The Self as Auteur:

An interpretative phenomenological investigation of Self-reflective photography

Blind man with Rolleiflex, 1993 © Rutherford

The casual snapshots we make of those scenes and events to which our attention is intuitively attracted can sometimes present us with allegorical 'picture postcards' of our unconscious emotional terrain – or, like a picture of our own Dorian Gray, self-portraits of the one we have become in our efforts to navigate our way through it

transfer report (amended)

Rutherford
February 2020

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I Introduction

This project is located in the space between photo therapies (which use photographs to explore and resolve emotional/psychological issues) and automatism (which attempts to access the non-rational contents of the mind) to give expression to the beliefs and assumptions which shape our lives. While sharing principles and practices from each in the creation of a body of work that is a symbolic self-portrait of the photographer, the objectives of this project differ from both.

Unlike the practice of photo therapies, this project does not assume that the photographer has a problem or concern which warrants therapeutic intervention and, unlike the work of the surrealists, does not seek to create work which has value to anyone but the photographer.

The literature on the use of photographs to explore the unconscious is dominated by those trained in one or more of the forms of photo therapy and who, accordingly, regard photographs through the frame of the assumptions and objectives of therapeutic practice:

- That the reason for looking at/investigating someone's photographs is because there is a problem or concern which warrants therapeutic intervention,
- That photographs offer the therapist and the analysand a means to identify and interrogate the nature of this problem or concern, and
- That the practices of photo therapies offer an effective means to facilitate and describe improvements in facilitated outcomes Sekula (1982).

Just as, to one with a hammer, everything looks like a nail, the value of photographs – and the nature of the inferences drawn from them – are widely seen by the authors (and, by extension, the readers) of this literature as a source of insight into the pathology of the analysand's thoughts and perceptions. Less attention has been paid by the literature to the use of photographs as a source of insight into a mind not in distress.

This project will explore the use of photographs as a means to establish a dialogue with the source of benevolent wisdom available within the unconscious as a means to greater Self-awareness, leading (it is hoped) to an improved ability to make appropriate life decisions.

In addition to the premises of art therapy and photo therapy (that the creative / plastic arts can facilitate self-expression and the exploration of hidden feelings, memories and emotions), this project will draw on the premises and practices of *automatism* as used by the Surrealists to produce "irrationally conceived metaphoric image[s]" (Krauss, 1981 pp.7). As distinct from the objective of the Surrealists however, these practices will not be employed to create artworks intended to challenge the preconceptions of an audience, but will instead be used as a means to generate insights into the perceptions, beliefs and assumptions of participants to which their conscious, rational minds do not otherwise have ready access.

Q: When two of the most powerful influences over the content and appearance of photographs (the desire to record a scene or event deemed worthy of attention and to produce an attractive image of this) are excluded from the process and instead, the camera is put in the hands of the 'auteur within our unconscious mind' – how do participants make sense of their self-referential interpretations of the resulting photos – and how do they integrate these interpretations into their life narratives?

The conceptual assumptions on which the study is predicated

1. That a happy and fulfilling life requires the ability to make informed decisions which in turn necessitates the pursuit of Self-awareness[1]. This assumption is drawn from the teachings of Socrates[2] as well as the Human Potential Movement and its belief in the existence of an internal (unconscious) source of benevolent wisdom. This study will not locate the source of this wisdom within any specific spiritual or philosophical tradition.

2. That the mind's non-rational response to visual images provides an opportunity to bring to light beliefs and assumptions to which we do not otherwise have ready access.

3. That the scenes / moments / juxtapositions / tableaux to which our attention is sometimes intuitively attracted may symbolically or allegorically connote a personally significant issue to which our unconscious may be attempting to bring our attention (Rutherford, 2002; Rutherford et al., 2018).

4. That, by providing a means to accurately record "every salient particularity" (Smith et.al., 2009 pp.14) of those scenes and events to which our attention is intuitively attracted without the need for, or the influence of, conscious decisions, the camera provides a means to document symbolic signifiers of our perceptions, thoughts and assumptions to which our conscious, rational minds do not otherwise have ready access.

My previous projects explored the use of automatism in the creation of photographs (Rutherford, 2002; 2009; 2014; 2018; 2018b) and texts (Rutherford, 2018a). These projects demonstrated that, by giving up conscious control over the creative process, it is possible to create the conditions for insights from that part of the unconscious which thinks and expresses itself cryptically, but to which we do not have regular access. This project extends this research by considering *the Self as a holistic psychological entity revealed in a body of photographs*.

For this project, a small group of participants will be asked to 'unthinkingly' photograph those scenes / moments / juxtapositions / tableaux to which their attention is intuitively attracted but with which they may have no conscious or logical connection – and then to reflect on their associations with the elements and juxtapositions recorded in the resulting photographs as meaning-full expressions of that part of their unconscious which-thinks-in-pictures – a source of insight into the perceptions, assumptions and behaviours of first-year university students I examined in previous peer-reviewed articles (Rutherford, 2011; 2012).

By encouraging the rational mind (with its tendency to try to determine both the contents of our photographs and how they should appear) to *get out of the way*, this study offers participants the possibility of a transformative lived experience by providing the means to establish an oneiric dialogue with a source of benevolent wisdom to which we do not otherwise have ready access.

While this project shares the view of photo therapy – that, by giving the operator the means to respond 'at the touch of a button' without the need for, or the influence of, conscious decisions, "photography enables the unconscious to express itself" (Halkola, 2009 pp. 24) and that "photographs [offer] a route to an unconscious" (Loewenthal, 2013 pp. 83) – the objective of this project is not therapeutic, and so will not attempt to test or demonstrate improvements in facilitated outcomes. Instead, by encouraging participants to identify and reflect on the thoughts, feelings and memories evoked by their intuitively recognised and intuitively-made depictions of these scenes and juxtapositions to which their attention was attracted, this project will describe, explore and explicate participants' lived experience of Self-reflection.

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1 The word Self is used here to refer to the holistic psychological entity and is thus capitalised as a proper noun

2 *The unexamined life is not worth living* (Plato – *The Apology*, 38a5–6).

By providing an opportunity for participants to reflect on feelings and memories evoked by the photograph's particular form of representation (Harper, 2002) ("*entrusting to the hand the responsibility of* [revealing] *what the head itself ignores*" Barthes, 1994, pp.3) and by encouraging them to do so, this project also shares some of the characteristics of Photovoice and Photo-elicitation.

The project's contribution to knowledge is expected to be the insights (the 'phenomenological snapshots') into the narratives generated by the participants in their efforts to make sense of (to integrate into their narratives) the photographs they had given themselves permission to make – while the researcher attempts to make sense of the participants' sense-making (Finlay, 2014): to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of their world (Smith, 2004 pp.40).

This research will attempt to identify, explore and explicate:

1. The ways in which participants use *Self-reflective photography* in pursuit of enhanced Self-awareness;

2. The kinds of insights (if any) identified by participants using *Self-reflective photography*;

3. How participants using *Self-reflective photography* 'make sense of' and/or integrate these interpretations into their life narratives.

II Background to the project

While working as a commercial photographer (1982-93), I sought to pursue a career as a 'fine art' photographer. (I use the term 'fine art' to refer to works that enable the viewer to transcend his/her usual frame of reference and to IMAGinE[3] the world from a different perspective and which are therefore esteemed for their imaginative, aesthetic, or intellectual value.) To achieve this, I believed that it was necessary to reduce the influence of the many mercantile assumptions about photographic practice I had internalised during my undergraduate studies.

Aware that we consciously attend to only a small portion of our visual environment (Boothe, 2006 pp.90), I photographed those scenes (or objects or moments) to which my attention was intuitively attracted and allowed my intuition (defined by Jung [1959 para 504 unpaginated] as "perception via the unconscious") to determine the composition of the photograph.

At the beginning of this project, it was not my (conscious) intention to use the camera to access and describe the contents of my unconscious for the purpose of Self-knowledge. The discovery that it provided a means to do so was inductively reasoned from the resulting photographs.

One day in 1982, while out and about with my Rolleiflex, my attention was drawn to the juxtaposition of the tree under which I was walking and a high-rise apartment building. Without thinking about the reasons my attraction was attracted to this scene (which would have obliged me to 'change modes of thought', undermining my ability to draw on my intuition in composing the photograph), I opened the hood of my Rollei, set the lens at hyperfocal distance and swung and rotated the camera until the composition 'felt right' and released the shutter.

The resulting photograph, *Building and Tree*, describes a large, dark and barren tree which appears to advance from left to right across the frame towards a modern building.

Building and Tree, 1982 © Rutherford

In the days after printing it, this photograph dominated my attention to the extent that I often found myself getting up from doing something else to look at it again. There was clearly something about this photograph that "pricks me", what Barthes (1980) called the *punctum*.

> A photograph's punctum is that accident which pricks me (Barthes, 1980 pp.26-27).

[3] This text uses the typographical conceit IMAGinE to remind the reader that the root of the word 'imagine' is IMAGE.

I wondered whether, as the product of my mind's intuitive (rather than logical, rational) choices, the photograph might be a visual allegory – as recognised and authored by my dreaming mind.

Considered symbolically, the photograph depicts a dark organic form advancing menacingly from the left towards a logical and rational structure which appears to recoil in trepidation: a dark and unruly force of Nature threatening the bright, clean and linear work of Man.

Reflecting on my associations with its elements, the building seemed to represent my rational 'right thinking' mind, while the tree advancing menacingly from the left represented my 'sinister' unconscious: a natural force – and one all the more powerful due to the fears I had buried there. Reflecting on the relationship implied by the juxtaposition of the two, I recognised my rational mind's fear of this 'organic' and unruly power I could neither understand nor control and which, in the dark of my imagination, had grown to monstrous proportions.

In a remarkably similar photograph made just a few days later and using the same method, *la Femme Reculée* describes a female figure recoiling (from the French *reculer*) from a dark form advancing from the top-left corner of the frame.

la Femme Reculée, 1982 © Rutherford

Interrogated in the same way, this new photograph seemed to suggest that some aspect of my Self (as in dreams, the protagonist who experiences and/or actively participates in dream events usually represents an aspect of the dreamer, Rosen & Sutton, 2013 pp.1041) was under attack from (what I apparently saw as) a dark and malevolent force which, again, advanced from the 'high sinister' upper left of the frame.

