

Chapter 2

Mr Airport Man and the Albatross: A Reverie of Flight, Hope and Transformation

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Abstract

This chapter is an autoethnographic account of my journey from a working class childhood and youth to becoming an academic in a large UK university. Using the techniques of poetics (Bachelard, 2004), the chapter focuses on several pivotal periods in my life, where I encountered a sequence of events that were to influence my journey towards transformation. Back in my early 20s, I knew that I wanted to change and to grow in new directions; however, infused with a particular heritage, set of experiences and cultural values – none of which embraced, recognised or understood learning and university as a possibility – I struggled to make sense of my feelings of frustration and being stranded. This is where my strange fascination with the airport, music, daydream and the notion of flight emerged (see Bachelard, 2011; Seres, 1993). Here, the nebulous and seemingly futile ache for an alternative and better future emerged as a potent hope and journey towards transition.

Keywords: Gaston Bachelard; dynamic imagination; flight; reverie; Albatross; memory

This is a story about two angels. You may be similar to Michel Seres's character *Jacques* in *Angels: A Modern Myth* (1993) and think that the notion of angels is either childish or naïve, and that people shouldn't believe in such '[s]imple-minded stories for kids!' (Seres, 1993, p. 115). But I urge you, bear with me, and think about what I have to say; the two angels that I wish to tell you about initiated a powerful journey of transformation back in the 1990s, and enabled me to transgress an ascribed life of working-class childhood and youth. I have retrospectively given them the following names: *Zaphkiel* and *Israfel*. *Zaphkiel*, as he is a ruling angel of the planet Saturn (Guiley, 2004, p. 374), and in angel lore is

recognised as being a special guide – or preceptor angel – to Noah (Davidson, 1971, p. 227). This is an important heritage, and one that has relevance for my story, as the *Book of Jubilees* notes, Noah received guidance on the building of the ark, was bestowed knowledge of redemption, and given restorative secrets of healing (Segal, 2007, p. 171).¹ *Zaphkiel's* connection with the planet Saturn is also relevant, as Rudolf Steiner notes in *Rosicrucianism Renewed* (2007), the planet Saturn is powerfully symbolic where the principles of liberation and renewal are concerned. The other angel messenger in this story is *Israfel*; so chosen because in Arabic folklore, he is referred to as the angel of music, song, and resurrection (Davidson, 1971, p. 151). Hence, where *Zaphkiel* represents the mediation of escape and redemption (Davidson, 1971, p. 147), *Israfel* is associated with music and its cipheric ability to encode transformative messages of hope and change.²

Etymologically the word angel derives from the Greek term *angelos*, itself a translation from the Hebrew word *mal'akh* – both terms mean messenger or envoy. As Seres tells us, angelic messengers usually remain invisible, however, they also have the ability to make themselves 'appear and then disappear ... [and] move through space at the speed of their own thoughts' (Seres, 1993, p. 7).³ As my story unfolds, *Zaphkiel* and *Israfel* will hopefully come to be understood as important envoys for another character that I wish to introduce here, that of *Mr Airport Man*. A literary leitmotif, *Mr Airport Man* is a historiographic version of me, back in the 1990s; at this time, I was a 22-year-old weaver, working on a rotating 8-hour shift pattern at a local textile mill.

I first started to encounter the alter ego of *Mr Airport Man* when I caught the train from my hometown of Blackburn to Manchester Airport, every third week – on a Monday, which was the first day of my 22.00 to 06.00 night shift, (and a day that was relatively 'free'). Sometimes my airport visits would need to be quite brief, so I would buy a coffee, sit in the café and runway viewing area of *Terminal One* and listen to music. Occasionally, if weather and time permitted, I would walk around the periphery of the airport to the outdoor viewing area, to get a closer view of the runway, and experience the aircraft landing and taking-off in proximal and visceral detail.

