## Centre for Narrative Research

## Department of Social Sciences, University of East London

***To Think is To Experiment, Postgraduate Research Day***

**Wednesday, 25th April, 2018**, **University Square Stratford**,

Room: USS 1.12

Directions: <http://www.universitysquarestratford.ac.uk/find-us.htm>

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| **10.00 – 10.20** | ***Welcome and Introductions*** |
| **10.20 - 11.00** | **Siyanda Ndlovu Memorial Lecture**  **Afrocentric symbols of relational selves as a decolonial narrative form of critical analysis**  Sabrina Liccardo, University of Pretoria |
| **11.00 – 11.25** | **‘Why all of a sudden is my motor going a bit funny?’ A multi-level narrative analysis technique to explore illness experience.**  Meredith K.D. Hawking, Queen Mary University of London |
| **11.25 - 11.50** | **Practising ‘outside of the box’ whilst within ‘the system’. A feminist narrative inquiry of NHS midwives facilitating and supporting women’s unconventional birth choices in the UK.**  Claire Feeley, University of Central Lancashire |
| **11.50 – 12.10** | ***Coffee Break*** |
| **12.10 – 12.35** | **‘Veteran’ Is a Three-Part Story (Narrative)**  Lisa Peacock, Anglia Ruskin University |
| **12.35 – 13.00** | **The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority employees in UK Organisations**  Mahendra Kumar Rangoolam, University of East London |
| **13.00 – 14.00** | ***Lunch Break*** |
| **14.00 - 14.25** | **Hearing the divine in narrative**  Thomas Sealey, University of Bristol |
| **14.25 - 14.50** | **Bridging the ‘individual’ with the ‘socio-political’ through narrative analysis, the sociology of childhood and intersectionality: Applying an analytical framework to young women’s accounts of experiencing domestic violence and abuse in childhood.**  Tanya Beetham, University of Stirling |
| **14.50 – 15.15** | **The impact of 19th century narrative on 20th/21st century thought with regard to theatres and music halls**  Deborah Jeffries, University of East London |
| **15.15 -15.30** | ***Coffee Break*** |
| **15.30 -15.55** | **Title to be confirmed**  Charlie Azzopardi, Institute of Family Therapy Malta |
| **15.55 – 16.20** | **Secrets and the Unknown: A Narrative Approach to Looking at Negation in Childbearing**  Jane Rooney, Liverpool John Moores University |
| **16.20 – 16.45** | Discussion over drinks |
|  | **POSTER**  **Evaluating the impact of recovery stories in first episode psychosis**  Chanelle Myrie and Claire Thompson,  Southwark Team for Early Psychosis, South London and Maudsley NHS foundation trust |

**Abstracts:**

**Afrocentric symbols of relational selves as a decolonial narrative form of critical analysis**

Sabrina Liccardo, University of Pretoria

‘I am’ is narrative.

I am the space where we narrate I am.

I am the time when we narrate I am.

I am the creation that we narrate I am.

What we are, who we become, and where we belong are all effects of narrativity.

This presentation is framed by a narrative complex system of human being, becoming and belonging (see figure 1) which I have redrawn from Maldonado-Torres’ (2016) “analytics of coloniality” and “analytics of decoloniality”, in relation to Levine’s (2015) analysis of four abstract forms (“Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network”) with the aim of (dis)entangling the psycho-sociality within the Lacanian registers of real (space), imaginary (power) and symbolic (knowledge).

I will begin the presentation by conceptualising the narrative re-structuration of three Eurocentric and Afrocentric forms within the following orders of human reality: (1) The discursive-circulatory system of human being; (2) The storied-nervous system of human becoming and; (3) The narrative-respiratory system of human belonging.

Through the “lived lives” and “told stories” (Wengraf, 2010) of young Black South African women scientists, I will use this conceptual framework to propose three visual-narrative models of analysis which will hopefully contribute to the project of decolonising research methods that help us move beyond Eurocentric binary hierarchical id-entities into a new context of discourses (as institutional culture), form of stories (as pedagogy) and content knowledge of narrative change across South African higher education.

**‘Why all of a sudden is my motor going a bit funny?’ A multi-level narrative analysis technique to explore illness experience.**

Meredith K.D. Hawking, Queen Mary University of London

Narrative analysis of patients' accounts of their illness experience can be a daunting prospect, even for experienced qualitative researchers. It requires attention to the emergence of themes within a narrative, the subjectivities of the narrator and researcher, and appreciation of the narrative as a co-construction and shaped by social context (both the immediate social context of the interview itself and the wider social context in which the story is embedded). Switching the way one engages with data analytically is a powerful way to ensure attention to these different narrative elements. This paper draws on empirical data from my doctoral study of patients’ experiences of atrial fibrillation (and the associated long-term treatment comprising oral anticoagulants) as a case study to illustrate the potential of a novel multi-layered approach to analysis. Patient narratives were gathered using a modified biographic-narrative-interpretive method for in-depth interviewing. The analytical approach brings thematic, structural and metaphorical lenses to the analysis of complex illness narratives. I will illuminate the benefits and drawbacks of each individual method and discuss the insights that a pluralistic analytical approach can bring to understandings of illness experience, as well as the challenges of using it in practice.