According to the Jungian model through which I interpreted what my unconscious seemed to be trying to communicate to me, these two photographs presented me with depictions of (what Jung called) my *Shadow*:

> The Shadow (aspects of ourselves we are unable to acknowledge and have been repressed from conscious awareness) [is] the sum of all the unpleasant qualities one wants to hide, the inferior, worthless and primitive side of man's nature, the 'other person' in one, one's own dark side. [Jung] identifies it […] with the contents of the personal unconsciousness [and] if it is repressed and isolated from consciousness [it] is liable to burst forth suddenly in a moment of unawareness. (Samuels et al., 1986 pp.138-9)

Given the similarity between the two compositions – and that the second was made while I struggled to understand the first – it seemed that these photographs (or my mind's inclination to recognise this message in these compositions) indicted the existence of an intelligence clearly

intimate with my deepest fears and anxieties. That it should not only possess the ability to make itself heard, but that it should address itself to subjects I had effectively banished from the court of conscious awareness, shook me like a blow. It was as if others could hear the private voices of reproach and self-doubt that rang incessantly in my ears.

In reflecting on the accuracy of the allegorical 'picture postcards' that regularly appeared in my photographs over the next 18 years, I began to see that these 'messages' offered more than just accusations of my shortcomings: like cryptic notes pinned to tress and left for me to find, I also found messages of hope and encouragement from a voice that clearly knew me well – but seemed to like me anyway. By reflecting on the insights offered by this benevolent intelligence, I came to find a better balance between the demands of my rational mind and those of the irrational (but no less legitimate) voice of *That which I Am also*.

The categories of Photo Therapy as defined by Weiser (1999)

The literature on the use of photography to improve Self-awareness has identified three main approaches – what Weiser (1999-2014) has termed:

i. *PhotoTherapy* (written with no space between the words): the interrogation, under the guidance of a therapist, of photographs that record the analysand's life (such as family snapshots), many of which will have been made by others

ii. *Photo-art therapy*: a form of art therapy in which, under the guidance of a therapist, photographs (including those made by others) are produced, and/or modified and/or elaborated by the analysand as a way to externalise / give form to feelings and memories

iii. *Therapeutic photography*: the use of self-directed photographs for personal therapeutic reflection and self-discovery with no formal involvement by a therapist

As the majority of the literature exploring the therapeutic use of photographs has been authored by therapists, more attention has been (and continues to be) paid to practices (*PhotoTherapy* and *Photo-art therapy*) which require the involvement of a trained therapist. Less attention has been paid to – and less has been written about – the practice of interrogating our own photographs for valuable personal insights without the involvement of a trained therapist.

The use of photography to be explored in this practice-led research project does not depend on participants' prior knowledge of (or training in) either photography or psychology, but only a belief in the value of Self-knowledge. Further, this project will avoid framing either the data to be produced or the interpretation of this data in accordance with any established psychological tradition but, drawing instead on the hermeneutic tradition, will encourage participants (as the creators of the images) to reflect on and consider the potential personal relevance or significance of their photographs through their own life experiences.

For these reasons, rather than Weiser's term *Therapeutic photography* with its implied deference to the authority of therapeutic objectives, this study will refer to this practice as *Self-reflective photography*.

Having established in previous workshops (2000-02 and 2016-17) that others have found the interrogation of their own photographs to be a "enjoyable and really useful means to develop their self-insight as well as their ability, and inclination, to reflect" (Rutherford et al., 2018 pp.13), working with a small homogenous group of participants, this practice-led research will explore and explicate:

1. The ways in which participants use *Self-reflective photography* in pursuit of enhanced Self-awareness,

2. The kinds of insights found by participants using *Self-reflective photography* to enhance their Self-awareness, and

3. How participants using *Self-reflective photography* 'made sense of' and/or integrated these insights into their life narratives.

III Literature Review

The term 'photo therapy' refers to two very different practices:

- *The use of certain wavelengths of light in the treatment of physical or mental illness*, and
- *the use of photographs (and the ideas and memories they evoke) in the exploration of emotional and/or psychological issues*.

In this project, the term 'photo therapy' will used in the second sense.

Throughout human history, visual representations have provided a means to access – and to share the insights from – metaphysical, and often sacred, sources of esoteric knowledge.

Cueva de las Manos ('Cave of the Hands')
Santa Cruz, Argentina – 11,000 - 7,000 BCE

> [T]he parts of the brain that process visual information are evolutionarily older than the parts that process verbal information. Thus images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness [than] do words; exchanges based on words alone utilize less of the brain's capacity than do exchanges in which the brain is processing images as well as words (Harper, 2002 pp.13).

Since the Renaissance, the west has viewed art as a means of individual self-expression (Bailin, 2005). While operating within (or occasionally struggling against) the conventions of national and period styles and (what Wölfflin, 2012 termed) the temper of the age, art was assumed to reflect the temperament of the individual artist. This notion of 'individual expression' originally referred to the artist's choice of subject matter and its treatment, but by the late 19th century, there was a movement away from the effort to render the appearance of the natural world and towards "imagery that drew on fantasy, dreams, and individual expression" (Gilmore, 2004).

It was no surprise therefore, that art came to be seen as a source of insight into the unconscious.

Art Therapy

Art therapy refers to the use of the creative / plastic arts to facilitate self-expression and self-exploration: a means to represent and externalise feelings, memories and emotions of which the analysand may not be conscious or which may not be readily accessible to conscious, rational interrogation. Art therapy regularly makes use of artworks created by the analysand as well as those made by others to which the analysand is encouraged to respond.

As defined by the American Art Therapy Association (June 2017):

> Art Therapy, facilitated by a professional art therapist, supports personal and relational treatment goals as well as community concerns. Art Therapy […] engages the mind, body, and spirit in ways that are distinct from verbal articulation alone. Kinesthetic, sensory, perceptual, and symbolic opportunities invite alternative modes of receptive and expressive communication, which can circumvent the limitations of language. Visual and symbolic expression gives voice to experience, and empowers individual, communal, and societal transformation. (https://arttherapy.org/about-art-therapy/)

The use of art for therapeutic purposes was defined and recognised as a distinct discipline in the 1940s but developed in different directions in the UK and the US as a result of the perspectives of its leading proponents.

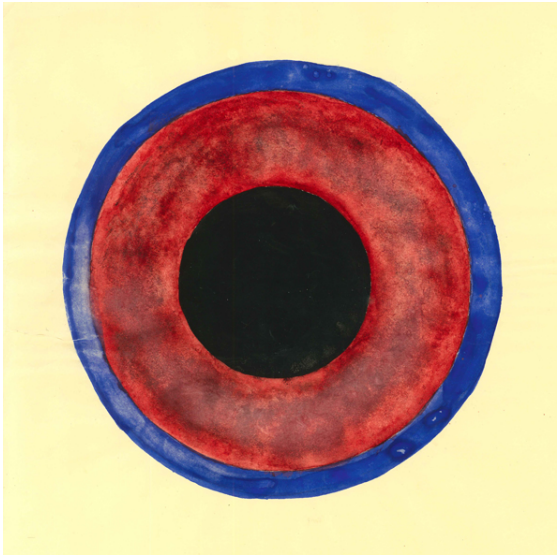
In the UK, Edward Adamson and Adrian Hill, proponents of 'non-interventionist' art therapy, believed that the therapeutic value of art was in *the act of making* – and so encouraged patients in mental hospitals to create freely for the purpose of self-expression without the comment, judgment or psychological interpretation by clinicians (arttherapyjournal.org). Throughout his long career during which he established the discipline in the UK, Adamson:

> …disapproved of psychological interpretation, which he considered the therapist's projections of their own beliefs onto the work. What mattered to Adamson was […] the person's narrative. (O'Flynn, 2011 pp.53)

In the US, art therapy pioneers psychologist Margaret Naumburg and artist Edith Kramer adopted Jung's view that, in creating art, "patients might be able to rediscover hidden parts of themselves as well as portraying their psychological condition" (Storr, 1989 pp.xi) and so believed that the primary therapeutic value of the art created by analysands was as *symbolic speech* which expressed the contents of the analysand's unconscious, the interpretation and analysis of which required the assistance of a therapist (arttherapyjournal.org).

Edwards (1989) suggests that the differences between these two attitudes towards the role and value of art within therapy (as an activity considered therapeutic in its own right – or as a means to create symbolic artefacts which, like dreams, must be interpreted by a clinician) may be traced back to differences between the classical and romantic schools of thought: the 'rational' belief that a person's state of mind could be inferred from a picture – versus a more positive view of subjective, inner experience and the natural healing capabilities of art.

Today, these differences can be seen in the emphasis of some art therapists on the process of art-making – while for others, the art produced by the analysand is considered – especially in cases where patients are reluctant to describe their thinking processes openly – a way for the analysand's unconscious to communicate with the therapist (Case & Dalley, 2014 pp.1) and point towards a new and better adaptation (Storr, 1989 pp.xii).



analysand's *Self-portrait in circles,* 1990

Photo therapy

Photographs are usually valued as accurate and objective records of scenes and events. In photo therapy however, photographs are valued and used (under the guidance of a trained therapist) as a means to prompt discussions of feelings and memories which lead to the reduction and/or relief of painful psychological symptoms and, ultimately, to facilitate psychological growth and therapeutic change (Stewart, 1979 pp.42).

> Photo therapy believes that Man inherently uses both halves of the brain, but that one half is usually repressed in a highly linear, "rational" society such as ours. Photo therapy also contends that virtually all human experiences - and therefore memories – are intricately related to visual phenomena, and it is impossible to deal thoroughly with one without referring to the other. (Stewart, 1979 pp.42)

Public recognition of the use of photographs in a therapeutic context began with the 1973 publication of *Photoanalysis; how to interpret the hidden psychological meaning of personal and public photographs* by Robert Akeret which examined the body language and proxemics recorded in family photographs as a way to understand the relationships between family members.

In 1975, psychologist Judy Weiser published the article *PhotoTherapy Techniques* and, in the same year, educational workshops on photo therapy techniques were led in Canada (by Weiser) and the US by Stewart, Krauss, Zakem, Entin and others.

As argued by Heidegger (1962), our reactions to and interpretation of these photographs reflects our assumptions which inform our "understanding of the world" and which can be "laid out by" our interpretation" (Heidegger, 1962 pp.190).

> The use of photography enables the unconscious to express itself in a non-verbal manner. (Halkola, 2009 pp. 24). Photographs and taking photographs help people to perceive events and to realise their importance at a non-verbal level (Halkola, 2009 pp.31).
>
> Photographs can be seen as a route to an unconscious (Loewenthal, 2011 pp.9).

