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**Narrative and Visual Storytelling: Accessing Memory and the Personal
in the Published Work of Grant Scott**



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Abstract

The portfolio of work presented here represents a coherent body of research that spans a ten-year-period. All the work under consideration uses photography as a principal source material. Through critical appraisal I will argue the importance of the published works in relation to the main themes of the personal, memory, narrative, and visual language.

My practice-based research focuses on personal and embodied experiences through a creative practice that combines multiple elements of inquiry resulting in artefacts such as the photographic image, books, articles, audio broadcast, photography, and filmmaking. I draw on ideas of personal and collective memory, narrative and the construction and dissemination of visual language through lens-based media. This critical appraisal will focus primarily on two artefacts, the documentary film *Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay* (2018) and the book *New Ways of Seeing: The Democratic Language of Photography* (2019). It will also reference the podcast series *A Photographic Life* and the associated book *What Does Photography Mean to You?*

Accessing and analysing memory is central to my research practice and the published artefacts included within this PHD application. My practice and research embrace these perspectives and draw's conclusions based upon more than one theoretical methodology building a framework of critical analysis from textural, post-structural textual and qualitative interviewing as prominent research methods. I will also evidence how this work contributes to knowledge within the field of photographic research and practice.

Introduction

*“All photographs are there to remind us of what we forget”*¹

*“Every photographer is Janus, the two-headed Roman god,
who could not look forward without looking back”*²

The portfolio of work presented and discussed here represents a coherent body of research that spans a ten-year period informed by the dominant themes of memory, narrative, and visual language, using photography as a principal source material. I aim within this thesis to identify the central research questions addressed in the individual published works within the submitted portfolio and to explore how the individual elements relate to the questions proposed. I will offer a rationale for the theoretical framework employed in the portfolio and document and explore the instigation and methodology behind the creation of the documentary film *Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay*, the writing of the book *New Ways of Seeing: The Democratic Language of Photography*, and the intention of the central question within the *A Photographic Life* podcast, *What Does Photography Mean to You?* This thesis is a companion piece to these published works.

The aims of this research have been to:

- Identify the importance of personal and collective memory to Grant Scott’s creative practice as evidenced within the submitted portfolio of artefacts.
- Provide evidence of the importance of personal experience in the creation of visual narratives and storytelling connected with the photographic medium.

The research questions that have been explored through the research are:

- What influence did Bill Jay have on the photographic community within the UK between 1968-1971?

¹ Berger John, *Keeping a Rendezvous*, Vintage International (1992).

² Jay Bill, *Past Perfect: The Relevance of Photography to Contemporary Artists*, *The British Journal of Photography* (September 1982).

- What is the future of photography as a democratic language and how through technological evolution has photography become a democratic visual language?
- What does photography mean to professional practitioners in the 21st Century?

I have made references throughout this thesis to relevant literature in answering these questions, but I am unable to complete a full traditional literature review due to the restrictions placed upon this thesis by its limited word count. Therefore, I have weaved such references into the body of the text.

Documentarians are aware that making artefacts focused on reality requires them to combine factual evidence, arguments, documentation and elements of narrative, audio-visual outputs, and creativity, to create a rhetoric of cognition and emotion (Bondebjerg, 2014). We also know from theories of narrative (Bordwell, 1987; Gottschall, 2012) and theories of memory (Bluck, 2003; van Dijck, 2007; Erll, 2011) that emotional dimensions play an extremely important role in forming our social and cultural imagination. Therefore, my ontological position within this thesis is complicated, encompassing both a realist and anti-realist perspective but focused on an anti-realist understanding that reality is only subjective. This could be described as a pragmatistic focus on a world of actions and consequences or ‘Critical Realism’, which accepts a realist ontology, but pairs that with an anti-realist epistemology (Hacking, 1999).

As I will evidence in answering the first, second and third of my research questions, memory is a central theme to my work and I suggest that it should not be seen as a burden of the past, but as a wellspring of agency, practice/habit, creativity, and imagination (Farley and Griffiths, 2008). I will develop this understanding of memory from a personal and collective perspective and identify its connections to the individual works submitted exploring relationships and dominant themes that bring together a disparate set of artefacts into a cohesive body of research. In addition to memory, I will explore the themes of narrative and visual language to address all three of my research questions and as connective threads within my work with a hypothesis that personal experience directly informs photographic practice and to throw light on the nature of the intelligence involved in responding to my research aims.

Psychologists debate the classification of types of memory but are able to distinguish between three distinct stages in the memory process: encoding, storage, and retrieval (Melton, 1963). Memory is usually perceived as being episodic but remembering specific events that have

happened over the course of one's entire life can be referred to as autobiographical memory (McDermott and Roediger, 2021). When vivid memories are informed by strong emotional content their impact upon our lives is increased. The term for this form of heightened memory is 'lightbulb memory', a description first used by Brown and Kulik (1977), and a form of memory directly connected with photography as it is named after the photographic lightbulb flash that captures a moment. However, our objective accuracy with this form of memory is far from perfect and it is therefore important to the documentarian researcher to adopt robust encoding strategies to form distinctive memories and to form links or associations among memories to help later retrieval (Hunt & McDaniel, 1993). It is these links and associations that form the foundation of the subsequent narrative artefacts that result from my research.

Endel Tulving stated that (1991, p.91) "the key process in memory is retrieval"³ and it is the process of memory retrieval that informs the research that responds to my first and third research questions relating to the Jay film and the responses to the podcast question *What Does Photography Mean to You?* Whenever we think about our past, we engage in the act of retrieval (Hunt & McDaniel, 1993), but in fact the retrieval of distant memories is reconstructive. We weave the disparate fragments of events in with assumptions and preferences to form a coherent story (Bartlett, 1932). The documentarian is engaged in the construction of narrative, but the researcher must also be aware of the unreliable nature of memory.

In chapter one I will directly respond to my first research question and establish the environment that instigated my introduction to the photographic medium. I will also introduce Bill Jay as a formative figure in the British independent photography movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s, whilst identifying the research methodologies implemented in the creation of the film *Do Not Bend: The Photographic Life of Bill Jay* (Scott, 2018). A project that uses collective and personal memory to assert the historical importance of Jay, created with the intention of bringing a chronological understanding of Jay's influence from multiple sources and in so doing present an argument for his recognised place within British photographic history. To achieve this, I have engaged in a process of accessing and analysing memory to reach conclusions based upon more than one theoretical methodology embracing one-to-one interviews, archival study, dissertations, and observations.