**Practising ‘outside of the box’ whilst within ‘the system’. A feminist narrative inquiry of NHS midwives facilitating and supporting women’s unconventional birth choices in the UK.**

Claire Feeley, University of Central Lancashire

My PhD study is an exploration of 45 NHS midwives’ from across the UK. They were recruited specifically to explore their professional practice of facilitating women’s birth choices that fall outside national guidelines or where the women have declined recommendations of care; described as ‘unconventional’ birth choices. The purpose of the study was to elicit professional stories to explore three broad areas; firstly, what happened to capture specific situations and the midwives’ actions. Secondly, to explore the sense-making that the midwives attribute to why they practice the way they do. Thirdly, to consider the relationship between the midwives’ experiences and the wider sociocultural discourses of birth.

However, the initial research aims align with three different narrative inquiry epistemologies and their associated methodologies; event, person and culturally centred approaches. Thus creating a significant challenge for data analysis that is theoretically sound. Rather than amend the research aims, I have undertaken the task of attempting to reconcile the theoretical incompatibilities in order to fulfil the research objectives. This presentation will focus on the multi-methods of data analysis I have adopted for this study, highlighting and reflecting upon my rationale, challenges and successes so far. Using examples from the study, I shall demonstrate that whilst complicated for the novice narrative researcher, my methods are a viable option.

**‘Veteran’ Is a Three-Part Story (Narrative)**

Lisa Peacock, Anglia Ruskin University

Becoming a veteran is often considered a three-part story: life before service, during service and after service. This presentation shares narrative research to critically re-examine traditional assumptions about veterans’ lives by paying close attention to the stories veterans tell through dramatherapy. Some contend that military training creates a military identity, one that replaces the civilian identity. Yet veterans often work and live apart from other veterans and among civilians. Cooperation and sense of belonging is replaced by competition and financial reward. Transition assistance often comes in the form of a job, education or health care. What if transition is a life-long process? What if global events can trigger a shift in overall wellness? Veterans who fare the best may be the ones who have the greatest opportunity to normalize their military identity—to be among those who have put everything on the line, value collective accomplishment, intimately know duty and honor. Maybe the three-part story of becoming a veteran is instead: leaving the service, experiencing alienation and discovering ways to embrace one’s military identity. Research with UK and US veterans is shared in this presentation.

**The Experience of Performance Appraisal for Ethnic Minority employees in UK Organisations**

Mahendra Kumar Rangoolam, University of East London

Based on theoretical work in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), it is proposed that HRM comprises a set of policies such as performance appraisal which supposedly lead to the maximizing of employees in relation to organizational integration, commitment, flexibility and quality of work. However, there is little evidential research of any of these policies impacting on ethnic minority employees working in UK organisations. This study examines and evaluates the experience of performance appraisal for ethnic minority employees through their lived experiences in UK organisations. Drawing on narrative interviews, the research examines whether ethnic minority employees’ experience of performance appraisal is congruent with the goals of Soft HRM. The research will further evaluate the outcomes for ethnic minority employees in relation to organizational integration, commitment, flexibility and quality of work, using a phenomenological approach.

**Hearing the divine in narrative**

Thomas Sealey, University of Bristol

It has been argued that narrative is one of the key ways in which we impose order, perspective and meaning on our lives and experiences, to the extent that we may well be thought of as *homo narrans*. Following this I make a case for narrative as particularly suitable to understanding the religious identities of British converts to Islam by arguing for the significance of a narrative approach which can reorient sociological epistemologies that insist on a methodological atheism.  Whereas most research on religious identity has focussed on the religious as a discrete category, one of many ‘multiples’, this contribution argues that these approaches fail to appreciate the distinctive character of religious identity and subjectivity. I present an analysis of my participants narratives that draws on Freeman’s (2013) framework to trace the temporal interplay of past, present and future, and the *distal*and *proximal*sources that go into producing a sense of self. I explore aspects of continuity and change to show how, through their narratives, converts to Islam establish a sense of coherence as a*religious* subject.

**Bridging the ‘individual’ with the ‘socio-political’ through narrative analysis, the sociology of childhood and intersectionality: Applying an analytical framework to young women’s accounts of experiencing domestic violence and abuse in childhood.**

Tanya Beetham, University of Stirling

This presentation will reflect on the on-going analysis of my doctoral research. The main aim of the PhD is to explore children, young people and young adult’s experiences of growing up with domestic violence and abuse (DVA) when they did not access support from specialist services. My analytical framework aims to draw on narrative approaches and the sociology of childhood (e.g. Burman, 2017; James & Prout, 2004). I am currently exploring ways of using an intersectional framework in, and through, narrative analysis (Chadwick, 2017), seeking to use my analysis to establish closer links between the ‘individual’ and the ‘socio-political’.