Influenced by the Human Potential Movement, some early practitioners also used photographs with their clients in an effort to increase self-awareness.

> It was an orientation not rooted in the remediation or elimination of pathology. I often used to say, "You don't have to be sick to get better" (Krauss, 2020)

Central to the use of photography to improve Self-awareness is what Weiser (2014) calls 'photo-projectives':

> the meaning of any photo is primarily created by its viewer perceiving it – thus any photograph that draws interest (from either client or therapist) has potential use in the counselling setting (Weiser, 2014 pp. 167).

Similar to the differences in the positions of the practitioners of art therapy (between those for whom art is valuable as a therapeutic process in its own right and those for whom the art produced by analysands is 'symbolic speech' that reveals the contents of the unconscious which may resist verbal expression), practitioners of photo therapy use photographs *of* the analysand for insight into the interpersonal relationships, regardless of who was behind the camera – while others privilege photographs made (or modified) *by* the analysand for insights into the allegorical contents of the analysand's mind or imagination. These differences reflect what Krauss (1983b) describes as the dual *projective* and *metaphorical* quality of photographs:

> Client photographs are not only windows that show us the 'who, what, where and when' of their lives, they are also the mirrors, the symbols and the metaphors of their lives. Photographs made in the past as well as those made with instant materials during a therapy session have this quality and can be considered in this light. (Krauss, 1983b pp.65)

The literature on photo therapy has identified three distinct uses of photography – distinctions which have since been acknowledged and accepted as the three main branches of photo therapy practice. These three practices are known by the terms coined by Weiser (1999):

1. *PhotoTherapy* (written with no space between the words): the interrogation, under the guidance of a therapist, of photographs which document the analysand's familial and social relations (such as family snapshots), many of which will have been made by others,

2. *Photo-art therapy*: a form of art therapy in which photographs are created and/or modified and/or elaborated by the analysand under the guidance of a therapist as a way to externalise / give form to feelings and memories, and

3. *Therapeutic photography*: the use of photographs for personal therapeutic reflection and self-discovery with no formal involvement by a therapist

I will briefly discuss and consider each in turn.

1. **PhotoTherapy: the use of existing photographs (including family snapshots made by others) in which the analysand appears and the memories and feelings prompted by which are explored and interrogated under the guidance of a therapist**

The original use of photography in a therapeutic setting was first described by Akeret in 1973; Weiser (2014) termed this *PhotoTherapy* and defined it as a set of interactive techniques:

> …that use people's personal snapshots, family albums, and pictures taken by others (and the feelings, thoughts, memories, and associations these photos evoke) as catalysts to deepen insight and enhance communication during therapy or counselling sessions conducted by trained mental health professionals in ways not possible using words alone. https://phototherapy-centre.com/phototherapy-techniques/

According to Krauss (1993):

> Contemporary phototherapy [...] allows clients [...] to examine their lives and to review their personal histories through the photobiographical use of snapshots and the family album. […] Phototherapy utilizes both symbolism and projection as the basic technique or tool for treatment. Photographs taken by clients concretely and symbolically portray […] their 'map of reality'. (Krauss, 1993a pp.42)

Boy prepares to *'Fill his family full of lead'* at Christmas

While such photographs can provide valuable insights into the analysand's familial and/or social relations (for example, by enabling the identification and investigation of the emotional legacy for the analysand that, '*In every family photo, Dad always put me on the periphery of the group*'), the 'map of reality' symbolically depicted is that of the photographer not the analysand.

Acknowledging that "these symbolic communications arise directly from the unconscious", Weiser (1993-1999 pp.10) too, reminds us of the influence of the photographer's 'map of reality' on the resulting (symbolic) photographic record:

> In PhotoTherapy […] speculation about the goals, needs, or desires of the originator can be built into the investigative process. (Weiser, 1993-1999 pp.11)

This project, by contrast, seeks to explore the value of photographs which depict our 'map of reality' rather than someone else's.

2. **Photo-art therapy: the conscious creation and/or modification of photographs by the analysand, the significance of which is shaped by the guidance of a therapist**

The production and/or modification of photographs – including snapshots made by others and photos cut from newspapers and magazines – under the guidance of therapists trained in the practice of what Weiser (2014) termed *Photo-art therapy* "enable[s] the client to create powerful visual metaphors that are then used to achieve deeper self-understanding and personal insight" (Wolf, 2007 pp.125).

Photographs intentionally created by analysands include stylised and/or symbolic self-portraits (Weiser, 1993-1999) that illustrate "*How I think I'm seen by others*, *How I see myself*, and *How I want to be seen by myself*" (Stewart, 1979 pp.45) and the modification and/or manipulation of photographs of (characters who may *be*, or may simply *symbolise*) the analysand in accordance with both conscious and unconscious decisions (Fryear & Corbit, 1992 pp.xv).

Wolf encourages art therapists to:

> integrate creative darkroom procedures into their therapeutic work […] utilizing […] Adobe Photoshop software [as well as] traditional art materials to modify and elaborate the images [which allows] even further integration of creative elements that were not possible with more traditional darkroom photography. (Wolf, 2007 pp.25-126)

Producing images which appeared first in our imagination (a 'pre-visualised' image) provides a means to externalise, reflect on and interrogate important issues (see *la Païan*, 1998).

la Païan, 1998 © Rutherford

Made 10 May, (a date which I learned only later is the *fête de St. Jeanne d'Arc*), *la Païan* was a conscious attempt to depict (externalise) my 'mental picture' of Jeanne d'Arc: one whose faith in her subjective 'truth' gave her the courage to confront and overcome enormous obstacles and ultimately to change her world. (And, according to an essay by one of my French undergraduates, *Jeanne* also saved the dolphins.)

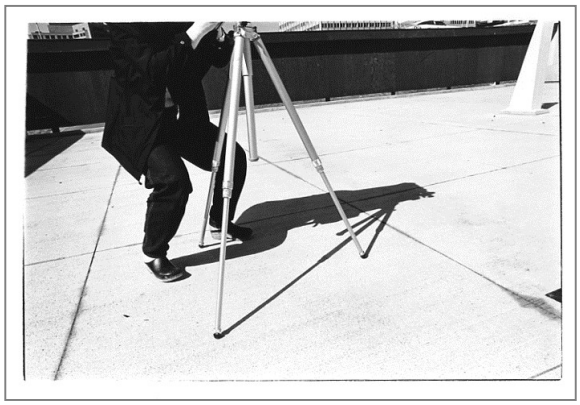
In producing such 'pre-visualised' images however – and in assuming that their depiction of our issues is 'emotionally accurate' – we must be prepared to acknowledge and consider the risk that the decisions we make in determining:

- their *content* (the selection of elements included in the frame: Krauss's 'who, what, where and when' of our lives),
- their *composition* (the spatial relationship created between the selected elements through which we will infer the meaning of the tableau) and
- the application of any post-production techniques such as creative darkroom procedures or the use of photo manipulation software such as Photoshop™,

are all susceptible to both our internalised assumptions about 'good', 'correct' or 'attractive' compositions as well as to our (possibly incorrect) assumptions about 'what we think we feel' about the issues we are attempting to describe in the resulting photographs, and which may distort or undermine the symbolic accuracy of the depiction of our emotions or memories.

3. Therapeutic photography: photographs made and explored by individuals for therapeutic purposes outside of a formal therapeutic setting

Although Stewart argued that, "while just taking photographs might be considered therapeutic by the photographer, it is not therapy" (Stewart, 1979 pp.42), many practitioners find value in what Weiser termed *Therapeutic photography* (what I have termed *Self-reflective photography*) as a means to self-directed reflection by examining our photographic snapshots of scenes and events for allegorical descriptions of affective memories or beliefs below the horizon of our conscious awareness to which our unconscious may be trying to bring to our attention.



the Shadow of the photographer, 1980 © Rutherford

The Shadow of the photographer depicts an anonymous photographer and three sets of converging lines. The first set (formed by the legs of the tripod), lead the eye upwards to the head of the photographer (the seat of logical, rational thought) which is clearly 'out of the picture'. Two others (the arrowhead created by the shadow of the tripod, and the rifle-scope cross-hairs created by the gaps between the paving stones which have the shadow 'in their sights') 'target' (and so draw attention to) the point at which the 'irrational' headless operator and machine become one. This is an example of the way in which the medium creates relationships between elements in the photograph which did not exist in the original scene.

Although some photographers (notably Minor White, Arnold Gassan and Ralph Hattersley) employed their cameras in pursuit of personal meaning, the literature on the use of photography to extend Self-awareness is dominated, for logical reasons, by those whose practice and/or research aligns with what I have termed 'therapeutic objectives': the pursuit and description of improvements in facilitated outcomes. Sekula (1982) argued that the "bounded arena of shared expectations" shape the 'kinds' of meanings and interpretations that are possible.

> In a very important sense, the notion of discourse is a notion of limits. […] It is this limiting function that determines the very possibility of meaning. (Sekula, 1982 pp.84)

As the objectives of this *Self-reflective photography* project are not therapeutic, there are a number of significant differences between this and all forms of photo therapy it is important to acknowledge.