³ Tulving, E. Interview. *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 3, 89–94 (1991)

Culture depends on the passing-on of learned knowledge between individuals, through teaching and copying but the duration of cultural memories depends not just on the amount of social learning but also on the fidelity of information transmission (Laland and Rendall, 2013). To ensure rigorous examination of the information gathered, my work in responding to the research questions within this thesis constitutes a continually evolving framework of critical analysis built from textural, post-structural textual and qualitative interviewing as prominent research methods. In so doing I aim to create artefacts that allow the viewer, listener, and reader to determine their own subjectivity, whilst promoting objectivity through their encounter with an artefact, based upon personal and collective memory. This framework is I believe evidenced in all elements of the submitted portfolio of works and acts as a link between them.

Although memory is a central theme to this dissertation and my work, the importance of narrative and the development of visual language within photographic practice are equally important in meeting my research aims. In chapter two I answer my first and second research questions by exploring the narrative approach adopted with the *Do Not Bend* film (Scott, 2018), the focus I place on narrative as a building block for photographic practice within my writing in *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019) and the narrative nature of the creation of the episodic *A Photographic Life* podcast (Scott).

As Nichols identifies:

For every documentary there are at least three stories that intertwine: the filmmaker's, the films, and the audiences. These stories are all, in different ways, part of what we attend to when we ask what a given film is about. That is to say, when, we watch a film, we become aware that the film comes from somewhere and someone. There is a story about how and why it got made. (Bill Nicholls, 2001, p.61)

The reasons behind the Jay film's documentary approach are explored within chapter two and synchronicities are drawn with the episodic framework that informs other published works within the submitted portfolio. Narrative construction is clearly identified in my documentary filmmaking, writing and broadcasting where research engages with ideas of autobiographical encounter with alterity relating to wider themes concerning redemption, resilience, confrontation, and resistance. The idea of 'unpalatable truth' is further explored within my writing and broadcast artefacts through the exploration of both existent and created narrative.

In chapter three I will specifically address my second research question, explore the possibilities for the acceptance of a photographic visual language and identify its importance in the technological evolution of the medium as outlined in *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019). Due to photography's unique status in the arts, my own analysis of the medium negotiates the sometimes, contentious relationship between art based, and commercially driven work. I therefore focus on the relationship between contemporary art practice and professional commissioned photography and how the traditional borders between these two areas of practice have dissolved to create a convergent environment of photographic engagement. What we're seeing now is a divide between a lot of the established older photographers who are trying to hold on to how the industry used to be, and the new, younger people who are coming in and changing it (Mitchell, 2018). The sense of new young guns entering the photographic arena is not new, but technological developments have placed photography into the hands of the non-photographer further emphasizing the sense of anxiety amongst those attempting to work on commission with the medium with commercial clients. As fashion photographer Ellen Von Unwerth stated (www.theguardian.com/artanddesign, 2017) "It's not special, any more, to be a photographer...Even when I take a picture, everybody stands next to me and takes the same picture." This tension between the commercial, amateur, and art-based photographer was identified by Jay throughout his editorship of *Creative Camera* magazine as evidenced in the *Do Not Bend* film (Scott, 2018) and is addressed in my writing and broadcasts acting as a further link between disparate outcomes.

This critical appraisal will aim to draw out the threads of research evident in my professional photographic practice, fulfil my research aims, and answer my research questions, whilst establishing the research in an appropriate context. It will also place an element of the research within a historical perspective of the development of photography as an art-based practice during the 1960's and 1970s.

I am interested in an approach to research that requires the identification of primary sources as starting points for investigation that lead the researcher towards conclusions based upon lived experience. Research advises that, as we study and learn, we should think of the meaning of the events we have experienced (Craik & Lockhart, 1972) and we should try to relate new events to information we already know. Because as a human race we are creative, we are inclined to go beyond the information we receive and automatically make associations and inferences from them. However, sometimes we make false memories from our inferences

(McDermott and Roediger, 2021) and we must be aware that memory traces, or engrams, are not perfect little packets of information (McDermott and Roediger, 2021). My research into Jay identified that this was a repeated issue with relation to the understanding of his role within British Photography, a situation that I wanted to address through my research.

The French sociologist and philosopher Maurice Halbwachs in his book *On Collective Memory* argued that memory is not an individual faculty, and that collective memory can be constructed, shared, and passed on by large and small social groups (Halbwachs, 1992) and that the act of memory requires a connection to collective frameworks of social reference points that allow memories to be co-ordinated in time and space (Halbwachs, 1992). This suggestion of collective frameworks has particular significance when addressing the photographic medium, which can be tribal in its beliefs concerning what constitutes serious and professional work. Any use of the word community when addressing this fractious conglomeration of loosely defined factions can only be seen as a general term. However, by utilizing memory, narrative, and visual language as unifying factors of photographic practice I believe that it is possible to transcend team loyalties and communicate with photographers at a universal level of shared engagement with the medium, an intention that underpins my research and ultimately informs my research artefacts. It is this intention that brings the disparate elements within this submission into a portfolio of considered creative practice with clearly defined research aims.

Chapter 1: Memory

“Maybe we don’t, can’t, choose what to remember.

Maybe we can’t control what blunders and tumbles into our days.”⁴

I was introduced to photography through my use of my father’s camera and the printed artefact. The record cover, resting on the DECCA gramophone lid. Part ‘art statement’, part ‘statement of taste’, not mine but my father’s. Ray Charles, closely cropped, leaning back in full voice against a rich red background. Frankie Lane in full cowboy regalia leaning against the ranch veranda. Cilla Black, prostrate across the bonnet of a white E-type Jaguar. The Rolling Stones in a London alleyway scowling at the photographer high above them, and Bob Dylan, in a suede jacket, caught in motion, speaking, clutching a leather-bound volume of renaissance paintings. Dominant images for me; time capsules, that inform and create memory.

These formative images, ‘flashbulb memories’, were supplemented within my childhood database by the documentary, fashion and travel photographs that featured in *The Sunday Times Magazine* and *The News of the World* passed around our family breakfast table. My research builds on these childhood memories of the late 1960s and 1970s, the images I saw, the events I experienced, viewed as a child with young parents growing up on the Kings Road, Chelsea, and Kensington High Street in London. My earliest experiences of the photographic image were firmly rooted within the context of commerciality, the shop window, the poster, and the magazine page. Greenfield comments on this belief of memory as a foundation for understanding the world both past and present, and its influence on our decision-making process when he wrote that (1997, p.146) “Memory is the ‘cornerstone of the mind’, it is more than a mere function of the brain, as it encapsulates individuals’ inner resources for interpreting the world around them.” Memory is a process of encoding and storing records of experience which can be retrieved, or which re-emerge, in subsequent practice (Jones, 2011). This sequence occurs both voluntarily and involuntarily (Jones, 2011) and it is involuntary memory

⁴ Farley, P. and Griffiths, N. Netherley, *Escaping the inner city*. In: Cowley, J. (ed.) *The New Nature Writing*. Granta, 102 Pages 153–169 (2008)

that I will discuss with relation to the instigation of my research into the life of Jay and voluntary memory in the creation of the podcast project.