I will reflect on the first stage of data collection in which I have conducted interviews (and some re-interviews) with eight young women about their experiences growing up in the community experiencing domestic violence and abuse in their family. My analysis is at an early stage, and this presentation will mainly focus on the application of narrative analysis. I will reflect on choosing an integrative analytical framework which addresses my aim of drawing on the sociology of childhood as a theoretical position and intersectionality as a way of making sense of ‘different’ accounts of childhoods.

**The impact of 19th century narrative on 20th/21st century thought with regard to theatres and music halls**

Deborah Jeffries, University of East London

Open a book about British theatre history and it’s likely to say that the official division between music halls and theatres was prompted by the 1843 Theatres Act. However, this is not the case. Authors to date have claimed that this law stated that alcohol, tobacco and food could be consumed in the auditorium of a music hall but it couldn’t in that of a theatre. In fact, there is no mention of what could and couldn’t be consumed in the auditorium of either building type whatsoever.

My paper will investigate written narratives about the Act and how it has been interpreted to reach this conclusion. There has been nothing discovered, as yet, that refers to this issue prior to the 1866 Select Committee on Theatre Licenses and Regulations. So where does the notion about consumption – or lack of it – of alcohol, tobacco and food in a Victorian theatre come from?

My conclusion will show that modern scholars have taken 19th century texts to be accurate when they are far from it, and included historic misrepresentations of the facts in their works. I will redress this, in summary, and trace it back to a work by Charles Douglas Scott written in 1895.

**Title to be confirmed**

Charlie Azzopardi, Institute of Family Therapy Malta

Families of the incarcerated emerge as a vulnerable group[1] and are known to suffer unparalleled consequences. Families and children of prisoners are often the unseen victims of crime who carry the social, emotional and financial costs of the crime they do not commit. Research has consistently indicated links between families and children who have an imprisoned relative and mental health problems, stigma, social exclusion and poverty.  The aim of this study was to explore the experienced impact of incarceration by families. This study considers multiple perspectives.  For this reason, families, inmates, prison wardens, and a group of volunteers participated in this study. IPA was used as the main framework for giving meaning to data. A systemic analysis of the different levels of data was finally provided generating a coherent narrative of the complexity that emerged.  What emerges is that the current punishment-based policy in conjunction with the punishment and prison-centred justice system, together with the paucity of services provided to families and children of those imprisoned combine to impoverish, disadvantage, and exclude children and their families further in an Ironic Process whereby attempted solutions further discriminate against families and children of the incarcerated  leaving them locked out from an inaccessible system.

**Secrets and the Unknown: A Narrative Approach to Looking at Negation in Childbearing**

Jane Rooney, Liverpool John Moores University

The term “negation” in childbearing encompasses both concealment and denial of pregnancy, labour, birth and the postpartum periods. Sadler’s (2002) definition provides a clear summary, “where a female, through fear, ignorance or denial, does not accept or is unaware of the pregnancy in an appropriate way”. Negation may present a risk to the woman and fetus/baby, as the woman is likely to have received little or no care throughout part or all of the childbearing continuum. There is evidence to link non-engagement with maternity services with high rates of maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality.

Research largely focuses on a standardised and routine approach to care, which does not encompass an individual holistic paradigm. This study proposes to explore women’s narrative stories of negation during the whole of the childbirth continuum, through in-depth narrative interviews, and an online social media group. Narrative analysis using Chase’s 5 lenses approach, and based around the concepts of particularity and specificity, which evolve with the narrator, aim to realise a story within a story (matryoshka effect). Furthermore this will consider the unique situationality of negation, and work with a sense of fluidity and flexibility to embrace a dynamic narrative approach.

**POSTER**

**Evaluating the impact of recovery stories in first episode psychosis**

Chanelle Myrie and Claire Thompson

Southwark Team for Early Psychosis, South London and Maudsley NHS foundation trust

People using mental health services for their first episode of psychosis may benefit from reading personal recovery narratives from other people who have experienced mental health difficulties. We conducted brief interviews with 16 individuals who had experienced psychosis using Early Intervention (EI) services within the NHS, and one carer of an individual using EI services. These interviews were transcribed and made into a booklet entitled ‘Moving Forward: Stories of Recovery’. The aim of this project was to evaluate the impact of reading these recovery stories on people who currently use EI services. We firstly collected feedback via a questionnaire from a sample of service users who had read the booklets, and are planning a semi-structured, service user led focus group to allow for more open discussion of the impact and potential utility of using personal recovery narratives as a peer-led intervention in EI services.