An Exploration of Pathography within Phototherapy,

An Analysis of the Photographic Self-Portrait

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ABSTRACT

This thesis presents and develops an advanced method of self-exploration for artists. The method, which incorporates the process of self-representation, enables a more authentic identification of the psyche of the artist to be created.

The objective of the research is to develop a restorative and valid therapeutic process that artists can apply to achieve further authenticity in terms of the work that they conduct. The process that is developed as a product of this research is an advancement of 'pathography', a term used by Sigmund Freud in 1910 in the final chapter of *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, to describe the psychoanalytic study of an artist through the works produced by the artist.

The specific method employed in the research involved myself as artist creating a photographic self-portrait, sharing this image with two psychoanalytic psychotherapists, who each then responded with their written analysis of the image. This led to the creation of a series of twenty-four images, informed by the written interpretations provided by the analysts, at approximate intervals of once a month over two years. This method allows the interaction of artist, artworks and analysts to develop dynamically. This collaborative process where the

written word is generated from the viewing of visual information, allows patterns or themes relevant to the research to be identified.

The research findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge by revisiting of 'pathography' and developing a new method within phototherapy, and, in doing so, provide a material progression in the context of the artist as a photographer. Recommendations are also made in respect of the implementation of this new method. Guidance is provided for researchers who wish to further investigate this area, particularly in terms of the research processes that can be adopted. I conclude that making photographic self-portraits in this way can be a restorative and valid therapeutic process.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY

Apperception   A process of meaning-making, assimilating new ideas with existing ideas already possessed. In the context of this thesis, the perception of any new experience in relation to past experience.

Auto-ethnography   A self-narrative that places the self within a social context or culture.

Condensation   The bringing together of two or more images to create.

Depth Psychology   An approach to psychology that explains personality in terms of unconscious processes.

Fantasy   A daydream, an imagined unreality that anyone can create. Fantasies may include elements of the deeper unconscious phantasies, but occur in a more conscious state.

The Frame   In psychoanalysis, the arrangement of the relationship between analyst and analysand, usually the location, time and cost considerations.

Free Association	A mental process by which one word or image may spontaneously suggest another without any necessary logical connection.
Happen-Across	A stumbling across awareness as if by accident, not by conscious thought or decision.
Imago	An unconscious object representation, as used by Freud.
Incongruity	Out of place, something that doesn't fit in its location or situation.
Latent Image	An image on exposed film or print that has not yet been made visible by developing.
The 'Other'	Identifies the other human being and recognises differences from self, constituting a factor in the self-image of a person.
Pathography	A term introduced by Freud in 1910 to describe the psychoanalytic study of an artist through the retrospective examination of his or her work.

Phantasy

A state of unconscious imagination. Symbols constructed from internal and external reality, modified by feelings, and emotions.

Phototherapy, Photo Therapy and Photo-therapy

Where photographs are used to elicit conversation leading to dialogue, with a therapeutic aim.

Projection

A presentation of an image on a surface or the unconscious transfer of one's own desires or emotions to another person or object.

Projective Test

A type of personality test intended to uncover unconscious desires and motivations, for example, a Rorschach test.

Psychodynamics

The study of psychological forces regarding desires and motivations and the defences against feelings. Predominantly involves enquiring into and digesting past experiences.

Reality testing

The adaptation of internal thoughts to use in the external world.

Recce   A shortened word for reconnoitre or reconnaissance of a location, to find and confirm the suitability of a location to take a photograph.

Reflexive   In the context of research, a method that takes account of the effect of the personality or presence of the researcher, on what is being investigated.

Signifier   A sign in physical form, printed word, or image, as distinct from its meaning.

Symbol   An object that represents or stands for something else, especially a material object representing something abstract.

Thematic Apperception Test

A form of projective test designed to reveal a person's social drives or needs by their interpretation of a series of images of emotionally ambiguous situations.

Threshold Consciousness

The boundary of the unconscious, or pre-conscious with conscious awareness, for example: 'half-asleep' or 'half-awake'.

Transference   In psychoanalysis, an unconscious process of the analysand redirecting their feelings towards the analyst. Counter transference is this process in reversed, or the analyst's experience of being with the analysand. This emotional entanglement is valued in psychoanalysis by way of gaining an understanding of the analysand's experiences of early relationships in particular.

[a] Truth   Not related necessarily to a fact or reality, but an emotional truth experienced.

PREFACE

Fig 1: Rowell, S. (2012) *Untitled* [photograph]

I have a face, but a face is not what I am. Behind it lies a mind, which you

do not see but which looks out on you. This face, which you see but I do

not, is a medium I own to express something of what I am.

(Bell, 2000, p.5)

I propose that the collaborative exploration in written language of photographic

self-portraits can produce a greater sense of self through therapeutic insight and I

call this process Pathography within Phototherapy.

I presented my artwork, alongside the original version of this thesis, but it became apparent that the passion for what I was trying do came across more clearly in the *viva voce* than in the form of the written language of my thesis which was attempting to be more empirically minded. In the institutions that I have been associated with, I have experienced an ongoing conflict between the creative aspects of any course, which I feel more aligned with, and the emphasis on aims and outcomes that can be documented. In my further training, I have chosen to go down the route of thinking of psychoanalysis as situated in the arts, rather than the sciences. This thesis can be seen as a creative extension of the method within my practice, rather than attempting to hold the method within a traditional structure of a PhD submission, drawing conclusions from analysis of findings. The writing and reading of this thesis might be seen as an experiential process alongside the creative practice. I wanted the thesis to be a written expression of the voice that I had in the presence of my artwork in the *viva*.

There are limitations to a project that comes about as an attempt to recognise and document unconscious psychoanalytic processes through creative practice; these are the unconscious processes in producing artefacts as an artist, and the unconscious processes in producing truths in the room as an analysand and analyst. I acknowledge that this thesis, alongside the series of artworks, is primarily a personal journey of self-disclosure; a reflexive account, subjective in nature, developed over time through the making of photographic self-portraits and interpreted through the lens of psychoanalysis. I present it because I believe it will be of use to others. Embarking on a creative and therapeutic process like this one also creates new opportunities of self, as the person who makes these

decisions needs a sense of self or to be in the process of gaining a sense of self as a continual journey. This dynamic process is not a fixed proposition. We are introduced to new elements and able to dismiss others as the narrative unfolds over time. The artist continues to make and re-make in order to happen across something that is recognisable in that moment, something that feels right. Even though you do not know why it is right, it might lead you to another position. The misrecognition is how you search for something recognisable. As Anton Ehrenzweig, art historian, wrote:

> Creative research proceeds in steps and stages; each of them represents an interim result that cannot yet be connected with the final solution… The creative thinker has to make interim decisions without being able to visualize their precise relationship with the end product.
>
> (1967, p.47)

It is as if you do not have to know what is going on to carry on, but just to believe in the work in progress.

Photography is and always has been a way in which I engage with my surroundings, recording not only what I see, but how I see, and with this I express how I feel I am seen and in this way communicate with the world I inhabit. What I see through the viewfinder, how I frame what I see, and how I represent this encounter in the form of the printed photograph; I propose that it is the re-engaging with this that creates new possibilities. The visual artefact

becomes the interface with my environment, with both internal and external relationships, and with the world.

Origins of Idea

For someone who is dyslexic,[1] having the opportunity to write a doctorate is probably quite unusual. I left school at 17 years old and became a photographer, because that is where I found my voice, rather than in expressing myself in writing. I had a forty year career in taking photographs, mainly commercially; editorial work, commercial work, advertising, and I was at a bit of a crisis as my job was spiraling into a different area, as at this moment digital photography came along. My paid work was dropping off quite dramatically, so I was in a position in my life where I needed to think about what I was going to do. I came to the Cass[2] and did an MA in Fine Art (Photography). This was a complete revelation for me; it was the first time that I had ever really done work for myself, or looked at doing things that didn't really have to please others or stick to a brief. I was happy to make images for myself, after a career of making images where the starting point was always someone else's idea, particularly as it was often very superficial as advertising is, as David Bate put it:

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[1] 'Spencer presents with specific learning difficulties that reflect a profile of dyslexia… He has some difficulties with grammar and written expression… not always able to express himself accurately and concisely, tending to go off on tangents… he may find it hard to keep an overview of a piece of writing in his head.' Spencer Rowell diagnostic assessment report, 18th January 2017.

[2] formally known as The Sir John Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design, London Metropolitan University

The argument that appearance is merely surface or 'cosmetic' and tells us nothing about depth-reality is a view only reinforced by the advertising industry's use of photographs.   (2009, p.79)

I had to believe that there had to be something more special with my relationship to photography. I became more interested in looking beyond the surface both in what became my art practice and also, in therapy.

I had been involved in the therapeutic community for many years. Through drug addiction in the past, I had spent many years in therapy and working with addicts as their 'sponsor',[3] so I was quite interested in the idea of becoming a psychotherapist. Alongside the MA course in Photography, I studied for a certificate in Counselling, [4] which was just a very basic to look at whether it would be interesting for me to do psychotherapy for the rest of my working life. These two parallel interests started to come together at what I feel was a really perfect time in my life; I was now in a position of using or recognising the camera as a tool of self-discovery, alongside using words as a tool of self-discovery in my therapy. It was hardly surprising that the two came together in devising what I think of as a version of Pathography within Phototherapy.

I started a tour of self-discovery through developing a fine art practice, alongside my studies in psychoanalysis, where the creation of an artefact and

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[3] The role of the 'sponsor' is the first port of call outside of the Alcoholics Anonymous meetings as someone who 'has gone before', who has some level of understanding of the process, an addict in recovery who 'one day at a time' refrains from using and commits to several meetings of AA per week.

[4] The pre-requisite to be considered for the PGDip Psychodynamic Psychotherapy Theory and Practice at WPF (Westminster Pastoral Foundation).

trying to find words to fit my experience in therapy are both attempts to reveal truths, often unpalatable truths. Engaging in these practices in parallel can be very useful in bringing the more unpalatable truths to the surface, as what has been thought of as unspeakable can be made manifest in visual representations that we can then try to find words for. The destructiveness of something that has been kept in the unconscious is disempowered once it can be spoken of. It is almost as if the inauthenticity of oneself is wrapped up in one's inability to reveal these unpalatable truths which can be seen as denial, and as soon as one has found the voice with which to talk about that, one is inescapably more truthful. This is the therapeutic aspect of Pathography within Phototherapy, as in bringing the image into language this process links authenticity with the voice.

On Being Fixed on the Surface

In retrospect, I see the fact that people weren't asking me to use my skills as a communicator through photography in my day to day work meant that I had to enter the world of language in order to engage more with the world. Gradually the photography business changed so that it started to feel as if experience did not count for anything anymore as experience cost money, so my skills and individual insight were not as much in demand. Having depended on my communication skills as a photographer, I had to go from 'I will show you what I can do' to 'I will have to convince you to be able to show you' with words. Previously, I didn't have to know why I was good at photography, as experience had counted for something: 'I don't have to think, I can do' – explaining or

thinking about this seemed to disempower the magic, as it felt as if aims and outcomes would become important rather than trust in perhaps an unexpected outcome.

I didn't feel I could call myself an artist when I was working as a commercial photographer. People would see me using techniques like double-exposing long before Photoshop, and they would say: 'You're an artist', and I would get angry and say: 'I'm just a commercial photographer'. Now, I want to find those people that I snapped at to say: 'I think you saw something'. I was blinded by the surface of the craft I was involved in, as if there was nothing behind it. As the art critic David Levi Strauss observed: '…some photographers grow weary of self-scrutiny and begin to ignore the most pressing questions about their medium…', but as he goes on to say, some 'have continued to ask the difficult, persistent, and recurring questions that arise whenever someone attempts to represent someone else.' (2014, p.10). I believe that sometimes it is important to look at yourself as if at someone else and this can be mediated by the words of an 'other' about the art you make. It is as if you do not have anything to say unless you have a voice that you have confidence in and know something of your own mind. If someone else is willing to listen, especially to what might not be being said, then it can help to re-make a relationship with an internal state, which can lead to more confidence in the way we think and we speak our mind. The psychoanalyst Kenneth Wright described this working in early relationships as: 'The image of the child that the "Other" conveys back to

him becomes, in this way, the form through which he grasps himself and comes to know himself.' (1991, p.270).[5]

The Trance as a Tool of Self-Discovery

As I immersed myself in the two disciplines of art and psychoanalysis, using my camera as a tool for self-discovery and using language in the consulting room as a tool for self-discovery, I realised that there might be similarities in these practices of entering a kind of trance or free-associative state in working. There are strong drives present within society that try to direct us towards being homogeneous. I believe that to remain true to oneself, we have to keep asking: 'Whose voice is it?' and 'Whose face is it?' I would argue that the intent in producing art is to find an authentic sense of self, informed by these questions, which is the same intention that I have when I go into a psychoanalytic session. As D.W. Winnicott put it: 'Feeling real is more than existing; it is finding a way to exist as oneself...' (1971, p.5). Finding a way to exist as oneself might involve ascertaining what of our identity feels 'real' and this may be easier to discern in a kind of trance, as the philosopher Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen described: '…in the trance, it is always a matter of a state in which one's own proper identity (or, at any rate, the social identity) is abolished…' (1993, p.118). In free-association, you allow things to come up that can offer signs of an authentic voice (whether audible or visible).

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[5] I may through this thesis, discuss early infant relations research, referencing the baby and 'his' or 'her' mother, but the reading of these terms can be less gender specific; the 'mother' stands for any primary caregiver and any reference to the gender of the child can stand for either.

Francois Roustang writes as follows:

> The fundamental rule of psychoanalysis proposes a radically different use of language. Here, it is a question of trying to speak without intention and to let words… independently of any organization imposed by conscious will. This is an apprenticeship in a language that opens toward other…
>
> (2000, p.25)

To allow us to practice psychoanalysis, I believe we have to be in analysis, and that might be a familiar feeling for someone who has an artistic practice involving self-critique and who makes work in the hope of engaging an 'other' in some way as a respondent. I have found that, without 'the other', objective insight is less probable, and it is important to recover this experience in its obviousness.

Interdisciplinary Research

I find being a psychotherapist as creative as being an artist, and I have also found writing this thesis a creative occupation. I am in a somewhat unusual position of embodying the results of the interdisciplinary nature of this research, and using myself as a subject brings challenges of how to write about it dispassionately. I like to think of the psychoanalyst and theorist John Gedo's recommendation to accept that it is not necessary to be detached:

And that brings me to the great sticking point of interdisciplinary dialogue: historians of culture are much more interested in created products than in the people who conceive them; psychoanalysts are interested in personal motivation, almost to the exclusion of everything else. Dialogues across these disciplinary boundaries often amount to nothing more than arguments over whose agenda should be adopted. Creativity research is a relatively new field of endeavor, thus far mercifully free of such rigidity. On this neutral ground we can all agree that W. B. Yeats's rhetorical question, 'How do you separate the dancer from the dance?' need not be answered.

(1996, p.xii)

The image we show to the world and its relationship to our internal state is complicated. The argument about whether there is a core unified self or that we are the sum of external connections goes on. As an artist, psychoanalytic psychotherapist and researcher, I am interested in the artist's internal voice finding a truth and authenticity in art practice, in this case, specifically through the production of photographic self-portraits. It quickly became evident that this project leads to the artist and analysts bringing about a narrative similar to that invited by psychoanalysis, where one might engage in *a lot of repetition*, in order to visualise oneself from different angles, and that it is not fixed. Psychoanalysis reveals something of truths and doesn't concern itself with the present obsession with showing an inauthentic self to the world. It is as if vulnerability has to be hidden at all cost behind the 're-touched' avatars in a virtual reality that people

are increasingly confusing with the image they have to show to the world. Using psychoanalytic thinking, we can attempt to see what hides behind this representation even though we have become very adept at concealing more than we show. It is as if in embracing collaboration, one is embracing dependence and maintains the 'other' as a more healthy conversation to be immersed in.

This thesis, in combination with the production and presentation of the series of photographic self-portraits interspersed with the writings, the documentation of the making, the reading of and the re-making of images and text is concerned with a collaborative process with two psychoanalytically-trained therapists. The collaboration is key to this process and therapeutic in nature. This practice offers an artist an opportunity to show internal worlds, consciously or unconsciously, and I would say that this self-exploration in sight of another has great therapeutic potential. This research will demonstrate the documentation of a dynamic process of a collaborative creative exercise that can enrich ideas of psychoanalytical theory and that of clinical practice, as well as artistic practice.

An Internal Conversation Made Public;

The Artist's Relationship with His or Her Practice

Psychoanalysis is concerned with the relationship between our inner and outer worlds – how we take in and make sense of external events and how we put our inner thoughts and understandings back into this world. This research documents the relations between inner and outer in the context of photography and

phototherapy with the photographs used as a representation of the inner world exhibited in the outer. I developed this method to make a self-portrait that would be more than just one visual representation of what we offer the world; it is a self-portrait made up of a series of photographic self-portraits interspersed with text to make a narrative. I wanted to find my voice within written language so that the self-portrait could speak for itself. I asked psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists to respond to my images, so that I would be able to step outside subjective norms. Then by a process of re-appropriating parts of their writings, I could claim something of their language to make my own. From this experience, I wrote a text to accompany the series of images to make a more rounded self-portrait.

A Series of Viewpoints Accompanied by a Written Narrative Can Express More of a Sense of Who One Is

The addition of words to denote the artist's 'voice' as part of a self-portrait can show more of how we think, and how we announce how we think. By exploring the authenticity of these images and voices and how they interplay, an artist can speak from a place of what might feel true at that point in time. This self-exploration means that what I feel I look like and sound like is more in tune with what an 'other' might think I look like and sound like; I am more attuned to how I am seen and heard in the world. The self-portrait that I have made during this project is not beautiful, it is not unbeautiful; it is complicated, in its harshness

and distress, even broken apart, but it is more representative of how I feel I am. There is always going to be a sense of dissonance, but something may ring true if we can think of a representation as something that provokes discovery and new inner and outer dialogues.

In this thesis, I reflect upon how this method can help bring about self-awareness. I will also examine how it might compare with other therapeutic uses of photography and other artists' use of photography as a form of personal insight. The method and this thesis based on it can be of use as a tool of self-discovery and as an insight into an artist's internal dialogue.

When I had this idea, I spent some considerable time looking into previous research that involved presenting artwork, for analysis with the function of thinking psychoanalytically about the work and I was surprised to find I couldn't find anything alluding to this method. I assumed that this idea, which may initially be seen as idiosyncratic, is original, and I felt it was worthy of some enquiry. There is quite a lot of research into phototherapy: work that uses photographs as a form of projection that might elicit conversation in a therapeutic relationship as a kind of art therapy, but this is different because the emphasis is on the art objects and the writings being the conduits through which the therapeutic relationship is mediated. It places a different value on collaboration as the analysis is seen as integral to the creative process, and what I came to realise is that working in this way with two individuals created a new interpersonal dynamic that in itself could be therapeutic, as a chance to re-experience something of the original family dynamics from a different perspective.

It has been interesting to find out in the process of revising this thesis that I can be described as having a type of dyslexia, as the process of describing my work has led me to think quite seriously about how I have always approached my communication with the world. Finding parallels between photography and language, and my relationship with each of these modes of communication, has occupied an important place in this enquiry.

It could be seen as an attribute of dyslexia that when I read something, certain words and phrases stand out to me, which could be described as a special form of thematic analysis. When I was growing up, I never read novels. I enjoyed the relationship between words and images in comics as if the speech bubbles were images of text representing the voice of the character. It is what I 'see' and what I see 'said' that comes together as narrative. I have come to realise that my relationship to the written word is more of a visual experience than for other people in that I see words the way I see images, so I visualise the voice. In devising this form of Pathography within Phototherapy, I developed a method which meant I could search through the written responses to my self-portraits and then re-search the words again, as a form of ongoing thematic analysis. When I was scanning the text, phrases stood out to me, it feels a familiar experience to me as there is an economy to the way language is used with an image, as in comics. There doesn't have to be an end to re-evaluating the language that has been returned from the presented images to find different ways

of understanding what has been seen and described. This process may be of particular use to other artists with dyslexia, of which there are many.[6]

The project consisted of six stages.

Overview of Method: Six Stages of this Project

Stage one: I produced a self-portrait in the knowledge that it would be written about by two psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists, referred to as DB and EB according to their wishes to remain somewhat anonymous (see fig.11. on p. 144 of thesis and p.11 of Appendix)

Stage two: DB and EB each responded to the image (without conferring). I refer to the encounter between each analyst and an image as a 'session', the documentation of this consisted of each analyst's interpretations alongside the image (see 'Session I – DB's Response' – and 'Session I – EB's Response' – on p.11 of Appendix).

Stage three: I made a new self-portrait, not just a photographic image, but constructing, deconstructing and reconstructing the image, consciously or unconsciously informed by the reading of DB and EB's writings to date. This

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[6] 'At the RCA… 29 per cent of current students identify themselves as dyslexic, compared to 5–10 per cent of the overall population.' (Royal College of Art, 2015).

happened 23 times over the two-year period (see 'Sessions II-XXIV' in Appendix).

Stage four: I made a thematic analysis by revisiting all the pieces of writing from DB and EB, piecing the words together that spoke to me and made it into a first person narrative, italicising the words I added in trying to integrate the two voices into one that I could claim in some way as my own. At this point, I kept the feedback from each image separate and in chronological order, as a narrative ('Sessions I-XXIV' in Appendix).

Stage five: I edited the words put together in stage four to construct what I think of as a 'Foreword' introducing the series of photographic self-portraits, as traditionally, a 'Foreword' is written by someone who knows something of the author. ('Foreword' on p.2 of Appendix).

Stage six: Building on the experience of weaving the two voices of the analysts with my own, I had the confidence to write a self-portrait in the form of the 'Preface' or artist's statement to introduce the series of photographic self-portraits ('Preface' on p.5 of Appendix).

The Appendix is a record of the self-portrait developed through this process, bearing in mind that being in the room with the actual artwork would offer the viewer a more direct experience, of the kind DB and EB had. Traditionally, the Foreword acts as an introduction written by someone who knows the author. In

this case, it is the piece of writing put together from the words that spoke to me within DB's and EB's responses, which I re-appropriated to claim as a first-person narrative. The Preface within the Appendix acts as the artist (myself) introducing the project, followed by the work made during the project. The volume in its entirety is dependent on a collaborative dynamic, as it retains traces of the language of the others, of DB and EB.

INTRODUCTION

Fig 2: Rowell, S. (2015) *The Process of Pathography*

[installation at the Union, Greek Street, Soho, London. 13.01.15]

If it were possible that a person should give a faithful history of his being, from the earliest epochs of his recollection, a picture would be presented such as the world has never contemplated before. A mirror would be held up to all men in which they might behold their own recollections, and, in dim perspective, their shadowy hopes and fears — all that they dare not, or that, daring and desiring, they could not expose to the open eyes of day. But thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits.

(Shelley, 1815)

Guide to the Thesis

In the Preface, I introduced the origins of the idea of developing a method that analyses artwork to see something of the artist's pathography. I will discuss a way of making artwork which might reveal unconscious processes, if something akin to a trance can be used as a tool of self-discovery, drawing parallels with psychoanalytic working. I described my experience of bringing my own art practice within sight of my psychoanalytic training and practice and what this interdisciplinary research might contribute to the area of phototherapy. I discussed how this method where artwork is made in the knowledge it will be analysed, means that an internal conversation can be made public. I call this a form of self-portraiture where a series of viewpoints accompanied by a written narrative can express more of a sense of who one is. I described the six stages of this project as a method that can be used by others.

In this guide to the thesis, I offer a map to what follows as I introduce this method which is a version of Pathography within Phototherapy involving the analysis of the photographic self-portrait in collaboration with two psychoanalytic psychotherapists who write about the encounter with the images during 'sessions'. I discuss the evolution of the photographic self-portrait and its relationship with self-searching.

I will go into greater details about the method in Chapter One, the intersubjective nature of this method having come out of two practices which can be used to reveal and hide what is 'inside'. I discuss narcissism and the importance of the 'other'. In looking at surface and depth interpretation and

through exploration and self-examination from these encounters, we discover new ways to say the unsayable using the power of image and language within a therapeutic engagement. I discuss the role of the latent image in its role as a pause 'to think' which occupies an import part of the eventual encounter with the image. I go into further details in describing artistic practice and the re-appropriation of 'their' language to bring the pictures into language.

In Chapter Two, I describe the genesis of this method of Pathography within Phototherapy and the importance of psychoanalytically-trained therapists to analyse the images. This idea came out of my experience of asking for 'analysis' of a photograph from a previous project, which led to finding something of significance in the image through re-engagement, which I felt was worthy of additional research.

Chapter Three is concerned with how the collaboration became a way to work out family dynamics crucial to the therapeutic nature of the research. This entailed ethical considerations which are also discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Four is the literature review which became the underlying theory of Pathography, including researching existing therapeutic uses of photography in phototherapy. I put forward how and why I introduced the important element of analysing the image with written language and how this links with psychoanalytic theories.

In Chapter Five, I look at some of the work of Larry Sultan and Jo Spence, other lens-based practitioners who have used photography to explore ideas around family albums and self-portraiture. I put myself through the experience of analysing my responses to Larry Sultan's artwork and speculating

whether that could tell us anything about his pathography. I speculate about their

relationship to their practice as versions of Pathography. I discuss how art

practice can lead to an understanding of one's relationship with self and how this

method which brings a photograph into language could further this process, and

from there, I draw my conclusions about this line of enquiry.

The Appendix acts in a twofold way: as a collation of all the images and

writings produced during the project and as an artist's book.

A Version of Pathography within Phototherapy

The concept and process of Pathography was first introduced by Sigmund Freud

with the publication of *Leonardo Da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood*.

Despite his caveat that 'It would be futile to blind ourselves to the fact that

readers to-day find all pathography unpalatable…' (1910, p.130), he wanted to

find a way to explore and present something of the biography of an artist through

analysing the artwork and written work, without skimming over the 'traces of his

life's struggles'. Leonardo da Vinci had no chance to respond, but in this project,

I give myself and others the chance to respond to what can be seen of me,

however unpalatable, through this version of Pathography within Phototherapy.

Pathography is further defined by psychotherapist Nicky Glover as '[t]he

viewing of art as a privileged form of neurosis where the analyst-critic explores

the artwork in order to understand and unearth the vicissitudes of the creator's

psychological motivations' (2009, p.3). It occurred to me that to take the stance

that a self-portrait is authentic, the artist has to have some measure of his or her

'psychological motivations'. I wondered if it might be possible to have more insight into 'the vicissitudes' of *my* 'psychological motivations' by developing a process whereby I could make a more accurate representation of self, through the creation of photographic self-portraits with the involvement of 'analyst-critics'. Three possibilities occurred to me:

1) The analysts might intuit something of the artist's pathography (although, to some extent this might be seen as projection from the analysts' internal worlds).

2) The artist might experience the process of creating the work as therapeutic with the practice itself creating insight of self.

3) The artist and the analysts may learn something of themselves and through the exchange of images and written analysis and all parties may find this process therapeutic if they can usefully 'use' the process.

Analysis of the Photographic Self-Portrait

The two psychotherapists, referred to as DB and EB, were in psychoanalytical psychotherapy training and were also practicing psychodynamic psychotherapists, as I was myself at the start of this project.[7] The project took the form of a removed form of therapy or 'distance analysis' (Freud, 1925), drawing parallels perhaps with the forming of a therapeutic relationship between Wilhelm

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[7] We have all since qualified and I am currently halfway through another psychoanalytic training at the Site for Contemporary Psychoanalysis.

Fliess and Freud in the years 1887-1904 through their exchange of letters and ideas which formed the basis of Freud's analysis which led to psychoanalysis as a theoretical method (Masson, 1985). Over the course of this 'distance analysis', involving an exchange of my images for words from DB and EB, the evolution of therapeutic relationships within this collaboration became fundamental to this enquiry.

I have a sense of self-representation that I attempt to make visual through pieces of artwork. In this project, these images have been brought into the world of language by the analysts' written responses and it is the reading of the written word and the continued development of the visual image that allows me to develop this self-representation. I wondered what might be achieved in terms of self-awareness through the viewing of the artwork and my reading of the transferential and counter-transferential nature of the responses. Understanding transference, which means one person's unconscious redirection of feelings laid upon other people or objects that evoke feelings from their past, was crucial to this aspect of my project. As a practising psychoanalytic psychotherapist, I experience this, and also counter-transference as the analysand's unconscious positioning me into a place of how she or he might feel. One reason why psychoanalysts in training are in analysis ourselves is so that we can differentiate between whether these feelings are our own or might be more appropriately located in the 'other'. By 'other', I mean someone able to observe one's self, both in reality and fantasy. I believed counter-transference would be an important part of the process as DB and EB felt their way into the meaning of my artwork, in a similar way to an analyst trying to feel her or his way into the intra-psychic

world of the analysand. We might say that transference and counter-transference are important processes in the way we engage with art.

In Collaboration

As mentioned, an important part of this process was the collaborative working relationship which developed between DB, EB and myself, which was characterised by a sharing of vulnerability, as we all gave each other and ourselves permission to be. DB and EB were invited to use any of their own counter-transferential feelings when describing the works presented based on a trust that we were each in charge of our own self-censorship. As psychoanalytically trained therapists they possess the experience necessary to protect themselves from the feeling of having revealed too much of themselves in writing about my images. From my point of view, I was considering an image to give them of myself, as if saying: 'There's something of me that is being shown, yes, of course, you are going to be projecting something on it, but my intent is to send something of myself for you to see'. Also, as psychoanalytically trained therapists, we are alert to trying to sort out and articulate what might be transferential and counter-transferential feelings. I knew I wanted that experience to be an acknowledged aspect of 'analysing' the images. As Linda Berman, both a psychotherapist and artist, wrote about phototherapy:

It is important that the therapist takes note of the impact of the patient and the photographs on her – such feelings are positively useful to the therapist in gaining a real understanding of the patient's world by actually feeling into it herself through her counter-transference responses.

(1993, p.60)

As in therapy, I wanted to allow the process time to give it the best chance of being 'positively useful'. I wanted to leave enough time after having made each self-portrait to 'take note of the impact' on me and on the analysts, for us all to gain 'a real understanding' of what I was showing of my 'world' through their written descriptions of their own counter-transferential responses. I had already established at the start of this project that my self-representation was not going to be made by one image; I decided to create a series of twenty-four self-portraits over two years. I was partly inspired by Henry Fox Talbot's series *The Pencil of Nature*, the first ever known sequence of photographs to be published, comprising twenty-four images taken over a two-year period between 1844 and 1846 (Bate, 2009, p.16).[8] I had decided on a two-year time scale, unlike open-ended psychoanalytic psychotherapy. I didn't stipulate the length of time DB and EB spent writing about the image, but I did think of their encounters with each image as a 'session'.

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[8] *The Pencil of Nature* was meant to show the applications of photography as Talbot saw it. Although all but one are photographs of inanimate objects, we can glean much of how he wanted to be seen from his choice of what to photograph and how.

The 'Sessions'

The self-portraits were delivered to the Guild of Psychotherapists, the institution where DB and EB were both in training, at an approximate frequency of one image per month. I chose this structure in order to give time for them each to write about it, and for me to absorb what they had written and let that inform me in making the next image. Some of the language of their responses particularly resonated, or 'spoke to me'. The making of further images was then consciously and unconsciously informed by these responses to what might have been revealed by the unconscious in other images, in the hope that I would be able to show more of what is on the inside and also show something of how difficult it is to show what is usually hidden. Elements of these images and written responses contributed to a shared lexicon which built up throughout the project. Wright described something like this as 'the creation of a joint and living language within which the pulse and feel of the patient's experience can be shared' (2009, p.125). In this project, the 'joint and living language' of all our experiences, re-informed subsequent images and their written responses to these. In some pieces, the text was literally incorporated into the image as part of the dialogue between artist and analysts throughout the development of the project. The series of photographs was developed through the editing of images, making of prints, re-making into three-dimensional artwork, alongside my reading and editing of their written analyses in which themes emerged to be explored further in new work. Through this process of editing the analysts' responses into a first person narrative that I could claim as my own, I gained the confidence to write what

could be thought of as an artist's statement to accompany the series of self-portraits. I see this as a preface to introduce the visual and textual self-portrait made during this project, presented as appendix to this thesis, with a view to publishing this as a limited edition artist's book. This could accompany the viewer around a solo exhibition where all twenty-four images can talk to each other in the same room as different aspects of myself to be seen as a whole.

Evolution of the Photographic Self-Portrait

Increasingly in the modern period, the artist's self-portrait has offered an opportunity for insight into the artist, as the invention of photography allowed artists to veer away from the demand for verisimilitude. Art historian Omar Calabrese described this growth in creative expression: 'The portrait was originally the reproduction of a physical identity concerned with someone's appearance, that is, the way one visually recognises an individual subject. However one can expand the meaning of both identity and appearance' (2006, p. 29), I argue that this could be managed by involving more of the artist's voice and its association with the way we often think in words. Bate wrote: 'If the photographic portrait is a shorthand description of a person, then portraiture is more than "just a picture"… Portraits fix our identity in what is essentially an art of description.' (2009, p.67), but that 'fixing' is only one facet of the subject's identity at that moment. My practice-based research seeks to expand the meaning of identity by bringing the language of psychoanalysis to visual self-

representation. As introduced above, the making of a series of self-portraits can be a way to explore identity as being made up of many different viewpoints. As Susan Bright, a curator of photography, writes:

One might then ask why self-portraiture was not killed off by post-modernism. On the contrary, the genre has gone through something of a renaissance over the last ten years in both photography and painting. Many contemporary artists who use self-portraiture in their work shun modernist notions of an authentic, unitary self, and continue to break down identity into various elements in an attempt to discern what remains of the objective self.

(2010, p.9)

It might be fair to say that it is more interesting when artists who use self-portraiture in their work use photography to 'discern what remains of the objective self', as photography is associated with the 'objective' capturing of an image. As John Berger wrote:

Unlike any other visual image, a photograph is not a rendering, an imitation or an interpretation of its subject, but actually a trace of it. No painting or drawing, however naturalist, belongs to its subject in the way that a photograph does.

(1991, p.54)

I would say that the 'trace' is revealed upon the photograph's interpretation. In my project, where a series of images placed within their written interpretations can remain in conversation with each other and invite other descriptions that can be added or subtracted from this narrative, the self-portrait is made up from a series of 'traces' of the subject in an attempt to get away from the idea of a 'unitary' self. In this dynamic process, any combination of the images making up this series could offer an expression of the self at a given point in time. The self here also emerges as a source of understanding of otherness and relatedness.

Self-Searching

In writing about this project, I put myself in the position of auto-ethnographer within 'a form of self-narrative that places the self within a social context', as described by Deborah Reed-Danahay (2006, p.15). More specifically, it combines photo-biography with ethnography – the latter being the domain of an anthropologist's personal engagement with the person being studied – within a particular setting by using photographs as this form of self-reflection. Embracing this auto-ethnographic approach frees the researcher from the traditional methods of writing up data and promotes a narrative presented in a more poetic form. Robert Krizek, a researcher of ethnographic methodologies, expresses concern about the possibility for auto-ethnography to devolve into narcissism and that there will be always a judgement on the nature of the findings (2003, pp. 141–152). A degree of academic suspicion arises as it contravenes certain qualitative

research traditions and for many, auto-ethnographic methods of enquiry are criticised '…for being biased, navel-gazing, self-absorbed, or emotionally incontinent, and for hijacking traditional ethnographic purposes and scholarly contributions', as another autoethnographer Garance Maréchal puts it (2010, p. 45). However, as Krizek emphasises, auto-ethnography, no matter how personal, should always connect to some larger element of cultural life. I feel that in writing about my own experience as subject in this method I call Pathography within Phototherapy, I am able to demonstrate the therapeutic use of photography within art practice. Where the researcher is not only subject, but also the creator of representations of this subject interpreted by analysts, 'knowledge' in this context must be seen not as specific and quantifiable 'truths' but in terms of a way of describing possibilities, a description of what might be there to be revealed, as Ellis termed it, the 'narrative truth' in auto-ethnographic writings (2004). What was required was much the opposite of theory-driven, hypothesis-testing research methods that are based on a positivist epistemology, characterised by the detachment of the researcher from the researched. I felt I had to be 'in' it to know it. The nature of this project attempts to gain understanding from a position of accepted reflexivity where there is acknowledgement that this is a reflexive account of my own experiences. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to re-write this thesis in a way that rejects the deep-rooted dyad of objectivity, that of the researcher and the researched, objectivity and subjectivity, process and product, self and others, art and science. I situate the analysis of my artwork as a form of hermeneutics, a theory of interpretation of written texts, but also interpretation of verbal and crucially non-

verbal communication, along with phenomenology, the analysis of experience, as methods for identifying the 'essence' of the internal world of the thinking-self brought about through interpretation. As Greenwood and Loewenthal suggest, 'this phenonomological-hermeneutic approach… is concerned with illustrating 'meanings' in contrast to methods that are intent on providing a definitive answer' (2005, p.43). I concluded it was more appropriate to this project to write about '[a] diversity of ideas working towards a discovery of "meanings" rather than the focus on "a meaning"', as the researcher Robert Donmoyer proposed (Dunmoyer, 2000, cited in Greenwood and Loewenthal, 2007).

