: 82) and poses the question of how we resist or disturb the dominant discourses or, and re-construct alternative “forms of knowledge”? (Weedon, 1997: 108). James highlights this dilemma of being caught up in the web of discourses, but being challenged to become “a speaking subject [which] can be extraordinarily painful and alienating” (Davies, 2003: 27).

*James: You know, I-I wasn't able to be my own man,
with her in the background.*

She was so powerful as a presence I think.

I could never really stand up to her.

*Eileen: Well, you did on that
occasion*

James Yeah, but that took how long now?

You know,

and I think just a bit of me could see,

if you do this you're going to bring trouble,

because she had this power of saying that,

you know, uh,

she'd just burst out crying

or so-something

that she would use that as a weapon.

*Eileen: Mm. but. wondering at
what cost really James?*

Yeah. There was a lot of cost to it,

and, uh, you know,

and then I suppose I-

I didn't want to upset my dad either,

or whatever,

Um, and the family is such a tight knit thing

It was very small,

you know on our side,,

But she was certainly,

She had a presence that was phenomenally powerful.

And maybe detrimental to my growth, you know,

I didn't have the language,

*No, I'll- I'll tell you where the
problem always is,*

I think it's the child in us.

We never,

*In our gener-- in our
generation,*

*children were seen and not
heard*

We never had the voice to say,

*we would always be compli-
clicit and dutiful.*

Acceptability is learned “in relation to a set of codes, prescriptions or norms” (Butler, 2005: 17), through the process of “being subjected to the meanings inherent in the discourses” (Davies, 2000: 7), which we learn consciously and indeed unconsciously from our parents and others. However, all that is socially *unacceptable* is often repressed, and “leaves an indelible” (Denzin, 2018: 38) mark on our bodies, through our complicity, with the “covert shaping that takes place through the establishment of norms and values” (Davies, 1945: 15; Grosz, 1994). This becomes, what Jung (1930) calls, our *shadow* personality, which represents all that has been neglected or overlooked, “in the interests of collective social values” (Hollis, 1993: 43).

Despite being enmeshed in our cultural discourses, we “are vested with an agency” (Butler, 2007: 195) in our ability to take up a critical stance, through our reflexive capacities, towards our constructed identities. In other words, taking up an Orphic critical stance, in the face of our inherited discourses and practices empowers us, not only to adopt alternative viewpoints, but perhaps give voice to the silenced, repressed and other invisible selves. Our engagement in reflective practice may filter a light into the cracks and fissures of the repressed and marginalised aspects of our lives, and

enable us to re-construct an alternative story in our *becoming*, expanding into “more spacious personalities” (Jung, 1963: 140). I am with Davies’ (2003) excitement in “discovering the mainspring of power that have held women and marginalised groups in place” (2003: 8), not only, in understanding the social context, but also in learning how to change it.

My shared stories with each of my *co-re-searchers*, regarding the dominant narrative of recognising our compliance and dutifulness, as the acceptable way of ‘performing’, highlights how *other* narratives are left behind, and how the Derridean (1978) approach, favouring a “logic of both/and”, of supplement, inclusion and multiplicity is overlooked. However, standing in this vulnerable Orphic space, we begin, like Ulysses to “weep, because [we] fully realize the meaning of [our] story” (Cavarero, 2000: 17), when we discover that we have lived our lives like Ulysses, believing ourselves to be that singular, fixed story. This significant connecting theme makes itself present throughout our conversations, and possibly is *the* most challenging, that is, letting go of lifelong epistemologies and ontologies, for alternative ones. Butterfly and I share similar stories of living life in the fast lane, of being superwomen to everyone else, but our struggle to be *other* than *who* we thought we were, presents an enormous challenge of letting go and re-negotiating meaning. In our moments of meeting, we capture the social and cultural context in which we performed, our efforts to extricate ourselves from the straightjacket of being ‘*good girls*’, to embracing the cracks and fissures of imperceptible *becomings*, as reflected in our conversation and email from Butterfly:

Eileen: So- so just I'm curious about you know, when you say, that you were the good girl. How was that for you, and how- how has that filtered through in your life, because I was always good.

Butterfly: And she (my sister), would have said when, when- when relationships weren't as good as they are now, "Well, you were always the favourite." But I used to say, but that's not a role, I just did what I had to do You know I wouldn't have fought, I would have done what was expected of me, which maybe is different? That was it really. I'm not just-

Eileen: So, you did what you had to do which was--?

To do. Yeah Well, which was sort of do the good girl things. Not now that I minded doing them as such-

I was uh, twenty. And then but when I was in fifth year, I gave up school to mind her (my mother) so and- and missed a lot of school in the fifth year, sixth year, in college, in first

*and second year. A lot of it.
And uh, but after she died, I
looked after family really. So I
was always a good girl. You
know I looked after everybody-*

Email from Butterfly

Fri 03/05/2019

In terms of the "good girl" space - we both conformed to all sorts of external prescriptions. My question to myself (and maybe you to yourself) is can we ever not conform and only time will tell. Christianity suggests, we consider others always and for me if I want to say 'no' can I or will I. However, I think that there are definite situations which I will say 'no' to, or resist, because of a gut instinct which I would not have done before.

Tiger's story, of her father's early demise when she was twenty, resonates with my own experience of my mother's untimely death, at the same age. We both took on the mantle of being the carers in the family, sacrificing our grief to be stoical and resilient, in looking after others. Like Oedipus, we received our story "from others' narration" (Cavarero, 2000: 17), Tiger looking after her helpless, grieving mother and I, becoming the mother figure, denying the weight of the child's grief and loss of a parent.

Okay, that life has been tough. [chuckles]

Um, but like,

am I going to dwell on the toughness,

of losing my dad,

and being left,

with a grieving mother for most of my life?

Or am I going to see it as resourceful?

And...and...and that's the-

and that's the individual choice, isn't it?

We became happily and unknowingly complicit in the selves that were created. They served us well in our careers, but in due course, we become constricted by them, as they no longer fulfil us, as reflected in an email to Abby, arising from our conversation:

(An excerpt from an email to Abby, 31/01/2020)

Abby, I found it most helpful to talk about how our jobs nurtured, inspired and energised us, but how, as our careers progressed, they gradually impacted on us; and how on the one hand, our inherited stories served us very well in our lives and careers (as gifts), but on the other hand, "holding us green and dying" as Dylan Thomas (1946) says. I was thinking how, if this is our experience as Principals, how many others may feel the same and how this may need to be given a voice?

Being claimed by this *Moment*, to take up our Orphic position of “border figure[s]”, standing in “the gap between the conscious and the unconscious” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 49), becomes a “long drawn out process of transformation and rebirth into another being” (Jung, 1959: 64), embracing the forgotten child. The cost is often great on our child, but we learn, that in telling and re-telling our stories, “that the specificity of those experiences, needs not be the marker of a bounded self, but rather, the moments at which an experiencing being comes to know possibilities” (Davies, 2003: 28). This is such a liberating poststructuralist gesture!

Through our storytelling in our *intermilieu* space of *in-between-ness*, we “recover, redeem and renew what has been left behind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 77), and open spaces for new beginnings and ways of *becoming*. This space between bodies becomes a transformable space where we re-construct new understandings of old stories and old shapes by bringing a “different presence” (Davies, 1945: 23), a witnessing to our stories. We are challenged to find a language, “one never chose” (Butler, 2005: 53) to express the “embodied patterns and meanings” (Davies, 1945: 43). We are hailed to ask

the question “who are you?” (Butler, 2005: 31), as we de-construct our long held inherited stories.

In our reciprocal narrative conversations, my *co-re-searchers* and I “enter the space of the story for the other” (Frank, 2013: 18), which also becomes “a willful embodiment of “we” (Spry, 2016: 15). By telling the stories of our experiences, we hope to understand a way of life (Ellis, 2004: xvii). We reveal our “hand or voice up front”, using “dialogue, emotion, and self-consciousness” (Dyson, 2007: 38), where we often expose our vulnerability (Holt, 2003), in this Orphic space of uncertain footholds, reverie, and disequilibrium. Our autoethnographic position of *in-between-ness*, goes beyond the realm of simply telling our stories, where our lived experience is both reflected on and re-viewed from our position in the present (Ellis, 2009). In other words, our shared storytelling is never exclusively narcissistic or exclusively personal. Rather, our stories always exist in the “sociopolitical context” (Spry, 2016: 36) and offer insight into that social context, which is for “the benefit of larger numbers, than just ourselves” (Madison, 2011: 129). We are always *becoming* in relation to the *Other*, always “made gloriously and ingloriously through others” (Madison, 2011: 136), as reflected in a shared email with my *co-re-searcher*, Mossy:

Email sent to Mossy: 29/04/2019

I was greatly moved by your story of being driven and how much it echoed with my own experience and how it could only sustain and nurture us to a certain point. There was still the void of needing more, to be other than driving hard on the motorway. I wondered afterwards who your driver was Mossy? Mine was a childhood culture of work where there was little time to relax and 'be'. It was always a place of doing and if you weren't doing you were lazy!! So those ancestral voices have been firmly ensconced for many years and I have come to realise, how much they have shaped me. As we said the other day, they have served us well, but I have come to learn that this is not the full story.

Similarly, James highlights below, as his journey of extricating himself from the “meaning of the identity” which “remains patrimony to another” (Cavarero, 2000: 22) to giving himself permission to undo the earlier script, as he considers reducing his working week to four days:

*And I should be thinking,
about other people for that day
And, um, what way, uh,
that I was brought up
in particular,
maybe,
way of service.
And that was a duty.
And that was the way to behave properly.*

Tentative beginnings in our social constructions

Our unfolding stories of de-constructing old scripts and developing a sense of agency are further expanded by taking a social constructionist stance. This holds, that we understand our world and our experiences, based on knowledge being “constructed in our conjoint activities with others in what people do together...We literally “make meaning,” as we engage with others” (McNamee, 2007: 314). Our narratives, draw on the notion of experience as both personal, cultural and social, emphasising that our experiences do “not go on simply inside a person... or in a vacuum” (Dewey, 2015: 39-40), but are understood in relationship with others, through our storying and re-storying, so eloquently described by Sartre (1964),

a wo/man is always a teller of tales, s/he lives surrounded by her/his stories and the stories of others, s/he sees everything that happens to her/him through them; and s/he tries to live her/his life as if s/he were recounting it.

p.39.

Through understanding that our “human construction [is] born within a culture and history” (Gergen, 2015: 3), we may become more conscious and call our inherited discourses into question. Such an open view of reality where the construction of meaning is produced and re-produced, may create “structures that are both stable and yet open to change as interactions evolve over time” (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010: 174; Giddens, 1984). We may begin to hear the silenced voice, the invisible, the marginalised, the disempowered in “challenging the legitimacy of the prevailing ‘knowledges’ through which we understand ourselves and our lives” (Burr, 1995: 69). We begin to acknowledge multiple evolving truths particular to each cultural and societal setting, disputing the theory of the ‘true’ nature of things as espoused by traditional and social psychology.

Social constructionism represents a change of direction in two respects, the first being a turning away from the positivist approach to reality, which focuses on certainty and secondly, a new fresh way of challenging the *taken-for-granted* nature of our social interactions (Shotter, 2014). It invites a multiplicity of perspectives (Gergen, 1991, 2015) within each cultural and social milieu and emphasises that “there is no true or valid interpretation” (Crotty, 1998: 46). It brings into question the nature of knowledge which we accept as true and which finds its way emerging from the “sociology of knowledge and social philosophy” (Shotter, 2014: 705) to,

a focus on the ongoing, active, living interrelationships between people and others and otherness in their surroundings, and on the creation amongst them all of what we take such things and facts to be.

p.705.

The language of meaning making

Social constructionism recognises the fundamental role of language and communication and how our reality is formed for us, by our linguistic representations of it (Raskin, 2002; Barge and Little, 2002; Cronen, 2001; Pearce and Cronen, 1980; Shotter, 2014). It becomes the medium through which we construct, negotiate, and make meaning (Deetz, 1992 and Jian et al., 2008). Therefore, language is not an expression of our individuality but instead is a socially specific construct, forged and nurtured in specific social and cultural contexts (Weedon, 1997). Meaning is taken from language rather than “reflected by language” but is also “socially produced within language” (Weedon, 1997: 23). This results in our inheriting a particular language of *givens*, in any given culture, about “how people talk about themselves and their world” (Raskin, 2002: 17).

Our world and our understanding of it, is created through the people from the past and the present, through the use of a particular language. Accordingly, language is no longer simply a means of expressing ourselves or describing or recounting life’s events, but becomes a medium, through which we negotiate and construct meaning about our world, becoming a “form of action” (Burr, 1995: 7; Hathcoat and Nicholas, 2014).

Shaped by language

*Returning from Dublin one
afternoon,*

I stood,

holding the rail,

of a populated train.

A mother,

with her pram,

nudged her way,

in alongside me.

She was with a young friend.

*I did not recognise their
language.*

Though,

*I was drawn to the 'knowing'
dialogue,*

of lifelong familial-arity,

between mother and child,

and of their shared generations.

I noticed,

that I was seeing the world,

differently, than before,

how,

as this baby nestled in her arms

was 'becoming filled' with,

comforted by,

and satiated with her words

his/her,

world becoming hers,

through language,

while the mother and friend

constructed meaning

*in their particular, language
and historic culture,*

*being observers and participants
in their adopted one.*

I watched a baby 'becoming'

in multiple cultures

multiple languages.

I noticed that

I was seeing the world

differently than before.

Noticing this simple, yet very complex, social interaction between mother and baby, I realised for the first time that “we are born, *in medias res*, in the midst of ongoing conversations that precede our own personal existence” (Schiff, 2012: 41). Through observing this mother and baby, I realised that it is through the words and language we use, that we frame the world, make sense of it, as much as actually experiencing or ‘*seeing*’ it (Hacking, 1999). The “interweaving of selves in landscapes of other selves” (Davies, 1945: 51) initially as baby and mother, as separate, but also connected in that “hybrid place” (Davies, 1945: 52) of shared ancestry. Not only is meaning reconstructed through language, but we begin to understand our own position in the world *vis à vis* each other, and through that interaction we grasp a sense of who we are, like the baby in the pram. We tend to take for granted how we construct meaning explicitly, and very often do not pay attention to the invisible and subtle nuances of our background, in “how we describe, explain or otherwise represent things”(Shotter, 2014: 705).

Social constructionists reframe this experience in the social context within a “particular system of social structures and power relations” (Burr, 1999: 114) and endeavour to make meaning through a “common currency of concepts” (Burr, 1999: 115). In our *intermental* dialogue, we are expanded, our potentials “develop as we collaborate with others in ways that help us to acquire personally relevant understandings and actions

derived from those interactions” (Lock and Strong, 2010: 117). In our dialogic space, we explore our experience through telling stories which gives coherence to our lives, and our conversations draw on whatever language and knowledge we have, to make sense and meaning of our lives. In these moments of meeting, my *co-re-searchers* and I are populated and expanded by our encounters with each other, and become “more fully laminated” (Gergen, 1991: 71) or transformed, as a result of our interaction.

Our multiplicity of selves and silenced stories “take shape through their active narration” (Riessman, 2008: 106) during our moments of meeting. In other words, through our informal reflexive conversations in this Orphic space, we get glimpses of imperceptible *becomings* as we tell and re-tell our stories, making *present* the voices of the silent, unheard stories of our ancestors. In our storytelling, we learn how “narratives are strategic, functional and purposeful” (Riessman, 2008: 8) in shedding light and understanding on the cultural and social context of a particular time and place, as we make meaning of this stage of our lives.

Imperceptible *becomings*

In this Moment, I become aware of the weight of our dominant discourses and how we navigate them successfully to a certain point in our lives having served us well in the first half of life. However, I come to realise in this threshold space, that the child who has internalised the received discursive messages, learns “protean forms of accommodation” (Hollis, 1993: 12) to cope with her sense of powerlessness. My own story, tells of the invisible wounding of our dominant discourses, but also, how, in being claimed by this work, I am enabled to come to new understandings and insights, in ways I would never have imagined, otherwise.

Interlude

Looking backwards

This *Moment of Being Claimed by the Work*, is divided into two parts. I story how I was lured into undertaking this study and how my co-re-searchers become my re-searching companions. I story how we are brought to the Orphic gap or threshold position, a place of *betwixt-and-between* where we tell and re-tell our story of transitioning from the first half to the second half of life.

In the second part of this *Moment*, I draw on a poststructuralist lens to interrogate the social psychological field, which embeds the theory of how we are constituted, attending in particular, to the effect of the social group on the individual. The poststructuralist lens both interrogates and helps to shed light on those social and discursive norms, and “recognize[s] how bodies are subjected within available discourses, thus become the selves we take them to be” (Davies, 2006: 19). We expand our lens to take in a social constructionist theoretical perspective, where “we open a space for inventing new ways of going on together” (Gergen, 2015: 122), with its focus on meaning-making of “co-action” (Gergen, 2015: 123). We do this in the three dimensional space of reflexive narrative inquiry, as we move “inward, outward, backward, forward and situated in place” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 49), in our poststructuralist Orphic orientation.

Looking forwards

As we journey onwards into our *Second Moment, Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation*, we welcome you to linger with us once more, as we take courage to travel with our ancestors, “the doorkeepers, who while closing one door “give” way to the other” (Cixous, 1997: 3), inviting us to “approach, to go to the door” (1997: 3) and let

go of all that we cherished most in the first half of life and mourn its loss. Their reassuring presence in “the gap between the conscious and the unconscious” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 313), reminds us as they gather around, that “the meaning of life is something we find through the mourning of life lost” (Morgenson, 1992: xv).

The Second Moment:

Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation

An Interlude

The breezes at dawn have secrets to tell you

Don't go back to sleep!

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep!

People are going back and forth

across the doorsill where the two worlds touch,

The door is round and open

Don't go back to sleep!

Jalaluddin Mevlana Rumi - *یہ مولیٰ و*

Looking backwards

In the *First Moment, of Being Claimed by the Work*, I reflected on how I was lured into this study, through the portal of the *inner curricula* (Ergas, 2018), a space to facilitate personal reflection with Professional Masters in Education (PME) students, in the course of their teacher-training programme. I was abducted from this path, by an-*other* personal, social, and cultural story, of how we negotiate what it means to be human, as we transition into the second half of life. This was a time of turbulence, loss, grief, and dismemberment. I began to fall apart, as did my research. It heralded a time of looking backwards, a time of re-membering in the presence of Orpheus, “the poet of anamnesis

and un-forgetting” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51). I pondered how knowledge is produced and how we are constituted through the language we inherit and use. My introduction to social constructionist theory and narrative inquiry enabled me to recount how we are ‘spoken’ into and become embedded into our collective narrative.

In looking backwards, I began to attend to the unfinished business of my ancestors, the threads and remnants of which were inextricably breathing through my own lived experience. This *First Moment* reflects on both the theory and the lived experience of the social and cultural narrative, in which, and by which, my *co-re-searchers* and I were shaped, and how these stories called to be told and re-told. We share stories of how “the very mainsprings of power” (Davies, 2003:8) kept us straight-jacketed and begin to re-discover, through our moments of meeting, how oppressed we are by them, without even knowing it.

Looking forwards

In this *Moment of Losing the Work, as an Invitation to Mourning*, I invite you to enter a place of losing, of loss, and of being lost. I invite you to dwell with my *co-re-searchers* and I, as “border figures” (Romanyshyn, 2013:49) in this Orphic gap, of betwixt and between, where we spent some time together, prior and during Covid-19. We “travel with our suitcases filled with history” (Hollis, 2013: 52), as we begin to lose what we love and cherish most, gradually pulling us into accepting a world of mourning and grief. I tell you how, like Eurydice turning away from Orpheus, and returning to the underworld, my research defiantly turned away from me. I lost it and, in the losing, I was “faced with something enigmatic: something hiding in the loss, something within the recesses of loss” (Butler, 2006: 22). I became an “agent in service to the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 74), where my research, became an invitation *to re-search* and re-find the enigma of what was lost, alongside my five *co-re-searchers*.

My *co-re-searchers* and I accept an invitation to inhabit a place where the past and the present meet, a place where we recognise how our personal, cultural, and social narrative continues to resonate and reverberate, through the living and the ‘dead’. We “open ourselves to the questions and the problems in which the souls of the dead are caught” (Morgenson, 1992: xv), and through our presence, in the present, we begin to be released from “our Oedipal attachments” (Morgenson, 1992: 94). We dwell in this place of re-remembering, re-storying and re-finding what was lost during our moments of meeting.

I invite you, my reader, to stay with us in this vulnerable, transformative, creative place.

The Orphic gap

Orpheus’ beautiful wife, Eurydice, is bitten by a snake and dies. Orpheus is grief stricken and inconsolable, upon losing the love of his life. The grieving, forlorn Orpheus refuses to play his lyre or sing for a long time. He loses interest in, and his engagement with the world, “has become poor and empty” (Freud, 1915: 246). There are no words to fill the void, in the face of great loss and mourning, the guest of honour, who comes to join us in our plight. We are bereft, beyond making sense, of who we are, and long to return, like Orpheus, to the way things were before, to our comfortable positions of certainty. Instead, we are held in this Orphic space, where darkness meets light; the world of dreams intermingles with our conscious world; the past and the present become blurred, and the veil between the world of the ancestors and our living lives becomes opaque. In this reverie space, “we are beyond making sense of who we are, who we have been, who we might become” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 54).

My *co-re-searchers* and I are brought to this Orphic place, of betwixt and between worlds, a metaphorical place, “between waking and sleeping” (Goodchild, 2012: 11), “a twilight world of shadows and light” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 31), into a reverie of re-

membering, to re-find what was lost. It is in this *entredeux* space, “a true in-between-between a life which is ending and a life which is beginning...” (Cixous, 1997: 9), we embrace an invitation to mourn what has been lost and forgotten. Romanyshyn (2013) reminds us that, when we do *re-search*, it “demands mourning” (2013: 65). In other words, research is no longer an objective, an external task. As a researcher, I choose to place myself at the heart of study, thereby closing the gap between the researcher and the researched. This new departure from being ‘outside’ the research, to story and re-story inherited discourses, and unravel long-held epistemological and ontological positions, brings with it profound loss. Being charmed into this re-search, was an invitation to travel to a once familiar place, yet with the passage of time, it had now become unfamiliar, estranged and lost, as described so aptly by Plato (Hamilton, Huntington, Cairns, 1961):

And if it is true that we acquired our knowledge before our birth and lost it at the moment of birth, but afterward, by the exercise of our own senses upon sensible objects, recover the knowledge which we had once before.

p.59.

It was as if I had waited a very long time to return to this place, just to give myself ‘permission’ to hear the silenced voices. This notion of giving ourselves permission at this stage of our lives emerges again and again as a theme in our conversations:

Email from Abby, August 2019

One of the aspects of this is covered by our discussion of ‘giving myself permission’ to take time for myself, be myself, grow at my own rate without always feeling that I have to be available for others but not affording the same availability to myself.

In this unbidden sociological and cultural territory, “encompassing communal and cultural frames of reference” (Neimeyer et al., 2002: 235), the loss, of all that I

cherished, hailed an invitation to mourn “as a response to the disruption of personal assumptions and relationships that sustained a sense of self” (Neimeyer et al., 2002: 235). It is such a privilege, that my *co-re-searchers* were brave enough too, to have had the courage to join me, to lose and mourn the *familiar*, and to give voice to the long-silenced voices of the past, in the present.

Signposts for the Moment

In this *Second Moment*, I reflect on “where mourning presents itself as an invitation, to let go of what was being lost” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 65), to something *other* than I had initially planned in my research. I re-view how I was inspired by my initial proposed research, with the Professional Masters Education (PME) students, to create a space, attending to one’s own personal growth, as part of a teacher-training programme. My interest in, and passion for this topic, emerged from my own personal and professional experience, that we bring *who* we are, to our teaching. Creating this reflective space became the foundation of my study. I recount how I was inspired, energised, and enthused by this work for over two years, until I began to lose it. It began to fall apart and I also began to fall apart with it. I welcomed “the visibility of the self” (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2013: 71) in narrative inquiry and autoethnography, which “describes human experience as it unfolds through time” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 40). This methodology also provides an opportunity for my *co-re-searchers* and I to tell and re-tell our stories of *becoming*, in this Orphic space, between the first and the second half of life. This marks the beginning of the mourning process, “which presents itself as an invitation to let go of what was lost” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 65).

I recount how *re-viewing* and losing our professional roles and identities become an essential part of the process of accepting the invitation to mourn. I resisted leaving my professional life for a long time, with its expansive, colourful canvas, its energy,

excitement and creativity, to respond to an incessant, nagging invitation, to re-find what was lost, manifested in a defiant pain in my foot. This invitation seemed absurd, or nonsensical, in the frame of my very well-established successful career. Our storied experiences in the fragile space of our moments of meeting, and reflective writing become points of entry in this Orphic space, to be other than *who* we thought we were.

I story how my *co-re-searchers* and I struggle with this painful letting go, of what we dearly cherished, and how our grief of such a loss, was “intense and multifaceted, affecting our emotions, our bodies and our lives” (Tatelbaum, 1980: 7). As part of the loss, we find ourselves looking backwards at our inherited stories, of *who* we were, and how we had lived our lives from our experience of those stories (Frank, 2013) for so long. Through our storytelling, in this shared Orphic space, we begin to *hear* and feel how we came to know ourselves through our hegemonic discourses. We come to recognise and understand how we loved and cherished these life-long inherited stories, others told us about ourselves, until they *became* who we were. We also begin to recognise their impact on us, physically, emotionally and cognitively and our need to give ourselves permission to let them go and re-author alternative stories. In being called to do research “with the soul in mind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 4), our research becomes a process of *re-searching* for what was lost. In being claimed by this work, with the soul in mind, we are challenged to re-view what we once loved and cherished, and mourn its loss, in letting it go.

I narrate how the “preceding world of language” (Gergen, 2009: 29) and knowledge we inherited, coloured and shaped our world view, and how this language posited “a clear and certain perception of fact or truth” (Gergen, 2009: 202). This accepted language, with its implicit power, reverberated in our families, church, and schools, promoting a certain view of knowledge, which produced “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1979: 138). Its

expression of the ‘self’, as bounded and fixed, straight-jacketed us into thinking of it, “as an accurate mirror of the world” (Gergen, 2009: 206). In looking backwards, to story our old shapes, we begin to understand and see our epistemological and ontological stances for the first time. My *co-re-searchers* and I, *hear* each other in this fragile Orphic space, where the veil between our stories, and those of our ancestors, almost touch each other. We are invited to mourn and “allow ourselves to recover something that we have lost along the way” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 123). Our journeys in de-constructing a long-established language and associated worldview, in looking backwards, signalled a falling into a reverie, of mourning and sadness.

In this *Second Moment*, my *co-re-searchers* and I unexpectedly begin to discover the discursive power of the “master narrative” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 211) of ageing and decline. Being on this threshold space brings with it a certain fragility about the imminent and ineluctable deepening shadow of death. In our moments of meeting, we story our fears and anxieties about its inevitability, bringing us also to a place of loss and mourning. However, in taking the courage to face the inexorability of death, we began to discover the power of the master narrative, of “being aged by culture” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 212), in which we have also been complicit during our lifetime. We begin to de-construct the weight of our inherited assumptions of decline and possible “systematic disillusionment [of] the mid-life plot” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1988: xviii), which we have carried with us through the years. We search for a more expansive and a “more precise age vocabulary” (Gullette-M, 2018: 254), which may open up new ways of “moving our mental furniture around” (Gullette-M, 2018: 255) about ageing.

Losing my love of the ‘inner curricula’

To begin, I recount how my initial passion to explore the ‘*inner curricula*’ (Ergas, 2017) of teacher training, inspired me to set out on this venturesome adventure. I was keenly aware, as a former Principal of a second level school, and my experience of working with student teachers, that embarking on a teacher-training programme, is “almost always a change experience” (Mezirow and Taylor, 2000: 11; Webster and Mertova, 2007). I was seeking to address questions about the ‘*who*’ we bring to our teaching. The language used by Palmer (1998), that we teach from *within*, resonated very strongly with me, and inspired my wish to provide a space where student teachers could reflect on their own personal growth as part of their training. It was an invitation to reflect on “the self that teaches” (Palmer, 1998: 7) and on what it means to be an educator. While I was deliberating on a methodology for my fieldwork with my PME volunteers, the content of my journaling was telling an *other* story, distinct from my ongoing conscious focus of student teacher education, as reflected in this entry:

Journal entry, 17th October 2016

When I read about this Arts-based narrative approach to research, I am touched and moved, that, in telling my story, I might get to have a greater understanding and ‘connection’ with my own life and its social and cultural context . I am trying to come to terms with this new concept of story, as a valid form of research, which is so un-like the empirical one, with which I was familiar. So narrative is about “finding language that is adequate to experience” (Bochner and Ellis, 2003:508). I am wondering if you can ever find language to embody or express wat it means to be human, but maybe story is the only portal through which we can make sense of our lived experience.

Tentative beginnings

I had invested two years reflecting on, and fine tuning what I was endeavouring to articulate in my initial research topic, when I began to realise that “which once existed, is no more, and that which was not, has come to be” (Campbell, 2008: 21), in my

“process of re-searching” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 67). The constancy of my reflective writing, enabled me to grapple with “the site and the subject of these discursive struggles for identity” (Richardson, 1994: 962) and helped to nurture my own voice, laying claim to “knowing something” (Richardson, 1997: 88). I groped “to find new ways of talking about ourselves” (Polden, 2002: 313) and to communicate what the research was calling me to do, “in re-turning to and re-membering” (Romanyshyn, 2013: xi) what had already made its claim upon me, through my own “complex relations with the topic” (Romanyshyn, 2013: xi). My endeavours to articulate the changing nature of my study and newly emerging research topic, in a coherent manner, unsettled and disturbed me, in the face of being accountable to others. The ‘I’, “implicated in a social temporality” (Butler, 2005: 8) struggled to make meaning of “the voices that speak to us at particular moments in our lives, especially during transitions or crisis” (Frank, 2013: xii) as reflected in my own ruminations about this period of turbulence and uncertainty:

*I know what it is,
I want to ‘say’
But like the mists of a dream,
words abandon me.
When asked,
‘so what are you doing’?
I stutter and stammer,
heart beating fast,
mumbling,
“it’s complicated”,*

(Nov, 2017).

Discovering a new storied landscape

However, I was heartened by Romanyshyn's (2013) assertion, that true research, if valid and significant for the researcher, has a vocational aspect, which means that we are "put in service to those unfinished stories that weigh down upon us, individually and collectively as the wait and weight of history" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 113). I began to discover the world of narrative inquiry, an aspect of qualitative research, which was radically different from the objective type of research, with which I had been familiar. It opened up new ways of thinking about experience for me. I was overwhelmed to discover an acceptable language and methodology which forges connections between one's own experience, research, and writing (Bochner and Ellis, 2003).

Narrative inquiry was, for the uninitiated like me, the study of experience as story, by which we create meaning in our lives and is "first and foremost a way of thinking about experience" (Connelly and Clandinin, 2006: 479). I was inspired and, indeed, in awe at discovering this acceptable approach to research, which provided a meaningful way of exploring our unfolding Orphic-Eurydician story, by "describing the particular, the micro and situated elements of our lives" (Holman Jones et al., 2013: 26). I was also greatly comforted and re-assured by Clandinin and Rosiek's (2007) emphasis on the validity of storytelling, in helping to make meaning of our lives:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they are and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful.

p.477.

My introduction to narrative inquiry and autoethnography gifted me with a way of telling my story, and "write, because I wanted to find something out" (Richardson,

1994: 924). Autoethnography, “was a profoundly transformative experience that turned my way of thinking and being in the world, quite literally upside down” (Glass-Coffin, 2016: 59), as it seeks to describe and analyse personal experience, in order to understand the cultural *milieu*. Its introspective and personalised approach of being able to recount stories about our lived experience, and their relationship with our cultural setting, which, in my case, was my experience of growing up in Ireland in the 1960s, was life-changing. I was inspired and encouraged by this “humanely situated approach to research, which is “always filtered through human eyes and human perceptions” (Richardson, 2000: 939).

Autoethnography becomes the container for telling our stories where we use our experiences “in the culture reflexively to bend back on ourselves and look more deeply at the interactions of self and others” (Ellis, 2004: 37). It nurtures the capacity to draw wisdom and insight from lived experience, and holds the possibility for personal, social, and cultural transformation. This means, of course, that autoethnography is not a means to an end, but rather, a “creative construction of a reality” (Dyson, 2007: 39), which emerges from our lived experiences. Indeed, it becomes “a vehicle for growth and transformation” (Glass-Coffin, 2016: 61).

Co-constructing knowledge.

In our moments of meeting, my *co-re-searchers* and I come together in “relational dialogue” (Sultan, 2019: 123), which “invites high levels of presence and attunement” (Sultan, 2019: 161). In this humanely situated genre of narrative inquiry, the relationship is inherently intersubjective, where the participants are *co-re-searchers*, rather than “impersonal subjects for data” (Ellis et al., 2011: 6). We are called beyond “simplistic commitments” (Gergen, 2015: 34), to re-author our stories, to “co-create

more promising futures” (Gergen, 2015: 34). Mutuality and reciprocity are the hallmarks of our encounters, as we share our stories in looking backwards, “offering the dead the fruits of our struggle” (Morgenson, 1992: 113). We listen to their unfinished business, as we tell and re-tell our own stories, gaining “insights into the direction and meaning of our own lives” (Morgenson, 1992: 113).

We begin to make meaning out of our lives through narrative, which Laurel Richardson (1990) observes, is “the best way to understand human experience, because it is the way humans understand their own lives” (1990: 183). Our mutual meaning-making stories and dialogues open up uncharted territory into our own subjectivities, which “often unfold in silence, in a parallel play of doing together and being together, wordlessly” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005: 199). We “reveal” (Gergen and Shotter, 1989: 71) ourselves only in and through our interactions with others, in the ongoing narrative we have with them. Our dialogues become like a “mutual unveiling” (Jourard, 1968: 21), where each person seeks to be recognised and experienced by the other (Moustakas, 1990). This extraordinary relationship evokes the intrinsic characteristics of counselling of empathy, congruence, genuineness, acceptance, and good rapport, underpinning our dialogues, as described by Buber (1992):

When dialogue is fulfilled in its being, between partners who have turned to one another in truth, who express themselves without reserve and are free of the desire for semblance, there is brought into being a memorable fruitfulness which is found nowhere else. At such times, at each such time, the word arises in a substantial way between [wo/]men who have been seized in their depth and opened out by the dynamic of an elemental togetherness. The interhuman opens out what would otherwise remain unopened.

p.79.

Our 'Oedipal' selves

In my *First Moment, of being Claimed by the Work*, I pondered how our stories from the first half of life could be likened to the Oedipus' story, of knowing *who* we are, "*from the outside*" (Cavarero, 2000: 11), through the stories, others tell us about ourselves. We come to '*see*' that we are born into stories, the collective story, which inscribes itself upon us physically, emotionally, and cognitively. These stories become our adopted ones. They establish themselves, as our 'provisional personality' (Hollis, 1993: 10), in which we live out the stories, others have told us, about ourselves, which "are built on social consensus" (Gergen, 2015: 6). Our lives and experiences become meaningful, through the stories we tell, in our inherited structures, which Sarbin (1986) considers fundamental to each of us, in what it means to be human. Hence, how I perceive myself, how I identify myself, is, essentially, based on how others talk about me - "their descriptions, explanations criticisms or congratulations" (Gergen, 2015: 54). The storying of '*self*' happens in the context of others, where we are shaped by the world in which we live. We may begin to adopt and accept the absoluteness of these inherited assumptions, "captured by the grammars of the language games" (Pearce, 1995: 92; Wittgenstein, 1978). Abby tells a story about an interaction she had with an authority figure, as a student in secondary school, who framed her story of herself for her entire life:

"You are a very unreliable person."

That actually stuck with me my whole life.

And it was only when I remembered those words,

and thought,

And it just suddenly struck me,

that I've been trying to prove,

I'm actually reliable.

*And when I thought about it,
I said to myself,
"I've been so freaking reliable all my life."
And even for the things,
I didn't want to do.
Well, that was a very good insight because.
I kind of said to myself,
"Hang on. I've paid my debt of reliability."
And so thinking about this now,
is freeing me up
to be reliable,
to myself.*

My co-re-searchers and I were reared on a language of ‘*children being seen and not heard*’. Our inherited, embodied experiences of docility, of being ‘*brúite faoi chois*’ (crushed under foot) and downtrodden by the coloniser, weighed heavily upon us, and echoed our ancestral stories of oppression. This powerful patriarchal language, reflected in the ideologies of Church and State, influenced the way children were treated at home and in school. It weighed heavily upon us as “fragmented, incoherent, piecemeal” (Ingram, 2008: 3) into our adult lives, living lives constructed by others and bodies which they wanted us to “dwell within” (Irigaray, 1992: 49). Authority was unquestioned, paramount, and not something to be challenged, an aspect of our inscription, which emerges in conversation with Butterfly:

In conversation with Butterfly:

Do you think

you would've said 'No' to hospitals ,

to the Church ,

and 'No' to anything in a hospital?

No, you wouldn't.

Yeah!

But I would just stop,

and just retreat.

And I would be thinking about the good things that I should be saying,

and all the arguments that I could be making.

I was never able to articulate--

No. I wasn't either.

*So, the language to express
something ...*

I didn't have that language.

And I think I would still find it probably difficult,

you can't unlearn it overnight.

I think if you've had a lifetime of this-

So, I think we're coming much later in life

to questioning authority.

So the authority,

and what it does to us,

uh, what it has,

Or have the courage.

you'd hope you'd learn-

you'd unlearn some of it,

Instead of being “able to battle [our] personal and historical limitations” (Campbell, 2008: 14), and re-find our own personal authority, we become “umhal don chlog, don ab, don seirbhiseach”, *obedient to the clock and the abbot, communal service* (O’ Riordáin, 1997), in fulfilling our obligations. Our ‘bounded’ selves, “dispossessed” (Butler, 2005: 8) by the collective story, becoming little more than a serf, “to the tyrannies” of the status quo, “and a prisoner of fate” (Hollis, 2009: xi). We all learn to fit in, in being “undone by the other” (Butler, 2006: 25). We often do not recognise how we are constructed, becoming inextricably “impressed upon” (Butler, 2006: 27) by others, and almost unknowingly be *umhal do (obedient to)*, the cultural and social norms, by being complicit in them, even though they may be harmful to us.

The weight of our Oedipal stories

Jung believed that our task in the first half of life is to establish ourselves in the world. Orpheus personifies this aspiration of “fulfilling one’s obligations” (Storr, 1973: 83), into which we “may not write the story” (Carr, 1986: 93-4), but are cast into the characters we *become*. Butterfly acknowledges this, in the course of our conversations, stating, “*I even have a fear of becoming lazy*”, while Mossy clearly becomes defined by his academic prowess:

In conversation with Mossy:

So I continued like that,

did-did well in college,

and did-went into teaching,

and I'll talk a little bit about that later,

but to get to the point I was making,

is that,

that was my route,

always kind of achieving...

achieving,...

achieving...

Eileen: mmh... driven...

Driven,

that's how I saw myself,

as somebody,

who was clever,

good,

achieving high marks always,

I was like programmed...

programmed...programmed...

programmed..

had to be this,

had to be,

and like that transferred into,

a rushing almost... a rushing to prove... prove... prove....

We acknowledge that our roles and identities in society served us well and allowed us to “focus our attention on the accomplishment of these necessary aspects for the life’s first half” (Brehony, 1996: 141). We discover that, very often, we become “separated from our own stories” (Randall, 2014: 2017), as a result of our casting and become aware of their costly weight on our lives. We begin to realise perhaps, for the first time, that “it is never okay, to give up our sense of who we really are”, or “to give ourselves away” (Glouberman, 2003: 135) completely, in our roles and responsibilities in the first half of our life. This realisation brings with it a sense loss and sadness, as reflected in vignettes from Abby, Mossy, and James:

*Being in charge,
you have to leave your own needs,
and your own wants,
outside,
And I know I did that.
In fact,
I never looked after myself really,
I just worked
and that's the thing,
actually,
that when you get,
when I got to that point,
there was no room for me,
the other bit of it,
the self.
And there's great cost really.*

James reflects on the weight and the cost of fulfilling his obligations in his role as managing partner of his law firm, which had served him well, but was catapulted by the timeliness of our conversations and relevant literature, “from one life-plot into another (Greene, 1990: 255), into “revisioning of the story into a more intelligent, more imaginative plot” (Hillman, 1989: 80).

*Waking up every morning,
worrying about all type of things,
as well as the cases,
you know,
and who's gonna turn up
and will they be able to get the work done.
and that was taking the energy from me
wearing me down,
So, that's what I mean by saying,
I was being strangled.*

Like James and Abby, Mossy reflects on the impact of being “spoken into existence” (Davies, 2003: 21), physically, cognitively, and emotionally, in fulfilling his obligations in pursuing his academic endeavours. He recounts how, with the onset of illness, his “carefully composed” (Randall, 2014: 237) life story was disrupted:

*And I think it was almost too late,
when I saw then,
that I had gone down that road.
of being,
I wouldn't say,
a workaholic,
I also got ill,*

I suppose that was the turning point.

In our moments of “resonant remembering” (Hoffman, 1994: 2), we attend both to what has happened in our lives, and also, to ways in which living through these events, shaped “what happened within ourselves” (1994: 2). We tell our stories, but also re-tell the impact of those stories on our lived experience. When we endeavour to describe or recount those experiences, we frame them narratively (Gergen and Gergen, 1984; Sarbin, 1989), drawing on whatever tropes we have available to us in our culture, at that time. Our stories of *becoming* unsettled and disturbed by the language of our old narrative, where “the same character” (Randall, 2014: 237) is “playing the accustomed role, speaking the familiar lines, contributing to the usual subplot” (Randall, 2014: 237) strangle us, until we find “new ways of writing and speaking that reconstitutes the world in significant ways” (Davies, 2003: 13).

Ancestral reverberations

In the course of our conversations, my *co-re-searchers* and I begin to understand how our personal story is articulated in, and through, our cultural one. Hollis (2013) calls this our ‘provisional story’, which means that sometimes we cannot differentiate who we are, other than through the stories others tell us. These inherited stories or ‘*complexes*’, as Jung calls them, which rise from deep within, are charged with emotion, and erupt like volcanoes, in our dreams. They thread their way into our genes and manifest themselves in patterns, projections which weigh on us. James tells a story of how, when being asked for a relatively harmless administrative requirement for a course which he was undertaking, triggered a major personal emotional disturbance. He was propelled into a rage, where he was willing to forego the programme, rather than having to comply. After some reflection, he discovered a pattern in his emotional behaviour,

which triggered earlier childhood stories, of being silently bullied and wounded as a child, and not having another sibling to support him:

*I remember,
being picked on,
you know,
because I was always dreading,
you know,
getting off the bus
And then you have to face us and you say,
"Who we're going to be dealing with today?"
And I had that in school,
so I had a whole year of being picked on myself,
then for standing up for somebody else.
So that was rough-
I was about 11, I think.
uh, and they were laughing at me then.*

The past is not the past, but the past reverberating in the present, which Butler (2006) asserts, are,

those primary others, who are past for me, not only live in the fiber of my boundary that contains me, but they also haunt the way I am, periodically undone and open to becoming unbounded.

p.28.

In other words, the weight of our inherited Oedipal stories of patriarchy, authority, invisibility, assumed gendered identities and the unfinished business of our ancestors, reverberates in, and through, our lives and the language we use. James and I share stories of having an intuitive sense about how we are 'bounded' by our past, but also

how we become “unbounded” by them, in telling and re-telling the stories, thus changing the narrative. In looking backwards, we begin to deconstruct how the “present moment is informed by the past, driven by its imperatives, its prescriptions and proscriptions” (Hollis, 2013: xvi), and the “power invested in them” (Polden, 2002: 26). We are challenged to *re-view* and *re-gard* “the beginning of the narratable self” (Cavarero, 2000: 39), and attend to the task of separating from this “outmoded identity” (Stein, 1983: 107). Our Eurydician call to re-author our lives continues to fly in the face of Orpheus’ desire to hold onto, or re-store, what was lost, to its former state, but is often triggered by forces outside ourselves, as cited by Butterfly. She tells about her long-standing sense of inherited obligation, of feeling that she has to prepare the food for family events, which is now being disrupted by her daughter:

*So she bought in Lasagnas and whatever,
and I said to her
would you like me to make a cake
“and no-no-no-no-no,
it’s fine,”
and I suppose... I was
I was slightly taken aback,
but I thought,
“Oh my gosh,
do not rush down with ten bowls of salad”-
So she had a great party going there,
and she wasn’t running in the kitchen,*

I can readily identify with Butterfly’s sense of loss in her response, at having to relinquish what was synonymous with the ‘*who*’ she lived out of for a lifetime. It perhaps also begs the Eurydician question of our need to tell our story, so that we can

“distance oneself from oneself, to double oneself, to make oneself an *other*” (Cavarero, 2000: 84), in constructing alternative stories, in our journey towards ‘*becoming*’:

*I mean it was a good lesson,
because initially,
I was very taken aback.
I think I wasn't expecting her to say,
she doesn't want the food.
Then I say to myself:
“get over yourself”
Of course, she had it all going,
and I said,
that's absolutely fine now,
and I felt very odd going down without-
having everything in the back seat-*

The labyrinth of this Orphic space.

Losing our cherished stories calls for an Orphic journey into “the dark night of doubt” (Gergen, 2015: 34), a time to re-view and critically evaluate the “limits and ideals” (Gergen, 2015: 34) of our collective inherited stories which served us well. The labyrinth of this Orphic “space of betwixt and between one context of meaning and action and another” (Turner, 1982: 113), becomes “a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise” (Jung, 1969: 97) in our moments of meeting. Butler (2006) points out that,

something takes hold of you where does it come from? What sense does it make? What claims us at such moments, such that we are not the masters of ourselves?

p.210.

In our efforts to make meaning out of our stories of love, loss, and transformation, we find ourselves in an unconditional space, within which “new meanings ...can be introduced” (Turner, 1981: 61), as stories wait to breathe and find their own words, in their own time. Like Kennelly (1998), cited by Romanyshyn, (2013: 28), we struggle to apply “the language of the day to that of the night, the language of explanation to the dreamenergised language of being” (Kennelly, 1998: 7). We are also reassured that, as we “research the possible meaning-making structures of our lived experiences, we come to a fuller grasp of what it means to be in the world” (Van Manen, 1990: 12). We learn that we cannot rush this discovery process, which “requires its own space and time” (Moustakas, 1995: 44) and, as such, is accompanied by the inevitability of embracing the panoply of conflicts, challenges, discords, as well as the flow and harmony in re-shaping our lives.

The threshold space of *becoming*

In letting go of the first half of our lives, we are cast under the spell of Orpheus, who “is with us always, holding far into the doors of the dead” (Rilke, 2009: 95). He comes and goes, his light touch beckons us, without our knowing, connecting us with inner longings and woundedness, building a temple “deep inside” our “hearing” (Rilke, 2009: 83) and calling us back to re-member and mourn what was lost. On the threshold, I “found myself fallen” (Butler, 2006: 21), exhausted, a “neglected wounded child of the past” (Brehony, 1996: 193).

Our stories on this Orphic journey are embodied, “where we make sense through our bodies and then reach for language to express ideas” (Ellingson, 2017: 20). Our personal stories of embodied knowing, “not only about the body but through it” (Frank, 2013: 3) enable us to exercise our capacity to inhabit some sense of agency. Our embodied selves are “made and re-made” (Davies, 1945: 54) through our three dimensional narrative space of temporality, sociality, and spatiality, where we also embrace the language of our dreams, to “reveal understandings normally concealed from our conscious minds” (Polden, 2002: 287).

My Orphic descent into the work manifested itself in a very emotional dream, which highlighted the need for greater balance, which Jung (1967: 694) calls *compensation*. Abby shared a similar life-changing dream-experience, where she was jolted into seeing what was neglected, forgotten, and lost, and was called to urgently make adjustments in her conscious living. It was a wake-up call for both of us that demanded immediate action to bring greater equilibrium into our lives. It was time to pay attention before it was too late. In this second *Orphic Moment*, the invitation is to let go of all that was loved and prized, and walk on the rugged, rough threshold ground into the second half of life. Our poignantly disturbing dreams call on us to move away, from “brickabrack and frick-frack to soulfulness” (Estes, 1992: 291), of our dominant narrative to embracing alternatives ways of living:

I am on my knees, kneeling sideways with my confessor, a woman of my own age, to my left sitting on a chair. I am kneeling on a cushion which has a plastic cover on it with a comfortable padding. My confessor is looking

ahead and I am at her side also looking ahead in the opposite direction. There are other women around, chatting and laughing. I don't want the others nearby to hear what I am saying and want to whisper what I really want to tell her. I am just so ashamed. I wait until they have moved slightly out of the way.

I begin my confession in the usual way as I did as a child, of 'Bless me for I have sinned....., with my eyes closed. I am nervous about confessing to her. I am looking straight ahead. As I try to mutter and articulate what it is I have to say, I become overwhelmed and profoundly upset.

I am ashamed to have to say sorry for my sin of not having lived life... for having let it all go..... being so sorry about this..... really sorry. I become inconsolable with regret.

*She listens and does not reply.
When I finish my confession I
realise that I cannot see, that I
have lost my sight. My eyes are
glued together. I can't see. I
stumble to gather my bits and
pieces together, my bag, and my
jacket.*

*I am overcome and weary with
sorrow and regret. As I make my
way out of where I am, I see a
line of young people singing
Christmas Carols. I notice one
young boy in particular with a
peaked hat, has a distinctively
beautiful voice, which stands out
from the other voices.*

Abby's dream:

*I am walking on the top of this slightly little rise,
and then there is a ruin,
the wall of a monastery,
straight in front of me,
there is, um, a stone archway
obviously, part of the entrance,
And then I look at the archway
and it is actually swaying.
It is completely unstable.*

and very gently

I start to try and get down off the wall.

And when I look up at the archway and the wall,

I could see it was entirely made from-

shards of glass

And as I try to get down off the wall,

I hear the glass moving and crunching,

I get down off it,

walk into this area that is like, you know,

those kinds of car parks,

you see around national monuments,

I am then in my car,

but I am in the backseat-

behind the passenger's seat

There is nobody else in the car,

the next thing

I hear Nora screaming my name. "Abby"

I look out the window,

I see this-this....