I must point out that all of the details relating to *Mr Airport Man* are now lodged in the annals of my distant memory; as such, I can only recall – and recollect – elastic fragments. Chronology and details relating to the minutiae of these everyday events are now long gone; after all, their memorial and reverberative traces extend and refract across an almost 30-year period. As such, I am not able to specify the precise number of times that I ventured across to Manchester, to reunite *Mr Airport Man* with *Zaphkiel* and *Israfel*. However, over the 5-to-6-year period that these events relate, I would suggest that they accumulated to at least double-digit figures. My traces of *Mr Airport Man's* pilgrimages are therefore a mismatched patchwork of registered instants; some tinged with coldness and rain, and some with a backdrop of warm and pleasant sunny weather. The above points are important, and worth emphasising, as they are a key aspect of the style – and methodology – adopted to shape and structure this piece of autoethnographic writing. What follows is a reflective accumulation of aphoristic fragments, loosely sutured texts that, as a whole, build a montage of

personalised, asynchronous and *nostalgic* insights.⁴ Non-linear in sequence, they connect and relate as a subjective trove of memorial debris, as well as an array of allegoric experiences, and replete with a retroactive symbolism, which I have developed and applied to aid emphasis and relevance.

I also use the term nostalgic here purposefully; as Boym (2001) tells us, it is akin to, ‘a mania of longing’; as such, my memories harbour a nostalgic capacity, ‘for remembering sensations, tastes, sounds [and] smells’ (Boym, 2001, p. 4). *Mr Airport Man* is therefore – and always was – a nostalgic character; a private expression and manifestation of personal longing, and the symbolic start point of an embarkation on a grail-like quest, in search of socio-economic escape, and the discovery of a new homeland never previously experienced. Further borrowing from Boym’s typological analysis of nostalgia, my selection of recollected experiences should be considered as creative and restorative stories, rather than factual statements that relay fixed details as historical accounts. The resultant segments are therefore an attempt to, ‘make sense of [my] seemingly ineffable homesickness’ (Boym, 2001, p. 41) as a pre-destined and emplaced working class ‘conscript’, and the subsequent search for hope, escape and transformation – as an undergraduate student, and later as an academic. The nostalgic stories contained here are therefore dislocated palimpsests, memorial texts repopulated with hindsight, academic enculturation in the form of a Bachelardean philosophy, and a malleable approach to content and time.

As Gaston Bachelard tells us in *Dialectic of Duration* (2000), the mind is an ultra-sensitive time detector, with an ability to conjoin discontinuities that characterise the shifting nature of archived time; as we listen inwardly to its segments, they morph, interpenetrate and cascade within us (Bachelard, 2000, p. 81). In *Intuition of the Instant*, Bachelard reinforces this and tells us that the seductive malleability of memory means that we do not encounter its re-emergence as a unified set of in-tact details. As a receptor of myriad incidents, the mind performs alternative manoeuvres by subjecting remnants to the processes and impact of daydreaming – or within the context of a Bachelardean theoretical framework reverie. As such, originary details become smashed and reconstituted as infusive sets of discrete instants (Bachelard, 2013, p. 10). He thus reminds us that:

...the asymmetry between past and future is radical. In us, the past is a voice that has found an echo. We thus attribute a force to what is no more than a form – or better yet, we assign one sweeping form to a plurality of forms. It is through such a synthesis that the past begins to take on the weight of reality.

(Bachelard, 2013, p. 31)

In this domain of mutations, the creative act of memorial recounting takes place through a punctuated terrain of creative instants (Bachelard, 2013, pp. 9–10). Full of lacunae, these irruptions merge along their peripheries, and develop as a dust of novel emergences (Bachelard, 2000, p. 112). Bachelard would therefore have positively recognised my memorial malleations and regarded them as affirmative permutations; as he notes,

...we realize that the deformation we impose on things always means actively acquired information. And so it is a question of taking shape, often with great difficulty, rather than losing shape. Thus, we come to experience deformation as dynamism.

(Bachelard, 2018, p. 17)

Language and Childhood

Basil Bernstein (2003) tells us that particular social groups organise around common principles of socio-economic communication; as part of this, they produce particular forms – and patterns – of language and inter-subjective speech codes. Such differences within and across particular social groups extend far beyond styles and nuance in dialect; they ‘occur in the normal social environment and [are] ... distinguished by their forms of speech’ (Bernstein, 2003, p. 46). In my own immediate and extended family environment, I recall hearing conversations about winning the *Littlewoods Football Pools*, and what we would do with the money; unsavoury monologues about the alleged perils of immigration; and the immediacy of not being able to afford things due to constant and lingering money problems. I also recall heated exchanges about the precarity and aftermath of being made redundant; and to ‘just do the best that you can at school’ (which overall, was pretty terrible – as it just didn’t make sense or seem relevant to me). Slang, dialect, idiosyncratic and staccato peculiarities very much characterised the style and content of these conversations. A distinctive, colourful and in some ways quite unique heritage, but one that wasn’t embraced, recognised or accepted by middle-class standards (characteristics which, of course framed and communicated the cultural milieu of the school environment). At home, foundational and pivotal skills associated with successful schooling, such as academic progression, critical reading, debating balanced arguments, seeking out evidence etc., did not feature at all. I carried this void of purpose relating to the alien environment of the school and wider educational knowledge throughout my entire compulsory schooling experience.