CHAPTER ONE: Details of the Method

Fig 3: Rowell, S. (2013) *Session XVIII* [photograph]

Alone with our madness and favorite flower

We see that there really is nothing left to write about.

Or rather, it is necessary to write about the same old things

In the same way, repeating the same things over and over…

(Ashbery, 1979)

Two Practices with which to Reveal and Hide

Psychoanalysis is concerned with the interaction between the outer world and inner world; how we take in and make sense of external events and how we put our inner thoughts and understandings back out into this outer world. This might be more visible in the work of artists. As Freud wrote in 'Formulations regarding the Two Principles in Mental Functioning':

An artist… finds the way back to reality, however, from this world of phantasy by making use of his special gifts to mould his phantasies into truths of a new kind, which are valued by men as precious reflections of reality…

(1911)

This thesis is concerned with a process which can explore the possibilities of looking at unconscious motivations and phantasies and how they might be used to present 'truths of a new kind'. My research documents a process by which, through the production of self-portraits and their analysis by psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists, photographs may form a representation of an inner world of the artist and relationships in the external world. Through practice, I am moving from a position of being psychically hidden, to a place of being observed; and through the production of these photographs and their presentation I discover a way of observing myself. This collaborative method encourages this use of the camera as a way to explore and present self-representations and combine it with the mediation of psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists to explore the language of response.

Inside

In this series, each individual image offers a snapshot into inner worlds and when viewed in sequence over time, a narrative of an internal world may become more visible both to the artist and viewers. Self-portrait photography could be a way of putting undigested experiences into an object, the photographic print. Each image reveals something else and also, in conversation with the other images, the potential of a complete image yet to be imagined. The self-portrait of who we would like to be is important. As I pondered these reflections of theirs and I offered more images that in turn have potential of more discoveries and awareness of my inner world, an alternative picture emerged which was a combined narrative emerging from the collaboration. From my own experience of this, I can say that there is potential for what could be felt as an inevitable, though temporary loss of certainty over identity. I believe that having the chance to play with self-representations over a long time led to a feeling of being able to creatively re-build a self-identity on my own terms, giving insight into what a notion of identity is, and I present this as a method that could be of use for others.

Artists looking 'out there' for answers, so to speak, may not concur that they may also simultaneously be looking 'in here'. However, I would offer here the view that all art practice can be described as a form of self-portraiture that explores this relationship between inside and outside. To take the example of my chosen practice, photography: photographers are drawn to particular subjects for

a reason, they point the lens, focus in a particular direction, edit, and, importantly, choose what not to see, crop it out. As Berger wrote:

…every time we look at a photograph, we are aware, however slightly, of the photographer selecting that sight from an infinity of other possible sights. This is true even in the most casual family snapshot. The photographer's way of seeing is reflected in his choice of subject.

(2008, pp.2-3)

As photographers, we make public these choices and in doing so, we make our internal dialogue external to some degree and to some degree, say who we are. Exploring the internal motivations that might be represented by those aesthetic choices, particularly in the creation of an image that is specifically called a self-portrait, can offer critical as well as personal insight. The method I devised involved giving myself the chance to make and re-make in an attempt to clarify this communication and offer a portrait of self-constructed multiple views within language.

The Trouble with Narcissism

I am aware that developing a version of Pathography within Phototherapy that entails analysis of self-portraits as part of a self-reflective practice could be deemed narcissistic or vain. The word narcissism is not associated in this concept with vanity, but being closer to an understanding of a 'beloved view of oneself'.

The difference being that being narcissistic in a traditional sense would be having your gazed fixed on the surface reflection of what you see as when you look in a mirror, being unable to ponder what is beneath the surface. I believe it is important to be curious about oneself in order to be able to produce work from a position of authenticity and 'truth', and essential in any development of identity as an artist to locate one's voice. As Wright wrote:

> Finding a personal voice, however, is not the exclusive concern of the psychoanalyst; it is an issue for any creative person, not lease for the patient who frequently discovers an authentic voice during the course of an analysis.
>
> (2009, p.123)

Being in therapy could also be described as narcissistic, as one continually discusses what one thinks and says, but it is not one-on-one, it is one-to-one. As the psychoanalyst John Steiner notes: 'Both seeing and being seen are important aspects of narcissism.' (2011, p.25). The relationship between analysand and analyst is vital, alongside an intrigue with oneself, in order to find or recognise one's own voice. The idea of concentrating on oneself in this seemingly narcissistic way, to dig below the surface, means that one no longer has to present a narcissistic surface to the world. It occurred to me that narcissism is predominantly image-focused in the original myth, but the elements of listening and language, with the oft-forgotten role of the 'other' represented by Echo in the story, shifts the emphasis from the visual to another kind of more free-floating

attention. Narcissus was so entranced by what he saw of himself that he ignored the words of the 'other'.

Importance of the 'Other'

The artist may not be the best person to speak to in order to get a sense of what their work is about. The artist might be caught up in a self-informing circle of their own making, an internal discussion or a creative block when it feels as if nothing can be made. When someone begins an analysis, they often come because they are aware of a block or 'feeling stuck' and then gradually become aware that they are doing the same thing over and over again, caught in a self-informing loop. The analyst's job is to try to highlight signs of what has been repressed coming to the surface, so the analysand can hear the echo of their voice recognising what has previously been unconscious. Hearing the echo of one's voice might be a way of getting one out of the obsessional fixation of the frozen image – as soon as there is a witness, there is a sense that your voice might be being heard. To think you can do it on your own is narcissistic.

Choosing to work in sight of an 'other' who bears witness, a new dimension gets us out of our own heads and gives us perspective on how we think. Collaboration in this case might involve thinking about what the other thinks or says, perhaps most importantly what is going on unconsciously when the artist thinks about what the 'other' thinks or might say. The artist's fantasy of the 'others' thinking is how to get yourself out of the loop of your own feedback,

to feel viewed or heard by an 'other'. This positive critical reception can help prepare for a bigger audience. In this particular case, some of these images have been included in exhibitions and I plan to offer to a wider 'readership' through an artist's book and other publications in the future.

Based on my experience of being both analysand and analyst, as well as artist, I designed this project in the belief that it might be interesting for all concerned to engage in analysing images in this way. The importance of this project to me, and to DB and EB, meant that momentum was sustained throughout the two-year period. It could be very rewarding for any artists interested in another's views on their artwork – and also for any therapists interested in finding out something about themselves in the process of writing about another's work. The opportunity for growth and change enabled by a therapeutic relationship with an 'other' means someone can break out of a vicious circle of feeling like one is only talking to oneself. To be confronted with an 'other' who can hold a different view highlights that we all embody multiple viewpoints and can encourage creative thinking and creative communication.

Surface and Depth

Art, like psychoanalysis, is about attempting to say the unsayable. I have always been interested in the relationship between the content of the photograph and the photographer, specifically in relation to what is in the frame and what has been edited out. I think of painting as having a canvas as a frame to fill. You bring paint on to the canvas. You bring it into the story. In photography, you crop, you

grade, you zoom in or you zoom out, and you choose to negate things around whatever it is that you have framed. Writing about photographs in the context of phototherapy, Berman suggests:

> Our photographs can confront us with the existence of such confusing disturbing clashes and inconsistencies that beset us internally and externally in our daily lives. If we are able to look beneath the surface, we can use the photograph in therapy to help us focus and concentrate on any incongruities, either in what we perceive in the picture, or in the feelings we have about it. Such discrepancies may indicate there is more to the picture than meets the eye, and may help us to identify unconscious conflicts.
>
> (1993, p.40)

These discrepancies can be confronted as the work progresses and develops; conflicts are revealed with interpretation and through exploration and self-examination from these encounters, we discover new knowledge. It is the collaborative nature of the work, the artist working with the thematic analysis of the analysts' writing about the images, that captures these intricacies of meaning in such highly subjective material.

Photography offered me an opportunity to communicate where the spoken or written word failed me. One might say it was the only language I had. It offered me a means by which to show, or hide, past experiences. Using words in dialogue in therapy meant that oral communication had a new place in seeking

knowledge. The return to photography as a form of self-expression, its pairing with psychoanalysis, and the documentation of its potential 'use' as a therapeutic tool has allowed my re-engagement with the visual as a means of communication once again. The camera is now turned on to 'self as subject' and there is an attempt to use the photographic medium to represent both the external image and internal self-image: photography as phototherapy.

The Power of Image and Language within a Therapeutic Engagement

Psychoanalysis often concerns itself with the revealing of tacit content rather than explicit knowledge. In a psychoanalytic session, a process occurs where a new intersubjective lexicon is formed, including non-verbal communication, quite unique to each analyst/analysand relationship, often involving dreams and metaphors of experience as a means of communication. A shared visual world is converted to language as a method of both internal and external communication; a 'hearing' of self, a 'seeing' of self. In this therapeutic dyad involving self-disclosure with an 'other', language is used as a way of slowly revealing unconscious motivations, needs and desires. In this context, the making and presenting of an image in language can offer insight to both parties involved, demonstrating the power of both image and language within therapeutic engagement. In both psychoanalysis and photography (both of which are practice-based, experiential endeavours), an intersubjective space is produced where new knowledge and insight emerges. With this in mind, it is clear that the

'use' of a self-portrait as a means of communication and exchange can offer an alternative view and new insight.

In his two essays 'A Short History of Photography' (1931) and 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936), Walter Benjamin concerned himself with the 'invisible content' in photographs, which he describes as 'the invisible that is present inside the visible' (Hirsch, 2007, p.117). Benjamin likened the process of viewing the photograph to reading, and expressed his view that the introduction of captions made the extraction of information from a photograph even more efficient, stating:

> The illiterate of the future […] will not be the man who cannot read the alphabet, but the one who cannot take a photograph [...] but must we not also count as illiterate the photographer who cannot read his own pictures? Will not the caption become the most important component of the shot?
>
> (Benjamin, 1936, sct13)

I developed my method of Pathography within Phototherapy to help me 'read' my own pictures, and find words to put alongside them, not as 'the most important component', but as a pointer. I felt that I would value some language being brought to my self-portraits and I understood that asking others to 'read' and respond to my images would mean that counter-transferential material would also be included. When I, as the artist who has created the photographic self-image, read the words of DB and EB, I wonder whether their written

interpretations of my image reflect my own truth or in psychoanalytic terms, their own projections. It would not be anything like a projective test[9], like a Rorschach Test[10], where psychologists were producing a standardised image to have some control over what people saw in that image, to be able to read their responses as revealing something about each viewer. My project differs in that I was very clear that the images I was asking DB and EB to respond to are all self-representations, so I was inviting them to analyse a self-portrait knowing it was a visual representation of myself and that would invite certain associations about me. Also, the notion of collaboration was important in the production of this series of photographic self-portraits, so that DB and EB would be aware that this self-portrait is one image in a series of images informed by their writings to create a self-portrait that is in dialogue with itself. One image may end up being more 'representative', but it's likely that it will still be more powerful as a constitute part of a whole; that in the series of twenty-four images a portrait would be made.

Latency

Time, as we will see illustrated later on, is an important element in all of this, as it takes time for the meaning in an image to come to light. I think photographic processes symbolise this latency; it is even called the latent image. I would load a

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[9] Projective Test are words or images designed to elicit responses, including the Rorschach Test.

[10] Rorschach Test, named after its developer Swiss psychiatrist Hermann Rorschach in 1921, it was thought that the patient's verbal free association to the ambiguous nature of the designs can offer an insight into the subject's personality, characteristics and emotional functioning.

roll of film into my camera, expose it, rewind it into the cassette and struggle to understand how the images were on that film. If you could look at the film in light you wouldn't be able to see the difference; on a chemical level, the silver halide crystals have been energised by the light and occupy a different state yet to be realised, only coming into being once they've been through the process of development. All this is denied us. We're denied the sacred light of the image in its latent form and I think it's this fantasy of the sacred image held in the emulsion that is the magic. I appreciate the element of waiting and the magic of the latent image being realised once captured. It gave me time to fantasise: 'Have I got it? Will it be how I imagined?' – it was sometimes a disappointment, but often something better than I could imagine. The latent image is made manifest in its processing, but the digital image is more immediate. I wanted to re-introduce a waiting time into my practice because of value of the dialogue that occurs with oneself while waiting. In this method, I decided on a monthly exchange of images for words, so that I would have to wait to see what DB and EB made of my images; what they might not have seen seemed as important as what they might have seen. Waiting for something to come into being might be important not just for the artist in this method, but also the analysts as it means it can be acknowledged that we all have our own fantasies about the images.

Encounter with the Image

It was very important to me that DB and EB had to be in the presence of the images as objects, because they are tactile, you can walk around them and that's all part of the experience I am offering a viewer. It wasn't something that could be done by email. Most of these images were shot digitally, but they are almost immediately brought into a physical domain, into something three-dimensional or with texture. You could scan it or copy it but you would never get the full experience. The closest I can get to describing myself in a self-portrait is to offer an experience of the encounter with the visual representations and the words. I manipulate the images. The actual photograph is never enough, there has to be an engagement with the image after the print has been made, either by covering it in wax, dismantling, reassembling, or the way it is framed. Some are very three-dimensional, with apertures cut into several layers, sometimes using mirrors, so that as you walk around the pictures, they change.

As a narrative, some of the images have more evidence of the processes they have been through than others, but there is always a sense of sticking something back together. It is almost as if I had to witness the deconstruction, so that I could witness something coming back together and so that the viewer can witness something of it too. As the psychoanalyst Hannah Segal wrote:

The artist's reparative work is never completed… the finished product bears traces of this incompletion… The act of creation at depth has to do with an unconscious memory of a harmonious internal world and the

experience of its deconstruction… The impulse is to recover and recreate this lost world. The means to achieve it has to do with the balance of 'ugly' elements with beautiful elements in such a way as to evoke an identification with this process in the recipient.

(2007, p.94)

I would say that one of the characteristics of the series made through this project is the attempt to bring the 'ugly' and beautiful elements within sight of each other – and therefore, within sight of the other. The 'feel' of each piece, for example: the preciousness of a small size, what could be seen through the layers of wax – you would never get this unless you were in the presence of the piece itself. The comments on the physicality of each piece led to my next work being made in a way that was informed by those responses, including integrating some of the words in the images.

I felt that this process led to communication about things that are in fact universally human; i.e. the experience of difficulties in relationships, attempts at communication and failures in communication, or a general lack of certainty about whether communication has been achieved. How I kept them out was more telling than letting them in. As an artist placing my work as the interface of this exchange, entwined with the viewing and insight of an 'other' in this intersubjective collaborative experience, I believe I have gained further insight into my own past, present and future.

The encounter with the image functions in a similar way to psychoanalysis. Where the gaze out (the creator, the analysand) and the gaze in (the viewer, the analyst) intersect, there is an opportunity for both to gain further awareness of self and the other. In this research I bring together two practices – that of the psychoanalyst and that of the artist – to use the photographic artefact as an interactive medium on to which we project our associations. This process informs the artistic practice and leads to transformation of new work. I propose that the production of this new likeness parallels changes within the artist.

Artistic Practice as Constructing Phantasic Objects

In *Creative Writers and Day-dreaming*, Sigmund Freud wrote:

> As people grow up, then, they cease to play, and seem to give up the yield of pleasure which they gained from playing. But whoever understands the human mind knows that hardly anything is harder for a man than to give up pleasure, which he has once experienced. Actually, we can never give anything up; we only exchange one thing for another. What appears to be a renunciation is really the formation of a substitute or surrogate. In the same way, the growing child, when he stops playing, gives up nothing but the link with real objects; instead of playing, he now phantasises. He builds castles in the air and creates what are called daydreams. I believe that most people construct phantasies at times in their lives. This is a fact

which has been long been overlooked and whose importance has therefore not been sufficiently appreciated.

(1908, p.144)

I think of the artworks created in the context of this research as 'phantastic objects' (coined by Tuckett and Taffler, 2008), made as a representation or a symbol of something that is not the thing in itself. The word 'phantasy' can be used as a description of unconscious processes or communication between and in the minds of the artist or analysand and analyst. The more conventional spelling of 'fantasy' indicates a conscious imagining and we could say that it is the awareness of this overlap during the creative process that is what constitutes the change from phantasy to fantasy. The 'phantasy' that Freud mentions above is the imaginary scene in which 'the inventor represents the protagonist in the process of having latent (unconscious) content or wishes, fulfilled' (Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973, p.314). These images, then, are symbols of internal worlds, filled with unconscious content and signifiers, but they are also objects, made with intent, on to which projections are made. This series of self-portrait photographs allows, to a certain extent, my unconscious wishes to be fulfilled. The images are created in a state of infantile omnipotence like play and the resulting representations of this 'playing' are reflected upon in the written interpretations by the analysts almost as if *in loco parentis*, a 'looking over' which could be said to counteract a feeling of having been overlooked. These responses, which may or may not be an overt expression of each analyst's own counter-transferential responses, may help point the way to an understanding of the unconscious

communication in the images that may otherwise not be 'sufficiently appreciated'. As Michel Artières puts it, the analyst's free-associations lead to insights into the artist's phantasies:

> Through the associative process, the spectator/analyst juxtaposes the resonances the work provokes in him and the formal aspects that can be considered traces of the unconscious life of its author. It is through this chain of association that he will be able to reconstruct the fantasies that generated the work of art.

(1995, p.45)

We don't always have the ability to recognise the importance of these affective messages as images or symbols, but these creative imaginings and their resonances can free us from what the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Charles Rycroft called the 'veils of our defence' (1979). It is the recognition of the dialogue or the links between the phantasies of the artist and the projections of the viewers or analysts within this dialogue that bring awareness as a form of working through or thinking together within a collaboration.

In effect it is dynamic and it is always work in progress, that is all an artist/analysand can offer. As Marion Milner, psychoanalyst, wrote:

> …the specific role of art as self-expression and the fact that the inner subjective and outer objective aspects of reality are in a continual state of

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change and development... [means] there is also a gap between the inner reality of feeling and the available ways of communication what we feel.

(2010, p.153)

As in psychoanalysis, the questions change, there might be provisional answers, but it can only be a stepping-stone to another question. I believe that poets have been talking about something very like psychoanalysis throughout time, so I will be quoting from them throughout this thesis. As Wright quoted Rainer Maria Rilke's poetic image of the 'creature there has never been' emerging 'into life', using it as 'a metaphor for the psychoanalytic enterprise…' (2009, p.186), he also noted: 'It has been suggested that Rilke was the young poet, already famous, who once walked in the Dolomites with Freud' (2009, p.170), as if poetry and psychoanalysis naturally should accompany each other. The kind of self-questioning that brings artists and analysts together is exemplified by Rilke in his fourth letter to Franz Xaver Kappus, his own 'Young Poet', in 1903:

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves, like locked rooms and like books that are now written in a very foreign tongue. Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer.

(1993, p.69)

There are no answers, only the search for the right questions – that is probably why we ask the wrong questions, because unconsciously we probably 'know' there are no answers to some of the questions we ask ourselves. I am playing, experimenting, until something feels authentic; artists make and remake to happen across something that is recognisable to themselves and then, perhaps to others. Authenticity might be defined as not consumerised, not done expressly for others, as Winnicott described the 'true self' 'acquiring in its own way and at its own speed a personal psychic reality' (1960, p.46). This might seem increasingly hard to find in a culture where representations of self are edited to compete in attractiveness, which could be described as an expression of a more traditional view of narcissism, a way to hide behind 'veils of our defence'. I believe that making these images for myself, but with specific 'others' in mind, helped to ground the project in the reality of an inter-subjective world, which then enabled me to construct 'phantastic objects' that can be recognised as attempts at communication with what might be unconscious in myself and others.

The Boundary Where Something Arises

I believe that 'phantastic objects' have their origins in the pre-conscious rather than conscious creative imaginings or sleeping dreams. The 'ideas' for these images emerge not from a dream-state but rather they might appear, or I might become conscious of them, in a state of 'threshold consciousness'. This could be

because ego boundaries become more permeable in a 'hypnopompic' state (a partially-conscious state preceding complete awakening from sleep, Myers, 1903) or in 'hypnagogia' (the state of intermediate consciousness preceding sleep, Mavromatis, 1987). It has long been thought that the hypnagogic state can provide insight into a problem (Havelock, 1897), a well known example being August Kekulé's realisation that the structure of benzene was a closed ring while half-asleep in front of a fire. Kekulé visualised seeing molecules forming into snakes, one of which grabbed its tail in its mouth (Rothenberg, 1995).[11]

Trance as Suspension of Disbelief

It is not just that I am making a series of photographs. I am in a process of trying to get to a place of greater self-awareness. A continuous journey towards an unknown destination, the individual photographs just become stopping off points or pauses in that process. As in life, our decisions are based on previous decisions we make, consciously or unconsciously. We can never rely on a decision we are about to make to inform art practice. Some people might imagine something and do everything possible to make that thing happen, but I imagine something and sort of meander my way there. I have always relied on the mistakes, blurs, out of focus. You always have to be in the process of making something for something to happen. If you say that is it, you limit the

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[11] It might be worthy of note that many other scientists and artists, from Isaac Newton to Salvador Dalí, have credited hypnagogia and related states with enhancing their creativity (ibid, 1995).

opportunities for it to develop further. I like the way the artist Bill Woodrow put it in an interview in 2013:

> It's to do with fighting and trying, and I look forward, rather than back. I make the work for myself. People are always telling me things about it and I think: "Oh, really?" But I would never close the door on what the work means, and that's what makes it fascinating.

> (2013)

The notion of interacting with art as being a unique and subjective experience is as much made manifest by the idea that we can only engage with anything or anyone within our cultural experience. However, this thesis engages with more primal and perhaps more common concerns, which to a certain extent underpin any culture we live within. People from diverse backgrounds can communicate through art and engage with it. It's a unique experience, not dictated by the whole cultural experience, but by the primal experience we share as humans, which is often indescribable, even if you speak the same language. Art can become a common language. It has been found by everybody, but it can't be described, and it's different for everybody and it's a different thing – the importance of language is that it can bring you closer to other people trying to describe with language a commonality, but there is a point where it becomes beyond language and then it becomes something unique. Your engagement with someone else who might like the same picture is that you are engaging with the fact that you each had an individual experience that is not describable and that is

the commonality. It is the same thing because the difference is indescribable, that's the paradox, it's a shared experience that can't be described, and that's what makes it shared or common. The analyst doesn't concern herself with whether the analysand has had the same insight that the analyst has, it's just the fact that an insight has been made. When someone says that they want an analyst that knows them, it could be that they want to know something that's not a fact, that's unknown, something that's indescribable. The self is unknowable, but language can narrate the journey in search of self. Art offers up something different when you are ready to see it is a thing that lives and breathes. Ehrenzweig wrote: 'Any work of art functions like another person, having independent life of its own.' (1995, p.102).

For both the artist and the viewer, finding meanings in the artwork come out of what I think of as a sort of 'reverie'. When we are in that trance, we have the potentiality to disregard the temporal nature of living in the real world, there is the possibility to engage with ourselves at every age – and that may be a position we take in art practice.

Reverie

The psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion's concept of maternal 'reverie' is of the capacity to sense, and make sense of, what is going on inside the infant, and that in psychoanalytic psychotherapy, the analyst uses this reverie when responding to the patient's material: '[a] capacity for playing with a patient's images that Bion

encouraged' (Casement, 1990, p.37). I knew it was important for my own journey of self-development to be making the artworks knowing that the analysts, DB and EB, would see them, playing with the images like a child playing in reverie while being observed unobtrusively; the child will know that they're noticed, but they don't have proof, they just know. The images that I made are abstract enough to encourage the kind of free-floating attention that someone might take up in analysis, a position that isn't a conscious state and isn't an unconscious state. As Bion advocated: 'without memory or desire' (1965, p.158).

In free-floating attention, everything has the same sense of importance so that what isn't said starts to permeate what is said, as if you are listening to things behind the words. I was asking DB and EB to look for things behind the surface of my images. I believe that art informed by the conscious awareness of a mode of thinking different from conscious thinking might allow us to see the influence of the mechanisms of the unconscious, offering, in the words of Rycroft (1979), 'momentary glimpses of the dreamer's total imaginative fabric, glimpses into the fabric, where are woven all memories, expectations, wishes and fears.' (p. xi).

In an essay entitled 'The Intersection of Gazes', Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins (2003, p.354) described the photograph as 'a dynamic site' at which many gazes or viewpoints intersect; a complex and multi-dimensional object that allows the viewer to negotiate a number of different identities both for themselves as viewers and also of that which is on view. Using this analogy, we might consider this project as the intersection of many gazes: the gaze of the

photographer as self-portraitist (using a viewfinder, trying to focus on myself) and the gazes of the two psychotherapists (the analysts of the image, whose gazes fall upon the reflection of themselves, as well as what they might see of me as the artist/subject). Liz Wells, writing about photographic culture, argues that in the dis-entanglement of this exchange – where the photographer's and viewers' gazes overlap — is where knowledge may appear (2002, p.162).

As the historian of photography John Tagg puts it, the viewer is 'invited to dream in the ideological space of the photograph' (1988, p.183). Over time, the analysts of the image, being part of this ongoing process, help to create a narrative out of the ideological space. As Wells wrote: there is 'not one reader's gaze, each individual looks with his or her personal, cultural, and political background or set of interests' (2003, p.358). I believe this diversity of available viewpoints can give greater insight, especially when there is 'not one reader's gaze', but two to offer alternative interpretations as in my project.

Freud delineated two distinct types of mental functioning as primary and secondary processes (1908), where primary processes are characterised by symbolisation, displacement and condensation, and secondary processes are governed by logic, speech and language (Rycroft, 1979, pps.25, 39, 179). The method I have designed delivers a fusion of concepts, images and ideas (condensation) into language (displacement). The images symbolise different representations to different viewers, so the analysts' descriptions of this surfacing of unconscious associations making the transition to consciousness, means that the narrative of primary processes then becomes a secondary process involving

communication through language and could be considered what Freud termed 'secondary revision' (1899). The analysis of the images did not generally include descriptive terms to describe the visual content of the images, rather, their responses operated as a link between the affective experiences of artist and each analyst when creating and viewing the image. I believe this is what makes it a therapeutic engagement. The images represent my phantasies that are sublimated through their production and remaking, and I believe that when they sit alongside DB's and EB's interpretations and the texts that I have constructed and written, they offer a deeper understanding of self.

Thematic Analysis of DB and EB's Written Responses to the Images

Another opportunity for revision came about through my thematic analysis of the written responses, where revisiting the writings over time reveals themes that come to light through a narrative, a storytelling of an exploration of inner experience, correlating with Victor Jupp's term of 'narrative analysis' (2006, p. 186). In this project, where the images and writings inform each other in a developing narrative. Images create an understandable reoccurrence of themes which develop into a shared lexicon between artist and analysts, revealing something more of the artist than a conventional self-portrait might. The psychologist Leopold Bellak described 'The Application of Thematic Analysis to Literary Products' (1986, p.179), explaining how inferences can be made about the pathography of the artist researched:

Their product – in terms of choice of content and with regard to expressive and cognitive style, aside from its susceptibility to study by content analysis in the sense of counting the frequency of words, noun-verb ratio, etc. – remains uniquely theirs and therefore lends itself in principle to an analysis of their personality.

(1986, p.180)

Bellak used the works of Somerset Maughan as a case study, making a thematic analysis of thirty stories broken down into three main areas, 'Descriptive Theme', 'Interpretive Theme' and 'Diagnostic Level'. Using this language, it could be said that in my searching and re-searching through the words written by DB and EB about my images, themes are interpretated and then a diagnostic stage comes about from an analysis of the themes identified. These methods are employed with a view to building up a picture of the artist through words and pictures as a form of phototherapy that I call Pathography as it offers greater insight into the psyche of the artist.

Integration of Language

Fig 4: Rowell, S. (2013) *Self-Portrait Number 19* [photograph]

The analysts' responses were emailed to me as a block of text divided into paragraphs. I realised I had to find a way to be able to quickly refer back to what each had said at different points, so I started by putting Roman numerals against each sentence, but then it developed so that as I went through the writings, I would put a Roman numeral where I noticed a nuanced change in the meaning. I thought of it as a way of differentiating the elements in a compound, like the 'Stock system' in chemistry where elements are indicated in parentheses by Roman numerals[12] – this is my way of formulating my voice from the compound of DB's and EB's writings. As I started to develop links between what DB and EB had written about each image, I wanted to be able to refer back to who said

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[12] A system of chemical nomenclature devised by Alfred Stock, first published in 1919.

what where, so I used their initials and the roman numerals as references to the writing that had come about from each 'session' with an image. I would keep pulling out sentences that would refer to themes coming out from past images and eventually, I thought of creating an image from the words used most often to describe these themes. I realised I could use the software 'Wordle' for generating 'word clouds' from text. This representation gives greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text to create very simplistic images of words (see fig.5 below) extracted from putting DB's & EB's responses to each image together, then from all of DB's responses for the whole project, then from all of EB's responses for the whole project. I pre-prepared the text, deleting certain common words, connective words, common verbs, the definite article, also punctuation and singularised the plurals of words: a, is, of, and, in, to, this, it, be, that, there, was, an.

Fig 5: Rowell, S. (2015) *Wordles* [artist's book]

Repetition, Repetition

Now that I know I could be described as dyslexic, I think it seems natural that I was trying to visualise the repetitive use of certain words to try to see more clearly the themes explored throughout the project. Repetition is important to the way insight is achieved, as in one-to-one therapy, eventually allowing one to see something from a slightly different angle (see fig 2 above which shows an installation view of some of the intermediary artwork produced during the two-year period, displayed at my *viva voce*[13]). Insight is not always an epiphany; it can creep up on you. The idea that we repeat and something else comes back, a nuanced echo, is clearly crucial to being in therapy, to find some understanding of why things are repeated. Whether the thing that comes back all the time is something familiar or something perverse, as it so often is, the idea that something comes back all the time, gives us something to pause and ponder when everything else is in flux. It is as if I forget it because it's important to be reminded again.

Along with the thematic analysis, I also wanted to represent visually the things that had kept coming back in the exchange of images and words. I loved the idea of making the words that had been used most often larger, so that the size of the word represented it's frequency of use, but the problem was that DB and EB were often using different words to describe the same thing, i.e.: 'picture' and 'image'. I even emailed the software developer to see if he could adapt the

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[13] It is interesting to think about the translation of *viva voce* in terms of this project bringing the artist's voice to life.

algorithm to accommodate the use of synonyms, but he didn't respond. I thought I might find a way to go through the language so that each 'picture', 'image', 'artefact', 'photograph' might become one word, but I realised that this logical response was counter-intuitive to the whole project, much too logical and conscious.   I realised I needed to trust what I was seeing, what was effectively 'heard' and the insights achieved. It could be said that this in itself helped my confidence in my ability to deal with written language.

Art and Writing as Conduits for the Therapeutic Relationship

In many forms of phototherapy, whether the photographs are found or made, they are 'made use of' as images to be projected upon. The method I have devised is very different to this as the images are explicitly photographic self-portraits so it is acknowledged that any projections will reflect on the artist and will effect the making and re-presenting of the images, some of which contain the elements of the written responses. In this method using visual and written communication on a turn-by-turn basis, the creative collaboration between artist and analysts develops, where each become important constituent parts in an intersubjective dance leading to greater insight into relationships and self. Being dyslexic, it was very important to me to work with both words and pictures and to feel adept at using the written word as well as the spoken word. One of the ways this came about was through my way of re-writing what DB and EB had written, to find my voice from their two voices, to find some understanding of myself that could be translated into words, by me as well as the analysts. I approached their words

in good faith, trusting that just like in analysis, it is the thing that happens between the analyst and the analysand, attributed to both, but assigned to neither, that is the collaboration.

The Reappropriation of 'Their' Language to Bring the Pictures into Language

Dennis Greenwood and Del Loewenthal, in their comments on the case study method in therapeutic research point out that 'written explanations of the encounter' [in the context of a therapeutic situation] are 'subject to considerable influence of the therapist's understanding' (2005, p.172). In this case, where I was asking for 'written explanations of the encounter' with an image, I understood that these might include each analyst's expectations of the process, the influence of previous images, their own projections, their own relationship to what each of them had already 'said', alongside other elements that none of us would be able to predict. Greenwood and Loewenthal note that the responses can also be influenced by the role of the supervisor at this stage, a re-interpretation to enable further understandings to emerge. I believe that most importantly, it is the artist's re-consideration of the artwork in the light of the analysts' 'written explanations' that forms the basis of the depth of self-enquiry enabled by this collaborative process. It offers a brief point of pause to contemplate an artwork before it becomes less significant as an object and this could be seen as reality testing. The reality testing complements the trance, in that we take what may have come to us in a free-associative state and trust it for its value when we take

it out into the world. The month between images gave me the time to consciously review what has been revealed unconsciously.

Reality Testing

The gaps between sessions in the consultant room and the gaps between time spent making things in the studio, could be seen as a form of reality testing of the truths found in those practices. Presenting the artwork for analysis could be said to be a form of reality testing. I call this continual process of making, showing, fantasising about what would come back about my self-portraits, and by association, myself, getting a response, reading what would come back, reassembling what I was showing, a form of pathography as the images and writings that result from this allow me to build a self-portrait. Language in therapy and art is often attempting to describe the indescribable, so the idea of making something that can be seen or read by 'the other' is important, and I found that having two 'others' that could re-align was particularly important. Ultimately it was the making in the context of all that which brought about therapeutic change or enlightenment.

It seemed important to bring words alongside the images, even just to remove some of them. I 'knew they had been there' to be used or to be discarded, and they were there, as opposed to my reality when I was growing up, when only silence was there. An artist in practice can feel lost in a world of their own making, for better or worse, and perhaps this is more likely, if the artist is dyslexic, as many are.

The 'Other'

That the images and words came out of a collaboration with the analysts is key –
I devised this method in order that the relationships with DB and EB might
develop and, as in therapy, repetition or incongruity be noticed. I think that
creating something visual that comes out of dialogue with external 'others' can
help in a similar way to how the analysand hears themselves talk in the presence
of the analyst, not just echoing off a mirror. The 'other' takes an important place
in this process, not as respondent necessarily, but representing an opening up of
the potential of all one might be, seeing and therefore allowing you to see more
of you than you could see of yourself. As if the other represents another view: 'I
wouldn't say that I know you more, but I see you from a different position which
allows you to see yourself from a different position'.

This is what we can do for each other, but it usually gets complicated – in
therapy, the complications can be talked about and explored: 'Why are these
defenses here?' That is what a therapist does; offers a true reflection if you want
to see it, as it is harder to hide behind 'veils of our defence'. In free association,
you are making the links, but not consciously, so one is less defensive. Asking
for written analysis of the image means that there can be less defence against
expressing counter-transferential feelings about the artwork than there would be
if the artist was present and this could open up more possibilities for the
therapists themselves too.

CHAPTER TWO: Genesis of the Method:

Pathography within Phototherapy

Fig 6: Rowell, S. (2009) *1963* [photograph]

My PhD research developed from the experience I had of asking for responses to my image *1963* (fig.6 above) from a group of psychoanalytic psychotherapists and a group of fine art students during my MA course at the Cass. The experience of presenting this image to the two groups made me wonder whether a method could be devised to ask for feedback about images over a longer period of time, in this case, two years, in a way that might parallel the therapeutic relationship in psychotherapy that develops over a period of time. In the collaboration, the intersubjective relationships would grow and develop, providing greater reality testing of the exchanges of visual and textual material,

and the artist, through internalisation of the written interpretation of the image, could gain further insight into the artwork and the interior world it comes from.

