

**Interviewing for life-histories, lived situations
and ongoing personal experiencing** using the
Biographic-Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM):
The BNIM Short Guide bound with The BNIM Detailed Manual

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[355,015 words; 911 pages]

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If this is your first encounter with the *BNIM Short Guide*, **please ignore roughly 85% of this text, i.e, ignore some 750 pages out of these 900!**

The *BNIM Detailed Manual* takes up that 85%, those 750 pages. The detail there is only relevant for those who have read the *BNIM Short Guide* (10-15%) and, after thinking about it, have decided they want to know more, or know more about some particular detail that concerns them at the moment. The *Detailed Manual* is a *Manual*, not an introduction. In fact, much to my alarm, it's becoming more like a *BNIM Encyclopedia!*

For an introduction to BNIM, use just the first section of this text, the 10-15% *BNIM Short Guide*. Much shorter! Quite sufficient!

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“ Tom Wengraf. 2011. *BNIM Short Guide bound with the BNIM Detailed Manual*. Version date. For a free updated version, write to tom@tomwengraf.com”.

Start by **NOT-printing** out all of this very long document!

See section below: p. 46

If you are not too happy with beginning with too many generalities:

**Go to the next page for the
Short Guide Brief Table of Contents (2 pages)**

And then to the **section 1.0.1. p. 37 for an example of BNIM interviewing**

Or to the section 1.1.2. **'Why bring in BNIM to your research? p. 49**

Then, when you get bored,

Ignore all the rest and jump to **section 1.2. on p. 97.....**

You can always return to section 1.1. (“Start Here”) later, if you think it might be useful.

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This *Short Guide and Detailed Manual* is dedicated to all those from whom I learned about BNIM – in particular to Prue Chamberlayne -- and to all those BNIM trainees and researchers whose work continues to nourish new trainees and researchers partly through the medium of this constantly-updated *Guide*.

Without new questions, new feedback publications and new accounts of the lived experience of BNIM-reading and BNIM-doing, there would be nothing new for me to write in, and no further learning from, this evolving *Short Guide and Detailed Manual*

So this *Short Guide and Detailed Manual* is also dedicated to you in the hope that you will share your experiencing in the reading and using of the *Short Guide and Detailed Manual's* current edition to enrich the next edition for others.

So send in accounts of your experience (positive and negative) and questions and comments to biographic-narrative-BNIM@jiscmail.ac.uk.

Or directly to me at tom@tomwengraf.com.

This Short Guide and Detailed Manual, and the BNIM 5-day intensive training: read it before/instead of/ the training!

Chapters 6 and 12 of the textbook (Wengraf 2001) were written to make it possible for researchers to acquire the basics of BNIM without doing a training course. This *Short Guide and Detailed Manual* has been written so as to make it even easier to acquire the basics -- and also perfectly viable for researchers to reach a good level -- without such a training course.

However, we do run trainings to run as a complement to both textbook and the Detailed Manual.

If you have registered for a 5-day training or might register in the future, please bear the following in mind:

Our original training in BNIM took 9 days; the current intensive model takes 5 days. Among the reasons for being able to shorten the time is that the 'exposition' part of the 9 day training has now been very largely encapsulated in the textbook and in this text. Briefly, it originally took 9 days to train people; now, with the *Detailed Manual*, it takes 5 days (see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards for a description and schedule of the 5-day training).

Somebody on a recent training said, around day 4 of the five days, something like

"I felt fully on top of all the learning by doing until just now. However, today, we're now getting beyond the point to which I read the Guide, and I'm feeling much less confident and getting much less from the exercises..... I should have finished my preparatory reading!"

Overview and brief account

I'm glad to say that by the end of the 5 days he had managed to cope with the temporarily-lowered quality caused by his incomplete reading of the *Guide*, and was feeling fine. But the point remains. I said "With the *Guide*, it takes 5 days"; it might be better to say "To get the best out of the 5-day course, you need to have read the key bits of the *Guide* beforehand".

The 5-day Intensive does have brief expositions of theory to explain the key points as you proceed, but only as reminders of the 'gist' of previous reading of this *Short Guide* and some of the *Detailed Manual*. [The intensive also provides intermittent open plenaries for discussion of points of difficulty as they arise].

So:

- although you can get a considerable amount from an intensive even if you only have read the 'brief overview' beforehand, and just perhaps scanned sections 2 and 3,
-
- the 5-days will work most effectively for you if you have prepared yourself by having had a serious look at, and preferably read, sections 1-3. When *after* a training, you read it in the course of practice, the bits that are relevant for each stage of that practice, you will get still more.

*Your predominantly 'learning-by-doing' on the 5 day course
depends for its effectiveness...
....on your previous 'preparation-by-reading'.*

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0. Differences from earlier versions

These notes make most sense for those who have read earlier versions of the *BNIM Short Guide and Detailed Manual*.

In general, the two chapters on BNIM in my 2001 textbook *Qualitative research Interviewing* (Sage) are now largely but not entirely updated and replaced by *Short Guide and Detailed Manual*. Ten years of further work and training and BNIM practice have occurred since 2001, and -- though other chapters in the 2001 text still stand -- something but not much would be lost if ch.6 and 12 of the 2001 text vanished from your copy and were replaced by this text. Where the two clash, use this more up-to-date text. Use both.

October 2010. I am currently changing terminology.

- The 'T' in the term 'TFA' used to stand for 'thematic' (as in Thematic Field Analysis). I am now starting to use it to mean 'Teller' (as in Teller Field Analysis). This forces the user to think in terms of the subjectivity telling the told story rather than the impersonal 'themes' in the told story. have started to rework the text below with the new terminology, but have only got a short way through the text. Therefore, the current version contains a potentially confusing mix of the old and new language. The procedure of TFA work remain completely untouched by this change in the terminology.
- Instead of 'evolution' of the case, I now talk of 'mutations' of the case and 'History of Case Mutations' (HCM). This avoids any implication of unilinear or necessary 'progression' in the history of the case.

Appendices on 'Variants and Adaptions' of and around BNIM – E.1-E.4

The bulk of the present text has been and remains strongly normative, presenting what might be regarded as 'classic BNIM'. I make no apology for this. It is important to have a clear well-trying set of procedures as a basis for one's research and self-training..

However, it is important to see how people have adapted and adopted different components of BNIM procedure. Hence Appendix E. Some of these may certainly strengthen the method for certain purposes; others may certainly weaken it. One way or the other, given that every researcher who uses the method will eventually develop their own minor or major 'subtractions' and 'additions' (and different ones in different contexts), it is important to be fully aware of one's own choices and be able to know and think about those of others.

I would like just to signal two other 'E' appendices:

- (i) one is about the use of BNIM within the context of a fully Psycho-social approach (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards) ;

(ii) the other (April 2010) is about Critical Realism and the mutual congruence/support of this developing philosophy of social-science research practice on the one hand and BNIM approaches on the other (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards).

No doubt you will be unsurprised that I strongly commend both!

The BNIM interview

I have stressed the importance of ‘pausing before responding’ much more than I did before. During the June 2009 BNIM London training, I become more aware of the dangers of mind-stopping rapid-response-unit-style questioning (Jeremy Paxman style) and the many important benefits for both parties in Sub-session Two if the interviewer always ‘Pauses Before Responding’ and models this for, and gives permission to, the interviewee to do the same.

Both interview-partners need to pause to listen about what has just been said (whoever said it, themselves or the other interview-partner), and have time to sense what they feel about it all, before starting talking again. Without pauses, we are only going through the motions of listening to what and how ourself or the other person has only just completing saying; and are likely to fail to listen to what’s going on between us.

There needs space to think: *What has just been said? What’s the significance of it being said? Why was it said that way? At this point? What do I feel about it all? What might my interview partner be feeling about it all? What am I feeling about it all, right now?* No need to use words, yet. Get a sense of it all -- and all about it -- quietly. Listen. If listening can be seen as a form of ‘pushing’ then a new slogan might be...

*“Push for thoughtful pauses; push for then-felt, heart-felt, in-PINs”.*¹

This will make more sense, later..

The silences between words and the sayings allow the unsaid (that make up what one might call the ‘crucial interword’) to come through. *Pause here. Why not? What stops you? What interviewing practice and behaviour needs to be ‘pushed against’ to allow the coming through of ‘thoughtful pauses’?*

¹ The notion of a PIN (Particular Incident Narrative) is central to our approach. A ‘Then-felt in-PIN’ (re-felt inPIN?) means that the story of a particular incident is told with at least some of the feelings that were felt at the time being felt again, re-felt, in the process of saying them. If the story is just told from a now-perspective (perspective at the time of the interview) then the now-felt PIN is an ‘about-PIN’ and not an ‘in-PIN’. The ‘in-PIN’ is recognisable by the interviewee *now* feeling *again* some of the feelings that they felt originally *then*. Hence the notion of ‘then-felt feelings’ and ‘then-perspective’. This gets clarified later.

The Western tendency to be ‘afraid of silences’, the compulsion to block thoughts with words. These have to be ‘pushed against’ to get thoughtful pauses and proper listening to self.

Pauses are ‘pregnant’; for good natural delivery, let the pauses have a full gestation, taking the time they need. You are not an extractive surgeon, you are a facilitating midwife.

The BNIM interpretation process

1) I have tried to insist more on the fact that only *people interested in the ‘unsaid of the said’* will generate good narrative interviews or interpret them well. If you ignore what is *not* said, you will not understand the person who did the saying of what *was* said.

If you are only interested in *what* is said, then the significance of *the way* in which the said is said and *the way* in which the unsaid is also said.... will both escape you.

2) Partly as a result of the emergence of new audio-visual recording and computer-aided qualitative data interpretation programmes, I stress more than I used to do the value of *checking back to the original recording* both during the interpretive process (micro-analysis) and also at late-points in that process after provisional interpretations have started to crystallise. New technologies enable you to switch between a place in the transcript and a place in the audio/visual recording at the press of a button. See Appendix *Chyba! Nenalezen zdroj odkazů*. starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována..

3) In addition, there is a discussion of *foreign-language interviews* and also – a separate question -- of *BNIM-panel interpreting* of the lived experience of interviewees who have had a lot of significant experience in ‘*dated foreign locations*’ (times and places) foreign to most or all people on your BNIM panel. See Appendices A.4 and B.4.

4) I have inserted a page of notes to my self for a new sub-section 3.7.6.3. on ‘*linked cases*’, getting ready to think more carefully about ‘transmission and conditions of mutation’. You can find these notes to myself about this on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována..

More examples in the Detailed Manual of written up intermediate ‘syntheses’ in BDA/TFA work and of ‘BNIM case accounts’

I have now provided further examples of the actual *writing-up of cases at different stages of the BNIM interpretive process*, to make clear the type of thinking and the type of text you could decide to aim for/against.

*Generalisations without sufficient examples don't guide enough.*²

So there is now a *set of fullish example or examples* of written-up accounts of (i) a Biographical Data Analysis, (ii) TFA-Flow Analyses, (iii) TFA-Structure Analyses, and (iv) Account of the Mutations of a Case. These examples are not prescriptive, but they should be suggestive...and hopefully provoke further exploration and innovation!³

Ian McGilchrist's work on the divided brain – a resource for understanding BNIM (April 2010). I've just come across the work of McGilchrist (2009). It has really illuminated my sense of how some of the oddities and imperatives of BNIM work are supported by recent brain research and by clinical experience. All references to left and right hemispheres in this version of the Guide are based on this extraordinarily interesting book. Warning: it's not a quick read, but it's engrossing as it – quite inadvertently – adds a new dimension to handling and understanding the productivity of BNIM's procedures and approach.

The pleasures of professional BNIM practices

*“It is the practice that breathes life....
not the primary task (Armstrong 2005: 131).*

The key practices of BNIM that breathe life into the work of the BNIM researcher are

- (i) the moment of enabling the interviewee to give you an in-PIN and enabling yourself to receive it properly (see the BNIM interview Sub-Session Two extract on p. 38)
- (ii) the equally live encounter with the other members of your BNIM interpretive panels; and, eventually,
- (iii) the pains-taking and illumination-making of your post-panel interpretive work as you reconstruct and come to understand the lived and the unlived unlived 'case-journeys' and 'life-worlds' of each of your interviewees.

² Abstractions need to be “fully charged with the concrete of experience... and thinking..[needs to be] unquestionably faithful to it (Leavis 1945, cited Inglis 2009: 94)”. “Concepts without intuition are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind (the philosopher Kant)”.

³ During 2009, I made the distinction between TFA 'flow' analyses and TFA 'field' analyses. As of December 2010, I relabeled this distinction as 'TFA-flow' and 'TFA-structure'. As examples show, this is a 'spectrum' difference (rather like Report/PIN): but spectrum differences are important to think with! Any TFA-account will be somewhere on the spectrum between sequential flow and higher-level (or deeper-level) structure of that flow. . In fact, you are likely to move from mostly the first to more of the second. In October 2010, as said before and to be iterated later, the 'T' in the above formulations got renamed as 'Teller', as in 'Teller Flow Analysis' and 'Teller Field Analysis'. Procedures don't change at all.

Overview and brief account

- (iv) the painstaking and illumination-making of your 'writing up and conveying' to different audiences your descriptions and understandings in a way that makes sense to, and helps, each of those audiences with their different needs and their different prior (mis)-understandings.

1. 0. Quotations, Overview and brief account

I absolutely loved the week, it was a fantastic experience for me and what I learned will bring many benefits to my own job. BNIM seems to me not only a method, but representative of an overall philosophy (and ethic) of how to 'do' research and I'm delighted to have it to inspire me into the future
(email November 2009)

Relief and joy...I have had the results of my viva. I received the highest grade (excellent, as opposed to very good, good, satisfactory, referred or failed). Clearly the examiners thought the BNIM approach was very appropriate for clinical psychology research and effective in answering the research question (CRQ for those of you who like abbreviations!!). The external examiners thought the study was well designed (it followed the standard BNIM design) and that the amount of work was more than adequate for a doctorate in clinical psychology.

Thanks a bunch for all the help, advice and support you gave in getting the proposal accepted, re the small numbers and in explaining how to use the data from three people to answer the Central Research Question. Thanks in particular for the way you ran the course so as to ensure it met the personal needs of each person who attended, in terms of the projects we were planning.

At times during the research work, I thought I'd never do research again. I've never done qualitative research before and didn't realise what the experience of getting familiar with the data is really like. I got totally lost at times and was without a supervisor who understood the methodology, but faith in the practical steps of the methodology did win through in the end. Lots of highs and lows but a rewarding journey overall. I am very pleased with the result. Well chuffed in fact! I start [my new] job at the end of the month, no doubt there's scope for experiential research using BNIM there.

I understand there are a number of people using BNIM on the postgraduate course again this year by the way. My supervisor told me that my external examiner did a great job of challenging [the university's] attitude towards qualitative research with small numbers, in his post-viva examination discussions of my grading with other internal and external examining staff. Best wishes,
[email received September 2006].

I was struggling with qualitative methods... During the training, this method proved itself to me time and time again.... It has given me confidence and security... (training course May 2008)

I truly enjoyed the course and benefited greatly from attending. To be honest, I had looked at the *Guide* and found myself terrified by it – the diagrams and terminology were well beyond my level of understanding. [The course] however, made the whole thing so accessible and clear that I do plan to use BNIM in my research...
(email received 25th February 2008).

*I was gobsmacked by how far we got into [the subject's] subjectivity in so short a time:
it was an eye-opener for me
[training course May 2008]*

The most intensive interview training course I have ever done (May 2008)

You can't imagine the power of the procedure until you follow it (June 2008)

I must say it has been quite a roller-coaster journey for me with the research aspects of the study. Obviously I had to learn so much and was suspicious of BNIM's rigor for a

while during the early stages in terms of the panel process. However, now I'm an absolute convert and couldn't imagine using another model if I were to undertake research again (2010)

Currently, I'm running some panels of my own for the PhD and this is proving invaluable for developing my thinking about the three 'gold star' cases in the study. Yesterday was a mind blowing Thematic Field Analysis session - so much amazing material and invaluable input from other people really forcing me to stretch and reconfigure my thinking in exciting directions.

It seems this is a generous methodological approach, in lots of different ways! Thanks for the method! I'm really enjoying working with the data it has helped generate and am finding the panels of huge value
(23 April 2009 email)

.....On a more personal note, I am very glad that I chose this research method for my research – it has since influenced my clinical approach (e.g. using life story question, asking follow up questions, getting the richest narrative material I can to work with, consideration of power in relationship etc etc) ... and carrying out the research in this way was an important developmental step / process for me in clinical psychology
(July 12 2009 email)

It was a wonderful and memorable experience. I feel very much shaken up (in a good way!): it's great to be brought to see the world a bit differently from before! (email November 2009)

Finally, a quotation from the methodology section of a report that I came across while trawling the web:

The biographic narrative interview method was highly successful in eliciting in-depth qualitative data on experiences of teenage pregnancy and young parenthood. The method exceeded our expectations in situating these specific events and roles in broad, historical, social, political and familial contexts.

Hence, we have been able to appreciate participants' identities and biographies in relation to their whole life course, including their upbringing, schooling, further education and employment, family and friendship networks, sexuality and relationship histories.

Most importantly, the use of this method has highlighted diversity across genders, generations and social class, and specific experiences such as domestic abuse, drug and alcohol use, disability, depression, being a young carer, growing up in care, enforced abortion and bereavement.

These issues were raised by participants without direct questioning from the interviewer, and without them, our data would be partial and less holistic.

Julia Hirst, Eleanor Formby, Jenny Owen. 2006. *Pathways into parenthood: reflections from three generations of teenage mothers and fathers*. Sheffield Hallam University: Sheffield Health and Social Research Consortium: p.63 (paragraphing added)

Overview and brief account

How can we make sure that the Other tells the story that [s]he really wants to tell and not the one we want to hear? (Mary Harvey et al 2000)

Narratives exhibit
the mediation between the person and the situation
because they are not reducible to either...
Narratives are both about the life and a part of it.⁴

*The first sentence of every novel should be:
“Trust me, this will take time but there is order here,
Very faint, very human.”*

Meander if you want to get to town.
[Michael Ondaatje, *In the skin of a lion*, 1987, cited Ogden (1994)]

*It is very interesting to find that, in Sanskrit, the word for ‘certainty’
is the same as the word for ‘imprisonment’.
And the word for ‘non-certainty’ is the same as the word for ‘freedom’
[cited Patrick Casement *Learning from our mistakes*, 2002: 16]*

The map is not the territory; the word is not the thing itself (Alfred Korzybski 1923)

*How quickly a formulation, a concept or theory [and this Guide and Manual, TW]]
loses its enabling quality and becomes a barrier to the possibility of making further observations
(Robert Gosling 1981: 644, cited Armstrong 2005: 118)*

Spoken words are a means to arrest a thought.
Once one has caught the thinking, one forgets about the words.
(Chuang Tzu 3rd/4th century BCE, cited Peggy Jones 2008)

*Any account should consciously pave a way towards its own obsolescence:
it does pave such ways, anyway, irrespective of consciously.*

On average, a novice gains most by following the rules moderately rigidly, and learning from consequences and outcomes by watching the transcripts.

Having learnt from this experience, the post-novice is only then in a position to learn from studying what happens in different conditions when different rules are broken.

Never let a (BNIM) rule stop you from doing the right thing, ... but then, whether you followed the rules or not, re-inspect the moment and the consequences to check how right it was, and what might have been just as right, or even ‘righter’.

One must have thoroughly learned...technique before one is in a position to “forget” it—that is, to rediscover it for oneself [to create it afresh for each new session]to try to overcome what we have learned in order to be free to create [BNIM] anew [with each new interviewee]
(Ogden 2009: 3 and 68, recreated anew!)

⁴ George Rosenwald ‘Conclusion’ (pp.269/71) in G. Rosenwald and R. Ochberg (eds) *Storyed lives: the cultural politics of self-understanding*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Overview and brief account

"All that was the case, or is the case, or will perhaps happen to become the case,
.....and nothing more???"? OR?

xxxxx

In the end we all have the same tendency, that is,
to see ourselves in the different stages of our lives
as the result or the summary of all that has happened to us,
of what we have achieved and what we have done ,
as if our existence amounts to only this.

And we almost always forget that people's lives are not just that:
each trajectory is compounded too by our losses and our vestiges,
by our omissions and our unfulfilled wishes,
by that which we once left aside or we did not choose or did not achieve,
by the numerous possibilities that were never explored (...)
by our vacillations and our dreams,
by the frustrated projects and the warm and false wishes,
by the fears that paralysed us,
by that which we abandoned or that which abandoned us.

People, in sum, perhaps consist as much of what they have not been
as of what they are. ⁵

xxxxx

We hypothesise and project thought and imagination into the "if-ness", into the free
conditionalities of the unknown.....Such projection is the master nerve of human
action.... Language is the main instrument of man's refusal to accept the world as it is.
Without that refusal, without the unceasing generation by the mind of 'counter-worlds' --
a generation that cannot be divorced from the grammar of counter-factual and optative
forms -- we would turn forever on the treadmill of the present. Reality would be (to use
Wittgenstein's phrase in an illicit sense) 'all that is the case', and nothing more. Ours is the
ability, the need, to gainsay or 'unsay' the world, to image and speak it otherwise. ⁶

xxxxx

⁵ Javier Marías, speech of acceptance at Rómulo Gallegos Award Ceremony 1995. Cited Oriana Bernasconi 2008 *Doing the self: selfhood and morality in the biographical narratives of three generations of Chilean families*. LSE PhD thesis.

⁶ George Steiner *After Babel: aspects of language and translation* Oxford University Press, 1998: 227-228, celebrating and elaborating Ernst Bloch. See also citations and footnote on p. 364 below.

Overview and brief account

The past is another country, they do things differently there; and we are no longer they.

The shadow past is shaped by everything that never happened. Invisible, it melts the present like rain through karst. A biography of longing. It steers us like magnetism, a spirit torque. This is how one becomes undone by a smell, a word, a place, the photo of a mountain of shoes. By love that closes its mouth before calling a name.

I did not witness the most important events of my life. My deepest story must be told by a blind man, a prisoner of sound.

(Anne Michaels. *Fugitive pieces*. p.17)

The Guide and Manual

“is the most complete set of information I have ever found on this theme and I hang onto it (*email* Anita Pincas, Institute of Education, London October 2008)”

The *Short Guide* part of this text is quite sufficient for *a broad understanding* of the method.

The Short Guide is quite short; the Detailed Manual *is very detailed*.

Why bother? A quick route to getting at the significance of those procedures might be to **look through the 'examples' of what sort of different 'writings-up' emerge** -- from the different moments of the interpretation procedure (BDA section 3.3.4.; , TFA sections 3.5/5.. 3/5.6. , Mutations of the Case' section 3.6.2.)).

BUT:

If you eventually intend to use all of the BNIM approach, please bear in mind that **you will need both this *Short Guide* and the *Detailed Manual***, but also plus **the textbook that they are designed to complement**, namely Tom Wengraf (2001) *Qualitative research interviewing: biographic narrative and semi-structured method*. London: Sage Publications

However, the good news!

You can do BNIM *interviewing* just on the basis of the relevant sections of the *Guide* and the *Detailed Manual*, plus Appendix A. That's about **120 pages, plus the Appendix A. Quite manageable.**

You can decide later whether you want to explore the BNIM *interpretive apparatus*, or not. At least half the users of BNIM interviewing procedure don't. They use other interpretive methodologies. And that's fine!

The following remarks on this page will make more sense once you have grappled with the account of BNIM interviewing and interpretation. BNIM has a strong ‘one thing at a time, delay the everything together until later’ principle.

One feature characterises some of the features of both BNIM interviewing and of BNIM interpreting: this is *the separation out into different ‘moments’ of the procedure of doing things* which are – in most semi-structured interview methods -- *more often done together in a ‘fused’ way right from the start* which can become, without always realising it, a con-fused way.

You could think of it as *‘a holism which is deliberately delayed but very carefully prepared-for’*.

1) *Interviewing.*

Most semi-structured interviewing method allow the interviewer to ‘insert’ their requests for clarification, for more detail, even their personal responses and interpretations at any point that feels ‘right’. BNIM demands that no such ‘insertions’ at all be made during Sub-session One, and very firmly restricts what the interviewer can do in Sub-session Two.

As a result, such “requests for clarification, expression of personal responses and interpretations, etc.” have to be kept for after the end of Sub-session Two. In Sub-session Two, BNIM principles foster only the asking for “more (narrative) detail”, more story. In the first two Sub-sessions, only one thing is done at a time. Only after the first two distinct Sub-sessions are concluded, and the material thought about, does the researcher go on to Sub-session Three, where the field of questioning is much more open.

2) *Interpreting the two tracks (sorts of data) separately*

Similarly, in the two-track BNIM interpretation procedure, only one thing is done in each track. The hard biographic data (BDC) is focused on, and data about subjectivity are firmly excluded. Then, the ‘soft telling of the told story’ data (TFA) is focused on, and data about the ‘hard objective reality data’ are firmly excluded.

3) *Bringing together the insights from the separate tracks (sorts of data) explicitly and consciously. This is delayed.*

Only after the two tracks are both separately concluded and the results thought about, does the researcher go on to explore their interrelation in constructing the ‘Case Account’ which require that that which was previously firmly separated be brought together.

The principle of the division of labour suggests that, for many purposes,

the mind of the interviewer and the mind of the interviewee benefit by doing only one clearly-defined thing at a time:

- **in the separated interview phases, then**
- **in the separated interpretation phases.**

After such focused separate-work, the focus then shifts to another ‘one thing at a time’; namely, at the right time,

bringing the results of such previously differentiated activity together and integrating them in an integration-work:

- **the ‘Coda’ at the end of *Sub-session Two (and eventually Three)* of the interview;**
- **the ‘Case-account’ at the end of *the interpretive work on the two separated tracks***

Nice quote:

An American poet, John Crowe Ransom, remarked that “poetry dramatises the past”.

Biographic narrative method might be said to restore not only the “dramas of the present” (the present as history, the present in its history) but also “the dramas of previous presents” (history is just a potentially-intelligible succession of times-present).....

.... previous presents in danger of no longer being seen or understood as such, either in themselves or in relation to each other

“There is in each survivor an imperative need to tell and to thus come to know one’s story, unimpeded by ghosts from the past against whom one has to protect oneself. One has to know one’s buried truth to be able to live one’s life”

(Dori Laub in Feldman and Laub 1992: 78, cited Brodski 2007: 240).

Take a dialogue and remove the voices (the partitioning of voices), remove the intonations (emotional and individualising ones), carve out abstract concepts and judgements from living words and responses, cram everything into one abstract consciousness – and that’s how you get.....

(Mikhail Bakhtin, cited in Morson and Emerson 1990: 57)

1.0.1. Situations and the 'situated perspectives' of a given moment

The 19th century French historian Jules Michelet wrote about his own practice of writing history as follows:

We have rarely made any total...judgement, rarely given a *portrait* as such; all, or almost all, are unjust, resulting from an averaging out of a character at a given moment, where good and evil cancel each other out and make each other false... How many men in one man! How unjust it would be to stereotype a definite image of this variable creature! Rembrandt made, I believe, thirty self-portraits, all similar, all different. I have followed this method: both art and justice equally urged me to it. If you take the trouble to follow each of the great actors through these two volumes [Michelet's *History of the French Revolution*], you will see that each consists of a gallery of sketches, each retouched at its particular date according to the moral and physical modifications which the individual had undergone. The Queen and Mirabeau come before us time and again, five or six times; at each appearance time has marked them in passing. Marat seems the same, but under shifting traits, all true, though different. The timid and comfortless Robespierre, hardly glimpsed in 1789, is drawn in profile before us in November 1790 in an evening session, at the rostrum of the Jacobins; we give a full-face portrait of him (in May 1791) in the National Assembly: magistral, dogmatic, already full of menace. We have thus carefully and punctiliously dated men and questions, *and the moments of each man*. Again and again we have had brought home to us an idea which struck us greatly and which dominates the present work: *history is time* (Michelet 1952: vol.1: 290-91. Cited by Jameson (1971: 265, italics added TW).

The task of carefully and punctiliously *excavating and dating men and questions and the historically-situated moments of each man* (Michelet's formulation) is a powerful default concern of BNIM. Coming to understand different moments of "the questions and answers of a situated subjectivity" can be termed as struggling to understand people and groups (their subjectivities and practices) in the light of the successive moments of their situated perspectives.⁷

If you go slowly through the 'Kathy, Sally and the purple sweater' extract on the next pages, a "perspective" may start to emerge as "moments" are grappled with – moments of a BNIM interview, moments of a situated subjectivity struggling to excavate earlier memories and states of being..... of the interviewee discovering an unexpected moment of herself when younger..... and differently situated.

Reading aloud (with someone else would be ideal) is the optimum way of getting into any transcript, including the one on the next pages!

⁷ Maybe 'mode of apprehension' would be a less compulsively-visual metaphor. 'Mode of grappling with the universe' might get more of the sense of 'difficult practice'. However, 'perspective' will do for the moment, but do substitute your own favourite instead, if you don't like it. And bear in mind its 'distant-voyeurist-passive' implications. See now or later the Appendix on 'perspectives', p. 658. Hermeneutic phenomenology talks about 'Befindlichkeit', where people are always oriented towards a situation in a particular sub-verbal way, they 'find themselves always already in a particular mood and non-neutral orientation' (see Gendlin 1978 for an orientation towards this approach)..

1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

1.0.2. Kathy, Sally, the purple sweater, and the driving test,

.....There is, however, a special circumstance in which a way of relating to people may... be described as a technique. This occur when a natural form of experiencing life and relating to people has, for some reason, been forgotten by a culture (Lomas 1973: 148)...

The following extract is from an interview by Kathy Brennan. It illustrates the process whereby the narrative-seeking interviewer in the interview second Sub-session pushes –not always directly and typically with an only slowly-mounting success as you can see from this extract -- for particular stories of particular incidents (PINs = Particular Incident Narratives)..... The ‘glosses’ in the right hand column show BNIM-thinking about it all. Think about the words used by the interviewer in forming questions.....