Self-reflective photography differs from *PhotoTherapy* in two significant ways:

i. Selected by our intuition or unconscious, the scenes, objects, events or juxtapositions recorded in our photographs are symbolic descriptions of the photographer's own internal 'map of reality' (Krauss, 1993a), not someone else's

ii. The interpretation of the scenes, objects, events and juxtapositions recorded in our photographs are not influenced by the assumptions of a therapist

Self-reflective photography differs from *Photo-art therapy* in three significant ways:

i. Unless explicitly discouraged or excluded, our assumptions about both i) the kind of scene or event believed to be 'worth' photographing and ii) how it should made to appear – internalised principles of visual composition – are shaped by (what I have termed) 'compositional reflexes' – and further, the more experienced the photographer, the more difficult to avoid their influence

ii. As the resulting photographs (in both the selection / exclusion of the elements within the frame as well as their arrangement relative to one another) are the product of our symbolically literate unconscious, they are more likely to provide an accurate means to externalise / give form to feelings and memories (Rutherford, 2002) in a manner that minimises the potential for influence by our assumptions about visual representation

iii. The interpretation of the scenes, objects, events and juxtapositions recorded in our photographs are not influenced by the assumptions of a therapist

Self-reflective photography differs from *Therapeutic photography* in three significant ways:

i. Here too, unless explicitly discouraged or excluded, assumptions about both i) the kind of scene or event believed to be 'worth' photographing and ii) how it should made to appear – internalised principles of visual composition – are shaped by (what I have termed) 'compositional reflexes' – and further, the more experienced the photographer, the more difficult to avoid their influence

ii. While *Self-reflective photography* shares the views of the practitioners of therapeutic photography (as well as that of *Phototherapy* and *Photo-art therapy*) that "photography enables the unconscious to express itself in a non-verbal manner" (Halkola, 2009 pp. 24) and that "photographs can be seen as a route to an unconscious" (Loewenthal, 2011 pp.9), the objective of *Self-reflective photography* is not therapeutic (to identify or demonstrate

improvements in facilitated outcomes) but to provide for subsequent reflection and interrogation of a photographically accurate depiction of some scene or tableaux recognised as significant by *that-part-of-them-which-thinks-in-pictures*.

iii. By removing the conceptual frame of 'therapy' from the expectations, this practice can be employed by practitioners whose primary objective is to access their creative unconscious in the creation of fine art or narrative projects, rather than for therapeutic insights

The knowledge gap identified in the literature

The majority of the literature exploring the use of photographs as a means to improve self-understanding and aid personal growth is authored by therapists interested primarily in 'therapeutic objectives' and which, as a result, prioritises the practices of *PhotoTherapy* and *Photo-art therapy*. Of the 15 chapters in the text *Phototherapy and Therapeutic Photography in a Digital Age* (Loewenthal, 2013), the four not authored by qualified therapists nevertheless share the perspectives and priorities of the therapeutic paradigm: that the purpose of looking at our photographs is because 'there is something wrong that needs to be resolved' – and so begin from a position incompatible with the requirement of a phenomenological study to 'bracket' such assumptions. Significantly less attention has been paid to the investigation of our own photographs for the purpose of enhancing Self-awareness outside of a therapeutic context.

Two other research methods use photographs to prompt thoughts, feelings, memories and reflections: *Photo elicitation* and *Photovoice*.

Photo elicitation

Developed by Collier in the 1950s, Photo elicitation has been used in visual sociology and visual anthropology as a research technique "to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant's life" (Collier 1957, cited by Harper 2002 pp.14).

Although there is now more emphasis on using the participants' own photographs (Croghan et al., 2008), as with *PhotoTherapy* and *Photo-art therapy*, Photo elicitation typically uses photographs made by others. As with the Rorschach test, the interpretation is understood to be a *projection* and so does not consider the possible significance of *what* was photographed, or *the way in which* the elements were intuitively arranged and juxtaposed within the frame.

In her widely cited text (7809 citations as of September 2019) on visual research methodologies, Rose confirmed that, in visual sociology and visual anthropology, the "significance of the photos is seen to rest on what is pictured, not how it is pictured" (Rose, 2012 pp.30-31). Accordingly, Photo elicitation encourages us to look, not *at* photographs, but through them – as if through a portal (Rutherford, 2018b pp.8). As a result, the (often intuitive and non-rational) decisions made in the organisation of the elements (their framing and juxtapositioning) are unlikely to be recognised as a potentially significant source of insight.

Photovoice

Photovoice is another research method that has been used to elicit data that may enhance understanding of the lived experience in which researchers ask individuals to:

> take pictures of health resources and needs in their community [and then] discuss them in photo-sharing sessions with other individuals who are participating in the study (Plunkett, Leipert & Ray, 2013 pp.157).

Self-reflective photography differs from photovoice in three significant ways:

i. The objective of photovoice is to identify the significance and/or implications of the 'objective reality' of the social or physical environment, not our interior landscape

ii. Both the content (what has been photographed) and the appearance (the arrangement and juxtaposition of the contents relative to one another within the frame) of the photographs used in photovoice are the product of conscious intent

iii. The photographs used in photovoice are interpreted collaboratively: "to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns" (Plunkett, Leipert & Ray, 2013 pp.159)

Auteur theory

First articulated in 1954 by Francois Truffaut in the monthly periodical *Cahiers du Cinema* (Staples, 1966), auteur theory asserts that the director is the primary creative force behind the production of a motion picture and can therefore be equated with the author of a novel or a play. Moreover, auteur theory holds that the resulting motion picture is (to a greater or lesser degree) a symbolic self-portrait of the inner life of the director.

Sarris (2007 pp.6) argues that the contribution of the 'auteur' to the production of the motion picture takes three forms:

i. his/her *technical competence*,

ii. his/her *distinguishable personality* and

iii. his/her *interior meaning*.

I have chosen to use the term 'auteur' to describe this project to acknowledge the Self-referential nature of the body of photographs to be produced by the participants. (Although in this project 'technical competence' refers to the ability of the unconscious or intuition to recognise and accurately depict the symbolically significant and salient elements of the scene).

Review of my prior research into the use of automatism in creative media for Self-awareness

The Self-reflective photography project

In order to invite the contribution of my unconscious mind to the creation of the photographs, in the *Self-reflective photography* project *The Shadow of the Photographer* (1982-99), I devised a means to limit the influence of my conscious mind in i) selecting the scene and elements to be photographed, ii) framing the image and iii) choosing the moment at which I released the shutter in an effort to:

> …support the fabrication of thought [and] as a medium for communication with oneself. It can also be seen as a virtual sparring partner for training and learning, stressing again the aspect of agency of the medium, and "open-ended-ness" (Spierling, 2005 pp.10).

In reflecting on my associations with the symbolic meaning of the scenes, events and juxtapositions intuitively recorded in these photographs, I recognised relevant personal insights which, taken together, constituted a kind of 'psychological self-portrait' which regularly confronted me with disturbingly accurate descriptions of my fears.

However, as I persevered with this series and endeavoured, firstly to understand what they revealed to me about the perceptual reflexes through which I saw and related to the world around me – and then to act on the suggestions conveyed in these images, the photographs

gradually began to offer more than just accusations of my shortcomings, but messages of hope and encouragement from a source (not me, but some other part of my *Self*) whose accuracy and benevolence it would have been disingenuous to dismiss. As a result, the auteur of these photographs led me, slowly and with trepidation, to a better balance between the demands of my rational mind and those of the irrational (but no less legitimate) *That which I Am also*.

The knowledge gap left by this project:

Although the results proved to be valuable to me, this project provided no evidence that this practice could be used by or offered value or benefit to others.

The text-based automatism experiment

Having found valuable personal insights as a result of limiting the influence of my conscious intent in the creation of photographs, Rutherford (2018a) describes the results of a text-based experiment in automatism in which the same approach was applied to the aleatoric creation of a text in an attempt to determine whether, by similarly limiting the influence of conscious decisions in the creative process, the same source might also manifest itself.

Breton argued that, as a consequence of giving up conscious control over the decisions that shape the final work, the anti-aesthetic of Surrealism denies the role of the artist/creator and that the value of a work "is something which results from unexpected juxtapositions, and not from [the conscious decisions of the artist which determine] composition" (Barris, undated). Leaving aside the influence of the ego's desire for credit and applause implicit in this conception of the source of creative expression, according to this view, the artist/creator *is* his/her conscious mind.

The results of the experiment provided further evidence to support the inductive finding drawn from the *Self-reflective photography project*: that, by giving up conscious, rational control over the means of expression, it is possible to create the conditions necessary for a constructive and illuminating dialogue with our creative unconscious – what Breton (1924) described as:

> [P]ure psychic automatism, by which one intends to express verbally, in writing or by any other method, the real functioning of the mind. (Breton, 1924)

In (my interpretations of) its contributions to the form and/or content of creative outputs, the intervention of this unconscious source has provided me with many valuable insights.

Testing whether Self-reflective photography would work for others (1)

Between 2000-02, I designed and led a series of workshops with more than 200 MBA students at CERAM: *École Supérieur de Commerce* in Sophia Antipolis (France) in an attempt to discover whether others would find benefit in reflecting on their associations with the contents of their casual photographic 'snapshots'.

Workshop participants had no prior training in either photography or psychology. Participants in these workshops were asked to carry a small camera with them wherever they went and to be prepared to record scenes which attracted their attention – but with which they had no logical, conscious or personal connection. Participants were asked not to *think about* how to compose their photographs, but to allow their *intuition* to determine both what *thing/s* were in the frame *and* the moment at which it 'felt right' to push the button.

After eight weeks, participants were asked to identify the four or five photographs they had made at which, when leafing casually ('absent-mindedly') through the resulting photographs, they regularly and instinctively paused – and to consider the emotional or symbolic significance

(if any) they found within each. The participants' permission for the researcher to use and reproduce their photographs and reflective texts was secured in the form of signed statements.

While no analysis of participants' photographs and reflective texts was undertaken, the majority of the 200+ participants confirmed that they had gained valuable and constructive insights from reflecting on their associations with, and their interpretation of, the elements and juxtapositions they had 'unthinkingly' incorporated into their casual snapshots (Rutherford, 2002).

From the written report of one workshop participant:

> I must admit that, at the beginning, I was sceptical; I wasn't convinced that we could analyse our own pictures. Now I know it's possible. It has helped me to realise where my problems are [and] I've understood a lot of things. Now I'm sure it works: our pictures reflect our souls. I can't hide the fact that I've got tears in my eyes right now. I think that this must be the magic of photography. A.V. (Rutherford, 2009 pp.150)

The knowledge gap left by this project:

While the feedback indicated that this process provided the participants with valuable insights, the evidence was entirely anecdotal and not independently verifiable.

Testing whether Self-reflective photography would work for others (2)

In 2016-17, a second series of workshops was carried out under the auspices of the Centre for General Practice (Dorset) in which eight GP trainees who had completed 18 months of hospital rotations and were starting the final 18 months of their training in GP surgeries.

The GP trainees were asked to record those scenes, events or moments with which they had no personal connection, but to which they responded with an 'emotional tap on the shoulder'. The GP trainees were asked not to *think about* how to compose their photographs, but to allow their *intuition* to determine both what *thing/s* were in the frame *and* the moment at which it 'felt right' to push the button. The GP trainees were asked not to look for scenes or events that *illustrated* a feeling or emotional state (for example, not to photograph an elderly person sitting on a bench as a depiction of 'loneliness'), but instead, to record those scenes and juxtapositions of elements that intuitively attracted their attention and/or evoked an emotional response.

After six weeks, the GP trainees were asked to identify the four or five photographs they had made at which, when leafing casually ('absent-mindedly') through the resulting photographs, they regularly and instinctively paused – and to consider the emotional or symbolic significance (if any) they found within each. The GP trainees were then asked to prepare a self-reflective commentary of 500-1000 words explaining what they believe they had learned about themselves as a result of this project – and how the photographs led to this discovery.