The role that photographic images play in the complex construction of a person's identity has been reflected upon as an area of cognitive and cultural theory, questioning how photographs influence our personal memories (Strange, Gerrie and Garry, 2005). It is therefore important for the documentarian to be aware that people can be easily seduced into creating false memories. Van Dijck addresses the importance of the personal relationship with the family album and its relationship to memory when he states that (2008, p.57) "They were typically regarded to be a person's most reliable aid for recall and for verifying 'life as it was'". Personal and family photographs figure importantly in our cultural memory, and memory work with photographs offers a productive route to helping us understand the social and cultural uses of photography and instrumentalities of memory (Kuhn, 2007).

These are memories that echo my own experiences and as Van Dijck identifies they act as vehicles for aid recall shaping what we believe our pasts looked like (Van Dijck, 2008). Through the construction of a family album of photographs each family constructs a portrait chronicle of itself (Sontag, 1973). I therefore suggest that the photographic album and its associated memories act as an instigator for the inquisitive mind, both to create new memories and to explore the memories of others. As a result, these childhood memories inform adult photographic practice concerning aesthetics and subject matter forming the identity of the photographer. The anthropologist Barbara Harrison within her ethnographic study on how people connect personal photographs to memory and narration, observed that:

Self-presentation – rather than family re-presentation – is now a major function of photographs and reveals a significant shift from personal photography connected with memory and commemoration towards photographs as identity formations.”
(Barbara Harrison, 2002, p.107)

The role of personal photography in forming the identity of the photographer, writer and researcher is clearly evidenced in the photographer contributions to the *A Photographic Life* podcast (Scott). These often relate directly to the receipt of a camera for a childhood birthday or as a Christmas gift, the passing on of a photography book or the family camera. These gifts

are identified by the contributors as instigators of personal exploration and self-presentation as Harrison identifies. A process of introduction to photography like my own and Jay's.

Bill Jay was a pivotal figure within UK photography in the 1960s and within the United States in the 1970s and my decision to undertake an extended period of in-depth research into his importance within the development of photography during this time can be seen as related to the role memory plays within cognitive processes, and decision making.

The memory of receiving a letter in 2010 suggesting the similarity between myself and Jay and the recurrence of that memory in 2017, led to my first reading of Jay's *Occam's Razor: An Outside – In View of Contemporary Photography* (Jay, 1992) and the beginning of my research with the intention of developing a documentary film based upon his engagement with the photographic medium.

The three-component model associated with memory assumes an attentional controller, aided by two subsidiary systems, the phonological loop, capable of holding speech-based information, and the visuospatial sketchpad, for visual information. These two subsidiary systems form active stores capable of combining information, hence a memory trace in the phonological store might stem either from a direct auditory input, or from a visually presented item such as a letter (Baddeley and Hitch, 1974). The identification of the importance of a letter in activating a memory trace brings personal understanding to my initiation of the Jay project.

Every revolution requires a figurehead, a leader who provides the passionate, emotional response to a series of situations that a community wants to address. A central focus that provokes the establishment and provides solutions and options to the status quo. Amongst the photographic community in Britain between 1965-1972 Jay was that figurehead. He was not the only one who had identified a need for change, but he provided a fulcrum for others to connect with and a lightning-rod from which to spark new ideas and projects. Jay was a spokesman for the work of contemporary photographers based in the UK and US through his editorship of *Creative Camera* and *Album* magazines, an engagement that provided him with an education on photography and subject matter for his writing, teaching and projects.

Similarly, the conversations I am engaged in with the photographic community through the *United Nations of Photography* inform my understanding, instigate projects, and my own

knowledge of its potential trajectory. The resultant short form writing reflections act as a memory bank for my long form meditations and writing. Studies of cultural memory draw on, and often combine a range of methods of inquiry – sociological, ethnographic, literary for example – allowing an unselfconscious methodological pragmatic, bricolage to develop (Kuhn, 2007). This form of eclectic methodology informs all my research and is particularly evident in the narrative structure of *New Ways of Seeing: The Democratic Language of Photography* (Scott, 2019).

However, the Jay project required the creation of a more structured framework of critical analysis. A textual analytical research approach was adopted to gain information from texts written or edited by Jay to gain information regarding how he made sense of and communicated his life experiences. The understanding this provided formed a foundation for a post-structural approach that informed subsequent dialogue. The conversations with those who knew Jay further informed his personal memories and provided a context for the film's narrative as the qualitative interviewing process initiated primary research material in both physical and spoken form.

To address potential problems of representation all personal memories were cross-referenced with collective memories and further referenced to primary researched artefacts. A requirement identified by anthropologist Jason Throop who noted that:

The importance of employing methodological strategies that complement the collection of explicitly retrospective assessments (the narrative building and meaning seeking that give form to experience)... with strategies such as video-taping. (Jason Throop, 2003 p.235).

Throop suggests that the narrator's point of view is not important and that it is not important for the narrator to tell the 'whole truth' but that the completed artefact must convey experiences and relate those to others by drawing the audience into a network of emotional proximity (Throop, 2003). Such emotional proximity occurs within the Jay documentary through the audience recognition of shared collective memory.

The filmmaker encounter's a multitude of challenges when working with personal memories to develop documentary structure, of how to structure, and formalize personal material (Mekas, 1984). To resolve these issues documentary film makers can adopt abstract devices, such as numbers, or descriptive inter-titles (Mekas, 1984). I adopted this solution when constructing the Jay film, with a publishing pagination that retained emotional distance from my perspective, whilst building emotional proximity for the viewer. This process involved the curation of a series of chapter based, short stories, constructed from collective memories with Jay's voice as the central narrator.

The decision to allow Jay to tell his own story in both audio and video form allowed him to speak of his memories supported by researched ephemera. During the research process I spoke with and recorded over seventy former students, colleagues, family, and friends who discovered forgotten photographs, audio and in one case filmed material all of which was considered for possible inclusion as part of the documentary. I conducted these interactive interviews via e-mail, Skype, telephone, and in-person framed as postmodern interviews (Gubrium and Holstein, 2003) with the intention of memory based collaborative conversation and research.