1	INT: <i>You said that you got your friends to help get lots of driving practice. Can you give me an example of how that happened?</i>	<i>Taking a generalisation, but asking for an example (a PIN)</i>
2	Well, I would badger the ones who had already got their test to come with me in the car to wherever they wanted to go so that I'd be driving.....	<i>No example, instead we get a generalisation about what would generically or typically happen (a GIN or TIN, not a PIN)</i>
3	INT: <i>Can you give me a particular example of one occasion of all that happening?</i>	<i>Again pushes for an example</i>
4	Well, if my friends wanted to go to the beach or if my mother wanted to go shopping, then I would offer to take them wherever they wanted to go....	<i>Asked again for a PIN, she gives a similar but more scene-specific generalisation,</i>
5	INT: <i>Can you remember any one particular example of this happening with a particular friend on a particular day?</i>	<i>Tries again (3rd time), with even stronger (triple) emphasis on particularity</i>
6	My friend Sally often wanted to go swimming and so she would want to go to the beach and I'd offer to take her so as to get my driving in	<i>Despite the [intensifying] push (1, 3 and 5) for specificity, the interviewee stays with generalisation but does however specify one particularity, one particular friend (Sally). The pushing for particularity is starting to work. Notice how slowly. This is typical.</i>

7	INT: <i>Can you remember anything about a particular day on which this happened?</i>	<i>Repeats the request in (5) but in a short form</i>
8	[Long pause...very hesitantly] No I can't.....but...(laughter) ... but I have remembered something completely abstract	<i>She says "completely abstract", but in fact it is a further move</i>

1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

	<i>towards some concrete particular</i>
9	I do remember that one time Sally always wore a purple mohair sweater even to the beach! That's 1980's fashion for you!	<i>Some specific something has emerged.... not a PIN (yet) but at least an 'image'.</i>

1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

10	<p>INT: <i>Can you remember any more about that one time when she wore that purple mohair sweater?</i></p> <p>(nb: interviewee didn't mention "one particular time", but rather a "time when Sally always". Bad question. Interviewer should have used "period" instead).</p>	<p><i>Tries to get more detail too quickly about a particular moment: but fails... [It might have been better to ask for "any particular place where you recall her wearing it".]</i></p>
11	<p>[Long pause..... firmly though regretfully] No, I'm afraid I can't</p>	<p><i>Still no PIN, but by (?) some move to the concrete has occurred.. this should count as a success at getting a scrap of that earlier 'situated subjectivity' and its perceptions. How to handle her firm denials of being able to remember...?</i></p>
12	<p>INT: <i>Do you remember anything else in particular about that time when you were practising your driving?</i></p>	<p><i>The interviewer decides to ask more generally about the "time when". And gets results.</i></p>
13	<p>[Long pause] Well, I can remember something else from around the same time. Sally had recently split up with her boyfriend and had offered me his ticket to go and see Duran Duran at Wembley.... My first ever big concert. I remember we went up to London by coach, it was so exciting, we stayed in London, and had a fantastic time, and I remember how [voice starting to get excited] I started to feel that I was really growing up and getting free now.....</p>	<p><i>A new item on the implicit agenda of the initial Sub-session One is broached, and the work of pushing for PINs is starting to pay off a bit more (notice the "now" in the last three words, they may be starting to come from her subjectivity then, not her subjectivity at the time of the interview). This is a Report summarising 4 events, (but not yet a detailed PIN about any one of them^s), progress!</i></p>

^s The terms, 'Description', 'Report', 'PIN' are technical terms in BNIM-speak [as are TIN and GIN]. They are explained later and if you are in a hurry are summarised on p. 892. Don't worry about them now. They will make more sense after you have read about BNIM interpretation procedures.

1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

14	INT: <i>Can you remember any particular thing that happened on that weekend, how it all happened?</i>	<i>Interviewer doesn't choose any one of the 4 events: provides a general PIN-query about any of them...open Q</i>
15	Well, I had a fantastic time and I felt that I was really growing up, and breaking free, and meeting people and doing things on my own, what I wanted to do, and it was great.....really liberating	<i>She is expressing with increasing excitement the felt mind state of the time, but the interviewer is still not getting a PIN, just getting an overall Description. But is making progress in re-evoking the lived experience of that moment.</i>
16	INT: <i>You said you went up to London by coach. Do you remember any particular thing about that coach journey, how it all happened?</i>	<i>The interviewer is probably taking the mini-narrative Reported in (15) and focusing on the second item mentioned in it, pushing for more detail about a sub-part of the Report, for the account of a particular happening...</i>
17	What I remember is being in my seat, I had a window seat next to my friend, and I remember the fabric on the back of the seat in front of me, it was red and blue, a very rough fabric, and I remember really touching it, and then I remember tracing my fingers very gently over it so as to feel its texture better, and I remember	<i>This is getting brilliantly concrete. (a) It could be seen as a sensory scrap or image (though much closer up and contexted than the purpleness</i>

This 'Report' contains four events:

- (i) Sally splitting up from her boyfriend;
- (ii) the offer of a ticket and implicitly its acceptance;
- (iii) the going up to London by coach;
- (iv) the staying up in London and having a fantastic time.

The interviewer could push for PIN-detail (more narrative detail, more detailed narrative) on any (or all) of these four events. You will learn how to do this later.

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	<p>thinking “I’m off on my first trip to London in a coach!” and suddenly feeling awfully excited like the world was at my feet .</p>	<p><i>of an ‘always’ sweater). (b) It could be seen as a close-up PIN (seeing fabric, liking it, tracing it, thinking a thought, suddenly getting a feeling) or (c) a close up Description of a complex single moment. It’s definitely progress – the pushing for particular incidents (PINs) is really re-evoking old experiences</i></p>
	<p><i>The interviewer attempts to get more PINs about the visit to London, but without success.</i></p> <p><i>The interviewee concludes that run of responding about the “fantastic time in London” by going back to the driving test theme and remarking</i></p>	<p><i>No immediate pay-off in clearly laid-out PINs from all that pushing for PINs, but the direction is certainly right. The mini-PIN of IT is very promising!</i></p>
<p>19</p>	<p>..... But after I passed my driving test and got my license, I had a real let down.</p>	<p><i>Will the interviewer follow the shift by the interviewee? Or will they hang on to the previous engaging topic?</i></p>
<p>20</p>	<p>INT: You said you had a ‘real let down’ after you passed that driving test. Can you tell me more about how all that happened?</p>	<p><i>The interviewer follows the movement of thought of the interviewee, and lets go of the previous topic.</i></p> <p><i>Another push for a PIN about a clearly shared understanding of an “all that”.</i></p>

1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

		<i>With what result? Will a PIN emerge?</i>
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1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

<p>21</p>	<p>Well, the same day I passed my driving test, I was driving home and I crashed the car. Not very badly but enough to crumple the front of the car a bit. The bumper fell on the ground. It was just awful. Well, I pushed the car together again enough to drive home and I parked it in the drive. I then went across the lawn to the front door. It's a really small lawn but I can tell you it felt enormous as I walked across it, and I was thinking all the time, 'How am I going to tell my Dad that I've just crashed the car?', and I was really anxious about what he was going to say or do when he heard it. I think I knew my Mum would just want to know whether I was alright, but I didn't know what my Dad would say, and I was thinking or half-thinking these thoughts as I walked across that lawn, and it just felt so long, but I got there and..... I've just remembered. I obviously had keys to the front door, and had had for a number of years, but what I did was that I didn't even think of using that key.... When I got to the front door, I rang the bell and waited for my Dad to come to the door. I'm only now thinking... Why didn't I use my key? Perhaps I wanted to tell my Dad on the doorstep so that if he got really angry I could run away or something which I couldn't do so easily once I was well inside the house, or something like that, I don't know.... Anyway, I rang the doorbell and he came to open it, and I said "Dad I've crashed the car" and he said straight away "Are you alright, was anybody else hurt?, lumps of metal can be replaced but people can't", and he wasn't angry, and I was so relieved.... But it's funny, I didn't think at the time about my not opening the door with my key, I never noticed it, and it's only just now that I've remembered that little detail, and I really wonder now why I didn't use my key...</p>	<p><i>A PIN at last, and quite a rich then-felt in-PIN at that!!!!!!</i></p> <p><i>NB: The determined constant and re-iterated using of her generalisation-phrases about all friends to push for PINs gradually produced in order:</i></p> <p><i>1) a generalisation about one friend (Sally).</i></p> <p><i>2) a scrap of sensory image – a mohair sweater</i></p> <p><i>3) generalisations about "getting free" but partly situated in the subject's earlier subjectivity at age 17</i></p> <p><i>4) Report of a weekend</i></p> <p><i>5) Moment in the coach with fabric</i></p> <p><i>6) On the 3rd item, this complex rich PIN about the car-crash, the return, the lawn, and door-talk with her Dad..... with previously un-remembered detail about not-using her key</i></p> <p><i>Despite what she says, however, some bit of her did notice it at the time, but it seems she didn't think about it then or until now, when she is starting to "really wonder" why she didn't use her key -- and maybe why she kept that detail 'un-noticed' until now.... This may be a clue to her (past and/ or present</i></p>
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1.0. The purple sweater, driving test, crashed car and the un-used key

		<i>) situated-subjectivity.... the default focus of BNIM's open-narrative questioning</i>
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Some of the features of BNIM interviewing are to be found here: the *strategic direction* of pushing for particular experiences and particular incident narratives (PINs) and the *frequently long struggle* (by no means always successful) to get to them. There are 21 pushes before the interviewer got to a full and extended then-felt in-PIN.

(The 'mini-PIN' at point (17) was a sign of, and a basis for, emerging access to some past lived experience).

Note also that, surprisingly, it doesn't matter so much what the PIN eventually turns out to be about. The one that was accessed wasn't about friends helping with driving practice, or about Sally, or about the concert.

There's no way of being sure in advance where the PINs are going to be hidden. You push for PINs and follow the musing and remembering of the interviewee wherever it goes: eventually a PIN about something nearly always gets unearthed. A bit like truffle-hunting.

What matters is that there is a particular memorable moment about something, sometimes, that gets evoked. A fully-felt in-PIN with detail that surprised the narrator. In what areas the situated subjectivity provides such memories, depends.....on the history of that subjectivity which by definition you don't understand and which, by the PINs you get and the PINs you don't, luckily will surprise you!.

When you do your first pilot interview and, as always happens, you don't get as many PINs as you hoped you would get or not about the topics you wanted to get them about, re-read again the above interview extract.

- To remind you how that the proportion of PIN to other material might be one-third or one-quarter
- To remind you how you have to persevere in the strategic direction of pushing towards PINs, even if you repeatedly don't get them
- To remind you how you first may get bits and scraps of lived experience (the purple sweater) long before any actual PIN emerges
- To remind you how you have to follow the 'cue-phrases used' and the movements of the interviewee's thinking from one apparently unrelated topic to the next, trusting that with your 'pushing for PIN examples', they and you will eventually get to somewhere.
- How there's no point in being in a hurry and every point in maintaining the PIN-direction while allowing or fostering a free movement of association from one topic that comes up in their mind to the next one.

1.1. Start here

The *Guide* as a whole is divided into three main parts:

- the ‘Introduction’ (about 50 pages)
- the ‘Short Guide’ (section 1.2 – 1.6 onwards, about 60 pages);
- the ‘More Detailed Manual’ (about 400 pages: section 2 on interviewing, section 3 on interpretation);
- and a large ‘Appendices’ section 4: also about 350 pages.

It’s been designed in sections so that you need only read (and occasionally print out) sections (and sub-sections!) for the area and level that you need.

To get an *overview* of BNIM, the **Short Guide** section 1 (this section) of about 70 pages (with a technical core of some **40 pages in sections 1.2 to 1.6**) is quite sufficient.

1.1.1. Printing-out and/or viewing electronically? Don’t rush to print!

This text has grown a lot – originally 25, now over 825 pages. Why is it so long? *The Short Guide* hasn’t grown so much (up to say 75 pages); however, it is now bound together with (and is cross-referenced with hyperlinks between itself and) another text, the *Detailed Manual + Appendices* that serve a different purpose.

The *Detailed Manual* has grown to meet the variety of questions that people doing BNIM raise implicitly and explicitly over the last seven year, and to thus to support you in achieving chosen levels of excellence in BNIM interviewing and interpreting. The *Appendices* likewise.

1. To do BNIM interviewing, you use this ‘Short Guide’ (section 1) , and, ideally, chapter 6 of the textbook (Wengraf 2001) as well.

When you want to move towards a practice interview, you should then read the Interview section of the ‘Detailed Manual’ (section 2) plus three of the four Appendices (A1-A3) in Appendix section A.

Long after that, to ‘do’ a practice BNIM interpreting through its various stages, you could read the relevant section of this ‘Short Guide’, and then ch.12 of the textbook (Wengraf 2001).... After you have completed a practice interview, then – for each 10 stages or so of the ‘doing’ (see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována.) -- you need to read and work on the relevant sections of the Detailed Manual (section 2)

BNIM interviewing procedure on its own is a very powerful technique. You can use it, and then interpret the material in a non-BNIM way.

You do not need to read about BNIM interpretation until much later, if at all.

But, you can

2. To explore BNIM interpretation, you might later on (after your first pilot interview, for example) choose to read the Interpretation section of the ‘Detailed Manual’ (section 3). BNIM interpretation procedures combine to make another very powerful triangulated technique. They too require persistence and practice to get right.

How to use the text [SG+DM: Short Guide + Detailed Manual] as a whole?

The advantages of printing out (at least of relevant sections) are obvious. The disadvantages of printing out and wading through over 800 pages, even more so....

Working electronically

Bear in mind, however, that you can work with this text in WORD largely electronically. Thus saving paper and the cost of colour or black/white printing.

Use PRINT LAYOUT and ‘FINAL SHOWING MARKUP’ to see the embedded ‘COMMENTS’

You can print out the [**Brief or**] the **Detailed Table of Contents (p.8)**, and **then routinely use WORD’s VIEW-> ‘DOCUMENT MAP’ on screen** facility to locate particular headed sections and subsections.

Having done that, you can also get to such numerically-headed sections and subsections on the contents pages straight away by CONTROL-CLICK on the page-number on the screen ‘Table of Contents’, or a straight click on the line of the screen ‘Document Map’.

[You can also SEARCH for a chosen keyword. This is a partial substitute for an Index].

Where there are PAGE CROSS-REFERENCES, you can in WORD jump-click on the page number to the page referred to. (But remember the page where you jumped from, or click on the RETURN-ARROW command, to get back to your original page. Try p.38 to test.). You may need to get rid of VIEW-DOCUMENT MAP temporarily for this to work.

If you are working on the material, you could use the INSERT COMMENTS control in WORD to add to, disagree with, and keep track of your own experiences with the text and your own interviewing and interpretation practices and experiments.

The *Detailed Manual and Appendices*— together with the **2001 textbook** -- provide the resources for a fully-professional use of interviewing and interpreting procedures to enable you – **with supported practice, see p.94** onwards -- to reach, if you so wish, PhD and post-doctoral levels of excellence in generating, using, presenting and where appropriate theorising from case material. It's long, but it's complete.

TECHNICAL NOTE on CROSS-REFERENCES

There are many cross-references in this text of the “..see p.**XX**” sort.

WORD sometimes needs to have its Cross-Referencing Fields Updated. You know it needs this when many of the page cross-references have the same number. They all say “See p.**0**” or some other number.

This is easy. You select “Control-A” to cover the entire document, and then press “F9” to update. You will first be asked to update the Contents and the Figures pages,. Just instruct the computer to update their page-numbers. This will happen three times. Then the rest will be done.

Then ‘deselect’ the control-A with one left-click.

1.1.2. Given where you are in your research, why might you want to bring in BNIM?

Many people move towards open-narrative interviewing when they start getting dissatisfied with the results of semi-structured depth interviewing (SSDI). As one research team reported, they moved from a semi-structured study to a BNIM-based one :

.... In [our previous] study, a qualitative method, namely semi-structured interviews, combined with a constant comparative content analysis, was used. However, the resulting analysed data were not of a sufficient depth to provide a possible explanation or interpretation.... [it was] a less complex qualitative method..... Therefore, our aim with this [new] study was to apply a qualitative method [BNIM] that would potentially lead to more detailed data analysis and explanation of the findings.... (Stamm et al 2008: 659, re-arranged).

Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson (1997) and other researchers report similar experiences, justifying a change of method to one giving better materials and increased depth and quality of interpretation.

- Many people want to get closer to the lived experience and the subjective culture of a given individual, family, grouping, institution or situation. BNIM is a powerful method for doing this.
- Many people want a systematic method of both doing and interpreting interview material because they find that without a clear system of doing that practice, without a rudder and a direction, they are constantly finding themselves uncertain what they should be doing. BNIM is very systematic. This text has many examples of practice to help you.
- Many people want the bulk of their research project to deal with a relatively large number of semi-structured depth interviews, but wish to precede that phase by an earlier one in which, by doing a small number of cases (one , or two, or three) in greater detail, they develop the best ‘rich theory’ (conceptualisation) to guide them in that later phase of larger number of semi-structured interviews. The ‘pre-quel’ principle. BNIM provides a basis for very rich and theory-innovative interpretations.⁹

⁹ For example, you may wish to do (say) 20 semi-structured interviews, and have even worked out a draft schedule of initial questions (topic guides). You may find it useful to start by a phase of doing BNIM interviews on (say) no more than 3 interviewees, in order to improve and enrich your draft schedule of initial questions for the non-BNIM remaining 17..... This first (BNIM pre-quel) phase can be treated as an initial theory-building phase on which to build a more powerful and insightful second theory-development, theory-testing, phase of non-BNIM interviewing, or non-BNIM interpretation..... The three-Sub-session model of BNIM is particularly congruent with such a design (O’Neill 2010 did one case BNIM-way and her remaining cases in other ways).

- Many people want to do a research project primarily using BNIM interviews and interpretation in the foreground, but these being supported by rich contextual material from both primary and secondary sources. BNIM's two-track approach fosters the organic and systematic integration of extra-interview material into the interpretation of any particular case or set of cases.

1.1.3. What are the assumptions and uses of the method?

BNIM started off as an off-shoot of the interviewing method of Fritz Schütze (open narrative), combined with the interpretive methods of Oevermann (objective hermeneutic micro-analysis) Wolfram Fischer (temporality) as worked over and crystallised by Gabriele Rosenthal and others associated with the Berlin *Quatext* group.¹⁰

Prue Chamberlayne is responsible for bringing their *Quatext* elaboration to the UK (and to me) and for many of the ideas (not the bad ones) in this *Guide*. The first extensive angloworld study was Chamberlayne and King's (2000) *Cultures of Care: biographies of carers in Britain and the two Germanies* researched at the start of the 1990s. The translation of Rosenthal's (1998) multi-authored research into *The Holocaust in three generations: families of victims and perpetrators of the Nazi regime* presented a great wealth of valuable short studies to the Angloworld reader to learn from.

Roswitha Breckner gave the first angloworld sketch of the methodology (Breckner 1998), which was then laid out for angloworld researchers to follow in detail in chapters 6 and 12 of Wengraf (2001) For details of BNIM's evolution, see Wengraf (2001: 112-3) (plus a few remarks later in this *Guide*), and, on *Quatext* itself, see also Rosenthal (2004).¹¹

BNIM is concerned to clarify both (evolving) situations and (evolving) subjectivities by exploring locally-historically 'situated subjectivities'. This is done by eliciting self-biographising narratives and interpreting them by way of clear (and initially largely auditable) procedures which involve thinking about the historical context of the life and of the interview interaction: a 'situated telling of a whole story' by an equally-situated subjectivity.

For a general discussion of biographical and narrative approaches in social research, see *The Turn to biographical methods in social science: comparative issues and examples*

¹⁰ For a discussion of the more general controversially-labelled 'German school' of biographical research, see Aritzsch and Inowlocki (2000).

¹¹ Several key texts can be found in the Bob Miller (ed) 2005 four-volume collection, *Biographical research methods*. A further brief discussion of Schütze's approach is in an appendix below (p. 639 onwards). The on-line journal *FQS* frequently has relevant articles, as does the *Journal of Social Work Practice*. Two recent introductions to the uses of narrative in general are Elliott (2007) and more recently Riessman (2008).

1.1.3 . Assumptions and uses of BNIM approach

(edited by Prue Chamberlayne, Joanna Bornat and Tom Wengraf). The ‘Introduction’ by the editors and the opening essay by Michael Rustin together provide a strong context.

‘Narrative’ is a specific way of giving an account: namely, an account that is oriented towards story, a temporal sequence of event-in-time following one after another: one thought after another, one action after another, one event after another, etc., but always one thing after another in temporal sequence.¹²

‘Biographic narrative’ means the individual generating a story about part or all of their own lives and lived experience(s).

‘Interpretive’ means a number of things: (a) that people are constantly interpreting themselves and the situation they are in; (b) that researchers are constantly attempting to describe those (narrative plus) interpretations; (c) that to understand the generation of a narrative, you have to interpret it in the light of the real historical context and evolution, not just re-cycle the artful presentation of self in narrative as an unproblematic and self-sufficient truth.

Assuming that “biographic narrative expression” is expressive both of conscious concerns and also of unconscious cultural, societal and individual presuppositions and processes, BNIM supports research into the complexities of the lived experience of individuals and collectives, and their transmission over time.

It facilitates understanding both the ‘inner’ and the ‘outer’ worlds of ‘historically-evolving persons in historically-evolving situations’, and particularly *the interactivity and mutual-constitutiveness* of such inner and outer world dynamics.

As such, BNIM lends itself particularly to both psycho-dynamic *and* socio-dynamic approaches, serving specialists of both the ‘psycho’ and the ‘societal’, and without requiring any particular allegiance to any particular theoretical approach.

However, it particularly serves those researchers wanting tools that support a fully psycho-societal understanding in which neither sociological nor psychological dynamics

¹² This is a deliberately restrictive use of the term ‘narrative’. Other people use the term more generally, without reference to temporal sequence, so that it can refer to any (or at least a much broader) sort of self-account, self-description, self-justification, etc (see, for example, Bernasconi 2008; Herman 2002, Hyvarinen XXX) . I suggest that experience shows that the ‘restrictiveness’ of Labov’s definition is pragmatically helpful. For us, an attempt to obtain a narrative about lived experience is an attempt to get the interviewee to respond primarily by attempting to tell the story of that experience, how one thing happened after another. Such a direction of questioning is – as you will see and learn – as you may have seen from the direction of questioning in the “Sally” example -- the strategic core of BNIM.

This is the strategic direction: it doesn’t mean that all the non-narrative material that you inevitably get is not wanted. It is. It is very much wanted. But you get such non-narrative material (such as descriptions, position-takings, etc.) *differently* if they emerge during a push for narrative. *You definitely want non-narrative material , but you definitely want it as it emerges from that different way of getting it.* So, strategically, you push for Labov-defined narrative and for particular-incident-narrations (PINs).

1.1.3 . Assumptions and uses of BNIM approach

and regime-structures are neglected or privileged, and in which both are understood not statically but as situated historically. Biographic-narrative interviewing can provide a firm basis for better practice (individual and team) and better policy.

A key feature of biographical research into people's lived experiencing of their lives and situations is a concern for distinguishing *the variety* of dominant and less dominant or suppressed *perspectives on those experiences*: both those configurations of sometimes contradictory perspectives that they *currently* hold (not necessarily consciously) on the one hand and, on the other, also those configurations that they held *earlier* before, during and after such experiences but which are currently apparently absent or forgotten... but are still detectable...

BNIM focuses in its interviewing in Sub-session One on the elicitation of what you might call Whole Stories (of the life or part of the life) and in Sub-session Two on the elicitation of detailed particular incident narratives (known as PINs) arising from or lurking behind events and generalisations and feelings mentioned in the Whole Story of Sub session 1.

What you typically get when you're asking informants for their whole life narrative in Sub-session one is a general view of what for them has remained the same and what has changed, along with some sense of how they currently understand that change (some element of self-theory) over the period they've been asked to talk about (whole life, or other).

The pushing towards PINs in Sub-session two produces accounts of particular incidents in the past, particular incident narratives, accounts which often encapsulate attitudes and ways of seeing the world and orientations which are not simply those which the interviewees in Sub-session One now- think of themselves as having or as having had. Consequently, in the interpretive process after the interview, the researcher has both the explicit self-theory/story of continuity and change from Sub-session One but also the implicit data from PINs and argument and description etc..... which sometimes enriches and sometimes strongly qualifies any explicit initial perspective and self-theory.

Other research methods (such as 'attitude' surveys and 'attitude' interviews) elucidate mostly dominant and explicit and 'official press-release' self-theories and present-time perspectives. 'Thematic interpretation' (even of BNIM interview material) finds it hard to grasp 'historicity' very well.

BNIM, through its focus on eliciting narratives of 'past experience' rather than (just) explicit assertions of present (or remembered) 'position', facilitates the expression and detection of implicit and often suppressed perspectives and practices in the present as well as the expression and detection of perspectives, practices and counter-narratives at various moments in the past (see a detailed discussion of the key – though disposable -- term 'Perspective' starting p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.).

Consequently, BNIM is particularly suited for retrospective and ongoing longitudinal process studies of complexity, since it fosters accounts of earlier and ongoing experiences in particular incident narratives (PINs). It can access vanished and mutated times, places, nuanced states of feeling and ways of doing and living.

1.1.3 . Assumptions and uses of BNIM approach

The individual must be free to wander in and out of recovered memories, in particular those that are seemingly trivial...very small incidents.... Recollection of very small details is a kind of screen function within the self, as the small memory evokes the self state that prevailed at the time: remembering the small episodes of life revives selves from the past, even if the past as a totality [as a grand narrative or encompassing and overarching Report, TW?] remains chained to its dumb facts and reveals comparatively little. ...

It is only in the displaced mentation of the subject, in his asides, in his *sotto voce* mumblings – in the details of the seeming trivia of his life – that one can discover the true response to the deeds done This kind of work defeats trauma and revives the selves [and experienced relations] that have been consigned to oblivion

(Bollas 2005 in his chapter ‘*The functions of history*’, pp. 138-41, rearranged, and material in brackets supplied, TW).¹³

However the overall structure of the form of the ‘wandering in and out of recovered memories response’ to an open-narrative question is not as trivial as the out-of-context citation above from Bollas seems to imply (“*it is only in the details....*”).

BNIM’s open-narrative interview structure – as opposed to semi-structured strongly-guiding part-narrative methods – allows or requires the interviewee to give their own form and sequence to what they choose to recall and tell.

Hence, we not only get *the detail* of important events and experiences from the interview, but we also get the added value and insights that come from their *structuring choices of form* in relation to the open-narrative question. (Perhaps have a quick glance at an example on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. at this point?).

Indeed in a later work, Bollas implicitly corrects his earlier over-statement just cited (“*only in the details*”). He writes “*By just talking freely, any person reveals a line of thought ... linked by some hidden logic that connects seemingly disconnected ideas* (Bollas 2008a: 8-9)”.

Free talking that enables that exploration of the further material that emerges is the other clue to the ‘situated subjectivity’ of the interviewee.

¹³ The main function of Sub-session Two of the BNIM interview is precisely to push for such small particular incident narratives (PINs) that may not be easily accessible or obviously significant. In addition, the search is for a narrating of such incidents that feels as if they were told -- at least partly -- from ‘within the original experiencing’ (‘in-PINs’). It is less satisfactory if the interviewer stops at the ‘about-PINs’: narrating that appear to be ‘about’ a mostly forgotten-experiencing recalled at some emotional distance by the interviewer in a self-state firmly and completely located within the present interview moment’. In an appendix on pp.590 onwards, I discuss further this distinction between an ‘about-PIN’ ... and the ‘in-PIN’ behind it that you try to release.....

The more free talking, the better..... both for freed-form and for freed-trivia.¹⁴

We should conclude, therefore, that value is derived *both from the “trivia of particular incident narrations”* (and the extensive and vital material thrown up around it by asking narrative questions) elicited and explored particularly in Sub-session Two *and also from the sequence of the whole-story free- form* generated in the freely-improvised and rigorously unguided initial Sub-session One. [Hence the need for two Sub-sessions of different types].

In longitudinal studies (for example on people with a chronic illness, or in human-service programmes like education) , a small series of BNIM interviews can be used: later interviews may elicit later retrospectives from potentially new perspectives on the period originally covered by the earlier BNIM interview, as well as on the subsequent period since that earlier BNIM interview.

Both Nicholson’s successive ‘shortitudinal’ interviews with frail elderly people (2009), O’Neill’s (2009) study of treatment decision-making around (but rarely of, and never just-by) frail elders in hospitals, and also Brown and Aldington Hall’s research (2008) using 3-monthly BNIM interviews for over a period of 18 months on people with motor neurone disease, exemplify this use of successive BNIM interviews.

BNIM can also be used as part of before-and-after particular *intervention* studies.

The methodological component of *biographic-narrative-based* research does *not* mean that the *research product* has to take the form of a collection of accounts of individual biographies or experiences; it may do so, but at least as often it doesn’t. *You could decide to make your BNIM-based research report contain no BNIM case-studies at all.*

On the other hand, before you get to a BNIM-based research report that ‘contains’ no BNIM case-studies at all, there are very strong reasons for doing, along the way towards such a case report, a number of *mediating case studies*. Without doing that, you may well fail to get a ‘sufficient sense of cases of evolving situated subjectivity’ to guide your ‘case-study-less’ eventual report.

You will benefit from doing at least one BNIM case-study, even if your final report is designed to have no ‘presented cases’ in its chapters.

Your research purposes and research questions dictate whether you choose to dwell in the dimension of case-description and understanding, or whether you wish, from further work on the cases researched and described, to focus more on drawing theoretical, policy or practice conclusions of a generalising/particularising sort.

¹⁴ Which are, of course, not ‘trivia’ at all, otherwise they wouldn’t be remembered.

1.1.3 . Assumptions and uses of BNIM approach

Exploring the particularity of individual experiencing and mutating subjectivity in unique historical and societal locations and processes through biography-*based* research lays the basis for systematic later ‘whole case’ comparisons of people, yes. It also lays a basis for comparisons of historically-situated practices and processes of different interest to the researcher, thus enabling well-grounded description and theorisation about a frequently *different* object of study. Very often, this can be that of ‘situated practice’, understood in different ways including that of Pierre Bourdieu’s *habitus*.

Consequently, the *object of study -- the focal unit of research, analysis and presentation of research using in part or in whole elicited auto/biographies-- can be highly varied.*

So far, it includes for example: *multi-generation families* (Rosenthal; Bar-On; Brannen); *intimate citizenship and public policy* (Roseneil et al, forthcoming); *organisations and their cultures* (Sostri Phase 2; Wengraf 2002a; Froggett et al 2005); *learning/training and mentoring cultures* (Volante); *relationship patterns between clients and/or service professionals* (Bolton; Snelling; Curran and Chamberlayne; Grant); *vulnerability to breast cancer* (Aydin); *cancer stories of the over-75s* (Hughes); *informal cultures of caring* (Chamberlayne and King; Jones; Jones and Rupp).

More generally, users of BNIM have been concerned with *modes of cultural transmission of patterns of feeling and behaviour...* A main focus has been on *individuals experiencing historical changes and institutions experiencing struggled-over uncertain transitions between historical regimes* at micro, meso and macro levels (Rosenthal; Sostri Phase 1; Breckner et al.; Chamberlayne and Spano; Bar-On; Ackermann; Brannen; Semenova; Humphrey et al; Domecka and Mrozowicki; Tatiana Bajuk Sencar and Jeffrey Turk; and many others).¹⁵

BNIM tends towards the holistic and the historical.