I wrote to the Institute of Psychoanalysts and the Guild of Psychotherapists and asked if they would be kind enough to put up a flyer on the noticeboard asking for help with an art project. At that time, I was in training at the WPF[14] and I wanted to find 'others' outside that sphere of influence, and I was aware that both those schools are non-denominational, neither the Lacanian school nor the Freudian school. I was looking for two people to respond to the photographs, a man and a woman. In my case, this combination might represent surrogate parents, that would look upon my form of self-portraiture as if observing the child playing. The original request was for them to interpret the images into language. One of the responders, referred to as DB in this project, had been in the group of therapists discussing my image *1963,* and was excited to be involved in this project and offered to find another responder. DB introduced the idea to EB who said she might like to be involved too, so there was always a relationship, and it almost felt like I was bringing a couple to the work, but we agreed that they would not confer about the project.

Guidelines

We agreed by email that they would respond to the artworks independently. There was also agreement that we would not talk about the project when we met in other circumstances as it was important to set professional boundaries. It was

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[14] Westminster Pastoral Foundation.

also important to me that they wouldn't only see an electronic image, that they would have the chance to be in the presence of the real objects, some of which were more three-dimensional than others. I would deliver a piece to the Guild[15] every month and then send an email to say that the artwork was there for them to respond to. We agreed that they would each send their responses by email to me as soon as possible, so I could prepare the next piece to be delivered within the next month. Later on, I began to think of each encounter between EB and DB and my work as a 'session', although it wasn't a pre-determined time or location. For example, DB would write notes in the presence of the artwork, and EB would photograph the work to be able to refer to the image when writing once home. My intention was to pay for the 'sessions', but it was agreed that they would be happy with two bottles of wine each per 'session'. The frame was set and as in any therapeutic relationship, there was some acknowledgement of the reality of deviating from the plan, so that at times when I was late in submitting the work or 'payment', we didn't start analysing about whether I was two bottles of wine behind. It made it much more of a collaboration because all three of us were aware of the frame and, as therapists ourselves, could work within it.

In psychoanalysis, the frame is important as it defines boundaries to promote consistency and then the deviations can be noticed, and issues around dependence and vulnerability can be explored. In conventional one-to-one therapy, if someone is late, it is noted and worked with. The analysand decides when it is worked with. The promise from me that I would continue to offer an image every month, our shared commitment to a project for two years, meant

that the rigidity of the structure wasn't so important as the fundamental trust – and I would say that this is true of a therapeutic relationship.

I was really excited about getting back what they saw and I knew that the way that they responded, their words, would affect the next work that I made. I looked forward to receiving their emails, even though some of them were quite difficult to read, as I felt that the artwork/I was being responded to in an authentic and honest way. There was a definite difference between the responses and that was the most important thing, not that I associated them with maternal or paternal, but that there were two distinct voices. EB was more efficient, would mention theory more, seeing it as a psychoanalytic project; DB was more gruff, his everyday moods affected how he saw some of the images. It seemed he would get more frustrated about how he had got himself in the project, the work. When I was looking at which voices spoke to me, I found that for some 'sessions' I embraced more of DB's or EB's interpretations, as if one of my parents was 'getting it' a bit more than the other parent. Some sentences didn't really make sense to me, others flew off the page at me and I would read what came back with enthusiasm, but then I didn't return to the words until the end of the project when I attempted to construct the pathography of me, giving voice to my 'inner artist' through this collaboration.

The intention was to construct an exhibition of the images interspersed with texts in a way that might show an authentic truthful form of self-portrait, a representation not just made up of one image, but made up of a series of images with texts, made over a long period of time. In actuality, this became the setting

for my *viva*, where my speech incorporated this research and I felt I could present myself as the artist as well as researcher. Subsequently, I have shown some of the images as individual pieces in group exhibitions, but at the time, they were considered part of a narrative which would help me learn something about myself as an artist and personally.

Self-Portrait as a Life-Long Process

What I offer is a process that has no specific endpoint, as it involves self-knowledge which hopefully is always a life-long process. We can see this as the fundamental thing about making art, that it is about the process rather than the product. Perhaps we could see the end of a series as a place to pause to contemplate and hopefully create a new awareness as a stepping-stone to the next place. I had always imagined a sense of the artist being 'known' if you could view the series of images interspersed with the writing in the order in which they came about. To give myself and other viewers the chance to experience the process from the first image until the final image, I envisage a book with a parallel narrative to experience what could be seen as the pathography of the artist. The book presented as an appendix to this thesis serves as an interesting precursor to what will come next, a book introduced by the Foreword that comes out of the collaborative nature of the project – and that any artist might want to produce if they undertake this method of phototherapy that I call Pathography.

I believe one of the most important elements of this process is that the artist has an opportunity to really think about how to put into language their

feelings about the process of creativity. In my case, that has been quite extreme in terms of writing this thesis having become part of what this process offers, the idea of having an opportunity for people to give me feedback about my ideas in writing. It was important for me to have a second chance to do a thematic analysis and pick and choose what leaps off the page at me. To re-weave the language of my experience, rather than being told what my experience is, is another way in which one can find one's voice.

Importance of Psychoanalytically Trained Therapists to Analyse Images

It is important to acknowledge that psychoanalytic thinking significantly differs from other ways of understanding human psychology (Tuckett and Taffler, 2008, p.389). It is suggested that the psychoanalytically-informed method outlined in this thesis may have a unique contribution to make to research. The psychoanalytic approach (language from interpretation) as a way to describe visual representations and affective knowledge might also be useful in highlighting aspects of unconscious functioning around art appreciation and production.

I chose to ask psychoanalytically trained psychotherapists to ask to write about my images, in the understanding that they would be interested in seeing below the surface, looking for clues to the revealing of unconscious material or symbols. When saying: 'this is a self portrait' to psychoanalytically trained psychotherapists, I would expect them to factor in what the significance might be of the form and the frame, and be able to explore that in psychoanalytic terms. It

is not just like going to any viewer. I wanted someone who 'spoke my language', sharing a lexicon for psychoanalytic concepts. It is not just about speech, but also what was not said. As Thomas Ogden, psychoanalyst, put it:

> In the analytic hour, we rarely use writing as our medium of expression, but we do use words and we do use our developed capacities for listening to language (both to the patient's and to our own) it its spoken and unspoken forms.
>
> (2005, p.205)

After my MA project, I didn't go back to artists to ask them what they thought, I went to psychoanalytic psychotherapists to ask them what they thought, simply because psychotherapists often have a more lucid use of language about unconscious processes.

The Emergence of a Triangle

I specifically wanted two people, and I deliberately asked them not to be in touch with each other about this project. It was known at the time why I wanted to keep their exchanges with me separate, but in hindsight, I realised I must have been working something out as it meant I could make something in place of the relationship between them to complete the triangle, which could be considered a symbol of the Oedipus complex. As a child develops his or her language from several sources, I realised that I could find a voice of my own from the two

voices and in doing so, 'speak' a better notion of self. With my real parents, there was no common parental voice, a 'we think…'; there was rarely agreement, so I was in conflict, because in 'believing' in one or the other, I would have to show disloyalty to the other. To make up one's own mind about something, one has to imagine an exchange where certain things are rejected and others accepted, a process of decision making. With this project, I wondered if a more informative voice might take precedent, but in reality, each image produced a more dominant voice which varied between the two. The thematic analysis of the words that became the statement sounds like a discussion between my mother and my father about me. The narrative of ongoing conversation informs the next work that I make and therefore makes the triangle. In choosing psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists, I suppose there was some notion of choosing parents of the same psychoanalytic creative culture.

Previous Series of Photographic Self-Portraits: *Peter's Dreams*

In order to explain how it was decided to use the interpretation of self-portraits as a therapeutic tool, it is necessary to introduce a previous project. While studying for my MA in 2009-10, I started doing a series of images entitled *Peter's Dreams* that might represent some of the dreams I had been having about traumas or just incidents that seemed very important in my life that I wanted to re-represent in a photograph; they are all self-portraits. I was quite interested in thinking about how I might endeavour to learn more of myself from my photography, or actually get the 'other' to extract information about the photography that I might

not have realised was there or that I had been blind to. I considered there were signifiers within the image that I had yet to discover or stumble across, or happen across, as can happen with the stories or memories discussed in psychoanalysis.

I was now taking photographs for myself and I was generally trying to not think too much about what I was doing; as I have described it as being in a trance. For anyone who has been in therapy I think that's quite a familiar phrase, when free-association is a state of almost trance. Where you disengage the brain to a certain extent, you disengage the thinking, and the more the embodied notion of what you are feeling starts to come to the surface. Freud wrote about this in 'Recommendations for Physicians': 'It consists simply in not directing one's notice to anything in particular and in maintaining the same "evenly-suspended attention » (as I have called it)'. This idea that if you start thinking too much, your agenda starts to come in, and it's not the agenda of, I would say, 'the piece', and it's not the agenda of the analysand. It is this quite strange, magical notion of free-floating attention that counts here, so we are listening for symbols that might be the unconscious revealing itself. Freud's famous examples of this are slips with words, and jokes.

I was wondering if there were any other signifiers in these images which I was quite passionate about making and had worked hard to make in this more trance-like state. I was wondering if the 'other' out there could actually see something that might be of value to myself, in terms of self-discovery.

Focus Group or 'Analysis' of *1963*

In 2009, I made a self-portrait entitled *1963* (fig.6 on p.82) to represent an event that had surfaced in dreams and had been discussed in my personal one-to-one psychotherapy. It was a reconstruction of an earlier trauma, at the age of five, remembered and represented in the present day. The text caption offers additional information about the event presented:

> 'Daddy, Daddy come and see my boat.' The little boy was excited as he ran to find his father on the beach. They both headed back to the boating pond to see this wonderful sight. But the boat was nowhere to be seen. It had been stolen. A dark angry person came and chastised the small boy: 'How could you have been so stupid as to leave the boat unattended. You deserve to have it stolen, you are irresponsible and it cost a lot of money.'
>
> (Rowell, 2009)

It is difficult to know how best to place text alongside images as it is often an uneasy alliance and offers many artists a conundrum regarding whether the statement would be read before the image or after, if at all. It is possible viewers might feel critical of the artist wanting them to know too much, perhaps because it feels as if it insults them by denying them the opportunity to make their own judgement, once the artist has 'outed' something of themselves. I feel those who get angry are simply unable to bring their own phantasy once something of the artist's is offered up.

The research element of my MA involved me printing off *1963* and taking it to a group of practising fine art students and, separately, to a group of student psychotherapists. I didn't know the five fine artists at the Cass, I just put up a poster asking if anyone would be interested in my project and in 'reading' a photograph, and I got these five people who kindly gave their time. I wanted to be present to hear what was said directly, but I didn't want to take part in the discussion, so I told them at the beginning: 'I'm going to be here, I'm not going to interject. I'm just going to film and record what you say and transcribe later, but I would just ask you to bear in mind two questions: this is a self-portrait – what do you see? and what do you think I'm trying to say?'

I had been accepted on to the Psychodynamic Psychotherapy course at WPF and I asked five psychotherapy trainees of my cohorts to do the same a few weeks later. I was fascinated by what I was hearing, and they were quite candid. It was interesting how the psychotherapists tended to focus on describing the image and ironically, the artists seemed to be much more interested in what the image was trying to say, which was the other way round to what I thought might happen. I then transcribed the discussions and I didn't have the sense that I'd got something miraculous from the encounter. It was immensely enjoyable and interesting and I really enjoyed the whole process of what I had done, but I didn't really come to any conclusions. It felt very different for me than the role of the analyst as the person 'who bears witness' to the analysand's observations, because they weren't attempting to know me, they were just describing something that they saw.

Finding Something of Significance in the Image through Re-engagement

Fig 7: Rowell, S. (2009) *1963* [detail of photograph]

Psychoanalytic thinking can be seen as a way of looking at your past in order to have clues about your present. If we are using our unconscious to produce artworks, the chances are there will be hidden content in the photograph that we even delude ourselves about, but that we can find through future re-engagements with the same image. As an example of this process, about a year after asking the groups of artists and psychotherapists to analyse *1963* I eventually happened across something that seemed of great importance in this image. Nothing had

changed, but suddenly, the two empty benches took on a huge significance as I felt I must have had an unconscious desire to recognise them as being representative of my parents; physically there, but not looking. The main point of this image seemed to be the empty benches, that there was a desire to be looked at and looked after, and this has come up over and over again for me in my own psychoanalysis. 'Recognising' the empty benches as something other than empty benches revealed the hidden content: my desire to be seen or known. Perhaps the ultimate thing being repressed was the idea that my parents weren't interested in me. I had denied the evidence that was there to be seen all along.

The benches became an important signifier for me of something that had been missed. I hadn't noticed the significance of the benches in any of the stages of making this image, not when I had recce'd[16] the location which is where the event actually happened, not when I photographed it nor when I printed it. It was very much throwing myself into the deep end of what I was trying to get from the image. I had gone to the place and tried to experience what I had experienced that day when I was a child and I tried to put it into a photograph. I had visited this location twice before and at no point had I seen the significance of including these two benches. I could have shot from many angles, I could have included only one or neither of the benches, but I included both. Once noticed as an important symbol, it is hard not to see them as places that could have been a vantage point to observe the young boy, but were not. As photographers, we are

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[16] Slang for reconnoiter, to make a reconnaissance of the suitability of an area as a photographic location.

drawn to these positions, this angle, this light, so that we can make something of it and potentially revisit it and see what we might have missed.

This was a reconstruction of an event, a memory of an event. I was on a family holiday and I had been given a little toy yacht. I was about seven years old. I was on my own with this yacht on the boating pond, which was in the same location where the pond I photographed is now, but it was a raised Victorian pond, just for children to float their boats on. The toy yacht was at the wind's discretion, aimlessly bobbing about and I was sort of enjoying myself, and suddenly, with the rigging correct, the boom and the rudder… and the yacht leant over and just sailed straight across. It was so extraordinary for me to see this; that a toy yacht became a real yacht and had purpose and actually worked. So I ran down on to the beach to get my father to come and see this sight, and somebody had stolen the yacht. I was absolutely distraught. I was distraught because I wanted to show that this thing had life, I had made it live, but my father just got angry and made me feel stupid for leaving it unattended. I was berated for having the yacht stolen and he just didn't get the idea that I was just so excited about what I wanted to show him or my memory of it.

I tried to get as close as I could to it in my re-enactment. To 'perform' the image was an attempt to experience the feelings attached to this memory. There is no retouching. At first I thought I might find a suitable model who I might use as a representation of me at around that age, but I thought: 'no, that's ridiculous, I need to experience these things'. I had to have confidence in that deferred state of trance where knowledge might be revealed. I had to just experience it. I tried to disengage my self-conscious thinking at all these stages. I was letting myself

be open to the potential of information being revealed to me as if in that half-light where the resistances are taken away. I believe it is like going beyond the surface of the print. If you choose to immerse yourself, there's more to be experienced – and that's what I did with the boating pond.

I found the place, there was a new pond, but waiting for the right light entailed two visits before the shoot. It was the middle of winter, clearly it wasn't something that I really wanted to do, but I got a close friend to fire the shutter for me. I would scurry out of the pond and look at the frame and then scurry back in, and I did about six or seven shots until I realised that I had got it. The digital camera I use has quite a small screen. I find this very useful. Rather than being obsessed with every part of the image being 'as it should be', it gives a wonderful overview of whether the concept works in an image the size of a postage stamp. I like the magic of not really knowing if you have captured what you wanted.

In this example, at no point during the preparation and the making of this image did the benches seem relevant, but they are so important to me now in hindsight as symbols of something I was trying to communicate. I am suggesting that these signifiers are present in images, it is just a question of whether you are at the point when you are able to see them. Ehrenzweig wrote: 'It is astonishing how artists after finishing their work may begin to study it in great detail as though it were the work of somebody else. Something happens that is like awakening from a dream…' (1995, p.103). For me, the astonishment comes from seeing that it has a life of its own, like when the yacht suddenly was not a toy; when it keeled over and caught the wind, it was a real yacht, it had direction,

purpose, it was real. From this experience of feeling enlightened by 'recognising' what I was trying to say by including the benches in this image, I felt it was important to ask for more analysis towards a future self-portrait. I wanted to give myself time to re-engage with the images I make in case I would be able to see more of myself through this process.

This is the thing that I got very excited about: this idea that there are signifiers within the things that we make, there are reasons why we are drawn to certain subjects and this can tell us something about our selves. As artists, we choose to frame things, and even more importantly, we exclude things when we edit or re-frame. As noted before, I am probably more interested in what we leave out psychically than what we actually bring in, and in this case, the benches that signified something of myself that had been overlooked had themselves been overlooked. I revisited the transcript from my focus groups and the benches were never mentioned in the context of being empty or a place where a person might sit to observe. I believe that the notion that the benches were potentially symbolic of my parents must have been there for me all along.

I wasn't really sure how the PhD was going to work out when I started writing potential synopses of what I might do, but I knew I wanted to build upon the MA and the excitement I got and the profound meaning I got from wanting to enquire more about the significance of the benches in the image *1963*. Describing it as 'my' image needs to be defined a little more. It looks back at me as much as I look at it. It is as if the image becomes my 'other', witnessing me, even when I can't fully perceive it. It is as if I belong to the image as much as it belongs to me.

I found the conception of the image, the re-enactment of the event, the production of the print and the process of integrating the language as caption to be a positive therapeutic experience. The process of asking artists and psychotherapists to discuss the image, and my own analysis of it, alongside one-to-one therapy, helped me find another understanding of this past event and what it symbolised for me. The combination of practice, production and addition of text were useful, not only in that they offered insight into a past memory, but also in bringing about an opportunity for these recollections to fit into a narrative, a timeline of events that led to further insight. By introducing the image into the public domain to be interpreted by others, with myself as witness, i.e. to be 'used', I gained additional insight. I wrote in my master's thesis:

> While being a type of self-portraiture, as I am also the subject in the frame, it also challenged sentimental images of childhood, the role of memory and shows the powerful use of photography in exploring such personal issues.

<div align="right">(Rowell, 2009)</div>

I was excited by this more active engagement with my image, it brought the image to life. I was interested to see what else would come up about affective unconscious signifiers in my images, any symbols I was not initially aware of during production that would enable me to understand more of myself. I wondered whether greater use of written language facilitated by this

communication with those asked to analyse an image might facilitate communication with other subsequent viewers.

The aim and outcome of asking artists and therapists to analyse my image *1963* was to draw information from a single encounter. This research project, however, involved the production of a series of images drawn out over a longer period of time, where the analysts were more aware of their role in the collaboration, and that their responses to the images would inform the production of the subsequent images. Their awareness of this offered an opportunity for the development of an interactive relationship. It allowed, through the turn-by-turn exchange of the development of the images and their analysis, an important acknowledgement of the collaborative nature of insight.

CHAPTER THREE: A Collaboration to Work Out

Family Dynamics

Fig 8: Rowell, S. (2012) *Session II* [photograph]

Photographs alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe. They are a grammar and, even more importantly, an ethics of seeing.

(Sontag, 1977)

Ethical Considerations

The original request to respond to the self-portraits was seen by DB and EB to be more complicated than they had realised by the time of the arrival of the second

image, as it was quite an aggressive image and it was felt (perhaps particularly by DB) that it was challenging their commitment to stay with the project. It is interesting that the image made for *Session II* (fig 8 above), where I felt I had to work out a way to see myself from different angles, is what invoked DB and EB's responses about what it would mean to respond and what was being asked of them. The way I set up the taking of the photographs could be seen to be a performance of asking others to take a different view to allow me to see myself from different perspectives. For this image, I was in darkness with three assistants operating cameras with the shutters open. I would throw up the soup, and I would trigger the flash, as a way of capturing the identical scene of the same moment in time from three different viewpoints. This could be seen as foreshadowing the weaving of EB and DB's written responses to an image with my own, bringing three perspectives into one view.

The email exchange between DB and EB and myself prompted by this image highlighted the role of counter-transference and the ethical angle to be acknowledged and considered in this process, because it's one thing to share vulnerability in a dyadic situation, but another to bring someone's vulnerability into the public realm. Being confronted by an image that could not or would not respond was evidently causing a sense of disquiet, as if I, in the guise of my own self-portrait, was analysing the analysts. EB emailed at that point at the start of the project in 2012 to say:

I agree that to start an email dialogue is out of line with what you're doing here BUT did have a thought I wanted to send. I wondered if there

was any way of the pieces "replying" to the comments, to make it more of a conversation - although I imagine this would mean they were less finished pieces. Of course, this may be something you have considered and discarded for good reasons. Or perhaps it is already happening. Anyway, in the interests of not turning this into an email communication, don't feel the need to reply to this. I just wanted to put that thought across.

(EB, 2012, email to SR)

It felt to me as if there was a realisation of not just looking, but of being seen, which caused the project to be seen in a different way. We could no longer realistically say it was just an art project, because the project was revealing things for both the artist and the analysts: you could say it was *working*. Without conferring, DB also emailed me at that point:

It must have taken its toll on me the last image, as seem to be struggling to send this to you. Forgetfulness, busyness, sure but also something else. I hesitate because I worry about how this might affect you, and me. I've managed to be frightened by the power I have to guess your meaning. This tips psychotherapy on its head and only acts to vandalise your meaning you attach to your photography. I hesitate I think because I've realised the project warps my understanding of psychotherapy / counselling / psychoanalysis. It's interesting so I'd like to continue, but it is also deeply troubling for this relationship with a static, unreactive

product of yours left at the Guild to be scrutinised, to be called psychotherapy. You produce it, leave it in the corner then, because of its lack of words, it encourages a flurry of interpretation – no guesswork – from a trainee therapist. I realise this can't be doing psychotherapy any more than discussing a paper on psychotherapy can be confused with actually doing therapy. I worry perhaps that aside from the impossible question of doing good, I can't rule out doing harm. Maybe I think too much of myself…

(DB, 2012, email to SR)

There was a realisation that there was something going on that had meaning and those meanings had implications for relationships, and how these relationships would be seen from the outside. The spotlight wasn't just on the artist, but suddenly the analysts were on the wall too, in that they realised that they were implicated in what might be revealed, 'might' being the operative word, at some point in the future. It occurred to me that there might have been a sense that they were misled, not that I had tricked them consciously, but perhaps they had thought of it more as a playful or enjoyable exercise and it was actually more serious. I felt it was important for DB and EB to know that I recognised the value of their contribution and tried to acknowledge the need for us all to have something akin to what the poet John Keats termed 'negative capability' in writing to his brothers about being 'capable of being in uncertainties' (1817). I emailed DB and EB together:

I write to you both as I would like to acknowledge that both of you have indicated a need to not perhaps question the process, but perhaps not feel as engaged. There is a sense of lostness, a questioning of this process (performance?) and perhaps even a feeling of an unsettling nature. Perhaps this isn't analysis, assessing, or even photo critique; perhaps we do not have to put a name to it at all. I do know that if you can continue being frank, honest and thoughtful then whatever it is, it feels interesting and worthy of documentation. What has also emerged is the importance of also documenting your feelings about the project; if you feel something (or of course nothing) about the work, please say. It is invaluable additional material knowing your process as well. Can I leave it there, for a while.

(SR, 2012, email to DB and EB)

I received the following responses from EB: 'Absolutely. It's your project. It was just a thought.' and from DB: 'Yeah, shall we let it develop and see what comes up? I agree it makes sense to hold off for the moment naming what we are doing.' It was at this point that I admitted to myself how crucial DB and EB were to the project.

Other Unpalatable Truths

My experience has enabled me to light my subjects quite intuitively without thinking too much about the technical aspects of lighting, so it's another

opportunity to disconnect my conscious thinking from the experience of what I am seeing, not to get bogged down with technicalities, as using photographic equipment is second-nature to me. Lighting is how you love someone: it is not that the photographer puts him or herself in a powerful position, it is how you photographically hold people in regard, which is very much devalued at the moment. In lighting my less unpalatable parts, I bring up what is beneath the surface to be sorted through and although it is unpalatable, I know that beauty can be seen within it, because I wanted it to be seen in its best light. It took a lot of time and experience to light this image, and that is part of the performative nature for me. An excerpt from EB's writing about this image:

> The subtext seems to be 'Something is coming out of my mouth and the
> process is horrible and painful, yet I am spewing light and beauty…
>
> (EB, 2012, *Session II, vii*, on p.13 of Appendix)

in particular showed me that the portrait of me could be made up of less palatable parts and that was acceptable.

Now they were committing to a period of time with the acknowledgement that it was unknown what would be revealed about any of us during the process. The artworks were unearthing something of interest within the analysts, but it wasn't clear whether this was as a response to information about the artist, the representation of the artist (in this case, my self-portrait), the process itself, something that each was feeling themselves as viewers of the artwork, or the unique creative consolidation of all these that comes about from any engagement

with art. The engagement with my art, and with me, through it, in this project where it was particularly unclear how any of us would respond to each other's responses, or what that might mean to the development of the project was something of a leap of faith. I was aware that I was asking a lot of them, almost as if I was demanding: 'You're helping me work out something of myself on my own, you should be helping me out as my parents didn't.' It became obvious that I was sending these images to meet with something much more than simply a 'blank screen' as a therapist is often called upon to be. The UKCP website describes how this works in Psychodynamic Psychotherapy as follows:

> The client is encouraged to talk about childhood relationships with parents and other significant people, the primary focus being to reveal the unconscious content of a client's psyche in an effort to alleviate psychic tension. The therapist endeavours to keep his own personality out of the picture, in essence becoming a blank canvas onto which the client can transfer and project deep feelings about themselves, parents and other significant players in their life.

> (Accessed 7 April 2013)

In this description the metaphor of a 'blank canvas' is used as a way of introducing the role of the therapist, perhaps because the word 'canvas' might paint an image of a more creative process of the interaction between the client and therapist as they engage, rather than a 'screen' which invites the association of projections. Either way, the therapist is tasked with getting her or himself 'out

of the picture', even though they are very much in the picture, whereas in my method, the analysts were invited to use their own personal associations to the artwork in a way that might be experienced by them as a disruption to their clinical practice, as something emotive and worrying may be emerging.

The classical approach to psychoanalytical treatment would have been a unilateral process; the analysand working towards awareness in the presence of the all-knowing analyst in a process that might offer respite from psychic pain. Now, the analyst's experience is seen as an important part of this process and is no longer simply, in the words of psychoanalyst Peter Glovacchini, 'the direction of treatment flowing from the patient to a blankscreen analyst' (1994). The notion of scrupulous neutrality and non-responsiveness of the analyst's past or present being involved with the workings of the analysand's internal mind is now seen as a hindrance to understanding. The analysand may know this intuitively, as Robert Langs noted: 'the patient is constantly monitoring the analyst's countertransference attitudes and their associations can often be understood as "commentaries on them".' (1978, p.509). In this project where I was asking DB and EB to monitor their own counter-transferential 'attitudes' to my artwork and feedback to me, my associations to their writings utilised in the making of new images might mean that the new artwork would contain my 'commentaries' on their 'commentaries'.

I designated the time the analysts spent engaging with the image 'sessions', because although they are effectively inert objects, I felt that the analysts were dealing with something akin to what they might have been confronted with in the consulting room in terms of managing their counter-

transference to what they could see of me through my artwork, and what they might imagine of what I might see of them through their writings. In being confronted by a blank screen, rather than a direct response as in a conversation with a friend, it forces the analysand to think, consciously and unconsciously, about himself or herself, entering into an internal conversation wondering what the other might think which could be perceived as a kind of echo. All the fantasies about all the relationships, including ugly and beautiful are all wrapped up in this thinking, and this comes about because there is no immediate verbal response from the analyst. There is a pause in time and this thinking goes on for the analysand and the analyst within in – and this is a hugely significant part of what psychoanalysis is, in my view, creating a multiplicity of outcomes.

A Canvas on which to Paint, a Screen on which to Project

Otto Fenichel, amongst many other psychoanalysts, believed that the suppression of countertransference in the therapeutic engagement is equivalent to the suppression of human feeling and that counter-transference is a vital tool with which to describe the very early interaction of mother child attunement, as he put it: 'This recognition of the importance of a reciprocal relationship and its integration into contemporary psychoanalysis has spelt the death knell of the blank screen method' (1946, p.76). The continual projection on to a screen and introjection of those reflections, is a crucial part of psychoanalytic work. However, this could be seen as simply setting the therapeutic framework for the more important role of object use. As Winnicott put it, it is the survival of the

therapist through these exchanges that develops object 'use'. As the object becomes more meaningful, it is not simply a screen on to which to bombard projections. In Winnicott's term, it becomes 'part of a shared reality, not a bundle of projections' (1971, p118).

When I listen to an analysand, she or he is aware I am listening. However, if we create an image or symbol that resonates with each of us, through interpretation, they will sense I am in touch with them. This concept also fits with the nature of art and its affect on the viewer. Responsive dialogue involves a match, or 'fit.' However, when this is not achieved, what then? Wright says the artist, in this gap, is poised on the edge of 'no mother', the un-attuned mother, hence the artist's compulsion to go on creating or the viewer's urge to go on searching for meaning: 'When the medium gives the artist what he needs then he experiences joy and self-realisation. The panic of facing the blank canvas is a re-enactment of the primitive anxiety of the non-adaptive mother, the distracted mother.' (2009, p.81). The viewer that gets too frightened is re-enacting this concept of an un-adaptive mother also. He or she may be frightened of the blankness that confronts them, as if trying to get a response from a non-smiling, silent face, that makes a person feel he or she is not recognised. Sometimes, the viewer would like the artwork to be a blank screen as this state may be familiar; from this place, they can think the worst (of themselves or the artist). If a function of my artwork was to act as a screen on to which the DB and EB could project, the artwork might at times be experienced by the analysts as the 'no-mother'. If I as artist, might be trying to compensate for deficiencies in attunement in making reflective forms of my own, through this process, I might

gain more confidence in my ability to exist and feel real. I felt as if a part of me was in the room with the analyst and their counter-transference could act as a very valuable access point to this world of the artist, as over time, a conversation of sorts develops between myself and the analysts.

In *Session II*, I was trying to represent the less palatable aspects of my psyche, which included aggression, knowing this is very difficult to be confronted with and reflect back. I once titled this piece: *here I sit before my mother's mirror*, because I was thinking of the way my mother used to sit in front of her vanity mirror to do her make-up, so it is associated with displaying and also covering up the less palatable aspects of self. I wanted to make an image that would be playing with the idea that I could see the way she saw me if I put myself in front of the same mirror. This performance in front of the cameras felt like an act of defiance to say whatever she saw to put into me, I wanted to throw up; 'rejecting the mother's milk… perhaps the poisonous and unpalatable – yet what is rejected is full of light', as EB put it (EB, 2012, *Session II*, xxii, p15 of Appendix), perhaps this could be seen as language. I knew that DB and EB might not want to see me get in touch with my more unpalatable parts or to take on the responsibility of telling me that that was an unpalatable part of me, so I was moved by the way they saw me through. It made me see my aggressivity in a different way, especially with EB's response that I might have an opportunity to sift through the stuff that may have been seen as disgusting and come to different conclusions about being turned away from, or turning away.

I think there was a sudden realisation for both DB and EB that the notion of a project whereby they were responding to inert objects that they might

describe, suddenly became the reality that these were dynamic images that might actually challenge them with their own projections. They might feel they would want to protect me and possibly themselves from what I might reveal of myself, and that what they were describing might reveal something more of themselves in writing; it felt dangerous for all of us. I felt it had to be acknowledged that the photograph could be a place of projections and the writing could therefore reveal something of the respondents, as if we were each saying 'Look, I'm giving you quite a lot of myself'. I'm not sure how vulnerable I was, I think they thought I was being quite aggressive, which in my thinking is only another way of being vulnerable, as if asking: 'are you going to hang around?' In a way, I gave them permission for them to make their own moral choices about what they were going to say. This led to an important change in the minds of DB and EB that it was a serious collaborative project and they were an integral part of it, perhaps not as I had envisioned it from the start, so had not been clear about this. After that, it was as if they had renewed their commitment to the project and I was very confident that they would see it through. I am eternally grateful for the decision that DB and EB made to see the project through to the conclusion. As the project went on, it became quite clear that we had each invested quite a lot and that there was something important going on for all of us. Often it seemed as though DB was the one who didn't want to be doing what he was doing, but in the end, he was the one who elaborated on the loss: 'What's beyond the end? Go somewhere from here.' (DB, 2012, *Session XXIV, xi-xii*, p.58 in Appendix). As the artist and subject of this enquiry, the responsibility for what happens next rests with me.

I filled in an ethics application for the research department at London Metropolitan University in order for the proposal to be accepted, but there were ethical considerations that could only come to light through the process, for example, how much either I or DB or EB were prepared to reveal of ourselves. There was a question of who we would all be revealing something of ourselves to, whether each of us to our own selves, or to each other, or to any future readers, as EB acknowledged early on:

> Perhaps this project itself is very exposing. Not only do two people analyse the pictures, but tutors presumably read parts on what we say that the subject's whole experience of self and family is exposed.
>
> (EB, 2012, *Session V, xiii*, p.20 in Appendix)

In retrospect, there was an element of me hiding in the photographs, for example what is cropped out, and I assume that there was an element of hiding within the written responses, conscious and unconscious. Perhaps this could have been to save my feelings in a similar way that parents might, but it may be that there was also some attempt to protect themselves from revealing too much about themselves through their projections. The idea that it was the photograph that acted as an interface for their communication to me, so that it could always be seen as them addressing a photograph rather than me might have made things easier, as if it was 'nothing personal'. I would like to again acknowledge that DB and EB made efforts to be candid, for example, EB wrote 'if I am brutally honest (and not to be is not helpful in this context), I want to say, give me photos that I

can write about…' (EB, 2013, *Session XIV, viii*, p.38 in Appendix) as if a direct appeal to me.

Looking back, the email exchange after the delivery of my image for *Session II* was not just about making sure that I had the commitment of EB and DB to the project, but also something about keeping 'mother' and 'father' in a relationship so that they could see the child together. I used to have an obsession with the artist doing everything on his or her own, but since going to art school and being introduced to critiques, I have come to realise the importance of an 'other'. In some sense I always believed in this project being a collaboration. I speak in pictures, they respond in words, I get to re-encounter my image in the context of their writings. I fundamentally believed that my exchange of images for their words was my route into language, having always used the camera as my primary form of communication. Now I can see that it was the images and words coexisting within this project which brought my communication to life. The collaboration brought language to the need for understanding that I had, where I had chosen the visual to communicate with the world, where everyone around me was using words. Now I feel I can use both in conjunction with each other.

From the outset, it was a question of having two people engaged with the work so that I might find some common ground with each of these analyses, but this was too simplistic. Now it seems more obvious that I set up the triangular configuration of mother and father viewing the child as seen through my images, so I could negotiate, as all children do, what to make of what mother saw and what father saw. In *1963*, the two benches with two different viewpoints became

this symbol, there was always going to be conflict in negotiating between the two responses, as well as the fantasy of what is communicated between mother and father, making a triangle of dyadic relationships, reflecting the triangle made by the benches as eyes with me floating 'unseen'. The mishmash of the words is the idea of me trying to bring the responses of both parents into unison, to feel like the artist is parented by parents instead of by two individuals, to release myself from two separate relationships and try to bring it into one relationship. By changing it to the first person, it is like bringing together the output of each person, to negotiate common ground. I force my parents' language into one voice, which we can call a pathography; that voice becomes a symbol of me, rather than split.

CHAPTER FOUR: Literature Review

Fig 9: Rowell, S. (2013) *Untitled* [photograph]

Psychotherapy is not making clever and apt interpretations; by and large it is a long-term giving the patient back what the patient brings. It is a complex derivative of the face that reflect what is there to be seen… the patient will find her or her own self, and will be able to exist and to feel real.