In a complementary sense, Pierre Bourdieu (1996) identifies the *habitual* cultural styles and influences cascaded and perpetuated as part of class-based environments; again, within the working-class environments of my childhood and youth, these aspects were really quite distinct and socio-economically particular. I recall that as a family we considered popular music and mainstream cinema (and in the late 1970s/1980s the emergence of video), package holidays to Spain, sport, second-hand cars, clothing fashion and home décor of particular relevance and importance. However, this was always situated against the backdrop of a habitus tinged with financial precarity and debt, and the increasing realisation that the socio-economic horizon of working-class future had been ingloriously and systemically predestined. All of this was bluntly reinforced by several flattening and ultimately rather pointless meetings in my final year at school with a peripatetic career’s advisor. Based on two meetings and conversations, it was summarised for

me – in descending order – that I had the ‘dole’ to look forward to, but only if the other slightly more appealing options of: labourer, factory worker, or soldier in the army didn’t materialise.⁵ Thinking back, I was vaguely aware that some of my school peers – those who had consistently populated the ‘top sets’ – were going to college to do A-levels; however, again, the meaning of this didn’t really register, as I had no immediate or extended reference points to guide me, through either dialogue or lived experience.⁶ I just didn’t know what this all meant; the notion of College, A-levels, pathways to university, studying towards and reading for a degree etc., had never featured as part of our everyday family discourse. For all of the points of criticism levelled at Bernstein and his theory of linguistic codes, within the microcosm of my own lived experience, his analysis seems to have been largely correct.

However, what I did have – and frequently engaged with – was an important form of escape facilitated by the music that I listened to. Through the abysmal schooling experiences, the tribulations and traumas of socio-economic precarity, and the realisation that as a consequence of my working-class positionality (in the late 1980s), my opportunities were to be somewhat limited; I sought – and found – solace in an unconquerable and private world of music-hued reverie. This deep relationship with music had always been with me – or so it seemed. One of my earliest recollections was getting permission to play records on my parents’ turntable. I guess the year will have been circa 1978, when I was only 7 or 8 years old; on this occasion, one record in particular intrigued and resonated with me: It had a painted scene on the sleeve, a solitary bird hovering over the sea; this was set against a beach, and beyond this was a forest that seemed to stretch into and beyond the horizon. The record was *Albatross* by Fleetwood Mac, and I was entranced.

I recall listening to this over and over and gazing *into* the picture on the record sleeve. I had no words to articulate, but reflecting back on this formative moment, I experienced a profound sense of emotion; whilst this seemed tinged with an emerging melancholia, it also harboured hope and beauty. I imagined soaring and escaping as a bird to a deserted tropical island; the warmth of the sun, and the unbridled possibility of having the freedom to do anything – liberated from the bleak constraints of my everyday life – was quite wonderful. Whilst I hadn’t named him at this early age, I got a sense that somehow *Israfil* was making an initial appearance, transcribing the tentative beginning of a hidden code in my mind, and registering the initial outline of a map of future escape. Bachelard would suggest that this encounter uncovered a special type of flight, one of dynamic imagination. The whole aesthetic associated with evocative music, the image of the bird and the sky, situated against a limitless ocean and forest, prompted an early awakening of imaginary flight. For the unspecified duration of a few fleeting moments, I was mesmerised by the visual beauty of the bird in its solitary flight, and my young imagination was liberated beyond the ordinary course of everyday things. Far from being a gentle take-off, the experience resonated as a ‘gushing forth of being’, and a fleeting experience of ‘new life’ (Bachelard, 2011, p. 155).