An analysis carried out on the outputs of this workshop (the photographs and reflective texts submitted, and the evaluation questionnaire completed by the GP trainees) provided robust evidence that, as a result of identifying, reflecting on and decoding the narratives embedded in their casual photographic 'snapshots', the willingness, the competence and the commitment of the GP trainees to engage in personal reflection had been enhanced (Rutherford et al., 2018).

The GP trainees who took part in this project also acknowledged it to be beneficial for both their personal and professional development. (See table.)

Question	Low value	Intermediate value	High value
How interesting did you find the photography workshops?	0 participants	1 participant	7 participants
Overall, how useful did you find the photography workshops for personal development?	0 participants	1 participant	7 participants
Overall, how useful did you find the photography workshops for training to be a GP?	0 participants	1 participant	7 participants
To what extent do you think the photography workshops assisted you in developing your skills in reflection?	0 participants	0 participants	8 participants
To what extent do you think the photography workshops assisted you in understanding yourself?	0 participants	1 participant	7 participants

(Rutherford et al. 2018)

The knowledge gap left by this project:

While this workshop provided evidence that *Self-reflective photography* was able to:

- provide the GPs with a means to gain valuable insight into both the nature and origin of their emotions which impact on their clinical decision making, and

- assist them in establishing a dialogue with their emotions which enabled them to find a healthier balance between the demands of their personal and professional lives,

the results generated no information that would improve the efficacy of this process, including the style and/or clarity of the instructions / guidance provided for those who wish to increase Self-awareness and establish a constructive therapeutic dialogue with their own unconscious outside of a formal therapeutic relationship

Drawing on the knowledge and insights gained from my previous practice-led research, the current project will seek to enhance our understanding of how photographs and photography might be used to provide an opportunity for meaningful personal growth by consciously and critically reflecting on the issues sometimes brought allegorically to our attention through the scenes and events we have 'chosen' to photograph.

Research Questions

Based on the knowledge gaps left by the interrogation of the results of previous workshops, this project will attempt to improve our understanding of the potential of *Self-reflective photography* to provide a means for increased Self-awareness and (it is hoped and expected) Self-acceptance.

The research will seek to identify, explore and explicate:

1. The ways in which participants use *Self-reflective photography* in pursuit of enhanced Self-awareness;

2. The kinds of insights (if any) identified by participants using *Self-reflective photography*;

3. How participants using *Self-reflective photography* 'make sense of' and/or integrate these interpretations into their life narratives.

IV Methodology and approach

Research philosophy

The approach to knowledge adopted for this practice-led research study is *Interpretivism*, particularly *Symbolic Interactionism* which, according to Blumer, assumes that humans ascribe meaning to things, that "humans act toward things on the basis of the meanings they ascribe to those things" and that the "meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with others and the society" (Blumer, 1969 unpaginated).

In addition to this relativist ontology, it is recognised that the researcher and participants (those who will be asked to produce photographs and then reflect on their significance) will co-create meanings/understandings based on our individual interpretations of our respective experiences.

Practice-led versus *practice-based* research

As distinct from *practice-based research* in which the basis of the contribution to knowledge is a creative artefact, *practice-led research* leads to new understandings of practice (Candy, 2006) in which practice is not just the medium of the output but is integral to the method (Biggs & Buchler, 2008 pp.5) by which practice contributes to new knowledge and understandings.

In this *practice-led* research, the manner in which the photographs will be produced (by attempting to minimise the influence of conscious decisions regarding both the selection and composition of the elements recorded in order to allow the participants' intuition to determine both the content and the composition of the resulting photographs) the practice attempts to allow the unconscious mind to alert us to, and then, for reasons that are unlikely to be understood at the time (Krauss, 2020), prompt us to point the camera in a certain direction in the creation of photographs that may provide opportunities for increased Self-awareness.

Background to the selection of the Research Methodology

With the exception of those photographs made for scientific or technical purposes (which, by definition, invite a positivist view of the photographic record of the thing/s in front of the lens), what I have termed the 'common-sense view' of photography (Rutherford, 2018b) and what Batchen (1999 pp.5) described as the "dominant way of thinking about the medium" is based on the premise that photographs are the product of the interaction of three factors:

i. the appearance and/or behaviour of the thing/s in front of the lens
ii. the photographer's conscious intention (what we want to show you, or to which we want you to attend), and
iii. the photographer's expertise in the purposeful manipulation of the technology and materials in pursuit of an intended result. (We might call this the photographer's *personal style* which is the result of the internalisation of what I have termed 'compositional reflexes' – assumptions about framing, exposure etc. and the internalised aesthetic preferences in whose service they are employed – and which determine both the content and appearance of the resulting photograph.)

Flusser (2000 pp.15) argues that, as a result, the "apparently non-symbolic, objective character of technical images leads whoever looks at them to see them not as images but as windows". Put another way, we are encouraged to look, not *at* photographs, but *through* them – as if through a portal (Rutherford, 2018b) – in our effort to identify what the (supposedly objectively accurate) details reveal about the world 'out there'.

This 'common-sense view' of photographs as the product of largely conscious intent informs our assumptions regarding the 'kind' of information and insight we expect to find within them –

and so may discourage us from considering, from noticing – and therefore from investigating – the possibility that the content and/or composition of our photographs might sometimes be the result of an intent of which we may not be consciously aware.

In an effort to explore "a fundamental alteration of the relationship between the photographer, camera and subject" (Latour, 1990), this project will investigate the use of photography to record those scenes that have attracted the interest of our non-rational intuitive system.

Several writers who have explored ways in which to enhance Self-knowledge have extolled the value of spontaneous utterances – a means which I am here extending to the intuitive decision to record or document those scenes or events to which our attention is sometimes attracted. McLaughlin (1981) suggests that, by avoiding our internal editor in the expression of thoughts, we may (as I did in the photograph *Building and Tree* (1982), we can sometimes reveal our deeply-held beliefs.

> If you jot down every silly thought that pops into your mind, you will soon find out everything you most seriously believe. (McLaughlin, 1981)

Similarly, by minimising the influence of the participants' conscious decisions and instead allow their intuition to determine both the content and the composition of the elements within the frame, the resulting images can offer participants a rare glimpse into the beliefs and assumptions which inform their perceptions and thereby drive their actions and behaviours. This approach aligns with Bakhtin's position that spontaneous utterances should be treated as "responses in a continuing dialogue" (Billig, 1987 pp.18).

Research Methodology

As recommended by Norlyk and Harder (2010), I will briefly:

i. State the phenomenological approach
ii. Present the rationale for the chosen phenomenological approach (the philosophical ground for the choice of a descriptive vs. interpretive phenomenological approach)
iii. Present the research design (purpose, research questions, investigated phenomenon, sampling procedure and data collection, analysis process, and role of the researcher)

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

The phenomenological approach adopted for this study is *Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis* (IPA), also called 'double hermeneutic' (Finlay, 2014 pp.127). This will involve an Interpretivist paradigm (an approach Nicholls et al. (2005) suggest is integral to IPA) in which data collected through interviews and observations will be interpreted by the researcher in an effort to understand the lived experiences of the research participants, allowing an interpretation of the resulting data which is both descriptive and empathic (Smith, 2007 pp.21).

The objective of this study is to identify the way(s) in which participants use their photographs to access their intuition as a means to greater Self-awareness. With its capacity to "explor[e] human lived experience and the meanings which people attribute to their experiences" (Shinebourne, 2011 pp.18) and at a level of detail which participants might be unwilling or unable to do themselves (Smith, 2007 pp.21). IPA is therefore expected to provide the researcher with an effective way in which to capture, analyse and explicate the results of participants' efforts to make meaning of their photographs as a source of insight into their beliefs and assumptions which may be influential in shaping their decisions and behaviour.

IPA draws on *phenomenology* (a means to externalise, reflect on, interrogate, analyse and understand, subjective lived experience), *hermeneutics* (a means to interpret the expression of

ideas as a way to uncover intentions the photographer/author may have hidden from him/herself) and *idiography* (a means to identify subjective, individual meanings) to provide a way to disclose (uncover) how we make sense of major life experiences (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith & Osborn (2003) add that IPA is a useful means to discover how people "are perceiving the particular situations they are facing, how they are making sense of their personal and social world" (Smith & Osborn, 2003 pp.53). Smith et al. (2009) argue that an IPA analysis:

> …is geared to learning both about the person providing the account and the subject matter of that account (Smith et al., 2009, pp.37).

Rather than Giorgi's scientifically driven descriptive phenomenology (Finlay, 2014), IPA will enable the researcher to interrogate the ways in which participants 'make sense of' their photographs – to make sense of the participants' sense making. IPA will enable the researcher to explore, examine and explicate the ways in which participants may use *Self-reflective photography* in making sense of, and drawing valuable insights from, the relationship between:

i. the scenes & events participants are intuitively prompted to record,
ii. the way in which participants record/depict these scenes & events,
iii. participants' associations with the resulting depiction of these scenes & events, and
iv. how these depicted scenes & events relate to their lived experiences – especially those experiences of particular significance.

The following section will briefly discuss the approaches of *phenomenology*, *hermeneutics* and *idiography* as they relate to IPA in order to explain how and why IPA is believed to be the most appropriate means to pursue the defined research objectives.

Phenomenology

According to Husserl (1927, cited by Smith et al. [2009]), in order to make sense of our experience (our "plans, decisions, hopes, and so forth"), it is necessary to adopt what he termed a 'phenomenological attitude': to direct our gaze inward and reflect on our interpretation of our associations with, and our attitudes and feelings prompted by, the objects in the world.

> [P]henomenologists seeking to explicate 'lived experience' must do justice to the phenomenon studied; our research method needs to be responsive to the phenomenon. (Finlay, 2014).

By exploring and examining the ways in which participants identify and interrogate the significance of their associations with the scenes and events they 'choose' to photograph, the primacy given to our interpretation of own perceptions and experiences and their meaning in our personal narrative places this research squarely in the Phenomenological tradition.

In order to identify 'the essential qualities of our experience', the challenge is to find a means to depict these 'essential qualities of our experience' in a sufficiently accurate manner, as free as possible from our "assumptions and preconceptions" (Smith et.al., 2009 pp.14).