The lived experience of those interviewed informed my research and the finished documentary film, something that Silvestra Mariniello and James Cisneros speak of:

Cinema's relation to lived experience is one of affinity, of resemblance, of organicness. Lived experience should be understood here in all its integrity, made of an individual's interaction with the existent, with things, people, signs, sounds, events, and natural phenomena, but also with memories, dreams and images.”
(Silvestra Marinielle and James Cisneros, 2005, p.160)

To summarize the relationship between the lived experience, and my work I would like to look at Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie*, or 'lived experience', that allows us to understand the relationships between how we perceive social situations and what we learn from them (Vygotsky, 1994). The concept can be utilized to understand the connection between a child's mental development and the effects of their environment on that development and is related to how certain situations stimulate development. This reflection of reality in one's inner mind, leading to an individual's development, is referred to by Vygotsky's as the 'social situation of

development' (Vygotsky,1994). Photography is one of continued development and evolution engaged with and informed by the social situation, both personal and universal. It creates memory and practitioners involved with the medium are formed by memory, the inner mind becomes the photograph, the written page, the moving image, and the still image. As van Dijck articulates:

Photography is part of this larger transformation in which the self becomes the centre of a virtual universe made up of informational and spatial flows; individuals articulate their identity as social beings not only by taking and storing photographs to document their lives, but by participating in communal photographic exchanges that mark their identity as interactive producers and consumers of culture. (José Van Dijck, 2008, p.57)

I consider my work to be engaged with these communal photographic exchanges, within a virtual universe in which memory has been created by identity and where the artefacts I produce exist as signposts for reflection for those within that universe or what could be described as the photographic community.

Chapter 2: Narrative

*“We are storytelling animals”*⁵

To create documentary narrative, we need material with which to construct our stories. Sanders addressed material gathering when creating a documentary film when he stated that:

I purposefully use the term *documentary filmmaking* instead of *documentary film*. The film, the final product, is a result of a production process. In this production process moral questions may arise, and filmmakers have to decide the right thing to do. (Willemien Sanders, 2010, p.530)

Moral and ethical decisions are central responsibilities for the filmmaker and the documentarian and in developing the narrative for the Jay project it was essential that memories expressed were as far as possible supported by collaborative evidence gained from multiple sources; people who knew Jay from different perspectives and who were able to provide their interpretation of his actions.

The collected oral memories I recorded were cross-referenced with physical artefacts such as magazines, books and articles and recollections by Jay himself in audio and video form to define a narrative structure for the film. It is through this process that the film was made. The adoption of an expository mode of documentary filmmaking in which an assemblage of fragments is constructed into a rhetorical and argumentative frame allows those interviewed and Jay himself to address the viewer directly and propose a perspective, advance an argument, or recount history (Nichols, 2001)

It was possible to provide the required evidence to support specific historical suggestions through Jay’s writing, particularly within *Camera Owner*, *Creative Camera Owner* and *Creative Camera* magazines between 1965-70 and his personal diaries released to me by his daughters. These revealed repetitions of subject matter and allowed developing themes to be

⁵ Gottschall J, *The Storytelling Animal. How Stories Make Us Human*, Mariner Books (2012)

identified. Collaborative evidence was obtained through a methodology of recorded structured discussions including open, funnel, probing and recall/process questions. This was an appropriate framework as one of the reasons audio and multimedia sources are utilized is that they allow interviews to retain their original context (Larson, 1998) and therefore maintain authenticity. The oral histories compiled suggested a narrative structure for the film that was not only important to ensure an ethical approach to the memories offered but also to ensure a consistent editing methodology.

Francis identifies the importance of narrative in filmmaking, the role that it takes, and negative issues that can arise, and have arisen in contemporary films dealing with one person as the main subject matter, when he said that:

To speak of narrative is to speak of plot and its resolution; just as to speak of *drama* is to speak of character, conflict, and climax. Because the roots of ‘cineliteracy’ are in mass populist response to popular art, the historical primacy of narrative in shaping film is indisputable. Thus, one of the principal elements in drama - the development of character - became subordinated to personality. Films about people, particularly unique or heroic individuals have almost always concentrated on the outer events of the life portrayed rather than the *inner* condition of the person. (Richard Lee Francis, 1984, p.109)

It became clear during my research and the correlation of recorded oral histories that Jay’s inner condition was central to understanding the man. To place his inner self within a historical context required the narrative to both inform and engage the audience. Therefore, the narrative structure follows a chronological order relating to events throughout Jay’s professional life. This decision challenges Genette’s suggestion in *Narrative Discourse* that although events occur in the order in which they occur they do not need to be told chronologically and that narratives can be constructed from flashbacks and anticipations (Genette, 1980). Based upon these observations he suggests a form based upon narrative order, duration, mood, frequency, and voice.

The final narrative of *Do Not Bend* (Scott, 2018) retains narrative order through a chronological approach, but also responds in part to Genette’s belief due to the discovery of a student film featuring Jay adopting the role of a film critic discussing the work of a long-forgotten film

director. This discovery introduced a non-sequential narrativity to the beginning and end of the film and its inclusion in instigating the narrative allows Jay to introduce his own film and comment on the importance of “this man’s” work from a third person perspective (Scott, 2018). An introduction to the film as unexpected and challenging as Jay himself. The immediate time shift to a cigarette left smoking on a desk filled with Jay related ephemera introduces a sense of melancholy to the pomposity of Jay’s introduction, which is swiftly followed by a further time shift back to Jay’s early childhood through a series of school photographs. The use of music to lull the audience into a sense of nostalgic reflection is abruptly interrupted by Jay, this time introducing himself and placing his contribution in both time and place. The subsequent story told by Jay provides a fourth introduction to the film, and a key to understanding his psychology through the unfolding narrative of the film.

The intention of such narrative decisions is to encapsulate the multiple aspects of Jay’s complex personality and to confound the audience expectation of the film, providing a sense of discomfort, as Jay would often do in his lectures, as he challenged his students. I adopted this expository mode of documentary filmmaking as it affords an economy of analysis since points can be made succinctly and pointedly in words (Nichols 2001). The editing of the introduction to the film suggests to the viewer that Jay will be providing his own personal analysis, through an economy of information that provides more questions than answers; questions that will become narrative themes through subsequent commentary and interviews. Such exposition accommodates elements of interviews, but these tend to be subordinated to an argument offered by the film itself, often via an unseen “Voice of God” or an on-camera voice of authority who speaks on behalf of the text (Nichols, 1991). Jay adopts such a God-like role through his audio commentary shown as a continuous tape recording and as an on-screen presence.