The ‘historical’ is relatively self-evident in the notion itself of a biographical narrative, that which asks for a historical account to explain the movement towards the present.

The ‘holistic’ is not so evident, perhaps. The concern for ‘whole cases in whole contexts’ (whole subjectivity in whole situation) as a default outcome/object of concern for BNIM is fairly significant. Ollman (2003) has argued strongly that the more the concept of ‘system under study’ is widened (the individual person as micro-system is the least wide system; the family is a wider object of study, the neighbourhood, organisation, networks

¹⁵ Many contributions to Robin Humphrey, Robert Miller and Elena Zdravomyslova’s *Biographical research in Eastern Europe: altered lives and broken biographies* (2003a) draw out the consequences of macro-societal regime change for individual and collective biographies. See also the important collection in Breckner, Kalekin-Fishman and Miethe eds (2000) *Biographies and the division of Europe*, and now also Gabriele Rosenthal and Artur Bogner (eds) (2009) *Ethnicity, belonging and biography: ethnographical and biographical perspectives*. Studies of ‘migration’ and studies of ‘trauma’ bring out characteristics of the contemporary psycho-societal scene in a particularly powerful way. See the work of Bar-On and of Rosenthal on the Holocaust in three generations in Germany and in the Jewish diaspora.

are all wider still, for the humans-on-earth the ‘planet’ is the widest), the more powerful and insightful the study can be.

Taking both points together, the ‘wider’ the object of study can be made and the longer the period of time under study can be, then the more adequate an understanding can be reached. Biographical narratives of individuals may well be our primary working data-generation/collection source, but the ‘case we study’ may be wider in scope and longer in history. “What do they know of a single case, who know only one case at one point in time?”

The desire to get a ‘freeform whole story’ from the interviewee in Sub-session One – prior to any investigation in Sub-session Two – can be thought of in relation to the *Gestalt* notion of early twentieth-century *Gestalt psychology*, and its insight that the same set of ‘parts’ could be configured in a number of distinct ‘whole ways’, and consequently a key focus was the ‘understanding of the role of parts in this or that whole into which they were configured’. The ‘sensing of the particular whole’ was key to not misunderstanding the significance of the parts.

Different sorts of ‘systems thinking’ and ‘synthesising apprehension’ continue this ‘holistic insistence’, and BNIM is a moderate part of this methodological insistence, and, of course, by eliciting ‘narratives of the past’ it cannot but help to undermine contemporary historical amnesias in societal life and in social research.¹⁶

Is there a case for using BNIM as part of your study?

As a broad answer, if you are interested in ‘situated subjectivity’ – *in the subjectivity shaped by* and perhaps shaping situations; *and/or in the situation that shapes* and is partially and potentially at least perhaps shaped by subjectivities – then you are likely to find BNIM useful.

Given that both situations and subjectivities are liable to mutate and change form over time, if you happen to have a concern for developmental change over some or all of the (life) time, then you are likely to find BNIM particularly useful for exploring changes in lived experience. We might call this, *dated situated subjectivity*.

¹⁶ In its method of interviewing and in its methods of interpretation (especially the procedure within the kickstart panels), it also may well support under-valued right-hemisphere brain functioning, and bring the mind of the researcher into a better-balanced relation of left-brain and right-brain functions. See McGilchrist (2009) and Grotstein (2010) for explicit discussion of these neurological questions. As of early 2010, I have applied them speculatively to BNIM below at points in the Detailed Manual. The notion of the *Gestalt* or whole pattern/configuration that was so important earlier on the understanding of the method – as a correction to linear-thinking, and bits-agglomeration thinking -- was itself based on an earlier ‘neurology of perception’. Contemporary brain research has developed such early right-brain appreciations in a more sophisticated way, being able to use neuro-imaging and other techniques not available even 20 years ago. We are becoming the beneficiaries.

1.1.3 . Assumptions and uses of BNIM approach

A more active term for a key ‘action’ component of any ‘situation’ is that of ‘practice’.

The *Journal of Social Work Practice* vol.23 (4) – and also vol.25 (1) to come in early 2010-- has an exciting set of papers emerging from an ESRC seminar on ‘practice-near research’. The editors conclusions from the ESRC series are in part:

...2. The [ESRC] series understood ‘practice-near’ to have a close affinity with many practice concerns, including ‘thick description’ of the social world and an emphasis on the experience of service-users and professionals, which has an immediate relevance for a critical appraisal of policy.

3. ‘Practice-near’ research employs a range of methodologies which have points of contact with each other. They are linked through concern for the study of emotionality and relational approaches to practice and policy. There is an ethnographic dimension to these research practices..

4. A range of theoretical approaches were evident...

6. Practice-near research is a useful way of conceptualising a cluster of methodologies which share a common aim of ‘getting closer to practice’ (Froggett and Briggs 2009: 378-9).

The ‘practice’ of individuals and groups can be detected both in a direct but sometimes all-too-obvious way by ethnographic and other forms of ‘observation’ and (in a different way, more indirect and mediated but also often a more ‘inner fashion) way by interviews, including BNIM interviews.

The two ways (interview and observation) are NOT perfect substitutes for each other, however tempting it is to think they are! We discuss multi-method approaches in an Appendix. Here, however, we are concerned with just BNIM interviewing.

1. 1. 4. Where and how has BNIM been used?

1.1.4. How and where has the method been used and taught?

The BNIM methodology for exploring lived-experiences through biographic narrative interviews (originally laid out in angloworld textbook detail nine years ago in Wengraf 2001) has been used over the past twenty years or so in a variety of collective research projects, either more or less directly starting with Chamberlayne and King's *Cultures of Care* project in the early 1990s: (e.g. Chamberlayne 1996; Rosenthal 1998, Chamberlayne et al 2002, Froggett et al 2005); or in a modified version, for example in Heggie et al (2007) ; and often in combination with other methods (for example, Firkin et al 2004, Froggett et al 2005, and Robinson et al 2006).

BNIM and BNIM-style work has already started to be used in an increasing number of successful individual PhDs – as well as in a similarly-increasing number of collective postdoctoral funded research projects. A larger number are currently in process.

For a sense of how the method has been used, and the types of publications that have been produced using BNIM, see below and the BNIM Bibliography, Bibliography A, starting on p. 156.

1.1.4.1. Where?

Where have BNIM/Quatext-style studies been undertaken or are under way? Where are BNIM-using researchers located? The core nodes so far are still seems to be (from an angloworld perspective) the UK (BNIM) and Germany (Quatext). The list includes:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Guatemala, Holland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel/Palestine, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Uganda, the UK and the USA.

The numbers of biographic-narrative trained researchers in each country vary from one or two through to several dozens. In the UK and Ireland, over 200 pre- and post- doctoral researchers have already had this training.

1.1.4.2. MAs, PhDs and professional doctorates

[With a few exceptions, this list does not include studies reports on which are not for the most part in English. A large number of biographic-narrative studies have emerged directly and indirectly in Germany (many through the *Quatext* group) and readers of German will find many more excellent biographical-narrative studies that are not listed in this angloworld publication]

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We haven't begun to have a list of undergraduate or MA dissertations that have been completed using BNIM. Our knowledge of PhDs and post-doctoral research, though better, is still sketchy. If you can add to our knowledge, please do tell us.

We know as *Already completed* some 40 or so theses – PhDs and dissertations at Masters and at clinical/professional doctorate level -- using BNIM in whole or in significant part.

In the UK, including Lisanne Ackermann (Oxford University), Elvin Aydin (Essex University), Caroline Barratt (University of East Anglia) Tanya Campbell-Breen (University of East Anglia), Sarah Collins (Kings College, London), Zaheera Essat (de Montfort University), Debbie Holley (Institute of Education, London University), Kip Jones (de Montfort University), Robert Little (University of Central Lancashire), Margaret McCulloch (Glasgow) Marilyn Mackay (Thames Valley), James McGurk (Exeter), Ann McNulty (Newcastle University), Caroline Nicholson (City University), Emma Snelling (Plymouth University), Manuel Villaescusa (Middlesex University), Margaret Volante (University of East London), Nicola Ward (University of Birmingham), Anthea Williams (University of East London), Mark Worthington (Exeter University).

Outside the UK, including Hakon Berntsen (Bergen University, Norway), Ines Blitz (Utrecht University for the Humanities, the Netherlands), Stian Bong (Nordic School of Public Health, Goteborg); Sarah Brennan (NUI-Galway), Lee Davidson (Monash), Lucy Her (Alliant International University), Kimberley Hieftje (University of Indiana), Martha Kamara (Australian Catholic University at Sydney), Liu-Chuan Liu-Hang (Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium), Carina Meares (Massey, New Zealand), Oyfrid Moen (Karlstad University, Sweden), Amanda Nielsen (Queensland), Catherine O'Neill (University College Dublin) *just submitted*, Judith Overbeek (Barnevelde), Erin Seaton (Harvard); Diana van Bergen (Amsterdam VU University), Nancy Wemm (Ohio University); Richard Wilson (Idaho University), Katrine Woll (Oslo, Norway), Chunyan Yang (Griffiths University, Australia), Asta Zbarauskaite (Vilnius University, Lithuania).

We know also of **increasing numbers of *PhDs and MAs in process***, another 30 or so PhDs or clinical doctorates [at the Australian Catholic Universities at Sydney and at Melbourne, and at Bournemouth, Canterbury Christ Church, Central Lancashire, De Montfort, East Anglia, East London, Exeter, Kings College London, Lancaster, Leicester, Liverpool, NUI-Galway, Oxford Brookes, Plymouth, Queens University Belfast, Southampton, Queensland, Robert Gordon University, Stirling, Surrey, and Westminster].

Altogether, so far, we know of over 40 universities as having been involved or being currently involved in supporting higher degree and/or post-doctoral research using BNIM in whole or in part (see below).

We are increasingly finding, in addition, that there are other researchers who have not made contact with us, just working on their own from the textbook (Wengraf 2001),

1. 1. 4. Where and how has BNIM been used?

earlier versions of this *Guide*, and other published materials (for a list, see Bibliography A, p.156). Except by pure accident, unfortunately we tend not to be told about Masters' dissertations using BNIM.

.....If you complete (or have completed) an MA, PhD, research report or other publication using BNIM, please let us know so that we can put this information into this Guide and so that other BNIM-using researchers know about it. Every piece of research and writing is an experiment in the applications and mutations of method, and therefore of value to others doing their own experimenting.....

If you have already completed such a piece of BNIM-based or BNIM-using research, you can see whether we know about it by looking in Bibliography A. If it's not there, please do tell us about it in full detail so we can insert it. Ideally, you would send us an electronic copy.....

Any benefits you get from this Guide and the earlier textbook are based on and improved by knowing about other people's work. *Make your contribution in turn by feeding back your experience and exploration to the BNIM research community.....*

There are a growing number of university-based research projects using BNIM not oriented towards higher degrees, both by individuals and by groups.

1.1.4.3. Collective post-doctoral research projects using BNIM

Apitzsch and Sioutie (2007) remark on the expansion of biographical research projects – using of course a variety of approaches to biography, not just BNIM. They write:

An indication of this expansion are a number of international research projects which have been funded by the European Commission during recent years and have used biographical research methods. Among them are the projects: '*Self-employment and activities concerning women and minorities*' (1997-2000) coordinated by Ursula Apitzsch; '*Social strategies in risk society*' (1996-1999) coordinated by Michael Rustin and Prue Chamberlayne; '*Between integration and exclusion: A comparative study on local dynamics of precarity and resistance to exclusion in urban contexts*' (1998-2000) coordinated by Daniel Bertaux in cooperation with Thomas Boje and Susan McIntosh; '*The chances of the second generation in families of ethnic entrepreneurs: intergenerational and gender aspects of quality of life processes*' (2002-2005) coordinated by Ursula Apitzsch; and the ongoing project '*Integration of Female Immigrants in Labour Market and Society. Policy Assessment and Policy Recommendations*' coordinated by Maria Kontos.

(Apitzsch and Siouti 2007:14, typography modified TW).

1. 1. 4. Where and how has BNIM been used?

Collective projects using BNIM-type procedures in whole or in part with other data-collection and interpretation methods or without so far include: –

- [from the Berlin *Quatext* group], a long and crucial collective project looking at multi-generational studies of the families of both victims of the Nazis and of Nazi perpetrators (*Families of perpetrators and victims* Rosenthal et al)
- a research project comparing cross-nationally (UK, East Germany, West Germany) regimes of caring and the different informal cultures that the different regimes gave rise to (*Cultures of care* Chamberlayne and King)
- an EU-funded three-year multi-country study comparing the social strategies of people in disadvantaged categories coping with increasingly risky societies in Europe and of innovative agencies that have tried to measure up to such new challenges of what is euphemistically called and ideologically labelled as ‘modernisation’ (*SOSTRIS Social strategies in risk societies* – Chamberlayne et al, especially 2002). [an EU-funded Targeted Socio-Economic Research Project]
- an ESRC-funded study of work and caring in the UK over the 20th century looking at change and continuity across four generations of twelve families between 1910 and the late 1990s (Brannen et al: *Working and caring across the twentieth century*)..
- a study of professionals immigrating to New Zealand (Firkin, Dupuis and Meares; Meares)
- a study of the interaction between front-line professionals and their clients in agencies dealing with the homeless (Curran and Chamberlayne);
- ethnic entrepreneurship and ‘new professionalisation’ as twin gendered strategies among immigrant minority groups in Europe (Apitzsch, Kontos, Kupferberg), [an EU-funded Targeted Socio-Economic Research Project].
- more recently, a multi-method psycho-societal evaluation of one innovative institutional regime, that of a Healthy Living Centre in a deprived part of East London [using BNIM biographical and other interviews, institutional observation, and participant action research (Froggett, Chamberlayne, Buckner and Wengraf 2005)].
- An evaluation of inter-generational work in a Community Centre in Speke, Liverpool (Jude Robinson, Lindsay Hobby and Andrew Kirkcaldy 2006)
- A study of ADVANCE Women towards Employability (Joan Heggie, Barbara Neil, Eileen Green and Carrie Singleton 2007)

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- A study of the changing needs of people who lose their eyesight (Clare Thetford et al 2008)
- A study of people living with rheumatoid arthritis (Stamm et al 2008; 2009)
- A study of the impact of BNIM-evoked cancer-survivor stories on African-American women (Kreuter et al 2008)
- a currently ongoing study of the habitus of Slovenian managers between 1960 and 1991 with historians and economists exploring the context in which the managers operated, and with researchers with specialist expertise and narrative-researchers eliciting accounts and exploring the narratives the managers told about their strategies and courses of action, followed by team exploration of the relation between the two (Fikfak, Prinic, Turk and Sensar *as yet no publications*).
- An EU-funded project FEMAGE (female immigrants and their integration into ageing societies) has used BNIM-style interviewing and interpretation as part of its multi-method research: see Kovacs and Melegh 2006 for its interpretive methodology, and also Kovacs and Melegh 2007.
- Another EU-funded project, (FeMiPol). Integration of female immigrants in labour market and society. Policy assessment and policy recommendations (FeMiPol) (Maria Kontos, Floya Anthias, Mojca Pajnik and others). Final report (2009) available from <http://www.femipol.uni-frankfurt.de/> and <http://primts.mirovni-institut.si/>

Some studies starting in or after 2008 based on or using BNIM-type methodology to varying extents

A UK study of community mental health nurses working with people with an early diagnosis of dementia (Weaks and Johansen).

A UK study of the experience of nurses acting as workplace mentors for mental health nurses during their training (Volante and Gurney *started in 2008*).

FEMCIT. A 4-country European study of intimate citizenship: women's movements, cultural diversity, personal lives and public policy [an EU-funded Targeted Socio-Economic Research Project] (Roseneil et al, 2008-10). See their website for details.

An EU-funded Targeted Socio-Economic *Euro-identities* Research Project on a biographical approach to the evolution of European identities (Robert Miller et al *started 2008*). www.euroidentities.org.

“Gay and pleasant land”: A study of *gay and lesbian older adults* living in South-West England. This study is part of the ‘New Dynamics of Ageing’ programme, the UK’s

1. 1. 4. Where and how has BNIM been used?

largest study of the quality of life of older people: the ‘New Dynamics’ seven-year research initiative, the largest research programme on ageing to date in the UK, is a unique collaboration between five UK Research Councils – ESRC, EPSRC, BBSRC, MRC and AHRC (Kip Jones et al *started in 2008*).

A multi-generational UK study into *fathering among white immigrant families*, funded by the ESRC, (Julia Brannen et al *started in 2008*).

YIPPEE An EU funded study across five countries studying *post-compulsory educational pathways among young people who spent at least one of their childhood years in the care of public authorities or child protection agencies*. This project uses BNIM and other methods to look for factors - cultural, social, psychological and practical – which encourage and enable such young people to continue their education beyond the school years. (Sonia Jackson, Claire Cameron, Hanan Hauari and Katie Hollingworth, Institute of Education, London University, et al). *Started 1st January 2008*. Their January 2010 Bulletin indicates that some 169 young people have had BNIM-type interviews for the project. <http://tcrui.ie.ac.uk/yippeel/>

Gunilla Bjerén and Atakilte Beyene: *A study into livelihoods, gender and ethnicity in an Ethiopian village (Shashemene) 1973-2008*. Based on BNIM, and starting in 2009, it is to be completed for Stockholm University 2011.

A study of *graduate career projects and activity in small and medium enterprises (SMEs)* (Walmsley, Jamieson and Holden 2010)

1. 1. 4. 4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research –program evaluation

1.1.4.4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research

BNIM is particularly suited to explore the experienced interaction between individual situated subjectivities and purposes, on the one hand, and, on the other, organisational and societal roles, constraints and processes. It does so in a form of *practice-near research* that practitioners and managers of practice can both engage with and engage in. It is *practice-near* because it describes lived experiences of practising, as Lynn Froggett pointed out in an ESRC seminar in July 2008 at the Tavistock Institute. London. It has been adopted for sensitivity-training for professionals (e.g. Chamberlayne and Chamberlayne 2005) and for use with service-users in forum debates.

On a nearby page, Greenhalgh et al (2005) provide a useful summary of the research power of narrative methods (which includes points one might however wish to debate!) (p.65 below).

An increasing proportion of the studies using biographical methods now deal with *'applied' issues*. Many researchers use BNIM to explore how professionals (such as health workers and social workers) do or don't intervene effectively with people in 'difficult situations' and how policy and practice of managers and frontline-workers in respect of actual or potential 'service-users' should be developed accordingly [see for examples Chamberlayne et al (eds.) *Biographical methods and professional practice* 2004] and O'Neill's (2011) PhD thesis on hospital treatment decisions.¹⁷

The notion of *regime-situatedness*.

In respect of research questions that inquire about changes of national, organisational and departmental *regimes*, biographic narrative interviewing is a valuable resource. They enable the researcher to capture the felt experience of the 'same person' in institutional regimes previous to the currently existing one .

People try to maintain or to change a given identity or practice within the constraints, demands and facilitations of successive previous, current and emergent internal and external historical and institutional regimes and regime-mix struggles.

To ignore enmeshment in broader and narrower institutional and historical regimes is to ignore reality. A regime-mix is one of the situations (or is the situatedness) that an always situated-subjectivity (such as our own, and you now) is always in.

¹⁷ Manion (2005) indicates that BNIM as a methodology held a significant place in a European gathering of social work doctoral students in 2004. Greenhalgh et al (2005) discusses the broader topic of 'narrative methods in quality improvement research' in respect of healthcare provision (but her article has wider application) and provides useful criteria for distinguishing higher from lower quality in narrative research.

1. 1. 4. 4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research –program evaluation

For a further polemic against unsituated studies of subjectivity (and its opposite), see the very excessive appendix on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below. But don't rush.

Sometimes you have a record of somebody – for example a UK probation professional – struggling to maintain value, quality and direction as they are under increasing attack by a worsening welfare regime.

Sometimes you have a record of somebody – for example an immigrant whose life-circumstances change markedly for the better – at last managing to develop capacities and aspirations previously frozen and neutralised by a regime from which they have escaped.

Both distortions and facilitations, mutations and stasis of inner and outer worlds can be traced in *the partial co-constitution over time of regimes and subjectivities* in a way that enables scenarios of possible futures to be painted with more confidence than before.

Box 1: Ten unique selling points of stories in quality improvement research

(compiled from various sources)

Stories are *perspectival*. They are told subjectively from the point of view of the narrator, thus drawing attention to the individual rather than the institution¹⁸.

Stories *make sense of experience*. The structuring devices of time and plot retrospectively align events and actions so as to modify mental schemas.

Stories are *non-linear*. They convey multiple and complex truths, depicting events as emerging from actions, relationships and environments.

Stories are *embedded in a context*. A particular story about what went on in an organisation is nested within an over-arching meta-narrative of “what tends to go on around here”.

Stories have an *ethical dimension*. They depict both acts and omissions, reflecting... expectations about what a “good doctor” or a “good daughter” should have done in such circumstances.

Stories *bridge the gap* between the formal codified space of an organisation (roles, job descriptions, and lines of accountability) and informal uncoded space (relationships, feelings, “unwritten rules”, and subcultures).

Stories offer insights into *what might have been* (what Bruner calls “subjunctivisation”). The imaginative reconstruction of... a story allows us to consider different options for change.

Stories are *action-oriented*, depicting what people did (and what happened to them) and also igniting and shaping their future action.

Stories are *inherently subversive* since (in Bruner's terminology) they embrace the tension between the canonical (i.e. an organisation's standard routines and procedures) and the unexpected (i.e. new ways of thinking and working).

Leadership is related to story-telling. “*Leaders are people who tell good stories and about whom good stories are told*”.

(Greenhalgh et al 2005: 444)

¹⁸ Though they are powerful indicators of institutional reality. Perhaps “indicating important things about the institution through the traces of its functioning left in the lived experience of the individual” might have been a better formulation! [TW note].

1. 1. 4. 4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research –program evaluation

1.1.4.4.1. Program evaluation: a note.

Where is BNIM in respect of program evaluation?

In the bibliography you'll find a reference to Froggett et al (2005) and a URL from which you can download the report of their 3-year evaluation study of integrated programmes involving older people of a Healthy Living Centre in Bromley-by-Bow, East London. This involved BNIM interviewing as well as other methods (BNIM-plus).

There is the SOSTRIS Phase Two study of thirteen innovative organizations in Europe (summarized in Wengraf 2002a).

There is an evaluation of the working of the Speke (Liverpool) Intergenerational Project (Robinson et al 2006).

Slightly to one side, there is a study of a program of using BNIM-evoked stories of African-American breast cancer survivors as a basis for 'cancer education' videos (Kreuter et al 2008). Note, though, that BNIM was not used for an *evaluation* of that programme. [Compare the use of videos worked up from studies with homeless people and homelessness officers in London: Chamberlayne and Chamberlayne 2005)

Slightly to my surprise, at the moment these seem to be the only ones that come to mind.

I say, "surprise" because a lot of the work undertaken with BNIM has been concerned with BNIM interviewing of front-line professionals or of their clients, and so has been "about programs" even if not formally focused on them.

In the bibliographies, you will find references to BNIM research on the lived experiences and subjectivities of the education and training, and the professional practice of *front-line (or close-to-front-line) professionals*.

There are studies of officials dealing with the homeless (Curran and Chamberlayne); human resource officials (HRD) dealing with disability (Abbott and Williams); mental health workers in different contexts (Bolton; Little; Weeks and Johansen); of workplace mentors of mental health nurses in training (Volante and Gurney *forthcoming*) and nurses in nurse education (Volante; Sochan and Singh); occupational therapists (Campbell-Breen); clinical psychologists dealing with mental ill-health sufferers (Worthington); teachers and school principals (Tucker; Kamara; Zhao and Poulson; McCulloch; Rippon). There are also studies of informal carers (Chamberlayne; Chamberlayne and King; Jones ; Nicholson;); of clergy being ordained or in function (Williams, Wemm).

1. 1. 4. 4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research –program evaluation

Also, there are studies directly of *those affected by conditions that involve actual or potential programs*:

homeless people (Curran; Chamberlayne and Chamberlayne; Tejero and Torrabadella), clients of occupational therapists (Campbell-Breen), young migrant women (van Bergen), teenage mothers and fathers (McNulty; Hirst, Formby and Owen); migrants (Meares; Firkin et al; Breckner, Rosenthal and Bogner); Congolese refugee women (Pavlish); Congolese children affected by war and transmission of violence (Seymour); refugees in Norway (Valenta); prisoners and prisoners' families (Breen), Lithuanian children fostered in orphanages (Zbarauskaite); young people across Europe engaging in post-compulsory education after spending at least a year in public care institutions (YIPPEE); parents experience of services intervention (especially the police) after the sudden bereavement of a child (Denise Turner), people suffering bereavement (Overbeek), drug users (Graham); migrants to Slovenia sending remittances home in times of economic decline (Pajnic and Balt)

people undergoing physical illnesses such as cancer (Hughes; Aydin; Corner and Harewood); rheumatoid arthritis (Stamm); Crohn's Disease (Blitz); heart attack (Hare), women with faecal incontinence (Collins); people suffering from sight loss (Thetford et al), older women with hearing loss (Lockey et al), people with teeth problems (Bond); people suffering from chronic pain (Nielsen);

people with less physical perhaps health issues such as the mentally handicapped (Berntsen); the mentally ill or vulnerable (see Bolton, Mackay; Snelling; Worthington; and Brooks/Dallos, with other studies currently being done, see references in Bibliography A); women suffering from anorexia (O'Shaughnessy et al).

older people and those in terminal decline needing palliative care (Nicholson, O'Neill, and another study in the UK just starting; dementia (Cowdell; Robertson).

Also *students*: apprentice engineers and motor mechanics in Germany and Britain (Brockmann), student teachers (Tellez); part-time and mature students (Lucas, Issrof and Paton); of students using new technology (Holley; Holley and Oliver), first-generation university students (McQueen *et al*), foundation learners (Williams et al), ordination of priests in the Church of England (Williams).

Using the concept of 'program' very broadly until it becomes close to synonymous with relatively 'institutionalised practice', then we can perhaps enlarge the scope to note:

Occupational categories: the Polish miners studied by Mrozowicki and his collaborators (2008, 2009), the ex-traditional workers across several European countries studied in the SOSTRIS project, occupational therapists (Campbell-

1. 1. 4. 4. BNIM in triangulated 'applied' research –program evaluation

Breen 2004) veteran soldiers (Zinn 2010) ...migrant and non-migrant domestic service in Hanoi (Thi Nguyet Minh Nguyen 2010)..... and the 'front-line professionals' itemised on the previous page.

Also *gender-specific categories*: male victims of domestic violence (Corbally), men who've been subject to sexual abuse (Anderson), men suffering from suicidal impulses and substance abuse (Bong). cross-cultural experiences of childbirth and breastfeeding in Britain by migrant women not used to Western medicine (Essat; Brennan), maternal smoking practices (Holdsworth and Robinson), women suffering from anorexia (O'Shaughnessy *et al*); women handling maternity leave and career choice options (MacDougall).

Indeed the *SOSTRIS Social strategies in risk society* European project (1997-2000) was concerned with a whole variety of categories of people across Europe in 'precarious situations' from one viewpoint or another: (i) single parents, (ii) minorities, (iii) unqualified youth, (iv) the early retired, (v) ex-traditional workers, (vi) recent unemployed graduates, etc [for a variety of theorized and presented cases and grounded policy-conclusions, see Chamberlayne, Rustin and Wengraf eds. 2002), and *SOSTRIS Working Paper* references in the Bibliography under SOSTRIS].

Risk is a central focus of Caroline Barratt's (2009) study of fishing communities in Uganda, and the work of Jens Zinn (2010a, 2010b).

In addition, Phase 2 of *SOSTRIS* dealt (very briefly) with innovative programs/organizations in each country dealing with one or more of the categories involved (*Sostris Working Paper* no.8, and also Wengraf 2002).

So, there have been many BNIM study of frontline professionals in what one might call 'human service organizations/programs' and a fair amount of study of actual or virtual clients of such services. The power of doing one or more BNIM interviews with professionals and clients (as well as managers) has been clearly demonstrated. There is lot of practice-near research, usually by professionals researching their own or their colleagues' experience. However....

However, *formal* program evaluation studies using BNIM are only just starting to happen (with perhaps *SOSTRIS* Phase 2 and certainly the Bromley-by-Bow study (Froggett et al 2005) and the Speke Intergenerational Project (Robinson et al 2006) being the first experiments in doing this that come to mind).

Why?

1. 1. 4. 4. Triangulation by different types of interview - more than just interviews

1.1.4.4.2. Triangulation by 3-category (multi-category) interviewing?

Few BNIM studies have looked simultaneously at both practitioners and clients, and *the most frequent policy working triangle --of practitioners, clients and managers -- seems to be particularly well-avoided.*

Practice-near research has so far often meant professionals doing practitioner-focused research through interviewing only other (same-type) professional practitioners. I would argue that such single-category research is necessary but not sufficient for understanding practice-triangles. On its own, such single-standpoint investigation can even reinforce the illusion of the single standpoint, let alone the epoch or generation or social location.

Indeed, I would argue *that single-category interviewing by somebody from the same (or pretty similar) category is virtually guaranteed – this may be a bit strong -- to make the common prejudices and assumptions very likely to become invisible to the researcher and to the researcher’s audience – particularly if the audience for the product also comes from the ‘members’ whose illusions and blindnesses are in danger of being reinforced.*

*New insight which challenges identity-illusions comes most powerfully from the criss-crossing of multi-category perspectives.*¹⁹

For program evaluation or other research into collective practices -- or into policies supposed to be being well-implemented through such collective practices --the fully triangulated study of a (professional or other) practice (“practice-near research”) requires not just the exploration of the lived experience of the (professional) practitioner themselves but of at least one other category, that of the service-user (which might be individual or collective).

When the professional is acting as an employee of an institutional regime (teacher in a school, a GP in a practice within the NHS, a volunteer for an NGO), then there are a complex of other institution and regime practitioners to be investigated as well (line-managers of the practitioner, peers involved in cross-professional teamwork with the practitioner, etc.).

A front-line teacher researching a front-line social worker is likely to share the “illusions – and ideologies -- common to frontline workers”; the same is true for junior management consultants researching only junior managers, or activist user groups researching only (activist) service users.

¹⁹ The importance of contrasting-source narrating for policy analysis and evaluation is well brought out in the discussion and case studies (non-BNIM) by Emery Roe (1994) *Narrative policy analysis: theory and practice*. For understanding the complex configurations of cultural and personal presuppositions of policy practices and situations, the biographic narratives of those located in ‘different but linked’ relevant situations are of great interest.