It is actually a wrecker's yard I am in,

where they squash cars-

And, I am kind of stuck,

to the backseat

I try and- lean in to blow the horn,

but I-I know,

I can't reach it.

And the next thing

*I look up,
and I could just see this big claw
coming down- to take the car.
and it just.....*

These very powerful messages, warn us to stop “rejecting or failing to live one’s story” (Brewi and Brennan, 1999: 187) and invite us to travel with Orpheus, the poet of loss and mourning, with “a new beginning beckoning” (Rilke, 2009: 83). Jung describes how we “make a virtue of unchangeably clinging” (Jung, 1993: 106) to our entrenched “personal standpoints and social positions” (Jung, 1993: 106) in the first half of life, and consider these to “be eternally valid” (Jung, 1993: 103) ways of interpreting the world. His language describes our enmeshment in our inherited stories, advocates an alternative stance, with the “reversal of all the ideals and values we cherished in the morning” (Jung, 1993: 109), of our lives. These stories wait longingly to be told, but our resistance to embark on “the adventure of the special, dimly audible call, that comes to those whose ears are open within, as well as without” (Campbell, 2008: 16) as reflected in Abby’s post-dream vignette, struggle to be heard:

*And the first thing I said to myself is
"Gosh, I just have to get out of that project."
"Can't do that again."
Oh, that's a dream I'm never going to forget.*

Losing the language of ‘Self’

I have come to learn that our identities, formed by being storied by others, often become our frames of reference, and inform our understanding of ‘self’ through the language we use, firstly, by having found ourselves “being addressed by a language one never chose” (Butler, 2005: 53). My notion and indeed my understanding of ‘self’, as reflected in the language used by the romanticists of the nineteenth century, developmental and Jungian

psychology, formed the bedrock of my worldview. This philosophy, which ascribes qualities such as “passion, soul, creativity and moral fiber” (Gergen, 1991: 6) to the individual, was up-ended. I discovered that my notion of ‘self’, as ‘bounded’, is compounded by the language used in the psychological literature, in which I had immersed myself throughout my lifetime. It was also heightened by the “*obviousness*”, as Althusser (1971) calls it, of the *taken-for-granted*, essentialist religious ethos of a Catholic Church and a Catholic educational system mirroring each other. The language used was one which revered the ‘true self’, the essential ‘self’, embodying personal essences of depth, soul and interiority. I grew up with, and was immersed in, the language of the romantics, all of which served me well, providing a solid foundation from which to make meaning.

The Jungian lens - a language of meaning-making

Jungian psychology made a lasting impression on my life and one in which my *weltanschauung* became deeply embedded. I was at home in Jung’s psychological language, describing the world of the ‘self’, whose purpose in life is to become ‘integrated’, a process of fusing all the elements of the conscious and the unconscious worlds together. My worldview was permeated by the language of Jungian psychology. I basked in its meaningful explanations of our conscious and unconscious ‘selves’ and as a guide for living, and even dying, through his seemingly unflinching treatise on the *individuation* process, which traced our life’s purpose from infancy to death, through a process of integration.

I was enamoured and ‘filled’ by Jung’s language on the inner life of the person, with its emphasis on both the personal and collective unconscious, containing “contents” or “phenomena” (O’ Donnchadha, 2011: 14). These aspects of ourselves, “accidental inhibitions, fancies, moods, vague feelings, lost memories, dreams” (Jung, 1921: 797-

811), resonated with me, and nurtured and satiated my existential 'self'. O' Donnchadha (2011) states that, at some time, these aspects of ourselves seek expression, but are often denied or suppressed, perhaps through "some element in the person's environment" (2011: 14). These were the lenses through which I interpreted life's events and ones which had served me very well in responding to life's imponderable existential questions, up until my recent work in this study.

My initial exploration of this Orphic threshold space, between the first and the second half of life, focused on understanding and making sense of it, through the language of developmental and Jungian psychology. They formed the foundation of my epistemological position of the 'self' as a fixed, self-contained "bounded container" (Sampson, 2003: 123). They use words like, "a kind of tectonic pressure which builds from below" (Hollis, 1993: 17); an "outbreak", "an awakening" (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 12); "the psyche explodes" (Stein, 1983: 2); "the unconscious erupts" (Stein, 1983: 78; Heilbrun, 1988); and when the "inner forces are brewing and bubbling over" (Brehony, 1996: 19). The focus of its binaried language, describing our 'inner' experience, emphasises the limitation of the bounded essentialist self, "the very concept of personal essences" (Gergen, 1991: 7), which excludes the "plurality of voices" (Gergen, 1991: 7) and a relational perspective. Wittgenstein (1922) asserts that the limits of our language place boundaries on our world and lived experience.

Losing the old language

My stance about the concept of 'Self' as 'bounded' and essentialist, was reflected in the language I was using, in struggling to understand the experience of transitioning from the first half to the second half of life. My use of words reflected both a psychological and an essentialist language, through which I endeavoured to describe the 'nature' and 'essence' of the internal events of this mid-life phase of adult development, as "having

some definable and discoverable” (Burr, 1995: 6) meaning. I began to understand that perhaps I perceived myself as fundamentally alone, and separate from the ‘other’. The *dis-ease* that erupted from within had to be addressed in that context of ‘self’ only. My approach reflected the traditional psychological one of the ‘essentialist self’, where understanding is sought from ‘inside’ with its “own particular essence or nature” (Burr, 2015: 19) to the exclusion of any other possibilities. The language used provided meaningful explanations about our collective “inherited mode of functioning” (Jung, 1953-78: 1228), including “the family, social group, tribe and nation, by race and eventually by all of humanity” (Singer, 1972: 104).

Mourning the loss of a language

My introduction to social constructionism, with its emphasis on the language of multiplicity, shattered a very well-established *weltanschauung* of meaning-making. In becoming aware of my epistemological position which viewed the world almost exclusively through a psychological lens, I began to see that this essentialist language reflects a more limited and confining understanding of ‘self’. In contrast, social constructionism recognises the ‘self’, as both relational and a multiple being, “immersed in the continuous stream of relating” (Gergen, 2015: 117). I was faced with the challenge of abandoning my long-held Jungian meaning-making language and embracing a social constructionist perspective, in understanding this Orphic space.

I was confronted with the language of ‘self’ as a “bounded being” (Gergen, 2009: xiii). I was greatly disturbed, shocked and challenged when I began to consider the presumption that the ‘self’ as a separate, bounded entity (Gergen, 1991; 2009; 2015) is not a *given*. This turned my *worldview* upside down, as many of my major life influencers such as psychology and religion were now up for question and could no longer be relied upon for any certainty, as reflected in one of my journal entries:

Journal entry, July 2019.

Hamlet's response to his mother Gertrude comes to mind in response to letting go. (Hamlet, 1.2.77)"Seems," madam? Nay, it is; I know not "seems." This long held narrative which I had come to take for granted as the absolute had become identified with my identity. Like Orpheus, losing Eurydice to the underworld, I am now forced to let go of what I loved, let go of a way of understanding the world which made sense to me. I hear my mother tell me that there is no Santa, when Burr tells me, "that we are left with an empty person" (Burr, 1995:59), that "our subjective experience is provided by the discourses in which we are culturally embedded" (Burr, 1995:59). There is a sense of disbelief and sadness that I must lose what I thought was a perfectly legitimate stance and now the ground is being taken from under me and I must make space for other possibilities.

I had to deconstruct my long-established, fixed "claims to knowledge" (Gergen, 2015: 148), and pave the way for alternative perspectives and other ways of knowing, other than the single ideological base which defined the Truth of the romanticists and the modernists. This was a very painful process of shedding all that I had cherished and loved, as a means of explaining and giving meaning to my life. My grief and mourning of having to relinquish all that I had cherished for a lifetime, was devastating. I was bereft of my familiar language as I stood in this Orphic space, of losing all that I cherished in making sense and meaning of my life.

Journal entry, 25th July 2019.

Letting go, and Mourning

I see now that I am being challenged to consider a different perspective, which I had never previously considered -that I am a relational being; was born into a set of relationships, formed and constructed by them; embedded in them and "every intelligible action [is] born, sustained and or extinguished within the ongoing process of relationship" (Gergen, 2003: xv). We are never alone, a concept which flies in the face of the 'bounded self', in which I have believed all my life. This is a very disturbing insight and it means I have to let go of everything, I thought was valid and beyond question. I find myself asking 'do I have to let it go?' Like a child, I look to Gergen (1991) for solace- for an answer to tell me that the worldview which I have cherished has some merit. I thought my shedding of roles, responsibilities was painful and thought I had

nothing else to lose, but now I am asked to shed more...there will be nothing left anymore...nothing to stand on ...only an “empty person” (Burr, 1995: 59) and that “the self is a fiction” (Kerby, 1991:34). So, who am I anymore?

The Eurydician call

Eurydice challenges Orpheus’ “familiar life horizon” (Campbell, 2008: 43) and demands alternative possibilities for the future, to “achieve sacred union and not succumb to the tragedy of death and separation” (Bishop, 2011: 158). In our storied space, “the aside” (St. Pierre, 2018: 605), very often the soul of the work, unexpectedly shines through, becoming an “unlocking and [a] release again of the flow of life into the body of the world” (Campbell, 2008: 32), as our nuanced tellings of our storied selves emerge. We acknowledge that the past has served us well, but in losing *what* and *who* we were, “a necessary release valve, creating the cracks and fissures necessary to break through to another place and space of growth” (Spry, 2016: 76) awaits us, as echoed in an email from Abby:

Email from Abby, Mon 16/09/2019.

I spoke about the summer being a time where I was trying to find a balance. There was a sense of a further step being taken in letting go of my former role of being a mother who needed to protect and guide her children. The letting go creates a sense of sadness for a time that is past, but opens up a potentially rich time of relating to my children as adults, who are very capable of running their own lives. Really acknowledging this, and looking at them with new eyes. The liberation this gives and how the earlier protective role is being replaced by a more equal role of sharing, learning, and mainly enjoying each other’s company.

My sadness was reflected in a feeling that there was a well of tears that could spill over at the slightest prompting. There was also a feeling that while they were tears of sadness, they were healing tears, because their shedding, allowed space for a whole new era of getting to know my children in a different, more equal way. A way that is more about listening, really listening without feeling that I have to offer solutions. I’m beginning to understand what this means and it is freeing.

Abby reflects on her struggle of holding on to her long-held epistemological stance, which has served her well, but realises that “the past is no longer the past but a theft of the future” (Ahmed, 2014: 36):

*And thinking when COVID descended upon us first,
what I was thinking was,
well, I'm not going to waste this time-
and then I found myself saying,
"Two- two days have gone.
I-I-I have to nothing to show-
for these two days.
I've done nothing."*

Abby’s musings acknowledge the importance of telling and re-telling our stories as a means of “gaining insight into who you are and others are and finding a way to be in the world, that works for you” (Ellis, 2004: 296). Storytelling often becomes the symbol of healing, as cited by Pennebaker (2004), Chung and Pennebaker (2007), DeSalvo (1999), Frank (1995), and Stone (1996). This study offers opportunities for self-compassion and new understandings of our selves and perhaps others, though our shared reflective storytelling. Abby’s struggle to re-author herself in this threshold space finds its resonances in our shared stories of Orpheus’ inexorable loss of the invisible Eurydice. Abby describes her conflict about her commitment to her ongoing professional work, while her other Eurydician selves are calling to be heard:

*I was flaked on the bed,
and apologizing to my heart,
for the fact that it was racing,
and wouldn't stop racing,
because it was so tired,*

*doing all the work,
that I've asked it to do.
And then you terrify yourself that you've just gone that step too far.
And thankfully,
you're waking up in the morning-
and you're okay again,
and the cycle begins again.*

Losing a life, which was lived in the first half of life, calls for an invitation to mourn its passing, before being able to inhabit an *un-socially* constructed script, where “each of us would be able to defend and thus hold tight to a complex, idiosyncratic narrative of age identity” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 175), where each of our stories is recognised as valid.

An Invitation to mourn- responding to the Eurydician call

Standing on the threshold of time, between the first and the second half of life, our “mature adulthood” (Illeris, 2014: 90) becomes quite a distinctive stage in our life’s development. Culturally and socially, it is marked visibly by children leaving home, when we learn the pain of loss, becoming “remote spectators” (Beauvoir, 2006: 22) in our children’s lives, to “re-defining and delimiting the new relationship” (Oliver, 1988: 103). Butterfly and I ponder the challenges of our changing relationship with our children, highlighting our struggle of letting them go, while, at the same time, being supportive in an adult way:

*seeing them as adults
doing the support business
which you would say to,
a good friend,
You are emotionally attached,
And I suppose,*

*they have to make their own mistakes,
which is not that easy.*

Abby reflects on the complexities of losing our children to adulthood, and entering “new and uncharted relationship” (Oliver, 1982: 103) with them, “who are, and always will remain her “children” (1982: 103), even though we know that this is one of the great losses and gains of the second half of life. Tiger debates similar conflicts as Abby and Butterfly, with regard to letting the children go. Tiger acknowledges that, while she wants to her child go, it always involves rage and anger, on her part:

*I'm trying- well,
I'm trying,
but i-i-it evolves,
I-I couldn't say,
I'm trying like my child didn't contact,
make any contact since the fourth of July,
And I...I didn't send her a text,
"I'm dying here without you."
Now, last year, it would have been different,
I would have got into a rage,
"How dare she do that?" You know?
"I've paid for this trip," and-
and now, I sort of say,
Well, we reared her to be very independent,
and liberated," yeah,
"And off you go:"*

In the course of our moments of meeting, my co-re-searchers and I discover that we have to break old patterns and find a new language with our children, other than the

cultural, social authoritative, language which permeated our relationships with our parents, the remnants of which reverberated in our lived experience. Our conversations with our children become ‘moments of meeting’, where the language used, reflects meaningful interactions, instead of being ‘stuck’ in the fixed, parent/child roles:

Diary entry from Abby, 28/07/2019

I have discussed this with my two adult children, and almost immediately I noticed a difference in the way we were talking to each other. I revealed my own searching to them concerning this time of my life, my acknowledgment of their adulthood and how good it is to be able to discuss these things with them and get their insights, saying that I am very much a learner and am feeling and thinking my way through this. I think that this more equal sharing has been very liberating for each of us too.

The same old story

Orpheus’ tale of love, loss, dismemberment, and transformation mirrors another aspect of this journey into the second half of life. Mc Gahey (1994) declares that Orpheus’ only reason for descending into the underworld, is for his own personal gain (to retrieve Eurydice). He longed to resume his earlier social and cultural position “of the singer-musician, charming the animals, trees and minerals through his incantations” (Mc Gahey, 1994: 76), with Eurydice by his side. This Orphic tale tells how easy it is to be complicit in the dominant and deficit narrative of being ‘*over the hill*’ or *invisible*, arising from the “language and our use of it, far from simply describing the world, it both constructs the world, as we perceive it, and has real consequences” (Burr, 2003: 46).

Jung maintains that, when we “step into the afternoon of life” (Jung, 2005: 111), our lives cannot resemble our morning life’s story. This new unfolding story becomes a time to re-author our lives, by paying attention to the “spontaneous productions” of the unconscious, dreams, imagery, fantasies and musings (Storr, 1974: 86). It is a time to

become the critics of our stories in evaluating and interpreting them, to elicit new meaning. This “golden age” (Illeris, 2014: 89), when people have established a sense of identity, may afford an opportunity to examine their own perspectives and frames of reference. We may also have the chance to reinterpret our old experiences, through a new lens, and challenge the validity of the old paradigm and frames of reference (Taylor, 2008; Mezirow, 1991).

The language of the dominant discourse

Like Orpheus, standing on this threshold space, where life unfolds most unexpectedly, the second half of life discourses are often slow in revealing themselves to us, as we are so blind to their existence and so immersed in them. The assumption, of being ‘retired’ communicates, unknowingly, about being “rejected, tossed on to the scrap-heap” (Beauvoir, 2006: 10), and is almost a ‘given’. There is little consideration given for an alternative story, or perhaps even the unseen joy of living “with no imperatives, no kind of restraint” (Beauvoir, 2006: 10). However, we become acutely aware that the older generation have died. The starkness of our age group replacing them brings the frightening reality of living in the shadow of death, as reflected in my poem, following a cousin’s funeral:

*There was an acknowledgement among
us,
that we were next in line,
there was sadness about it too,
a shared knowingness
that one of us would be next
that made it poignant,
stark,
inevitable.*

our turn was coming

with no escape

Undoubtedly, this phase of adult development is marked by an awareness of life being more limited than previously considered. We may become ‘*umhal*’ (obedient to), once again, to the dominant language and discourses of decline, which seem to become heightened at events such as funerals. We may begin to believe in the regressive narrative of decline, allowing it to limit the possibilities of other potential stories. I note, from my journal, how this language, of being ‘culturally aged’, excavated a deep sadness in me, when I realised it was time to let it go:

Journal entry, 8th April 2020.

This morning, I am struggling with the impact of what the language of being ‘culturally aged’ has unearthed in me. I realise that I am vehemently resisting the stark reality of the inevitability of the second half of life. I have resisted this, battled with it for a long time now, as its impact on me is much greater, than at any other age related time- with my fast approaching sixty second birthday. When we are young, each birth-day year is embraced as a taken-for granted continuity of an ongoing life. Age doesn’t seem to make any difference!

However, as I approach sixty two, the horizon, though beautiful, is different. I like being sixty two, but it is tinged with sadness, because I have no control over how my ageing body will unfold.

I have to accept this reality, difficult as it is. I can talk about theories, looking backwards and indeed forwards, but I cannot stop the years barrelling along. It isn’t as if I want to re-live them. No! I love being the age I am, but I am sad, to have let all those years go and in letting them go, I mourn them. So maybe, in letting go of those lived years and not hanker after my loss of ‘youth’, I may allow myself to “weave a new shelter” (O’Donoghue, 2015: 150) for myself, instead of chasing after the dream of still imagining that I’m still in the first half of life.

*The pain of letting go,
of having to let go,
of losing,
of wanting to die,
of not wanting to die,
of being afraid to die,
of grieving because I have
to die.*

Tiger describes so beautifully her struggles, in coming to terms with the passing of time in her email below, highlighting how we are confronted with “and discover, what has always been there for us, but we have only known it with a passing glance over our shoulder, our temporal finitude” (Montero et al., 2013: xxi):

Email from Tiger, 28/02/2020

Dreams February 2020.

Can't believe that I've just written this date - How have we suddenly arrived at 2020. I saw a new title "Perception of Time" and I think I need to read it as I'm constantly musing about the changing perspective on time, as we grow older. Just when there seems to be a finite amount of time, it just seems to rush at such a pace and I just can't keep up. It's a bit like a young river that's rushing by, but when I was younger the stream moved along like an old river, without hurry, as it meandered to the sea. The irony is, that everything else in my life has slowed down, except for time. We last met on 6th February, 2020, I came away with lots of thoughts about living and dying and the meeting was clarifying for me, the thoughts of moving gently back and forth from being young, to being old, and embracing both.

My heart I think will be forever young but the rest of me declines daily. I feel it in my body as in spite of giving it more and more care, it grumbles more than ever. However, some days I'm totally free of aches and pains, and feel ever young again.

Knowing the two extremes I think accentuates the need to grasp what is good, but also I'm certain that I have no wish to go back to a younger age, as sixty offers a self-compassion and ease with life, that I couldn't imagine at forty, and I'm hoping that at 80 there will be gifts, that

I can't imagine from this vantage point.

However the question is what is it that I might need to cultivate more in me so that I can be transparent to the gifts that are offered at each stage of life?

The discursive language of ageing

Our choice of language has wider social implications, because it represents “our thinking to ourselves and influences the thinking of others” (Gullette-Morganroth, 2017: 251). As I probed into the language of being ‘aged’ by culture, I found myself becoming a firm ally of Morganroth-Gullette (1997), in rejecting the hegemonic narrative of ageing and treating “it with suspicion” (1997: 174). I appreciated the fire in her argument about the distorting nature of the decline narrative, which “denies us the possibility of a free creative process” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 175) in our journey towards ‘*becoming*’. While I accept her argument and worldview about resisting the cultural notion of ageing, I began to feel tired at having to battle against the cultural norm and pretend that the weight of each passing year was not impacting on me. In the course of our conversations, my *co-re-searchers* and I begin to discover that “ageist language invisibly spreads ageist thinking” (Gullette-Morganroth, 2017: 251), which becomes deeply socially and culturally embedded, in a particular perception of how people should ‘*be*’ (Garfinkel, 1967; Slattery, 2003). In other words, by using a particular language or ‘ethnomethods’ “reality generating practices” (Gergen, 2003: 3; Garfinkel, 1967), become ‘acceptable’ ways of describing a particular reality, like the second half of life. This conflict and struggle is reflected in these shared emails from Butterfly and Tiger:

Email from Butterfly, 3rd October 2019.

I don't want to feel I can't do physical things the way I always have been able to do them (similar to your experience) but hit me forcibly a number of times and continues to - not because I had any difficulty but I feel if I give in to any difficulty that might arise I am on a slippery slope to slowing down.

Email from Tiger, 08/12/2019

Hi Eileen.

I'm still struggling somewhat with my body. Some days I feel eighty and others days I'm just nineteen. I miss being on the golf course as I always feel nineteen, when I'm there and when I'm on my bike. I received that book "The Ageing Mind" but I'm a bit resistant about reading it and in a way, I don't really want to know about the decline. It deals with scientific measures of the change and research covers general populations which I think says nothing about one's individual trajectory. But I really get the fear around loss of capacity. At the moment I'm feeling really old in myself. I have just noticed that everything has fallen southwards, breast, stomach eyelids and the worst is my hair. I even bought a strong gel last week, but it still lacks the bounce it once had, and just falls flat making me look ten years older.

Email from Eileen to Tiger, 11/12/2019

Dear Tiger,

Thank you for your beautifully reflective email which was, as always, so moving and expressed so honestly your struggle with decline. I can assure you that your struggle with decline is also mine. I understand completely the disturbing and debilitating effect it has on our energy, and perhaps even more, on our sense of purpose and meaning, at this stage of our lives. I am not so sure about that book on 'The Ageing Mind' Tiger. I have now come to accept that nothing is definite anymore- not even scientific fact about the nature of things. I am wondering if this book tells a decline narrative rather than an evolving one, the latter, which entertains our own individual's unfolding narrative, rather than one imposed on us from some generalised cultural context!

*In the book I gave you, *The Saturated Self*, Gergen talks about everything being socially*

constructed, which would also bring us to challenge our notion of ageing. I have been really inspired and encouraged by Morganroth-Gullette, who writes about decline from this social constructionist point of view. She argues very vehemently, that we are aged by culture, and she challenges us, to “demystify midlife ageing, so that we can begin to imagine, experience and share a more vital, fair, bearable vision of the entire life course”. She calls for resistance to this cultural stance of ageing and says that we need to know how we are aged by culture, so that we can resist it.

For instance, if you think about the language, in which we have been embedded throughout our lives, about ageing. It is as if, we feel we have to 'fit into ' this universal script, - otherwise we are not normal!! Gullette calls this cultural norm of decline, our master narrative - so it's no wonder that you and I, and I imagine so many others, may struggle with its weight! But nobody stops and questions this "enemy" (Morganroth-Gullette) - we accept what we think is how things should be, when we reach a particular stage of life, but look at what it is doing to us!

So if age is socially constructed, who is to say what is acceptable or not- even the science of it? It definitely calls for a new story - not only for ourselves, but also a cultural one. I didn't realise or expect until last Friday, that as we look backwards, to story and re-story our youthful discourses, that I would be met with another obstacle of the ageist cultural discourse, even the medicalisation of it!

So, our conversations and emails may become moments of resistance, in searching for what we can do, to re-imagine a life unburdened by a decline discourse!! Morganroth -Gullette says that this takes courage, so it may call for our voices to be heard, to counter-story the existing narrative. This may call for a collective voice!! Like you, I refuse and resist, to be complicit with our cultural ageist discourses, having been complicit in all the discourses, of the first half of life, and I know now, how much these cost me!!

Morganroth-Gullette says, "that age theory asks people to practice a radical skepticism about all the cultural means of naturalizing the middle years". She says if we “locate ageing as our sorrowful essence”, this prevents us from looking for meaning elsewhere.... I am gripped and empowered by her alternative model of counter discourse, which offers a space to 'become' in whatever way we want to 'become', in the second half of our lives. I think she summarises it 'liberatingly' beautifully when she says" The idea that we might escape being aged by culture is breathtaking. And breathgiving. We can hardly begin to imagine living in such a future". She says that we would still have all the usual ups and downs but we would “wear” the changes differently.

We would no longer be standardised and Tiger's story, would be Tiger's, and my story

would be mine, "diverse and unroutinized", and would move from the certainty of the hegemonic social construct tells us to a more evolving one. So, the question is I suppose - how do we make meaning of this stage of our lives, where we are not weighed down by the toxic influence of how we should be?

I don't know why we haven't heard about the turmoil and turbulence of this threshold stage of our lives? Nobody talks about it- maybe it's not dramatic enough like the terrible two's tantrums or the adolescent's dramas!! Instead, we are meant to have reached the point of wisdom' altruism or whatever social constructs we are 'meant' to embody!! In silence!

Thank you Tiger!

xxxe

An Orphic and Eurydician language

The mythical presence of Orpheus and Eurydice, in the upper and lower worlds, invites a language of the *gap*, of the night and the day, to “awaken the soul to its forgotten inner melody and to connect the awakened soul to the song of creation” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 51). It invites us in our moments of meeting and in writing to embrace a multiplicity of linguistic and perspectival harmonies, to tell and re-tell our stories of love, loss, and mourning. It invites us to embrace “the place where knowing and not knowing touch” (Cixous, 1993: 38). Drawing on psychological and social constructionist language, we endeavour to “facilitate negotiation of the meaning system, within which “the problem” exists” (Gergen, 1991: 251), by making a space in the *gap*.

The Jungian language of our collective stories and dreams provides us with a meaningful language, to help explain our unfolding life-stories. It also offers an important insight and understanding into the turbulence, disruption, and de-railment of this Orphic experience, where our accepted cultural discourses become dis-lodged and de-constructed. Its richness helps furnish us with a language, to gain insight and understanding into our collective unconscious, which contains the legends, weight, and

unfinished business of the ancestors, which weigh on the present. These archetypes, or aspects of our common humanity, which represent universal patterns and images, all form part of the collective unconscious. They are inherited, universal, and shared by all people down through the generations and “have existed since the remotest times” (Jung, 1969: 5) and are embedded in our culture. We meet the “soul of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013:13), which calls us to mourn what was lost, but awaits our attention in storying this phase of adult development (Lorenz and Watkins, 2000),

Through attention to dream, image, spontaneous thought, feeling and intuition, previously unrecognized knowings and points of view emerge, which supplant controlling monological thought with a vibrant, multi-layered complexity of dialogue among many.

p.6.

Embracing an Orphic and Eurydician perspective, where all forms of knowledge and ways of being are valid, through multiple ways of knowing, enables us to tentatively adopt multiple ways of *becoming*, and “through this work we come to a partial understanding of who we are and what we can become” (O’ Grady, 2012: 124).

*But we soon found ourselves also
turning backward,
for the beautiful faces,
and songs,
that lift us forward
onto new ground,
keep calling out to us as well,
inciting us,
to rediscover,
and recover them,*

in whatever new thing gets made

(Scarry, 1998: 31).

Imperceptible *becomings*

This second Moment opens up a gateway to wonder, illuminated and darkened at times, as I travel on these unbidden pathways of exploration. I felt my childish excitement at being able to tell my story through autoethnography, at being able to finally “conceive a frontier, [and] already go beyond it” (O’ Donoghue, 2015:22), in search of meaning. On my journey through this Moment, I stumble in the darkness to feel the pain of “pressing the subject into subordination” (Butler, 1997: 3) and becoming separated from the landscape of my body, the ancestors, other ways of knowing and speaking. I see how I have become stranger to myself, and so not surprisingly, in this Moment, it was a struggle to let go of the familiar ‘What’ I had been, and begin the long painful journey of responding to the Eurydician question of ‘Who’.

Looking backwards

In this *Second Moment: Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation*, my co-re-searchers and I find ourselves as ‘border figures’, in the Orphic gap, looking backwards to re-view and re-gard our lived experience, in the first half of life. In our backward glance, we are called to release all that we loved and cherished from the first half, in our journey of re-searching and re-authoring the second half of our lives. Like Orpheus, who loses Eurydice, we are bereft at having to let go of, and lose what we cherished, our roles, identities, responsibilities, and language. In these epiphanic moments of release, an invitation to mourning presents itself. Our lives take a turn and we become railroaded by our dreams, as we let go of our hold on *who* and *what* we were. In this *Second Moment*, we find ourselves dispossessed, losing the significant ties with which we had

been constituted (Butler, 2006), and cast into the vulnerability and fragility of mourning and grief.

My *co-re-searchers* and I lingered in this Orphic space, where “the boundaries of the living and the dead are not clear” (Morgenson, 1992: 102). We storied our own inherited narratives, where we release the grip of their power over us, and in our re-storying, our ancestors who “stand directly behind us” (Morgenson, 1992: 103), may be also released from their bonds.

In storying and re-storying our inherited narratives, my *co-re-searchers* and I pondered how our ontological and epistemological positions become established, through our inherited language and knowledge. We recounted how we become “embedded in that language” (Butler, 2005: 30) through our interactions with others, which, in turn, establishes “a set of norms, concerning what will, and will not, constitute recognisability” (Butler, 2005: 30). We recounted the “effects of language on the shifting grains of ourselves” (Davies, 1945: 18) as we began to painfully deconstruct and mourn the loss of our long-held ontological and epistemological positions.

Finally, in our dialogues of mutual recognition, we stood in the vulnerability of this Orphic space, to face the unexpected wrath of an unanticipated master discourse, of being “aged by culture” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 212). We discovered that we were also complicit in its construction, by our use of language about age throughout our lives, but had come to realise its power, for the first time. Inspired by Morganroth-Gullette (1997), who argues for a social constructionist approach to resisting the dominant narrative of ageing, we found ourselves, struggling with the realities of a more limited life-span ahead of us. Losing and letting go of a life lived in the first half, heralds us to accept the loss, so that we can mourn it, and, in so doing, find new ways of ‘*becoming*’, in the second half.

Looking forwards

As we journey into our *Third Moment: Descending into the Work/Mourning*, I invite you to “tread softly” (Yeats, 1889) with my co-*re-searchers* and I, in our Orphic space, as we come face to face with the mourning process, in the presence of our ancestors, where “loss makes a tenuous “*we* of us all” (Butler, 2006: 20).

The Third Moment:

Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial

Interlude

Looking backwards

In the *Second Moment: Losing the Work/Mourning as Invitation*, my co-re-searchers and I entered the Orphic space, of betwixt and between, from where we took a backward glance. These enigmatic spaces, where the veil between the living and the dead almost touch, invigorated and animated us, to re-view, re-gard, deconstruct, and let go of “the ideals and values we cherished in the morning” (Jung, 2005: 109) of our lives. In this Orphic space, we were unexpectedly, brought face to face with the hegemonic discourse of old age, which challenged us to seek an alternative stance. However, holding the tension between letting go of ‘being aged by culture’, and acknowledging the inescapable reality of our lives being more limited than previously, demands losing a life ‘*that was*’. It heralds an acceptance that “the afternoon of human life must have a significance of its own, and cannot be merely an appendage to life’s morning” (Jung, 1993: 112).

We die with the dying:

See, they depart, and we go with them.

We are born with the dead:

See, they return, and bring us with them.

(Eliot, 1942).

Orpheus is overjoyed, as he guides his wife from the underworld, but utterly bereft when he looks backwards, and loses Eurydice for the second time. Desperate to retrieve what he loved, Orpheus turns again and runs back into the cave. Orpheus, the poet-singer, represents “the old and the new at once” (McGahey, 1994: 9), where we want to run back to retrieve what was once familiar and *taken-for-granted* from the first half of life, denying that life has inexorably changed and requires to be re-authored. We stand like Orpheus at the cave, derailed, “the routine of life dislocated” (Shimshon-Rubin et al., 2012:10), forlorn, despondent, and orphaned. Orpheus shouts Eurydice’s name across the dark, oily water, but there is no answer. We want to cling to our familiar stories to comfort us in our grief, while we continue to deny the reality of the loss (Freud, 1917), in having to re-author and re-imagine new ways of living in the second half of life.

Orpheus knows he cannot return to Hades. His endeavours to bring Eurydice back to the upper world are admirable, but he realises it is impossible. Like Orpheus, we are no longer standing on sure footholds and are, instead, “immersed in an emotional crisis” (Shimshon-Rubin et al., 2012: 10), where we look back longingly to ‘*what was*’, while we, perhaps, continue in our “refusal to let go of what has been lost” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 68). Mourning is “ultimately about love and connection” (Shimshon-Rubin et al., 2012: 4), which calls on us to disentangle ourselves from our attachment to what we loved and cherished.

From a psychoanalytic point of view, Kubler-Ross (1969) outlines five stages in the mourning process including, denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. Tattelbaum (1981) includes shock, suffering and disorganisation and reorganisation, though Morgenson (1992) emphasises that “the inner world of mourning is as unique as the fingerprints of the deceased” (1992: 102). His (1992) view highlights

how the prescribed, defined, linear language, and “standardized measures” (Shimshon-Rubin et al., 2017: 84), outlined by Kubler-Ross and Tatelbaum, may be inadequate to describe the grief of this transition phase of adult development. Silverman and Klass (1996) posit that, “rather than emphasizing letting go, the emphasis should be on negotiating and renegotiating the meaning of the loss over time” (1996: 19). Our grief and mourning in this Orphic space acknowledge the flexibility of “a multitude of paths through grief with no clear end or resolution” (Walter, 1999: 200; Silverman and Nickman, 1996), which “search for an appreciative understanding of grief, within a cultural context” (Stroebe et al., 1992: 1211). In other words, our grief and mourning find their meaning in understanding our cultural and social milieu, from which they emerge and find expression.

Looking forwards

In this *Moment of Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial*, I invite you to accompany my co-re-searchers and I once again on our journey, this time as we descend into the work of embracing the second half of our lives. We reflect on our stories of grieving and mourning our losses, as we stand on this threshold. I re-view old Orphic essentialist ontological and epistemological stances, our attempts to hold on to these cherished edifices, before being challenged to let them go, to accommodate new Eurydician alternatives.

In making this Orphic journey, we carry the weight of our losses, and are called to mourn as “part of an adjustment and healing process, following loss” (Shimshon-Rubin et al., 2012: 12). We are challenged to confront a new unfolding future story, where perhaps the stories of the past need to be re-imagined. Like Orpheus, we cannot return to the stories which sustained and scaffolded us, but our gaze is drawn to re-finding Eurydice in the underworld, heralding new beginnings. We mourn for ourselves, as we

look backwards and find ourselves like Orpheus, denying our devastating loss of the *who* we were.

Orpheus defies all the odds, in finding ways to gain access to the underworld. His denial about losing Eurydice is reflected in his single-minded determination, to use all his charm and enchanting music to transfix all those he meets along the way, including the ferocious, three-headed dog, Cerberus, and Hades and Persephone, to *re-store* what once was. As we journey into the second half of life, we bring with us, like Orpheus, our embodied grief in the weight of our losses, but often continue to deny mourning them, grieving for ourselves while still holding on to what has been lost. In carrying the weight of our mourning, we may also embrace the unfinished business of our ancestors, which continues to “underpin our lives” (Morgenson, 1992: xi).

Signposts for the Moment

In this *Moment*, my *co-re-searchers* and I experience the process of descending into the work “as a full flesh-and blood human being” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 71). We are caught in this betwixt and between place, of the living and the dead, a place of vulnerability, grief and mourning, and of no definite identity. Like Orpheus grieving Eurydice, “the abandoned lover’s thoughts are constantly with the lost one” (Walter, 1999: 19), as we look backwards and struggle to let go of the first part of our lives. Initially, I ponder my own struggle to attend to this *Moment*, which calls on us to pay attention to the second half of life. I become stuck in this place of mourning for a while, until I begin to unravel my own relationship with and experience of it, with its focus on interiority.

I reflect on, and story, how we deny ourselves grieving our old Orphic *essentialist* ontological and epistemological stances. Our grief, ‘bounded’ by an *essentialist* language of mourning, is situated within the person, “with a strong cultural emphasis on individualism” (Neimeyer et al., 2002: 236). In this *essentialist* place, we are solaced

and comforted by the certainty of Worden (2008) and Tatelbaum's (1981) defined tasks, associated with the psychological mourning process. I ponder how this essentialist approach to mourning impacts how we story our experience of loss, from this Orphic position, and how in the telling and re-telling, it becomes transformed. This Orphic *re-search* space calls us into the work, through our own "embodied presence" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 71), heralded by "discordant symptoms" (Hollis, 2005: 19), in the shape of dreams, persistent physical symptoms and other embodied ways of knowing, as a means of facing the reality of mourning.

My *co-re-searchers* and I share stories of resistance and denial, of the potential of being transformed by our loss, through the mourning process. We reflect on our lived experience of our descent into mourning, initially manifesting itself as denial, in "refusing to let go of what has been lost" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 68). We narrate how we resist the invitation and deny "the full measure of grief" (Tatelbaum, 1981: 8) for a very long time, until the volcano is beyond containment. This Orphic position highlights this emerging tension, in our struggle of confronting our stories about denying mourning.

In this space of betwixt and between, where Orpheus melds the old and the new, we re-story and give voice to mourning, not simply as a "psychological response to any loss or change" (Volkan and Zintl, 2015: 2), but as a means of embracing a range of alternative perspectives. Essentialism and social constructionism are fused together in this Orphic space, where the new and the old are negotiated, to accommodate unfolding Eurydician possibilities for living. I draw on the social constructionist understanding of grief and mourning, as postulated by Neimeyer (2002, 2010) and Attig (1996), advocating that mourning is contemplated and understood in the social context, thus challenging the linear, essentialist view. I ponder how we may deny the reality of mourning, perhaps because of those resonances from our inherited cultural stories. In storying our denial,

we also catch glimpses of our ancestors' ones, "which they pass along to us" (Morgenson, 1992: xv) for both *our* attention and theirs.

At the gap

I was drawn like Orpheus, to the door, opening into Hades' realm, which embraces mourning and grief in the face of loss, but I struggle with how to write about my experience of mourning, as I enter this *Third Moment: Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial*:

Journal entry, 24th April 2020.

I am not able to settle into this Moment. I know I feel disconnected, almost like Orpheus and Eurydice being separated from each other. I don't know what to do. I feel stuck but then realise that perhaps I am stuck in denying my own mourning. I turn to the literature to seek clarity and insight into my resistance. I am brought to Bowlby's attachment theory, which resonates and clambers to be heard. "Failure to mourn is the emotional equivalent of failing not to care for a broken leg" (Volkan and Zintl, 2015: 66). I recognise my life story in the image of not caring for the broken leg, and in the cultural context in which this has happened, where only stoicism was valued above any expression of grief, sadness or upset. Deutsch (1937: 2) states that this concept of "absence of grief", is not so much about a person denying grief, but rather denying "the emotions connected to it" (Volkan and Zintl, 2015:66). It is liberating to recognise myself in Bowlby's (1998) mirror below, of how "the grain of ourselves is not so separate from the landscapes in which we are enfolded" (Davies, 1945: 61) and how the impact of its story continues to manifest itself in our living (Bowlby, 1998):

Adults who show prolonged absences of conscious grieving are commonly self-sufficient people, proud of their independence and self-control, scornful of sentiment; tears they regard as a weakness. After a loss, they take pride in carrying on as though nothing had happened, are busy and efficient and may appear to be coping splendidly.....Although these stoics will not permit any discussion of their sorrow, Bowlby notes, they often become deeply concerned with the welfare of others, becoming what he terms "a compulsive caregiver," giving to others the tenderness which they deny themselves. Because those suffering from absence of grief are surface stoics, it is hard to gauge just how many of us utilize such defenses.

p.153.

The ontological and epistemological stories from the landscape of my childhood are unexpectedly challenged, by my apparent dis-connection with my lived experience of mourning. My acquired collective ancestral stories of stoicism, like those of my *co-researchers*, become the lens, through which we see and experience the world. We clothed ourselves in a web of “reflexive stratagems, whose purpose is to manage one’s anxieties and to get one’s needs met” (Hollis, 2013: 31). In other words, everything derives from our ancestral history, so like Macon, in Anne Tyler’s, *‘The Accidental Tourist’*, who wants “to slip through life unchanged” (2017: 142). Arriving at this *Third Orphic Moment* invites an alternative perspective, of de-constructing of the experience and language of mourning, loss, and grief and perhaps that of our ancestors too.

Orpheus’ mourning, for ‘what was’

Orpheus’ inconsolable grief prompted him to risk the perils of being devoured by Cerberus, who guarded the gates of the underworld, while in search of Eurydice. In this space between the upper and underworld, he tries to salvage what he once had cherished with Eurydice, but of course fails in his efforts to re-store it, losing her for the second time. Similarly, taking the courage to stand on the threshold has become an epiphanic moment, to question how we create meaning, as we transition into the second half of life. Our exploration in this Orphic space, is characterised by shedding all the roles and identities from the first half, to becoming *other* than *who* we were, and, in so doing, changing our priorities (Gawande, 2015), for the second half.

Mourning ‘what was’, in the first half of life

Undertaking my study at this time of my life has highlighted my need to “break our old shapes and burst forth into new ones” (Davies, 1992: 75). In adopting our ‘positioning’ (Davies and Harré, 1990) posture, we take on the mantle of our ‘subject positions’, in

inheriting a host of pre-written expectations, possibilities and limitations, about behaviours which are acceptable or not. We are taken up into the discourses of our time and “cannot avoid these subject positions” (Burr, 1995: 142). In being shaped and inscribed by them, their effect upon us emotionally, cognitively, and physically is profound. We become enveloped in the labyrinth of their stories becoming our stories, their language becoming our language, and their “trusted patterns of living” (Gergen, 2015: 12) becoming deeply embedded in our ontological and epistemological stances.

As we look backwards from our Orphic position, we find it very disconcerting and unsettling, to have to de-construct and break away from old shapes, identities, and language, which were “produced by socially and culturally available discourses” (Burr, 1995: 140). Our complicity in adopting these ‘invisible’ discourses as our own, which Althusser (2004) calls ideologies, becomes a major challenge when we either assume or resist them. This means that we are both actors with voices, in the discourse *play*, but we are also “products” (Burr, 1995: 153) of it. In this case, one set of narratives becomes all embracing, physically, emotionally and cognitively, while others become marginalised, repressed but still inscribed on our bodies. We deny the language of loss and mourning, “as we inquire into what traditions or values are silenced, oppressed or annihilated by a given tradition or construction” (Gergen, 2015: 29).

It is, perhaps, in our reflexive conversations and moments of meeting, that we become aware how “an encounter with an other effects a transformation of the self from which there is no return” (Butler, 2005: 28). In other words, through our engagement with each other, the certainty of our constituted selves is disrupted, “especially when the winds of some deep sorrow whistle through the cracks in the walls of meaning we build to deal with suffering, pain, absence, loss and grief” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 77). Abby reflects on her struggle, to break free from her own “deeply scripted” (Covey, 2004: 245) frames of

reference, to tentatively acknowledging other silenced embodied feelings, which could easily be repressed:

*instead of acknowledging the fact,
that I want to cry my eyes out-
it is terribly sad and everything.
Okay, how do I deal with this?
So that gets pushed to the side.
So it's-it's actually important to let,
to let, - to let that happen.
And Mary says to me,
"Now sometimes I just want to rant"
So, well, that's it
I know how to fix it,
I-I know what to do.
I suppose me seeing the rant as irrelevant,
it's how to- how to sort the thing out.
I think maybe that's part of being older,
because you know that feeling,
yes, that feeling is there,
but you still have to do something about it
to retrieve the situation,
yes you can feel sad, upset, stupid, embarrassed,
or whatever you feel,
and the next step then
is, well,
how do- how do I deal with the situation,
that has made me feel like that?*

*because I think it's,
and again,
it is a lifetime of people bringing problems to you,
and you have to sort them out.*

Abby's awareness of her unfolding *other* story, as she grapples to honour others' account of herself, while "struggling for something else as well" (Butler, 2006: 27), highlights her emerging chrysalis selves. The language of our ancestral voices, "implanted in early life" (Riessman, 1950: 15), finds resonances in Abby's struggle of "maintaining a delicate balance between the demands upon her of her life goal, and the buffetings of her external environment" (Riessman, 1950: 16). The collision between being enmeshed and complicit in our dominant narratives, and negotiating our sense of agency, "emana[ting] from a corporeal body that exists within a sociopolitical context" (Spry, 2016: 37), calls us to challenge the power of our entanglements and our *complexes*.

Tiger reflects on her traumatic experience of her father's untimely death when she was nineteen years old, and the utter devastation and loss she felt. She tells of her struggle to separate herself from the weight of her mother's life-long story of grief, endeavouring to de-construct and extricate herself from this regressive, confining parental narrative, to *becoming* transformed in her "active narration"(Holstein and Gubrium, 2000: 106):

*And I just had this moment to thinking,
"Look out there now,
look at your house,
look at your life
and for God's sake, come out of that old story," [chuckles]
Cause I always told the story of,
"this was the worst thing that could have happened to me,"*

you know? It was like a sentence
No, I-I-I know, I felt, uh,
I felt like, uh,
this was a bit of,
um, a shift inside me of just positivity,
you know?
Of saying,
"Well, if you dwell on that,
then you're just becoming her."
"You know, that's just what she would do.
That's what she would do,
did with the latter part of her life.
So, wake up, smell the roses,,"

Our conversations become moments of healing, where we re-story ourselves “from the un/comfortable risk and intimacy of dialogue, from the vulnerable and liminal in-between-ness of self/other/context” (Spry, 2011: 106), which invites us to “*move and live* into the world” (Adams et al., 2013: 669) with each other, but also with our ancestors. I begin to see how “the woman I needed to call my mother was silenced before I was born” (Rich, 1975: 28). I learn how I inhabited and replicated her inscribed invisibility from her “human dramas of discourse and social practices” (Schrag, 2003: 138) for a life-time, which weighed heavily on me, eventually leading me into this work. Jung suggests that the greatest weight a child can carry is “wherever a parent was stuck in his or her individuation [which then] becomes an internalized paradigm for the child” (Hollis, 2001: 72). In other words, it seems as if the child’s unfolding life story becomes inextricably tied up with the parent’s un-lived one, in which s/he may become stuck “until it is flushed out in the full light of consciousness” (Hollis, 2013: xvii), as reflected by Tiger:

Okay, that life has been tough.

Um, but like,

am I going to dwell on the toughness of losing my dad ,

and being left with a depressed mother for most of my life,

Or am I going to see it,

as resourceful

and-and that's

and that's the individual choice,

isn't it?

Because it's off putting for people,

the depressive position,

but it's really

the depressive position

is when we can hold the good and the bad,

and something,

and develop our capacity for mourning,

and move on from it.

In this Orphic space, we are awakened to our loss and our expression of it, as we attend to the “weight and wait of history, so that what has been lost might be re-membered, so that what is unfinished, might be attempted again” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 119). Our work on this threshold space, calls us to attend to “this neglected, wounded inner child of the past” (Brehony, 1996: 193), so that we can “change the meanings [we] attach to things and events to reconstrue [our] world” (Jourard, 1971: 99). Tiger’s vignette highlights how, in taking responsibility for our own unfolding *becoming* in this Orphic space, we learn that “there is an adult potentially able to take responsibility for that child” (Brehony, 1996: 167).

Disrupting ontological and epistemological footholds

Standing on this threshold space, my life-long ontological and epistemological stances were completely up-ended, “because other ways of understanding how knowledge is produced and alternative ways of making meaning in the world opened up for me” (O’Grady, 2012: 91). Like Orpheus, all that served me well in the first half, seemed inadequate and insufficient to carry me forward to embrace the Eurydician world, of the second half of life. I was at home in the romanticist and the traditional psychological notion of an *essentialist* self, an *authentic* self, until embarking on this study. Its focus resting firmly on the notion of self, being “constituted by a certain sense of inwardness” (Taylor, 1989: 111), regarding any phenomena. I was very familiar with the language of the ‘inside’, which held the worlds of feelings, thoughts, and ideas ‘within us,’ and the objects in the world, existing ‘on the outside’ (Crossley, 2000: 18). I had spent much of my life reading psychology and spiritual books, endeavouring to understand the existential ‘nature’ of our lives and privileging ‘self’, in what Geertz (1979) describes as:

The Western conception of a person as a bounded, unique, more-or-less integrated motivational and cognitive universe, a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgement and action, organized into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against a social and natural background.

p.229.

I believed that the language of the bounded self was the only way to make meaning of the world, and one which wove its way into the tapestry of my research; my claim to knowledge; questions; style of writing and analysis.

Mourning, at letting go

I was bereft and distressed at having to let go of a lifelong identity, a story, and the language to tell that story. I felt the weight of the sorrow of having to relinquish the scaffolding, which had ‘held’ me safely, and served me well, for a lifetime. Like Orpheus, I wanted to deny a new emerging reality and was desperate to cling on to what I knew, though Eurydice was beckoning in the horizon. My sorrow was an embodied one, as I grieved for myself, in negotiating letting go of my ‘provisional’ identity. I desperately wanted to hold on to how the “world is interpreted and made personally meaningful” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 477) and how our “subjective positions”, our “life history and personal experiences” (Chiseri and Sunstein, 1997: 58) belong to me, rather than being constructed through our relationality. However, the collision of the ingrained “patterns of our ancestors” (Johnson, 2007: 9) continued to cause ruptures on the surface, of what was emerging in this transition space, towards the second half of life. This dual work of redemption, of the living and the dead, where we “overthrow such noxious stuckness” (Hollis, 2013: 4), opens the timely portal of redemption both for ourselves and our ancestors.