Husserl's approach (which, according to Smith et.al. [2009 pp.14], aimed for an investigation of consciousness – and so emphasised 'eidetic reduction' and the importance of the shared or common characteristics of phenomena) therefore differs from the objective of this project. In this project, I am seeking to improve our access to, and our ability to understand, the workings of our own individual consciousness through both *the meanings we make* ('people usually don't like me…') as well as *the ways in which we use visual phenomena to make meaning of* ('all of the trees in my photographs seem very critical and judgemental…') our individual experience.

Consistent with this focus on the individual and the ways in which s/he makes sense of his/her lived experience, this project assumes that the value of the scene or event recorded is encoded in the symbolic significance of its appearance (the combination of the elements within the frame and result of the angle from which it was seen and recorded) to the photographer.

Hermeneutics

Contrary to the descriptive phenomenological method of Giorgi (Finlay, 2014), who sought findings which can be replicated, in the hermeneutic variant of IPA:

> participants are seen to make sense of x while researchers make sense of the participants' sense making. Researchers are then advised to explore the semantic content and language used at a number of levels: descriptive (taking explicit meanings at face value), linguistic (e.g., noting metaphors), and conceptual (taking a more analytic approach). (Finlay, 2014 pp.127)

According to Smith et al. (2009), hermeneutics validates the use of intuition in the interpretation of texts (or, in this case, the interpretation of the appearance of the juxtaposed elements recorded in photographs) as a way to uncover the intentions of an author, even (or especially) an author which may be "unconscious to himself" (Schleiermacher, 1998 pp.266). And, just as the intentions of the writer will impress a particular form upon the text (Smith et al., 2009 pp.22), previous investigations into *Self-reflective photography* (Rutherford et al., 2018) have repeatedly shown that the unconscious concerns of the photographer will likewise often impress themselves on the form of the text in both *what* and *how* we 'choose' to photograph.

Hermeneutics is also central to the way in which 'the appearance of the juxtaposed elements' in the resulting photographs will be interpreted. As Heidegger explained, beyond (beneath?) their visible meanings, the appearance of scenes and objects can also have meanings that are concealed from conscious awareness, but which, under certain conditions, can come forth and present themselves to us (Moran, 2000, pp.230, cited by Shinebourne, 2011 pp.19). Previous investigations into *Self-reflective photography* (Rutherford et al., 2018) have demonstrated that our unconscious mind can sometimes recognise the usually hidden symbolic significance of these scenes and objects – meanings which can be captured or documented in a photograph and later brought to light in subsequent interrogation and analysis.

It is in the effort to identify and understand the significance of our associations with the scenes and events we have intuitively 'chosen' to record we can sometimes gain insight into some of our beliefs and assumptions. Smith (2007) argues that Heidegger believed that it is the effort to recognise the significance of our associations with the "one may only get to know what the preconceptions [...] are once the interpretation is underway" (Smith, 2007 pp.6).

In this case, our (admittedly subjective) interpretation of 'the thing itself' as it appears to us which, (like the inkblots of the Rorschach test), appear to be or depict an external object (an objective photographic record of something 'out there' in the world) provides a means to interrogate "this showing" (Smith et al, 2009 pp.24) of 'the thing itself in here'.

Consistent with the core notion of *the hermeneutic circle* which describes the vital and dynamic relationship between the part and the whole "and between the interpreter and the object of interpretation" (Shinebourne, 2011 pp.21), participants will be advised that:

> While it is easy to misinterpret a single image, by examining a group of photographs to which you respond, you may find valuable clues in their similarities and/or in their recurring themes and motifs. Likewise, clues found in the individual details of a particular image may prompt a re-evaluation of broader themes found throughout all of your photographs.

Participants will be encouraged to consider all elements in their photographs as *holons* (Koestler, 1967): simultaneously both *parts* – whose possible symbolic significance for the participant can and should be considered on their own terms – and *wholes* created by the juxtaposition of two or more elements in which they may find an additional layer of meaning.

For example, as observed over the course of eighteen years in my Self-reflective photography project *The Shadow of the Photographer*, the gradual change in my attitude towards my unconscious facilitated by this project – as revealed in the change in the depiction of trees in my photographs: from a dark and unruly power to a source of protection – was noticeable only by considering the photographs as a group.

Trees in New York, 1980 © Rutherford

Man and Tree #2, 1996 © Rutherford

Made in New York two years before recognising the implications of the photograph *Building and Tree* discussed previously, the photograph *Trees in Central Park* depicted the same dark and malevolent character of trees – in this case, in a manner reminiscent of the impenetrable forest of thorns surrounding the castle where Sleeping Beauty lay unconscious in her enchanted sleep. 16 years later, and as a direct result of the dialogue with the benevolent wisdom that I found offered to me through my photographs, in *Man and Tree #2*, the human figure (and proxy for me) sits within the protection of a healthy, vibrant tree.

As explained by Smith et al (2009):

> [T]he meaning of a word only becomes clear when seen in the context of the whole sentence. At the same time, the meaning of the sentence depends upon the cumulative meaning of the individual words. (Smith et al, 2009 pp.28)

This is consistent with Billig's (1987) statement that:

> One must understand words in relation to the contexts in which they are being used. Thus, the same word, or even sentence, may possess different meanings when applied in different contexts. (Billig, 1987 pp.121)

Idiography

The third feature of IPA is its interest in the particular (*idiographic perspective*) rather than the general (*nomothetic perspective*). Whereas the nomothetic approach attempts to draw out general principles of human behaviour, *the ideographic approach* seeks to describe the richness of individual human experience and gain insight into the unique way in which each individual makes sense of the world. IPA's commitment to the particular manifests itself in two ways: in its commitment to *detail*, and in its commitment to the significance of *particular experiential*

phenomena (an event, process or relationship) – and how this is understood (or how this looks) from the perspective of a particular individual (Smith et al., 2009 pp.29):

The importance of individual details in this project will be seen in what Barthes (1984) termed the *punctum* ("that accident which pricks me but also bruises me, is poignant to me", Barthes, 1984 pp.27) – details which are often the source of the significant personal insights in the photographs but which, due to the way in which these photographs will be made, are unlikely to be noticed or consciously included in the resulting photograph.

The ideographic approach will be demonstrated in the project's emphasis on the individual's interpretation of the content of the resulting photographs and on the reasoning process by which participants interpret the content in relation to his/her personal circumstances.

Montmartre, 1990 © Rutherford

Benediction, 1996 © Rutherford

Made halfway through my Self-reflective project, the photograph *Montmartre* (1990) includes the figure of a photographer within a protective circle of the unconscious (the trees). Unnoticed in the original scene and therefore not included intentionally, I did not discover this figure until I made the 10"x10" print.

In the photograph Benediction (1996), the juxtaposition of the birds and the heads of the two figures seated in the middle distance create an aureole. Too small to have been seen when choosing the moment to release the shutter, this detail is typical of the kind of 'gift' that began to appear in my photographs.

An acknowledged weakness of the idiographic approach is that, while it allows the identification of themes shared across participants' experiences, its focus on the individual will not allow robust generalisations to be made (Lee & Tracey, 2005). Accordingly, it will not be possible to draw or propose nomothetic results about the interpretation of the symbolic significance of the depicted scenes and tableaux without significantly more data than is to be collected in this study. This is not a concern, as this project does not propose to attempt to identify or devise any such 'dictionary' of symbols.

The following three inter-related aspects of 'lived experience' are also expected to be relevant as they are liable to influence participants' attitude towards and/or engagement in the project:

1. Participants' feelings and attitudes towards the prospect of being confronted by accurate insights into themselves, and

2. Participants' 'experience' of recognising allegorical depictions of their feelings and

memories in their photographs. (See the description of my reaction to the discovery that my deepest fears and anxieties had the power to make themselves known.)

3. The possibility that such 'experiences' may prompt reflections and reconsiderations (changes in our Self-concept) which may, in turn, be depicted or commented upon in subsequent photographs and so serve as material for further reflection.

As was noted in the review of the literature on photo therapy, phenomenology and ideography both have strong roots in psychology and psychotherapy (Shinebourne, 2011).

It is important therefore to recognise and guard against the potential influence of what were previously termed 'therapeutic objectives' (the pursuit of improvements in facilitated outcomes) on both the nature of the research objectives and the interpretation of results. According to Gibson (2018), both Heidegger (1962) and Gadamer (1989) emphasised that "the researcher cannot help but approach research with existing preconceptions, values and attitudes", and so the researcher must be aware of these and their potential to inform the interpretation of the results (Gibson 2018, 91).

Project design

This project will use a simple technique (making casual photographic snapshots) in an effort to improve our understanding of the way in which we use 'environmental tableaux' to represent, and thereby provide a means to reflect on, and by reflecting on, to enhance our ability to make sense of our lived experience.

Central to the design of this research, it will be necessary to reduce:

i. the influence of the natural desire to want to take 'good' photos and
ii. the inclination to approach the photographs as having therapeutic value

To reduce the influence of the natural desire to produce 'good' photos (those which confirm to traditional assumptions about what kinds of things should be recorded/depicted in photographs and the visual appearance of the resulting images), participants will be provided with strategies to explicitly minimise and the influence of the usual assumptions about both the kind of scene or event believed to be 'worth' photographing and how the recorded elements should appear – what I have termed 'internalised principles of visual composition' or 'compositional reflexes'.

To reduce the inclination to look at the photographs as having therapeutic value, the researcher will avoid using the terminology of therapy in discussing the objective of the project, and in the guidance provided about how to approach the significance of the resulting photographs.

Consistent with the ideographic approach, in both aspects of the design of the project (in the collection of data, and the two phases of the analysis of the results), the researcher will endeavour to retain a primary focus on the significance of the *particular experiential phenomena*) located within the perspective and the experience of the individual:

- The scenes, 'moments', juxtapositions and tableaux intuitively 'selected' by each participant,
- The personal significance of these scenes, 'moments', juxtapositions and tableaux as identified by each participant and the basis on which this significance has been identified,
- An interrogation by the researcher of the participants' interpretations of the photographs (their attempts to make sense of their reactions) and the accompanying reflective texts. This third-level analysis is not intended to provide an analysis of the psyche of the participant, but to identify patterns and trends across the data set(s).

In the analyses of the data (the participants' description of their efforts to identify the significance of the scenes and events they 'chose' to photograph), the interrogation of both the participants' self-recoded interpretations and the results of the subsequent interviews will move through a series of levels, beginning with an empathic record of the emotional and expressive dimension of participants' accounts of the phenomenon, to a more interpretative approach to the data and finally to a more abstracted and conceptual analysis, all the while remaining grounded in the participants' own words (Smith, 2007 pp.22).