The need for a resolution for the film in addition to an ending documenting Jay’s death has been addressed by Nichols when he suggested that: (1991, p.6)

Documentary can depend on narrative structure for its basic organization, as American Cinéma Vérité demonstrated by taking shape around a crisis. (This shape provides a beginning from which an unstable state-of-affairs emerges, a middle in which a problem gains in force and complexity, and an ending in which some form of resolution occurs.) (Bill Nichols, 1991, p.6)

This description has relevance to the narrative arc of the *Do Not Bend* film (Scott, 2018) as the student film is revisited at the end, allowing Jay to comment on the quality of the film the audience has just seen, providing a sense of communal experience. As the film has consecutive narrative touch points in its commencement so the ending of the narrative plays with the viewers expectations as to whether the film has ended. This sense of completion is further questioned with the return of Jay in audio form addressing the meeting with Hurn, that had been outlined by him at the commencement of the film. Jay the ultimate raconteur is allowed the final word and leaves the audience with a sense of wellbeing and humour, presenting the viewer with a sense of resolution. The subsequent unspooling of the audio tape signals the end of the film and as a metaphor for death, the ultimate end of Jay's appearance, and the end of Jay's physical contribution to his own narrative.

From the outset my intention was for the film to explore documentary narrative structures more related to popular filmmaking than those of the art documentary. This can provide its own issues within academic circles, in the world of cultural theory and art history as there has long existed a tradition of resistance against popular art. For critics such as Dwight MacDonald and R.G.Collingwood, popular or mass art is crass, formulaic or lowbrow (Schauer, 2007). Schauer brings further insight into the reasons for this belief when he states that:

Contemporary films are accused of being constructed not to provoke thought or even generate an emotional connection between the characters and audience, but to jolt and arouse the spectator like a roller coaster. (Bradley Schauer, 2007, p.195)

My intention was to ensure emotional connection between Jay and the audience by challenging their pre-conceived perception of Jay, to reveal his insecurities and present his story as a universal journey from childhood to death. This is a narrative that we all share, one that could certainly be compared with that of a rollercoaster ride, but one which also generates emotional connection through shared experience. Documentary filmmaking can offer access to a shared history, rather than access to *a* world, to *the* world, where issues of life and death are always at hand (Nichols, 1991). Therefore, the documentary has the potential through choice of subject matter and narrative approach to offer the viewer a sense of connection that offers an opportunity to relate to the story from a personal perspective. My intention was to respond to this potential and allow the audience to reflect, reimagine, and respond to a knowing narrative (Hankey, Ryan, Sedun and Skillen, 2015).

The effectiveness of this approach was evident in the impact that Jay's story had on the audience for the film at its numerous screenings in the UK and North America that confirmed the emotional impact of both the knowing narrative and this sense of the narrator, identified by Hankey, Ryan, Sedun and Skillen (Hankey, Ryan, Sedun and Skillen, 2015).

This shared narrative relies upon a sense of shared memory as Bondebjerg suggests in his comments on the reliance narrative places on memory:

Memory is a cognitive, emotional dimension through which humans combine short-term memory and long-term memory. Memory generally works on several levels and is most strongly activated when 'data' from the past are condensed in narrative images and stories. (Ib Bondebjerg, 2014, p.15)

The documentary film is an obvious illustration of the condensed past constructed from narrative images to convey a story as is the weekly episodic television series. John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* (Berger, 1972) was published as a book that accompanied such an episodic television series, therefore the book came second to the programme. When asked to respond to Berger's original book by the publisher Bloomsbury Academic it seemed appropriate to adopt a similar episodic approach in the structure of my book, to respect the original and to incorporate my own episodic approach to writing.

My photographic education was informed by the energetic activity within the photographic and arts community during the 1970s, as weekend magazines commissioned many of the photographers exhibiting, publishing, and engaging in teaching during that decade. It was a period when photographers were given editorial freedom to create documentary photo stories that seeped into my visual consciousness. It was therefore inevitable that my education within the creative arts was informed by this period of change. As part of my own understanding of my creative practice, I suggest that the narrative of art school teaching and photography during this period in the UK directly influenced my own narrative within the medium. In this respect the artefacts I create form part of my complex autobiographical narrative, a complexity that scholars have concluded are part of a culturally bound process (Huff, 2009).

Where my books and the Jay project evidence research, and a working practice in which I adopt the role of author, the *A Photographic Life* podcast project embraces the serendipity of chance,

and places me in the role of curator/listener, whilst ceding control of the content within the finished artefact. Each week I feature a photographer answering the question *What Does Photography Mean to You?* The contributions evidence stories based on autobiographical memory which as Fivush observes:

Is that uniquely human form of memory that moves beyond recall of experienced events to integrate perspective, interpretation, and evaluation across self, other, and time to create a personal history. (Robyn Fivush, 2011, p.321).

My decision to approach photographers and ask them to answer this question was based upon a personal desire to explore my own relationship with the medium of photography and visual storytelling. It seemed to be omnipresent throughout my life, but I had never questioned that reality. I had never considered what it meant to me. Where had it come from and how had I sustained my passion for photography? A process of inquiry directly related to cognitive theory that focuses on the individual's thoughts as the determinate of his or her emotions and behaviours and therefore personality.

To answer my own questions, I reached out to other photographers and those associated with photography to see if they could help me reach some understanding through their personal narratives. The responses were generous, and honest. Often raw in their passion, considered in their introspection. Most importantly, themes began to develop, themes of approach, intention, and desire. The consistency of these themes reassured me that my own understanding of photography had synchronicities with the people whose images I admired and whose stories I was interested in. These confirmed my belief as identified by Winnicott that (1965, p.148) "Only the true self can be creative and only the true self can feel real"

Storytelling is an intrinsic foundation for the documentarian and the photographer using personal experience as the starting point for their practice. Some are 'up-beat', others more melancholic in their presentation, but all are passionate, informed and engaged. Their words force the listener to stop and take stock, they force self-questioning, reconsidering pre-conceived understanding. They make you think. It is this intention that drives my narrative choices and the artefacts that I produce are part of both my personal narrative.

Chapter 3: Visual Language

“I believe in a visual language that should be as strong as the written word.”⁶

It could be suggested that a lack of definition of a particular field of research could potentially harm its research progress. This is certainly the case for the field of visual language, a vibrant research area for the past three decades (Erwig, Smeltzer, and Wang, 2016). I have addressed a possible definition of visual language in my published writing by suggesting that the photographic image provides a visual alphabet/language that through its dissemination has become a global language. I believe that this simple understanding could be accepted by the research community as a starting point for an accepted definition and for potential research into adoption and impact. It is an understanding that informs my research and writing on the photographic medium, most obviously in *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019) but also throughout my practice.