(Winnicott, 1971)

An Underlying Theory of Pathography

As referred to at the beginning of this thesis, the psychotherapist Nicky Glover wrote about the theory of pathography as a practice where analysis of the artwork can provide insight into the artist:

> The pathographer manifests the same qualities as the so-called 'objective' analyst who is able to look at the artist and his work as if he were conducting an analysis – but with the significant absence of a patient who can speak for himself. It is assumed that the artwork will shed light on the artist's inner conflicts, repressed anxieties, usually of an infantile nature. (Glover, 2009, p.4)

I wondered what of significance would be seen in my artwork, whether my unconscious might be visible at work in my self-portraits, speaking for itself and bypassing myself, so to speak. In devising a method where I could ask for psychoanalytic-trained therapists to look at my work and try to put into words what they might see of my 'inner conflicts' and repressed anxieties', I was hoping that being given a reflection of what is there to be seen would give more insight into myself. I felt written language could enhance my self-portraits as the words may offer a way to describe how I think or communicate. As researcher, my interest is to develop a deeper understanding of how an artist's process can be developed as a therapeutic tool. This method encourages getting in touch with oneself through the experiential process of art practice in sight of an 'other' who

endeavours to help the artist see more clearly. As in psychotherapy, this process may involve repetition which Freud described as compulsive for many of us:

> In the unconscious mind we can recognize the dominance of a compulsion to repeat, which proceeds from instinctual impulses. This compulsion probably depends on the essential nature of the drives themselves. It is strong enough to override the pleasure principle and lend a demonic character to certain aspects of mental life; it is still clearly manifest in the impulses of small children and dominates part of the course taken by the psychoanalysis of victims of neurosis.
>
> (2003, p.145)

Freud wrote that children read stories over and over while relating what they read back to their own family constellation. In his reading of 'The "Uncanny"' (1910) Hugh Haughton described Freud's implication that

> the whole extraordinary system of narrative exchange… is bound up with a child's need to reread itself over and over, in relation to its own family. Every novel offers alternative genealogies, alternative identities and alternative struggles with the family.
>
> (2003, p.xxviii)

Artistic practice might also be viewed as a similar process of repeating in order to incorporate and integrate alternative understandings and identities, the artist on a similar journey to that of the child; seeking an internal 'truth' and its relation to

authenticity, knowingly or unknowingly struggling to communicate through the making and re-making of the art. This artist, in the act of creating, is in a continual process of defining and redefining the artwork/self so that eventually the artist and perhaps then the viewer is able to recognise something of the artist in the work. Calabrese wrote:

> We begin to discover at least one essential condition for the self-portrait; a verbal or visual text that stands in place for the person who has produced it and that thus represents him.
>
> (2006, p.30)

The viewer is able to view the work and recognise, at least on an unconscious level, the hidden meanings and unconscious intentions of the artist. As Artières wrote:

> The artist uses a sensory material that bears the traces of his first affective perceptions and experiences, producing a figurative representation that balances desire with external reality, actual perception with what has been irremediably lost.
>
> (1995, p.35)

The interpretation of art by means of psychoanalysis is a well-trodden path, in attempts to unearth these 'traces'. Analysts such as Hanna Segal (1991, 2012), D.W. Winnicott (2012, Caldwell 2011), Melanie Klein (Segal 1992, Spillius

1988) and Ernst Kris (2000) all demonstrated at some point in their careers an interest in the intersection between art and analysis. Discussions of art made by people experiencing psychotic symptoms have been undertaken extensively in the world of psychoanalysis (Hacking 1999, MacGregor 1989, Waller 1991). Karl Abraham (1911) was also keen to apply psychoanalysis to the study of art as an alternative way of treating neuroses in patients. Art interpretation also surfaces in the writings of Freud, specifically in his letters to Carl Jung (1908), where he shows an interest in notes made by Leonardo da Vinci. The young artist revealed a memory of a childhood dream and from this dream Freud becomes curious about the character of the man himself. 'This riddle of Leonardo da Vinci's character has suddenly become transparent to me', he wrote to Jung, 'this would be the first step in biography, [that] biography, too, must be ours' (Haughton, 2003, p.xii). The pathography of the artist is now his interest. The *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria* (1905) was Freud's first sustained attempt at psychoanalytic biography. However, it was his interest in Leonardo da Vinci and the writing of *Memory of Childhood* (1910), states Haughton (2003), that was the first instance of Freud applying psychoanalysis to the subject of both the visual arts and an individual artist. I draw parallels with this process which Freud called pathography and the method I have devised as a form of phototherapy, as I feel a lot can be inferred about the artist from analysis of their artwork, in my case, photographic self-portraits.

Freud's reading of the notes of Leonardo da Vinci were an important part of forming an opinion of the artwork, because words and language are also an important part of a person's notion of their own self. Freud's pathography of

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Leonardo brings together his notations about his ideas, how he conveyed himself, not just through his artwork, but through his thinking. Perhaps my method of 'Pathography' is most similar to Freud's when he undertakes an analysis of Daniel Paul Schreber via the reading of the latter's autobiography (1911, p. 149-153). Introduced to Schreber's memoirs by Jung in 1903, he writes 'first an analysis of our good friend Schreber [because] one can guess a good deal from reading the book'. His letter to Jung documents Freud's analysis of Schreber using only Schreber's written memoirs as his research material.

Asking for analysis of self-portraits in my version of Pathography within Phototherapy is about trying to bring images into language and in doing so, detect the voice of the artist and what it might be trying to tell us by speaking its own 'truth', an authentic 'own truth' that is what's recognised when we first engage with the artwork. As an analysand or analyst, you are only finding out through memories that may be real or not – we don't go to analysis to unearth facts. Within therapy, we're not trying to find answers to factual events, we're dealing with memories and dreams, which are very ambiguous in nature; what is very real are the feelings or emotions attached to past experience. Artists can find ways to re-experience these feelings through their practice. The feeling is real enough, so the feeling becomes the fact, not the fact that might have resulted in the feeling. In my memories of childhood, I believe them to be 'true', but it is probably more accurate to describe them as memories that may or not be real, because by making them facts there is a sense that you can miss the point.

It is important that they stay potential or imagined truths, rather than 'the' truth and it's the feeling that's emoted through that process of not seeing them as

black and white facts that creates the ongoing dialogue with the self – and by extension, the artwork. We have to talk from 'a truth', but acknowledging that the truth is multiplicitous, always bearing in mind that I might not be telling the truth, or that the truth may not be so; a position a psychoanalyst often speaks from. Similarly, a performance or experience of an artwork is ever-changing, because you see new things in it with every new encounter. It's not a fixed proposition. *1963* is an example of how an artwork can be something to have an exchange with. The artwork offers up something new and may still in the future offer something else. This fixed two-dimensional image has the potential to offer up new information if the unconscious has been allowed to help in the making and then is allowed to help in the interpreting, so the process of making it allows the concept to offer something up in the future. Perhaps this ongoing futural effort could be seen as the closest we can get to immortality.

Me, Them, Us

The focus of my research is on the way the production of self-portrait photographs, along with their reception, can be incorporated into an artistic practice and, as the series develops in collaboration with the language of interpretation, a different self-portrait is revealed which is not fixed, but held within a narrative of language, from different angles. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the theories behind the experience of the combined intersubjective world of artist and analysts, the fantasies and desires of the artist combined with the projections of the analysts. Through transference and counter-transferential

observations, written language is used to record the experience of interacting with the artwork, which in turn, influences the production of future work. I discuss some of the mechanisms at work from a psychoanalytical perspective of the intersubjective interface between artist and analyst and the processes of projection and introjection. I examine the relationship as it develops, and later in the chapter, examine the use of photography as phototherapy in an established area of research where photographs are used specifically as a therapeutic tool.

Laurie Schneider Adams writes of categories of psychoanalytical thinking that can be applied to the visual arts, at least since the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, groupings that can be readily identified, including symbolism and sublimation (1993, p.4). Symbolism, as described by Rycroft (1995, p.179), is a product of unconscious intra-psychic conflicts, recognised as a symptom formation. Freud recognised the importance of symbols, not simply in the subject of dreams for example, but as a mental operation. Symbols can be seen in Winnicottian terms as the 'transitional object' (1971). Formed in early life, the transitional object becomes baby's first creative symbol, created through sublimation which importantly allows separation from the mother, 'constituting the child's first created symbol and forming the basis of adult creativity' (1971, p.63).

Sublimation, as described by Freud (1930), is the transformation of libidinal energy to a higher status, that of creative or intellectual activity, such as the making of art. It can be seen as the creative function of the ego to mediate between the instinctual wishes of the unconscious and the demands of reality.

The ego's narcissism can be seen reflected in the creative product. The use of language in this project can be seen as extension to these symbols, language being another way of achieving sense of further identity:

> Lacan's work on the symbolic power of the gaze has also entered the literature on art and psychoanalysis. He related the gaze to desire and to the complex, often contradictory, functions of the eye. Power, evil, benevolence, envy, and love are among the motivating forces of the gaze. [...] they can operate within the iconographic or narrative content of a picture, between picture and artist, and between picture and viewer.
>
> (Adams, 1993, p.6)

Art historians traditionally rely more on written evidence, archival records and other contemporary texts (Adams, 1993, p.11), suggesting the importance of the psychobiographer needing some psychoanalytic background, trained in psychoanalysis perhaps, so as to be receptive to symbols and language, the creative sublimation of which underlies the final picture. The story beneath the surface narrates the image:

> Biographical evidence adds another dimension to the iconography of the work. The difficulty of this task is increased by the very transformation that the artist makes from the original impulse and the unconscious source material to the final aesthetic product.
>
> (Adams, 1993, p.11)

In offering these artworks to be viewed, I encourage attempts to imagine the narrative that gave rise to these images. Through this project, I put my inner psychic experience into a self-representation for assessment, comparing this with the interpretations from the analysts using psychoanalytic theory. I offer a screen onto which the viewer can project, collude and be frustrated, just as an analyst would feel her/himself placed in the intra-psychic world of the analysand. Investing something of oneself in the making of the work or in responding to it, it is this intersubjective exchange that offers an opportunity for insight for both the artist and the analysts.

Therapeutic Use of Photography – Phototherapy

I suggest that the production of these self-portraits and their presentation arises from an urge or need to articulate my internal world as a means of self-discovery. Practitioners of phototherapy believe that photographic self-portraiture can be used as a therapeutic tool. As both a practising photographer and psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapist, I am interested in the therapeutic value of both the making and analysing of images and how this feeds into my practice of both. I am interested in the process of change that takes place through this extended period of enquiry and how the influence of external written language interpretations bring further insight to a purely visual form of communication: the photograph.

I do not consciously hold on to any of the language from previous reading. Until the end of the project I didn't pull any of the language out to work out what to do with it. I allowed myself to believe that unconsciously it would be there, somehow running in the background while I was envisioning and making the images. I believe that keeping an eye out for the unconscious revealing itself in the half-light is about trusting that there is something of value to be revealed, that might eventually be shared through language, either verbal or visual. As soon as I verbalise something, it runs the risk of a too-literal description in an attempt to make it concrete instead acknowledging an element of the unknowable. The language of description maintains a sense of symbolism as if the unconscious is still trapped within the words, waiting to be revealed. My relationship with the language of interpretation can be similar to my relationship with the artwork itself, which is that it might need time for me to see what has been revealed. Putting an experience into words can sometimes be the only way to share an experience, as Lacan wrote: 'Primitive as it is, this symbolism brings us immediately on to the plane of language, in so far as, outside of that, there is no numeration conceivable.' (1991, p.224).

Bringing Images into Words

Loewenthal differentiates between phototherapy, defined as the use of photographs in therapy to initiate psychological change, and therapeutic photography, defined as self-initiated photography-based activities where photographs are used as a means of therapeutic exploration, acknowledging that

these terms are 'not entirely separate entities but may be classed as existing on the continuum of photo-based healing practices' (2013, p.82). In his book *Phototherapy and Therapeutic Photography in a Digital Age* (2013), Lowenthal brings together photographers, art practitioners, academics (with crossover interests as therapists) and photographic practitioners, all individuals of different photographic experience and differing professional qualifications within the profession of therapy, but all working in a photo-therapeutic context. Theoretically, I parallel my research with a more traditional view of the therapeutic process, that of the analyst and analysand engaged in a creative process wherein the patient reveals and displays aspects of self in dialogue. In both respects we might begin to reveal, consciously or unconsciously, both internally and externally, an understanding of an alternative image of self in the world. My therapeutic use of photography (as with the psychoanalytic engagement) can be seen as a process of not necessarily offering a socially acceptable image to the world, but one that 'feels real'. Over time, in both of these relationships, the presentation of self develops. This often happens through the return of certain narratives, repeated in a slightly different way each time. In the initial presentation and re-presentation, in therapy and in the making and re-making of the images, a more accurate picture might reveal itself. In presenting the results of this enquiry through the lens of psychoanalytical theory and using the lexicon of psychoanalysis, I propose that this change can be documented.

In either denying or accepting the interpretations of the analysts, I am questioning my sense of my self. I would argue that the artist who doesn't have a notion of a viewer could benefit hugely from working in sight of the 'other', as

in therapy. I go to therapy so that I can encounter myself in the confines of the analytic frame, to be in a better position to engage with the world outside of that frame by reality testing ideas and thoughts that were generated through this process. Placing an artwork in a gallery has a similar function, that we can 'exit' the everyday and engage with the artwork within a specific frame, so that we can then take any insights that we may have made into the 'real' world. An artist's book could also offer a frame in a way, so that we can engage with the artist/ artwork in a conversation that we can then take beyond the book, and then re-engage and re-encounter this conversation every time we pick up the book. The length of time involved for this research project enhances art practice as a journey of self-discovery, because it allows time for reality testing in between 'sessions'. Indeed, it is the process of production of original artworks, and the therapeutic value of the collaboration it comes out of, that is my main area of intersest, a practice that offers insight in the form of more creative possibilities, as much through its re-viewing and re-making, allowing the viewer's phantasies to engage with the image representation.

The Phototherapy Frame

Judy Weiser, one of the earliest pioneers of photography in therapy, describes phototherapy, at its most basic level, as what happens when people use snapshots to communicate back and forth in a therapeutic setting, so that the information and insights that are brought to light can be noted, placed in a helpful framework, and consciously and cognitively reflected on (1999, p.35). Loewenthal states '[i]t

is clear that phototherapy and therapeutic workshops appear a popular means through which many people have useful therapeutic experiences' (2013, p.9), adding that the method is particularly effective with children who struggle to articulate themselves emotionally, to verbalise feelings about which they were previously unable to bring to language, as visual images can 'provide an alternative vocabulary to connect with, describe and evaluate our lives, bringing insights that might otherwise remain hidden through more traditional, non-visual modes of enquiry' (2013, p.13). One criticism that has been levelled at psychoanalysis is that it is a method of healing appropriate to those more adept in verbal language as a mode of communication. For those not as verbally articulate, introducing photography into the communication process, visual symbols within a free associative environment, offers new opportunities of communication and creates alternative possibilities. As Berman suggests: 'Photographs can act as a bridge, a link between two separate people and their worlds' (1993, p.64). In this way, phototherapy – as opposed to the therapeutic use of images of self - enables the use of photography, in conjunction with traditional methods of therapy, to act as supplement to memory which helps provide the opportunities needed to articulate feelings and explore emotions. My method takes this even further, involving written language as the bridge between aspects of self that may not usually communicate.

The Bridge of Language

Artists use image production and presentation as a means of self-discovery without any formal therapeutic qualifications. Spence and Sultan are practitioners of lens-based art who, I will argue, have used self-portrait photography in a therapeutic sense and whose work has influenced my project. This contrasts with those who are therapeutically-trained and use photography when working with self and others from the position of a therapist. These include, for example, Weiser, Loewenthal, Martin and Berman. There is, of course, a crossover between these two categories where, from whatever direction one approaches the concept of phototherapy, the photographer combines therapy and photography – for self or others – as a process of 'working through' (seen as the process of repeating, elaborating, and amplifying interpretations) an issue or a block. In this case, it is the act of communicating with images that enables personal therapeutic insight, especially around being seen and self-perception.

The use of photography in a therapeutic context divides into two main strands: existing images (such as family portraits and found images) and self-generated photographs (taken by the client). Both strands involve projection onto the image with simultaneous interpretation by the therapist to gain insight. The latter, which I concern myself with (self-generated photographs) also involves the production of original artwork. Editing, remaking and presenting the image are all parts of the process that can bring about therapeutic understanding in this context. Weiser

(1999) suggests that with both approaches the notion of the projection of the viewer onto the image remains the same.

In Berman's *Beyond the Smile: The Therapeutic Use of the Photograph* (1993), she further explores the use of photography in the therapeutic setting: 'These stilled images can function as powerful reflectors of the ambivalence, confusion and inconsistencies that patients bring to therapy' (1993, p.vii). She talks of the family portrait serving as a perfect psychodynamic access point, by which it deals with the past and also stirs up emotive content in both present and future. I see this psychodynamic aspect in psychoanalytic psychotherapy in regards to the relationship with our past as not debating whether the memory relates to something that did or did not happen, but specifically as mentioned before, our relationship with our feelings of what happened in the past as a tangible means of discussion. It is not just about engaging with the photograph *per se*, it is about engaging with the important relationships that the photograph 'conjures up', and it is this witnessed re-engagement with past emotions through the performative nature of the work in the present that can enable us to re-imagine our future. If we look at memories without concentrating on whether they are factual or not, we can focus on the feelings involved. It is about trying to engage with whatever is the sticking point. It is the continual desire to shift the creative block: *that* is the process, that is living, that is being alive, that is being a human being. Weiser reminds us that such work with photographs must be under the supervision of a trained psychotherapist (1999). The importance of a trained individual to help identify emotional responses from the client and their ability to be aware of transferential feelings is stressed by phototherapists:

They serve to highlight many of the themes within the patients' internal and external world. The exploration of this ambivalence often leads to some acceptance, resolution of inner conflict, and the self understanding that so many seek […] [These themes] make connections which may help us in the future.

(ibid, p.9)

As a tool of self-discovery, the camera facilitates the discovery of important opportunities to reveal connections between the past and present. Without the therapist as outside agency, this self-disclosure becomes potentially cyclical in nature, like the symbol of the ouroboros previously mentioned. But what of confronting these same questions in the context of the photographer's practice without the presence of a trained professional? In other words, the photographer's making and remaking of work as a means of consciously or unconsciously making more sense of his or her own past experience. In a practice, an image might instigate dialogue and, through this process, understanding. As Berman suggests in posing the following poignant questions:

Photographs can be seen as a powerful form of language: what is the nature of this language? How do photographs communicate their message? In what intricate ways can these soundless images speak to us? What are the limits of this language?

(1993, p.9)

These soundless images can speak to us if we are in a position to allow them to be revealed.

Michael Simmons writes of the practical application of a creative photographic approach as a key method by which to explore and interpret human experience. The experiential nature of the production of the image provides a means of delving into past experiences (Simmons, 2000, cited in Loewenthal, 2013, p.63). Simmons' own enquiry arises from a need to explore and connect with his personal experience of loss, as a way of making sense of memories of his father's death during his childhood. His method is to bring together different pieces of artwork whereby disparate objects 'form new alliances' to become 'metaphors that link internal emotional states', and then present these in the form of an exhibition. The act of making public something that was once private is also part of the therapeutic process. Putting together a series to make a narrative, both visual and in the form of the written word, parallels the therapeutic impact of making the individual pieces. Creating a narrative that might be reflected upon, a 'picture of loss' in Simmons' words, can create opportunities to access past feelings, not just for the artist, but also for viewers so that once in the public domain, the represented loss may be universally recognised and accepted. In my research, this method of the work is not seen as a series of individual encounters, but rather as the building up of a narrative over a period of time where the body of work develops into a self-portrait seen from many angles.

In their essay 'Acts of Embodiment: Explorations in Collaborative Phototherapy', Stephanie Conway and Julia Winckler describe phototherapy as a

method that allows one to 'challenge and un-fix established practices of seeing and knowing' (2006, p.205) enabling key areas of life to come to light. Having engaged with Rosy Martin's workshop *Re-enactment Phototherapy: Memory and Identity* (Toronto, 1996), their essay explores their own experience of practicing phototherapy where they take portraits of each other, often at the beginning and end of what are called 'talking sessions', or when requested by the listener at crucial moments in their dialogue. As a result, a picture is produced that they describe as both documentary evidence and a cultural inscription (ibid, p.210). Martin observes that:

> The photography sessions are not about 'capturing' the image; they are about seeking to make it happen... so that the body... may then be seen as performing rather than essentially containing those meanings.
>
> (Martin, 1996, cited in Conway and Winckler, 2006, p.210)

This practice of making within a conversation, Conway and Winckler suggest, explores the role of fantasy, with its roots in the unconscious, providing a psychic support through a 'continual process of identity construction' (ibid, p.211). Importantly, they discuss the re-making process (post-production techniques, on-screen editing) giving the artist 'distance' to review the images again. As in my practice, utilising previous images offers an opportunity to rethink: 'deciding which images to combine brought new stories to light and help us anchor existing themes, ultimately bringing more depth to the images' (ibid, p.217). Conway and Winckler confirm that this method of collaborative, interactive and

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interpersonal working formed a strong and lasting relationship between them, as DB and EB and I have found. I believe that the trusted, collaborative relationship goes a long way towards facilitating the revealing of self-knowledge. For Conway and Winckler, phototherapy is a tool for opening up new ways of knowing that are not 'limited, contingent and cyclical' (ibid, p.218) as can happen with someone struggling without the feedback of an 'other'. In their final observations, Conway and Winckler express their view that the challenge of phototherapy is in the photographing of the 'visually unsayable' (ibid, p.208). I would add that there might be greater scope for engaging in paradoxical thinking in meeting this challenge using the medium of photography, which is expected to be more representative than other art forms. As Susan Sontag writes: 'a photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image); an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.' (1977, p.154).

How does the photographer create a self-portrait that can represent the heretofore mis-represented taker of the image in his or her struggle to communicate? How can the image evoke an internal space as well as a surface on to which projections can be made? Jo Spence (1934-92) realised her own potential of self-expression through the use of photography. Initially she used the image to express her views about politics and society, but it was the therapeutic value of the practice of photography while recovering from breast cancer in 1986 that she is most noted for. A committed album maker, much of her work is presented as a narrative and process-led; by this I mean that the practice itself offered therapeutic support as much as the finished artwork and its presentation.

With her photography serving as an opportunity to compare internal worlds with external representation, the mirror was an important tool of her practice. Terry Dennett, long-term collaborator with Jo Spence and curator of the Jo Spence Memorial Archive, explained that Spence used the mirror for what she called the rehearsal stage during a process she called 'reflective participation', whereby she could 'be both patient and imaginary therapist' (cited in Loewenthal, 2013, p.33). In this way, Spence experienced herself as both self and 'other'. Her own work led to a collaboration with therapist and photographer Rosy Martin and together they developed a co-counselling method of self-portraiture which they named 'Photo Therapy'. Referring to this method of image production, Martin states her view that 'photographs offer us a slippery surface of meaning to reflect upon and project onto' (Loewenthal, 2013, p.69). It is the 'slippery' nature of what can be seen as surface in a photograph that encourages the viewer to play with possible meanings of what likes beneath, so that the photograph acts as a 'catalyst, providing clues' (ibid) to the unconscious. Martin reminds us that it is because all photographs are constructions that the performative nature of the making of the work is brought to the fore (ibid, p.70). This 're-enactment photography' (as coined by Martin) is transformative as it provides for the possibility of new endings, allows for changing the scripted memory of a past traumatic event. In this way, photography can serve a similar purpose to that of what Winnicott termed 'mirroring' – the psychodynamic process that occurs between a mother and baby (Winnicott, p.1971). The photograph can provide the interface between the outside representation and the internal world to allow for better understanding of self and one's relation to the world, in a similar way to a baby

getting to know herself or himself by seeing their facial expressions mirrored in the face of the 'other':

> The sharing and recognition of their photographic image provides an exciting added bonus for children in the quest for identity and recognition; it validates them and their individuality, confirming both their separateness in the world and their relatedness to other.
>
> (1971, p.4)

Photographic images can speak literally or metaphorically or both at the same time, and this duality means that the photograph can be of value in a therapeutic environment. A photograph might express 'how it was' or 'how I feel' in therapeutic terms without the need for written or verbal language. However, it must be acknowledged that for the photograph to be of any therapeutic value to the artist, there has to be some form of shared understanding, or at least the potential of being seen or known; a development of an intersubjective world or an overlapping of shared experience.

Fig 10: Rowell, S. (2012) *Session VIII* [photograph]

Face Down into the Surface

As we view a photographic print, we might just look upon its surface – an arrangement of grey and black particles of darkened silver halide crystals, a grouping of pixels, organised into light and shade – or we might look deeper beyond the surface, past the thing itself to see what makes it up, like fig. 10, *Session VIII*, above. In the context of this research, the analysts' interpretations of what the images communicate enable an intersubjective examination of the artist's internal world. As Berman says, photographs 'fulfil many powerful functions in psychoanalytical psychotherapy; above all, they provide us with a unique way into the unconscious' (1993, p.54). As mentioned before, only going so far as the surface could be characterised in terms of Narcissus being fixated on his reflection; another analogy might be made with the person who gazes upon

the window pane rather than looking through to what is beyond, which may involve an 'other' who could help us see ourselves better. As Lacan wrote about Sartre's ideas:

> I can feel myself under the gaze of someone whose eyes I do not even see, not even discern. All that is necessary is for something to signify to me that there may be others there. This window, if it gets a bit dark, and if I have reasons for thinking that there is someone behind it, is straightaway a gaze. From the moment this gaze exists, I am already something other, in that I feel myself becoming an object for the gaze of others. But in this position, which is a reciprocal one, others also know that I am an object who knows himself to be seen.
>
> (1959, p.215)

You don't dismiss the idea of the glass being there, you don't dismiss the other being there. It's like seeing the surface of the print as an interface from both sides, as the unconscious material is behind the surface, but you can't dismiss the surface, because it's the relationship between what is revealed and the history behind it. You don't ignore the history of the analysand, it has to be held in mind when thinking about what you see before you. In this way, an analysand, or in this project, the artist, can become more aware of her or his own subjectivity, even as she or he may be seeing themselves as in some way an object for the other, who may also be seen as an object.

The photograph as object has 'a realistic illusion and an illusionary reality' (Weiser, 1999, p.4). There are a variety of combinations of possibilities that occur where the intersection of gazes meet on the surface of the print; it is the interface between the internal dialogue of the artist, the communication between artist and viewer, and the internal dialogue of the viewer. To pass beyond the surface, more combinations of possibilities occur and this is where the language of psychoanalysis may help us. Particularly interesting to me is that an unconscious dialogue ensues between the artist and the viewer with the repressed content in the image, unseen by the artist because protected by defense mechanisms. I maintain that photography serves as an additional plane or location for intersubjective understanding because of the slipperiness of its surface allowing for different depths and relational possibilities to be explored.

Psychoanalytic Theory

The psychoanalyst Joseph Sandler wrote about these unconscious forms of communication and how we are formed by them:

> The interplay of introjective and projective mechanisms weaves a pattern of relatedness to the world of objects and provides the fabric out of which the individual fashions his own self-image […] out of this interplay also develops his capacity to relate to and identify with the objects in his environment.

> (1988, p.31)

In psychoanalytic terms, projection in the form of expulsion, and introjection as the internalisation of these projections, are seen as representing 'opposite sides of this same coin', as Sandler described it (1988). In the context of this research, I suggest that projection and introjection are more than simply opportunities to appreciate and gain a deeper level of understanding for the artist of the artwork. They also provide opportunities to understand something of the inner and outer worlds of artist and analysts. Lutz and Collins' description of the photograph as 'a dynamic site' (2003, p.354) at which many gazes or viewpoints intersect lets us see the photograph as a complex and multi-dimensional object that allows the viewer of the photograph to negotiate a number of different identities both for herself or himself as viewer and for those represented in the photograph. In this way, the photograph can also be seen as a way of creating a form of intimacy between the subject/s and viewer/s.

Ogden described projection and introjection as intercommunicative processes that create shared understanding which have their roots in early infant/ parent relations (1982). The infant cannot say how he or she feels and has to rely on somehow managing to make the parent/s experience the same feeling, which ideally leads to a deep and unconscious connection between them which facilitates the infant's psychic growth. Ogden explains that this process as it occurs in child development occurs in three phases: 1) the child as projector, ridding himself of unwanted bits, 2) depositing into (not just on to) the receiver and 3) recovering a modified version of these projections (1982). Without this third phase, Ogden notes, the process cannot be of therapeutic value. This is

similarly true in the therapeutic setting between analyst and analysand, and, I propose, between art(ist) and viewer. For an artist or viewer, happening across a reflection that has some familiarity might mean that something of oneself feels recognised. I suggest this process mirrors what occurs in the method created for the current research: the artist deposits un-resolved and un-differentiated parts of his pre-verbal past into a photographic image and presents the image for analysis. The artist then recovers a modified version of the projection in the form of written language and, as the project develops, through further written responses to further representations as the images are further modified based upon the introjection of earlier texts.

I am expelling something and I am getting something back in addition to what I might expect. My conscious process is more about playing and not being completely conscious of bringing bit-parts together in sight of each other and I'm not worried about the order. I am suggesting that if I let the unconscious take over, the potential meaning doesn't come to light until there's a conversation, whether that means conversing with the artwork in re-making, or conversing with someone else's interpretation of the artwork. I don't have a fixed pre-conceived notion of what might be seen. In the repetition, something is noticed in different ways each time it is encountered. If you are making an attempt to define a sense of self, art can be a way to face your demons, like in therapy. It can be used to create and confront a less palateable version of self, which could include coming up against a sense of perverted thinking or psychotic thinking in one's self – or you might be pleasantly surprised by how a more palateable version of self can be revealed.

Confronted by an image, the viewer must also, unconsciously, make a link to a personal representation. Sandler argues that in doing so, a boundary is set: 'this is I' and 'that is he' (1988). I am proposing that if an 'other' is brought in to engage with what has previously been an internal conversation, conclusions aren't made immediately. It is not 'this is I' and 'that is he or she'; it's as if what I'm saying is 'I don't know what I've got' and I'm inviting the analysts to see what can be made of it. The analysts' responses are then revisited by the artist in a much more privileged position than that of the child being talked about by his or her parents. It is as if the artist can now hear and can take or leave what has been said as a more conscious introjection. In contrast to the child who has a sense that he or she is being talked about, but never knows what is being talked about (which can lead to paranoia in an extreme case), I have been allowed access to the conversations between each analyst and my images and given the chance to engage on my own terms.

We might see projection and introjection as organising structures; a dual process by which there is a constant interplay across shared boundaries (Sandler, 1988). In the same way an artist sees the world and how the viewer, in phantasy, perceives that same world, there is capacity to bring this shared experience together. In inter-subjective terms and through this process of responding to the presented images, the analysts are unconsciously reflecting upon both the artist's and their own narrative of internal worlds. Even while identifying with the image in order to understand it, a dis-identification process also occurs whereby the ego says 'I distinguish between self and object, I will create a boundary' (Sandler, 1988). In effect, the viewer's boundaries simultaneously come down and are

temporally suspended within the image. It is when the mechanisms of projection and introjection are at play in the viewer playing with the image that the viewer brings his or her own life experience to the engagement, so that in one sense, the image is analysing the viewer. This process which Sandler calls 'sorting out' (1988, p.26) is similar to that which takes place in the consulting room where 'aspects of the object–representation are incorporated into the self-representation and vice-versa' (1988, p.26). It is the shared experience of reaching beneath the surface of the image in this 'sorting out' (unconscious thinking) that makes an intersubjective world for artist and viewer.

The artist's expectation of response and the viewer's experiences are coupled in phantasy, an unconscious conversation so to speak, enabling union and a different level of joint understanding. This could be seen as a re-enactment of a pre-verbal or early infant experience. The artwork also acts as a temporary container where this lack of initial understanding is held. In this project, I think the artwork has a voice worthy of calling me back to the artwork for further understanding, or to relate to it through the reverie of the engagement with DB and EB's writing which can offer less ambiguous thinking to refer to or turn back to later. One role of the analyst is to simply hold on to the therapeutic content while the analysand processes it, to act as a temporary container, enabling the analysand to maintain an ability to think. Handing back previous thoughts makes an alternative 'order' of things, as if the images can hold certain information to refer to. I think the viewing of the work was often difficult for the analysts as it involved getting caught up in the affective nature of my object relations. Many of the images will not 'pierce', to use Barthes' term (1981), they may dissolve,

counter and overlap the analysts' experience of communication, although through this play and interaction, I am asking the viewer to see something. I am sharing a representation of my internal world and enquiring how theirs might intertwine with it in a phantasy of connection. A sense of intrigue is maintained throughout. In this project which asks for an interactive engagement over time, a combined narrative is formed and some sort of awareness emerges of the state that I am attempting to disentangle. This project differs from therapy though as each of us creates and crosses these boundaries and through internalisation and externalisation responds to each other's work. Projection and introjection can be seen as tools offering a differentiating perspective on engagement with art – and I would argue that their place in Phototherapy could be acknowledged further to usefully describe the intersubjective processes in creative engagement.

CHAPTER FIVE: Lens-Based Practitioners – a Pathography
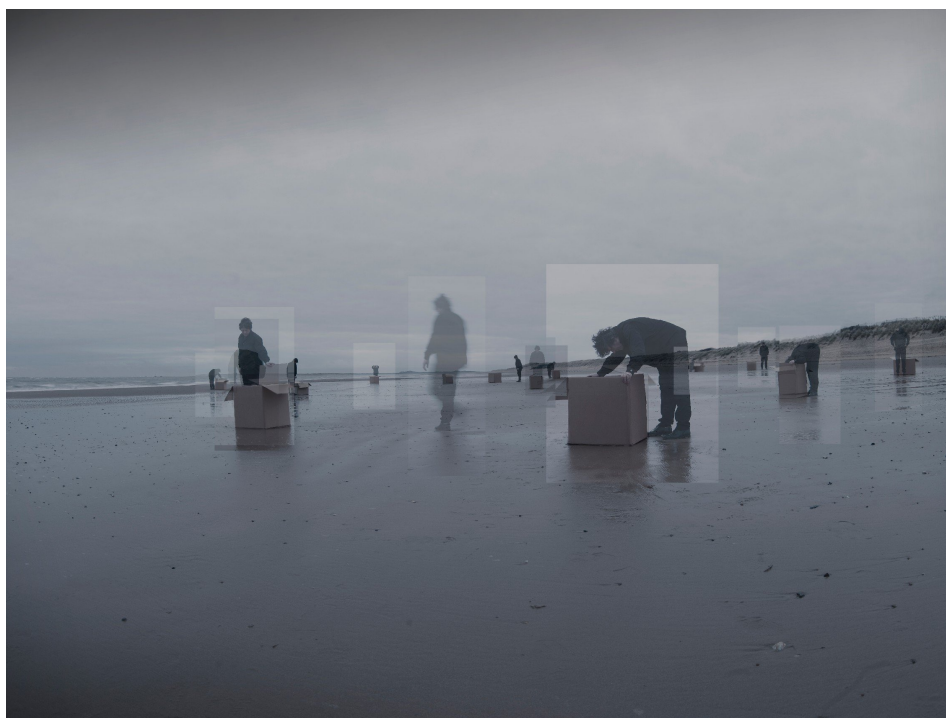
Fig 11: Rowell, S. (2012) *Session I* [photograph]

To search for historical truth is to live out the metaphor of analyst as archaeologist and to believe, along with Freud, that pieces of the past lie buried somewhere in the person's unconscious.

(Spence, D. 1987)

Susan Bright, writing on self-portraits in contemporary photography, talks of 'self' in 'self-portrait' as a 'representation' of emotions; an outward expression of inner feelings (2010, p.8). As expounded in this thesis, photography offers an opportunity for the viewer to explore the nature of what can be found under the surface, and in this respect, the presented portrait of self should not be confused with a photographic representation. Bate suggests that we can think of portraits

as a post-modern, non-realist, hybrid evolution of a specific genre in the study of photography: 'Th[is] genre of work presented provides different functions' (2009, p.4), whether family portraits, self-portraits, or more or less abstract representations of the sitter:

> Formalism has been replaced by a clear return to thinking in genres: [where] artist-photographers now commonly create a series of portraits, a sequence of landscapes, or the repetition of distinctive types of 'event'.
>
> (Bate, 2009, p.5)

As a photographer, I have always rejected formalism. My 'return to thinking' as an artist-photographer has led me to a certain repetition and even re-enactment of 'events', such as that of the boating pond. An artist remains true to his or her own practice in this a continual turning-inwards in an attempt to clarify a relationship with self. This self-portrait is made up of a narrative of a series of images that inform each other, in conversation with language, that have developed over quite a long period of time. There is an important link to therapy where the narrative is frequently repetitive in order to look at something from a different perspective to put a different angle on an 'event'.