Excursus 1: The Albatross

The albatross belongs to a taxonomic group of birds called Procellariiformes; this name comes from – and is associated with – the Latin word *procella*, which means ‘violent wind’ or ‘storm’ (Lindsey, 2008, p. 4). Traditionally, two species of albatross are seen as belonging to this group: the royal albatross and the wandering albatross (Lindsey, 2008, p. 13). The name albatross has been through a number of iterations and permutations and is derived from the term *alcatrace*, a term that Spanish and Portuguese navigators adapted from the Arabic word *alcatraz* or *al-gattas*’ which identified a kind of sea eagle. With reference to the bird itself, two characteristics in particular appear to have captured the public imagination, these being its great size, and also its seemingly miraculous ability to navigate enormous seafaring distances with graceful ease, over relatively short periods of time (Lindsey, 2008, p. 7). The most influential taxonomist where the albatross is concerned is probably the Swedish scientist Carl von Linné (1707–1778), known commonly by his latinized name, *Linnaeus*. In 1758, he included the first formal scientific description of the bird in his influential text *Systema Naturae* (Barwell, 2014, p. 26). Introducing the albatross to Western science, *Linnaeus* attached two additional epithets: *Diomedea* and *exulans*. *Exulans* is a Greek word that translates as ‘exile’, and *Diomedea* relates to *Diomedes*, a character from classical Greek legend. *Diomedes* was a prominent figure in Homer’s *Iliad*; serving with *Odysseus* and *Palamedes* as a naval commander, they sailed with *Agamemnon* to lay siege to *Troy*, and recover the abducted *Helen*. However, *Diomedes* later offended the goddess *Athene*, an offence to which she responded by conjuring a ferocious sea storm, which ultimately wrecked and sank his fleet. A vengeful goddess, she drowned his men, turned them into large birds, and prevented *Diomedes* from returning home by committing him to exile on a deserted island (Barwell, 2014, pp. 26–27).

The *wandering albatross* or *Diomedea exulans* is therefore a lifelong and homeless wanderer. There is evidently something metaphorical, powerful and evocative about this; public and poetic fascination with the albatross maybe as a result of its size, or its graceful stature and demeanour, or the way that it permanently travels and roams across oceans – by utilising the up drift of ferocious storms – or maybe a combination of all of these things. Lindsey (2008) confirms this, and notes that it is ‘not easy to be entirely unmoved by’ this wanderer, the albatross as storm-rider and ultimate flying machine (Lindsey, 2008, p. 3).

Bachelard suggests that the *flying* creature is imaginatively profound because it seems capable of escaping its immediate environments, and utilises an invisible ether to transcend gravity and ground; as such it is a conscious visualisation of our latent freedom (Bachelard, 2011, p. 8). Provoking an aerial imagination, it becomes a winged seed, ‘which, at the slightest breath of air, is seized with the hope of rising’ (Bachelard, 2011, p. 157). Aerial imagination thus asserts itself when we encounter images that soar upwards and vanish. However, to extend this beyond mere personal story, means that we have to learn how to rise up, to

imagine and fly without hesitation, 'whithersoever we are impelled – we free-born birds! Wherever we come, there will always be freedom' (Bachelard, 2011, p. 158).

I feel that through music and daydream I learned to imagine and explore as a *Diomedea exulans*, and this has served me well. My wandering has meant that I have been able to drift beyond earlier storms into new adventures, and with this a range of unexpected discoveries. Experiences that I would never have encountered had I not set-off in search of a strange and little understood (on my part) land of academic mystery. Certainly, time spent battling my fears and inadequacies in different universities as an undergraduate and postgraduate, and later as an academic, has required intense study, dedication, sacrifice and a committed work ethic. But the strength and belief to leave my previous positionality, to mutate my identity and enter into, participate, and grow as an academic exile, has been undergirded by the important experience of imaginative flight and aerial escape. Now, as a working-class exile in the territories of academia, I am proud of my heritage, and of the distance that I have travelled. But I do not mourn my exile; I do not miss it or the terrain of my heritage – with confining limitations. I do still have a working-class-ness, and this will always be a part of me; but I am no longer a working-class.