1. 1. 4. 4. Triangulation by different types of interview - more than just interviews

“Getting closer to practice” should mean engaging closely and critically with the *multiple* perspectives of practice, on practice..... *The pitfalls of proliferating identity politics should not be unnecessarily reproduced by identity researchers, politically comforting and personally-reinforcing/collusive though that is.*

There certainly are political problems in moving towards a 360-degrees research project, but studying one partner in a complex multi-partner collective practice such as a family or an organisation is likely to be less than satisfactory and may merely and unwittingly at least in part – whatever else its merits -- (re)produce single-category-standpoint ignorance and ideology, albeit at a high academic or single-practitioner level of discourse and argument.

For radical dialogue, and re-thinking and re-designing, -- or even effective resistance -- to occur, single-category studies by same-category researchers are not likely to be fully sufficient.

If we wish to promote more adequate knowledge of professional/practitioner work and improve practice, then there is an immense reservoir of under-used experience locked up within both professionals and users and those involved in experiencing and implementing and determining policy for different regimes of practice (see for example Sinclair 1970, Campbell-Breen 2004, Berntsen 2008, and especially O’ Neill 2009).

Unfortunately, regimes of collective practice operate within a context of State-Business regulated regimes of governance which are happy often to fund (but not always publish) explorations of lower-level practice but are unlikely to fund explorations of how such governance policies themselves came into being.

A radical US sociologist once said something like, “the hands of the sociologists are turned upwards to receive money and funded research projects from the up people; the eyes and the interviews of the sociologists are turned down upon the down people”.

My general point, however, is that *putting the experiences of several categories together generates far more insight than just working with the insights of one category only. The historical dimension of biographic narratives from selected complementary categories brings earlier and different regimes more into focus And no partner in a multiple division of labour/user positions, no category, is epistemologically privileged.*²⁰

²⁰ Ian Shaw has helped clarify for me the limits of ‘practitioner-only’ and ‘client-only’ research in a talk that he gave in November 2007 in an ESRC seminar series on ‘Practitioner research and practice-near methods’. He also provided the Iain Sinclair reference. Thanks, Ian. Elsewhere in this *Guide* I discuss the value of comparative (cross-regime) research for illuminating the ‘glocal’. Not to speak of the use of other psycho-societal data sources such as documents and extended observation. See for example Burawoy's discussion of the ‘extended case method’ (Burawoy 1991).

1. 1. 4. 4. Triangulation by different types of interview - more than just interviews

There are encouraging signs of both 2-category and even 3- (or more) category work:

Two-category

- Tanya Campbell-Breen's thesis (2004) studies both occupational therapists and their clients.
- Jane Robertson has used BNIM interviews as part of her PhD study, based on interviews with people themselves suffering from dementia and with those caring for them (due to complete in mid-2010).

Three-category and above

Families and beyond

- Robert Fleming is currently using BNIM to study the experiences of birth-parents, adoptive-parents and adoptees. Note, however, that he decided that it would not be feasible to collect biographic-narratives from interviewees who were part of the same 'adoption triangle'.
- Multi-generational family studies in Germany, Israel and England (Gabriele Rosenthal, Daniel Bar-On, Julia Brannen, for example) involve studying at least one person in each of three or four generations of the same family.
- Julia Hirst et al (2006) have studied both male and female teenage parents and *their* parents.
- Coletta Peta (Dublin) is interviewing social workers concerned with child protection and members of the families involved.

Institutions and communities

- Catherine O'Neill's not-yet-approved PhD thesis (2011) uses BNIM interviewing (and institutional ethnography) to do institutional research on the treatment decisions around elderly patients in two Dublin hospitals. It is based on BNIM interviews with patients, with family members, and with a great range of different types of medical personnel (nurses, doctors, consultants). This is very encouraging and pioneering triangulating work.
- The Bromley-by-Bow Healthy Living Centre study (Froggett et al 2005) did BNIM interviews with a variety of differently-situated people within the organisation (as well as using observation and document research, as well as insider/outsider participant action research): outsider-professionals and CEOs, local community clients and clients-turned-volunteers, etc.
- Aine Macken Walsh (2009, 2010) has very successfully explored the 'barriers to change' in Irish rural communities using BNIM-deploying interviews and focus groups with a large variety of 'rural actors' and 'development institutions'.

In other areas, there may be other triple-category 'triangles' where people from the same triangular situation could be interviewed, but..... each case is different.

We need more *interview triangulation* of the diverse 'categories' (in many cases, three is insufficient, O'Neill's work shows the value of going further in an institutional context) whose interwoven and often discordant experience is being explored.

1.1.4.4.3. Triangulation by more than just one type of interview

BNIM has built into it the opportunity of using non-BNIM interviewing methodologies. The Sub-session 3 can be used for such interviews, for example and quite typically semi-structured depth interviews in Sub-session 3 are common.

For example, Thetford et al's (2009) studies of people suffering from sight loss used both BNIM and semi-structured interviews. Yang (2005) in her study of the learning strategies of Chinese social science PhD students also used simulated recall interviews. Robertson (Stirling University) has interviewed people caring for dementia-sufferers using BNIM and interviewed those with the dementia using more casual conversation: her PhD should be completed in mid-2010. Nicholson (2009) studying frail elderly people developed a fluid methodology drawing on elements both of BNIM and of Hollway and Jefferson's FANI (Free Associative Narrative Interview) to achieve greater flexibility than she felt BNIM on its own could achieve.²¹

1.1.4.4.4. Triangulation with more than just interviews

Also, ideally, we need triangulation *with methods of data-gathering other than interviews* so that, for example, in conjunction with (BNIM) interviewing we find, for example, *document* research and *observation of practice*. On this latter point, see also notes on a full-spectrum psycho-societal methodology (p.145 onwards), and my later provocation recommending the impossible: fully psycho-societal approaches (p.Chyba! Záložka není definována.).

A full-spectrum methodology for psycho-societal research would include data-gathering primarily about the 'inner worlds' of people (conversation, in the form of formal interview and informal conversation), about the 'outer worlds' of people (observation, both formal ethnographic and informal) and the 'learning by experience' of PAR (Participatory action research) together with formal and informal documentation.

²¹ For a discussion of FANI, see Appendix **Chyba! Nenalezen zdroj odkazů.** starting on p.723. Her flexible practice also gave space for gentle exploring of emotional responses, rather than rushing compulsively towards 'more story'. Actually, BNIM does not require such 'compulsive rushing' but it is too easy to imagine that it does.... Pushing (gently) towards PINs (narrative) is a strategic direction, as you will gather later on, not an invariable and exclusive insistence..... tactics have to be extremely flexible. Not strategy.

And 'pushing towards BNIM' may not always be possible even as a strategic direction. Caroline Nicholson found that a less-directed free-associative-narrative-interview (FANI) practice was more appropriate for people slightly intimidated by the task of telling a 'whole story' but also for situations where the interview ended up by being an interview with more than one person. In her study of frail elderly people, she found 6 of her 15 participants "telling their stories" as part of a dyad. Where the object of study is not the individual as such, (i.e. in most cases of BNIM research), this 'informal focus group' or de facto 'joint asymmetric interview' may be very revealing, as in Nicholson's case of "Alfred and Elsie". See later discussion.

1. 1. 4. 4. Triangulation by different types of interview - more than just interviews

- Liu Hang's PhD study of Chinese restaurant owners in Belgium (Liu Hang 2008) provides a history of an evolving methodology, as well as an example of good historical grounding.
- Wilson (2007) discusses his (biographical interview + documentary research) strategy for his PhD on the Idaho State Library.
- Jude Robinson's research (Robinson 2006) into trans-generational relations also used a variety of methods and researched a variety of stakeholders.
- Erin Seaton (2007) used both observation and narrative interviews for her study of rural girls in New Hampshire.
- Froggett, Chamberlayne, Buckner and Wengraf's (2005)'s study of a Healthy Living Centre at Bromley-by-Bow East London UK used a rich mix: different types of interviews; existing and specially-generated documentation; different modes of observation; and also a component of joint action research.
- Macdonald's (2009a,b,c) study with a social realist framework used a prior quantitative component prior to his biographic-narrative study of dyslexia.
- Aine Macken-Walsh (2009, 2010) used interviews together with focus groups in her studies of rural development in the West of Ireland

Two researchers into frail elderly people used BNIM interviews with two different powerful methods of observation: institutional ethnography, and Tavistock observation.

- Nicholson (2009) used the open-narrative BNIM-based interview methodology along with a less-narrative-focused FANI-style approach, combining both with the Tavistock Observation Method.
-
- O'Neill's study (2009) of treatment decisions involving the elderly in hospital is a vital resource; unfortunately, at the time of writing, it is not yet in the public domain. An extensive and intensive PhD study of two Irish hospitals developing a combination of BNIM and other interviews (with a variety of categories of medical staff and with users and the families of users) and observation (including Dorothy Smith's Institutional Observation) is exemplary.

Both make for very good combinations, one oriented to the societal-institutional, the other towards the psychological-internal. See also the unfortunately short report of Fiona Cowdell on people with dementia (2007). Van Bergen's study of suicidal behaviour of young migrant women in the Netherlands (2010) has not much more than a slight use of BNIM approaches, but shows an interesting integration of qualitative and statistical method.

No one methodology is best for all purposes; real-life understanding typically demands more than one methodology. Obviously funding and expertise limit how far a study can go in triangulation strategy.

We have so far only discussed 'triangulation of data-gathering'. Another research project using BNIM fairly centrally works with a more inclusive methodology involving 'participatory involvement' right from the start:

1. 1. 4. 4. Triangulation by different types of interview - more than just interviews

To engage the voices of older lesbians and gay men who are not typically captured in traditional research, a range of qualitative methods were bridged within the study to explore the intersectionality between sexuality, rurality, and age. The project incorporates a strong participative research element throughout (Bradbury & Reason, 2003), and this is facilitated at various levels within the project through an number of mechanisms: (a) an Advisory Committee made up of a mix of older gay people and service providers who are central in the development and overview of the project; (b) focus group meetings with older gay people to elicit their narratives about rural life; (c) citizen panels which involved a group analyses of interview data; and, finally, (d) the inclusion of older gay people in a theatrical improvisation workshop, which contributes to the development of the performative element within the project (Fenge, Jones and Read 2010)

1.1.4.5. When NOT to use the method – counter-indications....

No tool in a tool-chest is best for all purposes. Indeed, a proper tool-chest of research methods like any tool-chest, contains an array of highly specialised tools each particularly good for one set of purposes, reasonably OK for others, and particularly not-useful for yet another set. When is BNIM counter-indicated?

1.1.4.5.1. Are there types of people who should not be (BNIM) interviewed?

The only *types of interviewee* for whom BNIM-interviewing is *probably not suitable* are people who cannot be expected to even half-successfully *attempt* to tell stories of particular incidents in their lives – e.g. perhaps people with advanced dementia or those similarly impaired., perhaps and perhaps not including the intellectually disabled.²²

Caroline Nicholson (2009) was doing work on very aged interviewees. She did fascinating interviews with a very articulate and educated man, Eli, both talking about and exhibiting his growing failure (from one interview to the next) to access coherent memories and sentences. She remarks that these were much more immediate stream of consciousness’ rather than reflected-upon accounts.

In Eli’s first interview, the asking for narratives produces a powerful self-expression in the transcript of his lived experience of being able to do so only partially.....

In Eli’s second interview, Nicholson’s questions were much less narrative-requesting, much more “tell me anything’, and he generated virtually no ‘complete narratives’ but did provide material powerfully expressive of a particularly situated subjectivity struggling against the failing of his narrative capacities, against a downward bio-mental trajectory.....

It is the ‘would-be telling’ of the would-be narrator that is crucial for understanding subjectivity; a partly failed attempt, a frustrated will-to-tell, may tell as much or more about (perhaps awkwardly) situated subjectivity than would a perfectly successful seamless polished complete narration. Nicholson remarks:

²² But see Middleton and Hewitt (2000) on life-story work with a severe case of disability. If you are prepared to *not get* ‘complete narratives’ (big or small), then material from even apparently-unpromising cases may turn into gold-dust..... In October 2009, four researchers at Dublin’s National Centre for Intellectual Disability were trained in BNIM: we hope that we will soon find out how BNIM may or may not be usefully used with the intellectually disabled. Laura Lorenz (2010) has used Photovoice techniques (giving cameras to survivors of brain injury and then helping them talk/narrate their story/stories). The use of visual and aural stimuli is a very key resource for stimulating ‘accounts’, even if these don’t necessarily become ‘episodic narrative accounts’, let alone a ‘would-be unified narrative’ account.

1. 1. 4. 5. When might you not use BNIM?

The modification of the method to be responsive to the participants in the study evolved, and was related to the dynamic between myself and the participants. For some participants, ‘classic BNIM’ continued to be appropriate... For other participants, BNIM was supplemented by an open approach based on the Free Association Narrative Interview (FANI) approach (Hollway and Jefferson 2000) (Nicholson 2009: 91 slightly modified).

Younger people, too, may be problematic. Froggett and her collaborators (2007) reported that biographical interview methods such as BNIM were unsuccessful with a group of youth offenders for which filmed interaction was a more powerful method of study. She suggests a couple of possibilities:

The research team eventually concluded that an open interview style, while markedly different from social work or judicial interviews, offered too little containment for this group, especially in relation to anxieties about family relationships... it may also be that the production and performance of something like a life story required by BNIM-style interviews depends on a coherent identity narrative (however provisional) which these young people cannot easily achieve (Froggett 2007: 348).²³

Haubl and Liebsch (2009) write very interestingly on methodological issues of facilitating good intersubjectivity in interviews with children. They argue that

Children have not yet fully developed the ability to share personal experiences with a stranger. ... Hence an important precondition for a successful interview is the willingness of the adult interviewer to share a status reversal. While usually adults exchange the world to children, the particular situation of the interview asks for an atmosphere that convinces children that this time they are the knowledgeable ones. This is by no means an easy task... The ongoing effort to understand [their] meaning is, however, a mode of thinking that is constantly in danger of being abandoned hastily (Haubl and Liebsch 2009: 231).

Memory-work (Haug 1992) can elicit ‘image memories’, charged with desire and frustration, love and hate, but most people are resistant to accessing their ‘infantile perspectives’ and experiences. Instead most of us spontaneously start – for the most part leaving ‘images’ aside – with stories coherently commencing no earlier than the emergence of the self-storying self at or around primary school age. There are great personal and perhaps cultural variations, however, and certainly ethical problems.²⁴

²³ Eva Hoffman (1991) also wonders whether weak educational achievement and other factors can leave young men and women with a vocabulary and a relation to language quite inadequate for adequate story-telling: an inarticulacy that leaves only ‘acting out’ as a mode of communication.

²⁴ Asta Zbarauskaite in Lithuania has just completed a BNIM-based PhD (2009) exploring children’s experiences of foster care under the specific institutional arrangements and conditions (regimes) of that country now.

1. 1. 4. 5. When might you not use BNIM?

To access childhood and early childhood memories of younger people and of vulnerable (older) people requires particular ethical and technical thought and modification, -- often modification as the interviewing proceeds from moment to moment -- and often legal clearance (the discussion on ethics starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. may be relevant here).

Where the mother tongue of the interviewer and the interviewee are not the same, and an interpreter needs to be used, then the quality of both interview and interpretation may become compromised. There is the start of a discussion – but only a start, like a Wikipedia ‘stub’ – in the Appendix dealing with this, starting on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována..

In addition, interviewing people during a chronic or acute life crisis – or who have suffered such a crisis, especially recently – requires great skill and great caution. The researcher needs to feel fully responsible for supporting those who are known to be psychologically vulnerable – or who reveal themselves as such during the interview.

See Rosenthal (2003) on how working with refugees from Kosovo forced her to re-think some aspects of *BNIM/Quatext* method (briefly summarised on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below) You need to be fully aware of how to reduce the danger that your interviewee runs of being inadvertently re-traumatised by an insensitive re-traumatising running of a BNIM (or any other) interview.²⁵

1.1.4.5.2. Are there types of research purpose for which BNIM interviewing is a bad idea?

The only *type of research purpose* for which BNIM-interpretation practice is *obviously irrelevant* is *any type of purpose in which the subjectivity of the subject is of minor or no concern* either in itself or even as data for some other concern.

If you are interested in precise factual details of [types of] behavioural episodes already known to you, thendon't do BNIM-style minimally-structured open-narrative depth interviewing. Instead, for such purposes, do strongly-structured surface (perhaps tightly-prescribed narrative) interrogative interviewing.

BNIM interviewing is a tool for exploring historically-situated subjectivities and the lived experience of situations and processes over time. As such, it is or should be *irrelevant* to

²⁵ As Rosenthal also points out, *if* skilfully and thoughtfully managed and followed up, a narrative interview can become (*not* ‘inevitably will be’) also be an important opportunity for a traumatised interviewee to ‘reorganise’ their experiences in a positive way. Rosenthal (2003) is very helpful on this possibility of a BNIM interview enabling the interviewee to do ‘biographical work’ on themselves. See also my appendix on the ethics of BNIM interviewing starting on p.778.

1. 1. 4. 5. When might you not use BNIM?

those who are not interested in individual or multi-individual situated subjectivity and lived experience. It is a tool for exploring the *deeper structures* of dated experiencing. BNIM's central focus is on understanding the (desiring and exploring but also inevitably limited and partly-defended) deeper structure and dynamic of the subjectivity-in-situation of the person narrating part or all of their history and the socio-historical situations and transitions that can be accessed by such biographic narrative interviews.²⁶

For those *not* particularly interested in the unique subjectivity and biographical specificity of particular people or categories, other methods of data collection and of interpretation may well be more appropriate.

In the *Sixth Narrative and Memory Conference* (Huddersfield UK April 2006), a strong case was made for 'excited arguments between dialogue opponents' as a way of exploring how 'defended subjects' deliver and defend against attack. For such research questions, the specificity of each subjectivity is of little or no interest, and recording and interpreting 'excited forums' may be a better way of answering research questions that are less individual-specific and more focused on present-centred 'situated collective subjectivity'. Or it may not.

Certainly, those interviewing the aged and the infirm often find themselves in the presence of their would-be interviewee *plus a carer*. This makes exploring *confidentially* the experiencing of the cared-for-interviewee pretty close to..... almost impossible or plain impossible.

If you find yourself in such a situation in – for example – institutional or family cultures where you *cannot successfully insist* on a private confidential interview, you may be obliged to compromise. Either right at the start or after the private individual interview is manifestly not happening, you may have to develop skills of exciting a debate between carer and caree (perhaps acting as if you had intended such a mini-focus group action all along)

Don't pretend there isn't a carer (or other relevant person) in the room. Take advantage of the situation and provoke a (controlled by you) debate in which (even if the isolated subjectivity of the interviewee can't emerge in the clinical isolation of the confidential BNIM individual interview) the *intersubjectivity of the dyad or multi-person group* can be provoked to emerge for inspection and interpretation (see, for example, Jerry Gale et al 1995, 2008; and also Nicholson 2009 dealing with the case of 'Alfred and Elsie').

²⁶ 'Defended' in this text means to me that we are all (interviewees or researchers) limited in our understanding of ourselves and others. There might be an omniscient God for whom everybody is transparent and who can understand everything and everybody fully. We are all creatures of our local space-and-time context, we speak from our limited experiences and our local 'standpoint'. There are always ways of thinking and feeling that we anxiously don't want to engage in, don't want to recognise in ourselves. We are always 'somewhat defended', our perspectives on ourselves and others are always limited, and conscious and unconscious anxiety is both cause and product of such defensiveness.

1. 1. 4. 5. When might you not use BNIM?

But act in such a way as to minimise ‘bad repercussions afterwards’ between your focal interviewee and their ‘intimate’ people that you couldn’t get to leave your interview room! *The ethical is key.*

Not everybody is interested in subjectivity (individual or collective). For example, some sociologists of a strict Durkheimian school do not want to understand ‘social facts’ by doing psychological exploration.²⁷ Some texts of some contemporary sociologists come close to this at certain points in their argument. For example, Andrieu (2001) in an otherwise useful and illuminating – though not always fully-informed – critical account declares his intention to critique “those narrativist approaches that claim or assume... a notion of the psychological subject”. [Curiously, an article he commends by Jones and Rupp is in fact the result of BNIM research, though he does not seem to realise this].

Despite Andrieu’s strictures, however, I think *some notion of the (historically-) ‘situated subject’ is inherent in any interesting social research. : The only question is about its degree of sophistication and adequacy and the researcher’s reflexivity about the notion or model of situatedness and subjectivity being used.*

Those who think they have no concept of the ‘psychological subject’ have just an under-examined one and therefore probably a too-simple one .²⁸

Many sociologists *do* find depth-interview material relevant, even in the pursuit of relatively abstract ‘sociological theorising’ about situations in transition.

For example, Archer (2003) makes a persuasive case that the ‘realist social theory’ she advocates requires the clarification of ‘subjective self-talk’ (internal conversation) to understand the dialectic in historical time between the causal constraints and enablements of objective structures and the social action of persons forming and pursuing and modifying their concerns, projects and practices (see discussion on CR, starting p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.)

Hence the importance of interview as one mode of accessing such present but particularly past ‘subjective self-talk’ (‘internal conversations’) – even if Archer neglects other methods. For example, observational ones and documentation ones highlighted brilliantly by Dorothy Smith and her school of Institutional Ethnography (see e.g. Campbell and Gregor 2002; O’Neill 2010) of looking at observable practices of such persons pursuing and reflexively evaluating their projects-practices.

²⁷ The counter-argument: a state(s) of mind of one or more persons or groups at a particular moment of time *is* a social/historical fact itself, as Emile Durkheim’s insistence on *conscience collective* identified.

²⁸ See now Archer’s remarks on anti-psychology sociology’s smuggled-in notions of the human subject in her account of the ‘Two-Stage Model’ (Archer 2007: 11-12): her examples are rational-choice theory, critical realism, and “Bourdieu/discourse theory”. I explore institutional theories-in-use of situated subjectivity in Wengraf 2002a.

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Most contemporary sociologists *are* interested in the ‘collective psychology’ that is often termed ‘subjective culture’ of families, groups, organizations, societies and historical transitions. Max Weber was particularly concerned with the social psychology of religions. Although often other sources of insight (e.g. ‘media’ and ‘observation’) may be seen to be as important or more important, and certainly as complementary, such a search for ‘historically-specific states of collective psychology’ can certainly use individual interviews.

However, both in psychology and in sociology, there are research purposes for which BNIM (and often any interview) is a waste of time.

Where the description of *mass behaviour* is concerned (not its understanding), then *mass observation and statistics* is called for, not individual depth interviews. Interviewing 10 Sainsbury shoppers (or all of them) will describe the mass of buying habits much less well than will interpreting the till receipts of 1,000,000 shoppers. The study of rational-action strategy (chess, military, economic) might be another – though Norman Dixon (1979) discusses the psychology of military incompetence.²⁹

In addition, it should be said that researchers using ‘polished’ biographical narratives (written out and corrected) are *not* likely to benefit from the core focus of BNIM – interpreting the telling of the told story -- since crucial to the understanding of subjectivity by way of BNIM is exploring the details and the whole form of the vocal and embodied expression of the *improvising of storying*.³⁰

Before you embark on mastering BNIM, make sure that what you want to study, describe and interpret is best served (at least in part) by some interviewing, by some narrative interviewing, and in particular by some of the type of narrative interviewing embodied in BNIM.

Bear in mind that complementary forms of non-BNIM interviewing and any other data-collecting and data-generating practice can be well-prepared-for and well-located in BNIM’s *third Sub-session* (p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards).

²⁹ And there is much to be said about fanatical market state fundamentalists pillaging, bombing and besieging whole populations over decades to make the world safe for markets and more profitable for themselves as market-rulers. A strangely-neglected aspect of State terror, but one unlikely to be explored by Western-funded biographic research!

³⁰ I was recently asked whether BNIM could be used for internet interviewing. I replied that I had no personal experience of this but (video) phone conversation [SKYPE] would be a best substitute for face-to-face in-the-same-room interviewing, and that chat-room conversation in real time would be a best substitute for phone interviewing. There is a programme PAMELA which I’m told is good. However, *exchange-of-email* interviewing would – because of the possibility of correction and rewriting and because of the lack of visual connection – be a very poor third to chat-room recorded real-time exchange.

1.1.4.5.3. Are you a type of person who should not do BNIM research?

This question is almost entirely a provocation. Anybody who wants to do BNIM research is in principle the right type of person in principle to do it.

However, there can be a problem. I mention two below:

1) Relationship to human suffering

One BNIM trainee recently sent me a practice interview with a woman. In her notes on the interview, she noted

I was shocked about the story [she told] , so I refrained [from asking further questions about it, to get more story]. This happens to me often, I am a bit shy about intimate things or conflict situations (Maria Eugenia)

I found myself writing as follows:

A generality. If you interview people who have quite an amount of suffering in their life (i.e. most people, including her), then at least some (maybe most) of the potential [incident narratives] will be about experiences of suffering at the time or current regret. Trying to work through this may be at least part (maybe an important part, maybe the most important part) of why they have accepted to be interviewed.

If you don't take up their leads towards 'PINs of suffering', you add to their current suffering (to be rather blunt and extreme about it), discouraging them in the future from starting to 'open up their personal history' to others. This will result in 'disappointment to yourself' (but then you are the one who freely chose not to follow up the promising PIN-lead) but 'discouragement for them' which in my view is ethically more important (email , slightly modified).

Put more formally, my argument might be like this.

- A) There is a lot of suffering and conflict, trouble and difficulty, in most people's lives
- B) BNIM asks for people's life stories, or self-biographies of parts of their life
- C) Sometimes – not always -- people agree to give up their time for BNIM interviews because, usually not very consciously, they need to work out some trouble or difficulty in their lives by talking about it.

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D) You can never predict what unexpected ‘narratives of suffering and conflict’ your BNIM interview may provoke; your interviewees may know some of them in advance, but may be as surprised as you by others

E) If your interviewees themselves allude to or bring up such episodes, then you have an ethical obligation to over-ride your personal preferences for non-suffering, non-shock, and non-sadness to enable those allusions or difficult episodes to be talked about.

F) If you aren’t in principle prepared to learn to cope with narratives of suffering and conflict, then you should not set out to learn to do BNIM interviews. It will lead to technically-bad interviewing and ethically-bad behaviour, and may inflict further damage and suffering.

In the case of the BNIM trainee in question, she wrote that she had been unaware of her difficulty with narratives of suffering and conflict until she looked carefully at the transcript of the practice interview.

This may well be the case for many.

The question is not whether you are aware before you start that you have difficulties in learning about or asking for more story about painful and difficult episodes and dimensions of other people’s lives.

The question is whether you are determined to learn to recognise and cope with such resistances in yourself. If in principle you aren’t determined to do this, then you shouldn’t start learning to do BNIM interviews.

There is much more to be said and thought about such issues.

2) Complex shifts and combinations in your own state of mind, and BNIM practice

A different point. At different moments of BNIM interview and interpretation procedure practice, BNIM calls on ‘particular states of mind’ (and shifts and combinations of different states of mind) which not everybody finds at first not easy to ‘get into’.

I’m just in process (April 2010) of reading what I think is a brilliantly illuminating text about the difficult and asymmetric workings of the divided brain (McGilchrist 2009). It suggests to me that some of the personal difficulties that we as individual researchers have in ‘doing BNIM’ can be traced to the unsmooth functioning of the types of brainwork that the methodology calls on us to do at different moments of BNIM interviewing and especially of BNIM interpretation

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Technically, if you were to have had serious damage to (or removal of) either your left or your right brain-hemisphere, you would not be able to do the full range of things that BNIM asks you to do.... This is unlikely to be the case. However, what might be the case particularly in the current 'Western world' according to Gilchrist is that you have a working epistemology (and, if you are unlucky, a dogmatic explicit epistemological theory, which will definitely make your practice worse) that does not invoke the fluid constant re-balancing and re-hierarchisation of left and right brain functions.

On the other hand, learning to do BNIM is likely to help in developing your personal capacity to do just such balancing and appropriate hierarchisation not only for BNIM but in other spheres of practice and relationship.

I hope to clarify these issues further – after reading and digesting the 'sense of the whole' provided by Gilchrist. For the moment, if you have time and opportunity – his book is well-written but lengthy and not always easy to assimilate for those like myself with no knowledge of brain physiology at all – I strongly recommend his work as a way of making sense of the 'experience of doing BNIM'.

Sensing one's own difficulties – and those of other people – in learning and engaging in a new complex practice – and treating them as explicable in terms of 'states of mind/brain' is rather unusual. However, developing such well-informed reflexivity about one's own learning and operating processes can be an invaluable asset!

You can then choose to engage in epistemologies and practices -- like BNIM, it turns out – which foster optimum left-brain/right-brain coordination, and make sense of what happens when you fail to do so.

Conclusion -

A readiness to cope with unexpected states of suffering in yourself and in others is one capacity you need before you start doing BNIM interviews, or one that you must be ready to develop if you are not to harm your interviewees.... and spoil your own research.

Similarly, 'doing BNIM' – both the interviewing and the interpretation – requires quite complicated shifts and movements of 'states of mind', including the capacity for 'not quite knowing what is going on' and 'letting things settle of their own accord', while trying to note such processes going on in you and the others around you.

1.1.5. BNIM Resources other than this Guide

1.1.5.1 BNIM 'Tasters' and 5-day training courses

These have been run in at different places in the UK, in Ireland (Belfast, Dublin, and Galway), in the USA (New York), in Slovenia (Ljubljana), in Rwanda (Kigale), in New Zealand (Auckland) and Australia (Sydney). Sessions have been run under the aegis of departments or research centres in several universities: Birkbeck; Central Lancashire; Dublin City University; East London; Middlesex; the Teagasc Rural Economy Research Centre and the National University of Ireland Galway; Newcastle; New South Wales; Oxford Brookes; the Open University; Queens University Belfast; Plymouth; Surrey; Swansea; Ulster, the National Institute for Intellectual Disability (Trinity College, Ireland), and under the aegis of the Tavistock Institute in London and the UK Economic and Social Research Council's NCRM (National Council for Research Methods).

In 2008, 'Tasters' (two-day or less) were held in Southampton, Belfast, Coleraine and Galway. '5-day intensives' took place in London in January, March, May, and June and November, and another in Queens University Belfast in September.

In 2009, further 5-day intensives took place in March, June and October in London, and another in October at the National Institute for Intellectual Disability (Trinity College, Dublin). Another took place in mid-November (arranged by the National University of Ireland - Galway, and the Teagasc Rural Economy Research Centre).

In 2010 further BNIM 5-day trainings took place in January, March, and October,. Shorter one-day or two-day workshops took place in the Grand Canaria in May, and in Dublin in a DCU summer-school in June.