The foundation for an interpretation of photography as a visual language is situated in our very earliest attempts to communicate, when as children we use the drawn image and image-based marks as forms of communication prior to the adoption of the written word. The rise of the digital native - people born after 1980 are digital natives; those born before are digital immigrants (*Nature* 547, 2017) - has seen the adoption of the digital device as an image creation tool that is replacing the written word, and with the rapid development of technology, children are using visual images with greater frequency and in unique ways (Serafini, 2014).

The sub-title of my book *New Ways of Seeing: The Democratic Language of Photography* (Scott 2019) clearly identifies my position in regards to photography's role in 21st Century visual communication and our adoption of the smartphone as camera, but it is through my investigation of how the language of photography impacts upon our lives and how it can be learnt through specific pedagogic practice that I believe a foundation for a universally agreed-upon definition of exactly what a visual language is could be based.

⁶ LaChapelle David, Galleria Mucciaccia, Galleria Mucciaccia (2019)

Those that use technology as a visual language are speaking a form of pixel poetry (Ketchum, 2013) and the use of the metaphor of poetry when discussing photography further suggests it as a valid medium for storytelling. The most successful photographs resonate a visual rhythm in their description, much like the line of a finely written sentence or poem (Ketchum, 2013) therefore I suggest that it is possible to expand upon this metaphor and interpret a series of images as a short story, a long-form photographic project or as a completed novel.

The development of visual literacy and therefore the creation of visual language is among the most critical literacies necessary to survive the 21st century (Avgerinou and Patterson, 2011) and the definition of visual literacy includes visual perception, visual language, visual learning, visual thinking, and visual communication (Avgerinou and Patterson, 2011). It is this belief that underpins my own sense of investigation and I agree with Felton when he wrote that visual literacy:

Can be learned in ways analogous to textual literacy. With training and practice, people can develop the ability to recognize, interpret, and employ the distinct syntax and semantics of different visual forms (P. Felton, 2008, p.60)

Many commentators on the photographic medium have struggled with the digitization of the medium over the last two decades, and therefore the new role photography has taken within visual literacy. Some have also seen this digital revolution as the instigator for the death of the medium, as Baker comments:

Critical consensus would have it that the problem today is not that just about anything image-based can now be considered photographic, but rather that photography itself has been foreclosed, cashiered, abandoned, outmoded technologically, and displaced aesthetically. (George Baker, 2005, p.122)

Photography's evolution and the subsequent democratization of the medium has always been based on technological developments, but it is with the revolution within telecommunications that photography's role as a form of communication has changed with the evolution of the mobile phone into being the single unique instrument of mediated communication (Nyíri, 2007). A paper based upon empirical evidence created at the University of California, Berkeley by researchers working in this area provides insight into this adoption of photography as language when it suggests that:

We are seeing an increase in photographic self-expression. Ready access to imaging encourages people to see the world “photographically” – as images, and to see beauty and interest in the everyday. And easy internet-based sharing creates an audience. (Van House, Davis, Ames, Finn, Viswanathan, 2007)

The suggestion of non-photographers seeing the world “photographically” challenges the professional photographer’s engagement with the medium which they have studied and adopted as a career. The visual language they have studied and mastered has now become one that can be used by anyone, even if it is used with less understanding or meaning. It is for this reason that the term “We are all photographers now!” has been co-opted and used so widely by those who disparage the adoption of photography by those neither trained in the medium or, engaged with it from the perspective of a career choice.

The phrase comes from the title of an exhibition held in Switzerland in 2007, and in a review of the exhibition Ritchin observed that (2007, p.21) “maybe a better title for this show would have been: *We All Have Cameras Now.*” Although Ritchin’s suggestion would be more accurate an observation of where photography finds itself in the 21st Century, I suggest that an even more appropriate alternate title would be “We are all publishers now.” In the same review Ritchin remarks upon the genesis of the exhibition’s title and the notion that the rise of the citizen photographer is not a new phenomenon, (2007, p.21) “Photography has a long history of remarkable amateur work, from mug shots to imagery by children. In fact, the show's title jibes with an editorial in the 1905 *British Journal of Photography Almanac*, unearthed by the museum's educational director Radu Stern:

“Again, I take the terms of ‘amateur,’ ‘professional,’ and ‘trade and industry’ for the sake of convenient illustration, and not because I think a sharp line of distinction can be drawn between those classes. We are all photographers nowadays, and it does not matter what we call ourselves.” (Fred Ritchin and Radu Stern, 2007, p.21)

Photography has long been a democratic art form, but it is through its dissemination over the last twenty years that its adoption as a global language has been established. We know now that the digital platforms in their infancy in 2007, such as Instagram have become dominant portals for the dissemination of the photographic image.

In her article *Photography Reframed* Anna Dahlgren, Professor in Art History at Stockholm University places the digital evolution of photography within a broad historical context:

“The notion of photographicality by framing might, for example, be applied to images in the digital era. For just like the xylographs of the nineteenth century illustrated press were made to look like photographs by their framing, so the photographicality of digital images in the early twenty first century is produced by different visual framing. Therefore, now as then, photography is not only an idea, a process or an object but also always mediated in a larger biotope of visual media.”
(Anna Dahlgren, 2016, p.17)

My adoption of multiple forms of media within my practice conforms to this belief and illustrates the creative and communicative potential that visual media platforms present photography and the photographer open to its digitized possibilities.

The photographic narratives included within *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019) were created using a smartphone and are intended as suggestions of meaning related to the text contained within the following chapter of the book. As such they exist as short stories that do not directly relate to the text but that suggest interpretations or translations of that text. In her article exploring a history of opinions around the role and meaning of photography, Naudé draws comparisons between the photographer and the translator and photography as a language:

In linguistics, by using the process of translation, the meaning of a text in its original language is decoded and subsequently recoded into a text in another language. A photograph, like a translation, can never be an exact copy of the source, since the mediums (or languages) are different. A photograph translates a temporal moment in time into a graphic semblance possessing traces of that moment. In this way, the process of photography may be regarded as a form of translation, although the totality of the temporal experience cannot be transcribed completely. Due to formal choices made by the photographer, and the technical interference of the photographic process, even the subject of the photograph becomes a mediated interpretation. In this way, the part played by the photographer may be likened to that of a translator.” (Irene Naudé, 2010, p.26)