The analysis of results (participants' descriptions of the way in which they approached their photographs, their associations with the contents and compositions of their photographs, and their responses to these identified associations), will begin with an examination of individual cases before moving onto an examination of any notable similarities and differences in the responses of participants in an effort to identify patterns (if any) in the significance to the various participants of what may be shared experiences (Shinebourne, 2011 pp.23)

V Research plan

Selection of participants

A brief explanation of the purpose and operation of *Self-reflective photography* will be distributed in the local area (email & posters?). The researcher will endeavour to recruit up to ten participants (the upper limit recommended by Smith et al., 2009 pp.52) prepared to commit to the duration of the project. (2-3 months) and to the amount of time required.

> Because IPA is an ideographic approach, concerned with understanding particular phenomena in particular contexts, IPA studies are conducted on small sample sizes. (Smith et al, 2009 pp.49)

Informed consent will be sought from all participants. This will clearly explain their right to withdraw from the study at any point during data collection (Smith et al., 2009 pp.54).

Participants will be asked to sign a release allowing anonymised transcriptions of the audio recordings of interviews which will be made solely for the purposes of transcription after which they will be deleted, and (anonymised versions of) their photographs and reflective texts to be used in appropriate academic/arts publications.

It is intended that a relatively homogenous group of participants will be recruited from the local community and the local business community via the university's network of placement providers. It is hoped to recruit an equal number of males and females.

For the Pilot study, participants will be recruited via a general circulation email to staff and (postgrad) students at BU as well as posters around campus.

To be excluded from participation:

- Those younger than 18
- Those with prior training or expertise in photography
- Those with prior training or expertise in psychology/psychotherapy
- Those known to the researcher
- Those over whom the researcher is in a position of power or influence
- Those unable to give informed consent
- Undergraduate students

Participants will be provided with a copy of the *Participant Information Sheet and Agreement Form* which explains the purpose of the project, what participants will be required to do, how the project will be carried out, and their right to withdraw from the project for any reason prior to the commencement of data analysis.

Issues to be considered and addressed and steps to be taken in planning and preparation (including ethical approval)

Autonomy requires that participants are regarded as autonomous agents rather than simply subjects. An accurate description of the objective and explanation of the logistics of the project will be distributed to potential participants to explain the purpose and possible benefits of the research to enable their informed consent. This will include a statement that participants are free to withdraw at any time prior to data analysis for any reason.

Based on previous workshops with 200+ participants, the researcher is confident that the unconscious of the participant is unlikely to confront the participant with emotional issues with which s/he is unprepared to process.

In the unlikely event that reflecting on their photographs raises issues or concerns about which participants would like to speak to someone, contact details for the following are provided on the *Participant Information Sheet and Agreement Form*:

- Samaritans Telephone: 116 123 or email: jo@samaritans.org (available 24 hours)
- NHS Mental health support helpline 0300 123 5440 (available 24 hours)
- their GP
- Any of the other services listed on the NHS mental health helplines

Participants will be required to sign a waiver acknowledging that they:

- have read and understood the description / explanation of the project,
- are willing to participate in the three sessions, and
- agree to allow the researcher to use anonymised versions of their photographs, their reflective texts and the researcher's analysis of both for the purposes of this research and for subsequent dissemination of the results of the project (including, but not limited to: exhibitions, publications, and public addresses).

Beneficence requires that the research should seek to maximise benefits to subjects while minimising harm and risk, arising as a result of the research or intelligence gathering.

Justice requires that particular groups or individuals do not bear disproportionate risks of harm while others reap the rewards. It is not expected that any participants will bear a disproportionate risk of harm or reward.

Description (how the research will be organised and conducted)

It is acknowledged that those willing to participate in this research are likely to have a pre-existing belief in the value of improved Self-awareness, and so will be self-selecting.

The research project will be prefaced by a small-scale pilot involving two participants.

Participants will be invited to attend two group sessions and one individual interview. Depending on participants' availability, for the first and second (group) sessions, participants will be organised into one group (of 4-10) or into two groups (of 4-5).

First session: the initial explanatory meeting (Group)

In first session, the researcher will explain the premise and organisation of the project.

It is recognised that rapport and trust are important issues in this project (Nicholls et al., 2005), as participants will be expected to share with a stranger (the researcher) potentially significant and intimate details of their thoughts and feelings. In an effort to establish rapport with the participants, in the first session, the researcher will share his experiences of discovering insights in his photographs in the Self-directed photography project (*The Shadow of the Photographer*).

Second session: discussing intuitive photographs (Group)

In advance of the second session, participants will be asked to submit an 'intuitively-made photograph which will be displayed anonymously for discussion by the group.

A series of questions will be devised in advance to guide the group discussion and assist participants in 'seeing' these photographs as metaphorical depictions of some issue of personal relevance or significance to the photographer.

The second session will be audio recorded to capture any potentially valuable comments. (A repeat of the second session may be organised if participants express a desire to come together once more to share / discuss their photographs.)

Third session: one-on-one semi-structured interviews (Individual)

In advance of the third session, an *interview schedule* will be prepared based on the questions to which participants were asked to respond in the *reflective text*. Similar questions are to be used in the interviews because ideas may occur to participants in conversation that did not occur to them in preparing their reflective text.

Following submission of their photographs and self-reflective texts, the researcher will meet with participants for one-on-one interviews. In these one-on-one interviews, participants will be allowed/encouraged to 'tell the stories' prompted by their reactions/responses to the photographs they have made. The set of questions to be used in these individual semi-structured interviews will guide the interview but will not constrain it.

In these individual semi-structured interviews, the researcher will attempt to develop rapport in order to be able to probe issues of interest that arise and will remain attentive to indications of the respondents' interests or concerns in order to follow these. As advised by Smith & Osborn (2003, p. 57), the objective is to "try to enter, as far as possible, the psychological and social world of the respondent. Therefore, the respondent shares more closely in the direction the interview takes, and the respondent can introduce an issue the investigator has not thought of". As Smith and Osborn (2003) also advise, the researcher will begin the interview with general questions and, if necessary, follow up with more probing questions (Did any of the photographs lead you to see a situation in a new or unexpected way? Did any of the photographs lead you to see yourself in a new or unexpected way? What did you think or feel about this new perspective? Did this new perspective lead to a change?) which will be prepared in advance.

The third session will be audio recorded to capture participants' responses to their photographs and their reactions to the outcome. Audio files will be made secure.

Video recording of the final interviews with participants was considered as a means to capture participants' body language, gestures, facial expressions, etc., but was rejected because the researcher lacks the ability to accurately interpret such signals and because it would present too much data to be interpreted. The researcher will however make notes of impressions of the participants' behaviour, demeanour, etc., in the interviews which may provide valuable data for the subsequent contextualisation and development of the analysis (Smith et al., 2009 pp.73).

What participants will be asked to do

In the first session, participants will be introduced to the idea that, if we are able to allow our intuition to determine the content and composition of our photographs, the resulting photographs can provide us with an opportunity to enhance self-awareness.

i. *Participants will be asked to attend three sessions*
    - In first session, participants will meet as a group with the researcher who will explain the premise and organisation of the project
    - In advance of the second session, participants will be asked to submit an 'intuitively-made' photograph which will be displayed anonymously for discussion by the group during the second (also group) session

- The third session will constitute one-on-one semi-structured individual interviews

ii. *Participants will be asked to make photographs*

Participants will be asked to carry a simple camera (or a smartphone or tablet) with them at all times and be prepared to record those scenes and events to which they feel an intuitive attraction.

Participants will be asked not to *think about* how to compose their photographs (not to try and produce a 'good' or aesthetically pleasing composition as doing so would undermine their ability to draw on their intuition in composing the photograph), but to allow their intuition to determine both the composition of the photograph and the moment at which it 'feels right' to push the button.

Participants will be instructed not to use any of the available 'filters' (apps) to modify the photographs when making it or to subsequently alter the image with software.

Participants will be asked to keep a record of the sequence in which each photograph was made and what was going on in their lives at the time that each photograph was made.

Participants will be asked to select (in accordance with instructions to be provided) approximately 4-6 of the resulting photographs and to reflect on the personal significance of the recorded scenes / moments / juxtapositions / tableaux.

iii. *Participants will be asked to reflect on the photographs*

Participants will be asked to reflect on and discuss each of the selected photographs as *individual images* and as part of a *group of photographs* to which they 'feel' they may belong.

When considering and discussing each of the selected photographs as *individual images*:

1. To describe and reflect on the 'story' they recognise in each photograph. (What is happening, or has just happened, or is about to happen to the 'characters' in this story?)
2. To identify and reflect on the visual symbols that led them to recognise the 'story' being told – and how they interpreted the meaning or significance of the various elements (both concrete and implied) within the photograph.
3. To explain what they believe that each photograph (or each group of photographs) appears to be trying to tell them – and why they think so.
4. To explain or describe the most significant event(s) or circumstances in their life (including their professional or family life) when each of the selected photographs was taken

When considering and discussing the photographs which belong to an *identifiable group*:

5. Whether there are recurring themes and motifs (objects or juxtapositions). Based on your associations with these elements, what do you believe these recurring elements represent?
6. Whether there are any elements or features which are conspicuous by their regular absence? Based on your associations with these elements, what do you believe these 'missing' elements represent, and what does their absence signify?

Throughout the project, the researcher will avoid endorsing the idea that visual elements 'mean' this or that, but instead, will encourage participants to 'use their intuition' and to 'put the situation into words' in interpreting the significance of both individual elements and their juxtapositions. The researcher will reiterate that the project is not therapeutic.

Finlay (2014) suggests that, in interrogating the data (the snapshots and reflective texts – the kind of data Ashworth [2003; 2006] described as "lifeworld fragments"), it can help to use the dimensions of *embodiment*, *selfhood*, *spatiality*, *temporality*, *sociality*, *mood-as-atmosphere*, *project*, *discourse*, *freedom* and *historicity* (Finlay, 2014 pp.127).

iv. *Participants will be asked to prepare a reflective text*

Having selected and reflected on 4 - 6 of the resulting photographs, participants will be asked to prepare and submit reflective texts in response to the six prompts listed above. (Participants will be permitted to audio-record and then transcribe their reflections.)

In addition, participants will also be asked to explain / describe what they consider to be the most significant event(s) or set(s) of circumstances in their lives (including their professional or family life) when each of the selected photographs were made. To understand the relevance of the photographs to the life experience of the participant, it is important to "consider the positions which are being criticised" (Billig, 1987 pp.121).

v. *Participants will be asked to take part in a final interview* about their responses to the project during which they will be asked:

- In what way(s) (if any) did this Self-reflective photography project assist you in understanding yourself? (What did you learn about yourself from this project?)
- How might the way in which Self-reflective photography was explained or presented be improved as a means to enhance self-understanding?