Fig 12: Rowell, S. (2012) *Session X* [photograph]

Recognising the Artist Through Their Work

Bate wrote that an artist's 'style' of photography is specific to the artist's enquiry (2009), if we recognise an artist's style we might be recognising the artist's authentic relationship to his or her work. As already mentioned, in my project, the 'style' includes deconstruction and reconstruction of the image in the post-production re-encounter. The photographic image itself which was often out of

focus or blurred, was put through a 'distressing process', cut or hidden under layers of wax, as I didn't want to see myself and I didn't want to see myself looking back out in a distressed state, a reflection of me looking back in. It could be said that neither of us wanted to see each other, or that I was finding it difficult to see an 'other' – so I created this blur to hide within, like Rycroft's description, 'veils of our defence'. The 'style' of this series of self-portrait images means that the viewer is expressly invited to think about the surface of the print and what might lie beyond it to what might be being obscured. As in therapy, there is an invitation to think about what is not being said and what that might mean in terms of recognising something of the self.

It might be easier to recognise something if it seems familiar. John Tagg, the historian of photography, wrote in *The Burden of Representation* that the signifier only has a meaning within a signifying discourse that uses it (1998, p. 118). The viewer's associations to the photograph, and therefore my intentions as an artist, may be socially pre-defined in advance, as a form of expression coming out of my way of looking at the world from my own viewpoint, having experienced particular circumstances. As Bate says:

> To this extent it can be said that photographs en-code 'meanings' and we have to ask what is the value of this representation, for a historical, or even any other (eg. social, personal, aesthetic, political, or ideological), purpose.

(2009, p.16)

What, in Barthes' terms, connotes a picture from what it denotes, in that it 'seems to constitute a message without a code' (1981, p.46). Bate reminds us of Freud's comments on photography as having a role in the recollection of memory rather than just offering a surface image, that 'the simple distinction between denotation and connotation [is that the latter] is also dependent on the knowledge of the viewer' (2009, p.17). Bate goes further in saying: 'the significance of this proposition for the use of the photographs in history (e.g. by historians) is crucial: meanings attributed to pictures are also dependent on the cultural knowledge held by the person looking at the picture.' (2009, p.18). Or as Barthes put it in *The Photographic Message:*

> Thanks to its code of connotation, the reading of the photograph is thus always historical; it depends on the reader's knowledge just as though it were a matter of a real language (*langue*), intelligible only if one has learnt the signs.
>
> (1992, p.28)

It is important to remember that although the 'signs' may connote similar things to viewers of a similar historical culture, the 'meanings' or 'essence' attributed to the photograph are 'polysemic' in Barthes' terms. That is, any viewing of any image is always potentially plural, offering multiple points of connection with the image from an emotional standpoint. I see the plurality of meanings intelligible to the analysts as what gives rise to productive knowledge both during the project and beyond and I encourage a psychoanalytic approach to look

beyond the surface for multiple meanings that may exist simultaneously. Photography may demonstrate more than any other medium that the surface might baffle the viewer. As Bate put it: 'the surface is hiding or covering something over, in a kind of deceit' (2009, p.79). There is something very revealing about the way photography captures an image that is so close to life that it can really throw you if you want to be thrown, so that you have to work harder with photography to see what is really going on.

Performance

I find I have more in common with certain artists, where the performative nature of their work seems as important as the actual artefact. The artefact represents something of the process of what the artist went through. The artist's engagement is mostly with the experiential nature of the performative act of the making of the artefact and its post-production. This seems to me to be true in the case of Larry Sultan's *Pictures from Home* series and also in Jo Spence's practice. As previously noted, I am interested in what has been cropped out of an image, whether by the viewfinder or at the editing stage, and I think that the work of these artists speaks to me because they seem to share my interest in absence and what that can be represented in the domain of familial relationships. I believe Sultan is photographing his absence and by doing so, he is ever present. This contrasts with Spence's use of herself as subject in much of her work, but as she wrote, absence itself is ever present:

In asking what is absent we enter the realm of the analytical, be it through psychoanalysis or historical materialism. The former engages with the construction of our gendered subjectivity, unconscious desires and pleasures, positioned as we are within familial relationships…

(1986, p.121)

In my work, although I often appear in the frame, the image is sometimes of such an abstract nature, that I am almost asking to be found, as if I am saying: 'Look harder'. Often devoid of facial expressions, my self-portraits in this series rarely offer 'a face', in an invitation to a viewer to look beyond that surface appearance. I see hiding *as* a self-portrait, since being able to lie and have secrets is a way of re-creating one's self-image, giving some sort of voice, however obscured, to the less palatable parts. There is a vibration between subject and space that can be felt as quite provocative in a photograph where I offer a narrow depth of field using a smaller lens aperture, so that it is as if the more you squint, the more the background and foreground come into focus. It is as if having a narrow depth of field creates an initial depth of focus which constitutes a sleight of hand to deflect what is really going on, like a magician. I invite the viewer to try to bring my future and my past into focus. I am trying consciously to let people in, but what I make keeps people out. The performance that is important to me makes a print that may or may not entice people further.

There is a long history of objectification of women in photography where it is as if the surface is the only thing before the viewer, which I have been complicit in with my advertising work with female models, and also, with male

models[17]. I feel I can identify with something of objectification in the performative nature of appearing nude in my self-portraits, as if laying down a challenge: 'the person that really wants to see me has to move beyond that', to see what informs the performance, what is behind the surface we face the world with. My staged re-enactment of the scene at the boating pond has something in common with Spence working with a script for a performance, as rather than it being all about creating a still photograph that the viewer might see something in, I am asking myself to perform myself in order to feel something differently and asking the viewer to witness something of that.

It could be said that there is something about photography that asks the viewer to witness a performance. All artwork might be seen as a form of role-play in the making of identity. The self-portrait brought within a performative practice so that the artist's re-encounter with the performative nature of the image puts his or herself outside of the frame, making him or her the 'other' to themselves. This is also my experience of the re-encounter with the image in the post-production stage.

Process

Spence and Terry Dennett developed ideas together, often shooting 'snaps as reference' and going through a period of 'waiting', returning to restage the event, often on a 5"x4" camera which Dennett would operate. Alongside the waiting

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[17] *L'Enfant* also known as *Man and Baby* was a photograph I published through Athena in 1987, heralding the image of the 'New Man'.

time between conceiving the idea and shooting the final image, Spence and Dennett thought of the time required for the film to come back from the lab as waiting time, enabling them to 'become divorced from' the image and allowing more 'objectivity' (Dennett, 12.04.11). I would argue that this waiting time also allows space for the fantasy of what you might have got, which is similar to ideas being 'left' with the analyst in between sessions, as I have speculated about the 'latent image' holding something that might be revealed at another time.

There is an important function of the pause to look at one's own image, like a snapshot or freeze-frame during a film, as if to stop time and to observe the artwork for greater objectivity about self, then developed through an ongoing dialogue with self – an act of self-realisation through practice. It is as if the artwork has this holding capacity to be able to refer back to. As in therapy, it is the role of the analyst to hold aspects of the work of the analysis until they are ready to be looked at in context of all the other sessions – or in the case of this project, the other 'sessions' as self-portraits.

Spence's Alternative Family Album

Spence tried to make herself into her own 'other', working in front of a mirror in ways that she found therapeutic without necessarily recording them on film. Spence offered an interesting insight into her process with her use of language alongside her imagery, and is known for the collaborative nature of her practice with Dennett, as well as with Rosy Martin, amongst others, in a deliberate and conscious use of the camera as a therapeutic tool (1986, 1995). As with Sultan, I

cannot ask Spence about her work, but I have an enlightened view from Dennett, who knew Spence for thirty-six years, living together for thirteen of these from 1973-1986. I interviewed Dennett on 12th of April 2011 at his home in Islington, North London, when he offered interesting insights into the collaborative nature of Spence's performative work.

Fig 13: Terry Dennett with the Jo Spence Memorial Archive (Rowell, S. 2011)

Dennett, an accomplished photographer and writer, collaborated with Spence and 'co-curated' (Dennett, 12.04.11) a lot of work with Spence which was extensively published, throughout this period. The social relevance of their work together has been documented widely, especially their photographs of Travellers, and of the Women's Movement. Little has been documented, however, about how Spence's upbringing may have influenced her motivations in her work, specifically her relationships with her parents which were described by Dennett

as 'difficult'. Spence called her early self-expressive artwork 'for self' albums, thinking of them as a means to fill in what Spence called 'the gaps in her past and to create her impression of the whole' (Dennett, 12.04.11).
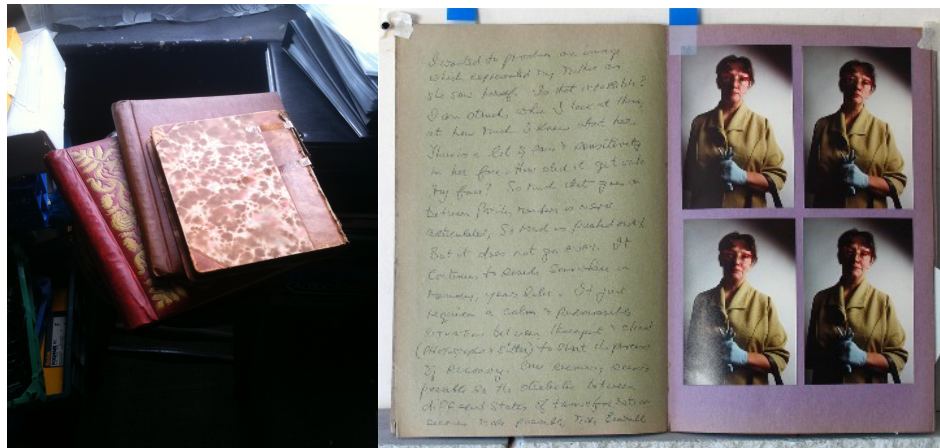
Fig 14: Spence, J. *'for self' albums* [artist's books]

By kind permission of Terry Dennett.

Spence stated that 'family albums intrigue me by what they don't show' (Dennett, 12.04.11), believing that ultimately 'the photographs would make concrete the intellectual parts of her past' (Dennett, 12.04.11). It seems that Spence was interested in the narrative fitting with the images and its impact on her understanding of her past. This 're-constructed truth through photography' (Dennett, 12.04.11), meant that Spence could ask herself difficult questions about her relationships with her parents. As Dennett said: 'Jo realised she had to be her own person', telling her own stories, 'ones that one wouldn't tell the neighbours' (Dennett, 12.04.11).

Fig 15: Spence, J. preparing *'for self'* albums [artist's books]

By kind permission of Terry Dennett.

In the interview I undertook with Dennett (12.04.11), he explained Spence began using the camera as a therapeutic tool very early in her career, 'mirroring emotions and a way of capturing a sense of her place in the world'. This early mirror work and experimentation with photo-theatre was an important preface to Spence's later therapeutic practice. By enabling her to 'stage' how she felt, she reconstructed her version of family portraits in a staged, narrative form. These processes provided a means of 'revised scripting' of her self-image. Spence's self-questioning could be something we could each take on:

> Whose version of family life do you inhabit in your family? How do you know anything about your own history – most of all the history of your subjectivity, and the part that images have played in its construction?
>
> (1986, p.214)

As I discuss in the Preface to the Appendix, questioning the truthfulness of the family album can be a way to define one's position in the world. The method which ultimately led to my being able to write the Preface is one that can be adopted by any artist who is interested in finding out more about themselves through Pathography.

Reflective/Reflexive Practice

Although clearly interested in the power of the therapeutic nature of this work, Spence's experience of therapy as a talking cure, was mixed. The exchange of money for the therapist's time is understood today as emotionally and experientially part of the process, integral to the 'setting of the therapeutic frame', but Spence's belief that a therapeutic relationship shouldn't be equated with a financial transaction meant that when Spence was 'charged for her first therapy session and never returned' (Dennett 12.04.11). She turned to 'self therapy, usually within like-minded groups, often feminist groups' without supervision, to continue on her therapeutic journey.

Spence's writings offer an interesting insight into her use of language alongside her mirror-work in a form of self-therapy as her own 'other' who bears witness to her attempts to 're model old image into something else', in her own words, reproduced here with kind permission of Dennett from the Jo Spence Memorial Archive:

Mirror Practice notes- - Self Portraiture therapy

Desensitisation---- release emotions-- change tight body language-- re model old image into something else-- say Yes when my face and body says No ------To look -----when my mind says don't look---- at that mutilated Breast

To change the visual concept from ------- dependant self pitying victim--- to a positive a survivor----Cancer War Hero--put on some medals-- a soldier's hat???-- People used to look up to War heroes didn't they--- not any more though!!!!!!

Qualities to think about

The Mirror is dumb non evaluative and non human - whatever I do in front of it -

It can't be critical like a person- It is not my Mummy or Daddy -- mirror pictures are-a private self activated show --just for me until I want to invite others in.

Mirror images cannot be saved for others to see later ---so it is safe to be uninhibited and show / release my most exposed self--? Important when Im vulnerable to work alone for a session??? But needs courage--do/will I always have the courage to face reality alone??

Mirror image is a reflection of the living image in real time ----but as ephemeral as real time--- it is not automatically preserved- except-imperfectly-in memory

The Photographer as a Resurrectionist--- not a body snatcher --- not TAKING pictures but reconstituting events

The Camera process can encapsulation real-time aspects-- but only as a dead embalmed cultural artefact------- photographs are pieces of paper-- why do people forget that ----So our task as photographers is to resurrect these dead things- to use our Art to get the shapes encoded in the paper   to express

something of the realities of the former living essence we confronted with our camera---

Thank God for a shared process of communication----- What would we do without it--and who will truly read our images and our intent when we do not share the same cultural codes?

Mirror image -a part self- a shadow self-- looks real -- moves in time and space but only a reflected illusion -- therefore some of my pretend situations and constructed image rehearsals will be no less real than others- I can choose my visual reality-- dress up ---makeup --all appear real -- but all are illusion in the mirror

The Mirror and the Camera

Set up Camera with bulb release to click any useful images first start with mirror rehearsal --No   Photos--- only looking.

In this writing, I would argue that Spence was standing up to her own super-ego, trying 'To look -----when my mind says don't look', that when looking in the mirror, she could also access an aspect of herself as 'therapist/other' 'To change the visual concept' of the way she sees herself. I think of this when I read Lacan:

The gaze is not necessarily the face of our fellow being, it could just as easily be the window behind which we assume he is lying in wait for us. It is an *x*, the object when faced with which the subject becomes object.'

(1991, p.220)

When Spence looked in the mirror, she made herself subject and object of her own gaze, which is perhaps true for any artist who makes self-portraits or anyone who reads something written about themselves. I would argue that the words that I pick out from the writing that is fed back to me from the analysts acts in a way like Spence's notes on her own self-portraiture therapy and that I entered into this project to 'show / release my most exposed self' to an 'other', which Spence practiced first in front of the mirror until she felt ready 'to invite others in'. I could read into her notes that collaboration is vital – 'who will truly read our images…?' We make images with a viewer in mind, hoping that they will see something of us. As viewers, we have to make an attempt.

This practice involving self with the other in mind can be of value even when there is no product, 'all appear real -- but all are illusion in the mirror', there is some currency in what I see, that is not an illusion, that it's important to wait to see, or to search for, unconscious signifiers. As Glover wrote about Milner's take on this:

> She came to see the role of visual art as similar to that of the psychoanalyst – 'facilitating the acceptance of both illusion and disillusion, and thus making possible a richer relation to the real world'.
>
> (2009, p.165)

In her practice, Spence attempted to accept illusion and disillusion in her therapeutic use of her self-image. I document my therapeutic dialogue with myself with my camera in order to revisit it, my images being the mirror that I

can hold up to help myself. In my project, I also asked for collaboration to help make 'possible a richer relation to the real world'. Spence developed a version of phototherapy in collaboration with Rosy Martin around 1983, as Martin described on her website: 'Jo and I exchanged phototherapy sessions, in a co-counseling style, alternating between the roles of sitter/director/client and photographer/therapist.' It could be argued that the roles of sitter and photographer/therapist are interchangeable in my method of Pathography within Phototherapy as there is an aspect of the artist being an agent of their own therapy by setting the stage for performative re-enactments of family dynamics.

Presence in Absence

Fig 16: Sultan, L. (1992) *Pictures from home 1982-91* [photograph]

I find Larry Sultan's staged images from the series *Pictures from Home* (1982-91), revealing of the artist, even though he doesn't appear in the

photographs, as what is 'missing' in the pictures encourages the 'conversation' between the mind of the artist and the mind of the viewer. In the image above (fig 16), the surface of the print is that this is a portrait of the photographer's parents, but I see the photographer trying to work out his relationship with his parents, whether it is to access his mother directly whilst his father's back is turned, or make sense of what he sees of his parents' relationship with each other.

Sultan didn't call these images self-portraits, but central to my argument is that all art is, and maybe particularly this series; his absence from the images makes him ever more present, so the conversation ensues from the viewer's need to put him back in the picture. Perhaps we can see this as psychologically motivated, as a way to re-visit family dynamics, visualised through his photography. We could think of family dynamics as a way to work out the relationship with any 'other'. We could discuss this in the context of Freud's conception of the Oedipus complex as something that must be negotiated in order to develop. As Paul Verhaege described it:

> …the Oedipus complex is the process through which everyone has to go in order to move from two to three elements, that is, to break away from a mirror relationship with another person who is the same, and take the step towards a third person, another other.

(2011, pp.33-34)

Within art appreciation, the Oedipal complex is not a new phenomenon: 'the History of art is filled with variations on oedipal derivatives in the lives and work of artists' (Adams, 1993, p.97)

> [In considering the visual arts] ...whether subject matter, history and criticism the creative process, the artists, viewers, or patrons – a recognition of oedipal derivatives can enrich the understanding of the material immeasurably.

> (Adams 1993, p.74)

A Picture of Unresolved Family Dynamics

I suggest that in phantasy, early attempts of access to his mother were swiftly put down by Sultan Snr. The boy, humiliated and shamed by not being let in, feels resentment build, and that this work could be seen as a visual representation of these early struggles. The underlying resentment about these lost battles and the wish for revenge, I propose, finds itself peacefully and subtly embedded in Sultan's work, unnoticed by his parents and not fully resolved by the photographer. Sultan's attempt to show the story from his point of view is the ultimate goal of his art. He has metaphorically entered the primal scene at last, and on his terms, producing the family photograph he wants to present to the world. He has confronted, to a degree, the relationship between the three of them, resolving a certain amount of the anxiety. Here we see a visual representation of the conflict approaching resolution, a form of figurative emasculation.

What might be interpreted within these images is an attempted re-negotiation of family dynamics via photography. The images may be an illustration of his recollection of struggles in the past, i.e. a photographic symbol of the echo from earlier experiences of a difficult phase of development. The images are of the everyday, located in the family home. However, there is a sense of a wedge being forced between the main protagonists. Is it the wedge of the obtrusive lens or perhaps it is the presence of Sultan Jr. we see? I see it as if the boy is present in these images and it is a boy who wants access. While describing this series for *The Independent*, the journalist Michael Collins wrote:

> The most magical and redeeming quality of photography, especially given the vulgar and superficial way it is so often employed, is that a photograph will reveal, subtly or otherwise, how the photographer was engaging with the subject. Our reading of family pictures is the most sophisticated of all, because our familial relationships are the most complicated, critical and contrary of all.
>
> (2010)

This method is a way to look at how the photographer is engaging with self as subject which could be seen as a self-portrait.

Fig.17: Sultan, L. (1992) *Pictures from home 1982-91* [photograph]

Sultan is doing with images something similar to what I am trying to re-experience through language in asking DB and EB to relate to my artwork. Even though Sultan is not physically present in the image, I would suggest psychically he has indeed put himself in the picture: 'I am here, I am between you two, I am of you two, recognise me!' As viewer of the picture, he makes us stand in his shoes as if we are witnessing what he sees as the camera does.

Sultan, in an interview with Sheryl Conkelton (Flintridge Foundation Awards for Visual Arts 1999/2000), said:

When I was working on *Pictures From Home*, my parents' voices – their stories as well as their arguments with my version of our shared history – were crucial to the book. They called into question the documentary truth the pictures seemed to carry. I wanted to subvert the sentimental home movies and snapshots with my more contentious images of suburban

daily life, but at the same time I wished to subvert my images with my parents' insights into my point of view.

(1992)

Where Sultan wanted to subvert his images and offer his parents point of view of their relations, I wanted to subvert my parents' version of stories as narrated in the family albums by creating an alternative family album (see Preface to the Appendix, p.5 of the Appendix). I wanted to give a chance for another point of view by asking DB and EB to respond to the images as if they could act as my surrogate parents, as if I was asking: 'I don't think it was like they said, but it may also not be how I thought it was, what do you think?'. Described by Sultan as a family album, *Pictures from Home* bears witness to alternative versions of family history. As Merriah Lamb wrote about Sultan's series of photographs:

> Often the voices of Irving, Jean, and Larry Sultan work against the photographs, sometimes confirming the apparent reality of the pictures and sometimes contradicting their purported documentary truth. Or is it the reverse? Perhaps photographs corroborate or complicate one person's recollection.

(2006)

Like Spence and myself, Sultan made a kind of alternative family album that shows something of the contradictory nature of a family album, that if the narrative is purported documentary truth, it poses questions around subjective

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viewpoints. Each of us has our own relationship with the equivalent of our own family album made and narrated by our parents or others, and all family albums have truths, as the 'photo never lies', but the narrative can be seen differently. The justification that it shows how it really was, is never quite so clear. My family album had a lot of credence, but the narrative didn't fit, it was a myth, as I describe in the Preface to the Appendix. Sultan may have gone through something similar, as he wrote:

> Photography is there to construct the idea of us as a great family and we go on vacations and take these pictures and then we look at them later and we say, 'Isn't this a great family?' So photography is instrumental in creating family not only as a memento, a souvenir, but also a kind of mythology.
>
> (ibid)

Sultan acknowledged that he was interesting in producing a document from his point of view and that by this, he was showing how he gains awareness of the 'mythology' of his family document. We also see his need to 'subvert [his] images with [his] parents' insights into [his] point of view', by way of saying 'this wasn't my experience'. Sultan therefore, was very aware of his involvement, the fact that he was colluding and appears symbolically, although not literally, in the pictures in which he produces:

The daily practice of a photographer is to be distanced, to have a little bit of room between what you're doing and how you see, what you look at. For me the biggest surprise was that the distance I thought I needed as a photographer slipped. It wasn't about 'these' people it was about 'us'.

(ibid)

In Sultan's words, the images became a portrait of 'us', which could include each of us as viewers with the desire to be 'in' it. Something that initially the images do not show to us is revealed, subverting the way we see what there is to see.

To Be Seen

As we stare into the world of his parents, Sultan's representation of family dynamics might be seen as his Oedipal dilemma, which Collins alludes to, but does not name as such:

And yet, this was his parents' home, the site where all those fraught hopes, understandings and misunderstandings, securities and insecurities, would be encountered over and over again, in an endless search, a longing, for a resolution of family and home.

(ibid)

Lamb provides an insight into the use of the camera to enquire into family dynamics and as the title suggests, an attempted rebuilding of the family unit:

> Sultan understands the camera's function as the family's primary instrument of self-knowledge and self-representation by which family memory perpetuates, using it to re-examine family, but also undermining any claim that photographs and their arrangements are necessarily an accurate form of documentation of family life.
>
> (2006, accessed 2013)

If you can 'see' Sultan in the pictures, as I can, you might say it is not only an alternative family album, but also an alternative self-portrait, which is what I set out to make. This project enabled me to explore my preoccupation with my own relationship with authenticity and truth in regards to the narrative I grew up with. I wrote about this in the Preface, introducing the images in the Appendix which could also be seen as an alternative family album narrated by DB and EB as surrogate parents:

> Photographs had of course already been in my life long before I was to make my own. The very box camera that I speak of captured most of these moments of my early life. They had been carefully placed and sequenced in the family album. There was also the accompanying narrative, the stories that were presented with these photographs. Together, these words and pictures served as a document of what I was to

believe was a truthful account and authentic story (for pictures never

lie!). There was a consistency to this narrative. (For the voice wouldn't

make up this stuff!)

<div align="right">(2014, p.5 of Appendix)</div>

It is as if I questioned the narrative by putting my feelings into the picture. I

wasn't asking DB and EB to look at me, I was asking them to look at how I felt.

If we see Sultan's work as an alternative self-portrait, it's one made up of his

mother and father and their narrative. In my project, I chose two people that

would find interest in me, and that interest influenced the language that I grew up

in, within this alternative narrative. I asked DB and EB to bear witness to my

working through. I set up a new encounter so that I could decide what voice to

take on. It is as if I try to see Sultan in his photographs of his parents, and in my

own project, I have chosen people to re-enact something of family dynamics, so

that I could join 'the gaps' with my own voice, as if my language sits between

the language of each 'parent'. The series of images elicited language to form the

triangle, this is how this method has been useful. As Lacan wrote 'the basic

intersubjectivity really shows itself in the child – it shows in the fact that he can

make use of language' (1991, p.218). Having the chance to make an alternative

family album means having a way to make an alternative version of self.

CONCLUSIONS: The Language of Resolution

Self-Portrait Number 19   Self-Portrait Number 19

Fig 18: Rowell, S. (2012) *Self-Portrait Number 19* [stereo photograph]

Emotionally deprived as a child, and arguably emotionally abused, he must have longed for someone to perform for him what these shadowy 'others' had done for the creature… namely to feed him 'with the possibility of being'.

(Wright, 2009)

This thesis has been concerned with what a photograph can tell us of value about the artist's history. My enquiry comes from the position of a photographer using the image as an agent of change, allowing the unconscious 'to speak' through the interpretations of two psychoanalytically-trained psychotherapists. There also has to be an acknowledgement of having 'chosen' a man and a woman, DB and EB, to analyse my images, as if standing in as surrogate father and mother. I took the realisation of seeing the benches in *1963* as two potential parental observers as a

way to work out something of my family dynamics, more specifically the role of language and its negotiation of speech. DB and EB might 'see' me, as if from the vantage points of the benches in *1963,* and might have something to say which would help me find my own way to voice my thinking behind the image of self. It is as if I was repeating something of a familiar structure, trying to have a dialogue within two independent dyads, DB and me, and EB and me, in the hope that somehow the language created by each in response to my self-portraits would mean that the two views could be reconciled into one more 'in-depth' view of me. This consolidated voice conceived in the conversation is representative of being able to express something of myself and to have it recognised by an 'other'. As Wright wrote,

> The notion of finding oneself in another's speech is clearly pertinent to the psychoanalytic enterprise which also involves a sense of being profoundly recognized by another person…

(2009, p.124)

This method involves bringing an image of self into language, to define it in a different way somehow, even if to then remove the words. In Ogden's words, 'the interpenetration of one's experience, one's attempts to use language to communicate that experience, and the effect (on oneself and on other people) of the words one uses and the sentences one makes in that effort' (2005, p.205) can be transformative. To know is to feel more 'real'.

In *Self-Portrait Number 19* (fig.18 on p.169), which evolved from *Session XIX* (p.47 of Appendix) and was made towards the end of the project, I created an image out of two photographs taken from slightly different viewpoints; a stereoscopic image which brings the environment to life in three dimensions, but the subject appears as a kind of ghost split in two. It is as if I remain in a beautiful place, part of two separate conversations, half seen and heard by both. The eye sees through me and the two halves are never put together as a whole. This is indicative of my pathography – the visual representation of two viewpoints where I was not seen – I became a ghost in each of the views, the person is only half-seen by each eye. I see it now as if my parents only half-saw me as two different people – and what was not known is that it was the disconnection between them that I was experiencing. I realise now that I was asking the two analysts to describe what they saw in these images of myself as if the two separate voices of my parents commenting on what they could see of me. The re-encounter, like the experience at the boating pond, was familiar. I was hoping that putting together their separate narratives would mean I could form some sort of attempt at cohesiveness, as if I could marry the two views. The collaboration that set up family dynamics to be re-encountered would be a way of finding oneself, not through finding similarities, for my dependence on each individual did not depend on denying one voice or agreeing with another.

I asked them not to confer, because I thought that it might have been important to see the correlation of ideas, and that if DB said *x* and EB said *x*, then *x* might be true, but in reality, it was more important to put the two together and make something new from the interweaving of the two bits of thinking. It was

too simplistic to imagine I would get a correlation of ideas about 'what was wrong with me', but what I did get was the opportunity to think, to put DB's responses alongside EB's responses, and the discarding and accepting of parts of both strands led to a sense of my own self, rather than agreement from two separate people. I used what I think of as our shared lexicon to create a version of myself, so I make no apology of appropriating their words, as a child would define themselves with their parents' language, and in this case, the writing represents the intercourse of all our thinking within that exchange.

We had to trust each other to approach each other's contributions with the utmost respect and I also had to feel I had free rein to re-make something as my own. I highlighted my appropriation of DB's and EB's words by using italics to signify where I had interjected my own to re-write in the first person. I felt I was 'trying the words on to see if they fit' and that enabled me to write my own, for example, in this excerpt from the writing that sits alongside *Session XIX* (p.47 in Appendix), the words in italics are what make the voice mine:

> *I'm* disconcert*ed*, the more I look at this gap *between my parts*, the more revolting it seems. *I'm not sure this is what I* want *my* audience to see, something nasty *is* staring back at me. Hidden. Leaving something behind – *my* unconscious *perhaps*?

The words in italics bridge the 'gap *between my parts*' as described by DB and EB as surrogate parents; joining their words and mine to make a work of art

greater than the sum of its parts. This had an impact on all of our thinking about a sense of self, as EB wrote:

> It led me to think about the project in relation to the three of us, too. Would we, in the project, exist without each other? Not in the same way, certainly.
>
> (EB, 2013, Session XIX, xiii, p.48 in Appendix)

Through engaging with and maintaining a relationship with two analysts through these exchanges, a new form of supportive environment has developed to create a new self-representation which could be seen as not only the pathography of the artist, but of the collaboration itself. What is presented to the world, a re-constructed image through collaboration, reshapes our reality and how we converse with the world.

Pathography within Phototherapy is facilitated by the written observations of the psychoanalytically-trained analysts who recognise the artist's need for self-awareness as they would recognise an analysand's need for self-awareness by being heard and seen by the analyst. The image holds its own story and it must be accepted that the artist's 'truth' cannot be found *per se*, but emotions and feelings residing within the image have been brought into written language to open up new conversations. With the exchange of images for words, a dialogue ensues and a closer approximation can be made of these attempts to construct a visual representation of the artist's internal processes. As Berman states, there is:

…no right way to interpret a photograph, there is only the individual patient's way. Interpreting someone else's photograph is like trying to explain another person's dream – it is solely the associations of the dreamer that are relevant.

(1993, p.59)

Just as the analysand comes to analysis with personal memories and associations, 'an insistence by the therapist that she knows the "right" meaning of a photograph would be a denial of the uniqueness of the patient's feelings and experiences' (1993, p.60). The analyst has a partial understanding of what this internal picture means, however it is their shared experience of working together that can reveal deeper, more latent content. Recurring symbols, themes and patterns appear in the artwork, and when reflected upon in language, a sense of self can be explored within a collaborative process where transference and counter-transferential communication is acknowledged. The pain and confusion that can entail from doubts about not knowing oneself or not being able to recognise oneself might lead an artist to engage with this method where an external agency is called upon to oversee this process of internal communication and external expression. Having gone through their own collaborative process, the artist may find in re-visiting these self-representations and the responses of an 'other' collated during the project, that more questions can be asked.

Through the lens of psychoanalytic theory, I have looked at the work of photographers who have asked these questions of themselves so that the artwork

can be looked at as a form of pathography. Sultan's *Pictures from Home (1992)* led me to speculate about the working out of family dynamics, in a way that could allude to an Oedipal complex. Spence's collaborative way of working and use of written language alongside her photographic self-portraits incited me to think about what words can do for an artist to gain greater awareness of self. As Spence wrote:

> Out of the broken pieces of the self will come a subjectivity that acknowledges the fragmentation process, but which encompasses and embraces the parts and brings them into dialogue with each other.
>
> (1986, p.198)

I devised this method that I call Pathography within Phototherapy to make a self-portrait that is not only visual, but also a representation of the artist in language. The thinking goes on below the surface, there's an internal voice to be made public; we think about how we might announce what this voice is saying to the world. How we look and say is how we show ourselves to the world. I believe this process has helped me. I now feel I am coming from the world of pictures into the world of written language. I believe this method could be therapeutic for any artist seeking their own authentic voice, who would like to express themselves more truthfully in artistic practice and in life more generally. I felt that even if I could make a visual image that could communicate on its own, live and breathe in the room so to speak, written language was still important, and I felt there would have to be something else to help me put words to my images.

As an artist, I want to communicate my ideas as best I can, knowing I can't always be in the room to speak for the image, so the only way that 'I' could be more in the room was if I could bring the image into the world and words of language, and if it could have more of a 'voice'. I believe developing this internal voice informs a sense of authenticity and that this can then be perceived in the artwork.

In my case, developing this project in order to work out something about the way I see myself in relation to the way others see me brought up many things for me. If there is any 'final outcome' at this stage, it is the artist's book (Appendix) that has come out of my attempts to integrate images and text in a way that gives more of an insight into my thinking. This more nuanced self-portrait is a final presentation of the images and texts that came out of my thematic analysis of the individual analysed images and their responses. This searching and re-searching of the written language, the process of note-taking evolving over time, parallels many therapists' practice. Thoughts that come to mind are recorded as written notes post-session to be reviewed in the fresh light of subsequent encounters to offer a higher level of understanding. Working in this way has allowed me to see how it could be adapted for any artist interested in finding out more about their way of thinking through using written language alongside their artwork. Having designed this method, I have put together a short course which will be offered at the Cass in the summer of 2017: 'Pathography, an

Exploration of Self-image using Photography, a short course in self-representation'.[18]

Vernon Yorke, psychotherapist, reminds us that a work of art is always collaborative. Using Picasso as an example, he claims that his paintings are 'not a piece of his mind' but something that 'requires a piece of our mind (the viewer's) to exist; a meeting of minds between viewer and artist' (2005, p.48). In my project, I am asking the analysts to see something of me with me – to encourage transformation through a collaborative interpretation. Over time, as in therapy, a narrative is delineated, where awareness of each of us might emerge. As a shared experience, art requires this projective/introjective dialogue. The artist's and analyst's subjectivity and awareness of counter-transferential feelings and projections in this to-and-fro communication have an important part to play in the formulation of any conclusions drawn.

Artists should know where they stand in relation to the things that are important to them, but not necessarily in a conscious way. I think we can have confidence in the unconscious revealing itself. I may feel inhibited about an idea because of my super-ego, but I carry on with something that is not particularly concerned with the outcome. Being open-minded is about being in the moment, as in Keats's phrase: 'Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being

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[18] A ten-week evening course that offers photography as a method of self-exploration, artistic expression and therapeutic experience through practice using both traditional and digital methods. Experiential in nature, alongside discussion we might explore through practice, self-image and identity. Would suit anyone interested in photography as a therapeutic tool. Use of traditional processes and studio lighting, scanning and montage as an example will be structured into the course, enhancing general photographic skills. (To be publicised on Cass and LMU website).

in uncertainties. Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason.' (1817). I may have caught sight of my reflection when I lay down in the boating pond that day, but I chose to dip my face into the water as, unlike Narcissus, I wanted to look beyond my own reflection and I am also interested in what Echo has to say.

There is a self-informing circle that being in collaboration gets you out of, knowing there is another mind that will cast its eye on the work. What was important was that I felt a 'they' always looking at the same thing, without me being there, like a child playing in reverie with whatever they were playing with, not having to think about their parents being there, but knowing they were.

Art as a kind of playing in sight of the other that can help us to see ourselves. I like the way Foucault put it:

From the idea that the self is not given to us, I think that there is only one practical consequence: we have to create ourselves as a work of art… [we] should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative activity.

(1984)

This collaborative process encourages internal and external communication that can be used by others as a means of self-examination. In bringing together my experience in psychoanalytic psychotherapy and photography to design this method and create this series of self-portraits, I have made an original contribution to the areas of phototherapy and fine art practice.