Denying alternative perspectives

I had never imagined that we could be “discursively constituted” (Davies, 1945: 23) and how we could be products of our cultural discourses. I assumed that, though these existed ‘externally’, my sense of ‘self’ manifested “a sense of constancy and unity over time” (Crossley, 2000:18). I was devastated to discover that the concept of the ‘self’ has “no internal sovereign territory” (Bakhtin, 1984: 287), or “presence, wherein is lodged the ultimate guarantor of unified meaning” (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 64). In other words, I was disturbed and deeply unsettled by the notion that ideas, personal choices, decisions, and attitudes are constantly being re-constructed by the multiplicity of social

contexts, in which we find ourselves (Burr, 2003). The theory, postulated by the social constructionists, that our identity is influenced by the effects of the multiplicity of relationships we have with others, was challenging to embrace. I found myself in the first stage of the mourning process, of defiant denial, as described by Kubler-Ross (1969), as I vehemently clutched the familiar language of the ‘self’, as a fixed, self-contained “bounded container” (Sampson, 2003: 123).

An Orphic essentialist mourning

While I grieve the loss of my ontological and epistemological positions, I discover my mourning reflects an *essentialist* stance, born, nurtured in the “investments in social norms” (Ahmed, 2014: 196) and based on the “presumption of interiority” (2014: 8). It reflects that inextricable connection between the cultural context and our expression of emotion, which in my case was a private, personal matter. I could identify with Kübler-Ross’ (1995) psychoanalytic ‘stage theory’ approach to mourning, where grief proceeded along a series of prescriptive, predictable stages, further enhanced by Worden (2008) and Tatelbaum’s (1981) mourning *maps*. Their premise includes accepting the reality of the loss; working through the pain of grief and suffering and adjusting to the world. While these roadmaps at some level are helpful, the emphasis rests completely ‘within’ the person, coming from “without and moving inward” (Ahmed, 2014: 9), as described so beautifully by Kübler-Ross’ words (1995),

that you will not grow if you sit in a beautiful flower garden, but you will grow if you are sick, if you are in pain, if you experience losses and if you do not put your head in the sand, but take the pain and learn to accept it, not as a curse or a punishment, but as a gift to you with a very specific purpose.

p.35.

Our experience of how we have learned to mourn often echoes our ancestral experiences of denying grief and mourning. In my case, and that of my *co-re-searchers*, our experience of growing up in the tough emotional landscape of stoicism and ‘stiff upper lip’ was comforted by the “*God is good*” or “*sure offer it up*” mantra, in the face of life and death. It is only when we recount our inscribed stories of loss and mourning, “the more author-ity we have over the storying and re-storying of our own lives” (Randall, 1995: 281), the greater the potential for our personal expansion.

Mourning for myself, denying the loss of the old

In this betwixt and between space, where the old Orphic essentialist view melds with a Eurydician social constructionist one, the latter which gives us a new perspective on meaning-making, and understanding ourselves, totally upended my world. I found it very difficult to accept that the ‘self’ “is essentially a social structure and it arises in social experience”, asserting that we cannot understand the ‘self’, “outside of social experience” (Mead, 1934: 140; Taylor, 1989; Crossley, 2000), as reflected in my journal entry:

Journal entry, August 2019.

I am deeply challenged by social constructionist theory which I have been reading and digesting. I am challenged because my notion of ‘self’ has been upended. This is an enormous paradigm shift, from thinking about ‘myself’ as ‘self’ – me, separate from others. I found this troubling and disturbing because I recognised that this was how I ‘saw’ the world, lived in the world- that I was a separate entity, the centre of the universe, as Gergen would say!

This was possibly the most meaningful lens I found to help explain the ‘self’. My notion of ‘self’ was the self-contained one, in terms of its own processes and had tendrils to the outer world through the collective unconscious, with the shadow, the anima and the animus. I was at home with Muncy’s (2011) premise, that part of the ‘self’ interacts

with the outside world, while another part is a “private inner world of thoughts, feelings which we share if we choose to” (Muncy, 2010: 11). Instead, Gergen says, that even if I am alone, I’m relational. I just can’t believe this! I have thought about it, and of course, it makes sense, but this concept never entered my thinking before. My life is now up-ended and I realise that I needed a considerable amount of time to come to terms with it. I have been so at home with the ‘essential’ self and surely it has some merit.

While social constructionism offers a very valuable and critical insight into how we are shaped and impacted by our social milieu and offers potentially new ways of understanding and re-viewing our experience, I find it “requires a transformation in one’s relation” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 67), to what has been lost in this liminal space of uncertainty and vulnerability. It calls for a ‘re-surfacing’, letting air into the tight cracks and fissures of the impacted toughened inherited cultural stance. Narrating the reconstruction of our stories, from this threshold position, calls on my *co-re-searchers* and I to give voice to the silenced, marginalised, and repressed stories of the past. The concept of multiplicity heralds an enormous instability, an unnerving and an unsettling disruption to the *taken-for-grantedness* of our accustomed inherited language, constituting our beliefs, definitions of truth, and knowledge. However, we are comforted by Gergen’s (2015) reassurance that our *taken-for-grantedness* has merit, and provides us with the scaffolding for living in a society, while, at the same time, acknowledging that it may become a noose to hold us, “green and dying” (Thomas, 1953).

In the Orphic gap of *becoming*.

In this ‘reveried’, dialogical space, which my *co-re-searchers* and I share, we begin to discover that our mourning is, no longer an ‘inside’ or a solitary experience, but “stretches backwards to our ancestors and forwards into future generations” (Morgenson, 1992: xv). We begin to realise that we are “manifestations of relatedness”

(Gergen, 1991: 170), and our shared stories highlight how “the phenomena of loss, grief, and mourning are permeated with meaning” (Neimeyer et al., 2002: 235), which “both celebrates and grieves our precarious lives” (Stanescu, 2012: 580). During our conspiratorial conversations (Barone, 2008: 39), we look inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards. As Morgenson (1992) notes,

we offer the dead the fruits of our struggle and in empathizing with them in the pain of their unresolved conflicts, we gain insights into the direction and meaning of our own lives.

p.113.

The work of mourning the losses of the first half of life calls us to fully grieve them. However, in so doing, we may come to realise that it “is shaped by multiple sociocultural factors” (Harris and Bordere, 2016: 22). Our ancestors’ stories of mourning, of denying mourning, “may be mixed up with ours” (Morgenson, 1992: 102) but await expression, opening both us and them “up to other vibrations of consciousness, other realities and the energies of other beings” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 69). Tiger tells how her experience of losing and loss is always connected with rage, as reflected in her experience of her child and herself separating:

*Oh my rage-rage is
always around disappointment and loss,
at the seed of it,
is disappointment and loss.
think how she separates from me,
is in the rage.
And it's liberating.
It's always in the rage-
But, she'll do it-*

through a fight.

You know one of the values of getting older,

is you can see the trajectory, can't you?

Of the anger.

The disappointment.

The loss.

The mourning,

What we're doing today,

Making,

Putting some sort of construction on it.

Like that quote about the theory,

The making sense of things—

To understand it,

in some way.

In telling and re-telling our stories, we confront “dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders” (Tierney, 1998: 66). Tiger recognises how she is enmeshed in her mother’s un-named loss and mourning, which continues to reverberate and pulsate through her own body:

I'm being immersed in her sense of loss,

like ever-present,

on my memories of her grieving.

Grieving,

before a succession of deaths ever happened,

you know.

Like some of my young earliest memories,

are of her crying,

*and not knowing what to do with her,
Um, and she'd always attribute the crying,
to a loss of some sort,
but I did just think,
she was full of loss anyway
And then looking at,
how can I mourn in a way,
No, I don't think she ever mourned,
I think it is grief.
Frozen grief.*

In our moments of meeting, we “re-story and re-interpret the stories of our lives” (Kalmbach- Phillips et al., 2009: 1457) and tentatively begin to disrupt our essentialist responses, unshackling ourselves from our internalised paradigms of the past. Tiger recognises the weight and echoes of the ancestral history, as her child upbraids her for being ‘*melodramatic*’ about expressing her hurt. On hearing this rebuff, Tiger is hurled back to her father’s dismissal of her *hysterical* expression of grief, at the death of her aunt. Tiger acknowledges the possible threads of ancestry as she says that her child is “*like my Dad she is, you know, uh, very practical*”. However, despite the weight of her mother’s mourning, she is able to distil the value of witnessing her mother being able to grieve. She understands the language of grief but is also able to recognise the limitations in her father’s stance of denying grief, mirroring my own story, and that of my co-researchers, and indeed perhaps the cultural and social landscape of that time in Ireland:

*Yeah. And that's where my mom taught me about grief,
And, uh, there's a gift in that.*

Like Orpheus, standing in the gap, between the upper and the underworld, “a nether world, neither between sleep and wakefulness, a place where you are neither in dream

nor fully in the world” (Romanyshyn,1999: 31), we slip away from our usual moorings, roles, and identities, inhabiting a place of fragility and vulnerability, like Tiger’s mother. There is, indeed, a profound wisdom in being able to recognise this place of mourning, so beautifully portrayed by Tiger:

Mourning liberates my soul and brings me to an edge

that I wouldn't want to lose,

A connection with the moon,

animals,

people,

sport,

life,

God,

the Divine

it goes on...

in fact it is liberating,

but it's only liberating,

when there is reverie with it,

and to move to reverie requires melancholia.

Oh, the gift of melancholia and the creativity,

buried deep in its well.

(Oct, 2019).

However, when we become frozen and stuck in it, “as the victim of [our] heredity” (Jourard,1971: 170), our ontological and epistemological stances also remains stuck, but

so too perhaps the child, who carries the burden, until like Orpheus in his descent, “we separate who we are from what we have acquired” (Hollis, 1993: 97):

In conversation with Tiger:

Eileen: How do you-...

how do you become unstuck in that...

where you have echoes from the past,

that come into the present?

Tiger: Mm. I'm not sure.

Well, the awareness is huge, you know.

just to see it,

I never thought I could re-story it,

because as I wrote about mourning,

I was re- re-storying it,

yeah...because I was seeing it as balance...um.

It's the balance ...

like if my mother at my age,

was to recall...

a very painful experience in her life,

it wouldn't have been calibrated in any way,

so she'd be totally overwhelmed,

when she'd tell it again,

you know.

Tiger's Eurydician journey of 'calibrating' her mourning through telling and re-telling her story of inherited grief, opens up *lines of flight*, expanding a larger picture in our partial understanding of our selves, by honouring the child who “will arouse primitive

longings in an adult for unfulfilled desires that have been lost in adaptation to civilization” (Moore, 1992: 53).

Similarly, Abby tells of how “overlapping and competing discourses make possible twists and detours of subjectivity, fissures in our self-fictions, and emergence into other spaces” (Kalmbach-Phillips et al., 2009: 1457) occur, as a result of an upcoming significant public event in her life. However, with the onset of Covid-19, this event was cancelled. Abby’s embodied response of rage of “*thumping*” on her walk and how “*the following morning, I woke up and I was still thumping*”, declared her unvoiced disappointment. In constructing and re-constructing ourselves, “as subjects of knowledge through language” (Gannett, 1992: 178), her story with its rhizomatic tendrils, is “filled with narrative fragments enacted in storied moments in time and space” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 17), from the past, present and future.

Instead of responding to her disappointment through the lens of being stuck in her inscribed cultural script, which she describes as “*trying to fight the feeling and pressing it down, ignoring it and pretending it wasn’t there*”, she disrupts it, to “*just sit with that feeling*”, allowing her grieving voice to emerge. In this story of *becoming*, Abby moves from her Orphic place in the present moment of “imaginatively constructing an identity for the future” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 17), where she says “*it’s actually okay to be disappointed in something*”, while wrestling with the persistent dismissive ancestral voices, which attempt to sabotage and diminish her feeling of disappointment and “summons to live” (Hollis, 2013: 66):

I can hear,

This is not just the little voice in your head.

I can actually hear the voices

Saying what?

"Oh would you ever you ever get....."

"But you're damn lucky,

that you didn't get ill."

Our old stories, like Abby's, where "our childhoods leave us in stories we never found a way to voice, because no one helped us to find the words" (Grosz, 2014: 10) to articulate what needs expression, are left "marginalized or otherwise neglected" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 270). In this fragile, vulnerable Orphic space, we begin the journey of un-forgetting and find the language "of mourning, that knows about what is lost, left behind and still waits for our attention" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 313). My *co-researchers* have been instrumental in my journey of re-authoring, which has "been in continual flux" (Ellingson, 2017: 25) as I struggled to re-find words to give voice to the silenced and the invisible.

In the course of our conversations and written communications, my *co-researchers* help to furnish me with a language "to see things differently- in terms of what they might become rather than as they currently are" (Martin and Kamberelis, 2013: 670) and provided me with '*lines of flight*' out of the stuckness of my inherited ontological and epistemological patterns. My emails with Tiger reflect my gradual movement from the "powerful illusory discourses of fixity and stability" (Martin and Kamberelis, 2013: 670) of mourning, to embracing a language and ontology of *becoming*:

Email from Tiger, 29th September 2019

Hi Eileen,

Thinking of you today in the wake of T's return to Melbourne. Isn't life just such a series of loss mourning and rising up again. The price we pay for attachments is exorbitant but would we have it any other way?

Email to Tiger, 01/10/2019

Good morning Tiger,

*I found myself becoming upset with the power of the language you used, on how I was feeling, which for the first time, helped me to recognise that I **was** mourning T's loss! I had never thought about it like that before, always thinking that mourning, only as a response to the death of someone close. I don't think I fully appreciated that life is a series of losses. I never used that kind of language, to describe the pain of life's losses, like closing the first chapter of my life, the boys' leaving, relinquishing my long-standing mother role. So you are so right about 'life being such a series of losses, mourning and rising up again'. Yesterday when I returned from the airport, I absorbed my grief in busyness, something I have always done, in times of loss.*

I am always reminded of Séan O Riordáin's poem "Oiche Nollag na mBan" (Women's Christmas) when I go 'mad' with busy-ness to cover up, press down the sadness that might want to well up. So your text yesterday and your most touching email reminded me that I am grieving and gave me permission to do so! I would have brushed it off in the past and just 'kept going' and never acknowledged its presence or its need to be recognised.

I was also thinking yesterday, that when you named 'loss' and 'mourning' (in your text and email), it invites me to accept that I am grieving and invites me into a place of compassion and gentleness, which I would not otherwise embrace. Your words put a 'stop' to my 'gallop', of wanting to be surrounded by the 'storm' of busy-ness, to allowing the grief to well up, instead of putting a lid on it and pushing in down. Hence writing to you today has helped me to stay with my grief and not brush it away. Thank you Tiger!

I am reminded of Gergen, who greatly disturbed my worldview- his proposed fluid, evolving notion of ourselves, as being very different, to my 'fixed' notion of self. He says that we carry with us multiple potentials for 'being', from the traces of our relationships, which manifest themselves in our multiple ways of talking and of acting. He says that it is through others we construct our worlds, and through relationships "we are continuously absorbing potentials for action" (Gergen, 2009: 135). Your presence in my life is a great testament to this- your words, inviting me consider the possibility of moving away from a Séan O' Riordáin story, of feeling alone in my grief, to one of relationality and constructing its meaning together. Sean O Riordáin's story possibly represents my inherited story of how grief and mourning was processed amongst my ancestors stoicism at all costs, preferring:

"every moment be full of the screaming sky,

that the world be a storm of screams,

and I wouldn't hear the silence coming over me,"

Your words and support have challenged me to construct a different story, Tiger.

Thank you again so much!

Xxx x Eileen

Like Abby's story, our bodies are "constituted not only by our social and cultural background, but also by specific situations" (El Refaie, 2014:110), which, in my case, manifested themselves, as I was preparing for my final *re-search* conversation with Tiger:

*And there it was,
my proustian moment,
preparing our final lunch,
invaded,
by all my un-mourned 'goodbyes'
gate-crashing
demanding
to be named,
to be at our table,
and welcomed.
Overwhelmed,
I recognised them..
and my mother.*

In telling and re-telling our stories of loss, in "that continuum – that imagined now, some imagined past or some imagined future" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 2), we endeavour to re-find what was lost, enabling us to co-construct meaning, which "exists

always and everywhere as potential” (Ellsworth, 2005: 32). In the vulnerability of this ‘nowhere’ Orphic space, we become dislocated, dismembered from our usual subjective positions and begin to acknowledge “the power to change the meaning and structure of the vulnerability itself” (Butler, 2004: 43). In other words, through our reciprocal exchanges, not only does our unconditional relational experience in this threshold space, invite us to embrace the gifted permission to be vulnerable, it also invites us to “solicit a becoming, to instigate a transformation” (Butler, 2006: 44), as reflected in my experience of my final *re-search* meeting with Tiger:

Email to Tiger, 19/05/2020

Hi Tiger,

I was going to text you but decided to email instead, to say how excited I was to see you 'in person' yesterday and your arrival, by bicycle- excitingly different, in these Covid times! Like you, my embodied bubbling tearfulness, and general 'out of sorts', in anticipating our 'official' ending did catch me by surprise, as I said to you. I 'stayed' with my upset for the first time in my life, all earlier childhood stories of loss and grief, re-presented themselves, in the upset I was feeling, asking to be acknowledged in story of letting go of our 'prized' conversations.

The difference this time, unlike all the other times in my life, like your arrival on your bicycle, was, that I was able to tell you, that I was feeling mournful and sad, at ending our enriching, treasured conversations and didn't have to carry that burden myself alone. In sharing my story of ending with you yesterday, Tiger, I was able to recognise the other sad un-grieved endings, give voice to them for the first time, so that I am no longer bound by them.

So our loss in ending, as re-searching companions, as you so beautifully said yesterday, we free each other to go back out into the world again and perhaps from our journey, we may be able to re-story our experiences differently, like the alternative symbolic way you made your way to our home yesterday!

Email from Tiger, 20/05/2020

Hi Eileen,

Thank you for your gorgeous heartfelt email. I'll get back to it when I'm not so unhinged with grief. All my losses collided inside me today. It's like the umbilical cord with my child (finishing secondary school) is being tugged at one end, and the separation from my hugely powerful group of family women, is being severed at the same time. There was a moment today when my foot went into spasm and I walked to a picnic point, way further than I was able for to join the other parents and students.

Our Orphic position, conflates the old and the new, demands of us to wake up, and question the *taken-for-granted-ness* of our traditions. It challenges us to embrace multiple traditions with their own distinct viewpoints, of how knowledge is produced and pursue creative ways of constructing and reframing knowledge, from our existing traditions. In doing so, we become authors and change agents through reconstructing our “patterns of language” (Gergen, 2003: 61), constructing multiplicities of selves. To view the ‘self’ as “a process not a structure” (Muncy, 2010: 23) provides us with a way to conceptualise the ‘subject’, as always in a state of ‘*becoming*’ (Gale, 2016), paving the way for multiple and legitimate ways of knowing, where “fresh alternatives are sought” (Gergen, 2009: 225).

Our stories of re-authoring and transformation occur in this Orphic space, of where the present stretches back into the past and forwards into the future, through dialogue, “that is steeped in the art of listening” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 340). Our conversational encounters offer Eurydician moments of redemption, of becoming unstuck, where the unfinished mourning of the ancestors is recognised, acknowledged, heard, and voiced (perhaps for the first time), transformed by stammering “in one’s own language” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987: 4), as outlined too by Abby:

*There was this kind of a sense,
of there was a sense of being free,
in one way
And sometimes knowing that when they phoned
they were, ah, lonely or frightened or sad,
I was dispensing this wisdom to help them deal with Covid
at some point during it,
I found myself saying,
"It's - You're so right to acknowledge the way you're feeling."
And I - it was like as if I was somebody,
looking at myself from the outside.
"Oh, yes. you're well able to say this to other people."
but I said to both of them,
And I promise,
that if I'm feeling like that,
Um, but also physically, it was like as if a weight was lifted.*

The Eurydician call to mourn, and to re-author

Re-searching, re-membling and re-finding ourselves may need to incorporate looking ‘outwards’ and ‘inwards’, in re-constructing “a fuller life” (Storr, 1983: 208). It also calls us to story the contents of the unconscious, dreams, synchronous events and encounters in our journey to help and guide us, as we mourn “a familiar falling away” (Solinit, 2017: 22). My co-re-searchers and I story how we resist letting go of the “assumptive world, which contains everything we assume to be true, on the basis of our previous experience” (Parkes, 1993: 94). Hence, major changes in revising our familiar assumptions, *taken-for-granted* ontological and epistemological stances, “are usually resisted”, because quite simply, “if we have to abandon it, we have nothing left” (Parkes, 1993: 96). I stood on the threshold, forlorn, losing “the ties by which we are

constituted, we do not know who we are or what to do” (Butler, 2006 22), and not only that, but I had “gone missing too” (2006: 22), while being under the spell of Orpheus, opening myself to the “transformative effect of loss” (Butler, 2006: 21), as portrayed in a dream:

I am on a bicycle,

I ask three students,

in school uniform

for directions.

They point to the street,

through which I have to go

which is very dilapidated,

I set off,

but discover I have forgotten my bicycle.

I go back again to retrieve it,

I meet some work men.

in this run down, dark street.

They give me directions,

*but tell me that there may be obstacles
everywhere.*

*They reprimand each other for not clearing
the obstacles.*

I discover that I am cycling in the darkness,

I have no front lights on my bicycle.

The rear light is falling off.

I am petrified,

I can't see where I am going,

it is pitch dark.

*there are huge puddles of water on the
road.*

I am cycling up a hill,

there is no one around,

I'm all alone on the road,

I start to sing,

as I am so afraid someone,

is going to come along

and crash into me.

they may not see me,

or hear me,

so I begin to sing.

(23rd, July 2018).

This “prospective” (Brehony, 1996: 213) or prophetic dream, which anticipated the closing of the curtain on the first part of my life, prepared me in some way “for a future attitude, that may not be recognized” (Brehony, 1996: 213), in singing a different song, in navigating this uncharted and obstacle-filled terrain through the darkness of the unknown.

Our stories reflect how “we have not much language to appreciate this phase of decay, this withdrawal, this era of ending that must precede beginning” (Solinit, 2017: 81), as a means of reaching Eurydician alternatives. Like my *co-re-searchers*, “a context for being in the world was ending for me, even as another was opening up” (Goodchild, 2012: 64). While my exposure to social constructionist theory was very challenging and unsettling, it opened the door to a new language of possibility and greater potential. This Derridean (1978) holistic and inclusive approach favours a “logic of both/and”, the logic of supplement. It opposes the notion of binary, where one position is more privileged over the other and where our fixed, bounded essentialist position becomes transformed into a multiplicity of possibilities. We begin to acknowledge that the space for grief and mourning our losses and “the anxieties of change, while trying to trust the new creative energies emerging” (Goodchild, 2012: 64) is overwhelming, Abby asserts that “*it wouldn't hit home until I [sit] with the feeling you know*”. This requires nurturing a new discourse in this Orphic place of beginning to care for ourselves, where we get a “glimpse of something beyond the ordinary sphere” (Goodchild, 2012: 120).

My *co-re-searchers* and I express our reluctance and denial of caring for ourselves as part of our journey in *becoming*. This shift in our stance calls for abandoning the language of guilt from our ancestral spectres, which Hollis (2013) claims is a “tacit lack of permission to be oneself” (2013: 75) by disrupting old stories “that the other will be displeased and subject us to the threats of punishment or withdrawal” (Hollis, 2013:74). We begin to realise that choosing an alternative narrative to the long-established one “is fraught with risk and inspires terror in some” (Jourard, 1971: 133). We are often dismembered by honouring the needs of others as we have always done, while, at the same time, beginning to re-discover, paying attention to our child, “by not fleeing its vulnerability, but by claiming it” (Moore, 1992: 50). This can be seen in James’ vignette:

*It's permission,
you see,
that's what you need,
from maybe,
yourself,
or somebody else gives it to you as well.
if you're ready to push it off,
making the decision yourself,
And I had to hear that I could,
that I had my own permission
as well as everyone else's to do it.*

Our journey from “the narrow confines of our own time, place and personal history” (Hollis, 1993: 94) calls on us to recognise those limits, but it also summons us to be courageous like Orpheus, and respond to the call of Eurydice, to descend with him into the second half of life, to tell a story, which, as Goodchild (2012) asserts,

belongs to a language, that involves feeling as well as thought, wisdom as well as common sense, ambiguity as well as clarity, image as well as sound, the irrational as well as the rational, speech as well as silence.

p.120.

Imperceptible *becomings*

I hear my child's woundedness again in this Moment, as she seeks to be heard through storying my mother's invisibility, and my own. I feel the lifelong weight of being stuck in my un-mourned grief, the expression of which becomes culturally and socially “contorted; twisted into shapes that enable some action, only insofar as [it] restrict[s] capacity for other kinds of action” (Ahmed, 2014: 145). However, in this Orphic space between the living and the dead, the “unfortunate concretions formed around a singular

event” (Bachelard, 1960: 128) begin to partially dissolve as I find footholds of hope in our reveries of in-between-ness.

Interlude

Looking backwards

In this *Third Moment*, I story how I struggle with descending into the work of mourning, arising from my own subjective cultural and social experience. I story how my co-re-searchers and I unsettle ourselves “through our relational reflexivity” (Spry, 2016: 84). We narrate our movement from our prescribed essentialist ontological and epistemological positions, to “gaining insight into who [we] are and others are, [and]finding a new way to be in the world” (Ellis, 2004: 296). We ponder the effects of our essentialist *weltanschauung* and how it coloured the expression of our mourning, and that of our ancestors. We de-construct this dormant terrain and re-discover the “vastness of power...the one who judges with breadth”, as the etymology of the name Eurydice denotes, *eurus* and *dike*, (Cavarero, 2000: 104). This “boundless territory that she inhabits” (2000: 104) calls us to “produce an interruption” (Denzin, 2018: 45), seeking to give an account “of what the narration has already made plain” (Butler, 1997: 11) but also to re-imagine ourselves in our expanding language and re-storying.

Looking forwards

As we sojourn into *The Fourth Orphic Moment: Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation*, I ponder my relationship with the study, where I lose my “narcissistic attachment” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73) to the work, so that “we can learn about our society by interrogating the material items produced within the culture” (Biber and Leavy, 2007: 229). The space provided, here, continues to give voice to our individual stories within our collective ones, which may allow us “in fits of nostalgia” (Stewart,

213: 60), to forge a link between ourselves and the world, the living and the dead, the past, the present, and the future.

The Fourth Moment:

Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation

Interlude

Looking backwards

In the *Third Moment of Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial*, our journey brought us to the Orphic gap or threshold space, of mourning the losses of the first half of life, to tentatively embracing the unfolding stories of ‘*becoming*’ in the second half. While living with the grief of our losses and the compounded layers of our ancestral losses, we discover that we deftly side-track their mourning, through our “rituals of repetition” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 68), in our daily lives. We learn how we encounter our mourning through our embodied selves, our dreams and other ways of *knowing*, highlighting how “knowing is a corporeal process that is tied up with our ontology, our way of being in the world” (Ellingson, 2017: 16; Merleau-Ponty, 1962). We reflected on an *essentialist* and a social constructionist approach to mourning, where the former is located in the individual, and where the latter finds its meaning in our social and cultural stories. We pondered how our denial of mourning is shaped by our *weltanschauung* and these social and cultural contexts. In doing so, we recognised that “we bear the dead on our backs as well” (Morgenson, 1992: xiv), in the expression of loss and mourning.

*There is something about telling a tale
again, and again,*

that in
and of itself
it gives shape and meaning,
to experience

(Cole, 1992).

Orpheus “is caught between the world of the living and the dead” (Walter, 1999: 19). His experience of negotiating the menacing Cerberus, who holds the key to Eurydice’s multiplicity of potentialities, mirrors our experience of re-storying the first half of life, as “charged with energy, pain and psychological tension” (Brehony, 1996: 61). Orpheus endeavours to use his inherited musical charm to successfully tame Hades’ loyal dog, but realises that re-finding Eurydice calls for a different response. He succeeds in releasing her from the grip of Hades and Persephone, but discovers that this second loss “forces Orpheus to re-view Eurydice through different eyes” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 72). In his backward glance, he lets go of his original relationship with Eurydice, and he is forced to separate himself from his attachment to her. It is only then, when he loses her in the backward glance, that he can truly grieve and mourn her, when she returns to the underworld. In this mourning as separation, Orpheus becomes transformed by his experience of losing Eurydice for the second time. In other words, his experience of grief, as postulated by Freud, may consist “of little more than the breaking of old habits associated with the object, despite the fact that the object is gone” (Morgenson, 1992: 19). He can never return to his old position.

Similarly, our Orphic journey “requires that transformative glance” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), to go beyond, and let go of our old personal attachments to the work, so that “we can learn about our society by interrogating the material items produced within the culture” (Biber and Leavy, 2007: 229). My research provides a space, to give voice to our individual stories within our collective ones, which may allow us, “in fits of

nostalgia” (Stewart, 2013: 60), to forge links between ourselves and the world, the living and the dead, the past, and the future.

Looking forwards

This *Fourth Moment Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation* heralds a change in the direction and mood of this study. It becomes the locus for *an-other* ending and *an-other* beginning. My initial abduction into this work, “created a vehicle for my own growth and transformation” (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2016: 61), through my need to re-find what was lost, and unexpectedly, to becoming a spokesperson, for the unfinished business of my ancestors. This Orphic/Eurydician separation, where the research turns away from the researcher, with her original need to tell her story satiated, now begins to speak for itself, in a different way. It marks a letting go of old ontologies and epistemologies and my *complex* relation with the work, and becomes *more* than my subjective relationship with it. I let go of the study as a means to *my own* end, and instead become an “agent in service to the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 74), allowing it to lead me in this outwards glance, where, as Ellis (2004) writes, we focus,

outward on social and cultural aspects of [our] personal experience and then they look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract and resist cultural interpretations.

p.37.

These begin to unfold through our shared collected data, emerging from our series of informal conversations “over time in a place or series of places, and in social interaction with milieus” (Clandinin and Connolly, 2000: 20). Our newly expanded and enlarged story opens up new possibilities, interrupting or breaking the “silences surrounding experiences, as they unfold within cultures” (Holman Jones et al., 2016: 35). In this instance, it does not mean that the “visibility of self” (Anderson and Glass-Coffin, 2016:

71) becomes absent but, rather, it is “looked back at, not only acts, but is acted upon by those in her focus” (Ellis, 2004: xix). In other words, my “self-narrative” (Reed Danahay, 1997: 9) of loss and mourning is not omitted, but other aspects of our threshold experience are now placed in the social and cultural context for greater understanding and interrogation, and so it “both becomes a method and a text” (Reed Danahay, 1997: 9).

This *Fourth Moment*, calls for a method, or “a way into one’s work, the making of a path” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 215), into writing a research text. We give voice to the metaphorical three-dimensional narrative space, of the personal and the social; the temporal context and the place in which the stories happen. This autoethnographic approach to research, invites us to invest our own subjectivity, as an essential element of the process, “of problematizing cultural norms and practices” (Kim, 2016: 124). Our “conspiratorial conversations” (Barone, 2008: 39), enveloped in reciprocity, embrace the fullness of “all [their] emotional and intellectual capacities” (Pelias, 2013: 387), about this stage of our lives, where, as Coles (1989), says:

Their story, yours, mine- it’s what we all carry on this trip we take, and we owe it to each other, to respect our stories and learn from them.

p.30.

This *Moment* presents us with an opportunity to “stumble forward” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 74), in allowing the work to speak for itself, by “flirting with the data” (Kim, 2016: 188). In this borderland space, “where we are made and unmade by data” (Mazzei, 2013: 737), we listen with openness and curiosity, catching the nuances and perhaps “embrace less familiar possibilities” (Kim, 2016: 188). The challenge of allowing the research data to give voice to the unsaid, requires “a kind of dismemberment of one’s familiar, comfortable style” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75), as

researcher. It means bringing an unconditional positive regard to the work, to “hear the sounds and the shape” (Rogers, 1980: 8) of *an-other* person’s world and “how social forces have influenced their lived experience” (Chang, 2013: 107).

In this *Fourth Moment: Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation*, I invite you, my reading companion, to join me in taking this turn, through the kaleidoscope of unfolding existential issues, to be surprised and maybe disrupted by our flirtatious gazing into our personal, cultural and social mirror.

*Put down the weight of your aloneness
and ease into the conversation.
The kettle is singing
even as it pours you a drink,
the cooking pots
have left their arrogant aloofness and
seen the good in you at last.
All the birds and creatures of the world
are unutterably themselves.
Everything is waiting for you.*

(Whyte, 2003).

Signposts for the Moment

In this *Moment*, we are under the spell of the “transformative backward glance” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), where, like Eurydice separating from Orpheus, the work comes into its own and begins to speak for itself. It makes a space for contemplating pertinent existential issues, such as limited lifespan, our hegemonic decline narrative and mortality. We find ourselves, like Orpheus, taking courage to interrogate the inherited ‘certainties’ and separate ourselves from our possession of them, to co-construct alternative possibilities.

I continue to ponder the points of connection with my *co-re-searchers*, as we journey in this Orphic “liminal dialogic space” (Denzin, 2014: 27) since April 2019, up to, and including, the Coronavirus pandemic in March, 2020. I am very privileged and humbled that they decided to *stay the course* with me, as we embraced the challenges and richness, which Covid-19 presented, personally, socially, and culturally, in the course of our work together. I recount our Covid experience of separating from each other, before being able to draw the strands of our reflexive conversations together. We ponder the impact of separating from each other, but also separating and mourning our ontological and epistemological stances. Like Orpheus, we are changed by our separation and mourning, through taking the critical glance into the unfolding, unanticipated manifestations of being on this threshold space.

This *Moment* rests in the transformative nature of mourning, in the telling and re-telling of our stories, which make visible, and “plots the drama of living” (Pelias, 2013: 401) through “the contours of data” (Chang, 2013: 116). Like Orpheus, having to let go of Eurydice as his possession, the work expands in this *Moment*, moving away from our possession of it, to “being led” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 74) by it. The narrative methodology continues to hold the “self and culture together, albeit not in equilibrium or stasis” (Holman Jones, 2005: 764), in the way we story the various fragments of our shared experiences, located in a particular historical time and place. In letting go of the work, “as a means to [our] own ends” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), my *co-re-searchers* and I find ourselves immersed in “continual, multiple and intensive processes of folding” (Gale, 2018: 34, cited by Meillassoux, 2008), which “belong to geography” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 2). In other words, our journey, in *becoming*, summons us to “get out of our history” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 2), and create meaning, through “the spoken word” (Hollis, 2000: 49). In de-constructing our inherited notions of ageing, lifespan, incapacity, and immortality, we also unpick our unquestioned language constructions.

In taking that “transformative backward glance” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), like Orpheus, we open up *lines of flight*, where we reveal “the human in humanity” (Pelias, 2013: 387). We listen sympathetically to emerging shared stories of “vulnerable selves within cultural and social worlds” (Tedlock, 2013: 358). Our stories “summon up whole cultures” (Frank, 2010: 37), offering insight and understanding into “cultural narratives and their influence on people’s lives” (Byrne-Armstrong, 2001: 110). As Orpheus fails to bring Eurydice back with him for the second time, he is forced to de-construct his ontological and epistemological positions, through his loss. In this deconstruction, he begins to look at the world differently.

Similarly, our Orphic dialogic space invites us to attend to our existential “messiness, depth and texture of experienced life” (Etherington, 2004: 213). We confront our limited life-time; the challenges of our ageing perceptions of ourselves against the backdrop of our cultural and social setting; the weight and impact of the dominant ageing cultural narrative and its attendant language on our thinking and behaviour. We also come to terms with our changing bodies; *re-viewing* and *re-garding* the medicalisation of people of our vintage and the ineluctable inevitability of being in the shadow of death. Our venture together, “holds the potential to transform how [we] know and understand [ourselves], how [we] understand others and how [we] make sense of the world around [us]” (Sultan, 2019: 123). From this threshold position, like Orpheus, we re-author the second half of our lives, “through different eyes” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 72).

An Orphic Covid-19 space.

The uncanny parallel of our *re-search* experience of telling and re-telling our stories in this Orphic space, finds a mirror in our evolving collective Covid-19 experience of love, loss and dismemberment, which “has hurled us all into a landscape of radical

uncertainty and fragility” (Sheridan, 2020). During this pandemic, “we are experiencing an even greater sense of instability” (Flannery, 2020), as we witness our *taken-for-granted* edifices crumbling, like Eurydice slipping away from Orpheus forever, “where no voice, not even that of Orpheus, could rescue her” (Romanyshyn, 2002: 78). We are challenged to re-view the *taken-for-granted* language of our discourses, which is no longer adequate to explain or hold on to the ever-changing landscape of our ‘certain’ world. We “fight to recover what has been lost, and found and lost again: and now, under conditions, that seem unpropitious” (Elliot, 1943/1971: 31). This Eurydician call to transformation may require, as Butler (2006) suggests,

that we ask how these conditions came about and endeavour to re-create social and political conditions on more sustaining grounds. This means in part, hearing beyond what we are able to hear. And it means as well being open to narration that decenters us from our supremacy, in both its right and-left-wing forms.

p.18.

In other words, Butler highlights the importance of bringing our *taken-for-granted* dominant discourses and assumptions into question, paving the way for an inclusive space to accommodate and give voice to the repressed, silenced ones, which are calling to be recognised. Our Covid-19 space perhaps requires us to see the world through an Orphic lens, of believing our stories as fiction, which sustain us for a while, but believing too, that as we “hold on them, that they too must pass” (Romanyshyn, 2002: 84), before we become entangled and constricted by them.

An Orphic/ Eurydician separation

With the onset of Covid-19 restrictions, my *co-re-searchers* and I become separated like Orpheus and Eurydice “as each goes his or her own separate way” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), with the restrictions taking their toll on our physical meetings. My work with

Butterfly had finished as she was scheduled to go abroad in March, marking the end of her professional career. Tiger and I were drawing our conversations to a close, but as the lockdown interfered with our physical meetings, we found ourselves somewhat lost:

Email from Tiger, March 2020.

I really miss meeting up and did not expect that the run up to the end of our formal meetings would take this form. The virus has taught me something about not anticipating how endings might be and that my karma still steers sudden endings. Maybe if I just anticipated the sudden then anything more gradual would be a bonus.

As Abby lived long distance, she was interested in scheduling our conversations virtually. I was rather anxious about moving to an online platform, but was rather surprised at how we negotiated it, as evidenced in our reciprocal emails:

Email to Abby, 08/05/2020

Good morning Abby,

Thank you for your lovely email. I too, enjoyed our conversation immensely. In fact, I was slightly apprehensive initially, when we had to go virtually, because of Covid-19 that we would lose our sense of 'seeing' each other, the way we usually do, when we meet physically. (this idea, reflected upon, by Schneider and Keenan (2015) in the article I sent you. But I have learned, since we have had to change over, that I am very comfortable with having our conversation through Skype, and in fact, the 'virtuality' of our meeting, doesn't seem to interfere with our "ability to recognize the presence of the other" (Schneider and Keenan, 2015: 5). I found each of our conversations inspirational, and transforming, and to use Ahmed's word, have been, "re-surfaced" by the un-conditionality of our presence with each other.

I was thinking, for the purposes of my research, that I was hoping we might have a face-to-face debriefing session, but unfortunately this doesn't seem possible now Abby. Continue to take good care and I hope you enjoy wonderful walks, within your 5 k limit!!

Warmest wishes,

Eileen

Email from Abby, 15/05/2020.

Good morning Eileen,

I agree, Eileen that it was very easy to work in the virtual setting. I think trust was there so the question was, would the technology work, and it did. But the relationship was unaffected by it. There was still a real and genuine meeting of two people. I think we almost forgot that we were not talking to each other in the same room.

Take good care too Eileen!

Kindest regards,

Abby

Covid-19 un-foldings

As we ponder the weight of our Covid-19 struggles, “often reflected in the experiences of many others” (Stein, 2006: 167), we also begin to notice the richness of this existential time, where we become transformed in our vulnerability, as described by Tiger in her vignette and email:

*I woke this am not feeling as resilient,
funny how writing about it,
threw up the flip side of resilience,
I'm more anxious this morning,
with questions around myself,
and the virus,
Will I get it?
Will others I care about get it?
Will I survive it,
I'm constantly checking in with my body.*

Email from Tiger, 19th March 2020.

Life as we knew it has changed beyond recognition since we last met and I'm so glad we have all of those lovely meetings in us and can draw from them in this barren time. But as I write, I'm wondering is it really that barren or are there great riches. Certainly we are all being asked to step up and exercise our muscle for uncertainty and creativity in the tediousness of it all. I just stopped for a "tear break". The beauty of this world has made me sad... I'm looking out at our deserted estate. One man is coming back from a game of early tennis that he snuck in. Maybe he just went and hit the ball against the target wall in the tennis club. Maybe someone joined him. Then I saw the postman keeping on doing what he does. I've seen nobody else in the past hour at what would normally be such a busy time in the park with droves of kids using the metals en route to school, passing our front door. Isn't there something lovely in the stillness as it draws attention to the beauty that sometimes is veiled by our busyness?

Resonances of both Tiger and Abby's experiences are very obvious in James' life-changing experience, as a result of the onset of Covid-19. Living with an underlying medical condition, he heeds the medical advice proffered, about protecting himself. He talks about how this Covid time as being a "catalyst maybe" in becoming unstuck from the responsibilities and identities with which he had been associated, for over forty years. James begins to see that his initial cynicism about working from home, "You know, I didn't think I could work from here. I thought this is only a Mickey Mouse thing", was transformed into admitting that he "could operate from here very satisfactorily." His Covid-19 experience becomes an unfolding story of separation and letting go of his lifelong professional identity, releasing him into the unknown Eurydician world of unfolding possibility:

*I think maybe that was a huge thing,
about this part of the journey,
with you,
even using the word,
transition.*

*You know,
when this- when the Covid thing is over,
I don't know,
I don't think,
I'd want to...
I'm not prepared to do that,
you know,
but I...
I'm not prepared to go in.*

In this Orphic Covid-19 space, James begins to “go through a periodic molt” (Whyte, 2001: 171), one which unfolds almost invisibly, in our journey of imperceptible becomings. Orpheus’ voice whispers to us in our dreams and engages us in “the work of dissolution” (Romanyshyn, 2002: 60), enabling us to re-find a language of letting go, of loss and death.

Meaning-making in Covid-19

The onset of Covid-19, upended our collective fixed language of security and certainty, where we have to re-find a new and evolving language to tell and re-tell our stories of love, loss and dismemberment. Covid-19 seems to have unnerved our contemporaries’ existential fears and concerns, about the finitude of life; physical incapacity and the possibility of death, in light of its invisible power. Stories of ‘*getting our house in order, just in case....*’, in the form of wills, powers of attorney and password-sharing, but also conversations about end-of-life wishes begin to emerge, in the event of life being interrupted. We begin to realise that our stories are not “an individual production”

(Denzin, 2014: 56), but emerge from “larger, cultural, ideological and historical contexts” (2014: 56). In deconstructing these contexts, we begin to “penetrate and understand” (2014: 56) them, opening up *lines of flight*, to give voice to the unspoken existential concerns about this transitional phase of our lives, which begin to emerge with the onset of Covid-19. Tiger acknowledges that the *work we have done has resourced [her] for this Covid time*, in our Orphic “assemblage of enunciation” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 4), which honours,

the dignity of language, the worth of human speech, the necessity of giving voice again and again, without judgement of whether it is gain or loss, the recognition that there is after all only the trying.

p.60.

Email to Tiger, March 2020

Like you, Tiger, I really miss our Orphic space, which has called us to look backwards and forwards, and dares us to be courageous, in telling and re-telling our stories of our becoming. My insight, like yours, about being ready, is a testament to the richness in our shared melancholic space and how it empowers us, to re-find what was lost and in our re-searching, a space for mourning was created, by which we are transformed.

Our formal ending is still possibly not ended quite yet, though I 'm not sure what it might look like the next time, because the landscape has become so global, in how we come face to face with our uncertainty and vulnerability. I was reading Judith Butler yesterday, who argues that our First world experience of our safety being dislocated, (as we are experiencing right now), might give us an insight, into how corporeal vulnerability is so inequitably distributed globally (2004). In other words, Butler argues that through our experience of vulnerability during Covid-19, we begin to understand the experience of grief and loss of others', in other parts of the world, perhaps through violence or war. We begin to appreciate that “despite our differences in location and history” (Butler, 2004:20) our common experience of loss, enables

us to identify and empathise more readily with the suffering of others.

Maybe our collective experience at this time will open up new conversations and people can tell an alternative story of vulnerability, of being unhinged. In so doing, we might learn, we don't always have to 'have it together'- that it might be okay to talk about fragility instead of always putting on the brave face....maybe a space for a different conversation and emphatic listening will emerge.... so maybe as Rumni says, we won't go back to sleep again.....

Xxxe

My co-re-searchers and I “celebrate the power of speech, in [assisting] us in our task of articulating” (Hollis, 2000: 35), the weight of our loss, as described by Abby’s vignette:

*And I am very conscious,
that it's probably,
my stage in life as well,
really the only thing,
that I'm missing,
is the fact that,
I can't put my arms around the two girls.
And this really does bring me back,
to the most basic things.
But the other little voice is saying,
"Yeah, but there is something,
that you need to be reminded of"
but it's not that I'm immune,
from needing to be reminded,
but what I perhaps found,
is that it is,
it's just making me more aware,
of the things that I hold most dear,*

*There are things that I enjoy,
that I can't do at the moment,
but I can do without them.*

I too become implicated in Abby's "gesture made to another who is absent" (Romanyshyn, 1999: 57), in these Covid-19 moments. However, in this same Orphic space, "between either this or that, one is beyond" (Romanyshyn, 2002: 85), we recognise and acknowledge our own grief and that of our ancestors, who "find their release and we find ours" (Romanyshyn, 2002: 87):

*Standing bereft,
as I say 'goodbye'

again,

bodies burdened by the weight of
sadness,

of loss.

These times
I cannot
hold them in my motherly arms,
whispering my love,
To know too,
that I am loved.
We look at each other,
separated.
With only words,
and kisses, blown,
through the gentle,
palm of the breeze.*

An Orphic/ Eurydician together-ing

This metaphoric Orphic space, of de-constructing and re-constructing our journey towards *becoming*, through narrative inquiry as a ‘*method*’, whose etymology signifies a path or a road, is most fitting for the purposes of this study. As we collaborate together, we tell and re-tell the stories of our experiences, of this phase of adult development. The words we use take on new and particular meanings in the narrative space of time and place, though Bakhtin (1984) warns us, that we are never free “from these concrete contexts in which [we] entered” (1984: 202). Our life stories are told and re-told in the context of moving backwards and forwards in time and place, but obviously reflect the prevailing theories about “possible lives that are part of one's culture” (Bruner, 2004: 692).

Our experience, framed in narrative, becomes a way of knowing, of constructing experience, and of making meaning out of that experience (Mc. Adams, 2008; Bruner, 1987; Kramp, 2004). Our informal conversational space, an “intersubjective connection or synchrony . . . a form of coordinated action . . . dialogic efficacy that is bodily and contextually embedded . . . (while) historically and culturally situated” (Gergen et al., 2004: 42-44), embraces the “four directions of narrative inquiry: inwards and outwards, backwards and forwards” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 50). My *co-re-searchers* and I cherished a reciprocal, respectful, and unconditionally accepting relationship, creating a space of ‘*seeing*’ each other, so aptly described by Thich Nhat Hanh (1997):

When you are really there, you have the ability to recognize the presence of the other. To be there is the first step, and recognizing the presence of the other is the second step. To love is to recognize; to be loved is to be recognized by the other

pp.13-14.

Through our collaborative reflexive dialogue, we created a space for meaningful interaction, to “recognize those taken-for-granted aspects of our everyday talk” (Cunliffe, 2002: 55) and their impact on our lives. Our long-held beliefs about “truth, objectivity and knowledge” (Gergen, 2015: 61) are disturbingly brought into question in this Orphic space. However, Eurydician opportunities for “opening new and exciting vistas for possibility”, “to appreciate multiple perspectives” (Gergen, 2015: 61), are also afforded. Through our moments of “engaging in existential humanistic, relational dialogue” (Sultan, 2019: 123), we begin to learn that each of us, “carries with us the impressions of those others” (Ahmed, 2014: 160), with whom we engage. In telling and re-telling our stories, by moulding the ‘*given*’ language, we “draw out the implications this meaning has, for understanding human existence” (Polkinghorne, 1988: 6), perhaps re-discovering new understandings and insights, into “what has been, what is now and what is *becoming*” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 146).

Un-hinging our Orphic stance.

I imagine Orpheus is ecstatic in prevailing on Hades and Persephone to release Eurydice to follow him to the upperworld. All his charm, powers of seduction and sweet music have worked, in what seems to have been an impossible task. We imagine that his journey upwards will be the easy part. We also imagine that he is overwhelmed at re-finding his beloved Eurydice, and though he “is about to achieve his purpose” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 72), he is tempted to take the backward glance, just to make sure she is still there, but as he does, “the edifice of [his] work falls down” (Whyte, 2001:

121). Orpheus is utterly bereft, imagining that all is lost forever, though not realising that his moment of separation, where “he sings of her, but not to her” (Cavarero, 2000: 101), is a pivotal moment of transformation for him. In his separation from Eurydice, Orpheus’ transformation necessitates “a particular courage, a courage we are never sure we have in our possession” (Whyte, 2000: 171), to look outwards and take that critical stance.

An Orphic separating

Our metaphorical dance, like Orpheus and Eurydice, of moving inwards and outwards, sideways and centre-ways, weaves an intuitive display of “responding to each other’s rhythm” (Burr, 1995: 28). It involves, a “process of resurfacing” (Ahmed, 2014: 160), where we become expanded and transformed by our shared encounter. In this gap space, there is movement, through this “transformative backward glance” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 73), we become unhinged, like Orpheus’ attachment to Eurydice. We have to extricate our attachments to which we are attached and perhaps discover, like Orpheus, that “the meaning of life is something we find through mourning” (Morgenson, 1992: xv), as Tiger so eloquently describes:

*To me,
it is carrying the grief of a loss,
consciously,
and allowing it to move through me,
like a stream,
sometimes that stream,
becomes a river
and every muscle in my body relaxes into it.
helps me,*

to go with the flow.
It is more about letting be,
than letting go
I grieve,
then mourn,
then move on with greater energy,
than before,
liberated,
more sea-ports,
for attachments,
yet knowing,
I make room,
for new attachments.