The artefacts that demonstrate this act of translation in my practice include the photograph, the photographic series, the book, the written article, the documentary film, and broadcast audio in

podcast form. The need to document our existence and/or experiences has always been integral to the human impulse (Naudé, 2010). The introduction of the viewer/listener/reader into the relationship with the photographer, writer or broadcaster progresses the connection that language makes in the process of visual storytelling and the sharing of reflection on the medium. The subject of the artefact therefore has three different personae: the individual that is part of the artefact, as a second person relating to the artefact; and as the subject which causes a connection of meaning with the artefact. (Naudé, 2010)

The pedagogic practice of photography as a visual language outlined within *New Ways of Seeing* (2019) and termed ‘Photosketching’ is one that I devised based upon my training within art practice. The idea of a painter, a sculptor, designer, or an artist working in any medium being able to create a completed work within the fraction of a second with no preliminary drawing goes against accepted art practice and yet this is the expectation of the photographer. In his article *Drawing for Designing*, Peter Loyd Jones recognises that:

In what we call the decorative arts, the number of times a fully worked-out picture is subsequently converted into thread or tessarae is far exceeded by the number of times a ‘design’ is discovered or invented by variations in decisions during the process of construction itself. (Peter Loyd Jones, 1984, p.270)

It is this understanding that led me to devise the term ‘Photosketching’ to describe the process of photographic exploration of light, form, juxtaposition, texture, and composition and to introduce it as a pedagogic process by which photographers could devise their own photographic language. This personal visual language is then implemented as the form by which the photographer tells their stories. It could be referred to as a ‘style’, but this would be to underestimate the importance of personal experience within photographic narratives. Individuals and more specifically photographers attempt to give meaning, order, and direction to their lives, through the formation of ‘personal narratives.’ (Roberts, 2011). The influence of personal experience feed into this process of ‘looking’; and even the ‘feel’ of the photograph (Roberts, 2011) as is evidenced in the podcast contributions to *A Photographic Life* (Scott).

Photography’s role as a communicative medium is established and evolving, with photographers and lens based medium practitioners embracing the possibilities it offers to tell stories. It’s acceptance as a democratic visual language within a media landscape by digital based manufacturers and ‘non-photographers’ is being embraced globally. However, from a

research perspective there appears to be a more limited and retrospective series of themes under discussion within photography.

The desire of some researchers and commentators for photography to remain within an analogue world despite its digital evolution is to me counter-intuitive to its potential and dismissive of its communicative reality. This belief is clearly seen in an article titled *Locating The Camera in the Digital Age* by Sylvia Grace Borda, in which she puts forward the question (Borda, 2018, p.179) “If the social network image is representative of what digital photography has become then we may want to question whether the camera as a material object has disappeared.”

I perceive the tool with which the image is created to be the ‘camera’ and I do not require that tool to conform to any previous understanding of what that camera looks like or how it works. It is this critical acceptance which I address through the acceptance of photography as a visual language not only for past and current generations but for those of the future. As I stated in *New Ways of Seeing*:

To learn a language, we need to know and understand which elements we need to learn and how to structure those elements into a form that enables communication. We accept that when writing we first must understand how to use nouns, verbs and adjectives before exploring metaphors, similes and multiple forms of grammar and syntax before structuring sentences, paragraphs, chapters and narratives. The development of a visual language is no different than this but instead of words we have images, and our grammar and syntax is defined by light, colour, texture, shape, form, composition, and juxtaposition. These are elements common to the foundation of the visual arts but whereas with painting, drawing or sculpture they can be played with, explored, developed, and manipulated as part of the process of creation. The photographer must bring these together successfully in the fraction of a second it takes to press a button or shutter. (Grant Scott, 2019, p.73)

Seeing is not a unique god given talent, but a discipline and visual literacy that can be learned and we can learn to read images the same way we learn to read words: through experience, exposure, and practice (Nelson, 1977). These are the building blocks with which the development of a visual language becomes the foundation of a photographic practice.

Conclusion

“We wanted to change the world, or at least that part of it which we most cared about - photography.”⁷

In this conclusion I intend to evidence how within this thesis I have addressed my research aims and answered the research questions proposed, explain the significance and implications of the work, and the contributions it makes to the field. I will also suggest areas of research that could be developed based upon the portfolio submitted.

Through analysing the artefacts within the portfolio this thesis has shown how memory and personal experience inform and shape my published work. Memory is the instigator for my engagement with the medium of photography, but it is a theme within my work that needs to be questioned and understood. There has been a preoccupation with memory within photographic research over the last few decades (Arnold-de Simone, 2013), which is not surprising as the photograph is a physical representation of memory. Therefore, it has been appropriate for me to explore memory and the relationship it has with storytelling to provide the rationale for the theoretical framework I have employed here.

To achieve my research aims and to answer my research questions I have employed more than one methodology as I have evidenced within this thesis. I recognise the issues that such a multi-faceted approach can present the researcher, but I agree with Silva, Warde and Wright that:

Methodological eclecticism most productively provides not a means of checking on the accuracy of facts, but the plausibility of interpretations. It is, we suggest, the enhanced coherence of interpretations that can be derived from the use of multiple methods which justifies, and will often demand, such a research design. (Elizabeth Silva, Alan Warde and David Wright, 2009, p.313)

They provide further detail to this suggestion when they state that (Silva, Warde and Wright, 2009, p.313) “If a research question is complex, then more than one method is probably

⁷ Bill Jay, *Magazine Memoirs: Creative Camera and Album, 1968-1972*, (2004)

necessary.” The answer to the research questions here are complex and therefore the adoption of more than one method of enquiry has been appropriate. The photographic medium is also complex and constantly evolving, and its cultural products have multi-faceted relevance to our lives, therefore a methodological eclecticism is also appropriate when attempting to interpret its meaning and trajectory. Photography has long battled to be seen as a legitimate cultural practice and has adopted much of its theoretical structure from film, media, and art studies. This has been my premise for looking to film studies within this thesis as an area to support my research framework.

I have evidenced the importance of memory and storytelling in the artefacts within the submitted portfolio and my documentarian practice. The importance of which Bondebjerg identifies when he suggested that:

Humans are genetically, biologically, and socially story-telling animals, and narrative structures are a fundamental way of experiencing, exploring, and thinking about reality. Stories come to us with invitation to both cognitive and emotional responses and activities and those two dimensions are linked intimately in real life, fiction, and documentary forms (Ib Bondeberg, 2014, p.21)

The *Do Not Bend* (Scott, 2018) film explored both personal and collective memory to create narrative structure, and clearly identified Jay’s importance to the development of photography in the UK in the late 1960s and early 1970s as outlined in Chapter One and Two, as a response to the first of my research questions. My second research question was answered with reference to *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019) in which the potential future of photographic capture was addressed through computational functionality and the development of visual language as a foundation for photographic storytelling as evidenced in Chapter Three. The *A Photographic Life* podcast project and its ‘*What Does Photography Mean To You?*’ strand further contributes to my research related to memory and narrative and answers directly my third research question as I have referenced within this thesis.