It is expected that, in the one-on-one semi-structured interviews, participants may offer relevant and valuable data not included in their reflective texts.

Although the participants' photographs will not be analysed/interpreted by the researcher as part of the data set for this project, it is expected that elements, features or aspects of participants' photographs (such as those listed in the six questions above) may form the basis of questions to be put to participants during the one-on-one semi-structured interviews as a way to prompt participants' reactions/responses to the possible significance of the photographs they have made.

Participants will also be asked to compare their attitudes to the following three issues to the attitudes they indicated/held at the outset of the project:

- Their attitude towards the value of insights from the unconscious
- Their confidence in their ability to (more or less) accurately interpret insights from their unconscious conveyed through visual allegories
- The potential value of using Self-reflective photography as a means to improve Self-awareness

As discussed in the discussion on idiography (above), the purpose of asking participants to address these questions is to attempt to gather the information necessary to understand, not just the participant's *interpretation* of the resulting photographs – but *the way in which* the participant interpreted this content in relation to (as refracted through the perceptual filter of) his/her life experience and personal circumstances.

The data to be collected

Three categories of data will be drawn from participants (their photographs, their reflections / thoughts / feelings etc. on their photographs, as well as the data drawn from the audio recordings of interviews with participants):

i. 4 – 6 photographs from each participant (the participants' photographs)

ii. Participants' written responses to the six questions/prompts (the participants' responses to their photographs)

iii. Participants' reflections on the *Self-reflective photography* project (the participants' reflections on the project)

iv. Audio recordings of final interviews to be transcribed (transcriptions of the one-on-one semi-structured interviews)

Participants' (written) responses their associations with the selected photographs are to be submitted as a text (although, if they find it helpful to do so, participants will be permitted to audio-record their reflections and then transcribe these).

How the resulting data will be analysed

The data (participants' written responses, reactions and the transcripts from final interviews) will be interpreted via an iterative process.

Based on Bradley & Simpson (2014 pp.9) the data will be analysed as follows:

i. The researcher will read each of the participants' (written) responses and the transcripts from final interviews to familiarise himself with the data, keeping an open mind about what was being expressed.

ii. In a second reading, initial thoughts and responses about the data will be recorded.

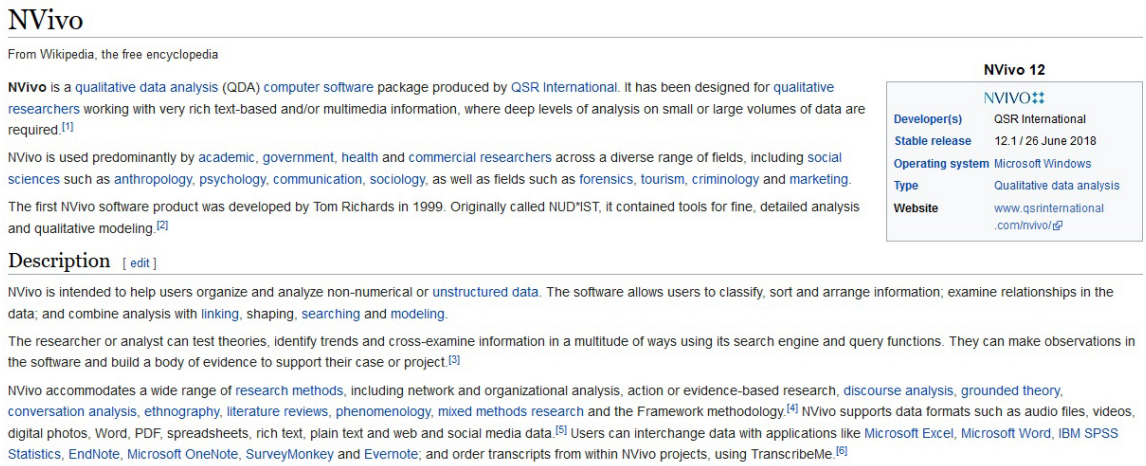
iii. Based on the researcher's initial thoughts and responses, the data (participants' written responses and the transcripts from final interviews) will be thematically coded

iv. In a third reading, notes will be made to summarise passages which contain interesting or potentially significant pieces of information.

v. In the fourth reading, themes will be identified / drawn from the above summaries of potentially significant pieces of information. These themes will then (in consultation with the supervisory team) be arranged into clusters based on shared characteristics, then finally grouped together to enable the identification of major themes used to select appropriately illustrative quotes from the participants.

Also as recommended by Shaw (2010 as cited by per Bradley & Simpson, 2014 pp.12), the researcher will maintain a reflective diary throughout the duration of the study as a part of an audit trail. The diary will be used by the researcher to record and to reflect on his evolving understanding of the data, from initial data collection through to the final thematic structure.

Data will be analysed with the assistance of NVivo (software for data analysis)



NVivo

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

NVivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required.[1]

NVivo is used predominantly by academic, government, health and commercial researchers across a diverse range of fields, including social sciences such as anthropology, psychology, communication, sociology, as well as fields such as forensics, tourism, criminology and marketing.

The first NVivo software product was developed by Tom Richards in 1999. Originally called NUD*IST, it contained tools for fine, detailed analysis and qualitative modeling.[2]

NVivo 12

Developer(s)	QSR International
Stable release	12.1 / 26 June 2018
Operating system	Microsoft Windows
Type	Qualitative data analysis
Website	www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/

Description [edit]

NVivo is intended to help users organize and analyze non-numerical or unstructured data. The software allows users to classify, sort and arrange information; examine relationships in the data; and combine analysis with linking, shaping, searching and modeling.

The researcher or analyst can test theories, identify trends and cross-examine information in a multitude of ways using its search engine and query functions. They can make observations in the software and build a body of evidence to support their case or project.[3]

NVivo accommodates a wide range of research methods, including network and organizational analysis, action or evidence-based research, discourse analysis, grounded theory, conversation analysis, ethnography, literature reviews, phenomenology, mixed methods research and the Framework methodology.[4] NVivo supports data formats such as audio files, videos, digital photos, Word, PDF, spreadsheets, rich text, plain text and web and social media data.[5] Users can interchange data with applications like Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, IBM SPSS Statistics, EndNote, Microsoft OneNote, SurveyMonkey and Evernote; and order transcripts from within NVivo projects, using TranscribeMe.[6]

Data protection

All identifying information, all photographs created and submitted by participants and all audio recordings will be kept on a password-protected university network drive.

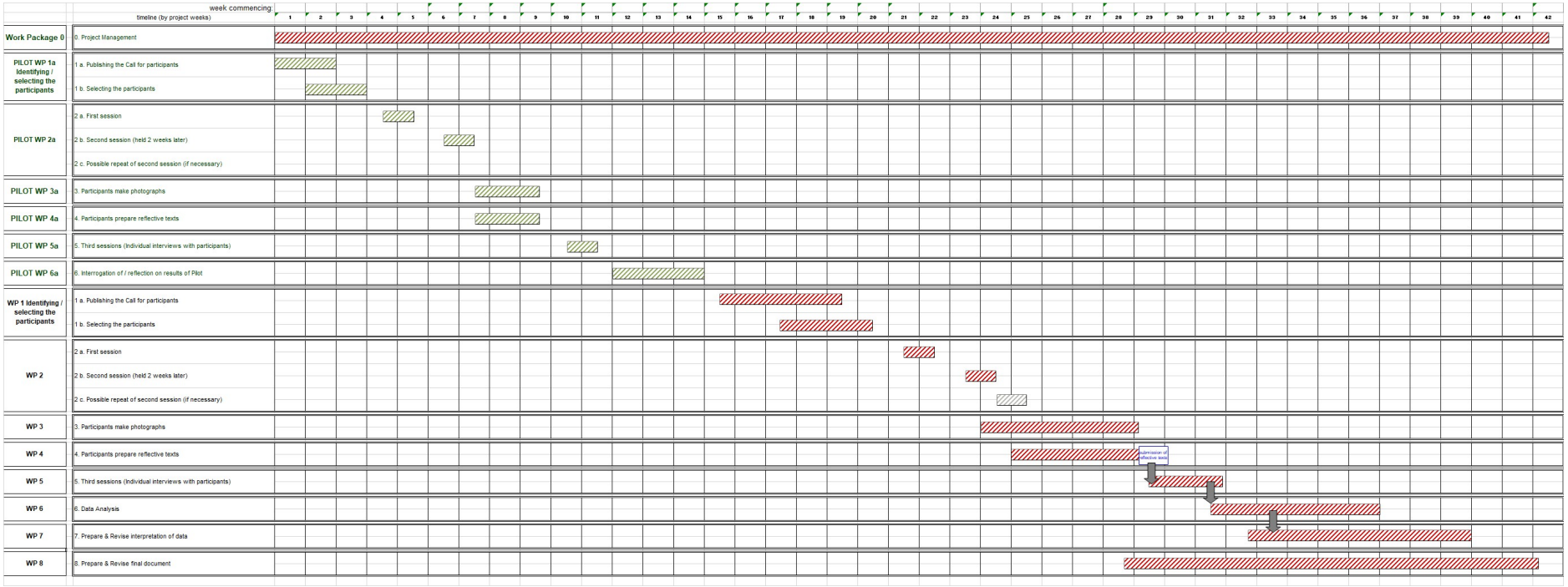
On the completion of the project, anonymised research data will be stored on the BU Online Research Data Repository "BORDaR". (Ethics checklist https://ethics.bournemouth.ac.uk/Login)

Following the submission of participants' photographs to the researcher, the faces of otherwise recognisable people in these photographs will be pixilated and the submitted files will be deleted. These photographs will be retained for a maximum of ten years for the purposes of publication and scholarly presentation, after which, they too, will be destroyed.

In the participant information sheet to be distributed to all participants (see appendix), participants will be informed that:

- Participants have the right not to answer particular questions and the right to withdraw from this study and withdraw their personal data at any time up to the point at which data analysis has begun.
- The confidentiality of information supplied by participants will be respected. All participants' data (photographs and all commentaries) will be anonymised.
- All information (all photographs created and submitted by participants and all audio recordings) will be kept on an external drive in a password-protected folder and will be deleted upon the completion of the project.

VI Project plan for the research (Gantt chart)



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