As Orpheus loses Eurydice for the second time, his relationship with her is changed forever. He is left with her memory and sees her through the memory of his loss. In losing her, he is transformed, perhaps by discovering that “mourning is as much the beginning of an imaginal relationship as it is the ending of a material one” (Morgenson, 1992: 18). He begins to realise that, though Eurydice is gone, she is “not gone” (1992: 18). In our experience of separating as *co-re-searchers*, a multiplicity of endings and separations clamour to be re-collected, voiced and heard. In drawing the strands of our research space to a close, we slip temporally backwards to our re-membered stories of loss, grief, separation and mourning.

I discover how my experiences of past separations, all flood back to overwhelm me, in this temporal, social, and spatial space. Séan Mac Fheorais (1954), in his poem, *M'uncail*, captures the impact of the sudden rush of long-forgotten, proustian memories, in his description of how, “bhrúcht siad suas im’ scornaigh” (they irrupted in my

throat). The past is never the past, as I experience these stories in the now and the dead are not gone, but dwell in our imagination (Morgenson, 1992). They continue to assist us, in enabling our “subjectivities take shape” (Schneider and Keenan, 2015: 5) and, indeed, theirs, through “the child we still carry” (Hollis, 2000: 43), beckons us to become unlocked from our past (Brewi and Brennan, 1993). This, of course, does not diminish the pain we may feel as we separate from the past, in the present. I am brought back to that place of vulnerability to re-visit the *complex* of loss, which is deeply inscribed on my body, manifesting itself, ‘im scornach’(in my throat). It is a place of wisdom, of knowing, where I meet the “shape makers of our lives, that [I] can choose to confront, embrace or ignore” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2000: 966).

Our separation, from our collaborative work together, as Tiger articulates, often becomes a catalyst for the work becoming *other* than what we intended, while also triggering an irruption of other losses:

Mm-hmm. -hmm.

as I was cycling,

I was aware of it visually,

but feeling,

heartbroken.

Um, so I don't know what happened to me

so the ending of the piece...

the research piece with you.

And then,

there's a whole host,

of other endings as well.

An event of necessity: separating

Like Eurydice and Orpheus' separation, as researcher, I interrupt the flow of our collaborative *re-searching* dance, to separate and step back from that closeness, to "see their own stories in the inquiry, the stories of the participants, as well as the larger landscape in which they all live" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 81). This is the challenge which presents itself to me as researcher, to "move from field to research texts" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 130), so that the questions we ask "of meaning and social significance" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 130) are made visible. It heralds a separation from each other, which attached us and "to our own histories, by providing a tapestry rich with threads of time, place, character, and even advice on what we might do with our lives" (Witherell and Noddings, 1991: 1). However, Josselson (2007) and Smythe and Murray (2001) remind us, that "it is incumbent on the narrative researcher as a social scientist, to relate the meanings of an individual's story to the larger, theoretically significant categories that they exemplify" (Smythe and Murray, 2001:325). Therefore, when Romanyshyn (2013) declares that Orpheus' second loss of Eurydice, "is an event of necessity" (2013: 72), he highlights the importance of "the relationship of [our] experiences and stories to culture and cultural practices" (Holman Jones et al., 2013: 22).

An Orphic critical stance

Our reflective stance in this Orphic space, calls for our "presence, our powers and our absolute commitment" (Whyte, 2001: 36), to re-author an alternative story for the second half of our lives. We also discover, like Orpheus, that a "paradigm shift, in our consciousness, a major change in the way we think about ourselves, our possibilities and meaning in our life" (Brehony, 1996: 149) is required. Though we may be thrown into disarray, when we "step into the deepest ocean, uncertain whether we will be able to swim to some distant shore" (Hollis, 2006: 25), we come face to face with the

unexpected, like Orpheus. We discover that perhaps, in our acceptance of, and accommodation of the losses and separation of our ontological and epistemological positions may signify that, “in truly letting go... [we] find what has been lost, to be with it, beyond the need to possess or control it” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75).

An Orphic critical stance... into the second half of life

Like Orpheus’ confidence about emerging with Eurydice from the grips of the gods in the underworld, we anticipate “that the next stage of adulthood is going to be rosy, harmonious and delightful” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1988: xix). I equip myself with Margaret Morganroth- Gullette’s social constructionist stance on ageing to inspire me to resist the decline narrative of the second half of life. In looking backwards and forwards from the threshold position, we endeavour to navigate and negotiate the fine line between looking at the inescapable reality of ageing and mortality, while at the same time, re-searching meaningful ways of being fulfilled and creative, while living in this ‘*troisième age*’ (Levinson, 1978). For this reason, poststructuralism disrupts and brings into question how the norms and the *status quo* may be meaningfully re-constructed from a regressive narrative to fostering alternative ones. Through our collaborative conversations my *co-re-searchers* and I address the important task of re-shaping them into stories “that allow for growth and change” in the second half (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 71). We begin to deconstruct this myth, by daring to talk about the reality of our limited lifespan, and how to live our lives meaningfully in the shadow of death. My *co-re-searchers* and I are relieved to be able to acknowledge and give voice to what is often silenced in the social and public arena, as Butterfly acknowledges:

*Well, the fact that we can discuss it,
two adults having a very interesting discussion,
on something that's very important to both of them,*

*I thought,
it's a new phase,
that you're not looking at it all,
through rose-tinted glasses,
Or dismiss it,*

James' story of how he often imagined his 'retiring' world would resemble Orpheus' dream of restoring Eurydice and himself, to their former lives. His, was to embrace a leisurely reading of the daily newspaper, accompanied by the waft of percolating roast coffee and an eloquently dressed basket of French pastries, to ease him into his day. However, James realises how his Orphic world of reverie is far from the reality of our journey of "attempting to separate from our outgrown definition of ourselves" (Gould, 1978: 25), *that just when you get to a particular age, it's not a defining thing*. This popular Orphic myth of the 'retiring' sea of tranquillity opening out before our eyes, as we retreat from our world of work, "glues us into whatever immobile, unattending identity we have constructed" (Whyte, 2001: 121), as perhaps described by Butterfly when she decided to 'retire':

*when we stopped,
when I
we stopped working initially,
I thought,
I am going to have my breakfast in my dressing gown,
every day,
and this is going to be the beginning of a great honeymoon,
except I [chuckles],
discovered by coming down,
and having my breakfast in my dressing gown,*

*and this was great,
and we read the papers,
But by the time,
I showered,
dressed,
half the morning was gone.
So, I said, you know,
about a week ago:
I said,
No I said a week ago,
This is cracked stuff,
you know.*

Butterfly's momentary lapse, into the dominant perception of retirement, is also highlighted by Tiger, who asserts that "*some people, I know of my age, are seeing this time, (the onset of Covid-19) as an easing into retirement*". Author and journalist, Caitlin Moran (2020), also describes her imagined excitement of moving into the second half of life:

*"I honestly thought that middle age,
would be a beautiful era of serenity,
where I would have long lunches with gal pals,
enjoy my capsule wardrobe,
and have a leisurely,
and elegant life,
And of course,
that's not what middle age turns out to be,
at all"*

Like Orpheus' romantic notion of being with Eurydice forever, we imagine that easing into the second half of life, "entails desired opportunities for leisure activities" (Segel-Karpas et al., 2018: 565), but very often never imagine that it also entails "role loss" (2018: 565), and a multiplicity of unanticipated losses, as we discover in this work. However, Butterfly's 'dressing gown' experience was short-lived, as she challenges this false assumption of moving into the second half of life. She appreciates that, "if we're too safe, we can't grow" (Gould, 1978: 298), so she decides to join me on our,

*adventure going forward,
allowing me to think through,
the experiences as they arise,
and present themselves.
and that these gaps are addressed,
and that's where the thinking it through.*

We realise that an alternative progressive narrative, supplies "us with a radically new plot for [our] life course" (Morganroth-Gullette, 1988: xix) and enables us like Orpheus, to re-discover how life could be lived differently. Orpheus' separation from Eurydice opens his eyes to taking that critical stance in re-viewing cultural and social ideologies, from which to "practice a radical skepticism" (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 15). This is the pivotal transformation which befalls Orpheus in his separation from Eurydice.

De-constructing ageist stories

My co-re-searchers and I begin to de-construct our dominant social and cultural "stories told by other people about ageism, 'the aged' and their needs" (Russell, 2007: 173). Several theorists (Butler, 1969, 1990; Ayalon et al., 2018; Voss et al., 2018; Krekula et al., 2018; Lev et al., 2018) advance the notion that ageism "is the third great "ism" in our society, after racism and sexism" (Palmore, 2001: 572). In deconstructing

these stories, we come face to face with our own ontological and epistemological “implicit ageism” stance, which Levy (2001) defines,

as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors toward elderly people that exist and operate without conscious awareness or control, with the assumption that it forms the basis of most interactions with older individuals.

p.578.

I recognise myself in the ‘ageism’ term, coined by Butler (1969), to describe,

a deep seated uneasiness on the part of the young and middle-aged—a personal revulsion to and distaste for growing old, disease, disability; and fear of powerlessness, “uselessness” and death.

p.24

Transforming questions

Journal entry: 27th October 2020.

In challenging me to strengthen my ‘critical stance on ageing’, Dr. O’Grady, in her feedback, quite rightly asked, if: “you have given enough space to discussing what this inherited, medical discourse of ageing is? Should you let the reader know more about this? Have you discussed the existing scholarly literature enough?”

Dr. O’ Grady’s insightful questions bring me back once again, like Orpheus, to come face to face with how I might be unconsciously perpetuating this inherited discourse of ageing. My resistance to accepting the changing reality of my life in the second half, carries the weight of all the ageing stories which constituted my life story. However, Twigg (2004) offers a stark reminder that as we are embedded in a particular cultural and social milieu, “there are limits to our capacity for cultural resistance, and thus of our capacity for age resistance” (2004: 63). I realise that I “must not stop at the acquired self-distrust or self-disgust of middle age; now [I] know that [I] have to look backwards for their origins” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 207) and unpick the ageist language which I still unconsciously use.

It is almost as if I still want to dis-associate myself from ‘older’ people and deny this “liminal geography of the third age [which] stretches between the face-lifted edges of a dream of middle age and the murky terrains of lived and feared old age” (Hazan, 2009: 98). I realise that I need to own and accept my complicity in perpetuating a deficit narrative of ageing. However, I note from the theory on ageing, that I am not alone in my resistance. Kydd et al.,(2018), posit that people in the “troisième age”, often wish “to distance themselves from the ageist stereotypes afforded to those in the fourth age” (2018: 121).

Dr. O’ Grady’s intervention, stopped me in my tracks and forced me to return to my own ontological and epistemological positions, so that in their de-construction, I can allow a space for manifestations of my own grief, in acknowledging the realities of ageing. This calls me to take that Orphic transformative critical stance, to re-view my unconscious stereotypical approaches to older people, “which have become internalized across a lifespan” (Mendonça et al., 2018: 517), and perhaps, dispel some of the inherited myths. By doing so, I open up lines of flight and initiate a “change of tune, which is a kind of dismemberment of [my] old familiar and comfortable style” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75).

Butler (2006) reflects on the value of grief in these circumstances, helping us to “develop a point of identification with suffering” (2006:30), where we become expanded and empowered by accepting our vulnerability. It calls on us to “address the enemy within” (Levy, 2001:578), which she says relates to our ontological and epistemological positions.

This requires us like Orpheus, to pause and reflect, so that “this can be a point of departure for a new understanding” (Butler, 2006: 30), of how to live and accept this threshold time as a preparatory time, “rather than preventing age-related changes” (Kydd et al., 2018: 124).

The weight of our ageing discourses

Like all social constructs, we are often impervious to the weight and impact of our ageist invisible ideologies, of how we are constructed in “stereotypical and discriminatory ways” (Phelan, 2018: 551). Tiger mentions her own ageing perceptions,

which emerge like gender and race from our dominant cultural discourses and “shape our perception of the roles that older individuals assume in our society” (Flores-Sandoval and Kinsella, 2020: 224).

*I am an older mum.,
the reminders of being an older mum,
were there in sixth class
the first few moms are six years younger than me,
if I was the average age of a mom,
but there could be 16 years younger than me,
So yeah,
I found myself opting out,
I found, it's whole generation of a gap there now.*

Tiger's perception of herself as 'older' may portray how “cultural attitudes in our society reinforce these feelings” (Butler, 1969: 244), as reflected in her self-perception of being 'cast' by her child's contemporaries:

*Mm, mm, exactly,
yeah, yeah, yeah.
Because you'd think say,
if I'm with a group of teenagers,
with my child's friends,
I never feel young,
you know.
Because they want me to feel old,
They want to cast me.*

Indeed, the subtle “manifestation of ageism in [our] daily interactions” (Flores-Sandoval and Kinsella, 2020: 223) highlights “that whatever happens bodies, we are aged by culture first of all” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 3):

*A delightful invitation,
to a neighbour's birthday party,
seemed an innocuous
and welcome event.
Once inside the door,
I could only see the word 'young'
written all over the guests' faces.
Beginning to feel uncomfortable,
I spotted the grandparents,
in the distance,
we looked the 'same',
to the 'young.'
Burdened,
by the weight of being cast as old,
the inevitable question,
uttered with matter-of-factness,
and certainty...
So have you grandchildren?
despite my Lagarde hairstyle,
my elegant demeanour,
sharp 'youthful' appearance
I was left bereft,
and for the first time,
felt invisible!*

My experience of that social event highlights how research on ageism is “one of the least acknowledged forms of prejudice” (Levy et al., 2020: 174). They postulate that there are three significant ageism predictors, which include *age discrimination*, *negative age stereotypes*, and *self-perceptions of ageing*. They define *discrimination* as “detrimental treatment of an older person”. They clarify that ‘*negative age stereotypes*’ is defined as “the negative beliefs of older persons about older people” and ‘*self-perceptions of ageing*’, as “beliefs of older persons about their own aging” (Levy et al., 2020: 175).

It seems that in this Orphic space, between the first and the second half of life, we are often trapped in our self-perceptions of ‘*ageing*’, which are frequently consolidated by those inherited stereotypical “ageist perceptions and behaviours” (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018: 1) we encounter in our daily lives. Abby cites how this “*objectivist*” (Butler, 1990: 193) cultural stereotypical view “writes its particular message” (Bayer and Shotter, 1998: 27), on our *worldview*, on our concept of ageing and perhaps how we ‘should’ behave:

*Again, this is another,
an expectation from outside,
that because you are a particular age-
you should be doing this,
and this.
And definitely,
all these things,
you should be giving up doing them,
because- they're beyond you,
and if you do them,
aren't you great!*

This self-perpetuating narrative shapes our anticipated perceptions and behaviours, which are “fraught with consequences” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2004: 80), about how our own life-course narratives may unfold. Interestingly, a longitudinal study of midlife and older adults in the United States (Stokes and Moorman, 2016) examines “whether perceived day-to-day discrimination attributed to age is related with mental and physical health in the long term” (2016: 50). It concludes that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this is the case and found that, when people were exposed to any of the three predictors, they “adversely affect the health outcomes of older persons” (Levy et al., 2020: 175), psychologically, behaviourally, and physiologically.

The medicalisation of our cultural discourses

Having been involved in a car accident in October 2019, which has left me with ongoing debilitating lower back problems, I find that I have to remind myself that “ageing was not what happened first in my body. It was an injury” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2004: 131). The symptoms of this injury certainly challenge me to rebut the scripts of ageing and re-frame the story as a life event, separating them from a decline narrative. Our inherited assumptions about “ageing become a self-fulfilling prophecy” (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018: 2), most especially if we have a health problem which we may interpret as a symptom of ageing, rather than *re-viewing* it, as an issue which could apply to any age group.

We often carry the baggage of doctors’ own beliefs about ageing, into our lived lives. My visit to a doctor, in September 2020, with whom I was not acquainted, highlights the complexity and subtlety of ageist discourses, which are “often overlooked” (Flores-Sandoval and Kinsella, 2020: 225), as I was called ‘*young Eileen*’. In one word, he conveyed his worldview to me. Fortunately, I was able to separate his assumption from his conclusions about my injury. Oftentimes, our doctors’ *weltanschauung* echoes ours,

as “they tell progress or decline stories in relation to the patient before them” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 50).

The medicalisation of ‘old age’ may be as terrifying as our fears of incapacity and death, but it dictates “how we live our waning days” (Gawande, 2015: 128). It calls to be de-constructed to make space, like Orpheus, for alternative perspectives. Our fears of “the waning days of our lives, given over to treatments that addle our brains and sap our bodies for a silver’s last chance” (Gawande, 2015: 9) may need to be re-considered, so that our sense of agency is respected and heard. Organisations such as SAGE Advocacy Ireland, offer possible alternative *lines of flight*, in supporting vulnerable adults, older people and healthcare patients. They launched a discussion document (2017) which highlights the “increased feelings of powerlessness, dependency and vulnerability” (2017: 4) and lack of agency people may experience in care homes and other similar medical settings. They advocate that people should have the right to be heard and a voice to choose. Indeed Abby suggests how, “all meaning/full relations leave us with another’s way of being, a self that we become through the relationship” (Gergen, 2009: 137):

*that's extremely important,
to find people who amaze me,
because of the things they're doing,
and what they're able to do,
And at-at...
at even, 20 or 30 years, older than I am.
I find that very, um, helpful,
to find people like that.
They're still having a very rich life.
If not richer than they've ever had.*

*I think those little glimpses,
of people like that,
um, are very heartening.*

While I am *ad idem* with Abby, O' Donoghue (2015) reminds us that there is “really no kind of education for getting old” (2015: 154), despite our best efforts. He reminds us, though, that “how we view the future actually shapes that future” (2015: 155), an opinion, shared by many other age theorists, “that we can have a dramatic impact on our own success or failure in aging” (Rowe and Kahn, 1998: 18). I concur with this notion of responsible agency, but like Morganroth-Gullette (2017), I am concerned that “no amount of theoretical deconstruction or individual behavior or good attitude” (2017: xix), may protect us from the powerful cultural and social script of “important institutions” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2017: xix), such as the medical field.

An Orphic critical stance... on ageing

This Orphic “transformative backward glance” (Romanyshyn 2013: 73), brings me to “this sphere of dispossession” (Butler, 2006: 28), in accepting how we are aged by culture and that “decline is the narrative about ageing-past-youth systematically taught from on high” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2017: xiii). In this threshold space, we begin to pick at the cultural and social threads of our self-perceptions of getting older and “the more we intelligently critique the universal biological decline narrative of aging, the more control we might have over our personal aging narratives” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2004: 35).

The language of limitation

Our “age-tinged language” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2004: 12) of discrimination, stereotyping and self-perceptions of ageing, so embedded in our cultural and social discourses, unknowingly limit us. More often than not, our learned set of assumptions

and beliefs prevents us “from functioning in an optimal way” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2011: 34), as we accommodate the vicissitudes of their construction. With the onset of Covid-19, we became more aware of its bite, when the language of age and ageing were to the fore. In his article in the *Irish Times*, Reville (2020) highlights the monolithic construction of “herding” older people into one “homogenous group that can be lumped together as the elderly” (Frueh-Schrage and Tracy, 2020). Reville (2020) rebuffs any notion of agency attributable to ‘older’ people, medically and socially, suggesting that “frailty and dependency” (Frueh-Schrage and Tracy, 2020) are the hallmarks of the dominant discourse.

My *co-re-searchers* and I found ourselves being drawn into this narrative of having “*those fear moments*”, as Abby describes them, when the “perceptions of older adults as vulnerable and frail” (Flores-Sandoval and Kinsella, 2020: 225) seem to flourish during Covid-19. When we interrogate the *taken-for-granted* chronological notion, of “how we perform or enact age and perform our own age constantly” (Laz, 1998: 86), we begin to unravel and critically *re-view* our assumptions, as Butterfly does:

*Am I not doing this now,
because I'm getting too-
I'm getting older,
and I don't have the energy?
Or are we trying to prove that,
Now this is non-sense.
I'm not-
you know,
I'm willing to do this.*

Butterfly questions our inherited assumptions about how we perceive ourselves at this stage of our lives. Like Orpheus, in this place of separation, we begin to see things

differently. We begin to interrogate and de-construct our ageist discourses, which helps us uncover and attend to our underlying fears, as Butterfly muses:

Am I slipping?

Well, you're proving yourself,

to yourself,

that you're not getting too old to do this.

Butterfly reflects on the challenge of taking up a critical stance with regard to how we perceive ourselves, against our social and cultural dominant narrative of ageing, where it can be “either systematic or casual and can target individuals or groups” (Phelan, 2018: 551). There seems to be a tension or anxiety, in our perceptions of others’ stories about us, similar to Butterfly’s anxiety about “devaluing the older person through particular attitudes, practices and cultures” (Phelan, 2018: 551), in utterances such as, “*she must be a good age now*”. I share Butterfly’s position about “speed, being the ultimate defense, the antidote to stopping and really looking” (Whyte, 2001: 117):

almost a fear of just slowing down,

which you don't want to do,

I suppose,

maybe it's because,

we're all being told

about taking lots of exercises-

that we should be moving.

Is it detrimental to our health

we're not doing that?

And where do you draw the line?

Well, this is the thing,

where do you draw the line?

In her vignette, Butterfly highlights the possible dilemma we may find ourselves in, on this threshold space, where we may get glimpses of our fear of the unknown, perhaps becoming mindful of losing our sense of agency, capacity and the frightening prospect of death. However, Butterfly alludes to the notion, that, we could “be pressured to abandon [our] subjective sense of [ourselves]” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 6), if we were to live our lives “on culture’s terms” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 6) and not our own:

*where we're told,
well, even if you don't feel like it,
you should do it-
but there comes this stage,
if you're that tired,
you-you just cannot-
And that's to find that balance.*

Changing our language

Our culture, saturated with predetermined notions about ageing “teaches us to feel bad about aging and to start this early, reading our bodies anxiously for signs of decay and decline. We breathe in this toxicity daily” (Twigg, 2004: 61), as reflected in Tiger’s self-observation at a social event:

Email from Tiger, 15/11/2019

Last night I was at a play where myself and my friend lowered the average age considerably. My friend overheard several of the elderly people comment that they didn't quite get the play. I noticed a slump in my energy and up to that point I had been totally engaged in the play. I became very restless and unsettled and later realised that it was a fear of a decline in my cognitive capacity and decline in those I care about, that had crept in. I've also been knotted with fear that my own body and hip is declining, but yet if a detective from an insurance co was following me they would say I was a fraud and there was nothing wrong with me.

I struggle with extricating myself like Orpheus, from my inherited discourses about ageing, which come “from outside, [pressing] on me and even [getting] inside of me” (Ahmed, 2014: 27, citing Scarry, 1985). We struggle to separate ourselves from the weight of our linguistic limitations, portraying “a particular vision of the world and thus enabling us to challenge it” (Burr, 2015: 21). This requires changing our own tune, changing our language and taking up a reflexive stance about our language use, and a “sceptical stance towards all truth claims” (Burr, 2015: 23). I realise that I have been immersed in the language of decline, which will require a considerable amount of work on my part to separate myself from that ideology. However, I know that the more compassionate and “empathetic [I] teach [myself] to become to other victims of decline ideology, the more liberated [I] will feel in [myself]” (Morganroth-Gullette, 2011: 35-36). This aspiration is beautifully portrayed in Kavanagh’s poem, *Memory of My Father*:

*Every old man I see
Reminds me of my father
When he had fallen in love with death
One time when sheaves were gathered.
That man I saw in Gardiner Street
Stumble on the kerb was one,
He stared at me half-eyed,
I might have been his son.
And I remember the musician
Faltering over his fiddle
In Bayswater, London.
He too set me the riddle.
Every old man I see*

In October-coloured weather

Seems to say to me

"I was once your father."

(Kavanagh, 1904-1967).

The logic of either/or

Similarly, Morrow-Howell (2012) challenges the cultural notion of using the sixty or sixty five as defining the older population, when in fact “the majority of people in this category, will be there for 20 or 30 more years?” (2012: 379). This means that we may “even look at ourselves as ageing persons through the lens of ageism” (Ayalon and Tesch-Römer, 2018: 1). We become more aware of the stereotypical language used by others in public places: ‘*dear*’, ‘*young*’, which, as Ayalon et al. (2018) argue, has the potential to dis-empower and confine us in this regressive narrative. It is in this betwixt and between space, like Orpheus, we interrogate the *givens*, and “question, too, the regime through which being, and [our] own ontological status, is allocated” (Butler, 2005: 23). In other words, by taking that critical backward glance, and separating ourselves from the “norms of recognition” (Butler, 2005: 23), we begin to expose the old essentialist views and begin to tentatively establish our sense of agency, as reflected in James’ deliberations:

I kind of began to question,

I was listening to you,

and then reading some of the material,

seeing other people,

*uh, working into their seventies,
eighties,
doing valuable work,
And I said,
I-I just felt I had something to offer
And I think the journey,
with you opened my eyes.*

The logic of ‘both/and’....

Tiger acknowledges the fine line between our own internalisation of the cultural notion of ageing, and the critical Orphic stance, which calls us to “separate the ageing body from the young spirit” (Ayalon et al., 2018: 5):

*there's a kind of,
how would you describe that?
Not a conflict going on,
but just that the two...
that-that struggle,
between kind of getting older,
and feeling older....*

This approach favouring a ‘logic of both/and’, rather than a binaried, ‘either/or’ position, is at the heart of Derrida’s (1978) deconstruction, and introduces latitude and possibility into a narrative of ageing. This post-structuralist position favours deconstructing the universality of our inherited scripts and replacing “the traditional assumption of individual selves with a vision of self as an expression of relationship” (Gergen, 1999: 117). In endeavouring to deconstruct the cultural narrative of ageing,

Tiger alludes to the language of possibility, instead of the binaried language of 'young' or 'old':

*Tiger: But-but you see,
you have to have range in you,
that you can go to 80,
then you can go to 18,
if you want to,*

Eileen: Well-well, that's a good- that's a very noble thought now. It really is yeah! You know, which is possibly, where I'd find it difficult to veer towards the 80 year old. I prefer the 18-year-old. That's a good range. There's a lot of negotiating now for an 80-year-old, you know, for me And how is it for you to be that 80-year-old? Do you find that easy?

*Tiger: Yeah. I'll put on my old jumper
and Mary's slippers
As long as she is not trying to get out to play golf,
or as long as she is not saying,
you have to walk up to the end of the pier,
every day and back, um, I'm okay with it,
As long as there is a bit of me,
a bit of me that resists it like mad...*

Orphic spaces and liminal stammerings

In this pivotal movement of “being led by the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 74), our shared reveries provide us with space to ponder our fears about incapacity, limited time and the inevitability of being in the shadow of death, as the second half of our life beckons. We “turn [our] critical gaze back on [ourselves] as a means of assessing the contexts” (Hawes, 1998: 99) from which our stories and language emerge, about these unfolding existential realities. In our dialogical reflexive space, we realise that though we are conscious of maintaining “a sense of control over both health and lifestyle” (Kydd et al., 2020: 116), our underlying assumptions and beliefs often rupture our endeavours. We discover, like Orpheus, that it is only when he separated from Eurydice that his perspective on life changes. Similarly, as we stand on this threshold between the first and the second half of life, “we become helplessly aware that our time is limited” and the “dawning awareness of mortality” (Polden, 2002: 198) is lurking:

Email from Tiger, February 2020

We last met on 6th February, I came away with lots of thoughts about living and dying and the meeting was clarifying for me, about the thoughts of moving gently back and forth from being young, to being old, and embracing both. My heart I think will be forever young but the rest of me declines daily. I feel it in my body, in spite of giving it more and more care, it grumbles more than ever. But I really get the fear around loss of capacity. However, some days I'm totally free of aches and pains and feel ever young again.

Knowing the two extremes I think accentuates the need to grasp what is good, but also, I'm also certain that I have no wish to go back to a younger age, as sixty offers a self-compassion and ease with life, that I couldn't imagine at forty, and I'm hoping that at 80, there will be gifts that I can't imagine, from this vantage point.

However the question is, what is it that I might need to cultivate more, in me so that I can be transparent to the gifts that are offered at each stage of life.

Our threshold space provides us like Orpheus, with a different perspective, than our previous ontological and epistemological stance. It furnishes us with a ‘preparedness’ space, where we can “encounter the onset of the tragedy of personal death with the sense of grief appropriate to it... we can begin to mourn our eventual death” (Elliot, 1965: 512):

Email to Tiger, March 2020.

I agree so much with you Tiger, how the work we have done together, has really helped to cope with the looming shadow of death. It has been such an extra-ordinary privilege to have had the courage to stand in that vulnerable reveried space, where the veil between ourselves and our ancestors is very thin.

This liminal space has given me the courage, to re-discover hidden and vital vulnerability and mourning, opening up the cracks and fissures into “other vibrations of consciousness, other realities and the energies of other beings.” (Romanyshyn 1999: 69). I know I have been given great courage, and like you, feel more prepared for the uncertainty, having shared this Orphic space with you Tiger.

Abby tells the story from the book about the life of Granuaile, a famous Irish leader of land and sea, in the West of Ireland. In this story, there is another character, an older person:

*very much cast in the, you know,
that Celtic connection with nature,
understanding life and death,
in that the woman didn't seem,
to have any fear or sadness about death,
because she saw,*

*that what was happening to her,
as being just very much part of the whole death,
renewal, rebirth cycle of life.*

Abby muses how this character had an ease about death and how “*it would be absolutely marvellous, to be able to see yourself in that light*”. I am reminded of the great story of Ivan Ilyich, who finally separates himself, like Orpheus, from his blinding ambition and power in the first half of his life, to finally longing for comfort and companionship. Gawande (2015) asserts that these two lifelines, of comfort and companionship, are “still so devastatingly lacking more than a century ago” (2015: 100), which were perhaps an integral part of the life of Granuaile and our ancestral stories, as they continued to shape their own finitude.

Imperceptible *becomings*

Listening to, and being in the company of my co-re-searchers and scholarly authors, I am brought to this place of reverie and insight, into my own journey of becoming. I see how my writing offers new understandings and lines of flight into a “seductive and tangled method of discovery” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2000: 967). The more I stay with this work, the more I discover that “in becoming a foreigner in [my] own language” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 4), I re-find a “minor language inside my own” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 4), with the help of our reflexive conversations, theoretical insights and personal reflexivity. I am learning an alternative language, by loosening, as (Foucault, cited in Racevskis, 1987; Richardson and St. Pierre, 2000) suggest,

the hold of received meaning that limits [our] work and our lives and investigate to what extent the exercise of thinking one’s own history, can free thought from what it thinks silently and to allow it to think otherwise.

p.967.

As old ontologies and epistemologies begin to become uprooted, new ones begin to take hold, “producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently” (St Pierre, 1997b: 175). I begin to find solace and comfort, like Ilyich, in being able to “question the world’s secrets and intimacies” (Van Manen, 1990: 5), such as our limited lifespan, incapacity and death, as I endeavour to make partial meaning in this temporal threshold position.

This betwixt and between ‘preparedness’ space, enables me to take courage to open up possibilities (Gadamer, 1975: 266), in staying with my uncertain existential fragility and vulnerability. The gift of this Orphic critical stance, offers me hopeful glimpses of accepting, that our stories and our lives are in “principle modifiable” (Schafer, 1978: 15), as they peep through the cracks and fissures of what seemed like an impenetrable landscape in this Moment of separation.

This is my most challenging Moment: Mourning as Separation, one with which I have struggled my entire life. I find myself in the presence of absence, “an act of departure...hold[ing] the echo of some fractured intimacy...when it was broken, the absence filled the heart” (O’ Donoghue, 2015: 80). This great Orphic grief, where the child “does not know death, but only absence; and if the only person who can satisfy her imperative need is absent, she (the mother) might as well be dead, so overwhelming is the [child’s] sense of loss” (Bowlby, 1998: 10). Yet, it is in this space with my co-researchers, theorists and ancestors, that the child can safely explore, and almost at times, play with incapacity, ageing, finitude, and death, as they mischievously lurk in the horizon of our lives, in the presence of a “mother [who] provides a secure base to which the infant can return” (Storr, 1988: 9).

Looking backwards

This *Fourth Moment* heralded a turning point in the research, with separation distinctively defining its movement. Multiplicitous rhizomatic tendrils explode into *lines of flight*, highlighting some of the social and cultural issues of our lived experience, seeking to be voiced. We “invent stammering...to trace a vocal or written line which will make language flow” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1997: 34), into the swamplands of our lives, where we search for meaning in our journey towards *becoming*. Our existential concerns of ageing, limited lifespan, fears of incapacity and death erupt for our attention, demanding “ways of establishing and articulating [themselves]” (Polden, 2002: 314) in our social and cultural contexts. To respond to this demand, we had to take “that transformative backward glance” (Romanyshyn, 2013:73), where the work my *co-re-searchers* and I had done together, becomes *more* than our attachment to it. Our stories in our reveried Orphic space, “in between the said, the ‘yet as unsaid’ and the ‘as yet unsayable’” (Speedy, 2005: 296), enables us, perhaps, to “examine and/or critique our “culturally bound” (Clark, 2010: 3) experiences.

Looking forwards

Through this veiled Orphic space between the living and the dead, we are called to respond to Eurydice’s promptings and invitation from the underworld, to cross the threshold and be guided by her, “to follow the soul of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). Our onward journey in the *Fifth Moment: Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation*, invites us to pay attention to “what has been left unspoken, unsaid, neglected, marginalized and otherwise forgotten” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75) in our daily lives, but perhaps also, socially and culturally. It calls us to not to go back to sleep, into

our *taken-for-granted* world, but instead to look at the life, as it were from the Eurydician underworld, where we “are in perpetual involution always in the middle of the path, always *en route*” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 30).

The Fifth Moment:

Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation

Interlude

Looking backwards

In the *Fourth Moment: Looking Back at the Work/Mourning as Separation*, my co-researchers and I experience the impact of the transformative backward Orphic glance. It signals a call to separate our attachment from the work, to give voice to those other personal, social and cultural existential issues, which surfaced during our moments of meeting. We pondered on the impact of Covid-19 on our work together, but also on us personally, socially, and culturally. This *Moment* is characterised by Orpheus taking up a critical stance, where we “figure out the taken-for-grantedness” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000: 78) and interrogate “the assumptions around the nature of experience” (Clandinin and Murphy, 2009: 598), which this transitional space presents. In this borderland place of separation, we begin to look, like Orpheus, at life differently. In separating from our attachment to the work, we become aware of the “limitations of our knowing and thus begin to stretch those limits” (Garvey-Berger, 2004: 338) of our social and cultural discourses. We interrogate and take a critical stance with regard to the discursive limits on existential issues such as ageing, lifespan, mortality, and what is often left unsaid about this stage of adult development.

When it's over, I want to say: all my life,

I was a bride married to amazement.

I was the bridegroom, taking the world in my arms.

*When it's over, I don't want to wonder,
if I have made of my life something particular and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument,
I don't want to end up,
simply having visited this world.*

(Oliver, 1992: 11).

Looking forwards

His loss of Eurydice to the underworld is utterly devastating for Orpheus, leaving him bereft and distraught, with all his dreams and ideals of their life together, shattered. He finally lets go of his struggle with the forces of the underworld in trying to bring Eurydice back to the upper world. Orpheus' ensuing experience of mourning and separation which he endures in "this threshold (the ground that is not the ground)" (Ingram, 2008: xii) is life-changing, and transforms his *worldview* forever. He lets go of an "earlier mode of subjectivity" (Land et al., 2014: 201) and disrupts his previously long-held ontological and epistemological stances, inherited scripts, and assumed identities. Through his experience of loss and mourning, in this liminal, "liquid" (Meyer and Land, 2005: 380) place, Orpheus is forced to re-structure "a world of meaning that has been challenged by loss" (Neimeyer et al., 2010: 73). His dis-memberment, "a mode of dispossession" (Butler, 2004: 28), brings him to a borderland place of unknowing, uncertainty, disorientation, vulnerability, and of wondering "Who have I become? What is left of me?, What is the Other that I have lost?" (Butler, 2006: 30). These fundamental existential questions become our questions, in this liminal Orphic space, where we, like Orpheus, are "worked on and perhaps even worked over" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76), during this process of dis-memberment and re-authoring.

In this *Moment*, Orpheus and Eurydice are re-united in the underworld, where, through Orpheus' mourning, he endeavours to make meaning of life. In this way, Orpheus is able to be with Eurydice in his imagination, having freed her, from his control or possession of her. In letting go of Eurydice, both are "freed into his or her own destiny" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). They are no longer bound to each other, or "hold each other green and dying" (Thomas, 1946). Instead, they "join together to make human beings of one another" (Morgenson, 1992: xv), in their truly letting go of each other. Orpheus now sees life through loss and death for the first time, and perhaps discovers that, with "each unfolding, something new unfolds" (Gale, 2018: 34). In this *Moment*, it seems as if the relationship between Orpheus and Eurydice has become more intuitive, more attentive to the inhabited silences of "those instinctual joys, which [fill] our imaginations and growing bodies, and set our enthusiastic course in the world" (Whyte, 2001: 65), carrying us forward "in the becomings of the fold" (Gale, 2018: 34).

Like Orpheus and Eurydice, I, too, have been dis-membered by my experience of being in this Orphic space, and now this *Moment* calls for the work "to be seen from its point of view, beyond [my] possession of it" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76). It calls to be *seen through*, where reflective spaces are created to give voice to what is often overlooked, in our cultural and social milieus. In re-viewing and critically interrogating our inherited discourses and language in our backward glance, we begin to redeem what is lost, so that both the cultural and social loss and woundedness of invisibility is honoured.

*"When I had reached the middle of our life's
journey, I came to myself in a dark wood
with the straight path gone missing. Ah, how painful
a thing it is to tell what it was like,
that wild, rough impenetrable wood,*

the very thought of which revives my fear!

It is so bitter, death is scarcely worse.

Despite that I found good there”

(Dante, 2016:3).

Signposts for the Moment

In this *Fifth Moment, Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation*, we reflect on the suffering and the richness of mourning, “as a creative act of transformation” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). In this liminal Orphic space, we are stripped of those “core beliefs which provide [us] with a broad sense of meaning and imbue the self-narrative with thematic coherence” (Neimeyer et al., 2010: 74). We ponder this dis-memberment process of mourning, where we finally painfully shed our old ontologies and epistemologies, “the prison house of [their] language” (Ingram, 2008: 88), and our need to possess or control them. I hear Kristeva’s (1977) words reverberate through this story of dis-memberment, of “voice without body, body without voice” (1977: 15), fragmented, torn apart, in this betwixt and between space. In this *Moment*, of our de-construction and transformation, we, like Orpheus, make a space for, what Mazzei suggests as (2007),

the irruptive emergence of a new concept, a concept which no longer allows itself to be bound by the strictures of the previous regime where the spoken word is privileged as the only element that is discernible, intelligible, accessible *meaning full*.

p.19.

We begin to re-find the “silent specters” (Mazzei, 2007: 21) which are often not heard in the spoken word. Our normal inclination, as Mazzei argues, is to give precedence and recognition to “lines of articulation” (Mazzei, 2016: 62) and hardly ever attend to “that silence, masking as nothingness” (Mazzei, 2007: 25), which is laden with meaning,

“opening the way for language’s potency” (2007: 28). We ponder our Archimedean moments where we find ourselves surprised by what emerges from the shadows of our dialogic intermezzo spaces of talking, laughing, writing, and gesturing. I ponder, as researcher, on how best to “undress this cloaked silence” (Mazzei, 2007: 43) and story our shared, heartfelt, transforming intermezzo space. We reflect on how these moments of insight, of shifting from one ontological position to another, where “a new conceptual terrain in which things formerly perceived come into view” (Land et al., 2014: 200), become a “creative act of transformation” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75) and a “re-visioning of [our] story” (Hillman, 1989: 80).

In this *Fifth Moment*, we attend to the “unfinished business in the soul of the work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76), where my *co-re-searchers* and I become spokespersons for what may have been left “unspoken, unsaid, neglected, marginalized or otherwise forgotten” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 76). Our Orphic experience of looking backwards becomes pivotal in our moving forwards into the second half of our lives, but also in *re-viewing* what may be forgotten socially and culturally, for people of our vintage. An opportunity to re-construct “the very foundations of [our] world” (Stein, 1998: 7) and give voice to the *unsayable*, becomes “a massive reorganization of attitude, behavior, and sense of meaning” (Stein, 1998: 7), a liminal moment of transformation “from one form to another” (Stein, 1998: 7).

Voice without body, body without voice

Orpheus is changed forever, not only by his descent into mourning, enduring the painful process of de-vesting the “implanted ‘ideas’ to which [his] history has so long been in service” (Hollis, 2009: 72), but, most importantly, by being forced to let go of his beloved Eurydice. Like Orpheus, our divestiture and dispossession of what we cherish most, brings “existing certainties [and] renders them problematic and fluid” (Land et al.,

2014: 201), exposing our vulnerable and fragile selves. In this *in-between* place, we contemplate “what is” and “what can be or will be” (Turner, 1981: 159), in dissolving “the grand narratives of self-constancy” (Holstein and Gubrium, 2000: 69) and their attendant language. However, in the process of re-finding and re-constructing “the emergence of a new mode of knowledge” (Satprem, 2000: 52), we are offered a haven, not only to stammer in our “minor language inside our own language” (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 4), but also “to give breath masked behind the spoken words” (Mazzei, 2007: 18), through reveried silences. Our relational reflexive space gives us permission to welcome its richness, opening up *lines of flight* into new understandings, insight, and a new language of re-creating meaning.

Meaning-making in our intermezzo spaces

In the course of our conversations, my *co-re-searchers* and I enjoyed the relaxed space of sharing lunch in my home or hotel, when we shared our travel. We enjoyed so many moments of laughter, reflective silences, pauses, and fun together, but very often those were the times when we might ponder the ‘*unsayable*’. As I re-listen to the silent spaces in our *re-search* conversations, I am brought back to the temporality and place of our “shared deterritorialization in which we constitute one another” (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012: 450). We hold each other in this “creative-relational” (Massumi, 2015: 7) space, where “in between the said and the not-said, we can hear and trace languages of the unsayable” (Rogers et al., 1999: 6), awaiting expression.

Tiger recounts a story she had read about two dutiful, ‘*good*’ women, who decide to take flight to Italy, away from the edicts of their respective husbands. In recounting and listening to this powerful story of resistance, we laugh heartily as Tiger questions the foundations of our ontological status of subjectification asking “*if we have to be good all our lives because we have been good?*” [laughter]. Similarly, Tiger questions her

own sense of agency, in giving herself permission to “*tip the balance of work*” at this time in her life. Her humorous self-deprecation highlights the absurdity of: “*Jesus, I can’t replace work, um, making a contribution with hitting a ball*” [laughter], perhaps this catches the conflict we all may feel, as we struggle in managing our guilt-ridden transition.

Surprising emerging stories

In our moments of laughter and silence, we make most unexpected discoveries in a “foreign language to which we do not [normally] attend” (Mazzei, 2007: 31). For instance, it is in this transformational space, where “speech born from silence and seeks conclusion in silence” (Mazzei, 2007: 28), I hear the enormous impact of being “young carers” (Aldridge and Becker, 1999: 313), “defined as being under the age of eighteen” (Gray et al., 2008: 169). Tiger tells how she found herself caring for her Aunt Mary in recent years, reminding her of how “*my own mom went missing [laughs] from that role*”. In her momentary silent space between words, she becomes overwhelmed by the “restrictions imposed on childhood” (Aldridge and Becker, 1999: 314), of having to “provide or help to provide care and support to [her mother] and take on a level of responsibility, usually associated with an adult” (Gray et al., 2008: 169).

Our shared story of our mothers being “unable to care for the child but, instead, welcomed being cared for and perhaps also demanded help in caring for younger siblings” (Bowlby, 1997:207), is, as Tiger says, “*a sentence, a huge sentence*”. Hollis (1996) draws our attention to Freud’s insight into a child’s unfinished mourning, “when the parent is physically present but emotionally absent” (1996: 44). As a result, the child internalises the grief “as melancholy” (Hollis, 1996: 44), but longs to be re-connected with the parent. We hear, through our silent spaces, the deep wounding of our “compulsive care-giving as a pattern of attachment behavior” (West and Keller, 1999:

425) on us emotionally and, indeed, in shaping our adult *worldview*. According to Bowlby (1977):

The person showing it may engage in many close relationships but always in the role of giving care, never that of receiving it.....the person who develops in this way has found that the only affectional bond available is one in which he must always be the care-giver and that the only care he can ever receive is the care he gives himself.

p.207

We discover perhaps, like Ulysses, in this silent *intermilieu*, that “when [we] had lived them directly [we] had not understood their meaning” (Cavarero, 2000: 18), we begin to realise the cost of care-giving in unconsciously suppressing our own un-known needs and learning “that [our] wishes count for nothing” (Etherington, 2007a: 174). Little attention, or indeed recognition, was given publicly in our generation to the needs of the care-giver, “that [she] may be suffering too, and suffering not only the wound of the patient, but also her own wound” (Hollis, 2001: 74). Tiger’s awareness of being “able to walk away from the work” (Hollis, 2001: 74) the second time, empowers her to *un-do* and re-author the old script:

*It had all,
just become too much.
couldn't,
couldn't,
couldn't,
I couldn't,
do it.*

As a result of my experience of role reversal, it seems that I may have achieved what Bowlby calls “relational proximity” to my mother, and perhaps in the process, “learned

that a relationship can only be attained by accepting the parent’s definition of the grounds for attachment” (Bowlby, 1977: 426). I now *see* how this insight possibly shaped my life story of unselfishly caring for others in my different professional roles, and not even knowing my own needs:

*I closed the curtains,
this evening,
on a life,
ending.
I gave it all away,
my energy,
my care,
my-self,
nothing left
nothing left in the reservoir,
not a drop of water,
for my-self,
I gave it all away.
So maybe,
now,
I can begin,
again.*

(July 2018)

In being storied and constituted “through the patterns that [we] find ourselves in [our] culture, which are proposed, suggested and imposed upon [us] by [our] society and [our] social group” (Foucault, 1988), we discover the absence of an *other* language to express a need to be cared for. Tiger and I, in our complicity in our discourses of being

care-givers, begin to give ourselves permission to become “a speaking, agentic subject” (Davies, 2003: 22). It is in this language of silence and reverie that “allows the two stories to emerge” (Cavarero, 2000:10). The first is the heroic Oedipal care-giver, who only knows herself through others’ stories of her, “[reinforcing] patterns of exclusive care-giving” (Bowlby, 1977: 431). The second is the silent invisible weight of “over compliance” (Arnaud, 1959: 10), of being *good girls*, unable to articulate our own needs and suppressing our own care-seeking (Bowlby, 1977).

In our “excursion in coming to silence” (Mazzei, 2007: 115), we become more aware of the significance of our story and, like Ulysses, we weep “when [we] fully realize the meaning of [our] story” (Cavarero, 2000: 17). In re-finding what was lost and mourning it, we encounter the weight of our ancestral threads, lingering like Orpheus in this veiled place, between the living and the dead. Tiger and I, begin to *see* how our attachment and attentive presence to our mothers, both while living and dead, have haunted us during our lifetime, “not so much by what was, as by what is and shall be” (Morgenson, 1992: 29). My journey into this work, though initially through the portal of the PME students, brought me back to my mother’s unfinished business and the “weight of a life that has been unsatisfactorily or incompletely lived” (Morgenson, 1992: 103) pressing in on me. This Orphic transformational moment adds another layer of meaning and perspective to our old script, opening up *lines of flight* in the cracks and fissures of our inscribed and accepted stories of our subjectivity, our cultural and social milieus.

Our conversations often reveal our “attempt to mourn what we never experienced, but yearned for deeply” (Bowlby, 1977: 430), as we “receive [our] own story through another’s narration” (Cavarero, 2000:17). Our silenced stories finally begin to breathe in our dialogic space, recognising, acknowledging and perhaps for the first time, *seeing* the lifelong impact of “remain[ing] caught up in the story” (Frank, 2010: 8). We

momentarily disrupt our long inherited narrative of how our experience, as carers, which served us very well professionally and personally, but *see* that this is not the *only* story. As we “meet up with [ourselves] through the tale of [our] story” (Cavarero, 2000: 17), we are moved to tears like Ulysses, as we *recognise* and *see*, for the first time what was lost, but also what is re-found, in our re-visited, reflexive space of telling and re-telling our stories.

Our journey in mourning, separation and truly letting go of our ancestors, is almost like “as if death [is] not so much the loss of a family member, as the occasion of that family’s reunion” (Morgenson, 1992: 36). In telling and re-telling our stories of love, attachment, dis-memberment, and loss, Tiger and I, like my other co-researchers, are very aware of our ancestral presence in helping us to mourn our losses. This dual work of redemption, of the living and the dead, where we “overthrow such noxious stuckness” (Hollis, 2013: 4), opens the timely portal of redemption both for ourselves and our ancestors. They help free us from each other, into our own destinies, as reflected in a dream I had about my mother’s readiness, and indeed mine, to let her go:

*I come into a room where my mom is
laid out.*

*Everyone seems to be preparing for her
funeral.*

I come into her,

and lean into her.

I know that she is still alive.

I whisper to her.

We are at one with each other.

She tells me that she is not ready yet,

to be buried.

I say,

with gentle understanding,

and compassion,

"I know".

I stay with her,

up really close to her.

I tell her how much,

I love her.

She tells me,

that she will be ready to go,

in the morning.

I say

"I know that".

I unlock the door,

and leave the other mourners,

gather around her,

telling stories about her,

as if she is dead.

I step back into school,

as Principal.

(September, 2020).

In her journey of mourning and letting go, Tiger tells me her life-changing dream, where she meets her mother, who has a placard on her back, saying: “*go away, I’m okay here*”, the clearest sign to free each other from the bonds of attachment, which have haunted her for so long. Tiger is now finally re-assured that she and her mother are now free, like I am, to live out our own destinies and acknowledge, as Jung (1968) says, how:

The child is the being which matures toward independence, and it accomplishes this through voluntary separation from the mother archetype – the psychological symbol of familiarity and protection – and subsequent exploration of nature and/or the unknown.

p.165.