1.1.5.2. Textbook + complementary BNIM resources

A textbook has been published (Tom Wengraf. 2001. *Qualitative research interviewing: biographic-narrative and semi-structured method*. Sage Publications). Its technical detail and exercises complement the *Guide* that you are reading at the moment. especially in respect of doing BNIM interpretation.

In order to see what are the outputs of working with BNIM, we recommend that you look at the studies in Bibliography A. Some are available as free downloads.

In addition, a dedicated e-mail list on "Biographic-narrative-BNIM" at www.jiscmail.ac.uk>. was set up in 2002 and continues to provide a basis for ongoing discussion and mutual peer support. Do join and consult the archives, and get discussed what BNIM-questions you want to have discussed! As of April 2010, there are some 300 or so people to discuss and exchange ideas and experiences.

1.1.5. BNIM resources other than this Guide

For further information about training, see the end of this *Guide* (p. Chyba! Zázložka není definována. onwards) and/or contact tom@tomwengraf.com.

1.1.5.3. Other non-BNIM resources

There are a plethora of other resources in respect of biographic-narrative and other psycho-social research work. A few that come to mind are suggested below:

You might want to subscribe to narrative-health-research@jiscmail.ac.uk or the biog-methods@jiscmail.ac.uk or the rather more general list devoted to 'performance' - in social research, performsocsci@jiscmail.ac.uk.

The very vigorous German tradition stemming from Schutze (of which BNIM is an anglophone off-shoot) often publishes work in English in the free-access on-line electronic journal *FQS*. Many items in Bibliography A of this *BNIM Detailed Manual* are available there. Go to <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/index>

There are large and vigorous biographical sections in the European Sociological Association and in the International Sociological Association (*RC 38 Biography and Society*: biography-and-society@gmx.de). In addition, there are strong sympathetic currents within psychology, especially the critical psychology branch – see particularly Hollway and Jefferson (2000). Try Critical Psychology International at www.criticalpsychology.com.

A UK Psycho-Social/societal Network is emerging, with a potential 'methodologies' sub-group (join in!). For the P-S Network, see until early 2009 <http://www.open.ac.uk/socialsciences/psychosocial/index.shtml> and now, <http://www.psychosocial-network.org/>.

The Centre for Narrative Research (CNR) at the University of East London centrefornarrativeresearch@listserv.uel.ac.uk also has interesting news and postings, though biographic-narrative is not its main focus.

I argue for the importance of a full-spectrum psycho-societal approach for studying /situated subjectivities/subjectively experienced and acted-in situations/ in the polemical appendix later on in this text: **Chyba! Nenalezen zdroj odkazů.**

1.1.6. Relation of BNIM interpreting to BNIM interviewing material

What is the relation between BNIM interviewing procedure and BNIM interpretation procedure?

The BNIM method of narrative interviewing is one which, if followed, is likely to provide you with a relatively coherent *'Whole Story'* or *'Long Narration'* (a Report) together with a relatively large number of recalled and deepened *'particular incident narratives'* (PINs).³¹

The *Long Narration* is generated within the first Sub-session. A few recalled Particular Incident Narratives (PINs) will typically be spontaneously inserted within that long narration.

The majority of Particular Incident Narratives PINs will, however, -- as a result of your PIN-seeking questions -- be brought up afterwards and probed for more detail in the second Sub-session.

Overall in all three Sub-sessions, BNIM interviewing also evokes past and present personal Descriptions, Theorising Argumentations, as well as Evaluations. An interviewee's Evaluations are value-lessons or 'morals' (often in the form of 'mottos') of his or her Whole Story and of particular sub-stories (PINs: particular incident narratives) in, and aspects of, that Whole Story.³²

³¹ The notion of a Particular Incident Narrative (PIN) is central. If you wish to get the notion clear at this stage – and you may decide to wait till later – you could look at the detailed discussion on p. 590 below. And there is the 'Sally and the purple sweater' example of 'pushing for a PIN' that you may have already looked at starting on p. 38.

³² See Bamberg (2006) and Georgakopoulou (2006, 2007) critiquing 'big (elicited, uninterrupted) stories' and favouring (more spontaneous, in-conversational) 'small stories'. (Boje 2001 celebrates the anti/ante-narrative, but his account is for me not easy to follow). BNIM does do 'eliciting' but it attempts to elicit both a 'whole (big) story' and the 'small PIN stories' that sometimes exemplify, sometimes fine-tune, and mostly complicate the intended but never complete and never completely seamless and coherent 'big story project' of Sub-session One. The value of the BNIM interview is NOT defined only by its success in getting a coherent and seamless 'big story' self-presentation in Sub-session One; or even lots of polished anecdotes in Sub-session Two. Indeed, such a (nicely-polished) outcome might well be more like a 'defeat' than a 'success'.....

As a researcher using the two-Sub-sessions of BNIM, you have the advantage of obtaining both types of improvised storying in a way that enables you to explore the complicated relations of improvised stories both 'big' and 'small', both partially completed and always self-interrupted. [However, Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's critiques of the 'artificiality' of biographic-narrative interviewing (and appreciation of its value), emphasising new areas of work and sensitivity for what Georgakopoulou wishes to identify as a distinctly-new 'third narrative turn', are of great interest].

1.1.6. Relation of BNIM interpreting to BNIM interview material

Bear in mind that BNIM narrative-questioning always produces and should produce much more than just narrative material.

This provides rich material for any method of narrative or more general qualitative interpretation. There are many methods of interpreting qualitative material: the BNIM procedures are just one. For some or all of your BNIM interviewees, you may not use all or any of the BNIM interpretation procedures (see p. Chyba! Zázložka není definována. for a discussion of strategies).

It is perfectly possible for you to generate material by way of the BNIM interview, but then decide to use a non-BNIM way of interpreting some or all of that material³³.

The opposite is not quite as true.

To work at its best, to produce the understandings of historically-situated subjectivity (or historical transitions and situations as and through their processing by such subjectivity) that is its target to deliver, the BNIM method of narrative interpretation requires the material on which it works to be generated by two Sub-session interviews that seek to generate *uninterrupted free-form improvisation of 'Freely-Formed Whole Story + Particular Incident Narratives'*.

BNIM interpretation procedure works best on material generated in BNIM or BNIM-like interviews.

In context the non-narrative material thrown up by pushing for narratives is critical for understanding the situated subjectivity (and the subjectively experienced situatedness) in question. If no non-narrative material emerged in the course of a narrative interview with only narrative questioning, that would be very surprising and very disappointing (as well as highly significant!). See the citation from Edensor on p. Chyba! Nenalezen zdroj odkazů. 480. Also, the narrative ground from which the non-narrative descriptions, generalisations and argumentations occur is crucial for understanding the non-narrative material as arising in the context and narrative sequence in which such non-narrative material comes to emerge.

³³ The BNIM method of interviewing is also of value for those who are not interested in the subjectivity of the teller of the stories or in the interpretation of the significance of the telling, but only in the content of the story told.

[If the purpose is just to relay the told story to others that wish to hear it, BNIM interviewing to get a story told is very powerful, but it does not need to be followed by *any* method of 'interpretation' or theorising (whether BNIM or any other). . Some story-collectors have attempted to stick to this rigorous anti-interpretive self-discipline, with no interpretation. They confine themselves to just editing and recycling].

Why?

If you have generated narrative interviews in which there is a lot of guidance and a lot of structuring and micro-management by the interviewer at the beginning and/or especially during the course of the interview, then such *interviewer-structured material* is not best interpreted using BNIM procedures (which is not to say that no value can be gained by using them).

In BNIM terms, the *micro-managed interview and text* subsequently produced is too much of an *equal co-production* of the interviewee and interviewer to be a clear guide to the expression of the interviewee's situated subjectivity not-interfered-with.

In particular *the sequence of topics (and even the timing of that sequence of topics) is determined by the non-BNIM interviewer* (“Thanks, I’d now like to ask you about something that you haven’t mentioned but that would be helpful for my research to know about...”) and *not by the interviewee*.

In BNIM interviewing, we have the content of any particular narrations as rich material for understanding. This we would get from any narrative interviewing methodology. But with BNIM, we also have something else.

In the *micro-managed non-BNIM narrative interview*, the researcher cannot obtain insight through understanding the interviewee's particular free-form improvising, because it is the questioner that determines the movement of the form. The form is not free.

However, from BNIM, as well as the content we get also the free-form ‘unconstrained self-managing of topic-changing and time-determining’ by the interviewee.

This freeform-structure is the ‘something else’. This provides crucial insights into that subjectivity not available to many other forms of interviewing. The form is free, and so we can learn about situated subjectivity from that improvisation of form. [For an exercise which may suggest that significance of the pattern of the interviewee's freely improvised topic-sequencing of their Whole Story, see p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards]. There is free expression of both content and form: ‘free-form and free-trivia’, as was said earlier in this text.

Researchers using ‘rehearsed’ or ‘polished’ biographical narratives (written out and corrected, or even learnt by heart) are not likely to benefit from the core focus of BNIM – the telling of the told story – since BNIM's understanding of subjectivity is achieved by exploring its vocal and embodied expression in *improvised* storying.³⁴

³⁴ It might be useful for ‘unpolished’ first-draft written self-stories.....as in a computer chat-room in real time (this is a speculation)? Crabtree (2002) has published what she calls a ‘Case Reconstruction’ of a polished-published autobiography, using the BNIM/Rosenthal method, but declaring that “this analysis

1.1.6. Relation of BNIM interpreting to BNIM interview material

We think that in terms of understanding ‘*subjectivity-as-formed-by-and-as-formative-of-historical-situation*’ – we could as well say in situational-analysis terms (Clarke 2005) – ‘*a flow of historical situation [a conjuncture] as perhaps witnessed and experienced and affecting and partially affected) by a particular subjectivity*’ -- the BNIM interview [interpreted by using *inter alia* the package of BNIM procedures] is a powerful and delicately sensitive tool (though by no means the only one nor the best for all purposes and conditions).

Final point. The task of improvising within the context of the open-narrative requested by the SQUIN shows itself in the revealing shifts and moves, incoherences and struggles for coherence, revealed in the transcript. A key component of the material needed is therefore *a verbatim transcript, not a polished one* .

Just as it is not appropriate for BNIM interpretation to work with a polished and prepared autobiographical essay, to a lesser but still crucially significant extent, it is inappropriate to work with a autobiographical transcript ‘polished’ either by the transcriber or by the interviewee ‘smartening up’ their autobiography. For BNIM interpretation purposes, the transcript needs to be an *UNsmartened-up* verbatim transcript of an *improvised* interview done under BNIM rules.³⁵

A caveat.

So far, and probably for the foreseeable future, BNIM interpretive procedures – like most qualitative interview interpretation procedures – are focused on the transcript, and works with the transcript or indirect data processed mostly (but not entirely) from the transcript. This in no way precludes --- and indeed should support you in – going back to audio and/or visual records of the interview to enrich and correct transcript-based understandings of the interview. I devote a whole appendix to this ‘periodic return to the audio-tape/video-tape’ (with digital recording there are no ‘tapes’ but the word contrasts nicely with the word ‘transcript’).

You cannot be running and re-running audio or video tapes of an interview to examine different bits of them separately or together as often as you can ‘inspect/immerse yourself in’ the transcript. Hence, with longish interviews (and qualitative interviews like BNIM are typically not-short), transcript-based work takes up most of the interpretive time.

Without pushing the analogy too far, we could say that the depth-interpreter of a long interview is rather like the literary critic of longish plays (or an opera).

focuses on the text itself rather than the question of how the text relates to the actual experiences of the author “. In our terms, this is not a BNIM-case analysis, whatever else it is. The paper itself is a quite interesting experiment.

³⁵ See Wengraf 2001: chapter 10 on ‘Copying, indexing and transcribing’ , especially pp. 218-22.

1.1.6. Relation of BNIM interpreting to BNIM interview material

Ideally, you would see at least one full performance of the ‘piece’ with all the sound, the context, the embodied movement of the people, and ideally you would have a ‘video’ technology that could re-reproduce this over-and-over again. Ideally, this would be the ‘authorised performance’ approved by the playwright.

However, most commentator on a play (let alone the plays) of a particular playwright have seen it or some of them at some point in the past.

At the (perhaps lengthy) moment of sustained interpretation, such commentators are likely to have to use their notes and work primarily from the written text of the play or plays they are considering (plus their field notes taken from any play they did participate in actually watching).

For the researcher, the transcript (as the play-text for the drama critic) serves as the most economic way of thinking the parts and the whole while recalling (and being able to summon up digitally) at least the acoustics and occasionally the visuals of the interview experience in which they played their part. See p. Chyba! Zálložka není definována. for further discussion.

However, going back to the digital recording occasionally is very important. The flat words on the page may systematically mislead about meaning: neutral words with warm voice and positive body communication; positive words said in an ironic voice with turning-away or hostile body movement. So keep digging back into the digital record of your long interview, but expect to work from transcript-derived data much of the time. Current software programmes enable you to hop between the two very very easily.

To conclude.

BNIM interview material can be interpreted in interesting ways using other non-BNIM interpretive procedures, but the BNIM interpretive procedures for understanding ‘historical subjectivity in situation’ and ‘situation through historical subjectivity’ works best when applied to the material generated *by improvised BNIM two-Sub-session interviews presented initially for interpretation in the form of a ‘unimproved’ verbatim transcript, supported by fieldnotes and by tape or digital recording of the interview.*³⁶

³⁶ If however you have used a non-BNIM interview methodology but have nonetheless obtained fairly long stretches of narrative material which has not been micro-managed, then you may be able to use BNIM interpretive techniques on such material. This does happen: sometimes successfully, sometimes not.

1.1.7. This Short Guide, the Detailed Manual and Supported Self-Training

This *Guide* should be of interest to those with no knowledge and experience of the method. Sections 1.2 – 1.5 should provide such an account.

There then follows the *Detailed Manual*. Its function is to serve those using or starting to use the method who are interested in some of the lessons learnt by BNIM-users with whom they are not in contact. Sections 2 onwards cover this.

- Section 2 on BNIM interviewing. This supplements *Wengraf QRI: chapter 6*;
- Section 3 on BNIM interpretation. This supplements *Wengraf QRI: chapter 12*.

It is updated regularly on the basis of people's experiences in BNIM research trainings and research practice. Given that it is free, you can easily avoid using an out-of-date version. If the copy you are reading is dated more than six to twelve months ago, -- the date is on the cover page of this *Guide* -- contact me for the most recent free electronic version. tom@tomwengraf.com.

A warning: the *Guide and the Manual* have been and continue to be written over almost a decade. Within the text, you may find shifts of perspective and definition which are not fully clear. This may well be because I haven't noticed these shifts myself (the ones I *have* managed to notice, I signal explicitly in the text, but I'm sure there are others).

Think of BNIM as an 'area of situated practice' which different bits of this text view from slightly different vantage points and historical moments within the past decade.

I am constantly trying to improve and develop this text. Parts become clearer; other parts become more obscure. And then, in the next update, things change again.

If there are any particular things that for you do not fit together at all, then it would be a great favour if you could write and let me know, so that I can try to respond and clarify the issue as far as I can. Do not adjust your (mental) set: there may well be a fault in reality!

1.1.7.1. Learning about an artificial practice from a text?

1.1.7. Support for your self-training in BNIM is available

Like any interview, BNIM is ‘artificial’ compared to spontaneous conversation, and, until you get used to it, BNIM will feel ‘more artificial’ than other genres that you have practised and that have therefore by this time become experienced by you and others as ‘non-artificial’.

There are different strengths and weaknesses of collecting ‘spontaneous talk and ordinary conversation’ and of creating the ‘artificial situations’ of different types of carefully structured interview: complementary, neither are ‘replacements’ for the other. See e.g. Greenhalgh et al 2005. This *Short Guide and Detailed Manual* and the associated textbook (Wengraf 2001) explores a particular type of ‘special conversation situation’ and a particular way of interpreting the material generated there.³⁷

Much scientific advance depends on inventing new technologies for generating special sorts of data and interpretive procedures – this is obvious in the natural sciences, and those qualitative researchers who wish to ‘rule out’ such artificialities in social research are limiting what they can achieve as social researchers. The same is true about the acquisition and improvement of concepts as it is about technologies.

Writing about a computer-aided software programme *Atlas-ti*, Konopasek (2008) writes about *data-interpretation (reading)* as follows. I would add that a new quality of ‘understanding’ is also generated in the procedures of BNIM *data-generation*:

How is a new quality... , which we call "sociological understanding", created during the process of qualitative analysis [data-generation and data-interpretation, TW]? A methodological (conventional) answer to this question usually speaks of mental processes and conceptual work. This paper suggests a different view—sociological rather than methodological; or more precisely a view inspired by a contemporary sociology of science. It describes qualitative analysis [and data-collection and processing, TW] as a set of material practices. [These worlds of constructed and linked different procedures can be seen as] *complex virtual environments* for embodied and practice-based *knowledge-making*. (Konopasek 2008, italics added)

BNIM is like that. To acquire a new perspective and to *practice differently* in the well-trodden field of semi-structured depth interviewing is not easy, and requires what cannot avoid first being experienced as a determinedly-unnatural practice.

To learn about BNIM through reading a text like this *Guide* together with the relevant chapters of the textbook *Qualitative research interviewing* (Wengraf 2001) requires an effort of the imagination in the acquiring of a new disciplined practice.

³⁷ But for a counterview at least of BNIM interviewing, see the remark by Peter Lomas cited at the top of p. 38.

1.1.7. Support for your self-training in BNIM is available

The BNIM perspective or mind-set is best encountered through a text by the *stressing of those 'rules of BNIM practice' which make it different from other practices of interviewing and interview interpretation.*

In the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's terms, grasping and obeying such rules (however uncomfortable) gives a chance for a new 'habitus' (or sub-habitus?) to start happening in you that you can add to, or integrate into, your portfolio (I know that Bourdieu would hate what he would see as a mis-use of his concept!). *The discomfort you will feel in starting to do this (conceptual, psychological) is a mark of the difficult and hesitant growth of such a new (sub) habitus, which will become comfortable only later.*

This growth of a new sub-habitus is what this text attempts to support.³⁸

As in the textbook, I have used real and occasionally imaginary examples of 'bad practice' to make it easier for the reader to see what the generalisations are driving at, and to indicate what a 'reasonable misinterpretation' might produce, apparently close to what is wanted but, actually, significantly different. My methodological guide here as elsewhere has been the French philosopher Gaston Bachelard's dictum that "truth emerges from corrected error" (Bachelard 1999).³⁹

I am very grateful to all those who have come on BNIM trainings and shared both positive and negative experiences of doing BNIM. Any value that the *Guide* may have comes from that 'data-base' of particular BNIM incidents and our struggles to interpret and understand them better.⁴⁰

Self-training is crucial in acquiring a new 'material practice' and I provide support for this, both in running the 5-day BNIM intensives to start you off on self-training and in supporting self-training where you are not in a position to attend a 5-day intensive.

³⁸ In actual practice (which texts cannot provide but only suggest), an impossible 'full description' of BNIM interview and interpretation practices would show where and how much commonality there is between BNIM and other semi-structured depth interviewing practices, and also how each BNIM-using (or any) researcher invents their own variation on, and combination of, the methodological tools and practices they use. *We are not attempting such a 'full description'*. This *Guide* attempts to evoke in you only the sense of how BNIM is *different*, in terms of concepts, principles, and rules of specific practical procedures. [BNIM is also the *same* or *very similar* to other qualitative research interviewing in ways *not* spelled out in this Guide..... My 2001 textbook however *does* insert BNIM practices into relatively common features of qualitative research interviewing and interpretation.]

³⁹ If you don't make mistakes, you can't learn from them. If you aren't helped to learn how they are mistakes, you have only made mistakes from which you haven't learned.....

⁴⁰ Having the opportunity to read published work based on BNIM and, in particular, being sent electronic copies of articles and of M.A. and PhD theses using BNIM has been of very great importance to me in understanding the uses and adaptations of BNIM and also in helping me think about questions of presentation. Many thanks to those who have informed me of their writings, and particularly to those who have sent me copies. Please continue to do so.....

1.1.7. Support for your self-training in BNIM is available

1.1.7.2. Supported Self-training in interviewing

For self-training, find somebody who is not very well-known to you and who is not a very ‘significant other’. This way, you will both know that your ignorance of their life and story is genuine and not faked. You will also have to engage in ‘talking with them in a different way’ from a way already well-established between you. Frame it as an experiment. Reassure them that you are perfectly happy with them not-answering any question they don’t like (this latter is true of all BNIM interviews).

It is definitely best to do a ‘generic practice’ *whole life-story* interview (see later on for details) with no more than 10 mins max for Sub-session 1 and 20 minutes max for Sub-session 2.⁴¹

In your practice, after the end of Sub-session Two, still recording, you might wish to ask a question about their experience of the interview, including how comfortable they felt with your SQUIN, and any points they wish you had taken up but didn’t actually ask them about.

A) Do a *verbatim transcript* of both Sub-sessions.

- The interviewer’s interventions should be in *italics*.
- If you have any retrospective comments on the interview at particular points, if working in WORD use it’s facility for inserting numbered ‘Comments’.

B) Write up *your field-notes* on your experience of the interview, in itself and in the light of what you wanted it to do, as per discussion below starting on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována..

C) In addition, produce a clear *polished version of the cue-phrase notes* you took during Sub-session One and sub session 2, so that it is clear (i) what items you noted, and (ii) what items you chose to follow up in Sub-session 2 both from the items in Sub-session One and from further responses in Sub-session Two. See p. 94 onwards.

⁴¹ Do not confuse this BNIM-practice interview with what comes after you are satisfied that you have a strong-enough grip on the generics of BNIM interviewing. What comes after your BNIM ‘generic practice’ interview or interviews (you might need two or three, getting feedback on each) is the later stage of a ‘pilot interview for your own research with your own designed SQUIN’. Don’t try to ‘economise’ by trying to do a pilot interview research and make that a generic BNIM practice interview as well. You will do both badly. First get the generic BNIM practice interview right; only then, draft your SQUIN for your pilot interview (get the SQUIN right, also with the aid of feedback), and, only then, having mastered the generics of BNIM interviewing through practice interviews, having got your SQUIN right for your pilot, move on to do your first ‘pilot interview’.

1.1.7. Support for your self-training in BNIM is available

Then send: (a) the transcript; (b) those ‘polished interview notes’ of the two Sub-sessions, and optionally (c) your fieldnotesto me at tom@tomwengraf.com.

I will then give you a quick feedback on your interviewing practice. People who do this find this a great help for identifying the inevitable errors that arise when you start a new practice.

After practicing BNIM generics, then move towards your first pilot interview. After such detailed feedback on your whole-life practice interview, you will then be in a position to draft a SQUIN to do a pilot interview for your own research. Send me the draft SQUIN (filling out the form in the SQUIN drafting appendix starting on p.Chyba! Zázložka není definována.). I will send you feedback.

For the ‘pilot interview’ of normal length (budget for 2 hours), you can also get feedback by sending me both the form in the SQUIN Drafting Appendix (p.Chyba! Zázložka není definována.), and the 3 items (A,B,C) above.

1.1.7.3. Supported Self-training in interpretation

From the transcript of the interview of which you have selected to do a pilot interpretation, extract a BDC and a TSS (sequentialisation). These terms will become meaningful later. Don’t go beyond this yet.

Send me the transcript and the draft of your Biographical Data Chronology I will give you feedback on this.

Once you have done a good Biographical Data Chronology (BDC) and Sequentialisation (TSS), **then do a BDA panel and send me your notes on the panel.** I will give you feedback.

Once you have mastered the craft of doing a BDA, then use the sequentialisation (TSS) as a basis for **doing a Thematic Field Analysis (TFA panel), and send me your notes on the panel.** I will give you feedback on that.

There are later stages, but doing these basics well are the precondition for getting top value from interpretation.

Don’t jump stages: in particular keep your generic *practice* interview quite separate from your own research’s *pilot* interview. Get feedback on the first before you run the danger of ‘wasting’ a good ‘pilot informant’ by not having learnt to do BNIM interviewing on someone else beforehand.

1.1.7.4. Introduction to the structure of this Guide

Below, I give a brief account of BNIM interviewing and interpretation. If this is your first encounter with BNIM, *do ignore the footnotes on your first run*. This is the Brief Account. There are very short summaries in section **1.5. Key principles in a couple of pages**.

Then, in the **Detailed Manual** (starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.), I look at each in more detail. You would need to do this if you are seriously thinking of trying to ‘do’ BNIM, instead of just ‘knowing about’ BNIM.

The **Appendices** follow. If you enjoy some of the footnotes, you may find things of interest in this section. Running from p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. (where a brief overview is provided), the Appendices take up certain issues that arise in training people in BNIM and among researchers using it.

The **Appendices are now grouped**:

(A) around interviewing (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. **onwards**) – though for the ethics of BNIM interviewing, see also the Ethics Appendix at the end (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.) ;

(B and after) about interpreting and writing-up and publishing onwards (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. **onwards**).

There are then two extended **Bibliographies**, starting on p.156; a number of **Diagrams** to illustrate certain points in the text (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.) ; and then finally (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.) a note on the 5-day intensive BNIM **Trainings**.

1.2. The BNIM three-Sub-sessions interview- brief account

Your Central Research Question (CRQ) will dictate both the selection of interviewees to fit your sample criteria and also the particular SQUIN that you design for each interviewee or type of interviewee in that sample. It will also have a definite influence on which items of what they say that you do decide to follow-up and on which you don't.⁴²

I suggest that, unless there are strong reasons against this, that you should let interviewees know in advance that in their interview with you – perhaps contrary to their expectations that in most interviews the interviewer does a lot of talking and micro-managing -- they will find themselves doing most of the talking (at least at first) and that they may well find themselves remembering things they hadn't thought of for a long time.

Also, remind them that you can't know in advance what questions they might not feel comfortable with, and, if questions come up asking them to remember things they can't or don't want to talk about, they should feel no problem in saying 'no' or 'pass'.

Do not, however, in advance tell them they will only get one question or give them the SQUIN: both technical details will make them feel anxious; the second will stop them doing a free 'improvised' response.

For any BNIM interview, you should schedule preferably three hours (but a minimum of two) with the interviewee, and a further one hour for your own subsequent instant debriefing, following pretty straight on after the place/time of the interview.

Wengraf 2001 (ch. 5 and pp. 184-206) gives general guidance on purposive sampling and on interviewee selection and preparing for the interview.

To collect the data, the interview is recorded. Use a digital recorder.

For each BNIM interviewee, there are always two Sub-sessions [and, sometimes, some time later, a third, though this can be just a phone call Sub-session and may not occur] (Wengraf 2001, ch.6).

Typically, these first two Sub-sessions from your point of view make up one interview (with an interlude) from the interviewee's point of view. If at all possible, Sub-session one should be completed at one go. Assume that Sub-session Two will take twice the time of Sub-session One.

Sub-session Two can be interrupted at any time to continue later on, e.g. on another day, not necessarily immediately. If Sub-session One cannot be completed in one day, try to get its completion scheduled as soon as possible. Ideally, the next day.

⁴² For a discussion of Central Research Questions (CRQs) and of Sampling in qualitative interview research, see Wengraf (2001).

In both sub-sessions: Making notes of ‘narratable items’.

During both sessions, you note cue-phrases with which to ask further question: such noting and such questioning is something that has to be learnt. It is different from the way you may have noted and questioned before (you will use the specially-designed BNIM notepad to help you learn to this well: see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. for this).

One of the differences with your previous practice may be that, for BNIM noting and questioning, you need to pay particular attention to close-to-narrative items. A ‘close-to-narrative’ item might be concealed in the following way. An interviewee may be saying:

On that journey, I saw somebody strange at the bus-stop, but that wasn’t important. What was important was, er, that I now realise that while I was on the bus my life completely changed.

You could say (in sub-session two):

1. *You said “You now realise that your life then ‘completely changed’ while you were on the bus”. Can you tell me any more detail about the moment at which you now “realised this”?*⁴³

2. *You said “while you were on the bus your life completely changed”. Do you remember any more detail about that particular moment when your life completely changed?*

What you may be in danger of not-noting (and therefore not asking) is the point (which he cues you to *not* note or ask about) of “seeing somebody strange at the bus-stop”. How insignificant compared to the super-enormous later formulations!

However, “seeing somebody strange” is a ‘close-to-narrative’ phrase and therefore addressing it – however relatively unimportant it may appear to be – is of particular importance for eliciting later narrative from the interviewee.

You are doing *narrative* interviewing, and are looking for what one might call ‘narrative items’. Never miss out the apparently unimportant close-to-narrative cue-phrases. Note down:

Saw somebody strange at bus-stop

Having discussed the unusual importance in both the first and the second sub-session of noting ‘close-to-narrative’ narratable items, let’s go back to the sub-sessions.⁴⁴

⁴³ For technical reasons, you can’t use the “*Do you remember*” formulation when somebody has spoken “I now realise”.... Otherwise, and normally, “*Can you tell*” formulations are bad ones in BNIM.

⁴⁴ For further discussion of the writing and selecting of ‘narratable items’ for further narrative interviewing, see the later section in the *Detailed Manual* on the ‘Interlude’, p. 214 onwards.

The first sub-session.

In the first Sub-session, the interviewer offers only a carefully constructed single narrative question (e.g. *“Please tell me the story of your life, all the events and experiences that have been important to you personally; begin wherever you like, I won’t interrupt, I’ll just take some notes for afterwards”*) and sticks to the promises given in the question.

For particular research purposes, the focus is typically on a particular *phase* or particular *aspect* of the life, or even a particular aspect in a particular phase: the story of your life “after you became aware that you might have [medical condition D]” or “before you met your present wife” or “the story of your life as a religious person after you left the Church”.

However, more often than one would expect, rather than design a too-narrow ‘partial’ SQUIN it is often better to ask a ‘whole life/whole period’ SQUIN and then let your research interest guide your non-taking-up in Sub-session Two of topics they mention in Sub-session One that you feel are less relevant to your project.

[See Wengraf 2001: 121-5 for an early discussion of crucial issues that need to be considered for designing not-whole-life opening narrative questions (partial SQUINs), and also see Appendix p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. on designing such ‘partial SQUINs’ for your own particular research needs].

The interlude.

For a typical BNIM interview, after the first Sub-session, you tactfully engineer a 5-10 minute Interlude (a “breather” from the interviewee’s point of view)

In this Interlude, you look at your notes of (imaginary example) 40 cue-phrases that you noted down in that first Sub-session, and decide which ones to use as a basis for further questioning in Sub-session Two.

Sub-session Two.

You must start with the first item and eventually end with the last item of Sub-session One; you have to choose, say, no more than 10 in the middle. You need to be quite thoughtful about your inevitable selection. Clearly you wish to select the cue-phrases relevant to your Central Research Question and also items clearly relevant to the interviewee: these are not always identical.