The role that narrative, emotions, and memory plays in documentary filmmaking and photographic practice is important for further studies (Bondeberg, 2014). Documentarian artefacts speak both to our private memory and personal story banks presenting a feeling of continuity between our past, present, and future (Bondeberg, 2014), but they are also important for both our personal and historical pasts, supporting our understanding of the present and

potential understanding of the future. The submitted portfolio supports this belief and through the exploration of the themes and research aims within this thesis the research questions have been addressed from this perspective.

I now wish to evidence how the work submitted has importance to the research community connected with photography and the possibilities for future research to be undertaken based upon work within the submitted portfolio.

In the introduction to a symposium in 2014 on '*Psychoanalysis and the Photographer*', held at the University of Westminster in Marylebone, London, UK organized by Professor David Bate, in which he posed a series of questions:

If today “everyone” is a photographer, one question that remains rarely asked: Why? What does it mean to be a photographer now? What is the wish to see? What might psychoanalysis have to say about the drive to take photographs?

While there has been much discussion of the new technologies that have enabled the avalanche of photographic images produced and distributed today, what is known about the psychical effects of all this on the persons involved? (David Bate, 2014, p3)

The *What Does Photography Mean to You?* (Scott) podcast strand responds directly to the issues raised by Bate and provides evidence that primary research is taking place based upon current practice. The work made by the contributors to the podcast is varied in practice, they are at different stages of their careers, and they are working across all four continents. Despite this creative, economic, social, and geographic disparity those who have contributed have identified the themes of emotion, memory, and narrative as important aspects of their multi-faceted engagement with the photographic medium. There is a clear ambition in cognitive theory to try to understand to what extent human phenomena are defined by universal dimensions and how these dimensions interact with and are influenced by social and cultural conditions and historical change (Bondeberg, 2014). The creation of an open-source audio archive of photographers reflecting upon their engagement with the photographic medium feeds directly into this ambition amongst cognitive theory-based researchers.

Through correspondence I am aware that it is already being used as a pedagogic and research tool by educators and students within academic institutions worldwide, and I believe that it will

provide a valuable research resource for future researchers aiming to understand professional photographic engagement and visual storytelling at the beginning of the 21st Century.

In a 2019 interview with Professor David Bate by Andreia Alves de Oliveira intended to provide an overview of the state of photographic education within UK Higher Education, Bates makes a series of statements that reveal the importance of an ongoing dialogue with photographers outside of academia and suggests that this is not being undertaken by many educators today. He proposes that:

They're living off 20th Century curriculum. We all are. I don't think there's the intellectual space, the institutional will, or maybe even the capacity to rethink it all.

If you look at photography courses. I don't see anywhere that specifically is heavily investing in new thinking.

Maybe the problem for photography today is we are still thinking in terms of the 20th Century. I think that is a problem. (Andreia Alves de Oliveira and David Bate, 2019, p.26)

I agree with Bate that this is a problem and I recognise his suggestion that some courses are living off 20th Century curriculum, but I disagree with his assertion that no course is engaging in new thinking, and by inference no educators, or that there is not the intellectual space, the institutional will, or maybe even the capacity to rethink it all. The submitted portfolio, with direct reference to *New Ways of Seeing* (Scott, 2019) addresses these research issues and has informed my thinking in establishing and my teaching on the Photography BA (Hons) at Oxford Brookes as a course for 21st Century photography and photographers. A need for research concerning the future of lens-based media storytelling is identified by Bates's comments and could be based upon the work currently being done at Brookes that responds to The National Council of Teachers of English recommendation that students should have (National Council of Teachers, 2009, p15) "Experiences interpreting and constructing visual compositions." Felten further suggests that (Felton, 2008, p.61) "in our rapidly changing world, visual literacy... should be recognized among the fundamental goals of a liberal education."

I suggest that Bates's comments illustrate a disconnect between photographic teaching and practice outside of contemporary art based theoretical practice. Further research into the pedagogic benefits of embedding professional practice within academic courses is required and

the implementation of my research into the course at Brookes would provide examples on which this research could be based. The success of this approach is already being recognised with invitations for me to consult and external exam courses at both undergraduate and post graduate level within the UK.

The Jay film has seen a resurgence of interest in Jay and his influence on photography at a pivotal moment in its history within the UK. This has resulted in invitations to give papers on Jay, exhibit and publish his photography, screen the film within photography festivals, contribute to books documenting the period and collaborate with academics researching the period unaware of his impact on areas of their research including education and collaborative working initiatives. As the photographer, writer and educator Paul Hill stated (www.donotbendfilm.com, 2018) “This film is a revelation in so many ways, not only as a reminder of his achievements and maverick nature, but also about him as a man. If you want to know about this seminal and fascinating era of British photography you should watch *Do Not Bend*”. A statement supported by photographer Martin Parr when he commented that (www.donotbendfilm.com, 2018) “I think the one-real achievement of the film, is to put on record the life and work of Bill Jay whose contribution has been known but never recognised.”

The *A Photographic Life* podcast is an ongoing research project that will continue to question and build on a weekly basis. One Hundred and Eighty-Nine photographers from diverse backgrounds, from across the world and from a broad range of photographic practice and age groups have contributed audio files in which they explain what photography means to them at this point. It is an organic resource that aims to inform and educate, introducing new photographers alongside more established practitioners to each other and the ongoing conversation. As such its influence and audience grows as it develops.

I am as interested in the ‘why’ of the process as the process itself and the ‘life-experience’ of the practitioner as the finished artefact. These have been the starting points in addressing my research questions. As I stated:

Berger reflected on the fact that although every image created embodies a way of seeing, it is our perception or appreciation of an image that defines our true way of seeing. This perception and appreciation of photography within a digital age is defined by the device and/or platform we experience the image on, the context in

which we engage with it and our own understanding of what photography is. (Grant Scott, *New Ways of Seeing*, 2019)

My research suggests that this situation demands a re-evaluation of photography as a medium, an historical record, a story-telling tool and as a visual language. Its role within a pedagogic setting and the opportunities it presents for research from a sociological perspective aside from its obsession with the mediums' theoretical past. I see my work as a starting point for future researchers to develop and evolve as the medium itself evolves into an unknown future. Berger finished his book *Ways of Seeing* (1972) with the simple request that it was to be finished by the reader, I share his sentiment.

WORD COUNT: 11,072

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