Our re-assuring dreams of love, mutual letting go and mourning, in the “interplay between the ‘here’ and the ‘hereafter’ (Jung, 1967: 330), become “a creative act of transformation” (1967: 330), in which the ancestors’ unfinished business “resolves itself when the childish tie to the dead is severed and a mature bond is forged” (Morgenson, 1992: 135). Interestingly, Morgenson (1992) considers how our mourning and experience of truly letting go may find its expression creatively, in perhaps an artistic creation, where perhaps in this piece of work, “the dead, whose fate is bound with our own, will have a place to manifest themselves” (1992: 120):

*Let go, let fly, forget.
You’ve listened long enough.*

Now strike your note.’

It was as if,

*I had stepped free into space,
alone with nothing,*

*that I had not known
already.*

(Heaney, 2001).

Silenced stories, stories of recognition

In the course of my journey over the past five years, I have learned to let go of being persistently purposeful and gradually embrace the art of loitering, sometimes with intent, but oftentimes, and maybe more importantly, without. Alchemical hermeneutics “dream[s] with the ‘text’, linger[s] in reverie in the moment of being questioned, as one might, for example, linger for a while in the mood of a dream” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 223). *The Poetics of Reverie* by Gaston Bachelard (1960) draws attention to this idea of *knowing* through reverie and how we can enlarge our understanding of our lived experience and be transformed by it.

My loitering “near [this] work” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 227) calls me to wait, to be addressed and summoned by it, and respond “to what the work wants to [say]” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 230). My *co-re-searchers* and I sit together, looking into our metaphorical open fire, telling and re-telling our stories, in our reveried space of *becoming*. In our epiphanic moments in our *in-between-ness*, we hear the attentive presence of our ancestors, in our “irruptions of speech” (Mazzei, 2007: 47), their stories like ours, “sometimes inaudible, sometimes ignored, sometimes misunderstood, but always present” (Mazzei, 2003: 355). The invisible veil between us, with its blurred soft silky edges of speech, pauses and silent stuttered reveries, draws us together “as the breath and the life of living” (Mazzei, 2003: 358), to give voice to what we know, and hear what we may have lost and what we are re-finding.

Our stories of *becoming* emerge from the mists of our whisperings, stammerings, pauses, reveries, and silences seem to belong to the “winged-footed Hermes”, “the god of oracles, dreams and prophecies” (Palmer, 1969: 13). Hermes, the mythic figure who guides Orpheus and Eurydice in their journey between the upper and the underworld, between life and death (Romanyshyn, 2013), is also charged with “the function of

transmuting what is beyond human understanding into a form that human intelligence can grasp” (Palmer, 1969: 13). He is the voice who assists in constructing the language of the *unsayable*, the voice of knowing, that “brings the message of destiny”(Romanyshyn, 2013: 220), that moment of *knowing*. As we make meaning of this Orphic space, Hermes is our guide, who helps us to articulate what we *know*, in re-finding what was lost. He is the one who re-assures us that our *knowing* emerges from our stammerings and silent intermezzo spaces, helping “us to know a language without censorship” (Bachelard, 1960: 58), “liberat[ing] us from the burdens of life” (Bachelard, 1960: 73) and the burden of our inherited language.

Abby tells about a life-changing moment of recognition, *knowing*, and liberation for her, at a particularly significant event shared with her child. This epiphanic moment in Abby’s life marks letting go of the weight of being the protective parent, *knowing* that “all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well” (Julian of Norwich, 1343 – after 1416), was life-changing:

*And I think,
when I said to you,
when she looked over,
from where she was
all of that,
was encapsulated
but this is...
emblazoned in my mind,
and through...
that little look-,
as I say,
I won't forget that-..*

everything is alright...

Abby's palatable relief at her readiness at being able to let go of her child, offers both of them an opportunity, like Orpheus and Eurydice, to pursue their own destinies:

*I think that even,
when you lose,
that sense of- or responsibility,
or sort of baggage,
that you have carried,
when that's gone,
you- you are..
you're in the,
the new space...*

Abby's acknowledgement of being able to experience "*the great gift to have got this moment*", possibly reflects "an effort to give voice to that which is produced beneath the layers of a hegemonic discourse" (Mazzei, 2003: 362), as a gesture of re-authoring. In our inhabited space of a "poetic understanding of silence" (2003: 356), in the marginal, liminal epiphanic spaces of our *in-between-ness*, Abby articulates how *knowing* happens, in "*such a quiet, unobtrusive*" way, and becomes not only a profoundly life-changing transformative moment for us, but also "a journey of return.... [where we] come to know what has already been known without knowing it" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 13):

Abby: Yeah,

So I suppose it's a great gift to have got that moment... (pause)

for me to actually experience...

just ... (pause)

Eileen: hmm.

And it's that sense of just trusting yourself...

Hmm.

to the greater scheme of things...

Hmm, hmm.

You know?...

*So now you
don't have to
....worry*

*...you have a
whole
space...a new
space-*

Yeah...

*for...
yourself...*

Yeah... (pause)

Within the social constructionist, poststructuralist framework, one way of knowing is not revered over another. Empirical, tacit, practical, aesthetic, intuitive ways of knowing are also valued under this theoretical umbrella. This liberating approach to knowledge allows us “to appreciate the many different claims to knowledge” (Gergen, 2015: 148), other than the single defined Truth which often shapes our worldview. Abby’s liminal epiphanic story of transformation and liberation draws on “an other wisdom, than that of our ego-conscious minds” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 47), reminding us that knowledge also inhabits the “primacy of the invisible” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 264), in our silent

speech, pauses, silences, and our words in between. In this vulnerable Orphic space, our hegemonic narrative of *knowing* becomes dis-rupted, making “room for the irruptive emergence of a new concept” (Mazzei, 2007: 19), a change, which may “turn out to be lasting and profound” (Stein, 1998: 7). We begin to hear and acknowledge our embodied selves in the silences of our *intermezzo* spaces and begin to trust the wisdom of “a speaking subject” (Davis, 2003: 27).

Our *worldview* may take on a different hue, as we begin to trust our unfolding “subsidiary” (Moustakas, 1990: 21, citing Polanyi, 1983) knowledge, which embraces “the elements of perception, that enter into [our] conscious awareness”(1990:210. In the silences and pauses of our Orphic *in-between-ness*, the unseen manifests itself in the language of “vague shapes, outlines or understandings” (Moustakas, 1990: 21). We begin to recognise that “by seeing differently, we do differently” (Hillman, 1975:122), as we embrace an unfolding burgeoning alternative narrative, waiting to be heard. We tentatively *un-do* the certainty of our inherited discursive language and re-discover that re-finding an *other* language of *knowing*, is also “one of the most important sites of this construction process” (Burr, 2015: 121), as we stammer to say the ‘*unsayable*’, in our “heterotopic space ... of counter hegemonic thinking” (Baillie et al., 2012: 202).

Silenced stories, breathing in silent spaces

In one of our conversations, Abby and I find ourselves exploring the effects of censoring our voices, holding resonances perhaps of our inherited stories:

but that she (Abby's Mother)
came to a point in her life
where she said,
If I'm looking at something on TV,
or if I'm going to the pictures,

*I've gotten to a point,
where I'm not going to go,
to anything that upsets me,
or that,
that frightens me
or,
that gives me,
any of those negative feelings,
and why would I put myself through that?"*

We become mindful of our social and cultural *shapes* and “acquired sense of self” (Hollis, 1993: 17) we have assumed, because of our ancestral histories. We *see* how we are not defined by them, but “ask anew the question of meaning which once circumambulated the child’s imagination but was effaced over the years” (Hollis, 1993: 19). Our intermezzo reflective space offers us this opportunity to stay with the pauses and gaps between words, in problematising, “what has been left out, excluded and literally silenced” (Mazzei, 2007: 46) in attributing power to the dominant powerful voices.

We consider how, when “we live out the conscious, adapted attitude, the opposite side remains unconscious, waiting for some situation which allows it to break through” (Singer, 1972: 169). We ponder our responses in situations where our voices are compromised, silenced and repressed, which “leaves the wound untouched” (Singer, 1994: 91). We *see* how they manifest themselves unconsciously in signs and symptoms, our rage; “*in wreck[ing] the bushes in my backyard*” [*laughs*] as Abby says; our compulsivity, in my case *busyness*, and perhaps in our addictions, all of “which serve as arrows that point to the wound” (Hollis, 1993: 17), which awaits to elicit a reflexive response from us. In other words, our symptoms or responses could perhaps be

interpreted as a *line of flight*, “enabling [us] to speak back and construct alternative narratives” (Ringrose, 2013: 137). We stay with the discomfort of *un-doing* the puzzle of being *without voice*, as we “enable each other to give voice to our experience, those voices [creating] a sense of power and authority” (Etherington, 2004:32 citing Hertz, 1997 and McLeod, 1997).

Abby tells how she consciously avoided her inherited ‘*fixing*’ narrative, of ‘*I’ll tell you what to do now*’, all her life. However, in our moment of meeting, “the *unsayable* stumbles along and tries to find words for its own inarticulate understanding” (Rogers et al., 1996: 8). Abby tells about the power of her mother’s influence on her own children, which she begins to de-construct. What follows in our conversation, through the silence between words, is the realisation that she may have been caught in the web of the ‘*fixing*’ relationship with her children too, as the only viable one, despite knowing that it did not seem to fit comfortably with her; ‘*But, um, it’s- I’m just wondering, have I been playing with the role that I resisted for a long time?*’

Abby’s reflective question perhaps highlights how our self-construction, formulated and constructed as a “regime of truth, that decides what will or will not be a recognizable form of being” (Butler, 2005: 22), disturbs us, maybe when we *see* our own complicity in its invisibility. In questioning this regime of truth, we begin to de-construct our ontological and epistemological stances, and in so doing, divest ourselves like Oedipus, of our perceptions of ourselves, “imperiling the very possibility of being recognized by others” (Butler, 2005: 23). Abby’s ponderous presence and silent attentiveness, “[exposes] the previously hidden interrelatedness of something” (Kiley and Wisker, 2009: 432), which is perhaps, waiting to be *seen*. In this inexplicable Orphic place between the worlds of our inherited stories and unfolding possibilities, we recognise, as Nobbs (2001, cited in Speedy, 2015) says, that,

our lives are made up of fragments. We never have all the pieces, never see the whole. Fragments get garbled, misunderstood and distorted. They make up life.

p. 9.

Abby begins the process of *un-doing* the old script, of accepting not only the power of the *other* voice, but also having “[come] to internalize or accept its terms” (Butler, 1997: 2). This threshold space, “evoke[s] indecision and hesitation, of not knowing. Of nothing being settled...of neither one thing nor the other, neither here nor there” (Wyatt, 2014: 11), gives ourselves permission to breathe and live a different story, “[its] work, [reminding] us that we have to live with complicated truths” (Frank, 2010: 5). In the gaps and pauses in this betwixt and between creative-relational space, our unfolding story emerges through “the irruption of speech, that is essential to a fuller meaning of speech” (Mazzei, 2007: 47) but also to a changing ontology and epistemology:

Abby: That-- do you know what this is?...

this is underestimating my own-...

..um, influence in terms of—

maybe,

influence is the wrong word,

but maybe underestimate- underestimating...

If I said a thing, that's just mam saying it.

Eileen: Mm.

Abby: But if it had the authority,

of coming from this other person,

whom they got on very well with,

and whom they knew,

until their teenage years

she'd carry more strength...

If ...

...if I channelled what I want to say,

into the way she would say it

I'm only thinking that now- ... (silence)

Mm. mm- hmm...

*And wondering what's
happening for you now as
you say that?...*

- uh,

it's...

it's coming back to just having-having...

... t-t-the confidence,

to believe in-in one's own...

Mm.

Authenticity...

*Mm. Well, that your way of
doing things is-is okay too?*

yeah.

Mm, mm.

...it's okay for them to hear it from me.

yeah, yeah.. exactly.

Exactly, yeah, yeah.

Exactly.. yeah.

and-and what you said there,

when I think about that objectively, of course...

isn't it much better...

that they tell me something...

*Mm... and that you don't
have to emulate-*

anybody or your mother or-

*or just for your way of
dealing with ...*

*yeah. but -- it is interesting
though, Judith answered, "I
just want to rant now." She
didn't want you to say, well,
uh, this is...*

*yeah.. so she is okay about,
you know. She just wants to
tell you.*

Eileen: Mm.

Mm.

just as-

Mm.

somebody that they feel...

Mm.

they can trust...

Mm....

to tell...

Mm.

rather than...

Mm.

somebody that they...

who needs to sort it out for them...

Mm.

*or whom they might
feel that, uh, if they
weren't listened to.*

So-

this one is where...

yeah.

I want to run...

but they trust you so much...

yeah, yeah.

but I think that's a great...

yeah.

*...an honour and
privilege-*

like...

to have that type of relationship.

Yes. yeah, yeah.

but they just want to be able to tell you.

so all I need to do is keep my ears open-

Mm.

... and just- yeah be

available... I mean.

yeah.

yeah.

that's lovely.

Abby: yeah.

Yeah.

Mm.

Um, yeah,

Abby: because that,

as I said,

it would have been something,

I resisted doing...

Mm.

uh, and then suddenly fell into doing...

Mm.

Um...

Mm.

...yeah. so-

Mm-hmm.

- uh-

...do you know what I think?

I mean, it's-it's-it's...

... it's a sense of-

Mm...

... starting to be okay with one's self.

*Mm-hmm. that's
true.*

Is that normal? [laughs]-

*Isn't it okay to be
okay with oneself?
Yeah.*

a little bit of-....

*I know. To be able
to...*

Does it take this long.

*I-I think it does.....
yeah. mm, mm, mm.*

Quietly okay,...

that's what I say [chuckles].

Yeah... it's wonderful..... (silence)

*Mm. I think it is. yeah. mm.
well, thank you Abby...*

Mm....thank you so much.

*Yeah.. maybe stay with
that...*

Yeah..

And I was right,

when I said it was a lifeline... (referring to our conversations)

Abby's unfolding insight perhaps highlights "how knowledge about life and the world may 'come from' a reflection on what appears in consciousness" (Les Todres, 2011: 1), when we are able to experience ourselves as 'more than' whom we think we are, and in more than the ways we have "been objectified and defined" (Les Todres, 2011: 3). Our threshold moments of vulnerability and insight become, as Sparrow (2013) says, "a site

for alimention” of food and nourishment for us and “effectuate a perpetual ‘breakup of identity” (Straus, 1963: 197) on our journey towards “identity-constitution” (Sparrow, 2013: 52) and ‘*becoming*’.

The silent voice of being ‘seen’

We become like Orpheus, dis-membered and *un-done*, through this liminal experience, of a “moment in and out of time” (Turner, 1995: 96), where we tell and re-tell our stories. In de-constructing our ontological and epistemological stances, we appreciate how precious and gifted we are, to share this un-conditional space, being divested like Orpheus, as we story and re-story Butler’s questions, of “Who we have become, What is left of me and What is the Other I have lost?” (Butler, 2006: 28). Our moments of meeting become creative acts of transformation, offering us the possibility of lifting the veil on what has been in the shadows and out of our reach perhaps until now. The weight of a lifelong story of an “identity, which expresses nothing other than” (Cavarero, 2000: 23) ‘itself and what is shown and exhibited’ (Arendt, 1977:35), begins to dissolve, in being recognised through the story of an-*other*. My Ulysean experience of dissolution, acknowledges the transformative power of being recognised and *seen*, opening up new possibilities of accepting an alternative story. We begin to *see* ourselves like Orpheus and Eurydice, free to enter our own destinies, transformed by our encounter with each other, “a process by which I become other than I was and so I cease to be able to return to what I was” (Butler, 2005: 27). In our experience of being *seen*, and seeing the Other, I become transformed “through the act of recognition” (Butler, 2005: 28).

I hear my *co-re-searchers*, and indeed others of our vintage, express how our experience of our cultural and social invisible language of being ‘*seen and not heard*’, has inscribed itself on our bodies, and has perhaps, stunted our growth. Our struggle to

become articulate, to re-find a language of *becoming*, as we emerge from our long-held silence, -“the thing one declines to say, or is forbidden to name” (Foucault, 1976: 13), seems to hold the key to our challenge in becoming expanded and transformed, in moving forwards. James recounts in an earlier *Moment*, about the impact his mother’s powerful presence in his life, ‘*and maybe detrimental to my growth, you know*’ It is only when I mention the story about her insistence on going shopping at a time when it suited her, with little consideration given to James’ needs, that we muse about our inability to find an adequate language to express our own needs. It is only then, that I hear a *line of flight* in James’ realisation and insight of the enormity of what he has just said:

*You know, um
that's probably
I don't know why...
I'm saying that now...
I think it came up
when you were talking about
the shopping experience.
and the, uh,
you know,
how, I was trying
to find my voice*

Reading this, I get a glimpse of the small helpless, voice-less child, whom Hollis (1993) says is,

lacking in power to choose other life circumstances, lacking even in objectivity to identify the nature of the problem as Other, and lacking the grounds for comparative experience.

p.12.

Not only is the child lost in the *other's* language by “this wielding power by adults” (Miller, 1987: 85), but also bears the burden of being pressed “into subordination” (Butler, 1997: 3), and also constituted by it. In this study, we dis-cover that it is the child who carries the weight of our ancestors’ unfinished business, and “we often do more crying within ourselves or take our crying to hidden corners” (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 174), without understanding why.

I have come to learn through this work, that it is the child who “paves[s] the way for future changes of personality and it is a symbol which unites opposites [conscious and unconscious]; a mediator, bringer of healing” (Jung, 1968: 151-160). The child’s burden of carrying and being silenced is enormous, as we protect ourselves and “the guardians at the gate of our freedom [who] are still large and intimidating” (Hollis, 2009: 178). In our gifted gesture of our presence and reciprocity, we begin to realise the impact of our bounded selves, as James, recognises, only when through our storytelling, “we also have the ability to disrupt or overwrite their stories” (Dubnewick et al., 2018: 418), as he recounts a story about his courage to declare his own needs in a particular business situation:

James

But at least

I was the person,

who made the-the choice,

at the end.

Yeah,

that's right,

I was heard.

Eileen

*But ultimately, you
were- sort of you were
heard? That's the
difference maybe, isn't
it?*

*Whereas in the past,
you would have...*

*your default would
have been to give in,*

*and you would have
been 'nice' about it,*

*and you would have
deferred to others,*

*rather than to James'
needs.*

Yeah. I would,

absolutely,

Um, I would,

so I had to do that,

and even now that I'm able to say,

that my role would be different

If I mind, will I not-- I won't be going in?

that's a big statement, yeah.

so, uh, you know,

I also have to say,

that without any kind of sense of...

that I've...

I just...

No...

I won't be going in...

I don't want to.

Wow! How is it for you to say

that?

It was quite powerful, actually.

It is about choosing something,

but then in the end,

if that doesn't work,

well, then so be it.

In our Orphic space of in-between-ness, we “put down the weight of our aloneness and ease into the conversation” (Whyte, 2012: 359) and acknowledge the gift of accountability which the child brings to us, on this threshold between the first and the second half of life. Otherwise, we may remain stuck in our old stories, old identities and never have the courage to “stand up against these disempowering messages” (Hollis, 2009: 179).

I understand now how our sense of agency depends so much on children “[achieving] a sense of themselves as beings with *agency*, that is, as individuals who make choices about what they do, and who accept responsibility for those choices” (Davis, 2005: 9). However, in our *in-between-ness*, we patiently and *com-compassion-ately* attend to each other’s stories, where we “act and [are] acted upon” (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010: 1), by those “intensities”, which “pass body to body”, and “resonances that circulate about, between, sometimes stick to bodies and worlds [and words]” (Seigworth and Gregg, 2010: 1). We “*tread softly*” (Yeats, 1899), as we hear the child’s powerlessness in not being able to respond to the ‘definitive’ authoritative voice.

Yet, in this Orphic space, we begin to perhaps partially *un-do* the script of our discursive repression and co-construct an alternative language of resistance and

empowerment. In our dialogic space, we are “caught up in lines of flight that choose us and take us into realms of new thought” (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012: 454) and infinite possibilities of *becoming*. By attending to each other and our stories acceptingly, in this *in-between-ness*, we also attend to the lightest touch of our ancestors’ presence, around the table, eavesdropping on what is being said, unsaid and indeed written. As I dwell among the dead, I know that they too are seeking voice in the silences in between speech. They call to be heard, to be *seen*, as victims too, “whose identities have, in turn, been shaped by family, cultural and historical ways of thinking that were available to them” (Etherington, 2007a: 174), pressing in on them and holding them “green and dying” (Thomas, 1946). We acknowledge the weight of our inherited stories where we make the “familiar strange” (Mazzei, 2007: 31) and also hear [our ancestors] pain of “what [was] subordinated and forgotten” (Mazzei, 2007: 19), during their lives, and that now calls to be *seen*:

*We of the here and now
are not for a moment
hedged in the time-world,
nor confined within it,
we are incessantly
flowing over and over
to those who preceded us...*

(Rilke, 1949, 374).

Questions ... waiting

In de-constructing our ontological and epistemological stances, we stay with Butler’s questions, of “*Who we have become, What is left of me and What is the Other I have lost?*” (Butler, 2004: 28). We appreciate very much the gift of this unconditional Orphic space we share, in which “the unveiling of what is hidden” (Corbin, 1998: xl) is brought

“from unintelligibility to understanding” (Palmer, 1969: 13) under the guidance of Hermes. We are faced with these questions which help to interrogate and de-construct our lived experience.

My *co-re-searchers* and I tell many stories, highlighting how very often we may become “slaves of the stories we unconsciously tell ourselves about our lives” (Pearson, 1998: 17). In this Orphic space, we get glimpses into other stories of possibility. We are challenged to painfully extricate ourselves from our adopted stories, which are so deeply embedded in our embodied selves. Our journey of shedding, mourning, and separating becomes a major life re-view. In some of our silent spaces between words, we hear the struggle in letting go, in rationalising; protecting ourselves from the fear perhaps, of what it might feel like. However, very often in our epiphanic moments, we are without words, only the silence of recognition and ‘*knowing*’. We hold on to what is familiar until we are forced to let it go. Butterfly and I are both passionate about baking and cooking, and have pursued these *taken-for-granted* activities with a relentlessness, application and commitment, perhaps without interrogating their constitution.

In one of our conversations, Butterfly tells of her struggle to accept letting go of her long-established identity, in a story she tells about not being needed to provide food for a family birthday party, something she has always done. In attending to the inhabited silences of our discourses, I hear how often we dismiss and neglect our embodied sense of being impacted by being dis-possessed of our *taken-for-granted* identities. I can readily identify with Butterfly’s sense of woundedness, in addressing the *who* I am *becoming*, *what* is left of me and the *Other* I have lost (Butler, 2006). I hear the deep pain and grief of being divested, where “the subject, produced in the existing discourse” (Davies, 2003: 10) is being un-done. We struggle to re-find the language of agency, of

articulating our woundedness in our silent “reticent breath” (Mazzei, 2007: 27), recognising as Butterfly does, the gift of its attendant loss and growth opportunity:

Well, I think i-i-i-initially.

it was uh-

I think initially...

it was it was.....

I was probably

felt a bit hurt...

And then I got sense as I thought about it more

Um, and took off...

a huge amount of pressure.

As we share Orpheus’ grief in fully letting go of Eurydice, we acknowledge the pain of loss at this time of our lives, but also the weight of the history of losses, waiting to be *seen*. In our journey of *recognising* and *seeing*, we are guided by Hermes, who “bridges the known and the unknown and makes possible their reconciliation” (Hollis, 2001: 109), through our sympathetic and empathic presence. We re-discover “our liberation com[ing] not from glossing over or repressing painful states of feeling, but only from experiencing them to the full” (Jung, 1981: 335).

The silent spaces of ‘in-between-ness’

Our conversations take us through the sentinelled portal from the main manicured garden into the woodland which is wild, ‘meadowed’, carpeted with wild garlic, wildflowers, voluptuously and verdantly enveloped by trees, and pillowed hedges. It becomes a place *apart* from the garden, a haven to hear the silence; to step carefully where you walk; a place of meaning’ of connection with our multiplicity of beings. Some days the woodland is darker than others where loss, grief and death make their

grand appearance. They challenge our certainty; mock our endeavours to be fit and healthy; laugh at our denial at getting older and having to succumb to the edicts of the medical profession. Death summons us to consciously look it in the eye and profess its existence. Here, words become inadequate in the face of this inescapable reality. I did not expect to notice death's bodily effect on me, a mist of tears welling up from somewhere in the deep dark woodland, where Tiger and I delightedly found ourselves at the beginning of each of our meetings:

Email from Tiger, 8th June 2018

Last week was such a rich experience. I've often fantasied about the conversations I might have with someone as they die and how nothing would go unsaid, and last Thursday's conversation had something of that imagined quality. Of course in my life those conversations are only imagined, as for me all deaths of loved ones have been sudden. Why do I wait to have those conversations until someone is dying when there are other possibilities; what gets talked about between us is hard to grasp loss, life, hope, despair, longing. The dream about the clematis/rose stayed with me. And Eileen with me examining the rose /clematis quizzically for its qualities. [Our] garden journeys are so settling as they are meanderings that are echoed, in how we later speak about life.



Plate 13: My garden, Mountain View.

Source: Author

Without speech...only reveried silences...

My conversations with my *co-re-searchers* become borderland moments where we stammer with the “language of the day to that of the night” (Kennelly, 1998: 7), to understand existential matters of love, loss, and death. Autoethnography offers a sympathetic haven to harbour our stutterings and stammerings, in that, it invites possibilities through our reflexivity, avoiding fixed or definite endings and “undebatable conclusions” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 744). In our Orphic space, we give voice to the *un-spoken* and silenced concerns, of loss, grief, finitude of life, and immortality, pertinent to being in this threshold space, between the first and the second half of life. We gaze into the open burning fire and dwell in the presence of the ancestors, acknowledging “our shared precariousness” (Stanescu, 2012: 581) of our vulnerability in the face of death, which Jung claims is “too important not to be talked about” (Jung, 1961: 302). My *co-re-searchers* and I consider it very important to talk about the finitude of life and death “a fearful piece of brutality... not only as a physical event, but far more so psychically” (Jung, 1963: 346). We want to be able to make meaning out of the “blooming, buzzing confusion habitable by ordering it into foregrounds and backgrounds of attention and value” (Frank, 2010: 48), which offers us a treasured opportunity to say the *unsayable*. We talk about how death’s shadow steals up on us, in most unexpected moments, sometimes overwhelmed by the voices of our inherited stories of ageing and in our anxious moments of any hint of physical incapacity:

Eileen: I think it hits us at various moments and...

and...

and it's just suddenly there..

and I don't know that we can be prepared for it either...

Tiger: Hmm...

Let's think about the ability

to hear a song of the decade

with Clint Eastwood..

Got to keep that old man out...do you know it?

Not sure! I'll look it up. I am and you know, but there are moments when it just hits you and you just feel vulnerable.....

Mmm,

And it's- and I don't know that we can prepare ourselves for keeping after those moments of when-..... when it just peep- creeps in and there is a visitor

when there is something wrong physically?.....

Our Orphic space of becoming

In our threshold space, we inhabit Orpheus' helplessness and desolation as he stands between the living and the dead. His aloneness haunts him and us. Our conversations

become moments of *prepar-ed-ness* for the inevitability of death. We take courage to say the *unsayable*, about being overwhelmed by our sense of loss and mourning at having to leave our loved ones behind and also at having to let them go. We become inundated by our stories of loss, grief, and mourning in the silent spaces between words, as we “recognise the vulnerability and finitude of the other” (Stanescu, 2012: 569), and of our selves. We begin to *see* and *know* “what is powerful is not what makes us unique, but what makes us in-common” (Stanescu, 2012: 575).

We attend to each other in the telling and re-telling of our stories of love, loss and dismemberment and recognise that to “mourn is to feel ourselves, sometimes at least, in the world of specters- to be spectral” (Stanescu, 2012: 577), in the presence of our ancestors. Sharing this Orphic space of mourning, in letting go of life and facing the reality of death, becomes “a stumbling and stuttering one, a condition of disturbed ground, or inarticulateness, of disorientation in and about time” (Brown, 2005: 100). We bring the weight of our ancestral losses into our Orphic space, drawing us into storying and re-storying our experiences of loss and grief. We are overwhelmed by grief and sadness, as we recognise that “vulnerability to a sudden address from elsewhere that we cannot pre-empt” (Butler, 2006: 29), hails us into consciousness and wakefulness. My experience of almost being killed by an articulated truck, at the end of October 2019, brought me to a place of mourning the precariousness of the life we grieve, but also the passing of that life (Stanescu, 2012: 580). It also brought me to *see and* value perhaps, “how the confrontation with death may impart life with a meaning” (Frei, 2013: 160):

Email to Tiger: Thu 07/11/2019

Good morning Tiger,

Hi Tiger, (Thursday afternoon)

I hope you have been well this week and things have worked themselves out with S. Forgive me for not responding to you but I seemed to have been badly shaken by this accident last week. I started to write to you last Monday morning Tiger as you see from the greeting, but this is now Thursday and I have been dealing with the aftermath of my brush with death in the shape of the articulated truck. I found myself being absolutely exhausted for the week and very fragile and emotional on Monday, while leaving our car in to be repaired. Outbreaks of tears have drowned my week so far like that rain we have been having- pathetic fallacy at its best!!

Your question about what I was going to do with this encounter with death was so fitting. This time she was right up close, derailed and reduced me to only having tears to describe the impact of her visit on me. An embodied one, until I began to put some language on it and only then did I realise that it actually was a major brush. I just thought I could get on with my life as I have always done but obviously this encounter called for a different response!!

Like always, it remained buried, pressed down, and then after a few days began to spill out through simple conversations with T., the guard from the scene of the incident, and even the doctor who helped to put language on what I was experiencing. So since then, I have been marked by her close up visit. I was reminded of the morality plays in the Middle Ages where God would send his mighty messenger 'Death' to visit 'Everyman' to give him a warning about his life and calling him to heel!! So I have reflected on your question Tiger and it's ironic really that as part of our work we have been talking about the inescapable reality of death and now to experience its presence up close, left me with no words, except fragile tears in the face of loss and my undeniable death.

Email from Tiger: 15/11/2019

I've just given your piece the attention it deserves this am and was moved to tears. You describe your encounter with 'her' so beautifully and I loved the stanzas. I was wondering was she a benign presence or was there a more persecutory feel to 'her,' but she was feminine. I too came away with a deep sense of your brush with death and my own thoughts about that. I panicked a bit when I came out on the road where you had the accident, and knew that I was stirred up too.

Saying the unsayable

Our social and cultural construction of dis-avowing or denying the inevitability of death seems to have “remained a common facet of Western society” (Frie, 2013: 158). The focus of our Western narrative and language of ‘active ageing’ and ‘successful ageing’ or its emphasis on a decline narrative, seems to overlook the value of attending to our vulnerability in our stories of loss and mourning, including “the confrontation with death as an ontological meaning-giving facet of human existence” (Frei, 2013: 167). In giving voice to the *silenced* in our cultural and social milieu, we “solicit a becoming, instigat[ating] a transformation” (Butler, 2004: 40), in the way we talk about loss, mourning, and death. As Freud (1915) suggests:

Would it not be better to give death the place in actuality and in our thoughts which properly belongs to it, and to yield a little more prominence to that unconscious attitude towards death which we have hitherto so carefully suppressed?

p.29.

Our experience of recounting our narratives of love, loss and dismemberment in the face of our mourning has afforded my *co-re-searchers* and I the gift of “confronting the meaning of finitude in everyday life” (Frei, 2013: 159). In our attentive reveried, silent pauses, where “meaning arises out of being present to what presents itself” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 228), our stories of mourning and loss are given space to breathe. In being able to tell and re-tell our stories “the meaning of finitude and the emotional trauma so often connected with loss can only be grasped in a relational context” (Frei, 2013: 160).

We gift each other from our threshold position, with the opportunity to look backwards like Orpheus, to re-story our lives, accepting the pain and richness of mourning, as we

become more conscious of our own finitude. However, “not to become conscious in the second half of life is to commit an unforgivable crime” (Hollis, 1993: 20), where perhaps we find ourselves stuck in our old stories, denying the inevitability of death. In attending to the silent spaces of our stories of mourning and loss, we give voice to and allay our child’s fears and anxieties about the pain of the unknown. We find a certain liberation in un-doing the inherited scripts about mourning and death, which perhaps helps us to live more meaningfully in the second half of life. In our language of reverie and silent spaces, we re-find a new language, of silences, of pauses, of in-between-words, we *see*, as Frei (2013, citing Freud and Heidegger) says:

Finitude and death are fundamentally relational; they are always constituted in a relation to others. It is precisely through the loss of another that the reality of our own finitude becomes clear to us.

p.171.

Imperceptible *becomings*

Orpheus’ relationship with Eurydice is transformed in this Moment, and holds a mirror for my own unfolding story of truly letting go. I was claimed by the work through my own woundedness of loss, grief and the weight of my mother’s invisibility and being silenced, like so many women of her generation and indeed mine. I carried her and the weight of her burden for the whole of my life, without knowing it, until this Moment. I hear the silence of her invitation to truly let her go, so that both she and I are “freed into [our] own destinies” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). I realise, that “truly letting go of someone or something, is the best way to find out what has been lost, to be with it, beyond the need to possess or control it” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). To be in receipt of such a powerful and precious gift in this Moment, as I move from the first to the second half of life, is truly liberating.

In one of my conversations with James, I brought my worry about how to hear and capture in words, what was unsaid in between the gaps of speech. I wondered how I could represent the embodied stories of my co-re-searchers in a “way that they could be breathed in” (Les Todres, 2007:12) and represented:

Eileen: Okay. So, my question today, as I said to you, James, is about... so, like, say, if you were to get-- if somebody were to get upset or were emotional about a particular thing, how would you actually write about that? That would, you know, that you as a reader, or I, would actually know what it feels like, because I could feel they're upset, or I could empathise with their- with their emotional, um, sense of something.

James: Uh, I-I think-

I don't know.

-it's a very difficult one.

So, that's my challenge, you see... I actually don't know the answer.

No, I have to listen so acutely to-

I know you have to listen.

...the conversation-

I know--

-and try and understand—

try and put yourself in the shoes of your co-researcher

as best as you can,

and hear the un-

try and hear the underlying-

But how do you write that? How do you write that?

You have to get into their skin,

nearly, and...

But I am struggling with 'how'

We have to use the language.

How do you-- like, Wordsworth...

they're saying something to you,

emotion, recollected, in tranquillity.

How do writers capture emotion?

How do they do that?

How does Romanyshyn ...

get across the extraordinary pain,

which it certainly came across to me that he went through,

you know, and, uh,...

bear in mind, he went—

at the loss of his wife,

so this was his pain.

So, I think it's more difficult,

even for a third party,

to come to somebody else's pain and emotion,

and try and express their pain,

from their conversation with you.

And that's a real challenge,

I think, if that's what you have to do.

Eileen: And I know it was there, and that's why the conversations were, so extra-ordinary. You know, the ones with you, the ones with my other co-researchers, every single one of them, there were moments when you-- it is difficult to find words ..., except there were no words, and-and accept just to be with them, and to be, you know, with you as somebody telling a story about a particular, uh, a time and place and the weight of the-the emotion, uh, of that time, of that story, of that place, in the now, here, or however we told the story. And I-I don't know how I can truly represent, uh, re-present—

In this Moment, I struggled with how to represent as faithfully as possible, my co-researchers' stories from the fragility of our Orphic liminal space, where we hear the silenced in our own lives, perhaps for the first time. In musing with James about how to re-present our emerging stories, I am reminded of the richness of the ethics of engagement (Pickering and Kara, 2017) which they posit “enables us to work and speak with, rather than about, our participants (Mannay, 2016: 123, cited in Pickering and Kara, 2017: 299). As a researcher, I am aware, that “while there are multiple tales in the field, [I] am charged with writing just one of them” (Hesse-Biber and Leavy,

2007: 343). *I was greatly inspired by Mazzei's (2007) timely intervention, in offering ways of representing the silences of our in-between-ness. I appreciated very much James' wisdom of reminding me, to bring my attentive listening presence to our recorded conversations, "which enable[s] me to hear the absences, the pauses, the whispers" (Mazzei, 2007: 80) of the unspoken and the unsaid.*

I was relieved and surprised at how the 'silenced' from our personal, social and cultural contexts, found its voice, becoming a moment of liberation and transformation for my co-re-searchers and myself. I was also inspired how the power of other ways of knowing, emerges in "cultivating a patient (silent) listening" (Mazzei, 2007: 89). I gained an insight as to how we co-create knowledge, by allowing "the silences to disrupt the tranquil assurance of the spoken word" (Mazzei, 2007: 11), but also how our other ways of knowing trigger a paradigm shift in our ontological and epistemological positions. Through our moments of meeting, we begin to see potential in ourselves and develop the capacity to "perform the person I become in that relationship" (Gergen, 2015: 118), opening new possibilities to alternative ways of unfolding.

Interlude

Looking backwards

In this Fifth Moment, Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Separation, we dwell in the liquid in-between-ness of reverie, reflective pauses and silences to hear what perhaps may be "erased (silent breath) in the production of speech" (Mazzei, 2007: 49). I lingered and loitered, waiting patiently to be addressed by the silences, mindful of the "temptation of impos[ing] upon the soul of the work the pre-formed language of one's ideas" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 230). I hear how the weight of our silent specters, carried by the child, into adult life becomes the foundations of our established ontological and

epistemological stances. I was surprised to hear how the child may carry this weight for a lifetime, until a safe haven is provided for its release. In this Orphic space of *in-between-ness*, we re-find an *other* language of *knowing*, one which is intuitive and “not concerned with the present but is rather a sixth sense for hidden possibilities” (Jung, 1967: 983), to re-story alternative narratives.

Lingering, loitering, and listening to the “pregnant breaths and pauses, the words between words” (Mazzei, 2007: 67), I hear how the thin veil between the living and dead, who “inhabit a single community” (Morgenson, 1992: xiv) accompany us on our journey, as we stutter and stumble, in making meaning of our lives. In recognising our stories of love, loss and mourning, we recognise theirs and *know* that our mutual redemption is inextricably interwoven.

Looking forwards

Our *Sixth Moment: The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation*, calls us to ponder the Eurydician question of ‘*Who*,’ as we take leave of this journey. I invite you to stay with us in our final *Orphic Moment*, as we acknowledge the release of the contents of our mourning and letting go in our final backward glance. Our mourning becomes a creative act of transformation, but, on this occasion, we are able to depart from what is left behind and now see it in our imagination. We become like Eurydice, who unshackles herself from Orpheus’ possession of her, free to be whoever she wants to ‘*become*’, in the second half of life. As we bring this final *Moment*, to a close we also celebrate that it “has been a journey of companions and whose ending is a mutual farewell” (Romanyshyn, 2013:79), where our shared stories “enter the realm of the imagination...where nothing is ever lost” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79).

The Sixth Moment:

The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation

Interlude

Looking backwards

In *The Fifth Moment, Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation*, I re-listen to my conversations shared with my *co-re-searchers*, to hear “a story of silences” (Mazzei, 2003: 355). Orpheus is re-united with Eurydice in the underworld in this *Moment*, where they both weave in and out of each other’s presence, in the shadows of the dead and in the “imagination of the soul” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 75). My careful, attentive, silent presence “to what is not spoken, not discussed, not answered, yet to be known and understood” (Mazzei, 2003: 358), brings surprising insights. I hear the voice of the child who carries the weight of the ancestors’ unfinished business into his and her adult life. We *see* our gradual un-burdening, in the course of our moments of meeting, as we attend to other ways of *knowing*, in releasing ourselves and our ancestors into our respective destinies. Our unfolding stories emerge in the shadows of our inherited stories, opening up possibilities for our own lives, but also perhaps for saying the *unsayable* in our social and cultural contexts.

*We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time*
(Eliot, 1969)

Looking forwards

This *Sixth Moment* of addressing the *Eurydician Question of Mourning as Individuation* is a fitting finale, as we begin to gather the strands of our dream-like, imaginal journey of letting go together, in this Orphic space. Orpheus' courage to take the earlier pivotal transformative backward glance, initiating a process of de-construction, of the "constraints which are imposed by family and other external influences" (Singer, 1972: 134), is life changing. In this space, he is offered an opportunity to "generate new and more useful accounts of self and world" (Gergen, 2015: 62), which, perhaps, would otherwise have remained silenced. His experience of being dis-possessed in the gap between the upper and underworld becomes a "dark night of doubt" (Gergen, 2015: 34), where all that he represents, in the first half of life, dissolves. His journey of mourning, thereafter, becomes one of being torn apart and lost, in finally letting Eurydice go. He is no longer in possession of her. In this *Sixth Moment*, Orpheus now takes the final backward glance to *re-view* his life changing journey of love, loss and mourning, "linger[ing] for a moment before departing" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 78). His unanticipated and unexpected journey has led to a "radical reorganization and transformation of [his] conscious personality" (Perera-Brinton, 1981: 50), bringing him to an unknown fragility and vulnerability.

In his final reflective backward glance, Orpheus "puts some things behind, passing an invisible boundary, new, universal and more liberal laws begin to establish themselves around and within him" (Thoreau, 1992: 256). Orpheus, like us, lingers to *re-gard* what has been disrupted and up-ended, perhaps old ontologies, epistemologies, embedded discourses, and an inherited "monological text" promoting a single ideology (Kristeva, 1996, cited in O' Grady, 2012: 93). It is here, in this final Orphic backward glance, that we are possibly better positioned to understand and make meaning of our experience of being in this fragile space of betwixt and between. We notice, perhaps, for the first time,

how our old *weltanschauung* has faded into the shadows and how we have been slowly, almost invisibly, transformed by our journey of mourning and letting go, through easing into our conversation and being “immersed in the continuous stream of relating” (Gergen, 2015: 117). We notice that our “gesture of release, [becomes] a way of mourning what is left behind, by carrying it in the imagination” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79) is a transformative one.

Our transformation resembles Orpheus’ relationship with Eurydice in the underworld, where we are no longer bound or constricted by our *old script*, so we are free to become whoever we wish to *become*, which Romanyshyn (2013) asserts is “an act of individuation” (2013: 79). His premise is based on Jung’s notion of individuation as “nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona” (Jung, 1966: 173-187). Watkins (2002), cited by O’ Grady, 2012: 124) expands this concept of individuation as “the differentiation of subjectivity away from the fixed and narrow conceptions of personhood given by our collective culture” (Watkins, 2002: 6). Her interpretation resonates with me, in that it possibly encapsulates the experience of our Orphic journey of separating from our hegemonic discourses and endeavouring to make *conscious* choices about how to live. We learn how we are “free to realize [ourselves] in a way which does not depend on the approval of an outside agency” and also “implies becoming one’s own self” (Jung, 1967: 171). We recognise that the journey towards *individuation* has possibly two aspects to it, the first being to “recognise and fulfil [our] own unique potentials” (Singer, 1972: 134) and the second, in the social constructionist sense, to re-author ourselves into *becoming*, through engaging in meaningful dialogue with others.

In this *Moment*, not only have the stories of the past been transformed in our imagination by our telling and re-telling, but so too has my journey as *re-searcher* being

challenged and transformed, by the Eurydician question of 'Who'. This reflective question interrogates my relationship with this work as a piece of personal and cultural therapy, positing as Romanyshyn (2013) says, that,

in the nominal sense {I} am the author of the work, but in an archetypal sense, [I am] merely an agent for the work that has come through [me] and in this sense Eurydice is the one who re-claims the soul of the work, the one who returns it to itself.

p.79

In being an agent to the work, I too, have to leave it behind and release it from my possession, where it too "enters the realm of the living imagination" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79).

*One day you finally knew
what you had to do, and began,
though the voices around you
kept shouting
their bad advice--
though the whole house
began to tremble
and you felt the old tug
at your ankles.
"Mend my life!"
each voice cried.
But you didn't stop.
You knew what you had to do,
though the wind pried
with its stiff fingers*

at the very foundations,
though their melancholy
was terrible.
It was already late
enough, and a wild night,
and the road full of fallen
branches and stones.
But little by little,
as you left their voices behind,
the stars began to burn
through the sheets of clouds,
and there was a new voice
which you slowly
recognized as your own,
that kept you company
as you strode deeper and deeper
into the world,
determined to do
the only thing you could do--
determined to save
the only life you could save.

(Mary Oliver, 1963)

Signposts for the Moment

In this Sixth Moment: The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation, my co-researchers and I reflect on that gesture of our final backward glance before departing, lingering for a moment to ponder the Eurydician question of 'Who'. We echo Butler's (2006) threshold questions, of "Who we have become, What is left of me and What is the

Other I have lost?” (2006: 28). In doing so, we tentatively story promises of new beginnings, burgeoning like spring flowers peeping through the cold winter ground.

I also take my final backward glance, to re-trace my reveried journey in this Orphic space, of being summoned initially to attend to the “narrative material rising up and demanding to be written” (Gannon, 2013: 231), but also summoned by Eurydice to return the work, so that she can “return it to itself” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79). Having kept “an appointment with [myself]” (Hollis, 1993: 56) by attending to this work, I have in the archetypal sense, always known that it is not mine to hold onto or to claim. However, rather like Orpheus, I have to truly let it go, so that I can continue to re-author the rest of my life, and not be identified by it. Emerging from this work, is like waking from a dream, where sometimes the images and story can be captured and re-told, and other times, they are like *will-of-the-wisp*. I linger in this reveried space, like Orpheus, taking that final backward glance, only bringing with me what I need for the second half of life. I now look back at my experience of letting go over the past five years and can possibly *see* for the first time, the unfolding landscapes through which I have travelled in this unexpected Orphic space.

Our final backward glance

Rilke (1939, cited in Romanyshyn, 2013: 78) uses the image of the hill walker to describe our final Orphic backward glance. From my many experiences of hill walking and perhaps yours, my reader, I know what it is like to trek up one hill after another, plodding, one foot in front of another and pausing occasionally to catch a breath. My *co-re-searchers* and I found ourselves enduring “a considerable period of disorientation, of wandering in the wasteland” (Hollis, 1996: 38), before reaching the top of the hill, where we now pause to take another breath, and take our final backward glance. We “retain the attitude of someone who’s departing....for the last time, we turn and linger,

we live our lives, for ever taking leave” (Rilke, 1939: 71, cited in Romanyshyn, 2013: 78). In our final backward look, we are able to *re-view* and *re-gard*, perhaps for the first time, our questions, unknown and silent, rising from our ancestral landscape in our journey of meaning-making. This seminal moment of mourning and release, calls us to rid ourselves of “our projections” (Morgenson, 192: 98) of the dead, and release them back into the landscape. We take our final backward glance, to ponder what we will leave behind, before journeying into the second half of life and taking with us “the relinquishment of the desire to control, to let be” (Hollis, 1996: 42) and to *become* a “participant in the act of letting go” (Hollis, 1996: 43).

Leaving our bounded landscape behind

It is here in our final Orphic backward glance, in each other’s presence, that we get a glimpse of the journey we have taken. We are better able to *see* what has been lost, re-found, what we wish to leave behind and bring with us, into the second half of life. We notice that we are leaving behind the landscape of our old ontologies, epistemologies, discourses of bounded selves, with its “strong traces of an individualist tradition” (Gergen, 2009: xxvi) and bodily inscriptions. We are also relieved to leave behind the “bounded mind, forever elusive and opaque” (Gergen, 2009: 14), one which always seemed unattainable and yet acclaimed, as the only one true construct through which we could find meaning. We can finally leave behind the lessons we absorbed and believed in school, church and state behind, where knowledge was accepted “as an absolute ideal with absolute unassailable and unchanging content” (Les Todres, 2007: 31). Our final backward glance offers a welcome dis-entanglement, liberation, and potential alternative possibilities for the future.

In gazing across the landscape of the past five years for the final time, I *see* the weight of how we are “narrated, posited and articulated within the context of the scene of

address” (Butler, 2005: 51), and the power of being constituted by our inherited language. I *see* how I, like my *co-re-searchers* and perhaps others, “develop[ed] the musculature” (Davies, 1945: 15) to navigate both the overt and covert “shaping that takes place through the establishment of norms and values” (Davies, 1945: 15). In looking at our landscaped stories through a poststructuralist lens, we are able to trace “how what lies beyond the boundaries of the subject, consciousness and self operate within those boundaries” (Williams, 2014: 9), but also how, as Davies (2003) says, poststructuralism,

opens up the possibility of agency to the subject, through the very act of making visible the discursive threads through which their experience of themselves as specific beings is woven.

pp.12-13.

Our conversations and writing have also become “acts of resistance to the pressure to stay silent, to do nothing” (Madison, 2010, cited in Wyatt, 2019: 20) about the oppressive language and discursive forces of our social and cultural milieus. Our journey across the rugged landscapes of our childhood, and adulthood, called us to “write from a place of mourning that knows about what is lost and left behind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 313). We take Orpheus’ critical stance, in seeing how our language “is drawn from past relationships”, [and] everything we say is drawn from a relational history” (Gergen, 2015: 114). In understanding our inherited language through a poststructural lens, we begin to realise, perhaps for the first time, the relief of being able to de-construct it, allowing “ourselves to see the intersection between [ourselves] as fictions and the fictions of our culture- which are constantly being (re) spoken, (re) written and (re) lived” (Davies, 2003: 2). In our final backward glance, we leave the poststructuralist “discursive provenance of our narrative knowledge” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 55) behind, and learn to take courage to interrogate the

“cultural truths and institutional structures” (Giorgio, 2013: 407), in which we are embedded. We begin to experience, perhaps, the liberation of “find[ing] other ways to speak and write against the grain of dominant discourses” (Davies, 1945: 34). Cixous (1991) describes how,

each time we take a journey, she insists, we “find in it thousands of different journeys”, new worlds within worlds, ad infinitum. She explains: “it is always a flight of some kind, a flight toward another life. It is another life, a death, oblivion, a recalling, a search” It can also be described as a line of flight or a line of escape from oppressive forces.

p.318.

Leaving our rigorous Orphic journey behind

In this final backward glance, we acknowledge “the secret unity of attachment and loss” (Hollis, 1996: 44), but also recognise the considerable Orphic grief and mourning we endured during our journey. Our experience “[threw us] into the search for the past, which [was] delightfully destructive of [our] present” (Kristeva, 1994: 224, cited in Fiorini et al., 2009: 182), causing a life-changing upheaval emotionally and in our *weltanschauung*. Jung, in his Orphic description of this journey, emphasises that that anyone intending to undertake it, “had better take the necessary precautions, rather than risking falling into the hole backwards” (Jung, 1968: ii). This work has been a journey of letting go, through telling and re-telling the visible and invisible stories of this stage of adult development, stretching backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards. As we take that final backward glance, we ponder our experience of giving voice to the silenced and the “rigors of this journey” (Brehony, 1996: 43), before we leave it behind:

Email from Abby, 15/05/2020

I also share your thoughts on the transforming aspect of this work. I have found myself realising that I've been reflecting on a range of ideas, relationships, ways of being and seeing them in a different light, a different point of view but in a gentle and non-threatening way. It has been an enormous privilege for me too, Eileen, to share this space.