Mr Airport Man

It is summer 1993; there is a slight breeze, but the sun is warm enough to make it pleasant; I've gotten to the airport nice and early, and so walk around to the outdoor aircraft viewing area. I am surrounded by plane spotters, uniformly bedecked with binoculars, *Airband scanners* and zoom lens cameras; a veritable band of butterfly collectors. I have got my *Walkman*, pen and notepad; equipped with these, I start to scribble random thoughts, words and ideas; embryonic hopes, distant and seemingly unrealistic possibilities; bad poems and unfinished lyrics for never-written songs. Somehow, I just know – and sense – that through *Zaphkiel* (as he fleetingly takes on the form of an ascending aircraft) that I need to gaze into and imagine beyond his skyward messages of longing. And that with *Israfil*, as he mediates a music-hued cipher through my Walkman, that I have to translate and annotate their meditations as talismanic echoes. I also know that somehow I need to believe that I can escape from the constraints of the life that is crushing me.

A *British Airways* 747 jumbo jet reaches the end of the taxiway and turns on to the runway, and I find that once again, almost 20 years later, I am listening to the song *Albatross*. Beyond the throttle and thrust of the accelerating aircraft, I am reminded that this is no ordinary fascination with flight; it is something more than – and quite unrelated to – the strange practice of butterfly collecting.⁷ Beyond the musical traces and jet engine vapour trails, I discern my messengers' codes, and start to reinvigorate the sputtering belief and possibility that a new journey can be travelled. In a memory whorl, excavated by the beautiful music, I am enveloped by a powerful reminiscence; through the visual wonder of flight and dynamic imagination, the ascending aircraft pinches my breath. I somehow know – and

sense – that *Zadkiel* is a silver metal albatross, and *Israfel*, a muse, and that they want me to follow and embark on a journey of ascensional longing and personal change, and hunt for jettisoned and discarded traces of hope. I see pulsing lights on the undercarriage of the mechanical albatross, and they shimmer throughout its graceful ascent. About four or five miles in the distance, they glint and blink one last time before finally disappearing into a thin cloud blanket; with this, seated at the edge of the aeroplane viewing area, I start to recognise myself as *Mr Airport Man*; equipped with imaginative and transformative possibilities, I start to pursue a very different and alternative journey.

Bachelard reminds us that the notions of *wing*, *cloud* and imaginary flight evoke the dreamer to mutate into whatever they wish; they can incite visions or sketches of something beyond the limitations of a lived life (Bachelard, 2011, p. 13). In doing so, the dreamer, ‘that twin of our being’ opens up the adventures of reverie, and, accepting the help of great dreamers, enters into the world of the poets (Bachelard, 2012, p. 8). In this potent state of reverie, dreamers dream of what they could have been and in rebellion against themselves, dream of what they could and should be. But to start to establish an alternative future beyond the realm of its internal idea, requires that the values and principles of flight find a physical channel to facilitate release (Bachelard, 2011, p. 10). As a result of the shaping function of time, year by year, ‘we end up resembling ourselves. We gather all of our beings around the unity of our name’ (Bachelard, 2004, p. 99); but to move beyond the unfolding threads of our history, shaped and told to us by others, we need to activate the power of ascensional escape, by discovering and pursuing a forgotten childhood that becomes hidden within us. We need to learn to activate the latency of internal rebirth, through the power of reverie of flight beyond our own past; by searching for the pre-established building blocks of malleable childhood, we can engage in renewal. In doing this, learn how to reconstruct a fresh childhood beyond the one of the existing person, and to grow and soar in place of groundedness and disappointment. My meditations on the new child that I could become, beyond the existing constraints of family and socio-economic history, with its zones of regret and defeat, meant that I could search for a new and reanimated life (Bachelard, 2004, p. 126). By activating an imaginative reverie, using my new name – Mr Airport Man – notions of my old self were gradually ridded of prior labels and assumptions. With this, my potent reveries as a solitary child rose again as a forgotten fire, which ‘can always flare up again within us’ (Bachelard, 2004, p. 104).

Excursus 2: Back to the Future

It is December 2021, I’m away from home on a research trip, and things are a little bit strange down here in Oxford (but in a good way I think). As I start to write my autoethnographic piece, I rediscover *Mr Airport Man*, and I’m reminded of how I used to daydream of becoming something and somebody else. I absolutely didn’t know who – or what; I just knew that to survive I needed to change, and to find a way of liberating my ache to be, do and give so much more. Memory

work obviously necessitates the revisitation and confronting of past events (and permutations of oneself) that are forgotten; well, still there, but embedded beneath the surface, and blanketed by layers of later and more comfortable memorial material. Having excavated down and through to those earlier layers tonight, I've felt so desperately sad for the traces of that lost young man. I'd forgotten just how unhappy, barren and almost defeated he was.