Bear in mind, though, that BNIM is concerned to excavate the ‘deep structure’ of situated subjectivity, and so – provided you push consistently enough for PINs on the 10 cue-phrases you select – then it may not matter that much which 8 of the 38 topics (+ first and last) you actually select. Any of the 38 rabbit holes might

1.2. The three BNIM Sub-sessions – brief account

well lead you to the central treasure-house in the middle of the rabbit warren. You need to be thoughtfully selective about ‘promising’ as opposed to ‘unpromising’ rabbit holes, but, given such thoughtfulness, then you don’t need to worry too much about your selection.

In that Sub-session Two, sticking strictly to the sequence of topics raised and to the words used, their *cue-phrases*, the interviewer pushes for more particular incident narratives (PINs) about some of them, being prepared to ask yet further narrative-seeking questions in response to some of the answers first given until the required level of narrative detail and personal engagement is provided, until Particular Incident Narratives (PINs) start to flow. The best chance of ‘flow’ is once the first in-PIN has been successfully elicited, thus powerfully motivating both interviewer and interviewee.

Again, your choice of items to follow-up will be largely determined – but not entirely – by relevance to your Central Research Question for which the BNIM interview is designed to generate relevant material. It will also be determined by personal relevance to the interviewee. And by ‘narratability’.

These first two Sub-sessions typically are planned to take place in the same (first) interview slot of two or so hours.

Often the first Sub-session provides an overarching Report story with rather few Particular Incident Narratives (usually about-PINs) described in inadequate detail. Sub-session One provides the menu of agenda items for Sub-session Two.

The second Sub-session allows the interviewee to fill out all the segments (very very rarely) or selected segments (virtually always) of this overall narrative Report with much more detailed particular incident narratives (PINs). The second Sub-session also allows the interviewee to reflect upon their account as a ‘first approximation’, and thus to visualise going further.

There are typically few or no detailed Particular Incident Narratives in Sub-session One. Provided the interviewer follows the rules for narrative-seeking questioning and pushing for PINs, there are usually rather more and rather richer in-PIN-materials in Sub-session Two.

The basic default form of the narrative questioning (as you push PINwards) is: “*You said [their cue-phrase]; can you remember any (more) detail about that/the/a particular [moment, situation, or other appropriate specification from one of three bundles of useful words]. How it all happened?*”⁴⁵

Learning to push hard-enough (but also carefully-enough, and being-prepared-to-stop-enough) for PINs is difficult and you have to push several times usually to get into ‘deep

⁴⁵ This is a crude covering formulation. In the ‘Detailed Manual’ and in the appendix on PINs, the more complex practice indicated but also inevitably largely concealed by this formulation is spelled out. The three bundles can be found at the top of p. 886. But the ‘covering formulation’ above will do for now.

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detail'. To misquote a letter from Franz Kafka, our pushing for PINs helps the interviewee to “*take his or her axe to the frozen sea within*”.

In Sub-session Two, you will be pushing along two axes (i) more detail of story, (ii) more emotional engagement with story, more re-living.

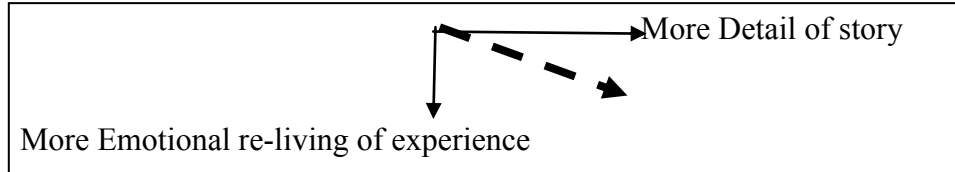


Figure 1 Two axes of pushing for in-PINs

Here is an excerpt from one interview with a Ugandan fisherman, where the pushing by the local-language translator/interviewer was not hard enough or went in the wrong direction (kindly supplied by Caroline Barratt):

A: You have been on water for so long as a fisherman and sailor tell us about any time you felt that you were in danger and what happened?

R: In 1986 I was driving the boat and it was heavily loaded the strong winds hit us and knew we were finished. We were two people in the boat with my employer and he told me to stop the engine but I refused. I knew that if I stop we were going to be dead the boat would sink, so slowly the wind subsided after about 5 minutes and we reached ashore. We sold fish at Bukakata and my employer gave me 1,000/- for appreciating my work of driving the boat in such wind.

A: What was the value of 1000/-?

R: It was equivalent to 5000/- of these days.

My comment to Caroline [modified] was:

R's account has great potential, but 'A' then asks a flat non-narrative question ("what was the value of 1000/-?") and, by doing so, this brief account is not pushed towards a more detailed account of strongly felt experience, but away from it.

Further PIN detail could have been pushed for on at least five points:

- (i) knowing we were finished;*
- (ii) my employer told me, I refused;*
- (iii) before the wind subsided,*
- (iv) when the wind subsided;*
- (v) reaching shore.*

1.2. The three BNIM Sub-sessions – brief account

With proper pushing, 'A' might have got a really-strong complex epic PIN.... but 'A' didn't push, asked the wrong sort of question, and the opportunity was lost....

Question: What would a successful and skilled 'pushing towards PINs' be like?

Answer: it would have taken preferably all of the cue-phrases (i-v) above in Sub-session Two; inserted into the default question for Sub-session Two questions, and asked (to take one example) 'You said that you 'knew you were finished': can you remember any more detail about that moment when you had that thought?'.⁴⁶

A counter-example of a slow and difficult, but eventually very successful, pushing for PINs was given right at the start of this *Guide* on p. **38**.

You will notice that it takes the form of "You said XXX [their cue-phrase]; can you remember.....". This formula should not be varied.⁴⁷

- See p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. for a **blank page of a BNIM notepad**, where the "**You said XXX; can you remember...**" question is at the top of the page. Note the word "particular" and "particularly", and the fact that you have to choose a 'magic word' from one of three 'bundles of words'.

To get the contrast clear, you might wish to **read another example of using the "You said XXX; can you remember..." formula now...** before going on to the next paragraph.

*SPACE FOR YOU TO (RE)READ
THE SALLY/PURPLE SWEATER EXAMPLE
STARTING ON PAGE 38*

Note that, in that transcript extract

(1) the interviewer pushes for PINs but, when the interviewee can't or won't come up with one, the interviewer easily and gracefully switches to something else. Accepting gracefully an earlier refusal creates conditions under which you may get a later good offer!

(2) You push towards PINs, but normally you make yourself not mind what the PIN is about. You push towards PINs about learning to drive, but you then let

⁴⁶ If they don't remember straight away, you could ask "Do you remember what your feeling was at that particular moment?". Were they to remember the feeling, they may then be able to remember the detail of internal events (thoughts and feelings) and external events (words and actions and happenings) that they couldn't at first remember. An emotion can put narrative memory into motion. It can also pull the interviewee away from narrative into mere (feeling and felt) description and theorising. *Emotion is a crucial impulse for, and a good servant of, narrative interviewing, but a bad master.*

⁴⁷ You always start by saying "You said" (not you 'mentioned' or anything else). In the place of "XXX", you always by citing a cue-phrase from your notes

1.2. The three BNIM Sub-sessions – brief account

yourself be re-directed (let the interviewee re-direct herself) toward a trip to London in a coach; then a re-direct towards the PIN that eventually emerges, namely one about smashing up her car and going to tell her father. *You don't need a PIN about something in particular; you just need whatever PIN it is that eventually comes up.*⁴⁸

That is why you ask vaguely for “*Any other time when X happened*”, “*Do you remember anything about the time that you are recalling at the moment?*”, “*Anything else/ any other memory / come to mind?*”, Etc.

To begin with, it doesn't matter so much *what* the PIN is about. You want them to get into a stream of in-PINs and to follow their own system of relevancy.... however it meanders.... against the location of PIN-excavation that you (and your system of relevancy) are so strongly tempted to impose.... It is *their* system of associative relevancy (*especially* when it appears to you as ‘irrelevant’) that you want them to explore and reveal. When they tell you an *unexpected PIN*, that's when learning happens.... particularly when not only you but also they didn't expect it, or expect it that way. *The stories they find that they want to tell; not the ones that you with your system of relevancy would want them to want to tell.*

(2) though this is less apparent in the transcript, *the interviewer always pauses after a response by the interviewee.* This indicates to the interviewee that you are thinking about what they've said and allows the the interviewee to do the same (such further in-pause reflection may lead them to then add something to what they've said or addressing your next question differently. Quickly going on to the next question stops both of you from thinking and ensures that you never get beyond well-prepared answers and quick responses. You have given them ‘voice’ but no time for thoughtful silent reflection and new mindfulness. To ensure thoughtfulness, reflection, ‘going deeper’ and remembering ‘forgotten things’, after each response of the interviewee, it is very important to pause.....

PAUSE NOW, AND THINK ABOUT IT! Can you think of interviews where this obviously doesn't happen?

WAIT A MINUTE BEFORE GOING ON.... What habitual interview behaviours (on TV, by you) would be being ‘pushed against’ by such a practice of ‘pushing for pauses’ (virtually always, without words)?

(3) Though you push towards PINs, the other material you get may be powerfully expressive of situated subjectivity. If you push towards PINs, and are lucky enough to get some, even if somebody stripped out of your transcript all the PINs that you had eventually got, the transcript would contain a lot of very valuable

⁴⁸ This is difficult to grasp for the interviewer trained to pursue only relevant-to-them detail. In BNIM You are trying to discover their system of relevance-for-them by letting them pursue apparently-irrelevant-to-you material. It is only *later* that you discover why the ‘initially apparently irrelevant’ was in fact amazingly relevant..... to your understanding their system of relevancy/importance.

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non-PIN material (such as argumentations and descriptions). *It is not that you “only want PINs”: by no means! You want the other material as well, but only in the form and at the moment and in the way as that that non-PIN material is thrown up by a consistent search for PINs.*

Informal debriefing of interviewee

After the second Sub-session of the interview, the pushing-for-PINs Sub-session, it is important that you then ‘informally debrief the interviewee’ in order to ensure as far as you can that any difficult emotions and questions stirred up do not leave them alone in a bad state. This is unlikely to happen, but you do need to look out for this. ‘Informal space for post-interview debriefing of the interviewee’ is ethically imperative.

Determined self-debriefing of interviewer

After that, you then need to spend an hour or so immediately afterwards on your own ‘debriefing yourself’.

Here you write up (or record on tape) your field notes and in particular about how you were stirred up and what memories, fantasies and questions about them, about yourself, and your interaction were evoked for you. By doing this free-associative self debriefing, you will gain considerably both personally and professionally, but it must be done straight away (see p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards for details).

Usually after these first two Sub-sessions have been thought about (ideally after having been listened to and even transcribed), a separate interview -- a third Sub-session-- can follow in which further narrative questions can be posed but also in which non-narrative questions and activities can be designed. Much BNIM research does not use the third-Sub-session option, but the option is always there, and can be quite important. Sometimes, the ‘third Sub-session’ can just be a phone-call.

Note: having non-narrative questions last: sequencing

The point of having three distinct Sub-sessions is to ensure that the initial narrative in Sub-session One is as uninfluenced as possible by the question-putting activity of Sub-session two, and that as much narrative material as possible is collected in Sub-sessions One and Two before other types of question get put in the always-sometime-later and often-not-necessary Sub-session Three.

Another way of making the same point is that the more usual semi-structured depth interview takes the form of what from a BNIM point-of-view would be a Sub-session three: *some of the disadvantages of a semi-structured depth interview can be overcome by having used BNIM Sub-sessions 1 and 2 beforehand.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Used in this way, your eventual Sub-session Three with many fully- and/or semi-structured interview questions can be much shorter, since much material was previously generated by the previous BNIM Sub-sessions 1 and 2. It can also be more precisely directed and tailored to the particular person.

When you are starting to learn to use BNIM, you will be anxious about “not getting the material you need”. To guard against this anxiety, spell out an interview schedule for a Sub-session 3 semi-structured interview as you would if you had never heard of BNIM. Then do the BNIM interview (Sub-sessions 1 and

Your *sequencing* is of great importance: two-Sub-session BNIM interview first if at all; semi-structured depth (SSDI) (or surface) targeted and (why not?) micro-managed interview next (if at all).

Interviews must be taped, and those interviews selected for detailed interpretation are transcribed into a verbatim transcript (see Wengraf 2001 chapter 10 on ‘copying, indexing, transcribing’, especially pp.212-22).

Why the rules of pause and non-interruption, condensed in the SQUIN and therefore known by both?

At one level you might think of it as ‘courtesy’: you ask someone to give you their time and then ask them a question, and consequently you should not interrupt them as they respond to your request: one request in Sub-session One; several in Sub-session Two.

At another level, you might think of it as ‘extended free time’ so that neither of you feel under pressure to answer ‘quickly’ and to leave things out as a result. The interviewee does not need to worry about any form of ‘cross examination’ (in more than one sense) that might occur. You are not going to ask *about* their narratives (“Why did you say that?”) but only ask *for more (new or further)) narrative*. You never interrupt whatever they say, whether narrative or not.

At another level, you might think of it as ‘free improvisation of form, detail, treatment’ within such ‘free time’ in a more psycho-dynamic way: this, when interpreted, shows something about individual and collective assumptions, prejudices, priorities and neglects.

At a feeling level, the length of the interview and the rule of no interruption/no commentary / no cross examination leads both interview partners to allow themselves to relax and the interviewee not to have to worry about taking the time they need and telling their story and their stories in the ways they find out that they want to tell them.

The implicit rule of **non-conversation** in the interview with the interviewer together with the important **‘pauses’ after each response by the interviewee** enables the interviewee to have a mindful reflection on and dialogue with what they have just said, un-steered by responses with you either supportive or disagreeing.

It also enables **you** to have a mindful reflection on what has happened up to that point in the interview, and what you should now attend to. You are then in a position to overhear an implicit and sometimes explicit dialogue they have with themselves..... and that you

2). Then see what you still need to ask about in your Sub-session 3, given the material already given. (Then see what new questions you need to ask about, new questions thrown up by the responses in Sub-sessions 1 and 2). Then have the redesigned Sub-session 3. If you need it. As you need it.

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are having, or should be having with, with yourself..... so as to have a better non-conversation with them.

You may think of other justifications, and do feel free to select and invent your own. The main thing is to follow the rules and discover – despite your inevitable initial awkwardness with these ‘unnatural’ new rules – how surprisingly well they work.....

The third Sub-session. This can be very different!

If you have a strong motivation towards an active role in interviewing, then the minimalism of the first two sessions can be quite a strain. You may wish to consider Sub-sessions 1 and 2 as having allowed a very extended self-introduction by the interviewee which, completed by the end of Sub-session Two, can now allow a quite different type of interaction to take place.

What kind of Sub-session 3 complementarity?

We have already mentioned the possibility of a ‘semi-structured interview rump’, where the questions that did not answered earlier can now arise. That can be one component of the Sub-session 3.

Another might be a much more co-produced conversation between your interviewee and yourself. You have had the opportunity to grasp much of his ‘reality’ during the self-presentation of Sub-sessions 1 and 2. This can produce much material for posing the questions that seem to arise for you after listening to him or her.

It can produce much material in terms of which you can *present something of yourself* to your interviewee (or ex-interviewee!), thus enabling him/her to understand how you situate yourself in relation to the ‘already said’. This is your opportunity to enable him/her to grasp your similarities and differences in whatever respect seems to you to be important. This might be a stopping point for the two of you, or it may then give rise to further dialogue in which you inter-view each other further.

You can also engage in a provocative or *active interview ‘bonanza’* of the sort suggested by Holstein and Gubrium (see very briefly Wengraf 2001: 201-2) and others.

Given your own subjectivity and the issues and questions that arise after thinking about the experience and material from Sub-sessions 1 and 2, you can then determine a (perhaps complexly structured) Sub-session 3 that takes you further.

But, whatever you eventually decide to do with the later and separate Sub-session 3, don’t let that interfere *at all* with Sub-sessions 1 and 2.

For more detail about BNIM interviewing, see *the Detailed Manual* section 2 p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below onwards. and also Appendix A on

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‘Technicalities of the BNIM interview’ (p.Chyba! Zálóžka není defínována. onwards)and Appendix F.1. on being ethical around and in a BNIM interview (p.Chyba! Zálóžka není defínována. onwards).

A two-page summary of BNIM interviewing is provided on p.96.

After that, you could look at chapter 6 of the textbook *Wengraf QRI (2001)*. Eventually, perhaps, see also some of the ‘Methodological’ references in Bibliography ‘A’ at the end.

The importance of grasping the ethnographic aspect of the interview interaction itself *as participant-observation* is suggested below in the section starting on p.143.⁵⁰

Remember the necessity and the necessary incompleteness of all question-and-answer activity, questions stay as part of the dialogue as they generate further emergent questions.

Only dialogue reveals potentials. It does so by addressing them, by provoking a specific answer that actualises the potential, albeit in a particular and incomplete way. At the same time the questioner necessarily undergoes the same process, which helps him comprehend unsuspected potentials in his own culture. The process, then, is multiply enriching: it educates each side about itself and about the other. And it not only discovers but activates potentials. Indeed the process of dialogue may itself create new potentials, realizable only through future activity and dialogue (Morson and Emerson 1990: 55 summarising Mikhail Bakhtin).⁵¹

⁵⁰ As well as pre-interview and post-interview experience as well

⁵¹ Bear in mind, however, that your part in a BNIM interview dialogue is almost exclusively limited to whatever ‘emotional facilitation and support’ turns out to be necessary *and* apart from that ‘just asking questions’. ‘Conversational dialogue’ is not part of the BNIM interview two sub-sessions, though you may engage in it afterwards. There are perfectly good forms of ‘conversational interview’ but BNIM is not one.

1.3. The BNIM two-track interpretation procedures – brief account

Interpreting the material obtained from a BNIM open-question two-Sub-session narrative interview can be done in many different ways.

One way is that described by me in (Wengraf 2001 ch.11) as a generic method for interpreting *all* qualitative research interviews: namely, to break your Central Research Question down into derived Subsidiary Research Questions (known in that book as ‘Theory Questions), then go through your material thinking about each Theory-Question separately and – in that sweep through the material-- collecting only data coded as relevant to the Theory-Question under consideration; then finally putting your separate answers to the separate Theory-Questions together in order to construct an answer to your Central Research Question (see Wengraf 2001: 223-30). This systematic ‘oriented to theory/research questions’ approach has a lot going for it.

Another way is that of reading through all of each series of processed data (the transcript and the chronology, for example) – or even just the raw datum of the transcript as a whole -- and then deriving hypotheses or ‘themes’ about the ‘whole data set’. This could be called a from-scanned-whole-to-part approach, or ‘holistic impressionism’. This inductive approach has definite strengths, especially for the experienced researcher.⁵²

Both of the above ways regard the data-source as being “the two sub-sessions as one whole”, a ‘single datum’ provided in a single (albeit 2-3 hour) moment. By implication, the ‘sequence and context within the interview’ from which particular items are drawn is of no interpretive significance. It was all said at one ‘time’.

This can of course provide the basis for ‘cut-and-paste coding’ which treats all the data as simultaneous. Alternatively, to justify such coding which ignores the unrolling-interview-context, you have to have such an ‘anti-historical’ epistemology of the interview as a single datum.

There are, however, epistemologies that take a historical perspective on both *the object of study* (a ‘case’ evolving over time in an evolving situation or set of situations) and *the generation of data* used to understand that object of study, that ‘evolving case’: namely, a multi-session interview and then a multi-procedure interpretation, *both evolving over time*.⁵³

⁵² ‘Holistic form’ methodology has several similarities to BNIM’s interpretative stress on form. See the approach of A. Lieblich et al (1998) as exemplified for example in Edwards and Gabbay (2007)

⁵³ The frequent use in this text of the notion of (historically) ‘evolving’ may give the impression of something that smoothly unrolls. This is not the intention. Any attempt to ‘periodise’ either a person’s lived experience or even the short period of an interview will look for ‘breaks and mutations’. Unlike historians, social researchers are not trained to believe that ‘periodising’ is a key task of their work. (See the discussion in the Appendix starting on p. 694 on creating your ‘historical narrative’. A concept of ‘conjuncture’ can be very helpful here.....(Hall and Massey 2010). The task of trying to identify ‘phases’

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For historically-minded research interpretation, the interview itself – not only the life-period that the interview is *about* – is taken seriously as having occurred and unfolded over time. First some things were said and done; after which some other things were said and done. The sequence matters. The time of the interview is not treated as a mini-Big Bang, but as a small period of lived experience running from its beginning to its end. The 20-year life has its 20-year-history; the 2-hour-interview has its own history of 120 minutes. Sequence is important.

This is a third way: the peculiar BNIM way. We look at the events and decisions and shift in the period of the lived life; we look at the events and decisions and shifts in the period of the telling of the told story. We eventually ‘periodise’ both. Both are considered as ‘wholes’, but as wholes evolving over time, to be treated as history.⁵⁴

We also look at that history as non-inevitable. At any given moment, there are a number of equally-possible and unequally probable ‘next steps’ that an actor might take. We are trying to block the sense of ‘retrospective inevitability’ by ensuring that the researcher and their panel are placed at least for a while in ‘imagining different next histories’ and not knowing which ones happened. There are always some alternatives (unequally probable, equally possible) at any given moment: BNIM interpretive procedure forces us to simulate this ‘not-knowing’ in the mind of the research subject living their life and telling their story *forwards*....

I stress that the above ‘BNIM third way’ focus on a historical living of the lived life and a micro-focus on a historical approach to that moment of that living, namely the immediate telling of the told story in the interview, is not necessarily all you do. You may also wish to treat ‘the told story’ as one thing, and do an analysis of that ‘one thing’..... the story as told, not (in this sub-procedure for understanding) as a telling of the story by the teller..

In traditional thematic analysis, the themes of ‘the story as told’ are paramount, the telling is background, and the chronology of the lived life may even be thought to be irrelevant. In the BNIM ‘third way’, it is understanding the historically-situated subjectivity as it lived its life up to and into the short period of the interview that is central, understanding the detail of the ‘telling’ is crucial to that objective e, and the

and the ‘moments of change between phases’ involves assuming not a smooth unrolling but a ‘periodically jerky evolution with occasional mutations’.

⁵⁴ In addition, the process of interpretation (starting with the Field-notes immediately after the interview and ending with the final revision of the final draft of a publication – or presentation to an audience – about the ‘case’ or issue that the interview is helping to illuminate) is also profoundly historical, and should also be treated as such. CAQDAS Computer-aided qualitative research programmes (basically cut-from-anywhere and paste-together) are profoundly context-insensitive and de-historicising. Otherwise, they’re very useful. They just carry --by omission-- an anti-historical epistemology. They are also not ‘spontaneously good’ at registering the ‘unsaid’ and the ‘un-done’, the invisible ‘negatives’ in the ground of grounded theorising. ‘Interpreting what is not’ is important, interpreting the significance of ‘sequence’, is also important, and neither are among the very considerable strengths of CAQDAS.

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thematic analysis of the ‘story as told’ may make a necessary or even vital contribution to that central question.

There are two tracks – history of the living of the lived life, history of the telling of the told story – and we follow them up separately. In each track, we look at the sequence of ‘historical chunks’ that happened in the 20 years of the life and in the 120 minutes of the telling of it.

Whenever we engage in the two-track chunk-by-chunk ‘action’ approach characteristic of BNIM, we start by engaging in a ‘*part-by-part-to-whole*’ procedure. To begin with, at least, we do, rather systematically, something else which appears --to begin with at least - - rather non-holistic.

What is that something else, the BNIM interpretive procedure?

A full verbatim non-polished transcript of the interview is made. The transcript datum is then processed in two different ways (the resulting interpretations of each track are then *later* brought together).

There are two stages in BNIM interpretive procedure:

Stage A: involves processing the raw interview material into a verbatim transcript and then processing the raw transcript in two different ways. Each set of ‘derived processed data’ is then interpreted separately along its own track. A 3-hour panel is used to start each track, and the researcher then continues on their own. The results of the single-track interpretations are then brought together by the researcher to produce an account of the case, often an account of the Mutations of the case, a case-narrative.

The procedure of stage A is re-produced for each interview under study to produce a separate ‘case-account’ for each interview.

Stage B: The ‘cases’ are then available for comparative study and further theorisation and ‘case-presentations’ for different practice, policy, general and disciplinary audiences.

This *Short Guide and Detailed Manual* deals with both stages of interpretation, but in different places.

The *Short Guide* is quite short; the *Detailed Manual* is very detailed. Scanning the ‘examples’ of what sort of different ‘writings-up’ emerge from the different moments of the interpretation procedure (BDA, TFA, Mutations of the case’) might be a quick route to getting at the significance of those procedures. Examples of BDA-writing can be found starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.; of TFA-writing on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována.; of Case-Account writing on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována..

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You are now reading the brief account in the *Short Guide* where we focus almost exclusively on Stage A. This is concerned with the two-track interpretation based on material derived primarily from the verbatim transcript. What are the two tracks?

The two tracks? The living of the lived life, the telling of the told story. You reconstruct the experiencing of the “interpreting and acting” subject first (a) as he or she lived his or her life events; and then (b) as he or she at the moment in their life when the interview happened, in the interview, chooses to recall and interpret events, telling his or her current story.⁵⁵

Why two tracks?

Typically in qualitative research, the interpretative process works directly on the verbatim transcript -- either by reading it altogether (as in holistic impressionism) or by reading it line-by-line (as in some forms of classic grounded theory) or a combination of both. The most intuitive and the most frequent way of interpreting biographic narratives is to pay attention to both context / situation and subjectivity *simultaneously*.

BNIM’s two track method involves first thinking in a *more than usually focused way about socio-historic context, situatedness in time and geographical and social space* (think of a genealogy defining vertical and contemporary social relations) (because in track 1 there is no subjective data to think about) and thinking *in a more than more than more than usually focused way about subjective experiencing* (because the track 2 focus

⁵⁵ The BNIM-speak term '*lived life*' (as in 'living of the lived life') is potentially misleading in two ways.

(1) It can refer to the period of a Whole Life (which is how it originally developed) , but also to a much shorter period (that of an adolescence, an employment, an illness, the membership of an institution, a joyous affair, a single meeting, a brief encounter. So '*whole lived period*' might ideally be better. It could, for example, be a half-day Whole Meeting or a half-hour Whole Argument or Encounter!

(2) It refers to the opposite of what a phenomenologist might mean by the phrase. Counterposed to the very subjective 'telling of the story as told', in BNIM-speak 'lived life' refers to a reconstruction by the researcher of a sequence of 'relatively objective events' of the 'period in question', a reconstruction *uninformed (or as under-informed as possible) by any knowledge of the subjectivity expressed in the story as told* (which is to be examined later). Ideally, it might be called '*factual report by the researcher on relatively objective events and public actions during the whole period under consideration [with notes on alternative possible subjective experiencing]*'. Its primary function is to provide a preliminary contextualisation by the researcher of the historical period and milieu of the individual's whose story/self-presentation will be given full weight in the second track. Its function is to reduce 'seduction' or 'infuriation' by the subsequent telling of the told story....

Despite points (1) and (2), I have chosen to retain the term 'lived life' for the purposes of BNIM-speak.

To change terms at this point in BNIM's history would, I think, cause more problems than it would solve. It could be called, developing a recent suggestion by Sasha Roseneil 'Biographical (Hard) Data Exploration' (vs. Narrative Soft Data Interpretation)! You could call it an 'exploring of a positivist chronology' if you prefer! See p.412 onwards for an example, Julio's BDC/BDA.....At the moment, the terminological couple in BNIM-speak remains the '*living of the lived life*' and the '*telling of the told story*'.

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is on the description – not the evaluation – of their telling of the told story, and socio-historical reality and chronology (the ‘objective facts’) is rear-grounded and bracketed-off.

After the *thinking more intensively* on each of the two tracks *separately* is complete, you have a richer store to bring together when you then turn to paying attention to both context / situation and subjectivity *simultaneously*.

Thinking about and doing one thing at a time is a way of doing each of those things better than when you try to do them all at once: Adam Smith supports the two track method through his argument for the greater productivity of the division of labour in society: to do complex processes properly, do one thing at a time. Admittedly the manufacture of pins that he was concerned with is not the same as the PINs we are struggling to elicit!

Why did the person who lived their life like this come to tell their story like that?

There are therefore in BNIM two distinct lines of processing and interpretation, two separate tracks: the *objective event lived-life-living* track, and the *subjective account told-story-telling* track (see diagrams of the two tracks – lived life and told story -- on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována.). In each track you focus on one thing at a time.

You (initially) follow both these tracks of the lived-life living and the told-story-telling separately and interpreting each according to a particular procedure, which we call an *initial chunk-by-chunk future-blind procedure using a panel*. BNIM uses initially two 3-hour interpretive panels engaged in a chunk-by-chunk, future-blind approach. What is meant by ‘future-blind’? What is meant by ‘chunk-by-chunk’?

Future-blind, chunk-by-chunk

BNIM requires the researcher – at least to start with -- to go forward through the events (of the interaction in the interview, and of the previous living in the previously-lived life) as did the subject: future-blind, moment by moment, having intentions and predictions but – like all of us -- never knowing what will actually come next or later. *We want to know what that moment felt like to him or her. We are reconstructing a situated subjectivity that, at every and any given moment, does not know its future.*

Why does BNIM do this initial mode of interpretation ?

The *chunk-by-chunk future-blind and track-by-track approach* avoids a number of epistemological dangers inherent in other ways of interpreting biographical interview texts.

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In particular, it avoids the ‘biographic inevitability illusion’ whereby the researcher’s god-like immediate impressionistic grasp of the ‘whole text of the whole life-story’ generates a numbing sense that the life and the story (the situation and the subjectivity) could only be lived that way and told that way, and above all understood (theorised by ‘Science’, i.e. you) that way.⁵⁶

Unlike some other methods, BNIM’s chunk-by-chunk provisionality-stressing approach helps to subvert a dull ‘naturalism’ (or retrospective impressionistic pre-determinism) and to restore a sense of virtual lives not lived and virtual stories not told. This brings the actual ‘decisions’ – and the actual and possible conditions of these and other decisions -- in the successive ‘present moments’ of the subjective interpreting and acting and experiencing subject whose ‘account’ we are studying into stereoscopic clarity.⁵⁷

[Comparative study and especially cross-national and cross-temporal comparison powerfully enhances the sense of ‘historical and sub-cultural specificity’ of each particular case.]

In these initial ‘kick-start’ panels, you are reconstructing the ‘states of mind of the actor’ in different contexts of action.

In addition, an initial 3-hour interpretive panel is used for each track.

The chunk-by-chunk and track-by-track ‘sense of provisionality’ is further enhanced by the procedure where the researcher starts their work on each of the two tracks by working within *initial 3-hour BNIM interpretive panels* in which three or four peers kick-start the researcher’s interpretive process in a procedure that challenges any assumptions the researcher may have had about the “obviously best” interpretation “of each chunk and even of “it all”.