Having co-researched, it is possible to recall the beginning, but there is a sense that the beginning was much further back than can be remembered. It is as if there was a knowledge, at some intuitive level I think, that the inner journey was waiting to be made and that the companion was one for and with whom the sacred and the vulnerable would be expressed, valued, respected. At some deep level that was known.

One thing I am sure of is that I am really looking forward to our next chat, as always. They have been so very good, so liberating, giving space and time for expressing thoughts that very often are not expressed so freely.

The person has to be right for that! You are the right person and my sincere thanks for that. The work you are doing is really very interesting. It is and will be beneficial for so many people at this stage of life. It certainly is for me.

Kindest regards,

Abby

Email to Abby: 21/05/2020.

Like you this work has been life-changing, in fact I would say therapeutic. I know my ontological and epistemological positions have changed from essentialist ones, where the emphasis is 'within' the person, as being immutable, fixed and boundaried to embracing a multiplicity of evolving selves. I am no longer tied by the constraints of my cultural story and even if they do re-present themselves, in the cracks and fissures of my everyday living, I am able to acknowledge their presence and attend to them, (as I did this week), instead perhaps of repressing them.

I notice how this change is reflected in the way I am now approaching this second half of life phase, by embracing a multiplicity of possibilities for living and not the one fixed approach, which the dominant discourse postulates. This is really liberating for me and hope-filling, that

I don't have to be bound by our fixed culturally acceptable narrative of ageing.

This work has called me to attend to the unfinished business in my own life, over the past four years and a chance to give voice to the unfinished business of my ancestors. Their unfinished business, regrets and losses, like mine, have in some way been healed through this therapeutic work, the theory, our life-changing conversations and writing.

I know I feel immensely enriched and enlarged by having had the privilege of our "moments of meeting" Abby. I look forward very much to chatting and I reciprocate your sentiments about being the right person!! Your presence has been transforming in my life! I will be forever so grateful!

Warmest wishes,

Eileen

Our final backward glance is an emotionally heightened space of closure, in this “process of discovery” (Frank, 2013: vi), “of maturation or unfolding” (Jacobi, 1973: 107). The Eurydician question of “*Who*”, or, as Cavarero (2000) asks, “*Who are you?*” carved on the landscape we traversed, challenged, disrupted and unsettled us. Our journey brought us face-to-face with our embodied fears of incapacity, ageing, finitude, the ineluctability of death and our unfinished ancestral business, all, “without any expectation of a full or final answer” (Butler, 2005: 43). We, like Ulysses, begin to appreciate the enormity of this chrysalic journey we have undertaken, “a transformation of lead to gold” (Brehony, 1996: 142). In taking that final backward glance, James, like us, “manages to stammer in [his] own language” (Parnet and Deleuze, 1977: 4), how this journey is not for the faint hearted and “not without its perils” (Jacobi, 1973: 107).

*And I knew from your journey,
so that helped me,
to know and see,
that it's not easy sometimes,
to see it.*

*I could see that,
you know,
it's...that it's-it's...
not too clear...
it's not that easy...
necessarily to see,
what's the right thing to...
the right thing to go...*

We often believe, like James, that “there must be some conceptual thread that will provide a narrative here, some lost link, and some possibility for chronology” (Butler, 2006: 68), to make meaning of, and provide direction in our overwhelming, frightening experience of letting go. We begin to discover like James, that this process is certainly not rapid or linear with several layers of unfoldings and erratic meanderings, as we endeavour to “to find answers to the questions that our lives have raised” (Morgenson, 1992: 113):

*I think that would be like
uh... the paths in the wood,
you know,
and they're at the far side,
and then you're back.
in the main thoroughfare again,
and then you can wind another way,
and back out again ,
and then eventually,
it kind of comes back to the main path,
Has this circuitous route ...really...
So-so it's not an easy way ...*

*it's not easy for me anyway,
I don't see the thing,
crystal clear.*

Leaving a journey of reciprocity behind

We *see*, like James how “without the presence of someone other and different, question and answer, merge into a formless mass” (Jacobi, 1974: 108) of confusion and stuckness. As we take our final backward glance, we appreciate how our creative-relationality sustained us, in our speech and in our “words between words” (Mazzei, 2007: 35), “taking us beyond ourselves, into the other, into becoming-other, into the more-than” (Wyatt, 2019: 42). In each other’s presence, we prized a “precious reciprocity” (Gergen, 2009: 33), inspiring hope of being able to de-construct our defined discourses and patterns, to *see* “that practice can be turned against what constrains it” (Connell, 1987: 95, cited in Davies, 2003: 13). We are so grateful for this treasured time together, where “something happens, something not [ours], ...something beyond technique beyond behaviour, beyond us. Something more-than” (Wyatt, 2019: 50), as we respond to the question ‘*Who*’. James, in his final backward glance, reflects on the impact of this journey and how this final glance possibly offers an opportunity to tentatively re-author a “new myth and story to live out of” (Brewi and Brennan, 1982: 28):

*And I think the journey with you opened my eyes—
To maybe other possibilities for me too ([clears throat])
As the way they unfolded for you.
And in fact,
I was probably setting the scene,
for the thought process of my own,
So, I think it was very...*

*it's helped me to reach my own,
helped my own thinking to develop.*

Butterfly reflects on her journey of hardly ever permitting herself the time to reflect on her own life, but recognises the value of this opportune moment, when it presented itself. In her final backward glance, Butterfly ponders on how, like so many of us, we may feel unworthy to take the time to embark on such a journey “with that very fine person...willing to be our constant companion” (Hollis, 1993: 34). Instead, we often choose to avoid “discover[ing] new identifications” (Montero et al., 2013: xxiv), through this “wonderful but painful opportunity to re-vision our sense of self” (Hollis, 1993: 7). In the telling and re-telling of our stories, as Butterfly suggests, we are offered an opportunity “to change [our] own life by affecting the lives of others” (2013: 18):

*I had a slightly guilty feeling,
spending time talking about myself,
but when I think about it,
there are very few people,
that you can have that open,
and honest discussion,
which we are having,
and a meeting of minds,
that are in sync,
which is benefiting both of us.
I have found the process,
very therapeutic.*

Bringing our Orphic gift-a language of 'becoming' with us

Our final backward glance offers a reflexive space to *re-view* and *re-gard* our shared experience of being in this Orphic space. We are now able to see, as Frank (1995) describes, that,

storytelling is for another just as it is for oneself. In the reciprocity that is storytelling, the storyteller offers herself as guide to the other's formation. The other's receipt of that guidance not only recognises, but values the teller. The moral genius of storytelling is that each, teller, listener, enters the space of the story for the other.

p.18.

We see how our sense of agency, of subjectivity, through our "assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 4), has been nurtured in our stammerings, embracing "lines of flight, becomings, without future or past" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 26). We *see* how a new tentative "*becoming* other of language" (Frichot, 2012: 319, citing Deleuze, 1998: 5) is emerging, where we take that Orphic critical stance towards the rigors of the "binaried machine" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1977: 20) of language. We begin to *see* how we have become more comfortable with the complimentary language of speech and silence, as we stand "with simple attentiveness at the borders" (Palmer, 2008: 64) of each other. Taking our final backward glance offers a glimpse at how we have tentatively begun to re-author ourselves in this Orphic journey, through our language of stammering and stuttering. We can now *see* that, when we speak from this place of *in-between-ness*, we do not "want to be fixed or saved: [we] want to be seen and heard" (Palmer, 2008: 117).

Bringing the gift of our Orphic intermezzo space

In our final backward glance, we get a glimpse of the giftedness of the uncertainty which characterises this Orphic space, in which we found ourselves. Its fluidity and blurred edges became a “site of diffraction, - an opening that spread our thoughts and questions in unpredictable patterns and intensities” (Mazzei and Jackson, 2012: 455). It unsettled us and opened paths of *knowing*, “created in voice with others” (Spry, 2016: 31). In our creative-relationality, we learned that our journey towards ‘*becoming*’ involves a process of “relational reflexivity” (Spry, 2016: 84), where we are constantly re-surfaced and perhaps unsettled by each other. As we take the backward glance for the final time, Tiger and I reflect on the impact of our shared meanderings, backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards in this Orphic space:

Email from Tiger, 29th September 2019.

What I’ve learned through the last very rich months working and chatting with you is the value of melancholia and the reverie that comes with it. We can then rise up again renewed and liberated a little more with the soul less tethered to our attachments and beliefs. Eileen words fail the value our time together so I’m not even going to try to be articulate about it. I’ve meandered through my past, present and glimpsed some imagined version of a future which has been such a comfort. The space between us has opened up such possibilities for thinking more about the “unthought known”. I have had the time to harvest the experiences of 60 years and at times. I’m flummoxed by the similarities in the journeys we have taken although our early experiences and career choices have been so different. What a gift that has been.

Partial email to Tiger, 01/10/2019

Tiger you helped me to ‘catch’ an old moment and re-story it, or, as you so beautifully express it “we can rise up and again, renewed and liberated a little more with the soul less tethered to our attachments and beliefs”. How extraordinary and ‘gifting’ it is for me to share these conversational moments, in the borderlands between living and the shadow of dying, on the threshold together. The gift of your presence on this journey, as you say “meandering”, in the

present and weaving threads between both, while we endeavour to re-construct other stories and new possibilities, is immense.

Bringing gift of mourning with us

In this final backward glance, we *see* how mourning becomes a creative process, “an act of individuation” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79), where, as we leave behind all that we mourned and lost during this journey of letting go, we “come into a new virginity” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79). In other words, we come to a new way of looking at things, at our unfolding story and our social and cultural milieus. It becomes an invitation to begin again, and “arrive where we start” (Eliot, 1969: 197). We become like Eurydice who no longer recognises Orpheus, having freed him to the realms of her imagination, after having mourned his loss. We have now finally let our experience of mourning go into the realms of the imagination, having been transformed and re-surfaced by it. As we move forwards into the second half of life, we bring the gift of the Eurydician question ‘*Who*’, which continually invites us to embrace “the craft and practice of letting go” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 58).

My final backward glance of gratitude

In this *Moment of Mourning as Individuation*, the question ‘*Who*’, seeks to be attended to in my relationship with this work, which I, as researcher, was summoned to undertake, in the archetypal sense of the word. As I take this backward glance, I have this one final chance to *re-view* this extra-ordinary journey, to be grateful for it, but to also mourn its passing and let it go like Eurydice, to the realm of the imagination. This study has been a most welcome, though oftentimes a very challenging companion, but I have learned that by “bearing the unbearable, we go through the desert to arrive at a nurturing oasis we did not know was there” (Hollis, 2020: 124). Gifted with the presence of my *co-re-searchers*, theorists, and my supervisor Dr. O’ Grady in this

intermilieu, “where difference is generated” (Wyatt, 2019: 66), our shared journeys of re-gaining our “personal rather than acquired authority” (Hollis, 2020: 26), inspire new *becomings*.

In taking this final backward glance, I am also so grateful for the presence of our ancestors “who demand[ed] attention” (Morgenson, 1992: xiv). Our shared stories of love, loss, mourning and letting go became a reciprocal act of individuation (Romanyshyn, 2013: 79), where through our imaginal dialogues and storytelling, their voices were *heard* and their invisibility made *visible*. This shared “rite of passage” (Morgenson, 1992: xv), between the living and the dead may in some way contribute to “the quality of the future we bequeath to our children” (Morgenson, 1992: xv), perhaps partially unburdening them of the weight of our unfinished business and that of our ancestors.

In as much as poststructuralism sheds light on how we are “subjected to the constitutive force of [our] discourses” (Davies, 2003: 14), it also offers a locus for interrogating them and their attendant language. We *see* the possibility of *lines of flight* in reconstructing and co-creating an Orphic / Eurydician language of attunement. We see that “squar[ing] the language of explanation with the dream-energised language of being” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 309) offers rich possibilities in making meaning of our lives with our adult children. In attending to the language of the Orphic gap with our adult children, we may in some way begin to change the shape “of individual and collective bodies” (Ahmed, 2014: 1) and free them from the construct of being bounded to embrace other hermeneutic ways of knowing.

A transformative final backward glance

As I take my final backward glance, I begin to *see* my trajectory from “the weight of my aloneness to [easing] into the conversation” (Whyte, 2007: 359) with others and in writing. My engagement has helped to unhinge and *undo* the stuckness of my ontological and epistemological stances, by bringing “their otherness” (Hollis, 2020: 121) to my journey of *becoming*. I *see* how my journey in this Orphic space, “with no definable boundaries” (Hollis, 2020: 39), between the conscious and the unconscious, the living and the dead, offers a safe place to “taste the sweetness and the bitterness” (Yalom, 2008: 147) of this stage of life. I *see* how I am able to leave the darkness of my aloneness behind, as a result of my experience of compassionate empathy and “willingness to experience one’s own pain in concert with another” (Yalom, 2008: 124). I *see* in my final backward glance how my lifelong story of the aloneness of being the ‘carer’ has begun to dissolve, as I embrace “my relation to the lost, the forgotten, the dead” (Grosz, 2014: 114).

It is here, as we take our final backward glance that we get a glimpse of how, when the “past and the future collide in the present [how] the possibilities of change and hope are created” (Denzin, 2018: 175) in our experience of letting go, through our collaborative reflexive dialogue and writing. In this *in-between-ness*, other stories of authorship begin to unravel, as I take responsibility for my own unfolding agency:

*Together en famille,
my birthday,
an outside Covid one,
the cold April day,
didn't seem to matter,
we were together,*

*It was my birthday,
always denied,
always dismissed
as nothing.
Today I longed,
the longing,
and waiting,
of the child,
for the words of agency
Happy Birthday to you!
Afraid of being
forgotten,
I asked...
tears in my eyes,
I let the words,
saturate and
seep into my
childish
tearful,
knowing loved self.*

This boundary experience of being jolted out of denying my own agency, and moving from “everyday mode to an ontological mode” (Yalom, 2002: 130), in deflecting my attention away from “changing the environment, rather than [myself]” (Yalom, 2002: 151), was momentous. This shift in my ontological position “away from the individualism of the ‘auto’ towards the felt dynamism of Deleuze and Guattari’s (2009) notion of ‘assemblage’, with its affect, time space and place” (Wyatt, 2013: 301, cited in Spry, 2016: 80), was life changing. In this final backward glance, I *see* how “aerat[ing]

the soil, that is, address[ing] the past in a manner that allows the present to be lived more fully and the future to be anticipated more meaningfully” (Morgenson, 1992: 125), becomes liberating. New *lines of flight* are opened up for us, but also for our ancestors who may “inhabit the purgatory of the archetypal dilemmas which they were unable to resolve” (Morgenson, 1992: 123). Writing about these tentative unfolding transformations, I *see* how under the spell of Orpheus, the “stories and narratives we make together are only for the moment” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 68), but they are a vital life-line in making meaning of our lives. In the act of writing, we also respond to the Eurydician call of “waiting to sense where the waves will carry us” (Wyatt, 2019: 69) in our journey of *becoming*.

My final backward glance, at the gift of writing

As I take my final Orphic backward glance, I *see* how my “temporary withdrawal from the world” (Goodchild, 2012: 57) over the past five years has been nurtured and enlarged by my journey through writing. It has been a journey into the unknown, waiting to see what “writing opens up” (Wyatt, 2019: 44) and where it may take me. It triggered a stammering of language, where we write “as if [we] were in a foreign country, as if [we] were a foreigner in [our] own family” (Cixous, 1993: 20). Writing in this reveried fragile space has “become the structure through which I make sense of my world” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2000: 966), “a seductive and tangled method of discovery” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2000: 967) in the “disrupt[ion] and turn[ing] up the soil of material” (Frichot, 2012: 313). I am *ad idem* with Guattari and Deleuze (1987, cited in St Pierre, 2000: 969), who suggest that writing offers a platform to “[map] and [survey] even realms that have not yet come” (1980: 4-5). My journey has been one, not only of de-constructing and loosening “the little cages of meaning

assigned” (Frichot, 2012: 315) but also a re-authoring of a language for other meanings which have either been “eclipsed or disappeared” (St. Pierre, 2000: 969).

My experience of dwelling in this fragile Orphic place, called for a language which recognises the quality of presence and absence, of mourning, of loss, but which is “responsive to what is lost and forgotten, left behind or abandoned and hence of celebration” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 314). Writing about what is silenced, *unsayable* and hidden, requires a stuttering, a stammering, a language of silence and calls for the researcher to be “an alchemist of meaning” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 320), attending to both what is said and not said. It is writing under the spell of Orpheus, “that pivots, like spring does between winter and summer” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 315), a writing which cultivates a sensibility. It is writing which is attuned to the language of borders and borderlands, not so much of the “power of naming [as more] the power of letting go” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 69). It recognises the “language of alchemy, a language of reverie” (Bachelard, 1960: 70), which brings to the work “an elegiac quality, a quality to the words and the writing that values not only the difference between the said and unsaid” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 313), but hears the whisperings of the living and the dead, in this liminal space.

Writing under the Orphic spell “touch[es] the mystery, delicately, with the tips of the words trying not to crush it” (Cixous, 1991: 134). This dream-like, reveried Orphic space of *in-between-ness* where the absence and presence of language, often “signals [its] limits in the face of radical other-ness, in the face of loss and death” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 62). Writing in this Orphic space accepts both the transformative value of telling and re-telling our stories, easing the existential burden of our attachments and losses, but most importantly “the recognition that there is after all only the trying” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 63).

In our Orphic *intermilieu* space, our writing lingers in the shadows of the dead, where nothing is left unsaid, where we are taken “close to the death, to forgetfulness, to the abyss, so [that] we will not be surprised, so we will never be complacent” (Wyatt, 2019: 68). We give ourselves permission to give breath to the *unsayable*, our stories of love, loss, mourning and death, the *unsayable*, of our dreams, other ways of knowing, our unarticulated and unknown questions waiting to be asked. We are awakened from the somnolence of “our fixed certainties or sinking into nihilistic despair over the absence of meaning” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 65) and “stunned into consciousness” (Hollis, 1993: 18). We keep company with the silent specters in our stories as “we invent stammering...which will make language flow between dualisms” (Parnet and Guattari, 1977: 34), offering the “promise of relief” (Wyatt, 2019: 140) and new beginnings.

Imperceptible *becomings*

I have once again been surprised at how this Moment has unfolded. It is as if I can see for the first time, how my language and writing have become more blurred, more tentative and congruent with fragility and vulnerability of being in this Orphic gap, between the living and the dead, the dream-world and the conscious world. I have discovered that I am very much at home in this world of reverie and “hav[ing] been drawn into a conversation so faithful to [my] experience, so intimately radical, I [was able to] carve out new ground to meet her” (White, 2016, cited in Wyatt, 2019: 7) and be present to my little child’s need to be nurtured. My conversation with myself, my co-researchers, and theorists in my reveried space of writing has delight-ed me, fulfilled me and surprised me. My gesture of writing has become a gesture of insight, of healing of letting go, of leaving behind, a moment of transformation, of trust and most of all “a gesture of love” (Cixous, 1991: 42) and gratitude.

Interlude

Looking backwards

In this *Sixth Moment: Eurydician question of mourning as Individuation*, we linger under the spell of Orpheus, on Rilke's hill, before taking the final backward glance to *re-view* and *re-gard* this remarkable reveried-journey. In this transient place of departure, of fleeting glances we catch glimpses of our experience "of moving from one state to a new one" (Owen, 1991: 55). We get an expansive *coup d'oeil* for the first time of the enormity of our rich Orphic journey of love, loss, dismemberment, and letting go. We can *view* the expanse of our stories in looking backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards in our gesture of sympathetic relational creativity. We have become people who have the attitude of departing, taking only what is necessary with us in our suitcases for the next part of our journey. I also celebrate the gift of how writing in this gap space has kept "the aesthetic quality of language alive" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 327), thereby inspiring other expressions of knowing.

Looking forwards

My final gesture of writing finds itself doing a *Re-view* of our *Six Orphic Moments*, of being cast under the spell of Orpheus in his journey of love, loss, dismemberment and transformation. This poignant myth which was "like the beams of a house, not exposed to outside view" (Rollo May, 1991: 15) has held both the structural framework of this study and "the antinomies of life: conscious and unconscious, historical and present, individual and social together" (Rollo May, 1991: 16), to tell a story about the experience of mourning and letting go.

A Re-view of a Journey through the Six Orphic Moments

Interlude

*Sometimes,
you come to a place
whose only task
is to trouble you
with tiny
but frightening requests
conceived out of nowhere
but in this place
beginning to lead everywhere.
Requests to stop what
you are doing right now,
and
to stop what
you are becoming
while you do it
questions
that can make
or unmake
a life,
questions
that have patiently
waited for you,
questions
that have no right
to go away.*

(Whyte, 2012:52)

Looking backwards...

In the *Sixth Moment*, we addressed the *Eurydician question of Mourning as Individuation*. It is here, in our final backward glance, that we let go our “too-centralized and muscle bound structures which have become so ordinary and normal” (Hillman, 1976: 109). It is here, too, that perhaps, for the first time, we see the promise of new “opportunities to live ever more fully” (Singer, 1972:187), having attended to our unfinished stories in the presence of the ancestors. We stand with them before we part, thanking them for their guidance and for “render[ing] back into light-world language, the speech-defying pronouncements of the dark” (Campbell, 2008: 188).

Looking forwards

In this closing *re-view* of these six *Orphic Moments*, I re-tell our story about a cycle of beginnings, endings, and new beginnings, “that have a forward momentum, the way they incite the desire to bring new things into the world” (Scarry, 1999: 46). In the movement of these six *Moments* of this autoethnographic Orphic journey, there is a rhythm, often visible and often invisible, tracing the bitter-sweetness of being on the threshold of time, between the first and the second half of life. Our movement “does not rest heavily in a single spot” (Campbell, 2008: 196), but calls us to move backwards and forwards, inwards and outwards, to tell and re-tell the stories of love and loss “that lift us forward onto new ground” (Scarry, 1999: 46). Our metaphoric threshold, liminal position is an “*integrative* [one], exposing the previously hidden interrelatedness of something” (Kiley and Wisker, 2009: 432) through our storytelling. We discover ourselves, “enhanced, enriched and supported” (Campbell, 2008: 331) by the living and the dead in our journey of love, loss, mourning, and letting go. As we *re-view* our

Orphic journey, “we must now let it go back to that place [beyond ourselves] as we are called back into life” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 80).

I invite you, my reader, to take the time with my fellow *co-re-searchers* and I, to ponder our journey once again, lingering for a little while, to hear the wisdom this revered space has gifted us.

*love the questions themselves
as if they were locked rooms,
or books,
written in foreign language.
Don't search for the answers,
which could not be given to you,
now,
because you would not be able,
to live them.
And the point is,
to live everything.
Live the questions now.
Perhaps then,
someday far in the future,
you will gradually,
without even noticing it,
live your way into the answer.*

Rilke (2001: 34).

Signposts for the Moment

In this *Re-view Moment*, I take one final glance at this life-changing Orphic journey, into which I was lured and how, in taking a turn from my initial research intention, it became a “sojourn of departure and return” (Romanyshyn, 2013:13). I highlight how our journey, from the first *Moment of being Claimed by the Work*, to the final one, *Mourning as Individuation*, was often frightening and isolating, where “there are no rites of passage” (Hollis, 1993: 23) in the borderlands between the first and second half of life. I story how, hidden in the folds of the work is the constant presence of mourning, loss and letting go and how “knowledge embedded in stories is memorable, interesting and sometimes transforming” (Etherington, 2007a: 30). Our autoethnographic journey through each *Moment* signifies an invitation to accept the Orphic/Eurydician call to “stand in the heat of this transformation fire” (Hollis, 2006: 31), “moving us emotionally, chang[ing] our attitudes and opinions, and sometimes influenc[ing] our future behaviour” (Etherington, 2007a: 32).

I also ‘show’ how, in taking a mythical approach to this study, we discover new ways of understanding the ‘*symptoms*’ and patterns of this liminal period of adult development, through archetypal resemblances or “mythical enactments” (Hillman, 1976: 100). I illustrate how the evocative tale of Orpheus and Eurydice is a myth of our time, offering a “structure of human existence” (Rollo May, 1991: 38), to guide and inspire us, as we tread softly in the gap of endings and beginnings, between the first and second half of life.

In this *Re-view*, I also reflect on how using narrative inquiry empowers us to make visible our unfolding stories of *becoming*, and how this process of storytelling “convey[s] an understanding of a reality lived, experienced and constructed” (Dyson, 2007: 37). This Orphic journey has been an extra-ordinary experience for me

personally, transforming my *weltanschauung*, through the multiplicity of encounters with theorists, my *co-re-searchers* and “the delicate, difficult, and dangerous means of succeeding in avowing the unavowable” (Cixous, 1993: 53) through writing. It has shone a light on the importance of this often unrecognised and overlooked phase of adult development.

This final *Re-view* presents a reflection on how an autoethnographic journey of anamnesis, of un-forgetting and of re-finding can be both therapeutic and transformative. I also discuss the original contribution to knowledge which this study brings to this phase of adult development.

A look backwards at the research journey

I initially set out to undertake some research work with student teachers attending to their own *inner curricula* or personal development, as part of their professional teacher training, but after almost two years my work took a turn. I never anticipated my ensuing journey in which I would find myself immersed in the uncharted landscape, between the first and the second half of life, triggering both a challenging and life-changing experience. I was slowly stripped of my old ‘solid’ epistemological and ontological moorings, by “this apparently autonomous process [which overthrew] the conscious conduct of [my] life” (Hollis, 2006: 3). I discovered my reading “established another universe of light and dark to that of the outside world” (Cixous, 1993: 23), about another phase of adult development, with which I was not familiar. This was accompanied by the arrival of the presence of my absent ancestors, “our first masters, who unlock the door for us that opens onto the other side” (Cixous, 1993: 9), to uncover stories of love, loss and re-remembering.

This research centres on the lived experience of being on the threshold between the first and second half of life, where transforming identities unfold. It offers an alternative to

the predominant psychological narrative of “the first person perspective” (Zahavi, 2008:107), to include a multiplicity of other standpoints and ways of *knowing* about this phase of adult development. It heralds a significant change in focus away from an essentialist, romanticist notion of having its locus exclusively *within* the individual, to “provid[ing] [us] with opportunities to moving towards developing a narrative of [our] lives, in ways that contextualises the life within its cultural context” (Etherington, 2009: 229), altering how we understand, interpret and make meaning. Autoethnography forms an integral part of this work, an approach to research and writing which seeks to describe and systematically analyse personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). It captures the way we look at this aspect of human development, no longer exclusively through the psychological lens, but through the framework of reflexive storytelling, which, as Poulos (2008) says,

sheds light on the dark folds, to open the doors to the closets of secrecy, to engage the power of story as a way to penetrate— and perhaps lift ourselves out of— the darkness of despair.

p.26.

In focusing on stories of love, loss, and letting go, this research makes a new methodological contribution to recognising both the troubling and enriching aspects of meaning-making of this stage of adult development, through a narrative space, “grounded in the study of the particular” (Riessman, 2008: 11) in co-constructing ‘narrative knowledge’ (Bruner, 1986). This narrative knowledge is, as Etherington (2007a) says is,

created and constructed through the stories people tell about their lived experiences, and the meanings they give to those experiences that might change and develop as their stories unfold over time.

p.30.

In the *Pre-view*, I tell how my study became “research with the soul in mind” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 4) and how drawing on Romanyshyn’s *Six Orphic Moments*, framed my thesis narratively, and helped to become a container for our liminal, epiphanic experience of storying and re-storying our lives. The *First Moment: Claimed by the Work*, set the scene for this Orphic journey, where both my *co-re-searchers* and I were charmed into this work, entering “a twilight world of shadows” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 31). This was initially prompted in my reveried writing, arising from a dormant woundedness and unfinished business, which had waited patiently made visible. My initial research interest in teacher education was usurped, while “words wander[ed] away, looking in the nooks and crannies of vocabulary for new company” (Bachelard, 1960: 17). In this *Moment*, I storied how my *co-re-searchers* self-selected themselves to join me on this journey, where we lingered together in this Orphic reveried space, between the living and the dead, the conscious and the unconscious.

Being claimed by the work brought me to a new landscape of narrative inquiry, where “the blank pages [gave] the right to dream” (Bachelard, 1960: 17) and permission to write what was patiently waiting to be written. The theoretical worlds of social psychology, social constructionism, and poststructuralism formulated a conceptual framework for exploring this Orphic journey and proffered life changing insights. This theoretical framework challenged my own *weltanschauung*, my own epistemological and ontological stances, and helped me to interrogate our social and cultural milieus, but also opened up new ways of thinking about living. I became freed of the language of the ‘bounded self’, to accept a “narrative account [which] is quite explicit in emphasizing

both the temporal and the social dimension of selfhood” (Zahavi, 2014: 54). Social constructionism’s value of knowledge as co-constructed and the “knower as interdependent, embedded within history, context, culture, language, experience and understandings” (Etherington, 2017: 7) opened up new ways of *becoming*. Having chosen narrative inquiry as a “method and the phenomena of study” (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007:5) for this thesis, I began to recognise “the tentative and variable nature of knowledge...allowing wondering, tentativeness and alternative views to exist as part of the research account” (Pinnegar and Daynes, 2007: 25). Our gesture of storytelling became “the outline of a world, the chiselling of what is otherwise a neutral space into a significant place” (Romanyshyn, in press: 10) about this stage of adult development.

Our story, a personal, social, and cultural one, emerged from a belief that we make meaning of our lives, through our social interactions. In our informal conversations, we began to understand how we are constituted by our agreed socially and culturally specific *mores*, which “we take for granted as given, fixed and immutable, whether in ourselves or in the phenomena [which] are created and perpetuated by human beings” (Burr, 2015: 45).

Our Orphic space of *in-between-ness*, offered an invitation to “make visible the dominant and constitutive forces of language practices, and the ways in which they inscribe and position us” (Barrett, 2005: 84, citing Davies, 2000b). In doing so, Davies (2000b) suggests that, by “eclipsing patriarchal discourses, it takes us bodily into landscapes where we are deeply vulnerable” (Davies, 2000a: 196). Our telling and re-telling of our stories became “an act of breaking free from the first story” (Frank, 2010: 5), instigating a journey in mourning, loss and letting go, in the *Second Moment*, “where everything in us and about us that is personal is dissolved into something larger than ourselves” (Romanyshyn, 1999: 65).

In our *Second Moment of Losing the Work, as an Invitation to Mourning*, we were cast into this vulnerable Orphic space, this borderland, where “we are invited to leave ambition behind as well as a preoccupation with self-esteem” (Hollis, 2001: 92), and become travellers with Orpheus in his journey of grief, mourning and letting go. At the outset, the initial invitation to mourn called on us to let go of “those primal internalized “stories” or interpretations that took us off course, framed our relations with others and came to own our daily lives” (Hollis, 2020: 24). Through telling and re-telling our stories, we began to recognise how “the thread of our history” (Bachelard, 1960: 99), triggered a process of mourning as we tentatively began to relinquish all that we cherished. In our efforts to let go of our stories, we excavated their attendant language and began to *see* and *feel* the weight of their history leaning on us.

In our unconditional, co-relational Orphic space, we began to stutter and stammer in our mourning and letting go of a lifelong cherished identity. This invitation to mourn rocked the ‘*solid*’ foundation of “this deeply implanted” (Hollis, 2020: 91) *weltanschauung*, leaving us bereft like Orpheus. In this *intermilieu* of watery shadows, we were shocked when we came face to face with the unexpected appearance of our old archaic language of ageing and decline, which we espoused. Its presence was frightening, as we struggled to let go of a lifetime of a fixed identity, greeted now by further gusts of mourning and sadness, blowing furiously through the cracks and fissures of our ‘*taken-for-granted*’ world. Our invitation to mourning summoned us to respond.

It was during this *Third Moment, Descending into the Work/Mourning as Denial*, that we seemed to have particularly lost our footholds like Orpheus. He loses Eurydice to the underworld and finds himself, neither in the upper or the lower world. We, like Orpheus, were now rudderless, lost, grief-stricken, half believing that the “buried life *is* buried” (Hollis, 2020: 94), while still denying its loss. However, Orpheus’ denial of

defeat is tangible, as he endeavours to woo his way into the underworld again to retrieve Eurydice. Like Orpheus, our journey of denial was without respite, as we longingly looked back at our cherished ontological and epistemological constructions, until we began to *see* how the weight of our history cast a shadow on how we mourn. Our discovery of being entangled in our ancestors' mourning opened up *lines of flight* into new understandings and sympathies. We were called "to step into that accountability" (Hollis, 2018: 4) in "reclaiming ... that language which has been made to work against us" (Lorde, 1980: 64). Our tentative movement from denying to acknowledging and working through our losses and mourning, offered us a glimpse into alternative stories of '*becoming*'.

We were expanded and enlarged as we continued to accept mourning as a necessity to "undergo a transformation" (Butler, 2004: 21) in the *Fourth Moment: Looking Back at the Work: Mourning as Separation*. In this *Moment*, we see how Orpheus is forced to separate himself from Eurydice in his pivotal transformative backwards glance. He finally lets her go and takes a critical glance at all that he has represented in the earlier part of his life. Our liminal Orphic position required a similar glance, calling us to separate from our own personal stories in the work, so we "can break silences surrounding experiences as they unfold within cultures and cultural practices" (Holman Jones et al., 2013: 35). This great gift of mourning as separation "begins in the ear and not on the tongue...it is steeped in the art of listening" (Romanyshyn, 2013: 340). We "fe[lt] a stuttering and stammering stance in relation to the Other" (Spry, 2016: 63), in the irruptions of our speech, as we endeavoured to make meaning at the borders of our finitude, ageing, incapacity and death.

In our *Fifth Moment: Dismembered by the Work/Mourning as Transformation* continued to take its toll. Having taken up an Orphic glance in the *Fourth Moment*,

where if “we [are] ever going to be true to our own voice, it [was] now while there is still time” (Hollis, 2020: 93), to mourn our ageing, incapacity and finitude, so that we could live the second half of our lives more meaningfully. We learned that mourning is both a “losing as we know, but is also the transformative effect of loss, and this latter cannot be charted or planned” (Butler, 2004: 21), as we discovered in this *Fifth Moment*. My *co-re-searchers* and I experienced the fullness of loss, letting go and transformation amongst the “silent specters” (Mazzei, 2007: 21) in our dialogic space of *in-between-ness* and the “sacred space between [us] and the ancestors” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 344). In our inter-relational loitering of our speech and our silences, the living and the dead found a welcome place of redemption and transformation in our shared mourning, as we prepared for our final Orphic backward glance in our *Sixth Moment*.

The Eurydician Question: Mourning as Individuation is our sixth and final *Moment* in this journey, where we lingered for a little while to take the final backward glance. We pondered our journey of “*who we have become, what is left of [us] and what is the Other [we] have lost*” (Butler, 2004: 28), before leaving it behind. In this final backward glance, we unshackled ourselves, emptying the contents of the first half of life from our suitcases, and only taking with us, what we need to live meaningfully, in the second half. We realise that, in taking leave of our ancestors, “the life that we continue to live becomes a cultured life, a life informed by instances of life lost, a life informed by death” (Morgenson, 1992: 137). Our leave-taking is filled with gratitude for the rich jewels we bring with us, in “the final work that is to return” (Campbell, 2008: 211).

I will forever be indebted to my *co-re-searchers* who accompanied and surrounded me on this journey, when we met in April 2019 up and through Covid-19 in 2020, to this final moment, of re-viewing our Orphic experience together. In the archetypal sense, my *co-re-searchers*, like the ancestors and theorists, have always “[been] in the midst”

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000: 145) throughout my journey of writing. Their felt presence in “word and scene” (Sewell, 2000: 28) in our shared chant, continued to pulse, *mar mhanachaibh ag siollabadh na nónta*, like monks syllabing the nones (O’ Riordáin, 1964: 40), as I immersed myself in writing. Our ethics of care and reciprocity continue to flourish as we “participate in the daily happenings in each other’s lives (Clandinin et al., 2018: 51). We left “the formal research site” (Clandinin et al., 2018:172) in 2020, and “attend[ed] to institutional markers that signify a clear ending” (Clandinin et al., 2018: 184), by gathering our journey together, in the form of an image/ metaphor. Tiger tells how our journey was like,

um, some sort of,
uh, an aquatic mammal,
who-who'd dive down,
but then had to come up for air.,
Well, it was like the dive,
into the unconscious,
and then coming up for air.
Mm, but the earlier,
um, journey was very arrhythmic,
like,
it was like ,
I could go back into my story,
and then come up for air.

For James, our meandering conversations embodied the image of a myriad of pathways, representing perhaps the breadth of our explorations and new unfolding possibilities:

where you could go one way or the other
Or maybe you could go different ways,

and then come back another way.

Abby talks about our conversations almost like assembling a jigsaw together, as we work together to co-construct meaning and re-author new stories of *becoming*;

seeing how one,

has not so much been moulded,

but allowed oneself to be moulded-

It's very much a sharing,

So there's...

there's a very good sense of connection-

Our ethical relationality has always been “narrated over the entire narrative process” (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000:7) and one, we managed to sustain, despite Covid-19. We continue to enjoy reflexive conversations, “creating a space [for each other] to be composed and heard” (Clandinin, 2013: 45). Our shared enriching, unfolding “places of possibility” (Lorde, 1984 /2007: 36) enabled us to continue to take that critical Orphic glance, as Butterfly suggests, in giving ourselves, “*permission as we go along*” to advance our sense of agency at this time of our lives.

Other ways of looking at this phase of adult development

What is novel about this study is the way in which this phase of adult development is storied and understood, socially and culturally, “as a product of narratively structured life” (Zahavi, 2008:107), “rather than separated pieces related only to [our own] personal psychology” (Etherington, 2009: 228). “Our [autoethnographic] storytelling brings us into a multiplicity of “layers of understanding” (Etherington, 2007a: 30) about ourselves, our culture and how we “make sense of the past and create meanings as [we] tell or ‘show’ what happened to [us]” (Etherington, 2007a: 30), and re-create alternative stories. In analysing the data, this work illustrates how the “complex patterns and

descriptions of identity construction, re-construction and evidence of social discourses impact on a person's knowledge creation from specific cultural points of view" (Daiute and Lightfoot, 2004; Harber and Pennebaker, 1992, cited in Etherington, 2007a: 30), thus offering a key contribution to understanding this phase of adult development.

Narrative knowing

The power of narrative knowledge utilised in this study is not just a representation of our experience, but "actually constitute[es] the social reality of the researcher" (Etherington, 2004: 81) and *co-re-searchers*. Drawing on the messiness, of "our embodied history, [which] cannot be thrown off as if it were a coat that one has donned" (Gatens, 1996: 105), sheds light on this phase of adult development and "impose[s] a meaningful pattern on what would otherwise be random and disconnected" (Riessman, 2008: 5). Co-constructing meaning out of our lived experience, "invites us to pay attention to the details of local stories and the contexts in which they are embedded" (Etherington, 2009: 225). Our evocative stories "tell of 'a kind of life' (Scott-Hoy 2002: 276), conveying the complexity and rhizomatic nature of this period of adult development, with all its textures and nuances, by "honouring individual agency and intention" (Speedy, 2008: 12), in our spoken words, in the gaps and silences and in our written reflective communication. The narrative approach "displaces a unified self as the primary site of experience and meaning" (Denshire, 2014: 836) and replaces it with a "world where (self) knowledge can only ever be tentative, contingent, and situated" (Gannon, 2006: 474).

We stand "back from [our] lives and use narrative structures as an opportunity to render 'meaningful, that which wasn't'" (Etherington, 2009: 230). This research witnesses how other voices become crushed when "as members of a society, we limit the kind of stories available by privileging some and denying others" (Etherington, 2007a: 31).

However, it also ‘shows’ how these other silenced voices continue to live and resonate in our bodies, often taking a lifetime for them to emerge from the darkness of our personal, cultural and social landscapes (if at all). Choosing evocative autoethnography allowed us to express and value our “emotionality and subjectivity” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 57) in a way that was meaningful, through poetry, narratives, reflections and theoretical insights. Our autoethnographic Orphic space became “a borderland between passion and intellect, analysis and subjectivity, ethnography and auto-biography, art and life” (Behar, 1996: 17). The research data weaves a rich “coherent and resonant story” (Etherington, 2004: 81) of a particular time and place, where certain “characters and actions are highlighted, projecting particular interpretations of what happened” (De Fina, 2003: 93) and empowering us to open up, as Todd et al. (2016) suggest,

the possibility for transformation through both a critical understanding of the constructed nature of those affiliations, and the development of creative practices that allow affects to be rerouted, relations to be re-worked, and bodies to be undone and re-composed.

p.188

This was a courageous step for both my *co-re-searchers* and myself, to ‘strip away the veneer of self-protection that comes with professional title and position ... to make [ourselves] accountable and vulnerable to the public’ (Denzin, 2003: 137), in shining a light on this unrecognised and largely unspoken aspect of adult development. Supported by the data collected, this thesis highlights an important contribution in how knowledge about this phase of adult development is made visible through narrative. It suggests that its validation as a significant and distinct milestone in its own right is required, similar in weight given to other stages of development, such as childhood or adolescence.

A myth for our borderland stories

This study's storied framework of the Orphic mythical tale brings a unique perspective to the study of this phase of adult development, in its universality. It adds another layer of meaning to our liminal stories of love, loss and letting go. It becomes a beacon for our "high adventure" (Campbell, 2008: 22), "bursting the limitations of [our] local and historical" (Adams-Leeming, 1998: 7) stories, and confronting perhaps what we feared most - ageing, incapacity finitude and death. The myth of Orpheus and Eurydice "shows itself to be as amenable as life itself," (Campbell, 2008: 2) in mirroring our unfolding story. This work illuminates how, being "lured and carried away...to the threshold of adventure ... and beyond, through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces" (Campbell, 2008: 211), carries us into a new way of thinking about, and exploring this phase of adult development. It highlights this "long drawn out process of transformation and rebirth into another being" (Jung, 1959: 64), using the "energy of mythos" (Poulos, 2008: 168). This enables us to "speak in and through experiences that are unspeakable" (Jones, 2005: 772) which produce new meanings and "offer cause for hope and an antidote to despair" (White, 2001: 67). By tracing this universal tale, our journey during this phase of adult development becomes a very different experience and a very different story, as it shines a light on breaking free "from fear and from the limitations of time" (Leeming, 1998: 257) and becoming transformed through the Orphic process of loss, mourning, and letting go.

Orpheus' rite of passage is ours, "losing ourselves in the overall pattern of the cosmos" (Adams-Leeming, 1998: 213), where we become torn apart in the face of "a life already lived" (1998: 213). We are with him in his grief and loss, because his loss is our loss, his dismemberment our dismemberment, his transformation ours, too. This Orphic tale reminds us "that if myth is to speak to a [person's] life, it must emanate from the void-from the nonhistorical, timeless unknown" (Adams-Leeming, 1998: 257) of *in-between-*

ness. My co-re-searchers and I were taken like Orpheus, into “a dream landscape of curiously fluid ambiguous forms” (Campbell, 2008: 81), where the stories of transitioning from the first to the second half of life play out and where, like the mythical hero Orpheus, “we must survive a succession of trials” (2008: 81), in navigating this phase of adult development. As Abby suggests:

*There is this old view of yourself
and whether it is a physical image,
or emotional image,
which seems to be disrupted,
in working through what we worked through,
helping to begin to forge a new view,
that in the beginning,
you don't know is there,
because you are more conscious
of what you are losing,
and what is lost
and you don't know,
what the way forward,
is going to be,
from this loss.
But you begin to realise,
that there is a new 'you',
coming out,
like a butterfly,
a chrysalis,
I think one thing that struck me recently
the experience of this stage of development,*

*is like coming through adolescence,
a similar fog period,
but we never hear that story
this is why this work is so important,
and that what you are feeling is normal.*

Abby's reflections highlight how, through our storytelling, "unquestioned, taken-for-granted meta-narratives can dominate the production of knowledge in multiple social/educational contexts and how narrative methods enable silenced knowledge to be articulated" (O' Grady et al., 2018: 153). This study draws attention to the 'silenced knowledge' of how we "act out of the great process of losing the self to [re-]find the self" (Adams-Leeming, 1998: 257), and struggle to make sense of the chaos and uncertainty (Polden, 2002), during this stage of human development. It highlights how the process of "dis-identification", in "tak[ing] distance from parental and social original discourse, to reconsider and connect with [others]" (Montero et al., 2013: 141) marks the end of "eternal youth's fantasy as a call from reality, by perceiving one's own ageing process" (Montero et al., 2013:136). These stories of loss, mourning and letting go in this research, are a far cry from the tranquil terrain posited by the dominant cultural and social discourses about this stage of adult development. This new knowledge enables us to "create a space for a turn, a change, a reconsideration of how we think, how we do research and relationships, and how we live" (Holman et al., 2013:21), when we begin to attend to *other* silenced narratives about this phase of adult development.

A key methodological contribution

Thinking narratively released new ways of seeing and understanding "[our] experiencing selves" (Mc Cormack, 2018: 267) in the context of [our] social and cultural milieus. My *co-re-searchers* and I began to challenge the dominant stories

about this phase of adult development, as “fixed and unchanging, throughout [our] inquiry” (Clandinin and Huber, 2010: 9), reflected by James, as he explains how, as a result of engaging in this study, his view of ageing changed from one of being,

*at the end of the road,
of not being of any value,
of being on the scrap heap,
negative,
and nothing positive about it,
to opening up new possibilities,
to make meaning out,
of this part of my life,
instead of thinking,
that I'm on the way out!*

This key methodological contribution enabled us to return to the “scenes that tarnished us, the ones hovering in our memories” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 68), making visible the “sociocultural representations of the Other, as those of the self” (Spry, 2016: 30). In doing so, our way of thinking and being in the world was transformed, through having been “embedded in autoethnographic praxis [which] allows for dynamic immersion into culture and cultural critique” (Berry, 2013:213). In attending to the social and cultural aspects of our experience, we began to *see*, not only how “we are present in and move through culture” (Berry, 2013: 213), but also our ancestors’ similar journey.

Other ways of knowing

What is also very different about this research on this phase of adult development is the access point of entry into our lived experience, in a “thin place” (Gome, 1996:1), where there is “a disruption in the ordinary temporal-spatial plane we inhabit” (Poulos, 2008:83). Our exploration is re-imagined, by occupying this metaphoric reveried space,

“a sort of portal to another realm” (Poulos, 2008: 83) between the living and the dead, the conscious and the unconscious, where our stories of love, loss and transformation are told and re-told, in the presence of the ancestors. Our narratives evidence how the living and the dead are inextricably inter-connected and how our healing in the present, is intimately connected with our ancestral redemption. Eurydice’s presence speaks for the dead, asserting that “without [them] there is no life...they are the beginning and we are the end” (Lowinsky, 1998: 101).

This study draws attention, not only to the importance of making a space to attend to our unfinished ancestral complexes as we move into the second half of life, but also to the significance of the Orphic space itself, where “the veil between this world and that of the ancestors, both historical and archetypal, thins” (Romanyshyn, 2010: 286). This research captures how storytelling opens a space to look at our own woundedness “in the eye” (Cixous, 1997: 5). In the re-telling of our stories, we are offered glimpses into our embodied resonant lived experience of a particular time and place. We give voice to “another silence...a dark silence, a silence of truths unspoken and stories untold” (Poulos, 2008: 94) of the wounded child, crushed by the weight of the ancestors of “having spoken her into existence” (Davies, 2003: 22). Her “innumerable predispositions for perceiving, feeling, behaving and conceptualizing in specific ways” (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 164) were annihilated by their weight. The significance of this work rests on how the past may be sealed on us, or by us like Pandora’s box, and how the child becomes the bearer of the “unlived life of the parents” (Hollis, 2013: 37). S/he may often unknowingly, spend a lifetime carrying this weight perhaps until it is disrupted, initiating an unanticipated, profound grief process. This work signals the importance of storytelling in “opening to possibility in moments of trauma” (Poulos, 2008: 48) and how the wounded child devoid of agency, embedded in the folds of cultural and social constructs, begins to re-find “potential openings ... to shift and

change the stories [she] live[s] and tell[s]” (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

It is here in this *in-between-ness*, that we too, become dissolved like the ancestors. We bear witness to, and avow each other’s unfinished stories and questions, confronting “the mystery of the there-not-there...the visible and the invisible” (Cixous, 1991: 3) as we make meaning of our finitude and death. Our shared knowledge of “knowing there is death, and not denying or proclaiming it” (Cixous, 1993: 13) dissolves our conscious certainties, positionings and language. This study highlights how our shared imaginal space becomes a welcome gesture, acknowledging and helping to dissipate “the fear...the unutterable bleakness and sadness and loneliness” (Scott, 2021: 13), described by the great actor, Anthony Hopkins, about this stage of our lives. Our shared vulnerability in the face of death comforts and re-assures us at this time of our lives, when we could feel submerged that “in the end we’re all desperately, desperately alone” (Scott, 2021: 13). Within this space, “we practice a way of speaking which is responsive to the gestural field as a haunting presence” (Romanyshyn, in press: 14). We hear the reassuring ancestral whisperings offering the child in each of us, comfort and love, as we continue to loosen our grip on life-as-known and seek meaningful expression of what this time is calling us to *become*, providing an opportunity for transformation and re-authoring. We became witnesses to each other’s stories of pain, and perhaps, for the first time, “grant status of an event, a happening in the world rather than just something [we] felt” (Ahmed, 2014: 27). Our mutual recognition of our woundedness, emerging from our social and cultural landscape, opened up a “narrative of reconciliation - and with it, [a] hearing of the other’s pain” (Ahmed, 2014: 35), for the first time. Through our unconditional, sympathetic presence, we came to understand how we were silenced and invisible, but how our ancestors too, were helplessly caught in the web of their cultural discourses as I was, until undertaking this Orphic journey. It was here, in our

shared social and cultural landscape that we were able to embrace transformation, marking a pivotal contribution to the exploration of this phase of adult development.