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APPENDIX

AN EXPLORATION OF PATHOGRAPHY
WITHIN PHOTOTHERAPY,
AN ANALYSIS OF THE PHOTOGRAPHIC
SELF-PORTRAIT

APPENDIX

Spencer Rowell

FOREWORD

In fact, these images seem so isolated and remote that we might ask "was there ever an adult in this small child's world?"

His experiences as a baby are buried deep and distant. Although well cared for – happy and even charmed – he is lost in his own little world, remote from reality. Within this isolation, we might see the fragility of him as the child who should be carefree, but there is something missing. He passively sits in this silence and waits. In this bleak place there is an inevitability that emphasises feelings of inaccessibility and an impossibility in making a connection. A place of both being not heard or communicated with. A certain experience of silence, by being left unseen. Or is he just unreachable?

Here he is a person, but doesn't know how to relate and doesn't know how to expect people to relate to him. An interdependence between these two parts – that neither would exist without the other – meaning nothing seems certain, clear or straightforward. Two elements which cannot easily co-exist, the "speaking" of an experience where there is a close relationship, yet being in the dynamic where he cannot live and speak at the same time. One is damaging for the other. Isolated in a world between a father and a mother where their intimacy also depends on exclusion, as they do not co-exist. A sort of detached inter-connectedness, stuck in-between and unable to acknowledge the inevitable infinite dependence of them. He is a child fascinated by his mother's reflection. But the reflection is not quite true and he finds it disturbing, troubling and hard to make sense of. As if he is within a reflection which has lost its real. His features are blurred, a turning away from something that cannot be faced.

It seems important not to see his own face, as perhaps there is no face to be seen. His face distorted over time in many different ways, just a shadow – as the little boy gone. He starts as a boy and ends up with a shadow of the boy unable to leave this place. It's a hopelessly raw situation. How can he not manage – seemingly struggle but not manage – to see his face in the mirror? What happened? He asks. "I have the mother who cannot hear or see?" He is lost, blurred, unable to see clearly. This blurred picture of him as a little boy, is always distorted, or by a muddling of the exposure, is imperfect, not a clear reflection. He tries to look for something which is long gone, something important, vital to represent and more importantly to speak of.

It's as if his pictures could be the speech lost in the past. By looking again and again at the same thing he hopes something unremembered will be resolved. That with his endless compulsive searching that he could never quite put into words, an answer would be found. However, perhaps it is something too terrible to be uttered. He is there, but covered up, not completely destroyed but screened, blacked out. The pattern of his background is ingrained and carried over – that nursery experience that has become part of him – impossible to wash away. He is taken over, even absorbed by his surroundings in a hostile way. There is a longing to be nourished, but he fears that the "feed" is poisonous or unpalatable. Where are those missing bits that are needed, to know himself, or do their absence say much more?

Whether without a face, or over-interpreted, over-seen as a 'faceless' face, suggests there was perhaps no identity, a blur between past and present. Or as different aspects of the 'self'. As if going back in time to some of the echoes of earlier times although he doesn't actually know what the story is. Does he really want to go back there, to that memory? In that place. In that family of not wanting to be there? Bits that didn't start out together, being assembled, but I'm not sure this is what I want my audience to see, something nasty is staring back at me. Play and imagination was very important as a way of surviving, but there is a part that feels so much shame in all of this exhibiting. There is a struggle between extreme sides of himself in this stripping back. A struggle with powers beyond his control. It is hard for him to reconcile these aspects of himself and maybe he wants to be left alone. It shames him. Perhaps in the end, to admit that photography is useless.

So is this the end, his death of photography? Is that the point? This search, this conclusion from the beginning? If so, what use is the looking? Perhaps unconsciously in this picture, he is saying that the picture has to speak for itself. Would he exist without the "readers"? There would be no words. If there was a shadow of something else that hasn't been 'said', what would 'it' look like? Has he escaped, got out of this nursery/childhood environment where these experiences, whatever they were, happened? What did happen? Did he have the mother who cannot hear or see? To whom the bringing of something precious to be admired through creativity ultimately was of no interest. Having his speech taken away, castration through silencing by

someone that controlled him and took away his identity. His creativity. His fertility. However, his experience of therapy – this spewing out of words and feelings – suggests an empowerment when once he was not allowed to have his own will, make decisions, have an identity. A process that is horrible and painful, yet he is doing something positive and something is coming out as language.

He seems to spit something back, saying to this controlling force that had to be left behind, "Now do you see? Now do you see how it feels?"

PREFACE

I offer a background context to the reader before embarking on the documentation of my research. By way of attempting to define the subjects of interest, voice and photography and my relationship with them. As much the relationship with photography and language, are the tools of communication and their use – the camera and the voice – that has occupied an important place in this enquiry. An initial inquisitiveness that I remember had been silenced. I was a quiet child. I had retreated into myself. I had learnt to be invisible. I felt both unseen and unheard. Lost. This changed however, at around the age of twelve when, in the loft I discovered a Box Brownie camera. It had been purchased by my parents in 1956 to take on their honeymoon. When I began making prints from the negatives it produced, developed and contacted in the large walk-in wardrobe I had in my bedroom, the potential for photography to take an important place in my life was immediate. My time was occupied, I had an obsession and it gratified my inquisitive nature. At least a visual inquisitiveness that didn't require asking questions. Ever since that moment photography became a way in which I would engage with my surroundings, record not only what I saw but how I saw. It is also a way of interacting and communicating with the family and world I inhabited. What I saw through the viewfinder, how I was to frame, edit and represent these encounters in the form of the printed photograph – a process I found magical – offered me a voice, importantly one with which I had a certain amount of control. Photography offered me an opportunity to communicate where before the spoken or written word had failed me. By offering a means by which I might visualise my experience, it became part of who I was. I could also deny, that is, hide behind the camera, frame what I wanted to record and in doing so choose what not to look at.

Photographs had of course already been in my life long before I was to make my own. The very box camera that I speak of captured most of these moments of my early life. They had been carefully placed and sequenced in the family album. There was also the accompanying narrative, the stories that were presented with these photographs. Together, these words and pictures served as a document of what I was to believe was a truthful account and authentic story (for pictures never lie!). There was a consistency to this narrative. (For the voice wouldn't make up this stuff!). This important script – for it was placed within

easy access for all to see – was made of photographs and a story that could be returned to as a source of comforting memories, always happier times. The family album served to reassuringly secure me to a past and ultimately a future. It provided a sense of my place in both my family and the world. It was compelling and convincing as archives are. I had, it seemed a major role in this script, however this narrative was of course directed and edited by an other.

It was to be thirty years after the making of this family album that I began to question aspects of it. It wasn't as if the pictures lied, they showed a certain truth and the accompanying story – well, this still had a certain convincing nature – but there was something important that just didn't stack up. It wasn't what this document showed or how it was spoken of, but what it seem to conceal and silence of my experience. The words, the language that filled these spaces between these selected pictures – that connected these pictures together – also seem to deny a certain truth. Something just out-of-crop, beyond the border seemed to beckon me. I was blessed as a child, for I had been told this. The family album and accompanied script confirmed this, however there was a dramatic change in the associated felt experience and that of there associated memories. After all, the smiles still stare back from the album and confirm a happy time, but the plausibility of this document's truth was thrown increasingly into doubt. It would be many years later when I might get the opportunity to confront these inconsistencies; that what this album presented to the world was seemingly untrustworthy through in comparison with my experience. The content of the photograph, a smile to camera, the story that narrates the photograph become parts of memory. There is an inconsistency. The photograph alongside the narration together and in relation with the felt experience, I shall call the memory-myth.

So my first camera offered me a means by which I might be seen and be noticed. Many years later, this could be a way of re-engaging with the family album once again, in an attempt to question its authenticity. Primarily, whose life was it authenticating? The photographer's or the subjects'? I wanted to explore this uncomfortable relationship with the family album – this documented image verses the felt experience, this confrontation with the memory-myth; memory disrupted as I re-remembered alongside the felt experience.

These feelings alongside the illustrated narrative elicited conflicts and inconsistencies. It was a sense deep down, of something embodied, that things were not quite as they appeared. Inconsistencies as regards the relationship between the image and script. The seemingly positive nature of this document – for it was true I appeared content enough, smiling back to camera – disguises something just out of frame, it conflicts with the script. Something implausible that seemed unnameable were only revealed to me when much older.

The new narrative was to come about through psychotherapy. By questioning and verbalising these discrepancies in memory, a new language came into being along with new considerations that included more of the background knowledge, to challenge the document. Slowly this narrative became more aligned with felt experience. The story took on a different viewpoint. What if the narrative could be rewritten as a new account of the existing script with reference to what was going on, re-archived with additional visual information – would this alternative family album serve as a more truthful story? This new voice would be placed alongside a form of new visual language and an alternative family album would be made. A series of memories might be remade in a new narrative. Through this method an alternative family album might be shown to the world as a more truthful representation of the memory-myths. The camera and its relationship with the language in psychotherapy provided a potential route to a new truth, this alternative family album which I can feel could be a more accurate record of events that I might present to the world. This new script alongside new images would be directed by my myself and became my MA final project Peter's Dreams (Rowell 2009), which offered a foundation for what follows. Re-archived with this additional information, perhaps a reason for the disruption and change experienced alongside the embodied experience of how I felt at the time. Would this alternative family album serve as a more truthful story?

A bewildered child without language finds photography as a means of communication and purpose to make sense of his feelings, the child seeking some understanding by using photography. Unexplainable and indescribable, then, as there was no language, because there were no words. I would have to wait many years to find a language to even attempt to verbalise a new narrative. This I found in psychotherapy. I returned once again to photography, and with these words, I challenged the memory-myth of
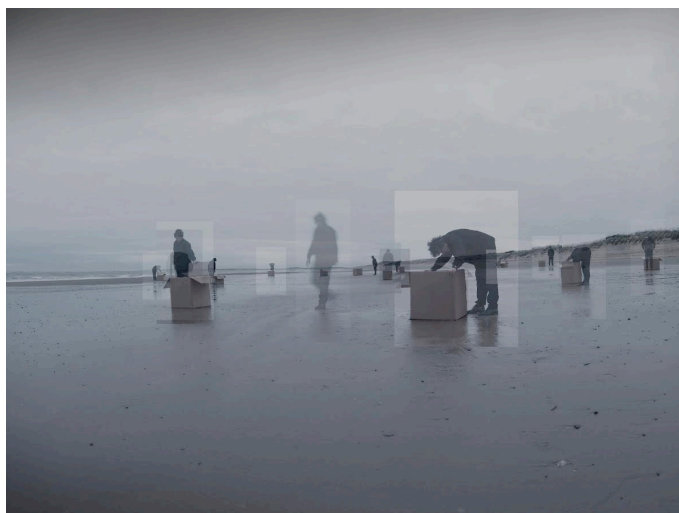
certain events. I wanted to find a truth, a more cohesive picture of myself and relationship with these past events to present to the world. Again I was to pick up a camera, now confident that the camera would provide the opportunity to delve deeper and re-represent a more accurate sense of self. Psychotherapy training throughout my MA project became psychoanalysis alongside this doctoral programme which has allowed me to authenticate my practice; to create a more authentic image to project into the world with a true voice. This is what Peter becomes, using the camera to re-record the past. The production of a new portrait of self is a way of conveying and sharing ideas with both myself and with others around me. The visual artefact becomes the interface with my environment, with both internal and external relationships with the world. Analysis complemented this method of gaining self-awareness. Telling my story and using language has become a more fruitful way of dealing with unresolved conflicts. Using oral communication – words and dialogue – in therapy became a new place for communicating and seeking new knowledge. For the second time the camera is picked up as an important tool, a return to photography as a form of self-expression, its pairing with psychoanalysis and the documentation of its potential 'use' as a therapeutic tool has allowed my re-engagement with the image of self as a method of self-enquiry. Describing what is seen and what might be meant analysis offered an opportunity to examine words to describe these memories as myths. The visual language that undergoes the process of description or analysis offers up many possibilities of narrative.

I was at a different school for my psychoanalytic training and it became clear to me and actively encouraged that I would be bringing these two areas of interest within sight of each other. Art practice and the art of interpretation grew closer and closer together. In what I describe as the trance, I found a similarity in the state of free association and making in art. In my own psychoanalysis there is an intent to say what is on my mind, to disengage a certain way of thinking. From this safe position of a wanting to reveal and of nowhere to hide, a sense of authenticity or 'truth' is found; I might 'happen across' something that is familiar. Art practice can be a way of exploring the unknowable or inexpressible, of embodied felt experience. So from this state, can art provide a more accurate image of self? A self-portrait that offers a more accurate representation, not as literal visual recognition, but making a

recognition of an embodied experience remembered and revealed within the practice. That if I was convinced by this representation, I could show this authentic self so that it might be analysed and thought about and read and ultimately, seen by others.

i. Looking for an answer.

ii. Very bleak dream-like.

iii. There was a glimmer of some sort of hope but an agonising hope. Memories of looking again and again at the same thing. The Hope that this time something will be resolved, some answer would be found. It will appear 'just this time' that thing of value

iv. I felt a strong sense of stuckness, repetition. Something unremembered, something lost that can only lead to endless compulsive searching and never be put into words.

v. There was a boredom too. A grey hatred of being in this place, a place where there should be sun, warmth and the sound of children playing but there's no-one, with nothing to do but the endless searching in the cold, without colour or hope.

vi. Is there also a time pressure here? The sea and the cardboard, the idea of tides coming in and taking the boxes away.

vii. These boxes need to be checked thoroughly before the sea comes and takes them away.

viii. I think somehow, something needs to be remembered but there's a block that means it never seems to be allowed to come out. Maybe something too terrible to be uttered.

ix. What is this searching? Why the sea? Why the boxes? Why does this search need to be seen by the observer?

x. Perhaps we need to look more closely at this picture, before and find the answer before the 'tide' takes it away from the guild office. Have I really looked at what you want me to look at?

xi. Perhaps, regardless of how hard I look at this photograph, it will never quite be enough for you. You are resigned to the fact that the observer will always leave without the answer. Without the true insight into what this and what you truly mean.

i. Boxes: what is or was in the box? Is the photographer trying to get an understanding of past issues and bring them into the light? But perhaps they are hard to bring out. I feel as if the contents of this box, although it is real, are intangible in some way. Perhaps it's about finding out what was once there.

ii. Light and dark. Shadows. Shades of grey?

iii. Movement - one of the closest images is blurred, suggesting some sort of process or travelling or transience. And this is the only one without a box. Is the photographer trying to leave them behind, or moving between boxes?

iv. The choice of a cardboard box is interesting - this is something we would normally discard after it has served its purpose. Could this suggest feelings of worthlessness? However, it is also a childhood treasure - it can be used for so many things: dens, for example.

v. There is also the concept of 'cardboard city' - people sleep in cardboard boxes. It is hard to believe the box would survive long on a beach: doesn't cardboard disintegrate in salt water? So the beach, which looks so peaceful, is in fact not a safe place for this container.

vi. It is interesting that I have barely commented on the figure, compared to the beach and the box.

vii. With a photo and especially working with just one image it is hard to discriminate between what is conscious communication and what is unconscious. Perhaps this might change as the project goes forwards.

viii. The head in the box is in the foreground. It suggests the figure is looking into his own psyche quite intently.

ix. The figure standing in a box contrasts quite markedly with this and the two images balance each other. Perhaps 'I need to look at this' but also 'I can overcome this and not be swallowed up.'

x. The figure behind the box has separated and is possibly objectifying the contents of the box - so it feels like a process.

xi. Peace or dereliction? A little of both. It brings to mind 'The Wasteland' in some ways - but also something peaceful about it; for me it is not an uncomfortable experience to view this picture.

I

I am looking for an answer *in a* very bleak, dream-like *state. As the project begins* a glimmer of some sort of hope; but *it seems* an agonising *one. These* memories, of looking again and again at the same thing *with* the hope that this time something will be resolved, *that an* answer would be found, *that* it will appear 'just this time', *this* thing of value. *There is* a strong sense of stuck-ness[sic], *of* repetition. Something unremembered, something lost that can only lead to endless compulsive searching and never *quite* be put into words.

xii. There is a feeling of the vastness of nature. And linking with this, perhaps the violence of nature.

xiii. Is it about the viewer or the artist? Or in some ways is it about both? The fact that the artist is viewed by the viewer makes it an interesting circular relationship, like transference/counter-transference.

xiv. Object relations (Klein, Winnicott, Fairbairn, Balint). The many different figures may represent different internal objects, different perspectives and ways of experiencing the same 'box'. Is the box an object, a container?

xv. Is it about different ways of experiencing a caregiver? Could it depict different aspects of a relationship, either with the self or other/others?

xvi. Jung: there is something archetypal about the beach: timeless with connotations and associations around the sea. The beach feels huge - an endless expanse. Although there are edges, (the sea and the beginning of the grass) it feels as if it goes on indefinitely. And there is something timeless about it - although the cardboard box and clothes, and the medium of photography, place it in the present, it is somehow a timeless present.

xvii. Phil Mollon and Kohut and the search for self come up for me also.

xviii. Not much Freud for me, although there is something about instincts and drives but it has to be looked for, it doesn't jump out at me.

xix. Something about child-like curiosity too and innocence - there is no suggestion that the contents of the box might be forbidden or dangerous or unconquerable.

xx. I suppose the figure almost disappearing into the box could suggest annihilation, but this is countered by the many figures who are surviving.

xxi. There is a connection for me with Anthony Gormley's figures on Southport Beach - except that his figures are all the same, and all looking out into the distance; so there is less dynamic.

I CONT.

There *is* also a time pressure, something needs to be remembered, but there's a block that means it *might* never be allowed to come out. *Perhaps* something too terrible to be uttered. *And a sense of* boredom too, a hatred of being in this *position*, a place *of* endless searching without hope. *It is* hard to bring out, trying to get an understanding of past issues and bring them into the light, *something that seems quite* intangible. *I am* looking into *my* own psyche quite intently *however something is* to be left behind.

Could this suggest feelings of worthlessness*?* *A worry that th*is, in fact, *is* not a safe place *that it* can be overcome, not be swallowed up. No suggestion that the contents might be forbidden or dangerous or unconquerable. *The process* makes an interesting circular relationship, like transference/counter-transference, *my* different ways of experiencing a caregiver *or* different aspects of relationships, either with the self or other/others. *What* is this searching? Why does this search need to be seen by *an* observer? Perhaps, regardless of how hard I look, it will never quite be enough for *me*. *I am* resigned to the fact that the *reader* will always leave without the answer. Without the true insight into what this and what *I* truly mean. *Will you* really look at what *I* want *you* to look at?

DB's Response

i. shame

ii. This seems to be a display of self-hatred but there also seems to be a kind of pleasure in looking at oneself at a bodily extreme, in a distressed state. And subsequently having someone else looking in at this anti-holy figure.

iii. I guess you might want to see me as an observer react perhaps joining you, as a disciple, opening up too, getting me to spill my guts. But perhaps you don't want me to join you at all. Maybe you want to be left alone.

iv. It also struck me that this religious image is a bombardment. A triptych, religious-looking but based on a very non-sacred, commonplace piece of furniture. The mirror seems pretty unique. I don't think this is just a mirror but maybe a 1930-1950s dressing table, where a woman made themselves up, brushing hair, perfuming, covering up their blemishes, smells of sweat and whatever else. But instead of privately getting ready, this is a very public undressing with us as an audience.

v. This is quite the opposite of making up: making yourself throw up. Puking, stinking.

vi. Giving up civilised pictures of a pretty albeit bleak beach, giving up the holding in, the hiding, the covering up.

vii. Perhaps this is a hatred of a big bit of yourself: a feminine vain, conservative, civilised part of you who doesn't want to exhibit.

viii. This is perhaps a reaction against the part of you who can't exhibit these personal images, who cannot stand it, who wants to cover up, make the images look nice.

ix. A part of you who feels so much shame in all of this exhibiting in such a way.

x. Maybe this is also struggle between two (or three?) extreme

EB's Response

i. The picture suggests ambivalent feelings. The vomiting could be about self-hate - wanting to get rid of part of the self. But what comes out of the mouth is full of light.

ii. There are many religious connotations to this picture: the presentation using three angled sub-pictures could suggest a church window, (also suggests C13 style?)

iii. The soft browns and gold are traditional, and the light from above suggests some kind of blessing, and replicates the light you might get through a church window.

iv. The lighting accentuates the ribs, which links the picture with religious representations. The light could represent love from a parent, or from God in the sense that it is from all around - another possible biblical reference.

v. There is a sense of tenderness; the naked figure appears very vulnerable with his eyes closed, which could be in prayer. Is the subject vomiting up the Eucharist/rejecting his faith?

vi. However, what is actually coming out of his mouth catches the light and appears to be either light or water, or even fire - so perhaps it cannot be absorbed into this body, but it has spiritual or elemental value.

vii. The subtext seems to be, 'Something is coming out of my mouth and the process is horrible and painful, yet I am spewing light and beauty.' Is this about the subject's experience of therapy? Is he spewing words and feelings?

viii. Or is it about creativity? There is perhaps something within which he cannot accept and must vomit out, but when it comes out, it is beautiful.

ix. I don't think that much of this communication is unconscious. Perhaps the fact that the three pictures are incorporated into one presentation may suggest something more integrated and less fragmented; it is a more decisive statement than the

II

Shame. Maybe *I* want to be left alone. *I have something to say to myself,* but *in* private. This is a very public undressing with *my observers* as an audience, *through* a display of self-hatred *and being seen in* a distressed state, a hatred of a big bit of *my*self *where* a part feels so much shame in all of this exhibiting in such a way. *A* struggle between two (or three?) extreme sides of *my*self. A strong part of *me* wants *my observers* to look away, stop looking, *I am* revolting against the vain, shamed side of *my*self. But this reaction reflects uncertainty about going *through this process*. This is quite the opposite of making up. *I try to shock*, threatening the project - by getting rid of *the* observers. *I am* unsure about this project. It is dangerous. *I do not* trust that *you* will stay with *me* and I think a very ancient part of *me* doesn't want *you* to stay with *me*.

sides of yourself, but which has turned into a war in a wartime/ post wartime dressing table.

xi. Vomiting versus the other extreme of covering your disgusting bits up. In some way I guess, and this whole thing is a guess, you are revolting against the vain, shamed side of yourself. But this reaction reflects your uncertainty about doing this (and I think this might be made even worse by me knowing you).

xii. Crucially I think that this picture (and presumably what is to come) threatens your project - by getting rid of us as observers.

xiii. A strong part of you wants us all to look away and stop looking. I suppose you want to be rid of all the onlookers, who are clearly, as a photographer, your life, your bread and butter. Your observers, us, are what you are really throwing up.

xiv. And I think you are especially unsure about this project. It is dangerous. There is an interesting uncertainty of boundaries here. You are revealing too much of yourself, without any makeup or perfume to hide behind.

xv. You don't want to be 'analysed' like this (by finding particularly psychoanalytical observers), or if you do, only as in an enjoyment at your own discomfort.

xvi. Do you trust that we will stay with you? I don't think you do trust we will stay, and I think a very ancient part of you doesn't want us to stay with you.

last picture.

x. The nakedness suggests vulnerability and something childlike - but there is something deifying in the staging of this picture. There are birth/death associations around- something about being stripped right back.

xi. Perhaps the picture tells us that the subject longs to be blessed by the light and nourished by it, even though he appears to be involuntarily rejecting it.

xii. This picture is less comfortable viewing than the last image. There is beauty, but also a sense of disturbance and anxiety.

xiii. It suggests raw, strong feelings. Something about a struggle- powers beyond control - which links with the spiritual aspect. It is hard to reconcile some aspects of the picture, so perhaps it is hard for the subject to reconcile aspects of himself. However, see also comment above on integration.

xiv. The figure's eyes are closed: what is this about? We close our eyes to vomit, but also in prayer, and perhaps in therapy on a couch, and also to avoid seeing what we do not want to see. We avoid eye contact if we are avoiding a relationship.

xv. It is harder to feel connected with the figure in this picture that it was in the last picture.

xvi. There is something disturbing in the combination of vulnerability (the nakedness), resignation (the facial expression) and pain (the vomiting) - and also perhaps isolation (the closed eyes).

xvii. This is a shocking image - is there a desire to shock, then? The picture demands attention.

xviii. The lighting is interesting - it seems to come from all directions. The lighting is creating shadows, but also the shadows are emphasising the light. Some sort of interplay here - Jung and the shadow side. The subtext may be, I am expressing myself by rejecting something, but in so doing I am creating something. Also, staying with Jung - perhaps there is something about the saviour archetype.

xix. The use of three images could suggest the Holy Trinity, or

II CONT.

This suggests vulnerability, something about being stripped right back longing to be nourished, even though involuntarily *the* rejecting *of* it. There is something disturbing in the combination of vulnerability, resignation and pain and also perhaps isolation. The suggestion of a lack of mirroring, a rejection the mother's milk, *or* perhaps the 'feed' *was* poisonous or unpalatable.

Although the session suggests *I do have* ambivalent feelings, about self-hate *and a* wanting to get rid of part of the self, *however*, what is *said* is full of light. There is beauty, but also a sense of disturbance and anxiety *with this process*. It suggests raw, strong feelings. Something about a struggle *with* powers beyond *my* control. Perhaps it is hard for *me* to reconcile aspects of *my*self. Something is coming out *as language*, the process is horrible and painful, yet *I am doing something positive*. Is this *perhaps* about *my* experience of therapy, a spewing out of words and feelings *in the work*. Or is it about creativity? There is something within which cannot be accept*ed* and *got* out, but when it comes out, it is beautiful. Does this suggest power through creativity?

the Oedipus Complex: two parents and the child.

xx. The shape of the work suggests not only a church window, but also an old fashioned mirror which allows you to see different views or aspects of the self, and this

could link with object relations - in this respect, there is something in common with the first picture.

xxi. The suggestion of a mirror could be about a lack of mirroring.

xxii. Spewing suggests Klein - rejecting the mother's milk, also the use of body fluids and nakedness are Kleinian images. Perhaps the 'feed' is poisonous or unpalatable - yet what is rejected is full of light.

xxiii. There is something about potency - the vulnerability of nakedness and vomiting is counterbalanced by the strength of the image. So does this suggest power through creativity?

i. It immediately makes me think of the similarity of the image itself and me writing this now: trying to translate these words scribbled on a paper so many months ago into sentences, and also of me trying to remember the image itself.

ii. The original piece (your piece) and the original photograph presumably of you as a baby are distant, deep and buried. The happiness of that child, which I suppose might as well be any child, is hidden.

iii. It is a picture hidden in a picture hidden in a picture hidden in a picture. I guess it might get smaller and smaller over time, the older you get. But perhaps it could also be the other way around, bigger and bigger the more you feel age. It could be a corridor leading to an endpoint?

iv. The staggered pictures remind me of the inside of an old studio camera, as though we are seeing through the bellow-like part. Involving the camera actually as a part of the image shows a will to grasp the instant, more than a photograph separated from its camera might do.

v. But what it also does is makes the subject lost in the technology. Never quite becoming a real subject in its own right, presumably because you as a baby is a long lost idea.

III

The happiness of *me as a* child, which I suppose might as well be any child, is hidden. *My experiences* as a baby are distant, deep and buried, hidden in a picture hidden in a picture, hidden in a picture. Was *there an* adult in *my* child's world? There is something sad about it, something missing or lost or is it simply that it is a memory from a bygone era that can't be reclaimed? *I, as* a small child in a small world within a world within a world, remote from reality outside, a child being kept very far away from reality, well cared for, happy and charmed, if a little isolated in *my* soft world, a fantasy world, like a picture of a child in an old fashioned picture book, *with clouds*, where the clouds can be walked across. *The image of me as a* child, so isolated and remote - 'in his own little world'.

i. A small child in a small world within a world within a world, remote from reality outside the frame. There are nine layers or levels: and a space, and then the glass; so the child is really being kept very far away from reality.

ii. The softness of the bedclothes is like clouds, and this reminds me of a fantasy world, like a picture of a child in an old fashioned picture book, where the clouds can be walked across.

iii. It is interesting that the last picture (to me) had religious overtones, and the image of a cherubic child in the clouds would also not be out of place in a religious book for very small children.

iv. The child looks well cared for, happy and charmed, if a little isolated in his soft world.

v. I saw the back of the picture first and noticed how elastic it was - almost bouncy. The whole piece reflects the soft, giving texture of the bed clothes in the picture.

vi. I don't think this was deliberate, but the foot sticking out made me think of Christie Brown, 'My Left Foot'. His left foot was his passport to self-expression.

vii. The way the picture has been constructed, this child's left foot is his link with the outside world. He is stepping out through a gate in time - but only his foot gets through. The foot is repeated again, and again - what is the repetition about?

viii. Like the last picture - disturbance: the child is so isolated and remote, 'in his own little world.' This doesn't make sense because children play in their cots all the time, and there must have been an adult there to take the picture, but that's the feeling.

ix. Was the adult in the child's world? He isn't making eye contact with the camera, but there's nothing unusual about that.

x. What is he thinking about? Is there a third person, who is drawing his attention and making him smile?

xi. I found it harder to connect with this picture. I think it's because in the case of the other pictures, there was no little or time lapse, they depicted the subject in the present or relatively near present.

xii. This time I am trying to pick up the feelings, not just through across the media of the photograph, but also across time.

xiii. Perhaps that is why I feel as if I am way off mark with this picture as if I can't hear the message. Is that in itself an unconscious communication?

xiv. There is something sad about it but it's hard to put a finger on. Is it about something missing or lost rather than something that is there? Or is it simply that it is a memory from a bygone era that can't be reclaimed?

xv. There is something that reminds me of Alice falling down the rabbit hole in the construction of the whole piece. She falls into an unreality where everything is different to how it was on the outside and there is the same feeling with this picture.

xvi. Linking with Freud - the same but opposite - the white could be associated with falling down a black hole. And, on the basis that the child is maybe smiling at someone, but clearly not the person taking the picture, we have a three: Oedipal?

xvii. It isn't a link with theory exactly, but the child reminded me of the children in Bowlby's films, just because of the way he was dressed, and the surroundings.

xviii. Like the other two, it is timeless: this picture could have been taken in the '50's, '60's or '70's.

SESSION IV
DB's Response

i. Caught in between what seems like a father and mother, you in the middle, suddenly together, the same age.

ii. Its intimate, being so tightly squashed into one frame; a nice feeling maybe. This intimacy surely depends on exclusion as well though.

iii. What about the others? What about mother and father of the mother and father. Were there any brothers and sisters banished from this perfect image?

iv. What about affairs, friends, work mates, enemies. What about your children and wife (I know this). What starts as a picture of love as another angle, another dimension of what cant be seen.

v. It's tight in that frame and I'm thinking about competition between the three. A fight to be seen by the viewer. The competition between mother and father, the mother facing the other way, the father and son together.

vi. Is this how you feel perhaps. Stuck in between. Closed eyes unable to acknowledging of the inevitable infinite dependence of them. Your image is lost amongst the parents.

vii. Death mask?

SESSION IV
EB's Response

i. It is a big, robust piece, with three strong portraits, but all the individuals are fragile/vulnerable in the sense that they disappear if you stand in a different place, eclipsed by each other. They do not co-exist. Does this reflect experience? Is this part of the presenting problem?

ii. The pictures are formal, posed, preconceived; the images fit into a certain world. Clearly that is normal for conventional photographic portraits, but does it also suggest an expectation to 'fit in', or am I trying too hard here? Or does that in itself say something?

iii. Does everyone have to try very hard in this family to be what they are expected to be?

iv. Perhaps a common theme between the pictures feels to be isolation. That was implied on the beach, in the nakedness of the second figure, in the cot and again here because as soon as one person appears, the other two start to disappear and there is no way of developing a dynamic between the three within this picture.

v. Like the last picture, there is a softness to the photography, but at the same time the profiles and the framing are very strong. And like the other pictures - where did time go? These could have been taken any time in the last 50 years.

vi. The construction of the piece is simple but compelling and fascinating - it moves, and you want to move around it, to get the different pictures.

vii. It is much more dynamic than the last three pieces, in this sense. Does this suggest that now the work has been going for a little while, the interaction between the client and therapist(s) is becoming more dynamic?

viii. Also, when I took a picture of the piece on my phone, I was in it as well my reflection. What does this suggest? Are outsiders and professionals a significant part of this family's dynamic in some way?

IV

Caught in between what seems like a father and mother, *with me* in the middle *and* suddenly together *at* the same age. It's intimate, a nice feeling maybe. H*owever,* this intimacy depends on exclusion as well. What about *my* children and wife. What starts as a picture of love, *has* another dimension, *is* of what can't be seen. They do not co-exist. Does this reflect *my* experience? Is this part of *my* presenting problem? Does everyone have to try very hard in *my* family to be what they are expected to be?

ix. A rather disturbing feeling that comes up for me relates to my reflection in the shot. In a concrete sense, I have an impact (although very briefly) on the piece in the sense that my reflection appears in it when I am looking at it.

x. I don't know why this was the case with this piece but not the earlier ones. What is the impact of this work that we are doing together on the family portrait, in a less concrete sense? Is there also a shadow cast?

xi. Perhaps this is an important question in any therapy, but it is harder to assess and work with the impact in this 'arms-length' situation.

xii. Object relations. What is the relationship between the three figures? Is it intentional that they do not co-exist in the portrait?

xiii. Yet there is a strong underlying connection, because they all are on the same medium and without all three being there, the picture loses its impact. And is the bottom picture a combination of the three figures?

xiv. So the family needs the individuals, and the individuals need the family. A sort of detached inter-connectedness.

Eb.IVxv. Three's and multiples of three keep coming up - the three pictures in Session 2, and the 9 layers in the last picture. This time there are three people in the portrait. (Is there a fourth implied presence - the family?)

xvi. I am wondering about the Oedipal experience. The recurring three's suggest that there is something around this. Perhaps a future piece might expand this?

IV CONT.

Competition *as well*, a fight to be seen by *my* viewer*s*. Competition between *my* mother and father, mother facing the other way, the father and *myself* together. *This is* how *I* feel perhaps, stuck in-between, unable to acknowledge the inevitable infinite dependence of them. *My* image is lost amongst *my* parents.

And like other *sessions* - where did time go? These could have been taken any time in the last 50 years. I am wondering about the Oedipal experience, *where* the family needs the individuals and the individuals need the family, *as a* sort of detached inter-connectedness. What is I *my* relationship between the three figures? Is it *my* intention that they do not co-exist in *a single* portrait?

i. I was initially a little non-plused by this photograph after praise from Susan in the office. As I opened it, it seemed to break, until I realised it was already broken and taped together - and shouldn't be opened at more than ninety degrees. It's been forced open further than it would like.

ii. The main reason I felt non-plused was because I didn't see it. I didn't see what was obviously lacking - a face. Since Susan had praised it I also expected something more spectacular, rather than the bare back, bare white walls. It struck me as so ordinary, everyday picture in an ordinary, broken sorry-looking double frame.

iii. Looking closer I fell disgust. Blurred wobbly vision and the uneven ceiling. Distortion comes out through the distorted mirror and spreads to the whole photograph and its frame. My reaction is seasickness.

iv. How can someone not manage -seemingly struggle but not manage -to see their face in the mirror? It's a hopelessly raw situation. Not being able to see the truth of your face. And it seems to be spreading throughout the picture and the frame. It's blurring, it's falling apart.