This very early liberation from what might be called ‘unchallenged researcher autism’ is an important part of the procedure. Ad hoc groups of (mostly or entirely) non-specialists drawn from a variety of backgrounds to ensure difference of experiences and

⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin sarcastically remarks that “*To historians who wish to relive an era, Fustel de Coulanges [a nineteenth century French letter historian] recommends that they blot out everything they know about the later course of history* (Benjamin 1999: 247-8). The future-blind chunk-by-chunk method crucial to *the initial panel-work stage* of BNIM does exactly that ‘blotting out’ disapproved-of by Benjamin at each point in the course of the improvised interview’s telling of the told story, at each point in the course of unfolding objective events in the lived life. At any given panel-moment, future chunks are *not-known* to the panel, just as they weren’t known to the historical actors ‘living’ the moment that the historian wants to ‘re-live’.. However, *after the panel-work*, at later stages of BNIM interpretation, retrospective and contextual understanding of the case-history as a whole become central in ways of which Benjamin might have approved.

⁵⁷ You may prefer the concept of ‘successive situations’ in order to link up with Adele Clarke’s ‘situational analysis’. That’s fine. But be careful to remember that any such situation is a dated situation. With a more time-minded language, the key word might have been ‘conjuncture’. Most sociology drains away the awareness of time. BNIM’s approach should heighten it.

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perspectives, the BNIM kick-start interpretive panels are discussed later. Contrary to expectations, they are not too difficult to set up, and their short, three-hour, experiences are – for all concerned -- as a personal and professional learning experience both insightful and often funny.⁵⁸

BNIM's initial and specific interpretation methodology involves procedures that are (a) future-blind chunk-by-chunk, where (b) each chunk is seen as a moment in a part-by-part-to-whole act of thinking, feeling and doing.

The focus is always on the inferring and re-inferring 'historical-subjectivity-in-situation' supposed to be 'behind' (or 'in') the manifest data (as mentioned earlier, p. 133 onwards, we are interested in the *situated subjectivity's telling of the told story* not the story in itself).

How does all this two-track business happen?

Exploring the hard Biographical Data (BDA), Biographical Data Analysis

Why bother? Why not just go straight to the analysis of the telling of the told story?

We don't wish to be seduced by the interviewee's current (and us-directed) story! The object of constructing a chronology of the 'hard biographical data' is to reduce (never abolish) the danger and level of such a seduction.

As interviewer, you heard the story of the life as told. As listener to the tape and as transcriber and reader of the transcript, you have heard it again.

Treat this as having been subjected to two attempts at (unconscious or conscious) hypnotism. The teller desperately wants you to accept their story, to see things as she or he currently sees them, for you to adopt their current perspective on what happened. More importantly, they want themselves to accept the basic assumptions of that current perspective.

How can you create a space in your mind so that you can think *independently* about the strengths and weaknesses and the propagandist function of the account and perspective embodied in that telling by the anxious-to-convince teller?

A partial contribution to such 'autonomous thinking' is, before looking again at the hypnotic telling of the told story, is to do something else. You construct your own account of the 'objective events' that have marked the person's life, of the

⁵⁸ See other references in section 3.2.4, in 3.5.3, and at greater length in Appendix B.2. If you are viewing this text electronically, 'FIND' references to "panel".

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event-structures that provide the bigger and smaller contexts of the telling of the story.

You want to avoid the ‘seductions’ of their story (as indicated above). In addition, you may want to avoid the ‘seductions’ of your own personal reactions to the interviewee which make you misrecognise the significance of the events they mention. One researcher took a strong dislike to a given interviewee, who in her story glossed over a particular difficult event in her early life when she narrowly avoided rape. When reading the transcript, the researcher failed to think *independently* about that set of events. It was only when she engaged in the BDC-disciplined extraction of the ‘actual events’ from the ‘dismissive telling’ and from her ‘dismissive dislike’ of the woman that she was able to stop glossing over them and to *think about them* independently of the woman’s account and her own dislike of the woman. The BDC helps you develop objectivity.

For the first interpretive track, a Chronology of Objective Life Events (BDC) is first constructed from a reading of the transcript. “Objective life events” are characteristically those that could be independently checked (e.g. using official documents) such as records of school and employment and other organizations.⁵⁹

Each item of this Biographical Data Chronology (BDC) (e.g. “*Took but did not pass exams at age 16*”) is stripped of the subject’s current or previous interpretation (e.g. “*disappointed at failing exams at age 16*”, or “*failed exams because of X-factor*” or “*failed exams and this changed my life for the good by setting me on path P*”).

What remains for the panel to look at is a de-subjectivised datum or construct (e.g. “*Took but did not pass exams at age 16*”). Each of these ‘stripped objective chunks’ (there might be 10 or 20 of them) is then presented in chronological order as a separate chunk to a research panel, which is asked to consider how this event might have been experienced /interpreted *at the time* – called an ‘experiential hypothesis’ -- , and, if that experiential hypothesis were true, what might be expected to occur next or later (‘following hypothesis’). in this series of life-event chunks.

How they actually experienced it at the time in their then-perspective may be *misreported* from their current perspective: that is why the ‘stripping of current subjectivity’ is necessary for the BDC. (The notion of ‘perspectives’ is discussed in an appendix starting on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována., which you might want to read at some time)

⁵⁹ If the ‘object of study’ is not a whole life but, say, a whole committee meeting or surgical intervention or observation-session, or even a BNIM interview, then a useful ‘objective account’ of at least some aspects could be obtained by an audio-tape or video-tape. The idea of track 1 is to get a non-controversial account of at least some of the more ‘observable events’ occurring in the period-space under consideration. ... in order to get some mental distance from the present perspective embodied in the current telling of the told story.

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Alternative counter-hypotheses and alternative tangential hypotheses are always sought for whatever experiential hypotheses are initially put forward.⁶⁰

After many hypotheses and counter-hypotheses and tangential hypotheses have been collected and recorded, the next life-event chunk is presented. Its implications for the previously-generated experiential and following hypotheses are considered: some may be supported by the new datum, others seem less plausible, yet others unaffected. Such implications are noted. Then a new round of hypothesizing commences.

An oscillating process of both imaginative identification with those involved in living the lived life and critical distance from them is sought: previous hypotheses are constantly to be corrected and refined by reflection on the emergence of future event-chunks as they are presented one -by-one .

After three hours of panel work, the researcher then proceeds on their own to complete work on any remaining chunks (separately or bundled together): or in some other way of ‘getting to think the whole’ (see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards).

A brief account of the evolution of the lived life (a history of the lived-life evolution) is then constructed by the researcher, considering alternative structural hypotheses that make ‘best sense’ of the data considered in this way. An example is given on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards.

This preliminary brief account of the evolution of the lived life (in terms of what we might call attributed pattern A) will be profoundly modified later, after the examination of the telling of the told story. However, it sets up a context and a set of sensitising hypotheses for refutation and enrichment after the researcher starts on the second interpretive track.

It can also (and nearly always does) incite the researcher to realise what further independent socio-historical research they might need to undertake to get to grips with the ‘individual history’ in question, after or even before the second interpretive track is undertaken.

Biographical Data work is elaborated in much more detail in Wengraf (2001: 236-70) and also will be dealt with below (section 3.3.3. “The living of the lived life track” p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards)

⁶⁰ Thorough-going subjectivists and relativists – and even objectivists doing certain sorts of project where objective life events are sparse or irrelevant – may find the construction of such a chronology somewhat useful, but will be less interested in going on to the further stage of analysing those biographical data.

Then. What are the different ways that somebody might tell the story of such a lived life?

The researcher then generates a variety of hypotheses as to how somebody who had lived their life according to the attributed pattern *A might tell their story of that life*. There are always many ways.

This imagination of **possible tellings of the told story** is then a preparation for working on the second interpretive track. The task is not to guess correctly (though it is very confirming if and when this starts to partly happen) but to sensitise oneself to possibilities. The construction of a variety of possible chronology-compatible told stories helps the researcher to avoid being seduced or ‘overwhelmed’ by the emotional pressure of the persuasive story as actually told. Examples of such ‘alternative told stories’ can be found in Wengraf (2001: 270-1). See also p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards for an example.⁶¹

Then. The Second Interpretive Track is now attended to: the actual Telling of the Told Story.

The second interpretive track -- always subsequent to the first -- is focused on the evolution of the subjective account as the interviewee improvises their ‘performance’ in the interview interaction, in their “the telling of the told story” as embodied in the transcript.

First, the transcript needs to be processed into a sequence of “segments.”: this is called ‘sequentialising’. This is a technically-demanding procedure that needs to be learnt carefully. Doing it, sequentialising, generating the sequentialisation, has a powerful effect of making the researcher see things quite differently, even before the actual sequentialisation eventually produced is put to work in the interpretive panel and otherwise.

A new segment or ‘chunk’ is said to start when there is a change of speaker, of topic, or of the tone or manner in which a topic is addressed (see below and also Wengraf 2001; chapter 12).

The ‘chunks’ are not chunks of the verbatim transcript. A working document is created in which the content of the chunk of verbatim transcript is summarised, a ‘gist’ is constructed by the researcher, the gist of what is said, together with a characterisation of the manner (the type of text, the text-sort) in which the topic-content was addressed. This researcher-constructed document (of gist+textsort segments) is called a TSS (Text Structure Sequentialisation) and the panel works

⁶¹ Youell (2005: 52-3) makes a similar point about the difficulty of staying objectively alert to unwelcome probabilities, thoughts you would prefer not have thought, “thinking under fire”. Youell’s context is when observing children for child-assessment purposes. The point is more general, though.

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with those chunks of the TSS. A 60-page transcript might be summarised into, say, a 10-page sequentialisation/TSS with 30 chunks identified making up the 10 pages. This 10-page summary is much easier to handle than the original 60-page transcript (see Wengraf 2001: 242, 250-1 for examples). It is like a contents page. It *is* a special sort of contents page, but more.....

However, when and where you think this useful, you refer back to the original verbatim transcript or even original recording. [A similar but usually much shorter working document summarises, as we have seen, the Chronology of lived life events, the ‘Biographical Data Chronology’; see Wengraf 2001: 238].

The transcript is ‘sequentialised’ into chunks. A new ‘chunk’ starts when the person speaking changes, the topic changes, or the manner in which the topic is talked about (the textsort) changes. Change of speaker in a transcript is obvious; change of topic, not too difficult. What is a textsort change, a change of the manner in which a topic is talked about?

BNIM initially distinguished three textsorts, A-N-D. There was either an ‘argumentation’ a ‘narrative’, or a ‘description’ going on (or a mix).

Currently, we distinguish five textsorts. ‘Narrative’ is divided into ‘Report’ and ‘Particular Incident Narrative’ (PIN). ‘Evaluation’ is added as an appendix to some sort of ‘narrative’. That gives us D-R-A-P-E for five main textsorts. See p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. for a diagram; see p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. for a not too serious account of the history of textsort-labels.

How is the sequentialisation used? The initial use of the sequentialisation-chunks is for a new *initial future-blind chunk-by-chunk panel*. (For several other uses, see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. and onwards). This kick-start panel has the pleasure (and it is fun!) of dealing with the telling-of-the-told-story (the personnel of this new panel may overlap with those of the previous BDA panel, but preferably would be at least a bit different, ideally as different as possible, but this can be rarely achieved and is certainly not essential). This is called a ‘TFA’ panel.

‘TFA’ used to stand (as in my 2001 textbook) for ‘Thematic Field Analysis’. As of 2010, I think it would be better to think primarily in terms of ‘Telling Flow Analysis’. This focus on the ‘flow of the telling’ enables a very stark contrast with other quite legitimate concerns which explore the ‘themes of the told story’ rather than the subjectivity of a particular teller.

The procedure of dealing with the ‘interview-event chunks’ is the same as that just described for dealing with the ‘life-event chunks’. Each interview-event segment (sequentialisation-chunk) is presented in turn to another three-hour BNIM panel that attempts to imagine how each such interview event and action might have been experienced by the subject at that moment of the interview.⁶²

⁶² Both in terms of the e/motional experiencing *at the time of the original event or situation* being recalled *and* in terms of the e/motional experiencing involved in recalling and relating to that event and situation *later on in the life*, *and* especially in respect to recalling and relating it *in the here-and-now*

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Experiential and following hypotheses are sought, as are counter-hypotheses and also hypotheses that are tangential to those initially put forward.⁶³ The hypotheses generated are then subject to subsequent correction and refinement as further segments are presented later. As in the case of biographic data, after three hours of panel work, the researcher continues on their own – not necessarily chunk-by-chunk, certainly not only chunk-by-chunk -- enriched by the panel's recorded deliberations.

Enriched by the experiencing of the initial panel and its structural hypothesising, you as interpreter have choices as to how to proceed after the second of the two panels.

After the 'telling-of-the-told-story' TFA panel

You may continue with the same procedure, but this is unlikely.

- You may (at least for stretches of the transcript) proceed with a much broader-brush version of the sequentialisation.
- You may use the sequentialisation to identify key sections to focus upon.
- At some point you will simply check through the rest of the material (transcript and/or sequentialisation) to verify, rectify, or develop better structural hypotheses than those developed by the initial panel.
- You may well use other procedures of 'interview text interpretation' which appear to you to be appropriate or necessary.
-

Conditions of work and the complexity and shape of each interview and your strategy for answering your Central Research Question will determine different choices for moments of post-panel interpreting.

In addition, a similar future-blind procedure of panel interpretation is also carried out – usually towards the end of the interpretive process -- for puzzling and potentially

interview situation: clearly a complex and multilayered activity: the present lived experience of re-evoking for the interviewer-stranger *now* one's own past lived-experience *then*.

In addition, given that all action and inaction occurs in a 'space of morals and values', the description of emotional experiencing typically involves identifying implicit as well as explicit levels, and configurations of often contradictory and uncertain 'moral feelings', fluctuating and evolving and often contradictory configurations that are no less complex parts of overall emotional experiencing.

⁶³ Berniker and McNabb (2006) have recently argued for a structured qualitative research method *DI* (dialectical inquiry) with reasoning that clarifies the need to integrate both thesis and antithesis, and also to free oneself from the numbing effect of being immersed too completely in both. Duarte, Rosa and Goncalves (2006) have argued a similar but stronger case in which, however, any assertion of A simultaneously constitutes its (usually fuzzy) opposite of –A [not-A] and hence creates the conditions of oscillation or destabilisation of both. See their article '*Self and dialogical articulation of multivocality: proposal of an analysis method*'. This relates well to the BNIM search for counter-hypotheses, etc.

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illuminating segments of the verbatim-text (**Microanalysis** see p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards for details).⁶⁴

A warning note. It is comparatively easy to keep ‘subjectivity facts’ out of your track one analysis of the living-of-the-lived-life. It is much more difficult to keep ‘knowledge of the objective facts and evaluations of ‘adequacy’ out of your track two analysis of the telling of the told story. Why?

1) The chunks of the sequentialisation (track two) contain constant implicit and explicit references to ‘the real world’ in a way that the ‘de-subjectivised chunks of the Chronology (BDC) do not.

2) We are programmed to constantly be ‘evaluating’ (in terms of the known and plausible ‘real world’) the subjective assertions of others. It is very easy to write “*He came to see that....*” (implying that you know that he was right to think that he saw that) instead of “*He now thinks that he came to see that....*” (not implying that his later view was more adequate to reality than his earlier one, which is his current perspective on which -- during track two -- you shouldn’t have your own opinion). The only discipline which professionally guards you against such premature ‘identifying and evaluating’ work may be that of old-fashioned anthropology, or a rigorous post-modernism.

3) Our work in the TFA panel on the telling of the told story can only work if we do (temporarily) identify with the teller and come to inhabit the universe of his ‘current perspective’ from which he tells the story of his past experiences and perspectives (“*I suddenly realised that I’d got it wrong. I came to see that X was the case.....*”). It is then difficult in your writing-up of the ‘pattern of the telling of the told story’ to break out of that necessary (but necessarily temporary) identification, out of the deliberate succumbing to seduction, and describe it (non-evaluatively, *yet*) from the ‘outside’ in a carefully-constructed new-objective account.

4) Our overall CRQ and BNIM approach requires us to do such evaluation (later), and it is very difficult *not to do it while doing track two, but only to do such*

⁶⁴ It should be born in mind that panels should be composed of at least three, preferably four and not more than, say, five or six people, and it is a bad thing if they are all academic specialists, much worse if they are dominated by the same discipline or paradigm or professional socialisation or life-experience. They should be as heterogeneous as possible, though it is good if at least one of them has some experience comparable to that of the interviewee. Differences of age, nationality and ethnicity help. If panel members are too similar to you, the researcher, you will gain less.... Go for difference, even (be bold) otherness! For any particular ‘case’ being studied, you need two such three-hour panels: one to start the lived-life track and the other the telling-of-the-told-story track. Cornish et al (2006) discuss ‘collaboration in difference’ at a European level in an interesting way. Every panel member has ‘hot-spots’ and ‘blind spots’, including you. You need people who are very sensitive to the ‘scent’ of type of hypothesising that you are insensitive to (have a blind spot for). You want people different from yourself. I have a bit of a blind-spot about religion; I therefore try to find someone for my panel for whom religion is a hot-spot. What are the types of hypothesis that you on your own would hardly ever or never spontaneously think about?

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inevitable and very necessary ‘evaluation of the adequacy of subjectivity’ later on in the next major task, bringing the two strands/tracks together, generating the Case-account.

If you don’t keep subjectivity-facts out of track one discussions and your ‘knowledge and opinion about the real-world facts’ out of track two, you will get a confusing unexamined very repetitive and unjustified mess.

A brief summary of the evolution of the telling-of-the-told story is written up, to summarise the findings of the second interpretive track. Examples are given on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards.

Structural hypotheses.

Throughout the separate examination of each series – the living of the chronologically-lived life; the unfolding telling of the interview-told story -- separate structural hypotheses are sought.

What do we mean by a ‘separate structural hypothesis’? It is a hypothesis about the structure of the whole series (either the living of the lived life; or the telling of the told story); or, based on the first two, the evolution and essence of the ‘case’, that is suggested as a pattern or gestalt by the process of interpretation so far. The hypothesis is: “*if the pattern we have seen so far were to be characteristic of the whole of the series of data/case-data that we are studying, then this is what might be true:*” For the principles of part-whole interpretation, see Scheff (1997).

Once you have completed these separate investigations of the pattern shown in the living of the lived-life series (biographic data analysis BDA) and the pattern shown in the telling of the told story series (teller flow analysis TFA), what next?

To help you keep the essence of the two tracks in mind, you attempt to construct a one - page (two or three-columns) forced condensation (see an example on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below).

Then. Putting the Two Tracks Together: developing ideas for the Case-Account

Only after the tracks have been hypothesised about separately do you then – in a process of knitting together – seek *connecting inter-track structural hypotheses*.⁶⁵ These

⁶⁵ For certain purposes, you may not wish to make those connections – at least not explicitly or thoroughly or at length – in your published writings. . Much depends on your research problem and Central Research Question. ... and the demands, capacities and allergies of your proposed audience.... and of yourself.

See for example Meares (2007) for a socio-biographical use of BNIM in which, for a variety of reasons, too much exploration of the ‘inner-world reality and dynamics’ of South African migrants to New Zealand is

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connecting structural hypotheses relate the lived-life findings (A) to the telling-of-the-told-story findings (Z) in a question about the dynamics of the case which can then be addressed:

“Why did the person who lived their life like this (A), tell their story like that (Z)?”.

Alternatively:

“Given he or she now tells their story like Z, what does that suggest about how they came to live their life like A ?”.

And

What is the pattern HiSS/TUF² (Historical Subjectivities-in-Situations in Transitions to Unknown Futures) of historically-situated and evolving and acting subjectivity that explains both pattern A and pattern Z?

Having then thought about the ‘connecting structural hypotheses’ that could explain both pattern A and pattern Z, you then proceed to use these hypotheses to write *your own historical narrative of the mutations of the case*. Such a case-presentation must be one that enables you to take properly into account and into your account both the inner-world and outer-world dynamics and the contingencies involved.⁶⁶

You need to construct and convey a sense – your best sense - of a historically-evolving situation (or several) being subjectively processed and of a historical subjectivity experiencing and acting in their evolving situation⁶⁷.

avoided. See also King (2000). There are other BNIM-based research studies in which, for a variety of reasons, too much exploration of ‘outer-world context and dynamics’ is avoided (see for example Jones 2001, Nicholson 2009).

⁶⁶ The two earlier brief summaries (i) the evolution of the living of the lived life and (ii) the evolution of the telling of the told story provide materials for this third document – (iii) the evolution of the case history – but (i) and (ii) are normally of less interest once the evolution of the case-history has been produced. They have served their purpose, have been used and gone beyond. They should be kept for later reference, obviously. After the panels, a whole number of historical and sociological contextual questions will be raised. To answer them, you will need to explore other data-sources..... This extra-interview data will then feedback into your understanding of the evolution and significance of the particular case.

⁶⁷ I refer to this model the researcher ends up with of a particular ‘historically-situated subjectivity’ or ‘historical situation subjectively experienced’ – both in transition to one or other unknown futures -- as HiSS/TUFF² (see below p. 368 for a discussion of HiSS/TUFF²). You can put ‘HiSS/TUFFs’ in the plural to suggest that any situated subjectivity that we study (an interviewee) has been and is marked by a variety of other subjectivities and by past and present situations. If you have a less relational model you can think instead of the terms being in the singular.

August 2010: You can add an extra ‘S’ for “strategising”, to read “Historically-Situated Strategising Subjectivity”. This will ensure you keep an ‘action’ frame of reference!

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And for your particular research interest (Central Research Question):

“What does all this tell us about my object of study?” (see p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. for more detail about BNIM interpretation processes.⁶⁸

The separate results of the lived-life analysis and the telling-of-the-told-story analysis are brought together in a way that modifies and enriches and questions the separate accounts previously constructed. This involves going back to transcript and field-notes and digital record, and going wider to any other contextual and case material that can help the next stage. This is key to the quality of your further understanding of the case in context.

The researcher works to produce a ‘case-account’ that describes the dynamics and significance of the way the case evolved over time (the researcher’s constructed narrative of the history or evolution of the ‘case’).

This involves considering the differences between the historical subjectivity-in-situation at the start, and that at the end of the period covered and at the time of the BNIM interview. Examples are suggested on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ It is important that the living-of-the-lived-life and the telling-of-the-told-story tracks are handled separately and you come to independent results that then have to be ‘reconciled’ in an explicit further and different research moment. Some sociologists wishing to ignore (self) representations would tend to ignore the ‘telling-of-the-told-story’ track (or deal with it very skimpily) ; some psychologists wishing to ignore the historically- and societally-situated and contextualised nature of lives would tend to ignore the ‘living-of-the-lived life’ track (or deal with it very skimpily). Psycho-societal researchers would not.

BNIM’s default stress on distinguishing and following both tracks and finding subsequently a way of making sense of both sets of data at least attempts to avoid the involuntary methodological one-sidedness entailed by anti-societal psychologisms and anti-psychological sociologisms, and the neglect of history and historical specificity and process by both. On history-writing, see eventually below the Appendix discussions **D.1** and **D.2.** below.

⁶⁹ See Appendix on p. **682** on ‘fatalities, freedoms and constrained transformations’ for a more detailed discussion of ‘permanent essences’ and ‘historical mutations’ in a given ‘case-mutation’ history. And, on the writing-up of your ‘history’ (researcher’s case narrative) of your object of study, see , p. **694** onwards.

1.4. Comparing several cases – Generalising and Particularising Theory (GPT)

Once a number of cases have been analysed in this way (say between three and five), then a systematic panel-based procedure for comparing the dynamics of these ‘whole cases’ can be used to lay the basis for case-based theorisation).

The method of comparative interpretation typically used is certainly grounded and emergent from within the case. However, it points simultaneously both to the generalities and typologies characteristic of Grounded Theory Research (GR), but also to the accounts of particular dynamics and contingencies of particular cases (of people, organisations, whatever) characteristic of Case-Study Research.

Not just Grounded Generalising Theory (GT). It is a waste of the knowledge of ‘difference’ between cases if you just hunt for similarities. It is a waste of the knowledge of ‘similarities’ if you just describe (an infinite number) of differences.

You need to hold both similarities and differences in mind for yourself; you need to write-up and present to others in such a way that they too can hold similarities and differences in their minds. To achieve this, you need to design and evolve a complex strategy of presentation.⁷⁰

*It is both Generalising and Particularising theorising (each to do the other better), (GPT) even if explicit generalising is – for good reasons – deliberately delayed.*⁷¹

Jane Helen Graham (2010) decided to do an interesting experiment in ‘triangulating’ her interpretive work, using both Grounded Theory and BNIM interpretive panels. She writes:

I found the combination of the Biographical Narrative Interpretive Method of analysis (panel interviews) and implementation of a Grounded Theory approach to be complementary and at times, useful.

However, on reflection, the Grounded Theory processes of coding were incredibly intensive, time consuming and laborious. Though it was clear that my findings which emerged from having implemented the coding processes were

⁷⁰ I find that a research presentation which presents only generalising theory or only particular case-accounts is for me weaker than one which does both. It is hard and artful work to learn to convey both together in a way felt to be more than just a juxtaposition. [However, for me, personally, the ‘newness’ comes from understanding that reality is historical, and that struggling to understand the ‘historically unique’ is the way that generalising grounded theory is dragged into further self-enrichment].

⁷¹ See Wengraf 2001: p. 231-312; Wengraf 2002; and below p.553 for further discussions of *GPT* (Generalising *and* Particularising Theory and Theorising). Cross-case theorising should be case-based and case-respecting....and case-benefitting!

1.4. Comparing cases: Theory that generalises and particularises – brief account

supportive of and on the whole consistent with the findings of the panel interviews, I felt that the benefit of employing a Grounded Theory approach did not justify the enormous efforts involved, in a research study which was time limited, and given its interdisciplinary nature, already an intense piece of work.

With hindsight, I can now understand my need to ‘back up’ my BNIM analysis with a secondary method in the context of a defence against the anxiety of inexperience

However, the Grounded Theory approach did offer me a systematic analytical pathway for data which was not presented for panel analysis due to such time constraints. Findings from both methods were in the main, congruent. (Graham 2010: 95-6, re-ordered)).

Personally, I was surprised at reading this finding of Graham. I had read about GT – and very much appreciated Strauss (1987) – but had always thought that GT would have been ‘speedier’ than BNIM. It may be that other researchers have also experience of GT and BNIM and it would be useful (as always) to have more information about such experiences. So, do write in!

What if you’re “against” the Grounded Theory movement?⁷²

You may be somebody who dislikes the rhetoric of ‘grounded theory’ and self-consciously intends to use the case material within a particular pre-existing conceptual-theoretical framework. In which case, unless you have a pretty omniscient theory, you will find that the GPT procedures below will help *not displace your current framework* but *enrich and where appropriate correct and refine* the current version of the one you are using. [Otherwise, you don’t need to do any new research because you know in advance that you and your theoretical model have nothing to learn!].

For a short summary of the ‘Key principles and stages’ described above, please go to p.127.

⁷² For another helpful discussion of Grounded Theory in respect of a study partially influenced by BNIM, see Philbin (2009) and his chapter on GT. The combination of ‘an educated open mind’ and ‘systematic procedures’ that he identifies as Barney Glaser’s position is certainly one that is part of the BNIM strategy. See also Anthony Bryant (2009) on “the strange case of Anselm Strauss” and GT’s simultaneous use and denial of Pragmatism.

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For further exposition of BNIM interpretation procedure , please go to p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below.

For technical detail, Wengraf 2001 ch.12;

and then you could look at one or more of the Discussion Appendices on ‘interpretation and ethics’ starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. below; and relevant BNIM articles and chapters, see list starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována..

The number of **footnotes in this text** develops sharply, but those exploring the area for the first time should probably avoid them. They are generated one -by-one as a result or on the occasion of particular research team meetings, particular musings, and particular trainings. Consequently the same point may be treated once in the main body of the text and twice or more in footnotes written at different times.

Once a year, I have the time to go through the text as a whole and ‘rationalise it’. The next version then is much tidier and coherent and non-duplicative. It then gets overgrown by further footnotes until the next year’s summer spring-cleaning. So: apologies in advance for ad hoc footnote proliferation, and don’t get lost or confused by them.

Mark Twain (cited somewhere by Maxine Greene) says:

“Your judgement may be flawed if your imagination is not in focus.” .

Compare two more recent writers:

“Learning from [our] experience is at the heart of our method, because it enables a particular quality of knowledge without which the quality of our interventions... will be shallower and more attenuated than they might be (Cooper and Lousada 2005: 9-10)”⁷³

⁷³ And the kick-start panels enable you to learn from the experience of others *before* your initial hypotheses, insights and your typical oversights and insensitivities harden..... The 6 hours (3 for the lived life, 3 for the told story) may be tricky to learn how to do, but are amazing in the amount of extra-insight and professional self-knowledge they *invariably* deliver..... and the interested participants who then (even if they weren’t already) often become some of your own ‘project research community’

1.5. Key principles in a couple of pages

1.5.1. Key principles of BNIM Three-Sub-session interviewing

1. Two Sub-sessions separated by a normally short interlude. You need a minimum 2 hour slot: if possible, 3 hours, though you are unlikely to use all of it. Total time normally 90-120 minutes, first Sub-session one-third of total time, second sub session two-thirds of total time. You make cue-phrase notes throughout. You write private field-notes immediately afterwards.

You may choose to do an optional third Sub-session but do this considerably later, only after Sub-sessions One and Two have been systematically inspected and thought about.

2. Sub-session 1: the SQUIN. You ask only one carefully designed question to start the interviewee off in telling their story. This question known as the SQUIN (the Single Question aimed at inducing Narrative) is designed with several components all of which are necessary for the interview to work well. In the interview you must deliver the question as designed, not adding to it or missing bits out, or varying the wording. (A car only works with all its components in place, properly sequenced. The same is true of the BNIM initial Sub-session programmed by the initial and initiating SQUIN).

3. Sub-session 1: facilitation of the ‘Whole Story’, but no interrupting or intervening until the unprompted interviewee insists that they have finished. Part of the SQUIN is a promise by you not to interrupt or intervene. Keep this promise. Even if the interviewee asks you to guide them, don’t do it: you must support them deciding whatever they wish to do with the task. Even if you cannot see the point of what they are saying, *especially* if you cannot see it, you must support them in saying whatever they do say and in not saying whatever they don’t say. Facilitation but no direction. You destroy a joke if you interrupt before the punchline; you destroy the BNIM interview at the moment that you attempt -- or consent -- to co-steer the interviewee. Instead you support them: wherever they take their story at whatever length is right.