Mourning, during this phase of adult development

The study brings new knowledge to how the process of mourning could be considered a vital aspect of this stage of adult development, one which does not seem to appear on the tapestry of our hegemonic discursive landscape. The attention drawn to the invisible faded colours of mourning painted into the landscape of our cultural and social discourses when recognised, highlights both the pain and beauty of the transformative nature of this process. Our insightful epiphanic imperceptible moments of *becoming*, released through our mourning, unsettle our epistemological and ontological stances, leading to new ways of knowing and re-imagining “potentials for reliving a life story from a different place, context, and time” (Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).

What is also remarkable about the thrust of the mourning process in this work, is how it looks to the cultural and social milieus for understanding and meaning, moving away from the bounded ‘self’. This research demonstrates how our expression of mourning is affected by the “social and cultural and institutional narratives in which [we] are embedded” (Bach, 2013: 282) but by “telling our own tales [and] drawing on a cultural stock of narrative forms” (Lieblich et al., 2004: 22), we are enabled to understand how our experience of mourning is shaped. We see how it envelops our ancestral stories and learn that in attending our own grief, we discover “its potential for revision and redistribution in future stories” (Frank, 2005: 967).

This work evidences how we come into the world with our suitcases full and charts our fear of letting go, as we continuously empty and re-fill them. This is the transformative Orphic/Eurydician call, which this thesis brings to our attention, how “in fleeing, it is

that life we lose” (Cixous, 1997: 25). We trace the rhizomatic threads of the mourning process from the initial call to let go, to being drawn deeper and deeper into its folds, until like Orpheus, we become *un-done*. This study furnishes a unique insight into this time in our lives, where Eurydice’s question ‘*Who*’, proffers a gesture, “an appeal, an invitation to enter a world, but also to partake of its experience” (Romanyshyn, in press: 11), of who we wish to *become*. We ‘show’ how we choose to remain stuck in old ontologies and epistemologies or embrace wakefulness, “not something we can live in the abstract; [but] a way of living that is grounded in experience” (Clandinin et al., 2016: 207). Accepting such an invitation at this stage of our life story becomes a gesture of release and transformation, a key finding in this study

Through this process of grief, mourning and letting go, we *see* how we become released to be *other*, than who we think we are. Tiger tells about an experience which brought her face to face with “*becoming less relevant as a mother*” and how the work we had done together freed her up, having “*flushed out the earlier grief and mourning*”. Through our *co-re-searching* experience, we came to appreciate the benefits of attending to our “energy-charged clusters of our history” (Hollis, 1998: 17), and “cluster of associations” (Singer, 1972: 43) from earlier life experiences in our storytelling spaces, which became transformed in our telling and re-telling. Our experience reflects the powerful “ontological status” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 68) of autoethnography, which, in the telling and re-telling of our stories, our work together, as Tiger says, “*has been liberating*”.

This study emphasises how in telling our stories, we began to learn that the “emergent self comes to know itself as capable of more than- and even, as other than its history” (Berry, 2013:213). As we re-conceptualise ourselves in “copresence with Others” (Spry, 2016: 33), we “move away from attachments that are hurtful” (hooks, 1989: 155),

empowering us to live more meaningful lives. We come to learn perhaps, as James does, that having this opportunity to tell and re-tell our stories helps to:

*give [us] a totally different way
of looking at this stage in life,
a much more meaningful dimension,
to face up to the past
and break free
from [our] cultural discourses of childhood.*

Research as therapy and the therapeutic impact of this study

This study brings a new methodological knowledge to the exploration of this phase of adult development, through a process of “engaging in this relational way with one another requiring careful, quiet listening, a kind of stilling of our voices so as to be as present as possible to what a person is sharing in his/her story” (Clandinin et al., 2011: 44). This feminist emphasis of reciprocity, of empathic and compassionate attunement to each other enabled us to peel back the layers of stories, “creat[ing] a field of mutual mourning [where] each of us [was] released” (Romanyshyn in press: 17). Our storytelling challenged our assumptions, “disrupt[ed] our sense of security and heighten[ed] [our] sense of vulnerability” (Etherington, 2007a: 212), but which was critical in “remain[ing] the cornerstone of transformation where human connection [was] restored and agency remain[ed] central to the recovery process” (Etherington, 2007a: 204), as our stories were heard and affirmed by the other. It is here in our respectful reflexive space, as Tiger says, that we were privileged “*to be witnesses of each other’s stories*”, as we were drawn in to the struggle of the story and “the narrative context of another person’s suffering” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 70).

Our “mutual and sincere collaboration, whereby each party educates the other...and each having full voice” (Etherington, 2009: 226) enabled us to defuse the power of our “emotionally charged clusters, [bringing them] into the full light of consciousness” (Hollis, 2013: xvi). In “developing trust and openness” (Etherington, 2009: 226), “the unsettled I” (Spry, 2016: 83), only knowing itself in our “dialogic reflexivity” (Spry, 2016: 81), gives “a vital place [to] the other's life” (Romanyshyn, in press: 22), effecting “a transformation of the self, from which there is no return” (Butler, 2005: 28). We “validate the meaning of [each other's] pain, but also allow participants and readers to feel validated and/or better able to cope with or want to change their circumstances” (Ellis et al., 2011: 5). This study contributes new methodological knowledge, describing the importance of a feminist therapeutic approach, “related to power and equality...[requiring] collaboration, transparen[cy] and reflexive[ity]” (Etherington, 2009:229), in exploring this stage of adult development.

Disrupting the deficit narrative

This study contributes to an understanding and an insight into how our social and cultural constructs about this stage of adult development are invisibly present, and how unknowingly, we are all unconsciously complicit in their maintenance. Our stories of being caught in the web of complicity and collusion about this time in our lives are voiced and witnessed by each other as we find ourselves “standing on a sheer existential cliff” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 68) of “the onslaught of time-bound existence” (Poulos 2008: 81), of ageing and incapacity and finitude. It draws attention to our dismay and sadness at being culturally and socially projected into, and identified with being in the shadow-lands of the afternoon of life. This study highlights how “ageism is well internalized and impacts us through [our] belief systems and expectations, influencing social integration and our relations with people” (Ayalon and Tech-Römer, 2018: 111). It also stresses our Oedipal blindness in not seeing our restrictive ageist language which

defines the linear lifespan trajectory of “beginning, middle and ending” (Davies, 1998: 134) as the only path through life.

While acknowledging the challenges the imminent penumbra would bring in terms of limitation of life, the research goes beyond conventional thinking about it as nearing sunset, as the best part of life lived, as diminishment and a fading away. Instead, it uncovered the excitement and unexpected heat of the afternoon sun, its richness and unexplored wealth, in taking courage to de-construct and *un-do* our cultural and social narrative of ageing and decline. It has been through our informal conversations that my *co-re-searchers* and I were awakened to the subtle power in the dominant social constructs of ageing, which penetrates our language, without our hardly noticing its impact, and “dictates how we collectively treat older people” (Pollock, 2020: 28), rendering them invisible. In our dialogic space, it is by making visible “the[se] structures, their effects and ways in which structures are produced and regulated” (Barrett, 2005: 87), that we begin to de-construct them. It is only when we take that critical Orphic glance at our stories that we begin to distance ourselves from the master narrative of ageing. In disrupting their power by talking about it, by exposing it and by “tearing away the conventions of ‘received’ ideas, received feelings” (Cixous, 1997:11), it emphasised the transformative importance of not making “death something mortal and negative” (Cixous, 1993: 13). This significant point highlighted in this study, breaks away from the traditional *taken-for-granted* notion of advancing into the second half of life that adulthood is a “developmental epoch”, rather than merely a “product of [prior] development” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1998: xxii, citing Michels, 1980), a continuous, evolving unfolding *becoming*. As reflected by James:

*you can't say that,
the process of mourning,
and letting go,
is completely sorted.
You have to go back again,
and excavate again,
and do the digging...
it's an ongoing journey...
it might be a different journey each time*

We begin to see that this time in our lives “is a very specific period in human life, when many opportunities arise” (Montero et al., 2013: xix), which would perhaps otherwise have been closed off. Indeed, as Abby suggests:

*another aspect,
of the relevance,
of this work,
is the possibility,
of helping other people,
to liberate themselves,
and how,
they don't always have to be caught,
inside the walls of whatever they grew up with.*

Addressing issues of validity and reliability

As a researcher, I question the relevance of this work but view it as crucial, in highlighting how we “need to have more careful and vivid descriptions of how [our discourses] harm and how much harm [they] do” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 218) to us in our lives. By telling our stories “we can open up spaces between fixed and often

negative ideas of identity, and invite instead more hopeful life-enhancing self-stories to emerge” (Etherington, 2007a: 32). In doing so, we become strangers to ourselves, our social and cultural narratives and their attendant language, “open[ing] up a space of resistance between the individual (auto-) and the collective (-ethno-) (Lionnet, 1990: 391). This study becomes an act of defiance and rebellion against being diminished by the power of our hegemonic discourses. It becomes a gesture of “creat[ing] our own unfolding narrative identity of age” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 218), leaving behind the “secure underpinnings of our lives” (May, 2020: 88) to embrace a story of meaning-making, an “enlargement that comes from taking life on” (Hollis, 2020: 119).

This research demonstrates how in taking a more evolving approach to this stage of adult life, we become “caught up in the flow, only ever able to seek a way to shape that which is partial, momentary, always already transforming” (Wyatt, 2019: 47). It illustrates how we do not have to be confined by our social, cultural and linguistic constructions, but instead, we can re-imagine alternative ways of living, where “voice is always provisional and contingent, always becoming” (Grant, 2013: 8). Butterfly’s acknowledgement of the value of our work together, highlights the importance, of “sojourn[ing] in the clearing” (Heidegger, 2002: 225). She describes how the gesture of being on the “existential cliff” (Bochner and Ellis, 2016: 68) becomes a gesture of preparedness for the second half of life, not in the abstract sense, but in a fully embodied, meaningful way:

*to think about this stage,
of adult development,
...in talking about it,
...you're not as alarmed*

Tiger also alludes to the importance of this sojourn together, highlighting an important contribution of this autoethnographic work which “endeavours to ... scrutinize ... dominant narratives, suggest alternatives and proffer viewpoints, previously discarded as unhelpfully subjective” (Turner, 2013: 225):

*And the fact,
that we've worked our way through,
mourning and- and death,
you know,
and we've looked at old age,
and we looked at ageing,
and we've looked at,
um, our- our stories,
you know,
and we storied them ,
and- and maybe,
that's what has- has, um,
Yeah, we've done a lot of work
Like- like and brought me,
to that like a vulnerable place.*

The study establishes how “stories change us in ways we may not always anticipate because they can move us emotionally, change our attitudes and opinions, and sometimes influence our future behaviour”. (Etherington, 2007a: 31). In writing about our experience, as evidenced in this research, we are “better[able] testify on behalf of an event, problem or experience” (Ellis et al., 2011: 5) and identify what perhaps remains invisible against the backdrop of the dominant and social milieus as highlighted in this research.

I look to theory for reassurance with regard to issues of validity and reliability in using autoethnography as a methodology for this study. In using evocative autoethnography, in this thesis, I hope that my readers will have “a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true...[enabling] them to enter the subjective world of the teller-to see the world from her or his point of view, even if this world does not match reality” (Plummer, 2001: 401). In our closing *Moment*, I ask, as an autoethnographer, “How useful is the story?” and “To what uses might the story be put?” (Bochner, 2002: 4). I ask, if our particular stories sound plausible, reasonable “given available factual evidence”? (Bochner, 2002: 4). I also hope the stories told and insights proffered, resonate with my readers “about their experience or about the lives of others they know” (Ellis et al., 2011: 4) and if they illuminate other silenced unfamiliar cultural stories as we see “ourselves and everyone else as human subjects constructed in a tangle of cultural, social and historical situations and relations in contact zones” (Brodkey, 1996: 29).

My questions about ensuring that this autoethnographic work is credible, rigorous, analytical, theoretical, emotional, and valid are supported by Andrews (2007), who is convinced, like I am,

that if I can listen carefully enough, there is much to learn from every story that one might gather. For society really is comprised of human lives, and if we can begin to understand the framework that lends meaning to these lives, then we have taken the important first step to being able to access the wider framework of meaning that is the binding agent of a culture

p.491.

One of the strengths of this work illuminates how this relatively unexplored aspect of adult development has been highlighted is valid and having importance. My experience of looking backwards and forwards from this Orphic threshold space, where I became

un-done has enabled me to be able to “move into the future with newness, promise, openness, energy and potential” (Brewi and Brennan, 1993: 193). My vision has become more blurred, uncertain in “my achievement of [myself becoming] a speaking subject” (Davies, 2003:27), which allows for other possibilities as I step into the second half of life. I have discovered insights into other ways of knowing, empowering me to make a place for them amongst other “bodies of knowledge” (Romanyshyn, 2013: 336) but I have also learned that the findings I present here “are neither ‘truths’ nor ‘untruths’, but are simply offered as ways of thinking” (Etherington, 2007a: 39) about this phase of adult development.

One of the work’s greatest benefits for me, in undertaking this work, and I hope too for my readers, has been the significance of “listen[ing] to the mythic level, to hear the song of the poet” (Lowinsky, 1998: 88). It calls us to *look* again, at this stage of our lives, “to hear [like] when you were a child, and have forgotten” (Lowinsky, 1998: 89), to the “storied dream-presence of the child” (Poulos, 2008: 82) who ushers us into this world of possibility. This once again, represents an alternative approach to the study of adult development, in breaking away from a linear to a more rhizomatic understanding of temporality. It also bears witness to the birth of a second language of *becoming*, enabling us to make meaning of this stage of adult development, and “lead[ing] us to a deeper understanding of our first language, not just grammatically, but as a language that constructs how we view the world” (Richardson, 2000: 936). This reveried language of the child, of dreams, of the *intermilieu*, where “writing, in its noblest function, is the attempt to unerase, to unearth, to find the primitive picture again, ours, the one that frightens us” (Cixous, 1993: 9), but also the one that liberates and transforms us.

Issues of power and authorship in this research

At the outset as researcher, I am in the midst of this “research puzzle” (Bach, 2013: 282) with my *co-re-searchers*, in exploring this uncharted territory of being on the threshold between the first and second half of life, through storytelling. I am aware that my own experience of this phase of adult development and my presence, in “listening and questioning in particular ways” (Speedy, 2008: 50) influenced and “critically shape[d] the stories the participants chose to tell” (Speedy, 2008: 50), though I endeavoured to bring a discerning presence to our moments of meeting. I am also mindful how, in “mov[ing] from field texts to interim research texts, each move, [was] a move of co-composing” (Clandinin, 2013: 200) with my *co-re-searchers*. I ensured that my *co-re-searchers* voices, written in the first person, were visible throughout the work, “because although I had re-created them I still saw them as belonging” (Byrne, 2017: 43) to them. I was also mindful of Connelly and Clandinin’s (2000) relational narrative ethics throughout the research process, so I invited my *co-re-searchers* to re-view my representation of their stories and to change anything they were uncomfortable with or unhappy about, though one person decided not to take up my invitation. With minor ‘word’ changes in one instance, my *co-re-searchers* were happy with the way I interpreted and represented the data “which explicitly revealed my influence as a researcher” (Byrne, 2017: 43).

As researcher I was very mindful of how I “play[ed] a major part in constituting the narrative data that I analyz[ed]” (Speedy, 2008: 50). To respond to this dilemma, I chose shared points of connection with my *co-re-searchers*, which were powerful in themselves and which are reflected in this work. However, I realise that it is “the researcher’s responsibility to tell the story of the research, to analyse and to interpret in order to seek and convey its significant messages” (Byrne, 2017: 38). I appreciate though, that in filtering and sifting the extensive data, that there “are some voices that

have only been partially heard” (Etherington, 2004: 85) and other significant and noteworthy findings pertinent to this stage of development, which still remain elusive. However, in “making decisions about the boundaries of narrative segments”, (Speedy, 2008: 50) which best displayed not only the broader social and cultural contexts that shaped [our] personal accounts” (Speedy, 2008: 58), “we can [still] hear the subjective meanings and sense of self and identity being negotiated, as the stories unfold” (Etherington, 2007a: 29). As I am the author of the work, I had the responsibility of making decisions about how much data was included, though it does not preclude me from returning to the extensive data collected and re-viewing it, perhaps on another occasion.

In this study, “the stories I present are not ‘life as lived’ but my own re-presentations of those lives as told to me” Etherington, 2007a: 29). I have attempted to give prominence and voice to produce a polyphonic text as Tyler (1986) suggests, in bringing a new focus, awareness and meaning-making to this phase of adult development through our storytelling, being mindful of course, that “narratives are reflections on-not of-the world as it is known” (Denzin, 2000: xii-xiii). In including a multiplicity of voices, storied, poetic, pauses and silences, I have endeavoured to do so in “a non-hierarchical manner, making [my authorial] influence explicit without it being dominant (Byrne, 2017: 36).

I have drawn on the power of poetic language, which has “led me to explore how poetry can be utilized as a means of representing the multiple voices inherent in my research and the layers of meaning” (Byrne, 2017: 42), but it “allows [us] to cross boundaries and dichotomous concepts” (2012: 600), creating other possibilities for interpretation, representation, making and communicating meaning” (Guttorm, 2012: 600). It also “interrupt[s], or disrupt[s], the processes by which research knowledge is customarily produced” (MacLure, 2003: 81), “so that new questions and meanings are generated”

(2003: 81). By taking a multiple layered approach to data, “such representations do not produce final interpretations” (Byrne, 2017: 42), but invites readers to find their own connections, resonances and make their own meaning about this phase of adult development. I am with Lincoln (1995) here, who reminds us that all qualitative research is “always partial and incomplete; socially, culturally [and] historically” (Lincoln, 1995: 280). However, as researcher, I have endeavoured to provide “one articulation” (Speedy, 2008: 187) from a particular point of view which proffers an understanding into the social and cultural milieu in which the stories are located.

Interlude

Looking backwards

A reminder about the study

In this *Re-view* Moment, I re-trace our Orphic journey and ponder on the richness and wisdom it has bestowed on us. The study highlights how, through collaborative dialogue, new understandings and insights are gleaned into this phase of adult development, by bearing witness to each other’s stories of love, loss, mourning and transformation in this threshold space. The work traces how, through the power of narrative, our fixed essentialist ontological and epistemological stances are shifted, to viewing ourselves as “fluid,, open, permeable” (Wyatt, 2019: 127) and “as entit[ies] fully immersed in...always emerging out of a process of becoming” (Braidotti 2011: 17).

What I might have done differently

In my final glance backwards at the work, I ponder on what perhaps I might have done differently, had my earlier footholds been less tentative. My journey into this work was circuitous, drawn initially by my interest in teacher education and somehow morphing

into one of re-membling and re-finding “moments perceived to have significantly impacted the trajectory of [my] life” (Bochner and Ellis, 2011: 275), that forced me to attend to that lived experience (Zaner, 2004, cited by Bochner and Ellis, 2011: 275). This tentative journey led me into casual conversations with others, some of whom seemed to have recognised their own stories in my unfolding research and self-selected themselves to join me. My ‘recruitment’ process could indeed be perceived as a limitation of the work, because of my own uncertainty in articulating its exact scope at the time. Had my thought process perhaps been more advanced, the range of interested participants may have been broader, drawing from more varied backgrounds.

Another possible limitation of this study is perhaps the question about reliability, in terms of whether I would have arrived at similar considerations/insights about this threshold experience, had I engaged with a different cohort who may not have had the same level of reflexivity and awareness. It would be interesting to see if their exploration of meaning would have had a similar transformative effect.

Looking forwards

Our storytelling, though a partially constructed space may help to “put knowledge in the service of enhancing human experience” (Clandinin and Rosiek, 2007: 47) by being theoretical, analytical, evocative, emotional and therapeutic. Our “stories [could also] have meaning beyond the local and personal context”, could “resonate and outlast their telling or reading, and sometimes have unintended consequences” (Etherington, 2007a: 31). In this sense, I hope our stories may help to “produce a different knowledge and [perhaps] produce knowledge differently” (St. Pierre, 1997: 613) about this phase of adult development.

Advancing this study

The new knowledge emerging from this research could perhaps be further developed, by highlighting how we could embrace “a complex idiosyncratic narrative of age identity” (Morganroth-Gullette, 1997: 18), through a greater awareness of our language-use in our sociological and cultural milieus, by moving from a feminist reciprocal stance to a feminist activist one. Drawing on the power of further research to spearhead policy and implement change in concert with the various government departments and state actors, both in Ireland and in Europe, educational awareness has the power to deconstruct, shape and change the dominant hegemonic deficit discourse. In highlighting the power of narrative in this research, it invites other researchers to explore how we could further uncover “the excitement and unexplored heat of the afternoon sun, its richness and unexplored wealth” (Morris, 2021: 320).

In mapping the mythical tale of Orpheus and Eurydice in this research, future researchers may be inspired to see how myth could not only be a mirror for our stories, but also a means of carrying us into new ways of exploring our lived experience.

This study highlights the importance of re-imagining more expansive ways of looking at and living the ‘second half’ of life, thereby gesturing towards embracing further educational considerations, in the areas of undergraduate and post graduate training for the caring professions.

Parting words...

However, as we journey onwards to new possibilities, we realise that we “will *always* live in *in-between-times*, between what has been reached and what has been exhausted and what approaches over the curve of the horizon” (Hollis, 2020: 144). We are also invited to live in the *intermilieu*, between the living and the dead, the conscious and the unconscious, as Wyatt (2014) so beautifully announces,

towards a place – a multiplicity where categories become indistinct where we position ourselves and our inquiries as always in thresholds, forever liminal, forever refusing “here” or “there”, seeking out the pauses, not the notes in the song; the pauses as notes.

p.16.

I am now approaching a new threshold, an *other* ending and an-*other* beginning, “evoking a suggestion of not knowing” (Wyatt, 2014: 11), unsure of what is beyond.

It is here that I now take leave of you, my reader, but, before I do so, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to take a moment, to ponder on what you might take away with you from our time together. I want to thank you for taking this Orphic journey and whatever threshold you find yourself on, may it challenge and delight you, as it did for me.

*Though we live in a world that dreams of ending,
that always seems about to give in,
something that will not acknowledge conclusion,
insists we begin again.*

(Kennelly, 2011).

Bibliography

- Armstrong, Nancy (2004) *Some Call It Fiction: On the Politics of Domesticity*. In: Rivkin Julie, and Ryan, Michael. 2nd ed. (2004) *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 567- 583.
- Abram, D. (1996) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language In a More-than-human World*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Adams, Tony, Holman Jones, Stacy, Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *Storying our Future*. In: Holman Jones, Stacy, Adams Tony E., and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge. 669- 677.
- Adams-Leeming (1998) *Mythology: The Voyage of The Hero*. Oxford: Oxford Press.
- Ahmed, Sara (2014) *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. 2nd eds. Edinburgh: Edinburgh Press
- Aldridge, Joe and Becker, Saul (1999) Children as carers: the impact of parental illness and disability on children's caring roles. *Journal of Family Therapy*, 21 (3), 303-320.
- Althusser, Louis (1971) *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*. London: New Left Books.
- Althusser, Louis (2004) *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*. In: Rivkin Julie, and Ryan, Michael. 2nd eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 693- 702.
- Álvarez, Ercilia García López-Sintas, Jordi Gonzalvo, Pilar Saldaña (2002) Socialization Patterns of Successors in First-to Second-Generation Family Businesses. *Family Business Review*, 15 (3), 189- 203.
- Anderson, H. and Gehart, D., eds. (2007). *Collaborative Therapy: Relationships and Conversations That Make a Difference*. New York and Oxon: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group.

- Anderson Leon and Glass-Coffin, Bonnie (2016) Learn by Going. In: Holman Jones, Stacey Adams, Tony, E., and Ellis, Carolyn. *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge. 57- 83.
- Andrews, Molly (2007). Exploring cross-cultural boundaries. In: Clandinin, D. Jean. (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage. 489-511.
- Arendt, H. (1958) *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University Press of Chicago Press.
- Arnaud, S.H. (1959) Some psychological characteristics of children of multiple sclerotics. *Psychosomatic Medicine*, 21 (1), 8– 22.
- Arrien, Angeles (2007) *The Second Half of Life*. 2nd eds. Colorado: Sounds True, Inc.
- Arensberg, C.M. and Kimball, S.T. (1968). *Family and Community in Ireland*. 2nd eds Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press.
- Arthur, Frank (1996) *Letting Stories Breathe*. Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Attig, Thomas (2010) *How We Grieve: Relearning the World*. Oxford: University Press, Incorporated.
- Averill, J. R., and Nunley, E. P (1993). Grief As an Emotion and as a Disease: A Social-Constructionist Perspective. In: Stroebe, M. Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R., 4th ed. (1993) *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 77-90.
- Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer, Clemens (2018) Introduction to the Section: Ageism-Concept and Origins. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer, Clemens (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 1- 10.
- Bach, Hedy (2007) Composing a Visual Narrative Inquiry. In: Clandinin, D., Jean (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. California: Sage Publications. 280-307.
- Bachelard, Gaston (1960) *The Poetics of Reverie*. U.S. A. Beacon Press Ltd.

- Baddeley, Jenna and Singer, Jefferson, A. (2013) Charting Life's Story's Path. In: Clandinin, D., Jean (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. California: Sage Publications. 177-202.
- Baillie, C., Kabo, and Reader, J. (2012) *Heterotopia: Alternative Pathways to Social Justice*. Winchester and Washington: Zero Books.
- Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Translated by W. Booth. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Barge, J. Kevin and Little, Martin (2002) Dialogical Wisdom, Communicative Practice, and Organizational Life. *Communication Theory*, 12 (4), 375–397.
- Barone, T. (2001). *Touching Eternity: The Enduring Outcomes of Teaching*. New York: Routledge.
- Barone, T. (2008). How Arts-based Research Can Change Minds. In: Cahnmann-Taylor, M., Siegesmund, R. (2008) *Arts-Based Research in Education: Foundations for Practice*. New York: Routledge.
- Barrett, M. J. (2005) Making (Some) Sense of Feminist Poststructuralism in Environmental Education Research and Practice. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 10 (1), 79-93.
- Baxter, Leslie A. (1992) Interpersonal Communication as Dialogue: A Response to the "Social Approaches" Forum. *Communication Theory*, 2 (4), 330- 337.
- Becker, Daniel. (2006) Therapy for the Middle-Aged: The Relevance of Existential Issues. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 60 (1), 87- 99.
- Bayer, B. M. and Shotter, J., eds. (1998). *Inquiries in Social Construction. Reconstructing the Psychological Subject: Bodies, Practices and Technologies*. California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Behar, R. (1996). *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology That Breaks Your Heart*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

- Benjamin, Walter (2004) *The Storyteller: Reflections of the Works of Nikolai Leskov*. In: Mieke, Bal. (2004) *Narrative Theory: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Oxford and Canada: Routledge. 88- 107.
- Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas (1966) *The Social Construction of Reality*. London: Penguin Books.
- Berger, Peter and Luckmann, Thomas (1966) *A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Berry, Keith (2013) Spinning Autoethnographic Reflexivity, and Cultural Critique and Negotiating Selves. In: Holman Jones, Stacy, Adams, Tony, E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013). *Handbook of Autoethnography* New York: Routledge. 209-227.
- Berk, L. E. (2000) *Child Development*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Berzonsky, M. D. (1990) Self-construction over the Lifespan: A Process Perspective on Identity Formation. In: Neimeyer, G. J. and Neimeyer, R. A. eds. (1990) Vol.1. *Advances in Personal Construct Psychology*, 1, 155–186.
- Brewi, Janice and Brennan, Anne (1993) *Celebrate Mid-Life*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Biber, Hesse, Sharlene, Nagy and Leavy, Lina, Patricia (2007) *Feminist Research Practice*. California: Sage Publications.
- Bishop, Paul (2011) *Reading Goethe at Midlife*. New Orleans: Spring Journal, Inc.
- Block, P. (1993) *Stewardship: Choosing Service Over Self-interest*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Bochner, Arthur P. (2002) Perspectives on inquiry III: The moral of stories. In Knapp, Mark L., and Daly, John A. 3rd eds. *Handbook of Interpersonal Communication*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage. 73-101.
- Bochner Arthur and Ellis Caroline (2003) An Introduction to the Arts and Narrative Research: Art as Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9 (4), 506-514.

- Bochner, Arthur P. (2012) On First-person Narrative Scholarship. Autoethnography as Acts of Meaning. *Narrative Inquiry*, 22 (1), 155-164.
- Bochner, Arthur and Ellis, Carolyn (2016) *Evocative Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge.
- Bohm, D. (1996) *On Dialogue*. New York: Routledge.
- Boland Evan (2009) *New Collected Poems*. New York: W.W Norton and Company.
- Bollas, C. (2013) Interview with Christopher Bollas. In: Montero Guillermo Julio, De Montero, Alisia, Mirta, Ciancio and De Vogelfanger, Singman Liliana (2013) *Updating Midlife*. London: Karnac Books.
- Bowlby, John (1977) The Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds. *British Journal of Psychiatry*, 130 (3), 201-210.
- Bowlby, John (1998) *Attachment and Loss*. London: Pimlico.
- Block, J. H. (1984) 'Psychological development of female children and adolescents' In: Block, J .H. *Sex Role Identity and Ego Development*. (1984) San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- Braidotti, Rosi (2011) *Nomadic Subjects*. New York: Colombia Press.
- Brehony, Kathleen, A. (1996) *Awakening at Midlife*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group.
- Brewi, Janice and Brennan, Anne (1982) *Mid-life Psychological and Spiritual Perspectives*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Brewi, Janice and Brennan, Anne (1988) *Celebrate Mid-Life. Jungian Archetypes and Mid-Life Spirituality*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Brewi, Janice and Brennan, Anne (1999) *Mid-life Spirituality and Jungian Archetypes*. Maine: Nicholas-Hays Inc.
- Brodkey, L. (1996) I-site. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, 6 (2), 17–30.

- Brown, Wendy. (2005) *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Brownmiller, S. (1975) *Against our Will*. London: Secker and Warburg.
- Bruhl-Levy, Lucien (1912) A Linguistic Consideration in Primitive Communities (circa.1936) In: Whorf, Benjamin Lee. 2nd eds. (2012) *Language, Thought and Reality*. Cambridge: MIT Press. 83- 112.
- Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual Minds, Possible Worlds*. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bruner, J. S. (1987) "Life as Narrative". *Social Research*, 54 (1), 11- 32
- Bruner, J. S. (2004) "Life as Narrative" *Social Research*, 71 (3), 691-710.
- Buber, Martin (1992) *On Intersubjectivity and Cultural Creativity*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bühler, C. (1968) The General Structure of Human Life Cycle. In Bühler, C. and Massarik, F., eds. (1968). *The Course of Human Life: A Study in Goals in the Humanistic Perspective*. New York: Springer. 12-26.
- Burr, V. (1995) *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Burr, V. (1999) The Extra-discursive in Social Constructionism. In: Nightingale, David J. and Cromby, John (1999). *Social Constructionist Psychology*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Burr, V. (2003) *Social Constructionism*. London: Routledge.
- Burr, Vivien (2015) *Social Constructionism*. Sussex and New York: Routledge.
- Butler, R. N. (1969) Age-ism: Another form of biogtry. *Gerontologist*, 9 (4), 243–246.
- Byrne-Armstrong, H. (2001) 'Whose show is it? The contradictions in collaboration. In: Byrne-Armstrong, H., Higgs J. and Horsfall, D. *Critical Moments in Qualitative Research*. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann.106-115.

- Byrne, Gillian (2017) Narrative inquiry and the problem of representation: 'giving voice', making meaning. *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, 40 (1), 36-52.
- Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, R. N. (1990) A disease called ageism. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 38 (2), 178-180.
- Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York: Routledge.
- Butler, Judith (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Butler, Judith (2005) *Giving an Account of Oneself*. U.S.A.: Fordham University Press.
- Butler, Judith (2006) *Precarious Life*. London and New York: Verso.
- Butler, Judith (2007) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. CA: University of California Press.
- Campbell, Joseph (1993) *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. California: Fontana.
- Campbell, Joseph (2008) *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*. California: New World Library.
- Carr, David. (1986) *Time, Narrative and History*. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Cavarero, Adriana (2000) *Relating Narratives*. Abington, New York: Routledge.
- Chang, Heewon (2008) *Autoethnography as a Method*. Walnut Creek, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Chang, Heewon. (2013) Individual and Collaborative Autoethnography as Method. In: Holman Jones, Stacey, Adams, Tony, E., and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge.
- Chiseri-Strater, E., and Sunstein, B.S. (1997) *Fieldworking: Reading and Writing Research*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Blair Press/Prentice Hall.

- Chung, C. and Pennebaker, J. (2007) The Psychological Functions of Function Words. In: Fiedler, K. (2007) *Frontiers of Social Psychology. Social Communication*. U.K: Psychology Press.
- Cixous, H. (1975) *The Newly Born Woman*. Vol.24. Translated by B. Wing. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cixous, H. and Clement, C (1986) The Newly Born Woman. In: Rivkin Julie, and Ryan, Michael. 2nd eds. (1986). *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd. 348-352.
- Cixous, H. (1991) *Coming to Writing and Other Essays*. Translated by D. Jenson, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Cixous, H. (1991) *Readings: The Poetics of Blanchot, Joyce, Kafka, Kleist, Lispector, and Tsvetayeva*. Translated by V. Andermatt-Conley, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cixous, H. (1993) *Three Steps on the Ladder of Writing*. Translated by S. Cornell and S. Sellers. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cixous, H (1997) *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*. Translated by M.Calle-Gruber, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Connelly, F., Michael (2000) *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Connelly, F., Michael, (2000) *Narrative Inquiry*. San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Rosiek, Jerry (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry Mapping a Methodology*. California: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Clandinin, D. Jean, and Rosiek, Jerry (2007) Mapping a Landscape in Narrative Inquiry. In: Clandinin, D. J., (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 35-75.

- Clandinin, D. Jean and Murphy, Shaun, M. (2009) Relational Ontological Commitments in Narrative Research. *Educational Researcher*, 38 (8), 598-602.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Huber, J. (2010) Narrative Inquiry. In: Mc. Gaw, B., Baker, E. and Peterson, P. P., 3rd eds. *International Encyclopaedia of Education*. New York: Elsevier.
- Clandinin, D. Jean (2011) Becoming a narrative inquirer. In: Trahar, Sheila (2011) Edited by Sheila Trahar. *Learning and Teaching Narrative Inquiry*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Clandinin, D. Jean (2013) *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Clandinin, D. Jean., Caine, V., Lessard, S., and Huber, J. (2016). *Engaging in Narrative Inquiries with Children and Youth*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Clandinin, D. Jean, Caine, Vera and Lessard, Sean (2018) *The Relational Ethics of Narrative Inquiry*. New York: Routledge.
- Clark, S.H. Schwiebert, V.L. (2001) Penelope's Loom: A Metaphor of Women's Development at Midlife. *Journal of Humanistic Counseling, Education & Development*, 40 (2), 161–170.
- Clark, Carolyn (2010) Narrative Learning: Its Contours and Its Possibilities. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 26 (Summer), 2-11.
- Coleman John (2011) *The Nature of Adolescence*. New York: Routledge.
- Coles, R. (1989) *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Comyn, Annabelle (2015) The Dark Heart of Dancing at Lughnasa. *Irish Times*, 01 September, Dublin. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/the-dark-heart-of-dancing-at-lughnasa-1.2332117>. (accessed October 2016).
- Connell, R. W. (1987) *Gender and Power*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Cooley, Charles H. (1902) *Human Nature and the Social Order*. New York: Scribner's.

- Connelly, F. Michael, and Clandinin, D. J., (1990) Stories of Experience and Narrative. *Inquiry Educational Researcher*, 19 (5), 2-14.
- Connelly, F. M., and Clandinin, J. (2006) Narrative Inquiry. *Handbook of Complementary Methods in Education Research*. In: Green, J., Camilli, G. and Elmore, P. (2006). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum. 477- 489.
- Corbin, Henry (1998) *The Voyage and the Messenger*. California: North Atlantic Books.
- Côte, James, E. and Devine, G (2002) *Identity, Formation Agency and Culture* New Jersey and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Covey, Stephen, R. (2004) *7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. U.K: Simon and Schuster Ltd.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. California: Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.
- Cronen, Vernon, E. (2001) Practical Theory, Practical Art, and the Pragmatic-Systemic Account of Inquiry, *Communication Theory*, 11 (1), 14–35.
- Crossley, Michele (2000) *Introducing Narrative Psychology: Self, Trauma and the Construction of Meaning*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Crotty, Michael (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research* London, Sage.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2002) Social Poetics as Management Inquiry: A Dialogical Approach. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 11 (2), 128-146.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2002) Reflexive Dialogical Practice in Management Learning. *Management Learning*, 33(1), 35-61.
- Cunliffe, A.L. (2008) Orientations to Social Constructionism: Relationally Responsive Social Constructionism and its Implications for Knowledge and Learning, *Management Learning*, 39 (2), 123–139

- Curtin, Chris, O'Connor, Barbara and Jackson, Pauline. (1987) *Gender in Irish Society*. Galway: Galway University Press.
- Daly, Mary (1978) *Gyn/ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Dante, Aligheiri (2016) *The Inferno*. Translated by P. Thornton. New York: Arcade Publishing.
- Davies, Bronwyn (1945) (*In*) *scribing Body/Landscapes*. CA: Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press.
- Davies, Bronwyn, and Harré, R (1990) The discursive production of selves. *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20 (1):43-63.
- Davies Bronwyn (1992) Women's Subjectivity and Feminist Stories. In: Ellis, Carolyn and Flaherty, Michael. G. (1992) *Investigating Subjectivity Research on Lived Experience*: California: Sage Publications.
- Davies, Bronwyn (1994) *Poststructuralist Theory and Classroom Practice*. Victoria: Deakin University Press.
- Davies, Bronwyn (1997) The Subject of Poststructuralism: A Reply to Alison Jones. *Gender and Education*, 9 (1), 271-283.
- Davies Bronwyn (1998) Psychology's subject: A Commentary on the Relativism/Realism Debate. In: Parker, Ian. (1998) *Social Constructionism, Discourse and Realism*. London, Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.133-145.
- Davies, B. (2000) *A Body of Writing*. Walnut Creek: Rowan and Littlefield.
- Davies, B. (2000b) Eclipsing the constitutive power of discourse: The writing of Janette Turner Hospital. In: St. Pierre, E., and Pillow, Wanda. *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education* New York: Routledge. 179- 198.
- Davies, Bronwyn (2003) *Shards of Glass*. New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc.

- Davies, Bronwyn and Gannon, Susanne (2006) *Doing Collective Biography*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- De Beauvoir, Simone (2006) *The Woman Destroyed*. London: Harper Perennial.
- Deetz, Stanley A. (1992) *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life*: New York: State University of New York.
- De, Fina, Anna. (2003) *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Félix (2019) *A Thousand Plateaus*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Parnet, Claire (1997) *Dialogues*. Translated by H. Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, (1998) “Literature and Life”, in *Essays Critical and Clinical*. Translated by D. W. Smith and M. A. Greco, London: Verso.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Guattari, Felix (2009) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Denshire, Sally (2014) On auto-ethnography. *Current Sociology Review*, 62 (6), 831-850.
- Denzin Norman. (1989) *Interpretative Interactionism: Applied Social Research Methods Series*. Vol.16. Newbury Park CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, Norman (2000) Forward: Narrative’s Moment. In: Andrews, Molly, Sclater, Shelly, Day, Squire, Corinne and Treacher, Amal (2000). *Lines of Narrative: Psychosocial Perspectives*. New York: Routledge. xi- xiii.
- Denzin, Norman (2003) *Performance Ethnography: Critical Pedagogy and the Politics of Culture*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. and Lincoln, Yvonna S. (2011) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Denzin, Norman, K. (2013) Interpretive Autoethnography. In: Holman Jones, Stacey Adams, Tony, E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, Norman, K. (2014) *Interpretive Autoethnography*. CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, Norman, K. (2018) *Performance Autoethnography*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.
- Denzin, Norman (2018) *Performance Autoethnography*. New York and London: Routledge
- Derrida, J. (1976) *Of Grammatology*. John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, USA.
- Derrida, Jacques (1978/2001) *Writing and Difference*. Translated by A. Bass. London: Routledge.
- Derrida, J. (1982) *Positions*. Translated by A. Bass. London: Athlone Press,
- De Salvo, Louise (1999) *Writing as a Way of Healing: How Telling our Stories Transforms our Lives*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Deutsch, H. (1937) Absence of Grief. *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, 6 (1), 12–22.
- Dewey, J. (1980) *The Quest for Certainty: A Study of the Relation of Knowledge and Action*. New York: Perigree Books.
- Dewey, J. (2015/1938) *John Dewey and Education*. New York: Free Press.
- Douglass, Bruce, G., and Moustakas, Clark (1985) The Internal Search to Know. *Journal of Humanistic Inquiry*, 25 (3), 39-55.
- Dubnewick, Michael Clandinin, D., Jean, Lessard, Sean and McHugh, Tara-Leigh (2018) *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24(6), 413–420.
- Duncan Margot (2004) Autoethnography: Critical appreciation of an emerging art *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 3 (4), 1-14.

- Dyson, Anne, Haas and Genishi, Celia (1994) *The Need for Story: Cultural Diversity in Classroom and Community*. U.S.A: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Dyson, Michael (2007) My Story in a Profession of Stories: Autoethnography-an Empowering Methodology. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 32 (1), 36-47.
- Eisler, R. (1991) Preface. In: Rountree, R., (1991). *Coming into Our Fullness: On Women Turning 40*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.
- El Refaie, E. (2014) Appearances and dis/dys-appearances: A dynamic view of embodiment in Conceptual Metaphor Theory. *Metaphor and the Social World*, 4 (1), 109-125.
- Elliot, Jaques (1965) Death and the mid-life crisis. *The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 1, (46) 502-514.
- Eliot, T. S. (1969) "East Coker", In: Eliot, T., S., *The Complete Poems and Plays* London: Faber and Faber.
- Eliot, T. S. (1969) Little Gidding In: Eliot, T., S., *The Complete Poems and Plays* London: Faber and Faber.
- Ellingson, L. (2006) Embodied knowledge: writing researchers' bodies into qualitative health research, *Qualitative Health Research*, 16 (1), 298-310.
- Ellingson, Laura, L. (2017) *Embodiment in Qualitative Research*. New York: Routledge.
- Ellis, C. (2000) Creating Criteria: An autoethnographic story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6 (2), 273-277.
- Ellis, C. and Bochner, A.P. (2000) Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject. In: Denzin, N. K., and Lincoln, Y. S. 2nd eds. (2000). *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd. 733-768.
- Ellis (2004) *The Ethnographic I*. California: Almira Press.

- Ellis (2004) *The Ethnographic I: A Methodological Novel about Autoethnography*. Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press.
- Ellis, Carolyn (2007) Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives Relational Ethics in Research with Intimate Others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (1), 3-29.
- Ellis, C. (2009) *Revision: Autoethnographic Reflections on Life and Work*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press Inc.
- Ellis Carolyn, Adams, Tony, E. Bochner, Arthur P. (2011) Autoethnography: An Overview *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 12, (1), 1-10. Available at: <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>. (Accessed, 2016).
- Ellsworth, E. (2005) *Places of Learning: Media, Architecture, Pedagogy*. New York: Routledge.
- Ergas, Oren (2017) *Reconstructing 'Education' through Mindful Attention*. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968) *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1980) *Identity and the Life Cycle*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Erikson, Erik, H (1993) *Childhood and Society*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Erikson, E. H. (1997) *The Lifecycle Completed*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Estés, Clarissa Pinkola (1992) *Women Who Run with Wolves*. New York: The Random House Publishing Group.
- Etherington, Kim (2004) *Becoming a Reflexive Researcher*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publications.
- Etherington, Kim (2007) Ethical Research in Ethical Relationships. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13 (5), 599-616.

- Etherington, Kim (2007a) *Trauma, Drug Misuse and Transforming Identities: A Life Story Approach*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Etherington, Kim (2009) Life story research: A relevant methodology for counsellors and psychotherapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy*, 9 (4), 225-233.
- Etherington, Kim (2017) *Narrative Approaches to Case Studies*. <https://docplayer.net/21926090-Narrative-approaches-to-case-studies-kim-etherington-emeritus-professor-university-of-bristol-uk.html>. (Accessed, 8th March 2021)
- Fanon, F. (1986) *Black Skin, White Masks*, Translated by C. L. Markmann, London: Pluto Press.
- Fairhurst Gail. T, Grant David. (2010) The Social Construction of Leadership: A Sailing Guide. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 24 (2), 171-210.
- Finlay Linda and Gough Brendan (2003) *Reflexivity, A Practical Guide for Researchers in Health and Social Sciences*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Firestone, S. (1970) *The Dialectic of Sex*. St Albans: Paladin,
- Flannery, Tony (2020) 'Rome may have done me a favour by removing me from priestly ministry' Irish Times, 20th October 2020. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/rome-may-have-done-me-a-favour-by-removing-me-from-priestly-ministry-1.4385286>.(Accessed, 20th October 2020).
- Flores-Sandoval, Cecilia, and Kinsella, Elizabeth Anne. (2020) Overcoming ageism: critical reflexivity for gerontology practice, *Educational Gerontology*, 46 (4), 223-234.
- Foucault, Michel. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- Foucault, Michel. (1976) *The Will to Knowledge*. London, New York: Penguin Books.
- Foucault, Michel (1979) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

- Foucault, Michel (1988) *Technologies of the Self*. A Seminar with Michel Foucault. Amherst: University of Massachusetts.
- Foucault, M. (1992) Vol. 3. eds. Faubion, J. Translated by R. Hurley. *Power: The Essential Works of Michel Foucault 1954- 1984*. New York: New Press.
- Frank, Arthur, W. (1995) *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness and Ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frank, Arthur W. (2005) What is dialogical research, and why should we do It? *Qualitative Health Research*, 15 (7), 964– 974.
- Frank, Arthur, W. (2010) *Letting Stories Breathe*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Freeman, M. (1998) Experience, narrative, and the relationship between them. *Narrative Inquiry*, 8, (2), 455-466.
- Frei, Roger (2013) On the Nature and Meaning of Human Finitude. *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 73 (2), 158–172.
- Freud, S. (1915) *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological works of Sigmund Freud: On the History of Psycho-analytic Movement, Papers on Metapsychology and Other Works*. Vol.XIV. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Frichot, Hélène (2010) Following Hélène Cixous' Steps Towards A Writing Architecture, *Architectural Theory Review*, 15 (3), 312-323.
- Friedan, Betty (1963) *The Feminine Mystique*. London/New York: Penguin Books.
- Frueh-Schrage and Tracy, Tony (2020) Ageing and ageism in the age of coronavirus and cocooning. Mayo: Moore Institute. 'MascAge://irishmascage.com www.mascage.eu. Available at: <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2020/0415/1130565-coronavirus-ageing-ageism-cocooning/> (accessed May, 2020).
- Gadamer, H. G. (1975) *Truth and Method*. New York: Seabury.

- Gale, K (2014) Moods, tones, flavours: Living with intensities as inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20 (8), 998-1005.
- Gale, Ken (2016) Qualitative Conversations with Kitrina Douglas and David Carless. [video online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WnxnzTXapfs>. (Accessed September 2018)
- Gale, Ken (2018) *Madness as Methodology*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Gannett, C. (1992) *Gender and the Journal: Diaries and Academic Discourse*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Gannon, Suzanne (2016) Sketching Subjectivities. In: Holman Jones, Stacey, Adams, Tony E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2016). *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Abingdon: Routledge. 228-243.
- Gannon, S. (2006) The (im)possibilities of writing the self-writing: French post-structural theory and autoethnography. *Cultural Studies Critical Methodologies*, 6 (2), 474–495.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967) *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Englewood Cliffs: NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Garvey-Berger, Jennifer (2004) Dancing on the Threshold of Meaning: Recognising and Understanding the Growing Edge. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 2 (4), 336-351.
- Gatens, Moira. (1996) *Imaginary Bodies*. London: Routledge
- Gavey, N. (1997) Feminist poststructuralism and discourse analysis, In: Gergen, M. M. and Davies, S. N. (1997) *Toward a New Psychology of Gender: A Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Gawande, Atul, (2015) *Being Mortal*. London: Profile Books Ltd.

- Geertz, C. (1979) From the native's point of view: on the nature of anthropological understanding. In: Rainbow, P. and O' Sullivan, W. M. (1979). *Interpretive Social Science: a Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 59
- Geertz, Clifford, Rosen, L. (1979) *Meaning and Order in Moroccan Society: Three Essays in Cultural Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gergen, K. J. (1973) Social Psychology as History. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 26 (2), 309-320.
- Gergen, K. J. and M. M. Gergen (1984) The Social Construction of Narrative Accounts. In:
- Gergen, K. J. and Gergen, M.M. (1984) *Historical Social Psychology*. Mahwah: NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 173-190.
- Gergen, K. J. (1989) Warranting voice and the elaboration of self. In: Shotter, John and Gergen, K. J. *Inquiries in Social Construction series. Texts of Identity*. Vol.2. (1989) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. 70-81.
- Gergen, K. J. and Gergen, M. M., (1991) Toward Reflexive Methodologies. In: Steier, F., (1991) *Inquiries in Social Construction. Research and Reflexivity*. Sage Publications, Inc. 76-95.
- Gergen, Kenneth J (1994) *Realities and Relationships Soundings in Social Construction* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University.
- Gergen (1999) *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gergen Mary and Gergen, Kenneth (2003) *Social Construction: A Reader*. London: Sage Publications.
- Gergen, K. J., Gergen, M. M., and Barrett, F. J. (2004) Dialogue: Life and death of the Organization. In: Grant, David; Hardy, Cynthia; Oswick, Cliff and Putman, Linda. (2004) *The Sage Book of Organizational Discourse*. London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.1-23.