As seems to be the case when I start writing something fresh, a new song serendipitously emerges and attaches itself to me. When I first hear it, I intuitively know that the song somehow harbours an unfolding message that I need to creatively decipher. Tonight, that song is *Dreaming of You* (Gonzalez, 2012). Irrespective of what the songwriter intended, tonight it has helped me resolve *Mr Airport Man's* lingering sadness; it has become a nostalgic love-song from the past, and transmorphed into a message from the 22-year-old me to a 50-year-old me. Through a strange quantum portal, *Mr Airport Man* is looking through to the future, and seeing a mirage of me as an albatross, and sending a message of longing out to me. In return – I don't know if he can hear me – but I'm calling back to him, and telling him to just hang-on because one day he'll be in the Bodleian libraries in Oxford as an academic; and he will have a beautiful, strong and loving wife; five of the most fantastic, funny, intelligent children; and six of the most enchanting grandchildren ...

I'm glad that he held on ...

I'm glad that he listened to the coded ciphers of hope from *Zaphkiel* and *Israfael*, and learned how to soar, travel and wander on the gales and uplifts of his storms. I'm glad that he resisted the urge to not get on the train for his first Open University class in 1994 (as he didn't feel that he was intelligent or good enough). I'm glad that he made friends with a *Hazey* anarchist at university in 1996, who helped him to discover a philosophical home in the works of Bloch, Benjamin, Buber and Scholem, and to recognise that some voids can only be filled by love; and that structural working-class wounds can't be healed through violence and anger. I'm glad that he listened to his wife, to use his passion and ideas to pursue a PhD. I'm glad that he became an *albatross exulans* and chose wandering over his structural positionality. I'm glad that he hoped, reached for and discovered an alternative childhood and subsequent transformed life as *Mr Airport Man* ...



Personal Photograph Taken by the Author.

Notes

1. A related note of interest here, the word Jubilee refers to a year of emancipation or restoration. Segal further notes that the angel told Noah, ‘the remedies for the afflictions of mankind and all kinds of remedies for healing with trees of the earth and plants of the soil and their roots. And he sent the princes of the remaining spirits to show Noah the medicinal trees with all their shoots, greenery, grasses, roots and seed, to explain to him why they were created, and to teach him all their medicinal properties for healing and for life’ (Segal, 2007, p. 171).
2. Edgar Allan Poe’s poem *Israfil* attests to the redemptive power of this angel in relation to music and song (Poe, 2005, pp. 273–275).
3. Seres in *Angels: A Modern Myth* suggests that airports and aircraft present us with ‘angels of steel, carrying angels of flesh and blood, who in turn send angel signals across angel air waves ... Aircraft carry letters, telephones, agents, representatives and the like: we use the term communication to cover air transport as well as post. When people, aircraft and electronic signals are transmitted through the through the air, they are all effectively messages and messengers’ (Seres, 1993, p. 8).
4. The notion of text is again purposeful here, and worthy of further elaboration. Its etymology is *texere* (which means ‘to weave’), and *texo* (which means ‘I weave’), therefore, my ruminations on memory and meaning should be read as nomadic, autonomic and unique offerings; the usurpation of the presence, legacy and coherence of the original context (Barthes, 1989). This renders the reception and transmission of biographic history as a fertile process, as its echoes resound and

malleate between the historical source and the contemporary receiver, in an open space of parallax and fracture. The lacunae between the event and the subjective recreation of memory does not perpetuate a trammelled or predictable form of unimpinged and unchanging material (Barthes, 1975).

5. I did join the army at 16 and have written about aspects of this in Hammond (2017); see Chapter 6, *Bye Bye Badman: The Redemption of Hope through Popular Culture*.
6. At secondary school, I did find geography and especially social geography fascinating, and during my options year (year 3 in 1985), I constantly came top of the class in tests. I recall asking to speak to the teacher, and almost pleading with them to allocate me a place in the GCE O-level group. But his response was, 'based on your low achievement in other subjects, I don't want to give you false hope'.
7. Walter Benjamin notes that: 'butterflies with superbright wings ... so often had lured me away from well-kept garden paths into a wilderness ... the more I strove to conform ... the more butterfly-like I became in my heart and soul ... in the end, it was as if [...] capture was the price I had to pay' (Benjamin, 2006, pp. 50–51).

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