V

Perhaps things are being forced open further than *I* would like. *Initially* I didn't see it, what was obviously lacking - *my* face. It struck me *initially* as so ordinary, *an* everyday picture. *I am* in a mirror, *with*in a mirror. *Have I succumbed* to some sub-world, a sort of half life, a reflection which has lost its real?

i. Taking this literally, I wonder if it is saying something about mirroring - but the mirroring has gone wrong somehow. Everything in the picture except the people (ie the mirror itself, the shadows and the hook on the wall) seem to be mirror images - but in psychoanalytic mirroring, it is the mirroring between people that is important; and the people in this picture are not true reflections.

ii. All the backs are turned! There is a hand reaching out - left hand on one side but right on the other I think? But it is not met in the way that your hand would be met in a true mirror reflection. In a reflection the person meeting your reached-out hand would be yourself, but even that is not happening in the picture.

iii. I'm not sure if this is unconscious or not but there is something about scale. The mirror looked to me like an old fashioned hand held mirror and it seemed as if there was the edge of a hand holding it - but it is also shown hung on a wall.

iv. So what is the true scale, a small hand-held mirror or a large wall mirror? And what does this communicate about how it might have been hard to know whether experiences were large or small?

v. I imagine a child fascinated by his mother's hand mirror.

vi. What is happening at the top of the mirror? It looks like waves. Are we underwater? Does this suggest a subterranean world, where reality/dry land is out of reach? Is there a suggestion of drowning?

vii. I am afraid that the frame will snap and that the two halves will peel away from each other: a fragile partnership? Or is there something about fragile containment here?

viii. The fact that (I think) it is a different hand reaching out on each side, and the fact that the reflections are not quite true is disturbing, troubling, hard to make sense of.

ix. The feeling of looking at something that should make sense but doesn't, quite. Is that the subjects experience?

x. In the right hand picture, the reflection is distorted and misshapen: the shadow side perhaps? We expect a reflection to be like the original and it is disturbing to see this.

xi. There is the same cascade effect (in this piece, of reflections) as in the nursery piece, Picture 3 - which was also perhaps suggested in Picture 1 by the many figures. Does this suggest something running through generations? Or is it about object relations, many different part objects?

xii. The distortions of the second reflection suggest the work of Francis Bacon to me. There is something disturbing and also mystical about false reflections. The mirror in Snow White told the truth, and the result of this was dangerous -but it did not show a true reflection. So, perhaps there is something Jungian in the link with fairy tales and folk lore.

xiii. Like the other pictures - the figure is naked. Perhaps this project itself is very exposing. Not only do two people analyse the pictures, but tutors presumably read parts of what we say and the subjects whole experience of self and family is exposed.

xiv. Perhaps it is no wonder the figures are so often naked.

V CONT.

Looking closer I felt disgust, *a* distortion com*ing* out through the *already* distorted mirror and *spreading into* its frame. My reaction is seasickness, a subterranean world, where reality is out of reach, a suggestion of drowning?

A child fascinated by his mother's *reflection.* Mirroring between people is important; *but* the*se* are not true reflections, the mirroring has gone wrong somehow. The reflections are not quite true *and it is* disturbing, troubling *and* hard to make sense of. Looking at something that should make sense but doesn't, quite. Is that *this my experience*? How can *I* not manage - seemingly struggle but not manage - to see *my* face in the mirror? It's a hopelessly raw situation. Not being able to see the truth of *my* face. And it seems to be spreading *throughout the project*, *that's* falling apart.

So what is the true scale and what does this communicate about how it might have been hard to know whether *my* experiences were large or small? *'Mirror mirror on the wall'.* ...the mirror in Snow White told the truth and the result *were* dangerous - but it did not show a true reflection. Perhaps this project itself is very exposing, *my* whole experience of self and family is exposed.

i. This is between you and your camera. You and photography. No one else should be there.

ii. It looks as though you spit the light again like the vomit ejecting something away, out, of you.

iii. The light I suppose is what a photographer cannot do without. You are dependent on it, like food. But then doesn't the light itself spoil the possibility of expressing what is really there and what is most important?

iv. In this image there is so little light it distorts the face into what seems like a lump.

v. The darkness (not true darkness, but something at the edge of light) illuminates something more relevant: that you can't get out of the conventions or of what has gone before, because you need it.

vi. Without light there is no representation. Without light there is no audience. Maybe that's what's important. But then it is impossible to get away from both entirely.

i. I can see two mouths: one closed, something coming out of the other. Is this the clients experience - one speaks, the other doesn't? The two faces seem superimposed, rather like the three faces in the picture before last. Something about merging?

ii. I am looking at what is coming out of the mouth and it looks like chains - chains of words? But 'chains' can mean precious jewellery -or it can be associated with captivity and slavery. So which sort of chains are these? Are they both - or neither?

iii. The chains could also be threads of bullets especially since there seems to be a jewellery fashion of wearing chains of bullets at the moment.

iv. Are words experienced as bullets?

v. The communication around the presentation of this piece may or may not be conscious, but it seems that something is definitely being communicated by the lack of payment and the production of two pieces at once.

vi. I think this has highlighted the difference between what we are doing here, and more dynamic therapy - in the sense that in conventional therapy there would be an opportunity to discuss and explore together what is being conveyed by these choices.

vii. In my opinion, I don't think it is possible to explore this in a written piece -it needs two people in a closer dynamic than this medium allows.

viii. So it feels that there is a very important piece of communication being made by these two things, but not one that we can work with together therapeutically.

ix. Perhaps this has allowed us to identify one of the elements of therapy that cannot be easily replicated here.

x. There is a feeling of uncertainty. The lighting is dim and a number of elements of the picture are atmospheric but it is hard to be sure what they are showing -for example, the shape on the left hand side -what is its significance?

VI

I feel this is between *me* and *my* camera, *me* and photography. No one else should be there. *I* spit the light, again like ejecting something away, out, *out* of *me*. This light, *this way of communicating.* I suppose *this* is what *I* cannot do without; dependent on it, like food. But then doesn't the light itself spoil the possibility of expressing what is really there and what is most important? The darkness. (Not true darkness, but something at the edge of light), it *seems to* illuminate something more relevant. Without light there is no representation, without light there is no audience. Maybe that's what's important. But then it is impossible to get away from both entirely.

xi. There is also uncertainty because it is hard to be sure what the picture denotes. Are there two different faces here? One is distorted, so it is hard to tell. Or is one also a hand?

xii. It reminds me slightly of the optical illusion picture which can be seen as an old woman or a young girl -so what is the illusion? Does that mean that there are conflicting truths, or is it about trying to work out what the truth is?

xiii. Again, the distortions reflect Francis Bacon and again there is nakedness (see previous responses for thoughts on this). Theories about self (Kohut and Mollon) seem relevant in connection with the superimposing or merging mentioned above. And Jung, in thinking about the image of the chains.

VI CONT.

There is a feeling of uncertainty, because it is hard to be sure, *perhaps there* are two different faces, one is distorted, it is hard to tell. I *see two ways of communicating my* experience - one speaks, the other doesn't, it feels that there is a very important piece of communication being made by these two things, but not one that *I* can work with together therapeutically, conflicting truths; or is it about trying to work out what the truth is?

i. Shattered bits of glass, old, the bits of glass in a brass frame. Are they ???real????? pieces of something stuck onto a canvass or are they mafe [sic] to seem so? I'm unsure.

ii. Looking at it it [sic] reminds me of old pottery dug up buried for millennia and through time bits have got lost or eroded away. Where are those missing bits? Are they needed to see you, or do theur [sic] absence say much more then their presence?

iii. No answer?

iv. There's also a gap between writing 9and sending and receiving) and reading this and then a response. A gap in-between. Since I wrote this on a scrap of paper over 7 weeks ago there's also a gap inbetweem [sic] me looking writing then writing again and getting it to you, in a rush.

v. In any case this is something dark and ancient maybe existing in the present. You really want to exist in this present, giving so very little away yet being the focus of a portrait.

vi. [left in the mistakes and the strange problem with the font. Partially because it is interesting and partly because I'm in a hurry to go across the road to the Ritzy!]

i. Fragmentation. This communication is so strong that it overshadows any others and makes it hard to see anything else. But the frame counters this, in the sense that the frame is a mirror which is unbroken. So we have a perfect, whole, flowing, complete reflecting frame for these sharp, jagged, dangerous pieces.

ii. The eyes are closed, same as they have been in many other pieces. To me this suggests an almost religious submission. Again, in common with the other pictures, the figure is naked, suggesting vulnerability.

iii. Shadows and reflections are important in this piece - so it is not what you see at first, more what you discern after a little while, and depending on how the light falls.

iv. Something about ambivalence/ambiguity or a lack of clearness, because it is unclear in some cases which bits of the body are suggested in the different shards of mirror.

v. Some irony in the fact that a mirror, which is meant to show you things clearly, is so ambiguous in this instance. To me, on the left hand side, it looks as if a hand is gripping another hand - but someone else might see this quite differently. There is something intangible and ghostlike about these reflections.

vi. Initially, disturbing, and invoking anxiety because of the sharpness of the shards of mirror, but there is also a sadness about the piece, to do perhaps with the submissiveness and vulnerability.

vii. With this piece, a very small part of me was starting to think, why keep submitting?

viii. What happens if you look back at the camera and confront the viewer? Of course there will be reasons why, but I can't get those from this picture this time.

ix. But perhaps there is some neurotic counter-transference here -I am trying to do this in a hurry, before I go away. So it

VII

My thoughts dug up, buried for millennia and *where* through time, bits have got lost or eroded away. Where are those missing bits? Are they needed, to *know me*, or do their absence say much more then their presence? No answer. In any case this is something dark and ancient existing in the present, *I* really want to exist in this present, *yet* giving so very little *away*. A fragmentation. Fragment*ed*, in the sense that *although* the frame is unbroken, we have a perfect, whole, flowing, complete frame, *a container* for these sharp, jagged, dangerous pieces.

may not be anything to do with the picture!

x. Again, theories about mirroring seem important, and fragmentation, and the self psychologists (see previous pieces).
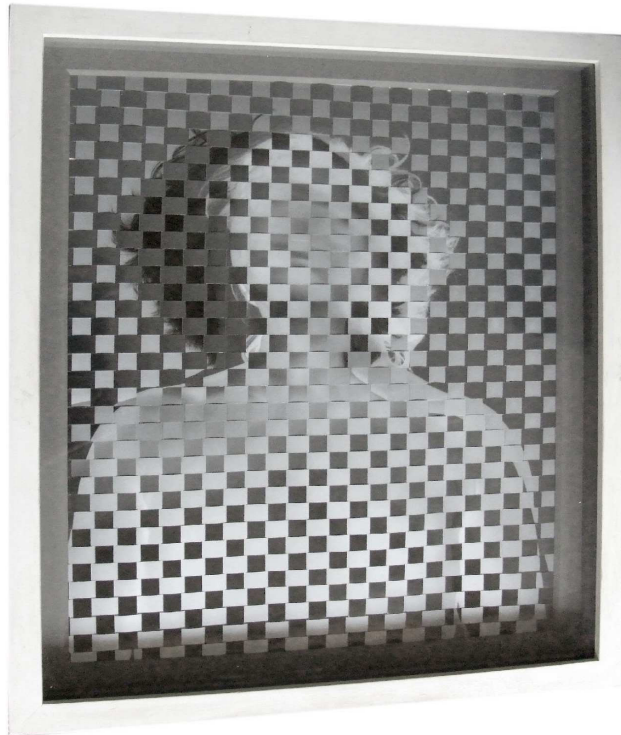
VII CONT.

A mirror, which is meant to show *me* things clearly is so ambiguous in this instance, something intangible and ghostlike about *my* reflections. Ambivalence/ambiguity - a lack of clearness, because it is unclear in some cases which bits are suggested in the different shards of mirror. *In this session,* a very small part of me was starting to think, why keep submitting?

i. Patchwork weaving of squares and binaries black and white.

ii. There are not there.

iii. What more to say? Trying to say more has become the delay I think. Am I busy or can I not say anything back to this?

i. There is a sense of something not quite as it should be, perhaps because the shadow seems to be in the foreground instead of the background. There is a suggestion of silhouettes, and one hides the other -but shouldn't they be the other way round?

ii. The suggestion of a featureless face is disconcerting - this is a person, but we don't know how to relate to them, and don't know how to expect them to relate to us.

iii. There is something of interdependence between the two - perhaps neither would exist without the other.

iv. The body shape is the same as in the previous picture - I wondered if it was the same shot, used differently - so there is recognition and a sense that I am getting familiar with the subject. At the same time, contrasting this piece with, say, the first few, it is getting more complex. It feels as if the work has moved along.

v. The picture suggests a great deal but it is hard to know how much of it is me reading stuff into it and how much of it is really there.

vi. So there is a feeling of uncertainty - is this real or is it just how I see it? For example, it seemed to me that there was a very small face at the base of the neck on the left hand side - was this wisps of hair, or does it suggest a little voice whispering in the ear? See below for comment on this!

vii. There is also - to me - a suggestion of a mouth in the middle of the head - but

VIII

The *session* suggests a great deal but it is hard to know how much of it is me reading stuff into it and how much of it is really there. There is a sense of something not quite as it should be - disconcerting. *I am* a person, but *I* don't know how to relate and don't know how to expect *people* to relate to *me*. An interdependence between *these two* - perhaps neither would exist without the other. *Again*, there is a feeling of uncertainty. Something about mouths and voices - but only suggestions, nothing concrete. *They are* not there. What*'s* more to say? The analyst Searles, writes of the client who drives the analyst mad, *perhaps* I now *I am* seeing things that are not there? Or is this a reflection of *my* experience, *an* uncertainty about what is, or is not real? Nothing *seems* certain, clear or straightforward.

again, only a suggestion. So there is perhaps something about mouths and voices - but all only suggestions, nothing concrete.

viii. And there could be an eye on the right, in the hair - this

makes you reassess which part of the head you are looking at, the front or the back. Nothing is certain or clear or straightforward.

ix. Searles writes of the client who drives the analyst mad - so am I now seeing things that are not there? Or is this a reflection of the subjects experience - uncertainty about what is or is not real?

x. NB - this time and last time I did not have a picture of the piece on my phone to refer to when writing up, so there is also a real and concrete reason why it is harder for me to be sure about elements of the picture.

i. This is exactly what I scribbled on my note. Usually would rewrite this and I think I expected I would do.

ii. It, you, remind me of something exciting, childish excitement of something vague: another take on reality, opening another world, something more to explore than the usual.

iii. Lots of layers. Layers towards something of what you want to suggest about you. Again like a previous image the lens of an old camera from within curving into your head, curving to the left. I wonder why the left?

iv. An other, A nother, Another, [sic] the faceless other your features removed, your hair rally the only identifiable feature - that and that the whole project is a view of you or your head!

v. This head wants to be the head of an other, someone not known, a stranger walking by giving nothing away. Mysterious . A mystery.

vi. As a self portrait this is a mystery. It reminds me of childhood citement, it also reminds me of nausia [sic]. Faceless, psychotic dreaming where familiar faces although familar become alien and hostile.

vii. What is most sickening somehow is the chain used to hang the picture. It strikes me as sinister somehow as I was putting it back behind the clothes rack.

i. The first impression is that the piece represents the pages of a book. It is striking that there are mirrors within the pages -taking this literally, perhaps the subject has sought terms of reference, ways to live, even mirroring, within books?

ii. Page 1: the silhouette is defined but the features are blurred. Distortion around the nose suggests movement - turning away from something that cannot be faced? And this is repeated on the other pages.

iii. Like the previous pieces, there is no face-on contact - what is this about? Is something too dreadful to look at, or does it reflect feelings of isolation, or is it about feelings of shame, or is it saying something quite different?

iv. Page 2: there could be a suggestion of a child refusing to eat; or to read it quite differently; there could be a religious suggestion of looking up.

v. Page 3: there is something, two lines, across the forehead -what is this? There could be religious connotations, or pagan, or it could suggest a branding mark, like an animal.

vi. Are there feelings of being owned by someone or something? You can see less of the face on this page, which makes it more disturbing - the sense of someone who may be missing the thing that makes them most human.

vii. There is also a particular effect of light around the body, like an aura -but not on the other portraits, why does this one have this and not the others?

viii. Page 4: the picture centres on the closed eye. The dappled lighting in this picture reminded me of light through water. There have been other under-water references in previous pictures: what is this about? Under water is another world: very

IX

I remind *myself* of something exciting, *a* childish excitement of something vague; another take on reality, *the* opening *of* another world, something more to explore than the usual. An other, the faceless other, *my* features removed - that this whole project is a view of *my* head! *However*, this head wants to be the head of an other, someone not known, a stranger, giving nothing away, *both* mysterious *and a* mystery. As a self-portrait this is a mystery. It reminds me of childhood citement, *a* faceless, psychotic dreaming, where familiar faces become alien and hostile. Another world; very beautiful, but *I* cannot breathe there. Perhaps *indicating* things hold together on the outside more easily than on the inside.

beautiful, but we cannot breathe there.

ix. On all the pages, there is a contrast between defined silhouettes and blurred features: perhaps things hold together on the outside more easily than on the inside. Which could tie in with the robust frame and the fragmented bits of mirror in the last picture.

x. The reflections of reflections in the mirrors would in principle go on infinitely. So something keeps happening? A cycle being repeated, and no way of changing?

xi. I don't think much of the communication within this picture is unconscious, I think it is intentional. The only thing that I think might be unconscious is that you have to be quite close up and look in detail to interact properly with it. Something gets lost, at a distance. Perhaps this ties in with the thing about there being a difference between outside and inside.

xii. Perplexed and uncertain. It is sort of a series, sort of not. A little exasperated. I don't think I have understood what the picture is trying to say.

IX CONT.

I have sought terms of reference, ways to live, mirroring within books, *but my* features are blurred, *a* turning away from something that cannot be faced. Reflections of reflections in the mirrors *that* would in principle, go on infinitely. So something keeps happening, a cycle being repeated, *with perhaps* no way of changing. There is no face-on contact. Something too dreadful to look at, or does it reflect feelings of *my* isolation, or is it *again*, about feelings of shame, *of* being owned by someone or something.

xiii. Mirroring might be important again. The difference between internal and external (the blurred features and defined silhouette) - might tie in with Winnicott and his papers about self.

xiv. A bit of Jung -the possible underwater reference, and also, the book suggests, once upon a time.

SESSION X
DB's Response

i. Water seeing through the skin onto skin. The ripples, circles create a newhead distorting in yet another way the sharpclear [sic] image of your own.

ii. For this I needed to find light in a dingy kitchen in the basement of the Guild clinic. The basement is mainly underground with some light in the corner, relying on this to see you underwater.

iii. In the dark most of the time, useless without light - or maybe something else without light? There is a worried look as you stare backlit by the window into the basement kitchen.

iv. The waxy back like some sort of icy landscape.

X

I *am in* the dark most of the time, *feeling* useless without light - or maybe something else without light? Or underground with some light, relying on *what little there is* to see.

SESSION X
EB's Response

i. The piece reminded me of a lake frozen over, with a face under the ice - but you do not see the face except in very particular circumstances.

ii. The message is shocking - someone trapped in an element where he cannot breathe; frozen, unable to move, but we know he is still conscious because the eyes make contact.

iii. This is the first time in the series of pictures that the eyes have connected with the viewer, which makes the impact very dramatic. So what is the message? Something about a sense of suspension, being in a world which does not give you the air you need, where are not seen unless there is a special situation (the backlight), and cannot be heard?

iv. It is very disturbing that you cannot see the face without the backlighting. It could so easily be missed. And when you do, there is a blankness - but it is not lifeless, because the face is conscious and seems to see the viewer.

v. The other thing that was different with this piece was (I think) that there is colour (in the lips). I don't remember any colour in the previous pieces. Interesting that it is red and not blue that is included - we could have expected the lips to be blue with cold.

vi. The shock and contrast is heightened by the use of red. I would read this as suggesting a state of being alive and sentient, but in an awful, paralysing suspension.

vii. The picture also seems to me to tell me about silence: in ice and snow, sound is often muted.

viii. The choice of materials was a strong (unconscious?) communication for me. The piece is made of wax, which is used in candles, which give light, and you need light in order to see the piece. Perhaps.

ix. I was getting carried away here, but it seemed to me that if the wax was used to make the piece, that might mean there was no candle left to view it with. So in fantasy there was a terrible choice perhaps, between speaking (making the piece)

and being heard (the back-light).

x. Backing up this either/or idea, wax is associated with flame is associated with fire is associated with heat. But this (to me, anyway) is a picture of ice, which melts in heat!

xi. So again we have two elements which cannot easily co-exist. Is this what the picture is telling me? Is the subject 'speaking' of an experience where (like the three portraits where you could only see one at a time) there is a close relationship yet the individuals in the dynamic cannot live and speak at the same time, and what one needs is damaging for the other?

xii. Shocked. It felt like a very brave piece, seemed to be saying something more raw than previously. I didn't want to stop looking at it.

xiii. It had the most impact on me of all the pictures, but it is not comfortable viewing.

X CONT.

A sense of suspension, being in a world which does not give *me* the air *I* need, where *I am* not seen and cannot be heard, suggesting a state of being alive and sentient, but in an awful, paralysing suspension, a muted *voice,* communication through non-communication. *I am* frozen over - see*ing only in* particular circumstances.

Trapped in an element where *I* cannot breathe; frozen, unable to move, but still conscious because *my* eyes make contact. So again, two elements which cannot easily co-exist, the 'speaking' of an experience where there is a close relationship yet *being* in the dynamic *where I* cannot live and speak at the same time, one is damaging for the other.

xiv. I think there is a communication about object relations, because of the relationship between the elements (see above).

xv. Concepts of the self again - Winnicott, in particular. He says something about communication through non-communication - which ties in maybe with the thing about silence which I said above but also with the fact that this piece does communicate extremely powerfully.

xvi. Also, the bit about difficulty co-existing - Oedipal theories, maybe. Jung because there is so much ice and cold in mythology (Snow Queen for example), and also so many fairy tales include this suspended animation state. Not just fairy tales - the tales of King Arthur. Which, come to think of it, also link with lakes.

i. There is something funny about this, something desperate perhaps.

ii. The eye peeking out the back of the head. The colours seem unreal like a painted black and white photo.

iii. It's wax. The eye sates through hair and wax.

iv. Vision blurred like I have a cataract.

i. This piece is on a different scale to the other pieces: it fits in an A4 jiffy bag. Lightweight, and the frame looks ordinary.

ii. Neatly sealed at the back with masking tape - nothing fragile or disintegrating about this one.

iii. And that is echoed in the waxy finish, which forms a veneer that nothing can get through. So does this somehow reflect the subject's experience?

iv. On the basis of these things, this is an unassuming piece. But that changes, once you look at the picture itself.

v. The dominating feature is the eye, and the fact that there is only one, and placed in the back of the head, is disconcerting.

vi. There are associations with one-eyed characters in mythology. But the main association which comes to mind, because of the nature of the project, is a camera.

vii. I guess the thing about only having one eye is that it changes your perspective and you see things in two dimensions. What would the impact of this be?

viii. The wax this time has a different effect than in piece 9(?). It is less fragile. Instead of being like breakable ice, it is like a mist.

ix. Of course there could be two more eyes on the front of the face. So there are associations with the fact that adults sometimes say to children, 'I've got eyes in the back of my head, you know'.

x. What is the effect on kids when someone says that? 'I mustn't do anything wrong because they'll see'. And also, 'they are different to me: more powerful, all-knowing'.

XI

Why see so much? *There is* something desperate. A veneer that nothing can get through. So does this somehow reflects *my* experience, having vision blurred like I have a cataract. A camera that changes *my* perspective *to* see things *only* in two dimensions *it's* disconcerting. Instead of being breakable ice *as before*, it is like a mist. Are *these* associations with *the super-ego?* 'I've got eyes in the back of my head, you know', 'I mustn't do anything wrong because they'll see'. 'They are different to me: more powerful, all-knowing'.

xi. Perhaps this is accentuated, because this eye could quite easily be kept secret, hidden under the hair.

xii. The eye is quite cold and there is something dark about it, in the way that the light reflects back.

xiii. And what is it looking at? Nothingness? The viewer?

xiv. Come to that, what is the figure looking forwards at, if there are eyes at the front? This could link with Janus, who looked forwards and back.

xv. It is only the second piece where the subject has made eye contact with the viewer and you would expect this to make it a piece to connect with, but this eye does not invite warmth and connection.

xvi. Some of the other pieces might invite compassion as a re-action. There is reason to feel compassion with this piece - who wants to see so much? - but it is not the first feeling I got.

xvii. That was probably disturbance.

xviii. There is a different silhouette under the hair, a suggestion of a neckline. So there are superimposed images. Lacan's con-cepts of multiple identifications making up the self, then?

xix. Again, the superego, because of the eyes-in-the-back-of-the-head associations.

XI CONT.

And what is it looking at? Nothingness? The viewers? Come to that, what *am I* looking forwards at; if there are eyes at the front? *I'm* Janus, who looked forwards and back but this eye does not invite connection.

SESSION XII
DB's Response

i. Repetition memory. I remember this image now back three ways. Is the page and book real, stuck on there?

ii. I cant quite make this out. The repetition of this project hits me now and my delay in responding is a bit of a readjustment I think.

iii. I'm starting to think about all these pieces as a whole. Your image is close to saturation and each picture straining to find a new view of you. A body of work definitely, but it's running out of healthy veins to inject.

iv. What is this blitz of self> Hiding blurring, waxing, drowning, representing the represented. A surreal distance takes me further and further away from where I thought we started.

SESSION XII
EB's Response

i. There are four pictures in an old-fashioned mount style setting. The whole piece is monochrome -no colour, again. Four shots, like the sort you get out of machines and use for passport or travel passes - but the contrast is striking because all these pictures are out of focus.

ii. So whereas usually in this sort of picture the point would be to see the face clearly, for identification purposes, in these pictures the features are blurred, not easily recognisable, and the eyes in particular are not visible.

iii. The blurredness [sic] seems to increase, from left to right, as if the identity is getting increasingly lost.

iv. So does this make the presenting problem something about loss of identity?

XII

A repetition *of* memory but I can't quite make *it* out. The repetition of this project hits me *as needing* a bit of a readjustment I think. A surreal distance takes me further and further away from where I thought *I'd* started.

v. There also appears to be something across the eyes in the first two shots - a blindfold? A shadow? There has been something across the brow in other pictures. What is this about?

vi. Also, for me, the focal point of this piece is the picture I can't see, the one which is just out of reach.

vii. There is a sense of movement - to avoid something? Like an animal moves its head, when it can't move away from something. This was in some other pieces, too.

viii. The fact that this is just one page in a photo album, and also the ordinariness of the concept of four 'mugshots' suggests insignificance. But at the same time, this page is the piece, so there is a paradox.

ix. What would be on the other pages? Their absence is tantalising, like the shot we cannot see.

x. Actually, thinking about it, mugshots are also taken when you are arrested. Is there a communication here? Something about guilt?

xi. I wrote above about photos 'you get out of machines'. Something about an automated process, but it is not working as you would expect, because the pictures are out of focus.

xii. First response to the piece: I felt quite dismissive and a little disappointed because it is much smaller and less dramatic than the others have been. But after I looked awhile my reaction changed.

xiii. It is saying just as much, but somehow the point of it is just out of reach - like the fourth shot. But perhaps that is the point.

xiv. Staying with the bit about mugshots, perhaps something about the superego or judgement? Or, linking with the blurred identity, Kohut?

xv. The book which the photos are in is falling apart: the pages are not securely attached to the spine. Attachment theory, then? Or back trouble, or lack of structure/support.

XII CONT.

Out of focus. *My* image is close to saturation and each picture straining to find a new view of *myself*. A body of work definitely, but it's running out of healthy veins to inject. *Is the process* falling apart, *through* a lack of structure/support?

To see *my* face clearly, for identification, *I need* the features *not* blurred, *they are* not easily recognisable, and *my* eyes in particular are not visible. A loss of *my* identity? A blurriness *that* seems to increase, as if the identity is getting increasingly lost, *or perhaps a* movement to avoid something. I *just* can't see.

i.Who's dog is this? This picture discomforts because it makes me unsure.

ii. Is it you? Your father? The dog is long, long dead but is alive, only the quality so bad that it could be painted.

iii. Painted with light. A framed frame, a double picture with blu-tac remains and a blu-tac stain.

iv. Its low quality forces the feelings of wanting to ask questions, and guessing anything to fill in the gaps. Who? When? Where? Spencer's dad or Spencer?

v. The deep past home; someone's. Remembering the summer.

i. Almost it is more about what I do not see, because there are bits of the picture missing, whited out. Are bits of memory missing?

ii. The pictures are very stylised, very staged. The wooden cart and the blazer and cap are so stereotypical of a point in time.

iii. As a viewer you look and you think, ah, yes, I know what this sort of childhood would be like. There are associations. But then, what about the spaces? I suspect they say more than the bits which are not whited out.

iv. The dog and the cart in one of the pictures are centre stage, the child almost out of shot!

v. Someone once told me that in her parents house the hierarchy was: father, mother, servants, pets, children. Is this how it was in this family? Or did the child say, take a picture of the dog for me?

vi. Because of the whited-out bits, these are the sort of pictures that seldom make it to the album - yet they have been kept, framed, and then the frame framed within another frame. What is this about? Were there so few pictures that these were precious?

vii. The two frames make it all seem very remote. Is this how it feels to the subject?

viii. There is a long rope around the dogs neck that doubles as a lead. Rope around a neck has sinister connotations.

ix. There is also something very physically real about it -you can imagine the roughness of the rope, and the wiriness of the dogs coat.

XIII

I am discomforted, because it makes me unsure. Wanting to ask questions, *but* guessing anything to fill in the gaps. Who? When? Where? *Reader,* dad or *me.* Is it *me?* M*y* father? *My* dog is long, long dead but *still seems* alive. *But* there are *still* bits of the picture missing, whited out, bits of memory missing. *I am showing a* staged, stereotypical *view* of a point in time. *A* deep past home; someone's remembering *of* the summer. 'Ah, yes', *the reader will know* what this sort of childhood *this* would be like. But then, what about the spaces. They say more than the bits which are not whited out. It all seem*s* very remote. This robust looking world that cannot quite be taken at face value a sense of aloneness conveyed. Is this how it feels? The relationship with the dog, *it was very* important. *Th*e dog is the first living thing apart from the parents which *I've* included. Someone once told me that in *the* parents house, the hierarchy was: father, mother, servants, pets, children. This *is* how it was in this family.

x. The rope connects child and dog, like an umbilical cord (sorry, that sounds very therapistish [sic]). What was the relationship with the dog? Was it important?

xi. If this is the client, on the basis of the choice of these pictures, perhaps there is a sense of aloneness being conveyed.

xii. That would be reinforced by the picture in the cot. Actually, all the pictures have been alone. You could see this the other way round - the dog is the first living thing apart from the parents which has been included. So perhaps the aloneness is reducing!!

xiii. There is something a little worrying about the angle that the tree leans at, it looks unstable or as if it had no roots. Likewise, the house - the side of the window is at an angle.

xiv. This is in practical terms due to the angle of the shot I guess but the feeling it conveys is that things which should be solid and stable, like houses and trees, are actually in danger of keeling over.

xv. Perhaps there is more solidity and stability and reliability in the bricks in the little cart than there is in the house behind it. So leading on from this (which is a bit tenuous), might play and imagination have been very important as a way of surviving?

xvi. The cracks in the paving suggest also that what should be solid is not. So there is something a little unsettling - this robust looking world that cannot quite be taken at face value.

xvii. The child's own little world might have been a place to feel safe in, alone with their toys and their dog.

XIII CONT.

My own little world might have been a place to feel safe in, alone with *my* toys and *my* dog, the black dog of depression. Play and imagination have been very important as a way of surviving.

xviii. Although of course being terribly literal - the black dog of depression.

xix. The bit about a childs imaginary world links to narcissism, eg the writings of McDougall.

i. I expect to see Spencer somewhere. Is he there?

ii. The inkblot is opening up like a Rorschach test, assessing whoever looks, turning the tables.

iii. Spencer is a dark twilight moth without colour.

iv. Aggressive somehow in its question: now I have shown you all of me, who are you? Your turn.

v. There's something of a terrifying emergence; Something timely, monolithic, destroying. I want to move on to the next picture. I'm leaning forward writing on a tall stack of chairs, one leg straight tense and swinging freely.

i. At first sight, an ink blot. So my reaction was, for goodness sake, what can I write about this?

ii. It becomes more interesting when you realise that the ink blot is not symmetrical -so it is not an ink blot then, or if it is, it has been doctored.

iii. Things are not as they first appear, then. For example, there are two blotches on the left hand side near the top and a shadowy bit is missing on the right hand side.

iv. If I try really hard to make associations then there is obviously a conscious decision to have the paper not flat, and it is rather a nice choice of paper that is used.

v. But I'm not really engaged with the piece.

vi. Irritated. How can this be a family portrait? Unless making ink blots is an important memory?

vii. Perhaps I am repeating the child's experience of bringing something precious to be admired and there being no interest. Or of using a medium such as art as a language to try to say something, but having it dismissed.

viii. So perhaps I become the mother who cannot hear -or see! But if I am brutally honest (and not to be is not helpful in this context), I want to say, give me photos that I can write about, with people or animals in!

ix. I also have a little anxiety - am I missing something? Will I look stupid?

XIV

The reader expects to see *me* somewhere, *but am I* there? *I'm* a dark, without colour, something of a terrifying emergence; something timely, monolithic, destroying. I want to move on to the next session.

Things are not as they first appear, then. I'm not really engaged *in this session*. Irritated. *It* is not symmetrical. Perhaps I am repeating *my* experience of bringing something precious to be admired and there being no interest. Or of using a medium such as art as a language to try to say something, but having it dismissed, I *have* the mother who cannot hear - or see.

i. This image seems pale compared with the last. But maybe its about the last one.

ii. Jung uses the shadow to mean the parts of us that we do not recognise as 'me' - the unpalatable, destructive.

iii. Maybe your shadow is you as observer and reader.

iv. You are waiting for the show to begin. This time to watch someone else perform. Someone else to 'make an entrance' to be seen by the seated audience.

v. Why the wax?

vi. Why doesn't your shadow have a shadow?

i. There is something dreamlike about this picture. A sense of someone at the bottom of a well - but sitting in a chair.

ii. What is the chair doing there, all by itself? A chair like this would usually be at a table, with other chairs.

iii. This building does not look like a pleasant place that someone would choose to sit in.

iv. The windows are so high and shuttered, no light can get in through them. It looks cold (interesting; my logic is saying, how can a place 'look' cold? But it does - maybe because of the bare brick-work, which suggests that the purpose of this building was not to keep people warm. Actually, I am writing this on a cold day with the heating off: perhaps this is my intersub-jectivity?!).

v. Why is there a chair, and why is the figure sitting on it? What is he waiting for? The door is open: so it would appear on the face of it that there is an option to leave.

vi. Why would someone stay in this rather bleak, sad building with high windows, when there is light pouring in from the doorway? Is something being conveyed about the difficulty of leav-ing what is familiar, even when it is sad and hopeless and there is every reason to believe that you would be leaving a rather cold, pris-on-like space for somewhere much more nurturing and light and happy?

vii. There is something passive about the figure, just sitting and waiting in this

XV

Maybe *my* shadow is *of me* as observer and reader. The shadow *being* the parts of *the reader* that *they* do not recognise as *'them'* - the unpalatable, *the* destructive. This *place* does not look pleasant, *I* would *not* choose to sit in, no light can get through *and* it looks cold. What *am I* waiting for? The door is open: so it would appear on the face of it that there is an option to leave. *Am I* waiting for *a* show to begin, to watch someone else perform. Someone else to 'make an entrance', to be seen. Why would *I* stay in this rather bleak, sad *place*, when there is light pouring in. *A* difficulty of leaving what is familiar, even when it is sad and hopeless and there is every reason to believe that *I* would be leaving a rather cold, prison-like space for somewhere much more nurturing and light and happy?

bleak place. Passive could link with feelings of powerlessness, inevitability?

viii. There is also something ghostlike about him - he is almost transparent and has a sort of aura of light around him (which

we have seen in some other pictures). But not in a malevolent way - just emphasising those feelings of inaccessibility and in-evitability and the impossibility of making a connection, being heard or communicated with. Perhaps this figure cannot leave this place.

ix. The bleakness also for me has associations with a workhouse or factory. Is there something about past generations?

x. I feel drawn to this picture. Despite or maybe because of the bleakness I absolutely love it. I also like the different textures, the brickwork as mentioned and the waxy finish, which has been used before but is one of my favourite things in these pictures. In this case I think it adds to the dreamlike quality, the feeling that this world can be seen but only at a distance. It cannot be reconnected with. The figure is unreachable.

xi. I also love the feeling of scale -there is almost something church-like about the height of this building. And the light pouring in from the doorway possibly has something biblical about it, too. It's like the illustrations you get in religious chil-dren's books.

xii. The oldness of it all and the sense of the past being present but at a distance links it to Jung, for me. I would argue that there is something archetypal about this one.

XV CONT.

