Pre-occupations with identity ; an exploration of the relationship between identity/ies and career or career path through the examination of the stories of two women of ambiguous identity;

In this paper I explore the relationship between who we believe ourselves to be and what we do in our lives; our career. It is an examination of the relationship between personal and career identity and the meso space between the personal and public. Through the examination of the lives of two women as told in their own words in loosely structure interviews, I identified themes and threads which seemed to have been prevalent in their lives and which were, in different ways, resolved in what they chose to do and how they found their settlement. This research contributes to our further understanding of why people choose to do what they do and that illusive factor, vocation, quest and more broadly job satisfaction. What is that thought, issue, concern or illusive missing part that is there like a phantom in the background of our lives; the spectre in every chapter of our lives whom we both fear and embrace, invite in and throw out? As well as being that notion that we may spend our lives chasing like a child with a butterfly, I argue that it is also about who we believe ourselves to be; not only what we choose to do but our very essence of selfhood.

A pre-occupation with identity was evident in these particular stories perhaps because their identity/ies were complex and to some extent ambiguous. Other threads in these particular stories were clear too, and it was in the pattern created in the tapestry made from these threads that these participants found the meaning of their stories. Moreover as the relationship between personal and career identity is explored some thoughts on the importance of this relationship is proposed with respect to career counselling practice.