- Gergen, Kenneth (2005) *An Invitation to Social Construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gergen, Kenneth, J. (2009) *Relational Being: Beyond Self and Community*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gergen, Kenneth, J. (2015) *An Invitation to Social Construction*. London: Sage Publications.
- Giddens, Anthony (1984) *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giorgio, Grace A. (2009) Traumatic Truths and the Gift of Telling. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15 ((1), 149-167.
- Giorgio, Grace, A. (2013) Reflections on Writing through Memory and Autoethnography. In: Holman Jones, Stacy, Adams, Tony E., and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. Oxon: Routledge.
- Glouberman, Diana (2002) *The Joy of Burnout*. Makawao, Maui: Inner Ocean Publishing, Inc.
- Goodchild, Veronica (2012) *Songlines of the Soul*. Florida: Nicholas- Hays, Inc.
- Gome, P. (1996) *The Good Book: Reading the Bible with Mind and Heart*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Gould, R. L. (1978) *Transformations: Growth and Change in Adult Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Gould, R. L. (1980) 'Transformations: tasks in adulthood'. In: Greenspan, S., I., and Pollock, G., H. (1980) *The Course of Life: Psychoanalytic Contributions Toward Understanding Personality Development. Adult and Aging Process*. Vol. 3. Washington, DC: National Institute for Mental Health.
- Grant, Alec, Short, Nigel, P. and Turner, Lydia (2013) *Contemporary British Autoethnography*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

- Introduction: Storying Life and Lives Alec Grant, Nigel P. Short & Lydia Turner
(2013)
Contemporary British Autoethnography. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. 1-16
- Gray, Ben, Robinson, Catherine, Seddon, Diane (2008) Invisible Children: Young carers of parents with mental health problems- the perspectives of professionals. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health Volume*, 13 (4), 169–172.
- Green, M. (1990) The Emancipatory Power of Literature. In: Mezirow, J. (1990). *Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. 251-268.
- Grosz, E. (1994) *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Grosz, Stephen (2014) *The Examined Life*. London: Vintage Press.
- Guba, E. and Lincoln, Y. S. (1988) Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research In: Fetterman, D., M. (1988). *Do Inquiry Paradigms Imply Inquiry Methodologies?* New York: Praeger. 105-117.
- Guba, Egon G and Lincoln, Yvonna, S. (1990) “Can There Be a Human Science?” *Person Centered Review*, 5 (2), 130-54.
- Gullette-Morganroth, Margaret (2018) Against “Aging”- How to Talk about Growing Older. *Theory, Culture and Society*, 35 (7–8), 251–270.
- Guttorm, H. E. (2012) “Becoming--a--Paper or an Article Undone: (Post) Knowing and Writing (Again), Nomadic and So Messy.” *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18 (7), 595–605
- Hacking, I. (1999) *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard
- Hamilton, Edith and Cairns, Huntington (1961) *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. New Jersey: Princeton University.
- Harris, D. L. and Bordere, T.C. (2016) *Handbook of Social Justice in Loss and Grief: Exploring Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Hathcoat John D. and Nicholas, Mark C. (2014) Epistemology In: Coughlan, David and Brydon-Miller, Mary. (2014) *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Action Research*. Vols, 1-2. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hawes, Susan E. (1998) Positioning a dialogic Reflexivity in the Practice of Feminist Supervision. In Bayer, Betty, M. and Shotter John,. *Reconstructing The Psychological Subject*. London: Sage Publications.
- Haynes, K. (2006) A therapeutic journey? Reflections on the effects of research on researcher and participants. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1 (3), 204-221.
- Hazan, H. (2009) Beyond Dialogue: Entering the Fourth Space in Old Age. In: Edmondson, R., and von Kondratowitz, H. J. (2009). *Valuing Older People: A Humanist Approach to Ageing*. University of Bristol: Policy Press. 91-106.
- Heaney, Seamus (2014) *Station Island (Open Ground)*. Dublin: Macmillan.
- Hector, Vera. (2016) Rebuilding a Classic: The Social Construction of Reality at 50. *Cultural Sociology*, 10 (1), 3–20.
- Heilbrun, C. (1988) *Writing a Woman's Life*. New York: Norton.
- Hertz, R. (1997) *Reflexivity and Voice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Naggy, and Leavy, Patricia Lina (2007) *Feminist Research Practice*. California: Sage Publications.
- Hochschild, Arlie Russell (1983) *The Managed Heart*. Berkeley: University California Press.
- Hillis, James (2001) *Creating a Life: Finding your Individual Path*. Toronto: Inter City Books.
- Hillman, James (1976) *Re- Visioning Psychology*. New York: Harper & Rowe Publishers.
- Hillman, James (1979) *The Dream and The Underworld*. New York: Harper and Row Publishers.

- Hillman, James (1989) *A Blue Fire*. New York: Harper & Rowe.
- Hoffman, E. (1994) *Let Memory Speak*. *New York Times Book Review*. New York: New York Times. January 23, 1994. Available at: <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/02/15/home/appelfeld-soul.html?scp=182&sq=new%2520york%2520times%2520book%2520review&st=cse>. (Accessed, 2017).
- Hollis, James (1993) *The Middle Passage*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Hollis, James (1996) *Swamplands of the Soul*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Hollis, James (2000) *The Archetypal Imagination*. Texas: A. and M. University Press.
- Hollis, James (2001) *Creating a Life*. Toronto: Inter City Books.
- Hollis, James (2006) *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*. New York: Avery.
- Hollis, James (2009) *What Matters Most*. New York: Gotham Books.
- Hollis, James (2013) *Hauntings*. Carolina: Chiron Publications.
- Hollis, James (2020) *Living Between Worlds*. U.S.A. Sounds True, Inc.
- Holloway, W. (1995) A second bite at the heterosexual cherry. *Feminism and Psychology*, 5 (1), 126-30.
- Holman Jones, S. (2005) Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (2005) *Handbook in of Qualitative Research*. 3rd eds. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.763-792.
- Holman Jones, Stacey Adams, Tony, E., and Ellis, Carolyn (2013) Coming to Know Autoethnography as More than Method. In: Holman Jones, Stacey. Adams, Tony, E, and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013). *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge.17-47.
- Holman Jones, Stacey (2016) Living Bodies of Thought: The “Critical” in Critical Autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 22 (4), 228-237.

- Holstein, James and Gubrium, Jaber, F. (2000) *The Self We Live By*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- hooks, bell (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. New York: Routledge.
- hooks, bell (1991) Theory as Liberatory Practice, *Yale Journal of Law. & Feminism*, 4 (1), 1-12.
- hooks, bell (1994) *Black Looks: Race and Representation*. New York: South end Books.
- hooks, bell (1999) *Remembered Rupture*. London: The Women's Press Ltd.
- hooks, bell (1989) *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. London: Sheba Feminist Publishers.
- Horton. Fraleigh, Sondra (2004) *Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Hunter, Sally V. (2010) Analysing and representing narrative data: The long and winding road, *Current Narratives*, 1 (2), 44-54.
- Hutchinson, Derek, A. (2015) Coming to Understand Experience. *Journal of Thought*, 49 (3/ 4), 3-17.
- Illeris Knud (2014) Transformative Learning and Identity. *Journal of Transformative Education*, 12 (2), 148-163
- Ingram, Penelope (2008) *The Signifying Body*. New York: State of New York Press.
- Irigaray, Luce (1992) *Elemental Passions*. Translated by J. Collie and S. Still. New York: Routledge.
- Irigaray, Luce (2002) *To be Two*. Translated by M. M. Rhodes and M. F. Cocito-Monoc. New York: Routledge.
- Isaacs, W. (1999) *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking Together*. New York: Doubleday.

- Jacobi, Jolande (1973) *The Psychology of C.J. Jung*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Jian G, Schmisser Amy. M, Fairhurst Gail.T. (2008) Organizational discourse and communication: the progeny of Proteus. *Discourse & Communication*, 2 (3), 299-320.
- Jacobsen, Michael Hviid. Mestrovic Stjepan (2014) *Classical and Contemporary Social Theory: The Poetics of Crime: Understanding and Researching Crime and Deviance Through Creative Sources*. Great Britain: Routledge.
- Josselson, R. (2007) The Ethical Attitude in Narrative Research: Principles and Practicalities. In: Clandinin, D. J. *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*. California: Sage Publications, Inc. 537–566.
- Jourard, Sidney, M. (1968) *Disclosing Man to Himself*. New York and Chicago: Van Nostrand Reinhold Offices.
- Jourard, Sidney, M (1971) *The Transparent Self*. New York: Litton Educational Publishing, Inc.
- Jung, C., G. (1921) *Psychological Types*. Zurich: Rascher Verlag.
- Jung, C.G. (1953/1966) *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology. Collected Works*, Vol. VII. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Jung, C. G. (1959) *Archetypes and The Collective Unconscious. Vol. 9. Translated by A.F. C. Hull. Princeton: Princeton University Press*. Available at: <https://ia802700.us.archive.org/2/items/collectedworksof91cgju/collectedworksof91cgju.pdf>.
- Jung, C.G. (1959b) *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. trans. by R.F.C. Hull. Vol. 9 Part 1 of *Collected Works*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1960) *The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche. Collected Works*. Vol. 8. Princeton: Princeton University.

- Jung C.G (1961) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Translated by R. and C. Winston, New York: Random House.
- Jung C.G. (1963) *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*. Translated by R. and C. Winston. London: Collins Paperbacks.
- Jung, C. G. (1966) The relations between the ego and the unconscious. Part 2. Individuation: The function of the unconscious. *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*. Vol. 7. 2nd eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 173-187.
- Jung, C.G. (1967) Two Essays on Analytical Psychology, in the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Volume 6, Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Jung. C. G. (1968) Archetypes of the collective unconscious. In: Jung, C. G., *Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, Vol. 9, Part 1. 2nd eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 3-41.
- Jung, C.G. (1969) Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious in the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 9 (Part 1), Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C.G. (1971) *The Portable Jung*. New York: Viking.
- Jung, C. G. (1975) *The Collected Works*. Vol. 17, par 33. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. (1970) *Structure & Dynamics of the Psyche*, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, Vol. 1, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jung C.G. (1981) *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, C. G. and Jarrett, James, L. (1988) *Nietzsche's "Zarathustra": Notes of the Seminar given in 1934-1939*. 2 Vol. eds. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Jung, Carl, G. (2005) *Modern Man in Search of Soul*. New York: Routledge.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005) *Coming to our senses: Healing Ourselves and The World through Mindfulness*. New York: Hyperion

- Karr, Jean Baptiste (1848) *Les Guêpes*: France.
- Kavanagh, Patrick (1904-1967) *Uncollected Poems*. The Patrick and Katherine Kavanagh Trust. Available at: <https://www.tcd.ie/English/patrickkavanagh/>. (Accessed, 2020)
- Kennelly, Brendan (1998) *The Man Made of Rain*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books Ltd.
- Kennelly, Brendan (2011) *The Essential Brendan Kennelly: Selected Poems*
- Kennelly, Brendan (2004) *Familiar Strangers. New and Selected Poems*. Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books Ltd.
- Kerby, P. (1991) *Narrative and the Self*. Bloomington: Indiana University.
- Kiley, Margaret and Wisker, Gina (2009) Threshold concepts in research education and evidence of threshold crossing. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 28 (4), 431-441.
- Kim, Jeong-Hee (2016) *Understanding Narrative Inquiry*. California: Sage Publications.
- Kalmbach, Phillips D, Harris G, Legard Larson M, higgins, karen (2009) Trying On—Being. In—Becoming. Four Women’s Journey(s) in Feminist Poststructural Theory. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15 (9), 1455-1479.
- Klass, Dennis, Silverman, Phyllis, R., and Nickman, Steven L. (1996) *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*. Philadelphia: Taylor& Francis.
- Klinger, Eric (1981) “The Central Place of Imagery in Human Functioning” In: Klinger, Eric (1981) *Imagery, Volume 2: Concepts, Results, and Applications*. New York.
- Kramp, M. K. (2004) Exploring life and experience through narrative inquiry in foundations for research. In: deMarrais, K. and Lapan, S.D. eds. *Foundations in Research: Methods in Inquiry and Social Sciences*. New Jersey: Mahah.

- Krekula, Clary, Nikander, Pirjo and Wilińska, Monika (2018) Multiple, Marginalizations Based on Age: Gendered Ageism and Beyond. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.33-50.
- Kristeva, J. (1994) *El tempo sensible: Proust y la experiencia literaria*. Buenos Aires: Eudeba, Ed, In: Fiorini, Leticia Glocer, Bokanowski, Thierry and Lewkowicz, Sergio (1994). *On Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia"* (2009) Great Britain: Karnac Books.
- Kristeva, Julia (1977) *About Chinese Women*, trans. Anita Barrows. New York: Boyars.
- Kubler-Ross (1969) *On Death and Dying*. London: Macmillan.
- Kuhn, T.S. (1962) *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Kydd, Angela, Fleming, Anne, Gardner, Sue and Letchfield- Hafford, Trish (2018) Ageism in the Third Age. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer, Clemens. (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.115-130.
- Lachman, Margie E. (2004) Development in Midlife. *Annual Review of Psychology*; 55 (February), 305-331.
- Lachman, Margie, E (2001) *Handbook of Midlife Development*. Canada: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
- Land, Ray and Rattray, Julie and Vivian, Peter. (2014) Learning in the liminal space: a semiotic approach to threshold concepts. *Higher Education*, 67 (February), 199-217.
- Laslett, Peter (1989) *Fresh Map of Life: The Emergence of the Third Age*. USA: Weidenfeld and Nicholson.
- Lax, William D. (1996) Narrative, Social Constructionism, and Buddhism. In: Rosen, H. and Kuehlwein, K. (1996) *Constructing Realities: Meaning Making Perspectives for Psychotherapists*. New York: Jossey-Bass.

- Laz, Cheryl (1998) Act your Age. *Sociological Forum*, 13 (1), 85-113.
- Leedy, P. D., and Ormrod, J. E. (2010) *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. New Jersey: Merrill.
- Les Todres (2011) *Embodied Enquiry*. U.K: Palgrave Macmillan
- Lev, Sagit, Wurm, Susanne and Ayalon, Liat (2018) Origins of Ageism at the Individual Level. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer, Clemens. (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 51-67.
- Levinson, Daniel. (1986) A Conception of Adult Development. *American Psychologist*, 41 (1), 3-13.
- Levinson, Daniel J. (1978) *The Seasons of a Man's Life*. U.S.A: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
- Levy, Becca R., Slade, Martin, D., Chang, E-Shien, Kanno, Sneha and Wang, Shi-Yi (2020) Ageism Amplifies Cost and Prevalence of Health Conditions. *The Gerontologist*, 60, (1), 174–181.
- Levy, Becca, R. (2011) Eradication of Ageism Requires Addressing the Enemy Within. *The Gerontologist*, 41 (5), 578–579.
- Lévy-Bruhl, Lucien. ([1912] 1926) *How Natives Think*. Translated by L. A. Clare. London.
- Lowinsky, Naomi Ruth (1998) How eurydice tells it, *Psychological Perspectives*, 38 (1), 86-104.
- Liamputtong, P and Ezzy, D. (2005) *Qualitative Research Methods*. Melbourne and Oxford University Press.
- Lieblich, A., McAdams, D. and Josselson, R. (2004) *Healing Plots: The Narrative Basis of Psychotherapy*. Washington DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lincoln, Y. S. (1995) 'Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive inquiry' *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1 (September), 275-289.

- Lionnet, F (1990) Auto-ethnography: The An-archic Style of Dust Tracks on a Road. In: Gates, H. L. *Reading Black, Reading Feminist*. New York: Meridian. 382–413.
- Lock, Andy and Strong, Tom (2010) *Social Constructionism. Sources and Stirrings in Theory and Practice*. UK: University Press Cambridge.
- Lopez, Barry (1990) *Crow and Weasel*. New York: North Point Press.
- Lorde, Audre (1980) *The Cancer Journals*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books.
- Lorde, Audre (1984/2007) *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde*. Berkley, CA: Crossing Press.
- Lorenz, H. Shulman and Watkins, M. (2000) *Depth Psychology and Colonialism. Individuation, Seeing Through and Liberation*. The International Symposium of Archetypal Psychology, Psychology at the Threshold, Pacifica Graduate Institute, the University of California, Santa Barbara, CA. August 31-September 4, 2000.
- Mac Fheorais, Séan (1954) *M'uncaill. Léargas Fada*. Kildare.
- MacLure, M. (2003) *Discourse in Educational and Social Research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Madison, D. Soyina (2010) *Acts of Activism: Human Rights as Radical Performance*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Madison, D. Soyina (2011) The Labor of Reflexivity. *Cultural Studies-Critical Methodologies*, 11 (2), 29-138.
- Madison, D. Soyina (2012) *Critical Ethnography: Methods, Ethics and Performance*. 2nd eds. New York: Sage.
- Mancusco, J. C. (1986) The Acquisition and Use of Narrative Grammar Structure. In Sarbin, T. R. (1986). *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*, New York: Praeger Publishers/ Greenwood Publishing Group. 91-110.

- Manen, Max, Van (1990) *Researching Lived Experience*. London, Canada, Ontario: New York Press, Albany.
- Mannay, D. (2016) *Visual, Narrative and Creative Research Methods*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. (2006) *Designing Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Martin, A. D. and Kamberelis, G.G. (2013) Mapping not tracing: qualitative educational research with political teeth. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26 (6), 668-679.
- Massumi, Brian (2015) The Supernormal Animal. In: Grusin, Richard *The Nonhuman Turn*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.1-17.
- May, Katherine (2020) *Wintering*. London: Penguin Random House.
- Mazzei, Lisa, A. (2003) Inhabited Silence in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9 (3), 355-368.
- Mazzei, Lisa, A. (2003) Inhabited Silences: In Pursuit of a Muffled Subtext. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9 (3), 355-368.
- Mazzei, Lisa, A. (2007) *Inhabited Silence in Qualitative Research*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
- Mazzei, Lisa A. and Jackson Alecia Y. (2012) In the Threshold: Writing Between-the-Two. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, 5 (4), 449- 458.
- Mazzei, Lisa, A. (2013) A Voice without organs: interviewing in posthumanist research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26 (6), 732-740.
- Mazzei, Lisa, A. (2016) Lines of Articulation. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 5 (4), 62-66.
- Mendonça, Joanna, Marques, Sibila and Abrams, Dominic. (2018) Children' attitudes towards Older People and Future Directions. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-

- Römer, Clemens. (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.517-548.
- Mezirow, Jack and Taylor, Edward W. (2011) *Transformative Learning in Practice: Insights from Community, Workplace and Higher Education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mc Adams, Dan, P. (1996) Personality, Modernity and the Storied Self: A Contemporary Framework for Studying Persons. *Psychological Inquiry*, 7 (4), 295-321.
- Mc Cormack, David (2018) Evocative autoethnography: writing lives and telling stories. Book Review. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 46 (2), 267-268.
- Mc Gahey (1994) *The Orphic Moment*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Mc Gillicuddy, Mary (2018) *John Moriarty, Not the Whole Story*. Dublin: Lilliput Press.
- Mc Kinlay, Andrew and Mc Vittie, Chris (2008) *Social Psychology and Discourse*. Oxford: John Wiley and Sons.
- Mc Leod, John (1997) *Narrative and Psychotherapy*. London: Sage.
- McNabb, P. (1964) "Social Structure" In: Newman, J. (1964) *The Limerick Rural Survey 1958-1964, Tipperary*. Munitir na Tíre Publications. 193-247.
- McNamee S (2007) Relational practices in education -teaching as conversation. In: Anderson H., and Gehart D. (eds) *Collaborative Therapy: Relationships and Conversations that make a Difference*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group.
- Mead, G. H. (1934/2015) *Mind, Self and Society*. Chicago: Chicago University of Chicago Press.
- Meillassoux, B. (2008) Prelude to Manning, E. (2013) *Always More Than One: Individuation's dance*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.

- Merleau-Ponty (1962) *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge and Keegan-Paul.
- Meyer, Jan, H. F., and Land, Ray. (2005) Threshold concepts and troublesome knowledge: Epistemological considerations and a conceptual framework for teaching and learning. *Higher Education*, 49 (April), 373-388.
- Mezirow, Jack (1991) *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. San Francisco: Jossey- Bass.
- Michael, Mike (1997) Individualistic Humans Social Constructionism, Identity and Change. *Theory and Psychology*, 7 (3)311-336.
- Miller, Peter (1987) *Domination and Power*. New York: Routledge.
- Mills, C. (2000) *Sociological Imagination*. Oxford. Oxford University Press.
- Moffit, John (1962) *The Living Seed: Poems*. USA: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc.
- Montero Guillermo Julio (2013) Interview with Charles M.T. Hanly in *Updating Midlife*: London: Karnac Books.
- Montero Guillermo Julio, De Montero, Alisia, Mirta, Ciancio and De Vogelfanger, Singman Liliana (2013) *Updating Midlife*. London: Karnac Books.
- Moore, T. (1992) *Care for the Soul: A Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life*. New York: Collins.
- Moran, Caitlin (2020) In middle age you lose the amount of f**ks you give' Irish Times, 30th October 2020. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/people/caitlin-moran-in-middle-age-you-lose-the-amount-of-f-ks-you-give-1.4396745>. (Accessed: 30th October 2020).
- Morganroth-Gullette, Margaret (1988) *Safe at Last in the Middle Years*. California: University of California Press.
- Morganroth-Gullette, Margaret (1997) *Declining to Decline*. USA: University Press of Virginia.

- Morganroth-Gullette, Margaret (2004) *Aged by Culture*. Chicago: Chicago Press.
- Morganroth-Gullette, Margaret (2011) *Agewise: Fighting the New Ageism in America*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Morganroth-Gullette, Margaret (2011) *Ending Ageism: or how not to shoot old people*. New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.
- Morgenson, Greg (1992) *Greeting the Angels*. New York: Baywood Publishing Company, Inc.
- Moriarty, John, (2020) *Dreamtime*. Dublin: Lilliput Press.
- Morrow-Howell, N. (2012) Toward a more accurate view of the 'elderly'. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 55 (5), 1426- 1432.
- Moules, Nancy J., Simonson, Kari, Prins, Mark, Angus Paula, and Bell, Janice.M. (2004) Making room for grief: walking backwards and living forward. *Nursing Inquiry*, 11 (2), 99–107.
- Moustakas, Clark (1990) *Heuristic Research: Design, Methodology and Applications*. California: Sage Publications.
- Moustakas, Clark (1995) *Being- In, Being-For, Being-With*. New Jersey and London: Jason Aronson Inc.
- Muncey, T. (2010) *Creating Autoethnographies*. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Murphy, Brenda (2020) Gender-Positive Advertising: Challenging Gender Stereotyping. In: Advertising. Ross, Karen (Editor-in-Chief), Bachmann, Ingrid, Cardo, Valentina, Moorti, Sujata and Scarcelli, Marco (Associate Editors). (2020). *The International Encyclopaedia of Gender, Media, and Communication*. U.K: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Neimeyer, Robert A.; Prigerson, Holly, G. and Davies, B., (2002) Mourning and Meaning. *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 46 (2), 235-251.

- Neimeyer, Robert, A., Burke, Laurie, A. Mackay, Michael, M. and van Dyke Stringer, Jessica, G. (2010) Grief Therapy and the Reconstruction of Meaning: From Principles to Practice. *Contemporary Psychotherapy*, 40 (June), 73-83.
- Nobbs, K. (2011) Fragments of silence, an unbound single edition book. In: Speedy, Jane *Staring at the Park. A Poetic Autoethnographic Inquiry*. (2015) California: Walnut Creek. 9.
- Norwich, Julian (1343-1416) *Revelations of Divine Love*. U. K.: Christian Classics Ethereal Library. Available at: <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/julian/revelations.html>
- O' Riordáin, Séan (1965) *Brosna*. 3rd eds. Dublin: Sairséal and Dill.
- O' Donoghue, John (2015) *Walking on the Pastures of Wonder*. Dublin: Veritas Publications.
- O' Donnchadha, Réamonn (2011) *A True Note On A Lack String*. New Orleans: Spring Journal Books.
- O' Grady, Grace (2012) *Constructing Identities with Young People Using Creative Rhizomatic Narrative*. Unpublished PhD. Queen's University, Belfast.
- O Grady, Grace, Clandinin, D. Jean and O' Toole, Jacqueline (2018) Engaging in educational narrative inquiry: making visible alternative knowledge *Irish Educational Studies*. 37 (2), 153–157.
- Oliver Rose (1988) "Empty Nest" or relationship restructuring? A rational-emotive approach to mid-life transition. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 6 (March), 102-117.
- Oliver, Mary (1963) *No Voyage and Other Poems*. London: Dent, J. M. and Sons Ltd.
- Oliver, Mary (1992) *New and Selected Poems*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Mary Oliver (2013) "Invitation," *A Thousand Mornings*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Owen, Harrison (1991) *Riding the Tiger*. U.S.A.: Abbott Publishing.

- Palmer, Parker, J. (1998) *The Courage to Teach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, Parker, J. (2008) *A Hidden Wholeness*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, Richard, E. (1969) *Hermeneutics: Interpretation Theory in Schleiermacher, Dilthey, Heidegger, and Gadamer*. Evanston, IL: North Western University Press.
- Palmore, Erdman (2001) The Ageism Survey: First Findings. *The Gerontologist*, 41 (5), 572–575.
- Parkes, C. (1993) Bereavement as a psychosocial transition: Processes of adaptation to change. In: Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R. eds. (1993). *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 91-101.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002) *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Pearce, W. B. (1995) A Sailing Guide for Social Constructionists. In: Leeds-Hurwitz, W. eds. *Social Approaches to Communication* New York: Guilford. 88-113.
- Pearce, W. B. and Cronen, Vernon E. (1980) *Communication, Action and Meaning: The Creation of Social Realities*. New York: Praeger.
- Pearson, Carol, S (1998) *The Hero Within*. USA: Harperelixer.
- Pelias, Ronald, J. (2013) Writing Autoethnography. In Holman Jones, Stacey, Adams Tony, E. and Ellis, Carolyn, (2013) *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge. 384 - 405.
- Pennebaker, J. (2004) *Writing to Heal: A Guided Journal for Recovering from Trauma and Emotional Upheaval*. Oakland CA: New Harbinger Publications.
- Perera-Brinton, Sylvia (1981) *Descent to the Goddess*. Toronto: Inner City Books.
- Perry, M., and Medina, C., (2011) Embodiment and performance in pedagogy research: Investigating the possibility of the body in curriculum experience. *Journal of Curriculum Theory*, 27 (3), 62-75.

- Phelan, Amanda (2018) Researching Ageism through Discourse. In: Ayalon, Liat and Tesch-Römer, Clemens. (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*. Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.549-564.
- Pickering, Lucy and Kara, Helen (2017) Presenting and representing others: towards an ethics of engagement. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 20 (3), 299–309.
- Pinnegar, Stefinee and Daynes, Gary, J. (2007) Locating Narrative Inquiry Historically: Thematics in the Turn to Narrative. In: Clandinin, J. (2007) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: CA: Sage Publications. 3-34.
- Polden, Jane (2002) *Regeneration: Journey through the Mid-Life Crisis*. New York: Continuum.
- Polkinghorne, D. (1988) *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Pollock, Lucy (2020) *The Book about Getting Older*. Dublin: Penguin Random House.
- Poulos, Christopher N. (2008) *Accidental Ethnography: An Inquiry into Family Secrecy*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2008.
- Radtke, H. Lorraine; Stam, Henderikus J. (1994) *Power/Gender: Social Relations in Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Racevskis, Karlis (1987) Michel foucault, rameau’s nephew, and the question of identity. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 12 (2-3), 132-144.
- Randall, Lowell, William (2014) *The Stories We Are*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Rapport, N. and Overing, J. (2000) *Key Concepts for Social and Cultural Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Raskin, J. D. (2002) *Constructivism in psychology: Personal construct psychology, radical constructivism, and social constructionism*. In: Raskin, J. D., and

- Bridges, S. K. *Studies in Meaning: Exploring Constructivist Psychology*. Pace University Press. 1–25.
- Reed-Danahay, D.E. (1997) *Auto/ethnography: Rewriting The Self and The Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reed-Danahay, D.E. (2009) *Anthropologists, Education, and Autoethnography*. *Reviews in Anthropology*, 38 (1), 28-47.
- Reville, William (2020) Blanket Cocooning for over-70s has done more harm than good. *Irish Times* 21st May 2020. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/science/blanket-cocooning-for-over-70s-has-done-more-harm-than-good-1.4254477>.
- Rich, Adrienne (1950-2012) *Selected Poems*. London and New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Rich, Adrienne (1975) Re-forming the Crystal, in *Poems Selected and New* (1950-1974), New York: W.W. Norton.
- Richardson L. (1995) Writing-Stories: Co-authoring “The Sea Monster,” a Writing-Story. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 1 (2), 189-203.
- Richardson Laurel and St. Pierre, Elizabeth (2000) *Writing a Method of Inquiry* In: Denzin Norman, K., and Lincoln Yvonna, S. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 2nd eds. (2000).London: Sage Publications. 959-978.
- Richardson, Laurel (1997) *Fields of Play*. USA: Rutgers University Press.
- Riessman, David (1950) *The Lonely Crowd: A study of the Changing American Character*. New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press.
- Riessman, C.K .and Quinney, L. (2005) Narrative in Social Work: A Critical Review. *Qualitative Social Work*, 4 (4), 391-412.
- Riessman, Catherine, K. (2008) *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Rilke, R.M. (1949) *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke, 1910-1924*. Translated by J. B. Green and M. M. Herter. New York: W.W. Norton.
- Rilke, Rainer, Maria (2009) *Duino Elegies. The Sonnets to Orpheus*. Trans. S. Mitchell. New York: Vintage Books.
- Ringrose, Jessica (2013) *Postfeminist Education?* Canada: Routledge.
- Rivkin, Julie and Ryan, Michael (2004) *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Rogers, A. G., Casey, M. E., Ekert, J., Holland, J., Nakkula, V., and Sheinberg, N. (1999) *An interpretive poetics of languages of the unsayable*. In: Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (1999) eds. *The Narrative Study of Lives: Making Meaning of Narratives. Vol. 6*. CA: Sage Publications, Inc.77–106.
- Rogers, Carl (1980) *A Way of Being*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.
- Rogers, Carl R. (2004) *On Becoming a Person*. Great Britain: Constable and Company Ltd.
- Rollo May (1991) *The Cry For Myth*. U.S.A:W.W. Norton and Company, Inc.
- Romanyshyn, Robert (1999) From the Moment, That's Enough: Reveries on Therapy and the poetry of Language. *The San Francisco Jung Institute Library Journal*, 18 (1), 55-73.
- Romanyshyn Robert (2002) *Ways of the Heart*. Pittsburgh, PA: Trivium Publications.
- Romanyshyn, Robert, D. (2010) The Wounded Researcher: Making a Place for Unconscious in the Research Process. *The Humanistic Psychologist*, 38 (4), 275–304.
- Romanyshyn, Robert, D. (2013) *The Wounded Researcher*. New Orleans: Spring Journal Inc.
- Romanyshyn, Robert Psychotherapy as Grief Work: Ghosts and the Gestures of Compassion. Available at:

<http://robertromanyshyn.jigsy.com/files/documents/PSYCHOTHERAPY-AS-GRIEF-WORK.pdf>. (Accessed 3rd March, 2021). 1-22.

- Rosenblatt, P. (1993) Grief: The Social Context of Private Feelings. In Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R. (1993). *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 102-111.
- Rowe, J. W. and Kahn, R. L. (1998) *Successful Aging*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Rubinstein, Robert, L. and de Medeiros, Kate. (2015) “Successful Aging”, Gerontological Theory and Neoliberalism: A Qualitative Critique. *The Gerontologist*, 55 (1), 34–42.
- Rumi: Jalal al-Din Rumi (1207) *Don't go back to Sleep*. Available at: <https://allpoetry.com/The-Breeze-at-Dawn>. (Accessed, 2019).
- Rush, F. (1974) ‘The sexual abuse of children’ In: Connell, N., and Wilson, C. *Rape: The First Sourcebook For Women*. New York: Plume Books. 64- 75.
- Russell, Cherry (2007) What Do Older Women and Men Want? Gender Differences in the ‘Lived Experience’ of Ageing. *Current Sociology*, 55 (2), 173–192.
- SAGE Advocacy (2017) *Contracts of Care for Nursing Home Residents: Issues for Policy and Practice. A Discussion Document*. Dublin: Advocacy Sage. Available at: <https://www.sageadvocacy.ie/media/1126/sage-nursing-home-contracts-discussion-document-sept-2017.pdf>. (Accessed, November, 2020).
- Sampson, Edward E. (2003) Possessive Individualism and the Self-contained Ideal. In: Gergen, Mary and Gergen, Kenneth, J. *Social Construction. A Reader*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Sampson, Edward, E. (1998) Life as an Embodied Art: The Second Stage-Beyond Constructionism. In Bayer, Betty, M. and Shotter, John. (1988). *Reconstructing The Psychological Subject*. London: Sage Publications.
- Santrock, John W. (1989) *Life- Span Development*. Iowa: Wm C. Brown Publishers.

- Santrock, John W. (2013) *Adolescence, Fourteenth Edition*. New York: Mc Graw-Hill Companies.
- Sarbin, T. R. (1986) 'The narrative as root metaphor for psychology' In Sarbin, John. (1986) *Narrative Psychology: The Storied Nature of Human Conduct*. New York: Praeger.
- Sartre, Jean Paul (1964) *Les Mots/ Words*. Paris; London: Penguin Books.
- Sarup, M. (1988) *An Introductory Guide to Post structuralism and Postmodernism*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Satprem, (2000) *Sri Aurobindo or the Adventures of Consciousness*. Translated by M. Danino. India: Thomson Press.
- Scarry, Elaine (1985) *The Body In Pain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Scarry, Elaine (1999) *On Beauty and Being Just*. Princeton: Princeton University.
- Schafer, Roy (1978) *Language and Insight*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Scheff, Thomas, J. (2005) Looking-Glass Self: Goffman as Symbolic Interactionist. *Symbolic Interaction*, 2 (1), 33-47.
- Schiff, Brian (2012) The Function of Narrative: Towards a Narrative Psychology of Meaning. *Narrative Works*, 2 (1), 33-47.
- Schneider, D., Keenan, A., and King, E. (2015) From Being Known in the Classroom to "Moments of Meeting": What Intersubjectivity offers Contemplative Pedagogy *The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry*, 2, (1) 1-16.
- Schrag, Calvin, O (2003) *Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity*. West Lafayette: Purdue University Press.
- Schubert, W. H. (1986) *Curriculum: Perspective, Paradigm, and Possibility*. Ann Arbor, MI: Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Schwandt, Thomas, A. (1997) Reading the "Problem of Evaluation" in Social Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3 (1), 4-25.

- Scott, Caroline (2021) “Success is a way to survive, but at the end we’re all desperately alone”, *Sunday Times*, 28 February 2021, 10-15.
- Scott-Hoy, K. (2002) *The Visitor: Juggling Life in the Grip of the Text*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.
- Segel-Karpasa, Dikla, Ayalonb, Liat, and Lachman, Margie E. (2018) Retirement and depressive symptoms: A 10-year cross-lagged analysis. *Psychiatry Research*, 269 (November), 565–570.
- Seigworth, G. J., and Gregg, M. (2010) An Inventory of Shimmers. In: Gregg, M and Seigworth, G. (2010). *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham: Duke University Press. 1–25.
- Sewell, Frank (2000) *Modern Irish Poetry. A new Alhambra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sheehy, Gail (2006) *Passages*. New York: Ballantine Books.
- Sheridan, Kathy (2020) ‘Now is the time for humility, not cynicism’. Irish Times: 21st October 2020. Available at: <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/kathy-sheridan-now-is-the-time-for-humility-not-cynicism-1.4386274>. (Accessed, 21st October, 2020).
- Shimshon-Rubin, Simon; Malkinson, Ruth; Witztum, Eliezer (2012) *Working With the Bereaved*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Shimshon-Rubin, Simon; Malkinson, Ruth; Witztum, Eliezer (2017). Bereavement and Traumatic Bereavement: working with the Two-track Models of Bereavement. *Journal of Rational-Emotive and Cognitive - Behavior Therapy*, 35 (1), 78-87.
- Shotter, John. (1989) Social Accountability and the Social Construction of 'You'. *Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice*, 2 (1), 1-30.
- Shotter, J. (1993) *Conversational Realities. Constructing Life through Language*. London: Sage Publications.

- Shotter, J. (2005) Vygotsky and Consciousness as Con-scientia, as Witnessable Knowing along With Others. *Theory and Psychology*, 16 (1), 13-36.
- Shotter, John (2014) Social Constructionism in *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Action Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Shuchter, S. and Zisook, S. (1993) The Course of Normal Grief. In Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R. (1993). *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 23-43.
- Skilbeck Malcolm (1970) *John Dewey*. Toronto: Macmillan Company.
- Shulman Helene, and Mary Watkins, Lorenz (2001) Silenced Knowings and Forgotten Springs. Paths to Healing in the Wake of Colonialism. *Radical Psychology*, 2 (2) Available at: <http://www.radpsynet.org/journal/vol2-2/lorenz-watkins.html>. (Accessed, 2018).
- Siegel, D. (2012) *Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology: An Integrative Handbook of the Mind*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company.
- Silverman, Phyllis, R. and Dennis Klass (1996) Introduction: What's the problem? In *Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief*. In: Klass, D., Silverman, Phyllis, R., and Nickman, Steven L. (1996). Philadelphia: Taylor and Francis. 1- 23.
- Singer, June (1972) *Boundaries of the Soul* .New York: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group.
- Slattery, Martin (2003) *Key Ideas in Sociology*. Cheltenham, UK: Nelson Thornes Ltd.
- Smythe, William E. and Murray, Maureen J. (2000) Owing the Story: Ethical Considerations in Narrative Research, *Ethics and Behavior*, 10 (4), 311-336.
- Solinit, Rebecca (2017) *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. Great Britain: Canongate Books.
- Sparrow, Tom (2013) *Levinas Unhinged*. U.K: Zero Books.

- Speedy, Jane (2005) Using poetic documents: An exploration of poststructuralist ideas and poetic practices in narrative therapy. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 33 (3), 283-298.
- Speedy, Jane (2008) *Narrative Inquiry and Psychotherapy*. Basing- stoke: Palgrave Macmillan
- Spender, Dale (1982) *Women of Ideas and What Men Have Done to Them: From Aphra Behn to Adrienne Rich*. New York: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Spry, Tami (2011) Performative Autoethnography Critical Embodiments and Possibilities. eds. In: Denzin, N., K. and Lincoln Y. (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: Sage. 497-511.
- Spry, Tami (2016) *Autoethnography and the Other*. New York: Routledge.
- St. Pierre, Elizabeth Adams (1997) Methodology in the fold and the irruption of transgressive data. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10 (2), 175-189,
- St. Pierre, Elizabeth A. (2000) Nomadic Inquiry in the Smooth Place of the Field: a Preface In: St Pierre, E.A and Pillow, W.S (2000). *Working The Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge.365-383.
- St. Pierre, Elizabeth. and Pillow, W.S. (2000) Introduction: Inquiry Among the Ruins. In: St. Pierre, E and Pillow, W.S. (2000). *Working the Ruins: Feminist Poststructural Theory and Methods in Education* New York: Routledge. 179-198.
- St. Pierre Elizabeth A. (2018) Writing Post Qualitative Inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 24 (9), 603-608.
- Stanescu, James (2012) Species Trouble: Judith Butler, Mourning and the Precarious Lives of Animals. *Special; Issue: Animal Others*, 27 (3), 567-582.
- Stanley Liz and Sue Wise (1993) *Breaking Out Again*. New York and Canada: Routledge and Keegan Paul.

- Stein, Murray (1983) *In Midlife*. Texas: Spring Publications.
- Stein, Murray (1998) *Transformation: Emergence of the Self*. Texas: University Press.
- Stein, Murray (2006) *The Principle of Individuation*. Illinois: Chiron Publications.
- Steinberg Laurence (2011) *Adolescence*. New York: Mc Graw- Hill International Edition.
- Stewart, K. (2013) An Autoethnography of What Happens. In: Holman Jones, Stacey, Adams Tony, E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013). *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge. 659-668.
- Stokes, J. E. Moorman S. (2016) *Age, Discrimination and Health: A Longitudinal study of Midlife and Older Adults in the United States*. [Poster]. Annual Science Meeting: Session 195. Boston College, Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.
- Stone R (1996) *The Healing Art of Storytelling a Sacred Journey of Personal Discovery*. New York: Hyperion.
- Storr, A. (1973) *C. G. Jung*. New York: Viking Press.
- Storr, Anthony (1988) *Solitude. A Return to the Self*. New York: Free Press.
- Straus, Erwin (1963) *The Primary World of the Senses: A Vindication of Sensory Experience*. Translated by J. Needleman, London: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Stroebe, M., Gergen, M.M., Gergen, K., J., Stroebe. (1992) Broken hearts or broken bonds: Love and death in historical perspective. *American Psychologist*, 47 (10), 1205-12.
- Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R. (1993) Bereavement Research and Theory: An Introduction to the Handbook. In: Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W., and Hansson, R. 4th ed. (1993) *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 3-19.
- Stroebe, M., Stroebe, W. and Hansson, R. (1993) *Handbook of Bereavement: Theory, Research, and Intervention*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Sugarman, Léonie (1986) *Life- Span Development*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Sultan, Nevine (2019) *Heuristic Inquiry*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Super, D.E. (1980) 'A life-span, life-space approach to career development' *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 16 (July), 282-98.
- Scheff, Thomas J. (2005) Looking-Glass Self: Goffman as Symbolic Interactionist, *Symbolic Interaction*, 28 (2), 147–166.
- Tamsin E. Lorraine. (2010) Revised. "Lines of Flight". *The Deleuze Dictionary*. 147-148. <https://works.swarthmore.edu/fac-philosophy/504>
- Tatelbaum Judy (1981) *The Courage To Love*. London: Heinemann.
- Taylor, Charles (1989) *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity*. USA: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, E. (2008) Transformative Learning Theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, 119 (Autumn), 1-15.
- Tedlock, Barbara (2013) Braiding Evocative with Analytic Autoethnography. In: Holman Jones, Stacey. Adams, Tony, E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013). *Handbook of Autoethnography*. New York: Routledge. 358 -362.
- Thich Nhat Hanh (1997) *True Love*. Colorado: Shambhala Publications, Inc.
- Thomas, Dylan (1952) *The Poems of Dylan Thomas*. UK: New Directions.
- Thoreau, Henry, David (1992) *Walden Or, Life in the Woods*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Thornton, Peter (2016) *Dante The Inferno*. New York: Arcade Publishing.
- Tierney, W. G. (1998) Life history's history: Subjects Foretold. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 4 (1), 49-70.
- Todd, Sharon Jones, Rachel and O'Donnell, Aislinn (2016) Shifting education's philosophical imaginaries: relations, affects, bodies, materialities, *Gender and Education*, 28 (2), 187-194.

- Trahar, Sheila (2011) *Learning and Teaching Narrative Inquiry: Travelling in the Borderlands*. Edited by Trahar, Sheila. Amsterdam/ Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Turner, Lydia (2013) The Evocative Autoethnographic I: The Relational Ethics of Writing about Onself. In: Grant, Alec; Short, Nigel, P. and Turner, Lydia (2013) *Contemporary British Autoethnography*. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. 213-229.
- Turner, Victor. (1981) Social Dramas and Stories about Them. In: Mitchell, W. J. T. *On Narrative*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 137-164.
- Turner, Victor (1982) *From Ritual to Theatre: The Human Seriousness of Play*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications.
- Turner, Victor (1986a) "Dewey, Dilthey, and Drama: An Essay in the Anthropology of Experience" In: Turner, Victor and Bruner, Edward M. (1986a) *The Anthropology of Experience*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Turner, Victor. (1995) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Twigg, Julia (2004) The Body, Gender, and Age: Feminist Insights in Social Gerontology. *Journal of Aging Studies*, 18 (1), 59 -73.
- Tyler, Anne (2017) *The Accidental Tourist*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Tyler, S. (1986) "Postmodern Ethnography: From Document of the Occult to Occult Document." In: *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. edited by. J. Clifford, J. and Marcus, G. Berkeley: University of California Press. 123 -140.
- Vaillant, G.E. (1977) *Adaptation to Life*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Van Manen (1990) *Researching Lived Experience*. Canada: The University of Western Ontario.

- Vera, Hector (2016) *Rebuilding a Classic: The Social Construction of Reality at 50*.
Cultural Sociology, 10 (1), 3–20
- Volkan, Vamik D., and Elizabeth Zintl. (2015) *Life after Loss: The Lessons of Grief*.
London: Karnac Books Ltd.
- Voss, Peggy, Bodner, Ehud, and Rothermund, Klaus (2018) *Ageism: The Relationship
between Age Stereotypes and Age Discrimination*, In: In: Ayalon, Liat and
Tesch-Römer, Clemens. (2018) *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*.
Switzerland: Springer International Publishing. 11-31.
- Walter, Carolyn Ambler, and Judith L. M. McCoyd. (2015) *Grief and Loss Across the
Lifespan, Second Edition: A Biopsychosocial Perspective*. USA: Springer
Publishing Company.
- Walter, Tony (1999) *On Bereavement, the Culture of Grief*. Berkshire: Open University
Press.
- Watkins, Mary (2000) *Invisible Guests The Development of Imaginal Dialogues*.
Canada: Spring Publications, Inc.
- Webster Leonard and Mertova Patricia (2007) *Using Narrative Inquiry As a Research
Method*. London: Routledge.
- Weedon, Chris (1997) *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*. Australia:
Blackwell Publishing.
- Weil, Simone, (2002) *Gravity and Grace*. London: Routledge.
- Weiss, David (2014) *What Will Remain When We Are Gone? Finitude and Generation
Identity in the Second Half of Life*. *Psychology and Aging*. Vol.29 (3), 554-
562.
- West, Malcolm, L., and Keller, Adrienne, E.R. (1991) *Parentification of the Child: A
Case Study of Bowlby's Compulsive Care-Giving Attachment Pattern*.
American Journal of Psychotherapy, xlv (3), 425-431.

- White, M. (2001) 'Folk psychology and narrative practice.' *Dulwich Centre Journal*, 2, 1– 37.
- Whyte, David (2001) *Crossing the Unknown Sea*. London: Penguin Group.
- Whyte, David (2007) *River Flow. New and Selected Poems*. U.S.A.: Many Rivers Press.
- Whyte, Julie (2016) *Permission: The International Interdisciplinary Impact of Laurel Richardson's Work*: Rotterdam: Sense.
- Wild, John (1955) *The Challenge of Existentialism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Williams, James (2005) *Understanding Poststructuralism*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1996) *Thinking about Children*. London: H. Carnac (Books) Ltd.
- Witherell, C, and Noddings, N. (1991) (Eds) *Stories Lives Tell: Narrative and Dialogue in Education*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Wittgenstein, L (1978) *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Worden, William (1996) *Children and Grief*. London: The Guildford Press.
- Wyatt, Johnathan and Gale, Ken (2013) Getting Out of selves: An Assemblage ethnography? In: Holman Jones, Stacey, Adams, Tony E. and Ellis, Carolyn. (2013) *The Handbook of Autoethnography*. CA: Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press Inc. 300 -312.
- Wyatt, J. (2014) 'Always in thresholds', *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 3 (1), 8-17.
- Wyatt, Jonathan (2019) *Therapy, Stand-Up, and the Gesture of Writing*. New York: Routledge.
- Yalom, Irvin, D. (2002) *The Gift of Therapy*. London: Piatkus Books Ltd.

Yalom, Irwin, D. (2008) *Staring at the Sun*. Great Britain: Jossey-Bass.

Yeats, W.B. (1889) The Lake Isle of Innisfree. Available at:

<https://poets.org/poem/lake-isle-innisfree>. (accessed, 24th February 2021).

Youdell, Deborah (2006) Diversity, Inequality, and a Post-structural Politics for Education. *Discourse: Studies in the Social Politics of Education*, 27 (1), 33-42.

Zajonc, Arthur (2006) Love and Knowledge: Recovering the Heart of Learning Through Contemplation. *Teachers College Record*.

Zavahi, Dan (2005) *Subjectivity and Selfhood*. London: MIT Press.

Appendices

Appendix 1: A Summary of the Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice

The tale of Orpheus-Eurydice is a love story. It is also a tale about Orpheus who played the lyre and whose enchanted voice touched every fibre of your being and wooed you with his magic. His music brought tears to the eyes of his listeners, softening and loosening all the tightly held strings of their ego hearts. When he played, the birds swooped down from the heavens and would sit on the branches to listen to him. The animals would gather to imbibe and breathe into their selves, evoked in the experience of listening to his sweet music. Even the trees would sway and dance in unison to his melodic tunes, often taking up the rhythm again by themselves long after he had finished.

Orpheus fell in love with the nymph Eurydice. Shortly after their marriage, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. The grieving Orpheus refused to play or sing for a long time. Finally he decided to go to the underworld to find Eurydice. His playing enchanted Charon the ferryman, who carried the souls of the dead across the river Styx, into the underworld. Charon agreed to take Orpheus across the river, even though he was not dead. Orpheus's music also tamed Cerberus, the monstrous three headed dog, who guarded the gates of the underworld. Even Hades and Persephone, king and queen of the underworld, could not resist his playing. They agreed to let him take Eurydice back to earth—on one condition. He was not to look back at her, until they had both reached the surface. Orpheus led his wife from the underworld, and when he had nearly reached the surface, he was so overjoyed that he looked back to share the moment with Eurydice. Immediately she disappeared into the underworld for the second time.

Orpheus turned again and ran back into the cave- he crossed the rivers, the orchard and the forest. He did not stop until he reached the River of Forgetfulness. Standing there he shouted her name across the dark, oily water, but there was no answer. He knew he could not return to Hades. So he made his way back to the living world and he devoted himself to his

music, which was even more beautiful than ever, woven through with a silver thread of sorrow.

Dionysus looked down at the world and saw all the women whom Orpheus had turned his back on. Dionysus frowned and with his frown, those women were filled with jealous fury, so they began to attack Orpheus with spades, sickles and the blade of a plough and killed him. He journeyed for the third time down the River of Forgetfulness. He was spirit now and Charon, the ferryman was waiting for him. Persephone felt pity for him and reached out to touch his forehead with the tip of her finger. In that moment, Orpheus' memory returned and now the two lovers may be found in the shadowy kingdom talking, singing and laughing. Sometimes they walk arm in arm and sometimes one goes ahead of the other, but knowing that they will always be there for each other.