Passiv*ity perhaps*, just sitting and waiting in this bleak place, *a* powerlessness, inevitability emphasising those feelings of inaccessibility and inevitability and the impossibility of making a connection, *of* being heard or communicated with. *Perhaps I just* cannot leave this place. The oldness of it all and the sense of the past being present but at a distance. Past generations *that* cannot be reconnected with. *I'm* unreachable.

i. It's the same but different. An old image on the beach now with us, our, writing.

ii. Is that me - my words? I can't quite see. By holding it up to the light I can see more but it doesn't really seem certain.

iii. Why are all these images framed with waxy inner frames?

iv. I can't make out if it is my writing and I'm searching like you are in the boxes. I can't quite see my reflection in this as much as I try and read the faint text. It's a kind of un-obtainable truth. I also can't remember. Could I check in my emails? Have I saved it somewhere?

v. When we originally start-ed this was planned to be a kind of therapy session, an 'as if' scenario.

vi. Transference machine.

vii. This mashed image of text and another image produces some sort of mirror. It's a kind of manufactured experience of what the image felt like to you only for the observer, for me, now as observed.

viii. What would the response be from observers of this picture? Could this go on in-definitely, like some feedback loop of observation. Looped gazing.

ix. This image is you spitting something back, saying, now do you see? Now do you see how it feels? Like lots of the other images it reveals you on another level - actually something quite aggressive, vengeful, manipulative.

x. Why Is this aggression? It seems like it. But perhaps it could also be a longing to be united with the people who look but don't show themselves. A desire to be mashed together? Company.

xi. Now we put on a show together.

xii. These are your rules - and I think you are trying to show me your hell. You are excited by this - you must be.

xiii. But speaking as/for all your observers (customers, teach-ers) WHY WOULD YOU PULL ME (ANOTHER) INTO

XVI

I can't remember. This was planned to be a kind of therapy. Could this go on, like some feedback loop of observation. Looped gazing. *More of* the same, but different a kind of unobtainable truth, a 'Transference Machine' *The* mashed image of text and another image produc*ing* some sort of mirror. It's a kind of manufactured experience of what *it* felt like to *me. I* spit something back, saying, 'now do you see? Now do you see how it feels?' Like lots of the other images it reveals *me* on another level - actually something quite aggressive, vengeful and manipulative. Now we put on a show together 'WHY WOULD YOU PULL ME (ANOTHER) INTO YOUR NIGHTMARE HELL' *you shout*.

i. It's a miniature version of the first picture -but it has changed, because now there is a suggestion that we are in it, in the sense that the writing behind the doors might be these feedback sheets.

ii. There is something about opening doors/windows/pages/ books. It's interesting that the windows in the last piece (15) did not open, just the door, which brought light pouring in. Now we have lots of little doors or windows, and doors within doors, which open to show not light but some communi-cation behind - although we cannot see what the words actually are and I suspect this is deliberate.

iii. But nevertheless, and even if it cannot be under-stood, there is more sugges-tion of two-way communi-cation in this piece than in most of the others. So in that respect this reminds me of the picture of the figure un-der the ice, where there was eye contact. But that was a shocking/ sad piece. This one has a much lighter tone to it, in my opinion.

iv. Something much light-er is being communicated, as I said above. We have gone from the unwelcoming enclosed space of 15, to a sort of wasteland of beach: much lighter and freer.

v. In contrast to the first pic-ture where the box seemed to me to be the main feature, now the emphasis seems to be more on the figure - per-haps because each of the little doors seem to frame him.

vi. The more old-fashioned outer frame (compared to when we first saw this picture as Piece 1) changes the picture completely for me. Is something unconscious being communicated by that, maybe? That the 'frame' changes the sense?

vii. Does the fact that the figure is on the doors suggest that he has found a way of moving on in some way?

viii. Again, there is a waxy/gluey wash over the top of the pic-ture, so there is something between us and the picture.

YOUR NIGHTMARE HELL

xiv. "twas hell. mehr licht! mann kann alles sehen! niemann karm sich verstechen." (from German twas more bright light! man can see everything!)

ix. This isn't a feeling exactly but there is something flowing about this picture, both the sea coming in and the ends of the lines of print. This gives it a relaxed feeling, to my mind. But also there is something perplexing, tantalising, in that the words are not readable.

x. I don't think they are my words, because I don't think my lines of print were that short. Perhaps they aren't our feedback sheets. Perhaps they are a shopping list! But actually that is unimportant because there is still a link, in the sense that the media of written words is being replicated.

xi. There is a temptation to deconstruct this piece, for me! This hasn't been the case previously. I think this is because I cannot get to what is written well enough to read it, but I can see that it could potentially be read, so I want to take it to pieces!

xii. The small size compared to the original piece makes it somehow like a storybook about something, I know this isn't a clinical concept but I was reminded of Janet and Allan Ahlberg's children's book, 'The Jolly Pocket Postman'! Especially because of the little doors opening.

XVI CONT.

These are *my* rules - and I think *I am* trying to show *you my* hell. *Perhaps I am* excited by this - *I* must be. Why this aggression? It seems like it. Perhaps it could also be a longing *for me* to be united with the people who look but don't show themselves. A desire to be mashed together?

Company. Lots of little doors or windows, and doors within doors, which open to show not light but some communication. Again, there is something between *the reader* and the picture. However, something much lighter is being communicated. We have gone from the unwelcoming enclosed *to* lighter and freer, suggest*ing* that *I* ha*ve* found a way of moving on in some way, there is more suggestion of two-way communication in this *session* than in most of the others.

i. The figure looks at himself looking out to see. We look at the figure looking a himself looking out to see.

ii. Or maybe there's something touching time, where we can see the present (or whenever the picture was taken) and a few seconds earlier.

iii. The frame is old and stained and waxed.

iv. It has a snippet of an upside-down version of the main bit.

v. I don't know why but it reminds me of an aquarium or looking into the crystal palace swimming pool from the basement through the windows underneath the swimmers.

vi. A sneaky view of an upside-down and past world.

vii. What is the stain? It looks like a liquid stain.

XVII

I look at *my*self looking out to see. *The readers'* look at the figure looking at *my*self looking out to see. The present (or whenever this *was*) and a few seconds earlier. A view of an upside-down and past world *where there is* no*where* to hide/search in/ emerge from. Are these *as* parent and *as* child? The past and present? *I'm not sure* which is the (pre)dominant one - the blurred, *parent* or the more defined, *child*. What is *my* relationship? It is not clear what sex *I am*. Androgynous? *In 'Session I' I was* returning as an adult to this beach, *but this* comes from the part of the mind which holds *my* childhood memories. Past and present selves - self as child and self as adult, or parent and child? Or *as* different aspects of the 'self'. *Am I* saying that it has become possible to find a way of living with a part of the self, that there has been reconciliation? Perhaps this suggests shifting perspectives about the past, maybe it is losing its hold somehow? There is more peace around, there is sadness, perhaps, but also peace, have remember*ed*, repeat*ed and* work*ed* through *what* happened? ...as if the focus has changed from the past or present, to the present or future (or the other way round), either way, there has been a change, a change in perspective.

i. The picture is of an empty stretch of sand, perhaps the same place as the beach in Picture 1. Just the two figures, one within the other, their backs turned, with no boxes this time to hide/search in/emerge from.

ii. In Picture 1, no-one was looking out to sea, I don't think, but that is happening here. As if the focus has changed from the past or present, to the present or future. Or the other way round. Either way, there has been a change.

iii. The picture is looking the other way along the beach, which again suggests a change in perspective.

iv. It is not clear what sex the figures are. Androgynous? The hair of the larger, more blurred figure is longer so they are not the same person, although the blurred outline of the larger one means you have to look carefully at details such as the hair to be sure about this.

v. The smaller figure is much more defined than the larger! Are these parent and child? Are they in the past and present? Which is the (pre) dominant one - the blurred, larger figure or the more defined, smaller figure? What is their relationship?

vi. The wax seems to me to be out of place here: I don't associate it with sand and sea water somehow. It's too pure and clean and unmixing. Although of course you can make candles by pouring wax into sand.

vii. The mount is mottled, spoilt. But more 'real' somehow and more weathered than the plain mount of Picture 1. The little inset is like a postbox slot which a small letter could be posted into. Are these

notes 'letters' that we 'post' to the subject, perhaps?

viii. The piece is so much smaller and older than Picture 1! It could be that Picture 1 was the subject returning as an adult to this beach, and Picture 17 comes from the part of the mind which holds childhood memories.

ix. Perhaps this suggests shifting perspectives about the past, maybe it is losing its hold somehow?

x. There is more peace around this picture than most of the others. There is sadness, perhaps, but also peace. So, thinking of Freud, have remembering, repeating and working through happened?

xi. Are these two figures past and present selves - self as child and self as adult? Or parent and child? Or true and false selves (Winnicott)? Or different aspects of the 'self' (Lacan)? Is the picture saying that it has become possible to find a way of living with a part of the self, that there has been reconciliation?

xii. Or, or, or!

xiii. I don't have a lot else to say about this one really. Like the beach, my mind is clear. But maybe this is because I have peeked at Picture 18 and can't wait to start writing about it - it has eclipsed 17 for me!

i. 8 - 8? is this right?

ii. It's written on a sheet on the back. Perhaps it refers to the original image. Going back in time!!

iii. The image is enveloped. Being encroached by wax. I like the mystery of what it - the wax - actually is, and also what it covers up.

iv. A figure without a face. Over interpreted, over seen, until it disappears up its own arse?

v. The words seem to be there to add something to the piece but perhaps it over eggs the meaning until it, the original image, disappears into a waxy cataract.

i. This seems like a bringing-together of many pieces. A story is starting to come together. Although it's interesting that I say this, because I don't actually know what the story is, for the subject and the family in this photo album.

ii. Some of the echoes of earlier pieces are as follows: there is a band around the head again - but in wax this time. Again, we have the waxy surface.

iii. The backdrop of words repeats the use of indistinct words a couple of pieces ago. The picture frame is familiar, possibly the same as one used before? - a cheap, white, rather dated frame.

iv. There is the weave -this time it looks as if it has been made by partly shredding a picture then reversing the shredder, but not before the picture was half shredded.

v. There is once again the blurred or 'faceless' face. Maybe this suggests there was no face (identity?), even before the shredding! So is the piece saying, something happened which threatened annihilation, but then it went into reverse and something was salvaged - but it was damaged and is stuck together with damaged, torn bits of other pictures?

vi. On the back, there is a picture of a table and a dresser with a mirror (another reference to earlier pieces), and there are rips in the backing paper. Actually, why have I assumed that this is the back? It could be the main piece!

vii. That side has a coolness to it - perhaps because there are no people in the picture - but the other (for now, let's call it the front) picture has warmth - eg in the colour of the figure's skin.

XVIII

Like being encroached by wax, I like the mystery of what it - the wax - actually is, and also what it covers up. *Me* without a face, over interpreted, over seen. *As if* going back in time!! *To* some of the echoes of earlier *times*. The words seem to be there, but perhaps it over-eggs the meaning until the original '*me*' disappears into a waxy cataract.

viii. So although the shredding was destructive, what survived has colour and life and warmth. And so we have warmth and coolness, juxtaposed on the two sides.

ix. The top piece of the weave is at an angle, doesn't fit in. And some of the strands don't fit/aren't part of the main original picture.

x. So - again something about bits that didn't start out together being assembled (no, that suggests a sophisticated process, and

there is a naivet [sic] to the piece - 'cobbled together' reflects the result better, although I suspect the naivet is deliberate and was actually achieved through a sophisticated process)..

xi. A piece made up of candle wax, and some old notes, and bits of pictures salvaged from a shredder! These are such everyday things. 'Spare parts,' being used to say something.

xii. A weave or plait is a very ancient way of making something. They probably wove things in prehistoric times. Perhaps the subtext is, to weave something whole you must draw several threads in, as this piece does -threads from earlier pieces.

xiii. Like 17, there is a change of focus. Instead of looking principally at the figure I am looking at the process now - at the way the elements of other pieces are drawn in.

xiv. This piece seems to me to be leading towards the end of the project.

xv. My first reaction was: oh, those are my words! And unlike the words in Picture 16 I can read them, without dismantling the piece! But - tantalising - I can't remember which picture they were about.

xvi. Being very truthful, a bit of a competitive spark in me thinks, Ha! My words, not D's!

xvii. Reading this over, and also the notes for 17, I think I might be writing differently - less carefully.

xviii. I feel exposed, writing that - I don't want it to appear as the backdrop of the next piece! So - there is a double edged sword to seeing my words in a piece. It's nice to be seen, but will I like how I appear? Perhaps I am experiencing a little of the nervousness the subject might feel, sending these very personal pieces out for comment. The tables are turned!

xix. Something about identity, sense of self? But then in this picture, we stop focussing on ourselves and become fascinated with the process! For Lacan there is no self, just identifications (the weave, the elements of other pictures coming together). Kalsched - protector/persecutor: the shredding experience persecuted the subject, but perhaps allowed growth also (this one is a bit tenuous and a bit of a mis-use of Kalsched, I think).

XVIII CONT.

A story is starting to come together, *in the* bringing-together of many pieces. Although I don't actually know what the story is. Once again the blurred or 'faceless' face, suggesting there was *perhaps* no face or identity. So *am I* saying, something happened which threatened annihilation, but then it went into reverse and something was salvaged - it was damaged and is stuck together with damaged, torn bits of other *experiences*? This shredding was destructive, what survived has colour and life and warmth. And so we have warmth and coolness, juxtaposed on the two sides. So - again something about bits that didn't start out together, being assembled. Something about identity, sense of self? *The* protector/persecutor: the shredding experience persecuted the subject, but allow*ing* growth. Perhaps the subtext is, to weave something whole *I* must draw several threads in - threads from earlier *sessions*.

i. The more I look at this gap the more revolting it seems. Disturbing more than revolting perhaps.

ii. The space in the middle is disconcerting and makes me think again in a roundabout way of the gap since I wrote the last comment, the lack of red liquid in this dismembered sliced body, the wax suddenly looking like semen smeared over picture after picture.

iii. Is this what you want your audience to see?

iv. And there below my own semen - my errors and typos - are collected at the bottom of this piece. Something nasty staring back at me.

v. Not how I would like to be seen but happy in a way that I am. I feel a bit sick about this.

i. This piece is more of a regular, everyday picture and less like the other pieces in my opinion. It is big and colourful - lots of green.

ii. As far as I remember, the only other time there was colour other than neutral tones was the underwater piece, when the lips were red.

iii. This piece could not be more different to that one. And nature has been present in the pieces before, but mostly images like fire and ice and windswept beaches, whereas this piece is set in a forest with masses of natural growth and life going on.

iv. The figure is less ambivalent, too - the full body of the subject is in the picture and nothing is blurred or made to look unusual (unlike the picture with the hair over the face, for example).

v. Like some of the previous pieces, there is wax dripped down it, but only a little. We get a sense of the full body outline of the subject, but the face is still obscured. But not in a surprising or intense or unusual way this time - it's just hidden behind the tree.

vi. Again, this piece seems to me to be leading towards the end of the project. It looks as if the subject is leaving something behind - his unconscious? a preoccupation with something in the past? - and becoming part of the real world.

vii. But the intensity of the previous pieces is lost as a result, and I rather liked the

XIX

I'm disconcert*ed,* the more I look at this gap *between my parts,* the more revolting it seems. *I'm not sure this is what I* want *my* audience to see, something nasty *is* staring back at me. Hidden. Leaving something behind - *my* unconscious *perhaps*? *this* preoccupation with the past - *trying to* becoming part of the real world, something sensible and healthy is happening, but something else is discarded in that process. Would the project, exist without the viewer *(the readers and I?)*? Not in the same way, certainly, there would be no words. It starts to be clear that this is a dialogue. Or should that be trialogue, something Oedipal.

intensity. So something sensible and healthy is happening, but something else is discarded in that process.

viii. A lot of the trees are leaning at an angle. Not unusual in a forest, but is this deliberate, a way of saying something?

ix. Very conscious that I'm in this piece again - my words are at the top, and not anonymously this time, my initials are there. And D's words are there too.

x. And, unlike the other pieces, we had a (very) brief conversation about this piece - the three of us. That seems to parallel

the fact that for the first time, all three of us are visible in this piece!

xi. But unlike last time, I don't feel, oh help, what have I written that might appear another time? It feels quite comfortable and natural to be in it.

xii. Am I getting used to a shift in the relationship, then, where everything becomes normal, less secretive? See theoretical bit about the OC below in relation to this.

xiii. It led me to think about the project in relation to the three of us, too. Would we, in the project, exist without each other? Not in the same way, certainly.

xiv. Without mine and D's words this would be a different piece. Without our responses in write-ups like this, the pictures might have been produced differently.

xv. But without the pieces themselves, there would be no words to write! It starts to be clear that this is a dialogue. Or should that be trialogue? (horrid word - I hate it already).

xvi. Staying with that idea of a trialogue, something about the Oedipus complex (Freud, Klein, Lacan - basically any theorist you like). Although on the other hand there are actually more than three - two in the picture, a third who staged and set up the whole thing.

xvii. So, counting D and I, there are five in this piece. Do the two figures in the forest represent the ways that we two viewers see the subject? Or is it about the subject and his shadow (Jung)?

SESSION XX
DB's Response

i. There's a shaking of the head a blurring. Blurred between past and present. Or is it a refusal? Both?

ii. The cold of the metal says something perhaps of the coldness of the place. On a beach wrapped up warm. The coldness of the relationship perhaps. In that place. In that family. Not wanting to be there?

iii. Do you really want to be there? Do you really want to go back there, to that pier, to that memory? Do you want to be here, sending in these pictures? (presumably) reading what our 'analytical' thoughts on you and your pictures?

iv. There are 4 pieces left of this project. Then that's it. The first picture was another cold beach I think. Perhaps the same one? Further up? A blurring of present and past? Also this time there is no reflecting back of our past words.

v. A silence. Maybe a refusal of our participation in the project. Our joining together in and outside the project. There are words here I think on the pier, pointing, advertising food maybe and they stand out more since your image is blurred, difficult to get a hold of, forced into the middle of the picture when in the original photo you would have been more to the left with a unseen family.

vi. You, Spencer, forced into the focal point. But hiding still. And what about this family, us three, created by this project? This is no therapy, nor is it particularly psychoanalytical. It can't be. We know each other - all three of us.

vii. There are no boundaries, no ethics, no separation; all is blurred. Should this be forced into centre too? The fact of the relationship between you, L and I.

viii. Should this be admitted and pulled into focus in contrast with what you wanted at the beginning (minimal contact, par-

SESSION XX
EB's Response

i. First of all - the frame and the piece are one! And the back is reflective, so it acts as a mirror, I can see my blurred self in it.

ii. Which D will also be able to do, of course. And on the front, a blurred picture of this little boy.

iii. So we really are all in this piece. But, in different ways, we are all blurred, because it is not a perfect or clear reflection.

iv. This is by far the sweetest picture. Actually I think it's the only one that is sweet! But when you look at it for awhile, there is something disturbing about the blurredness, especially in contrast to the background, which is defined.

v. The effect is as if the little boy's face is underwater, and there is light playing on the water. Is he drowning? Or is he losing his face, his identity? Or is there some medium I can't see, between him and the camera?

vi. The more I look at this one, the more I change my reaction to it. But I'm looking at a snap on my phone. I wish I could see the piece itself again.

vii. It's a very evocative piece, but hard for me to be specific about why. Perhaps it's to do with the fragility of the child, or the way he looks so carefully dressed (the collar neatly out over the jumper) on a beach, which should be carefree.

viii. Or perhaps it's to do with his isolation: a day by the sea is a day when you might especially expect children to be in a group, eating ice creams, giggling, cuddling up to each other.

ix. So there is something missing. Fun? Companionship?

x. Sad. Why isn't the child laughing or playing, or skimming stones, why is he being so still? But perhaps I am not being fair: I'm sure I have lots of pensive pictures of my kids. But then, does that say something about the child's life, or about the life/mind of the adult taking the picture?

XX

A shaking of *my* head, a blurring. Blurred between past and present. Or a refusal *of* both? A blurring of present and past? Also this time there is no reflecting back of *my readers* past words. Do *I* really want to be *here*? Do *I* really want to go back there, to that memory? A coldness of the relationship perhaps; in that place, in that family *of* not wanting to be there? A blurred picture of *me as a* little boy, *that is* all blurred. *The* muddling *of* the exposure, because it is not a perfect or clear reflection. A silence, left with an unseen family *and a* losing *of my* identity.

ticular rules, each picture seen as some kind of session?).

ix. There has been contact. I don't think I have followed the rules much, and I don't really see how a sent picture can be a session, even with words reflected back. I knew you before we started. And it's not just our writing but also what has happened outside the project: us meeting up in Soho, in London Bridge, at my flat in April, and that we are setting up a website for referrals together.

x. You are a psychotherapist too - now more qualified than me - should this be as blurred as it seems to be at present? Do you want to admit how familiar we have

become despite what was agreed at the beginning of the project? Or shake your head, muddling the exposure?

xi. Should what happens outside this text be included? Our conversation last night by your car for example? I can't know of course but I think it is pertinent to ask - is your thesis blurring all this? And does the anonymity blur this too? Is this a nasty pollutant thought? Is it honesty? Is it revenge for...

xii. making me feel sick? I can't pretend to be objective enough to a friend (certainly not a patient), can I?

xi. Is something transgenerational expressed in the pictures that we choose to take of our children? And if so, what does that mean in the context of the present picture?

xii. I'm also noticing there are a lot of lines in this shot - the signposts and the stripes, for example.

xiii. Dunno, ran out of all of the above. Maybe because it's August. Sorry.

XX CONT.

With*in my* isolation *we might see* the fragility of *me as* the child, *who* should be carefree, there is something missing. Fun? Companionship? Sad*ness* Sorry*ness*.

i. Why nine photographs? Were you nine? If so what happened then? Is this when it started? Always distorted images.

ii. The neatness and clarity of the original picture perhaps doesn't capture it. It is as important not to see your face as it is to see it. In the last picture (assuming we are reading left to right and downwards) there is no face to see.

iii. You are there but covered up. You are not completely destroyed but you are screened.

iv. This is maybe a better portrait than the first. Blacked out.

i. The last four pictures have all been delivered together and they are all disturbing. This one starts off with a 'standard' snapshot of a school boy. But his face becomes distorted during the series in many different ways and by the ninth picture in the series he is just a shadow- the little boy in the first picture has gone.

ii. What happened? Was it family dynamics, or school experience (because it looks as if he is wearing a school uniform) or both? Whatever the reason, the series starts with a boy and ends with a shadow of the boy.

iii. There is the influence of Bacon here -not for the first time. I suspect if I knew more about Bacon I might say completely different things about these pictures, read them quite differently.

v. Firstly, the number on the back is upside down. Does this mean the subject got fed up of the project, and became careless? Or does it mean something more complex - is it a deliberate communication? Is the picture meant to be viewed upside down, for example?! Don't think so, somehow.

v. Sad.

vi. Freud emphasised the importance of numbers and there are nine shots - there have been lots of repetitions of patterns around three in the series.

vii. Is this a reference to the oedipal experience? Or does it mean there were no siblings, just this child and his parents? Or is there some other meaning, which I am missing?

XXI

There is always distort*ion*. It *seems* important not to see *my* face, as *perhaps* there is no face to see. *I am* there, but covered up, *I am* not completely destroyed but *I am* screened, blacked out. *My* face distorted *over time* in many different ways, just a shadow - *me as* the little boy gone. What happened, *I ask*. Family dynamics, or school experience. *I* start *as* a boy and end up with a shadow of the boy. Sad.

i. It's duller than the first version. I don't have the notes I wrote for the original so I am going on memory.

ii. It's a dull reconstruction of the first - something that is changed through the after-wardness. The afterwardness a milk-like sperm-like cata-ract. A film covering film.

iii. The first to block vision the second to show it. May-be first is becoming more powerful as we forget and reconstruct the original.

iv. I've just realised while putting it back in its place that light aluminates [sic] the picture. But not by much.

v. It seems somehow futile.

i. It's quite creepy and nightmareish actually, the subject is looking in the mirror but the skin on his back is covered with the pattern of the wallpaper, as if he is being taken over or absorbed by his surroundings in a rather hostile way. Does he know he has the wallpaper pattern on his back?

ii. I recognise the wallpaper from the nursery shot. And it links with the forest piece recently, too - fronds of bracken perhaps (or perhaps it is feathers, it's hard to tell on my phone). Hah! Interest-ing, there is a link here with the other writer!

iii. There is another repetition in this piece- the mirror. Sev-eral earlier pieces had mirrors in, it has become a recurring motif. Is the reflection the right way round now? I'm not sure (working from a shot on my phone).

iv. But I do know it looks as if the figure is in a mirror, in a mirror - because the shape of the frame suggests another mirror. Has the subject succumbed to some sub-world, a sort of half life, a reflection which has lost its real?

v. Has the subject kept the reflection, but lost the origi-nal real self (although Lacan says there is no real self, just a collection of identifications) that was reflected?

vi. The wax is cracking, there are little spider breaks in it in several places. Is there a way out taking shape, then? In cartoons you see that: first something is solid, then a tiny crack appears and then the whole surface breaks down.

XXII

It is as if *I am* being taken over or absorbed by *my* surroundings in a hostile way, more repetition, 'is *my* reflection the right way round now'. Succumb*ing* to some sub-world, a sort of half life, a reflection which has lost its real. *But have I* kept *my* reflection, *and perhaps* lost the original real self that was reflected? The *covering* is cracking, a way out taking shape; *it* appears *that my* whole surface is breaking down. A*lthough* perhaps the cracking up is not a way out, perhaps it is the beginning of the structure of *my* world breaking down. The pattern of the *my background* is carried over onto *my* skin, like a tattoo *that* covers the whole surface, that nursery experience *that* has become part of *me*, *that is* ingrained, impossible to wash away. Is it going to swallow *me* up, take *me* over?

Or perhaps the cracking up is not a way out. Perhaps it is the beginning of the structure of the subject's world breaking down.

vii. The pattern of the wallpaper is carried over onto the subject's skin, like a tattoo - but more than a tattoo, because it covers the whole surface. Does this mean that the nursery experience has become part of who he is, then, ingrained upon him and impossible to wash away - except by painful and expensive tattoo removal (this could be an analogy for therapy, if so!)?

viii. I have been looking and looking at the pattern of the wallpaper in the shot on my phone. I can't be sure what the motif is - I think it is plants - maybe two fronds of bracken repeated many times? - but it could possibly be feathers - and the way the two fronds or leaves or feathers or whatever they are overlap makes them look a bit like wings.

ix. It seems ironic that a motif which suggests growth or flying away has become a tattoo all over the subject's back - and tattoos can be like brands, marking the fact that someone is owned by or affiliated to some group or other.

x. Or, of course, they can be a mark of rebellion - my skin belongs to me, I'll do what I want with it. Although in this picture it doesn't look like a conscious choice to have the tattoo. We can't even tell if the subject knows it is there.

xi. Disturbed, same as the other three last pieces. I don't like how the nursery wallpaper has become part of the subject. Is it going to swallow him up, take him over?

xii. Mirror theory. Either Lacan or some of the object relational school - Winnicott, for example.

xiii. It also made me think of Day of the Triffids! Maybe because plants took over in that story, and the motif of the plant is taking over the subject's skin.

i. Three Êdistorted [sic] spencer-like things. What is this frame? It's like looking through windows, something like a chapel.

ii. The portraits are smeared. Three things with old wallpaper and wax. It's like this is something important, vital to represent, to say (if pictures were speech).

iii. I am this. I am lost, blurred, with a film, something you are trying to look for but which is long gone.

iv. Here only in so much as it can't be fully stared at from here. Lost in the past.

v. A successful failure to represent anything of this long lost you.

i. This one is difficult to write about. There are elements from other pictures again: the (nursery?) wallpaper and the number three (because there are three photos) and the blurred heads; and as in previous pictures, the back and front have got combined.

ii. The first of the three is a back view, but the neck is a different colour and it looks as if it is two different photos soldered together quite roughly. Has someone else's head been added to the body? If so, what is the implication of this? Was the subject not allowed to have his own will, decisions, identity? Were someone else's imposed upon him?

iii. In the second picture there is what looks to me like a penis, right up against someone's face, obscuring their mouth. That is one hell of a motif to introduce, especially on the penultimate piece, when there is no chance of a dialogue about it - if it can be said to be a dialogue, when one half is done by pictures which may or may not be answers.

iv. There are so many associations it's hard to know where to begin. Power - it could compound what the first of the three pictures in this piece said, about a will being imposed, especially because in the picture the penis is right in front of the mouth.

v. So that could suggest several things - speech being taken away, perhaps. A picture showing a penis in front of a mouth should surely suggest a blow-job but if I really look at the piece that isn't what's happening here. Is it about castration through silencing? Is it saying something about dominance or a battle of wills, a father who forced his will on his son?

XXIII

I am this. I am lost, blurred, *unable to see clearly* something *I am* trying to look for, but which is long gone. It's something important, vital to represent, to *speak of* - if pictures were speech, *but* lost in the past. A successful failure to represent anything of this long lost *me.*

vi. I'm not convinced of this because I don't get a sense of two people in this shot, but that could be for several reasons. Is it telling about something not someone that controlled him and took away his identity?

vii. As far as the project and power is concerned, sometimes it has seemed that the subject is in control and sometimes that the power was shared with the writers. This piece seemed to

me to be the subject taking control back in a big way. But also at the same time it seems that in the piece he is having control taken away, by whatever the penis represents.

viii. Another association around the penis is creativity and fertility. And although it is a shocking image and part of me is cross that you landed this on us at this stage of the project, another part thinks it's a brilliant move - it has shaken up the project entirely.

ix. My first reaction was defensive - is it just me seeing this? Perhaps it isn't really a penis and I have a dirty mind? Then I wrote about it, but realised after I had sent the first write-up to a discontinued email account (what the heck is that about?!) that actually some of what I was writing was probably about my own stuff, more than the picture.

x. This project asks for a lot of honesty from us. This is why, to me, it is almost dangerous - the pictures are the subject's emotional guts on paper (horrible phrase, mixed metaphor?) and we are being honest about what we see, so it ends up that all of us have put our own psyche's out there.

XXIII CONT.

Was *I* not allowed to have *my* own will, *make* decisions, *have an* identity? Were someone else's imposed upon *me*? Speech being taken away, castration through silencing? Or a battle of wills, a father who forced his will on*to me*? Someone that controlled *me* and took away *my* identity? *My* creativity and fertility. Swallowed, it has become part of *me*, so now being controlled by it somehow from inside. Like a head attached to the wrong body: *in* the *wrong* skin, face blurred, *a* careless cut out, not the proper shape of *my* head. Chilling; *my* spontaneity controlled out of *me.*

xi. And this is such a strong image! And we are writing with very little knowledge of what the subject's experience was and is. Some of what I write may be very insensitive within the context of the subject's life experience and I have no way of knowing.

xii. In the third shot it looks as if whatever was being done to the subject has been completed. There is a shadow in the middle of the neck - if I write as I see it and ignore how I feel about saying this, it is as if he has swallowed the penis and it has become part of him, so now he is being controlled by it somehow from inside?

xiii. It is a front view and the head is now most definitely attached to the wrong body: the skin colour is different, there is a clear line where the two meet. The face is blurred and the outline looks as if it has been roughly and carelessly cut out - it is not the proper shape of the head.

xiv. As I mentioned above, the background to all three pieces is the nursery wallpaper. That doesn't sit right with these images. What the heck is that saying?

xv. This piece says so much that some of it surely must be unconscious but it's really hard to know what is deliberate and what isn't.

xvi. See write-up for 22: the same feelings. There is something chilling about it as if the boy in the first picture of 21 has had

his spontaneity controlled out of him.

xvii. Again, all the identity stuff - I've mentioned those theorists before.

xviii. Oedipal, because of the three's and the battle of wills. I am feeling exasperated with myself - this is the penultimate piece and I keep saying, there's something about three's but never getting any further with that.

xix. Who are the three's? Is it you, me and D? Or is it you and your parents? Or could it be you, the piece (or whole project) and each of us? What is the dynamic between these three's? I think I am missing something important here.

i. So the end is the photography as the lack of a photography just this wallpaper, which I think is just that, real wallpaper.

ii. It's disturbing, but only so much as it is a controlled disturbance of looking for something, trying to represent something and finally losing it.

iii. You want to say something a bit timely for the end of the project about the end of history/memory or the end of photography. The death of photography.

iv. The death/limit of representation. Are you trying to say that 'I am accepting as a photographer I am ultimately impotent?

v. That maybe 'it is best, in the end, to admit that photography is useless'. Is that the point? The piece seems powerful but it's all quite well-planned and punctual. Does this mean photography is dead to you?

vi. Does this conveniently wrap up your search at the exact end of the project? Did you imagine this conclusion from the beginning? If so, what's use is the looking?

vii. If not, have you stopped looking - is the actual desire to stop trying to represent this thing in this project truly over? Is this although powerful and personal not also performed, comfortable (rather than the true horror of the real) and a good-enough conclusion for an audience, for your assessors, for us two, L and me?

viii. Do you really believe there is nothing more to say and have decided that this point - this preconceived rough point in time would be the end? If it wouldn't be the end, if there was a shadow of something else that hasn't been 'said', what would that look like?

ix. Spencer, do one more photograph to confound the neat ending of this project.

x. Do the the impossible 25th. What does it look like, I'm

XXIV

So *this is* the end. *Finally* trying to represent something and finally losing it. *I* want*ed* to say something timely for the end of the project, about the end of history/memory or *even* the end of photography. *My* death of photography. *Perhaps* accepting as a photographer, *but* ultimately impotent. In the end, to admit that photography is useless. Is that the point? Does this mean photography is dead to *me*? *This* search, this conclusion from the beginning? If so, what's use is the looking?

i. This is the first shot where the subject isn't visibly in it. How to read this, then? Has he escaped, got out of this nursery/childhood environment where these experiences, whatever they were, happened?

ii. Or is it more sinister than that - has he or some essence of him been annihilated? Or disowned, by the family that this family album is about? If you took a photo of someone out of an album, just leaving behind the corner pieces, it would either be because you wanted to forget about them and pretend they had never existed, or because you wanted to take the photo with you, maybe keep it in your wallet.

iii. Who wants to erase - or alternatively, carry the subject round with them? Who did the removing?

iv. And it hardly needs saying that an absence says as much if not more than a presence.

v. Again, I don't think anything about this piece is unconscious. Although - the cheap frame is possibly the same as the piece with our words - does this mean the subject has also escaped from our write-ups, then, from this project itself?

vi. If so, were we, the writers, a controlling force that had to be left behind? Perhaps unconsciously this picture is saying: sod you guys, you can't define me anymore. I'm gone. I'm somewhere else now.

vii. Looking through the photos on my phone to see where else the cheap white frame appeared, reminded me of how much has happened in the time we have been doing this. There is the life of the project and there is each of our individual lives too. I took the second of my kids to uni the same weekend we got these pictures so now for me there are two empty rooms upstairs - and an empty frame in the picture!

viii. Although these experiences are not on the same level, there is some merging and confusion about what feelings

interested.

xi. What's beyond the end?

xii. Go somewhere from here.

belong to this project and what feelings belong to me and my life. But, with that comparison in mind, it doesn't have to be the case that someone else took the subject out of the frame. Maybe he did it himself, as part of a natural process. Maybe it was about going to somewhere.

ix. I think my fantasy is that the subject has escaped, and that this is a good thing. I also think I will miss doing this.

x. Definitely not. The picture can speak for itself. If I try to tie it to theories now, I will be missing the point.

XXIV CONT.

There is nothing more to say and have decided that this point - this preconceived rough point in time would be the end. If 'it' wouldn't be the end, if there was a shadow of something else that hasn't been 'said', *but I am unsure* what '*it*' would that look like? What does it look like, I'm interested *(Db., XXIV. x.), in knowing* what's beyond the end. *It would be nice* to go somewhere from here.

H*ave I* escaped, got out of this nursery/childhood environment where these experiences, whatever they were, happened? *Has* some essence of *me* been annihilated? Or *have I been* disowned, by the family that this *project* is about? *Do I want* to forget about them and pretend they had never existed? *Did I* want to erase - or alternatively, carry *them* around with *me*? Who did the removing? And it hardly needs saying that an absence says as much, if not more, than a presence. *This* controlling force that had to be left behind. Perhaps unconsciously this picture, *that I am* saying *that* the picture *has to* speak for itself.