4. Sub-session 1: You make notes of around 3 to 5 words for each of the key *cue-phrases* that they use as they tell their story. These cue-phrases will be used by you rather like a theatre prompter in Sub-session Two to *cue them back* to bits of their Sub-session one overall story, when you ask them to amplify those points. *Make notes on the special BNIM notepad.* Don’t change their words: miss out their words rather than change them.

5. Interlude. When they insist, unprompted, that they have finished their story, you normally have an interlude in which you privately choose items on the notepad to be probed in Sub-session Two. This Interlude might last on average from 5-10 minutes. The selected items must include the 1st item that they brought up, the last item; and your selection in-between. *For each cue-phrase chosen, you write down one ‘magic word’ from one of the three lists* at the top of the BNIM notepad for insertion into the ‘magic formula’ you will later use to structure the main parts of Sub-session Two.

6. Sub-session Two: pushing for PINs, and.... pausing . You use the notepad to “push for PINs” on each cue-phrase item selected. A ‘PIN’ is a Particular Incident Narrative, as exemplified in the footnote at the bottom of each page of the BNIM notepad. You push for them by using the magic formula at the top of each notepad page – “*You said [cue-phrase]. Can you remember a particular [magic word]... how it all happened*”. During their response, you *continue making notes of the new cue-phrases* in their response. After the response, after checking the PIN formula at the bottom of the notepad page, if you see that you did not get a PIN, you use the magic formula again, revising it as necessary. *You may need 7 or 8 pushings to get to a PIN*. You will get lots of valuable non-PIN material as well when you push for PINs. Do your best to stay with an item (especially the first) till you have obtained at least one rich PIN or a clear refusal. [Otherwise you are unconsciously training them to not-give you PINs!].

After each response of the interviewee, *you pause to let both of you think, and to let your interviewee sink deeper towards **forgotten** images, feelings, thoughts and memories of particular incidents*. . *Otherwise, you only get the pre-prepared stuff.... So pause.... you need this as much as they do.... to let these processes happen.... always pause...go for slow....*

7. Sub-session Two: you can leave items out but you must not go back to earlier items. “*If you go back, the gestalt goes crack*”. Use only their cue-words; use only the magic formula provided; use only your selection from the list of magic words to fit into that formula. In addition, *do not try to combine items, interpret, or communicate your thoughts about anything*. Sub-session Two ends with their last PIN (or refusal) raised in relation to the last item they originally mentioned at the end of their initial Sub-session 1.

8. After the interview (Sub-sessions 1+2), write your free-associative debriefing field notes. Easily skimmed and not taken seriously, rich field-notes are crucial for supplementing your tape and for starting the post-session process of your informal tacit-sense-making. And if your tape-recording fails.....! For a full length interview, for unhurried and thoughtful debriefing field-notes you should *allow yourself a full-length one -hour debriefing*.

9. Sub-session 3 (optional and at least 3 or 4 weeks later). If, after interpreting the material from sub sessions 1 and 2, you find you have further questions or questions arising, you can arrange a Sub-session 3. When found necessary, this is most frequently takes the form of a more conventional semi-structured depth interview, perhaps preceded (*but never followed*) by a few narrative questions .

1.5.2. Key principles of BNIM Twin-Two-track future-blind initial interpretation procedure

(with an initial 3-hour panel for each track)

1. **Basis of interpretation: raw data.** These are: your field notes written immediately after the interview; the original recording; and the verbatim transcription. Also, after the interview, dated memos to self written later as you proceed in the interpretive work.
2. **Twin-track interpretation.** The transcript is interpreted at least twice: first to understand the pattern suggested by how the person lived their life; second, to understand the pattern suggested by how, in the interview, they told their story of that life.
2. **Living of the lived life: extracting the biographical data.** For this track, you need to extract from the transcript (and, if necessary, from elsewhere) relatively uncontroversial data (that can or could be externally validated) about the 'objective events' of the life. Stripped of all adjectives, causal explanations etc., you then arrange these data (birth, family, schooling, working life, other events in life, medical history etc) in chunks into a 'Biographical Data Chronology'.
3. **Chunk-by-chunk future-blind interpretation: in principle.** Some interpretation procedures look at all the data all at once. To start with, at least, we deliberately don't. Under BNIM, we are trying to get a sense of how the subject experiences their experiences and improvises their doing. We all live our lives future-planning but always future-blind. As researchers, BNIM procedures simulate this succession of chunk-by-chunk experiencing of current experiences and our future-blind current acting towards desired (and away from feared) futures.
4. **Use of a 3-hour kick-start panel for each of the two tracks.** To reduce the inevitable effects of your own blind-spots and hot-spots, the limits of your own ignorance and subjectivity, you get three or four different sorts of people to join you in an interpretive panel for future-blind interpreting. They only know each chunk as you present it to them. See (5) and (6) below. After the 3-hour panel that initiates work on each track, you then - - not necessarily in the same way -- normally work on your own (not avoiding discussion with others, of course). The panels are there to kick-start you into complexity and uncertainty.
5. **Track One . Interpreting the succession of BDC chunks of biographical data – future-blind.** You present the panel with the earliest chronological datum of the life. They call out hypotheses about (i) what the significance might be for the experiencing subject; (ii) what might follow next or later in the series if that were true. These are all written up on flipchart paper and put up on the wall of the room as a permanent record. *No criticising, just the multitude of alternative alternatives.* Then the next chunk is put up: past hypothesising is reviewed; then new hypotheses are generated. Then the next chunk.... Towards the end of the panel time, the panel is urged to develop 'structural hypotheses' about what the pattern of the living of the lived life might best be said to be.

1.5. Key principles in a couple of pages

Alternative versions are recorded. Then, finally, the BDA panel develops contrasting hypotheses: in what different ways might this story be told? These are also written-up. After the panel you continue on your own, not necessarily future-blind, not necessarily in chunks. Many questions will have arisen about the collective and the person socio-historical context and global period. These will need further research....

6. Track Two. Telling of the told story: segmenting the transcript into a sequence of chunks. Just as you as researcher construct a Chronology of objective events in the history (BDC), you also construct a Sequence of the telling of the told story (TSS). A new chunk starts when at least one of the following occurs: (i) the speaker changes; (ii) the topic changes; or (iii) there is a change in the way in which a topic is being spoken about. You as researcher construct this sequentialisation ('Text Structure Sequentialisation') for future-blind interpretation by another panel as in (4) – but also for other uses.

7. Interpreting the succession of chunks of the sequentialised telling of the told story. This is the TFA-flow [Teller Field Analysis- Flow]. It starts with a new kick-start panel on a different day from that of the BDA with preferably at least some different members.. Procedure of hypothesising etc as per (4) above. The typical question is: "*At this point in their life, why, in this interview, did the subject improvise their telling of the story in the way they did, the chunk that they did?*" You describe their subjectivity (perspectives), you do not (yet) evaluate it. At the end of the panel, you ask them to come up with contrasting TFA-Structure hypotheses. After the 3-hour panel – which is not likely to deal with more than 6-12 chunks of the telling of the told story -- you as researcher continue on your own, not necessarily future-blind, not necessarily in chunks. [This TFA will take much longer than doing the BDA].

8. Bringing the two tracks together. The question is: "*Why did the person who lived their life in the pattern suggested by procedure 4 come to tell their story now in the pattern suggested by procedure 7?*". You attempt to develop a strong 'connecting structural hypothesis' that makes best sense of the connection/disjunction between the pattern suggested in the analysis of the living of the lived life (5 above) and that suggested by the telling of the told story in the interview that is the current moment of that life (7 and eventually 9). To think and to present your understanding of the historically-(re)situated subjectivity under examination and interpretation, a typical device is to *construct a narrative of your own: your account of the evolution, a case-history*. This involves bringing together your best understanding of the objective facts of your and their world, and your best understanding of the strengths and limitations of your and their current and previous 'subjective perspectives' on such a 'world'.

9. Handling puzzles by micro-analysis. To clarify competing interpretations, bits of strange and uncertain expression in the verbatim transcript (or the digital recording) can be given up-close treatment in a chunk-by-chunk future-blind micro-analysis. You use a new panel for this work on a puzzling bit: normally no more than 60-90 minutes.

10. What do we learn about that historically-situated subjectivity? What about their situation? Both aspects are illuminated by the same twin-track (initially always future-blind, eventually always not) BNIM interpretive procedures. The default concern served by BNIM is in historically-situated subjectivities, or in historical-situations as subjectively processed.

11. Comparing and theorising from cases. This requires further steps to make your work relevant for other researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, etc.

Bar some extra notes, the Short Guide to BNIM ends at this point.

Having at this point completed your reading of the brief accounts of BNIM interviewing and BNIM interpretation procedures,

- Some extra notes follow – which might be useful
- you might wish to stop here and look at some case-study material (see **bibliography A** on p. **156** for examples) , BNIM published-products. This may be a less-dry approach.
- you might wish to go back and look at any footnotes that interested you
- perhaps after looking at one or two published BNIM presentations (Bibliography A below p.**156**) you might wish to go on to more detailed discussions of BNIM interview procedures (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards) or of BNIM interpretive procedures (p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. onwards)..... This involves moving from the Short Guide to the **Detailed Manual**....

Mental Digestion Warning.

Remember that a video-manual (or any technical guide to any detailed process) such as the **BNIM Detailed Manual** is not best read through if you are not *at the same time* struggling with the practice of the technology it is there to support.

The rest of this text -- apart from the Extra Notes-- the **Detailed Manual** starting on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována., will work better if you **read it as you work on selected bits of BNIM practice**, not just read it on its own in a way divorced from actually trying out and doing the relevant practices of doing BNIM interviewing and BNIM interpreting.

1.6. Some extra notes

1.6.1. From interpreting the 'told story' (Thematic Field) to interpreting 'the telling of the told story': **Teller Flow: Teller Flow Analysis**

A major modification and clarification of terminology emerged from discussions in 2005 with a number of people and in particular with Prue Chamberlayne and Carina Meares (NZ), to whom many thanks. Namely, the following:

In my 2001 textbook *Qualitative research interviewing: biographic narrative and semi-structured methods* and in previous accounts, I identified the two tracks of BNIM interpretation as being that of the 'lived life' and that of the 'told story'. I now refer to the second track as being that of the 'telling of the told story', and have tried to specify more clearly how BNIM's 'Teller Flow/Field Analysis' is very different from that which might emerge from a formal-textualist literary analysis of the 'basic theme' or the 'basic structure' of a given interview transcript text (an example of one such formalist-textualist interpretation is given in Wengraf 2001: 368-77). As of October 2010, I think it now best to lose the word 'Thematic' altogether, and refer only to 'Teller', as in **Teller Flow Analysis**.

Leaving aside the 'spoken' character of the improvised interview, and thinking just about the verbatim interview transcript, the 'discourse on the page' is not interpreted in terms of a 'discourse-strategy approach' but in terms of a 'biographical-strategy approach'.

Our primary concern is NOT the 'themes of the told story' BUT RATHER the 'subjectivity behind the telling': TFA might be read as *Telling Flow Analysis*.

BNIM interpretation is not formalist-textualist.

Why the difference?

In BNIM's interpretive procedure of chunk-by-chunk reconstruction of the subject's telling of the told story, reconstructing the decision-making and selective process of the 'improvised telling' is important, since we are concerned with reconstructing the subjectivity (the Real Author) that is struggling to tell and not-tell over the duration – and through the process -- of the telling of the told, the hinting at the hinted-at, the 'suggested unsaid', the shadow of the unthought-known (Bollas 1987), the un-noticed between the lines, the silenced facts (Bar-On 1999), the 'carefully-placed to be ignored', the 'carefully-stressed to silence the opposition'. The 'not said' and the 'way of saying' gives you the significance of the 'said'.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ This defines the limits of analytical methods who focus on the coding of data given; communication lies in the way things are said and above all in the not-said. Positivist methodology can only code the literally said, and ignore the rest. It's very good at searching and retrieving the said. Nothing else.

1.6.1. From 'told story' to 'telling of told story'

The significance of the 'telling' can lie as much or more in the sound of the speaking voice used in saying this, in what linguists call the 'paralinguistics' of the spoken word. Very often, the way something is said goes against the apparent literal meaning of the words: e.g. "You have been *so-o-o* helpful" said in a super-exaggerated ironic way. (See Wengraf 2001, ch2 and p.215-23 for some discussion of this).

An aside. It can also lie in the gestures and the body-language accompanying the speaking voice. Think of somebody saying "*I most sincerely apologise*" in a very sincere voice.... while crossing their fingers behind their back!

Very often the body-language (non-verbal communication, NVC) can 'trump' the communication of the para-linguistics, just as the para-linguistics (ironic voice) can 'trump' the literal meaning of the words said in the verbal communication (VC).

The significance of the 'telling' can also lie as much in the 'asides' – see citation from Bolla on p.53 above -- in patterns of apparently trivial idiosyncratic expression, in the 'absences and omissions', as it can in the interviewee's explicit or formal exposition of the 'story' or the 'theory', or the formal 'statement of position' (Argumentation) or Evaluation, on which the speaker is focusing their self-presentational attention.

If it is a 'basic theme' we are looking for in BNIM interpretation, we are looking for the 'basic theme' or themes not of the text but of the person behind the embodied spoken improvised account-giving (the response-generating subjectivity in its historical situation): that is why the tone of voice and the 'asides' are so important.

Jameson has very appositely remarked that

*"in narrative analysis, what is most important is not what is said, but what cannot be said, what does not register on the narrative apparatus (Jameson 2005: xiii)".*⁷⁵

This is why, from the point of view of the ideal full psycho-societal analysis, it is a serious warning sign if – in drafting your report on a piece of BNIM research --you find yourself summarising the self-report or the self-representation or the explicit arguments and themes of the speaker as the predominant feature of your understanding of them.

The subject's self-representation and self-understanding is only part of what will emerge as your independent researcher's always provisional them-understanding. It is important, perhaps, to do this. For some research purposes it may have to be central. For others, it is more important to go further.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Does not register at all, or registers implicitly as not registering explicitly [TW]. .

⁷⁶ Getting to grips with the explicit themes of the story *is* a necessary part of grasping what's going on, but a firmly-subordinated part. See Fischer (1982: 408-10) which lists the "Appresented Themes in the

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Their self-representation in assertions, declarations of position, etc, in the stories they tell must be understood by you primarily in conjunction *with their much less conscious presentation of themselves and their world through the interview-telling of the told story*: the two are unlikely to coincide and are often significantly different. Explicit self-presentation and implicit self-presentation are both to be first sought for separately and then related to each other. And when you write the cases up, you should carefully distinguish the two.

What is said is one thing. *How it is said* suggests an 'implicit unsaid' which may trump the explicit literal meaning. *What is never said* may be the most important thing.

If we thought that a person's explicit self-theory was sufficient for our purposes, we wouldn't be doing narrative interviewing. Instead we would do the less arduous task of 'argued position' explicit self-theory interviewing. We would just ask a self-description / self-theory question:

*"Tell me what sort of person you are and how this has shaped your life" . Or
"Tell me what sort of life-worlds you have passed through in your life and where you are now"*

For a brief indication of interview questions aimed at eliciting not narrative but description, argumentation and/or evaluation, see Wengraf 2001: 175-81 and Archer's (2007) investigation into human reflexivity and social mobility by way of accessing people's 'internal conversations'. Also Joerchel 2006 Appendix 1.⁷⁷

Where 'seeing beyond' means 'seeing as well as... But also more', we do narrative interviewing to see *beyond* the explicit current self-theory, both into the present hidden assumptions and (via Particular Incident Narratives) into encapsulated past states of mind and feeling, past states of 'situated subjectivity'.

Life Story of a 37-year-old woman". He heads these as five distinct "biographical traces": (a) career of being a mother; (b) career of marriage; (c) trajectory of uterus problems; (d) trajectory of cancer; (e) trajectory of rheumatoid arthritis.

These all emerge at different points and in different configurations of the telling of the told story. Their analytic listing by Fischer as 'traces' (or things talked about, or components, or themes, or headings for sub-themes which he also lists under each 'trace-name') is not equivalent at all to showing how they enter, dissolve, re-combine and re-appear (like in a theatre, or a concert of complex music) into the telling of the told story.

See also Firkin (2004) and the non-biographical but similarly multi-strand approaches of Evans (and Kimeldorf) suggested in a couple of pages below, from p. 699 onwards. Melissa Corbally is currently (2009-10) working on a similar multi-stranded approach.

⁷⁷ Joerchel's Appendix 2 does ask in one place for critical incident narratives. We are also interested in trivial incident narratives because they can reveal crucial other things about situated subjectivity. The *content* may appear trivial; the *significance* of the trivia may be considerable.

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Obviously, with a given interview subject, *after* the BNIM Sub-session One and 2 have been completed, in a 'second interview' – in what we call Sub-session 3 -- you might well wish to ask such *non-narrative questions* to understand more precisely what 'argued value-positions' or explicit self/-theory or lifeworld-theory they currently hold, and what 'constructions of typicality' they are eager or liable to make. *But this is after all the narrative questions have been asked in Sub-sessions 1 and 2.*

And I would argue that their conscious self-descriptions from Sub-session 3 are to be understood in terms of your understanding of them in terms of the material from Sub-sessions 1 and 2: *not the other way round.*

Obviously, more formalist narratologists would disagree with such emphases: quite rightly. They are doing something else. They stay with the story as told.

A formal-textualist narratologist (studying, let us say, the 300 variants of the story known to some as 'Cinderella') is interested in the deep structure of the story (Smith 1981). They are interested in the 'told', not in the accidents of any particular individual's or even culture's telling of that told.

Most 'thematic analysis' is of this variety (see Ryan and Bernard 2003 for a helpful formalist approach to this work).

For example, in Wengraf (2001: pp. 368-77) I provide an example of a critical linguistics 'narrative analysis', that of a 'story about his father' of Harold the miner. In an eminently narratological way, I there ignore the significance of its mode of its telling. I think there is much to offer by doing such a formal-textual narratological 'told story analysis'.

However, elsewhere in the textbook, the *telling* of that told story is analysed in BNIM terms as 'clues' to the subjectivity of Harold as he told that story: see two variations of a researcher-told story about Harold, one more sociological and one more psychological (Wengraf 2001. 363-65).

Our actual understanding of Harold was enriched by the formalist analysis (*Wengraf QRI: 368-77*) but this latter had to be reworked in terms of why the 'situated subjectivity' of Harold might have told it in the way so well described by the Critical Linguistics/Semiotics (CLS) model. For us, formal description of any told story reveals its potential fully only after we have concerned ourselves with the subjectivity doing the telling.....

To sum up, therefore: less interested than some might think in the actual story told, when using BNIM-interpretation procedures researchers are trying to get at the deep structure of the historical subjectivity-in-situation expressed in a particular telling (or in a partial or even pretty total failure to tell a story, or some bits of it).

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A large number of people use BNIM interviews without the intention of going much beyond the collection and classification of “things said” under a variety of thematic or ‘things said’ headings. What it was in the ‘deep structure of the situated subjectivity’ that led to these things being said is not central to their research purposes. As long as you *know* that you are using BNIM interviewing just to get to “things said”, there seems nothing wrong with this approach. It is NOT that of the BNIM interpretive methodology focused on the ‘teller of the told story’, why were those things said in that way at that point?⁷⁸

In comparing the subjectivity inferred from the analysis of the ‘telling of the told story’ with that inferred from the analysis of the ‘living of the lived life’, we are interested in the deep structure (and mutations) of the situated subjectivity that generated both.⁷⁹

Example. Somebody’s lived-life pattern may *show them* as battling to succeed and succeeding over and over again. However, they may *tell the story* of that life as a perpetual victim story.

What is the nature of the evolving- subjectivity-in-evolving-situation that gave rise *both* to the real-life battling indicated in the lived-life pattern *and* to the self- positioning-as-victim indicated in the currently- told-story-pattern?
Exploring according to BNIM procedures that telling-of-the-told-story pattern helps us understand this, develop and test hypotheses about this.

An interest in the biographical data of the lived life and some research of the historical context(s) of that life can often suggest the nature of a possible difference between the

⁷⁸ When they have other research purposes, they may well use other interpretation procedures on the same material, such as content analysis, theme analysis, certain forms of discourse or ideology analysis, etc. For all of these (as well as for situated historical subjectivity analysis for which BNIM interpretation procedures are especially, though not uniquely, fitted), BNIM interview material can also provide a rich material resource.

⁷⁹ Obviously, we may not be interested in that ‘historical subjectivity in historical situation in transition to uncertain futures’ (HiSS/TUFF²) for its own sake.

We might be interested in the ‘experiencing subjectivity’ solely because it provides a clue to understanding the *historical situation(s) and processes, the life-worlds and historical moments through which the subjectivity has passed* and for which its lived life and its telling of its ‘told stories’ provide a crucial set of traces. This is likely to be the goal of the sociological researcher.

In such a ‘less psychological’ use of BNIM, you may write up and publish your ‘historical sociology’ so as to underplay the exploration of inner-world dynamics of particular individuals so as to concentrate more on common or different external dynamics and contingencies (e.g. forced migration, sudden arrival of chronic disease, etc.) and on different ‘coping strategies deployed’

[Meares 2007 has a very useful discussion of concepts of ‘biographical disruption’ deployed to understand both the onset of chronic disease and migration and, of course, much else as well. Her discussion of the ‘varying currents of biographical flow’ is based on earlier important but neglected work by Firkin: 2004. At any given moment, we are handling a whole variety of tasks with very different ‘task-histories and perspectives’... in a variety of contexts which themselves have their own dynamics and temporalities of change: these can all be seen as ‘currents’ which make up our biographical ‘flow’.....]

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'real author' and the 'implied author' (see Ruthrof's characterisations of possible implied-author / implied reader stances summarised in Wengraf 2001: 366-7, especially the 'unreliable narrator').

Like a concerned citizen or a therapist, we have to pay great attention to the lines, but we have to learn to read between the lines, and through those lines to the unsaid as said in that particular said way. You do not take the self-presentation at face value, though you must be fully sensitive to what it is.

Tones of voice are one clue...

In the little Example above, you might wish to imagine the telling of the 'victim story' said in various ways. *Imagine the words used in the telling as unchanged; however, the tone in which they were said might differ:* there might be a tone of unconscious arrogance in one telling, one of deep persecuted anxiety in another, a tone of 'would-be shared amusement' in a third.

For an illustration of the importance of actual or imputed 'tone' in an interview, see Wengraf 2001: 34-37. I work through an example in which two quite different sets of 'tone of voice' are given to the same words on the page ('Isobel's interview'). The suggested 'meanings of those words' then become rather different.

The limitations of 'bare transcript' (especially if you weren't doing the interview and/or have no field notes) are also discussed below in Appendix F, starting on p.Chyba! Zálůžka není definována..

Bakhtin remarks that in real life --and especially he might have said in important situations and conjunctures --

...we very keenly and subtly hear all those nuance in the speech of people surrounding us, and we ourselves work very skilfully with all those colours on the verbal palette. We very sensitively catch the smallest shift in intonation, the slightest interruption of voices in anything of importance to us in another person's practical everyday discourse. All those verbal sideways glances, reservations, loopholes, hints, thrusts do not slip past our ear, are not foreign to our lips. (Bakhtin 1984: 201, cited Morson and Emerson: 1990: 34).⁸⁰

⁸⁰ The notion of a 'verbal sideways glance' hints at the further dimension of all face-to-face – fully embodied – interviews, namely their bodily nature and the importance of body posture, movement, context in communication. Studied by those whose task it is to work in the theatre, from whom 'field researchers; could learn much, what verbalists/textualists rather flatly called the *residual category of 'non-verbal communication'* is central to 'controlling' the significance of what is spoken out loud, let alone what is merely written down about what was said.

I tried to suggest the importance of all this in what I called an 'anthropological-historical model' of interview communication developed in particular from the work of Charles Briggs (1986). This very condensed model is to be found in Wengraf 2001: 42-50.

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One of the specificities of the BNIM approach to interpretation is that *the way the words are said* is crucial in understanding what the 'saying of those words' means. That is why, *though a polished or 'improved' non-verbatim transcript can probably improve 'interpreting the told story irrespective of the telling'*, such a polished non-verbatim transcript is doomed to *radically mislead and degrade interpreting the teller through high respect for the 'telling'*.

This is comparable to the way in which a 'jazz standard' is played and sung in quite different ways by a variety of musicians and singers for decades after it was originally composed, sung and played. Similarly for a 'piece of theatre' (compare Shakespeare). The pretty unquenchable interest of such 'standards' or 'classics' lies not in the 'dominant tune/words' of a jazz standard, or in the 'dominant message/words' of *Hamlet* or *King Lear*, but in the new way the 'standard' is re-interpreted, the new approach and nuances that are found and transmitted.⁸¹

Tidying up the following into proper English, coherent statements, and removing contradictions is not I think the best approach for understanding the complexly situated and struggling subjectivity (H) that said it. It is a way to not understand it.

Harold is talking about his mother's death when he was still quite young⁸²:

21 H I think that affected me dramatically you know
22 I mm
23 H emotionally emotionally more so that anything else so I I left school with not a one qualification not one em I think I would honestly describe myself as not a bright child but em (4) I think that if I'd applied myself and the problems of what had happened I that I would be at the stage I am now early (1) and I I think it's just that I was kind of it it delayed my er development my em my educational development em by a number of years but I think from from maturity wise I think I'm far ahead of my or I was far ahead of myself
24 I right
25 H because of the problems so there are sort of pros and cons of that I wouldn't I wouldn't recommend anybody go through it but that's that's my that's my my opinion at that stage of what was going on em
26 I mm
27 H but I didn't I again I have to emphasise the point I didn't think that at the time never thought that at the time think it now but I I never thought that at the time (Harold transcript, see also Wengraf 2001: chapter 12, esp. 289-95).

An important issue in this fragment is a confused struggle to assert something clearly but also to sort something about and between perspectives at different times: then-perspectives and now-perspectives about different sorts of maturity at different times. Its

⁸¹ Though most people will 'recognise the dominant tune/theme' of a 'standard classic', different people will be differently sensitive to various undertones or overtones : hence the use of a heterogeneous pattern in BNIM interpretive panels. This helps discover the less obvious, sometimes the denied opposite.

⁸² The figures in brackets (e.g. "(4)") indicate a number of seconds pause. Harold normally speaks very fast. Other materials about 'Harold' can be found in Wengraf 2001.

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partial lack of success reveals something important. A polished version would conceal it, Only a *verbatim unpolished* text gives us something of the idiom of the speaker and the unsaid struggling through (or against) the said.... and an audio-tape or video-tape gives us more.⁸³

It is important to record a shift in our sense of the use of BNIM.

In the mid-1990s we tended to have a 'structuralist ideology' that there was an 'invariant deep structure' of any case that would reveal itself as a permanent given (e.g. Breckner 1998).

- For example: Oevermann – who contributed the micro-analysis procedures to *Quatext* and thus to *BNIM* – believed that this 'structure of the case' would reveal itself completely in *any* salient bit of verbatim text if properly micro-analysed.
- For example: others believed that the 'structure of the case' would be revealed by just looking at the 'whole form' just of Sub-session 1 ... and hence Sub-session 2 would just be a set of footnotes with useful PINs. Etc.

Morson and Emerson give a flavour of this approach, discussing the Russian Formalist writer's approach to a particular Russian writer, Bakhtin. In the following extract, the restriction to "a writer" and "a writer's life" can be swept away and reference imagined to be to anybody's researched life and interview expression. Morson and Emerson write:

A common model...is the structuralist one A writer's life is described as a set of variations on a theme, of surface transformations of a an unchanging 'deep structure'. In this model, the passage of time and the work of the [researcher-] biographer may illuminate one or other aspect of that structure, but the whole is essentially timeless. Evolution, if it exists at all, is itself given in the underlying structure..... Todorov observes

Properly speaking, there is no *development* in Bakhtin's work. Bakhtin does change his focus; sometimes he alters his formulations but, from his first to his last text, from 1922 to 1974, his thinking remains fundamentally the same; one can even find identical sentences written fifty years apart (Todorov, *Dialogical Principle*, p.212; cited Morson and Emerson 1990: 4-5)

This 'research ideology of the one true deep perpetual structure of the case' is reflected in the 2001 textbook (and in some of the illustrations of writing-up later on in this *Detailed Manual*), but the notion of such a possible 'deep structure' has now become just one component (though an important one) of our current practice. Why?

We have softened our 'structuralism' to a certain extent and become more historically-minded. We no longer have an extreme hologram model whereby 'everything' can be

⁸³ The rather central notion of 'perspective' and its limitations are discussed in Appendix **Chyba! Nenalezen zdroj odkazů**. beginning on p. 658

1.6.1. From 'told story' to 'telling of told story'

read-off just one aspect (be it the form of Sub-session 1, or any bit of the verbatim text). The BNIM interview itself can give rise to a mutation of perspectives in the interviewee such that a perspective apparent at the start of Sub-session 1 may have become distinctly qualified by or be in significant tension with another one that has emerged before the end of Sub-session 2. The freedom to express one perspective in Sub-session One (*"Everything's great!"*) may spontaneously lead to a new perspective in Sub-session Two (*"Talking to you has made me just realise that 'Not Everything's quite so great'"*).

In a number of ways, as a result of our working with a more psychodynamic approach (in the multi-method Bromley-by-Bow study with Lynn Froggett and Stef Buckner), we have come to give more importance to the 'intersubjective experiencing before, after and within the actual interviewing' than we did before. We have come to understand the interviewing process itself as having its own history, demanding its own biographic-narrative awareness and accounting. It is not an out-of-time event. The same is true of your own 'biographic-interpretive process' as you struggle to synthesise and transcend conflicting 'interpretive oscillations' over the period of research and especially writing-up.

We could imagine a several-level diagram.

A) At the top level is the 'flow' of the interview interaction at a particular time. This can be seen as fluid and capable of interpretation as a transient situation-specific post-modernist self-presentation performance.

B) At the next level is an attempt by the researcher to identify particular 'present' perspectives (and also glimpse past perspectives) held by the interviewee and capable of interpretation in a 'history of perspectives' way, more or less rooted in and partly explicable by (according to researcher proclivities) the 'objective history/sociology of the times'.

C) At the lowest level is an attempt by the researcher to understand the 'evolution of perspectives in the case history' (level B) by some sense of 'the overall/constant problem of the case', in which contingencies only serve to bring out the 'essence' (the dynamics, the structure) of the case in different ways. A very structuralist-determinist model.

We could say, therefore, that a 'post-modernist philosophy' will keep one researcher at level A; a 'structural determinist philosophy' will keep her neighbour struggling to identify level C. Others will move up and down the spectrum between A and C.

We might say that BNIM typically now situates itself as probably working primarily at -- but also dipping toes both above and below -- position (B).

Typically, we need to know and think about the historical context of the interviewee's and the interviewer's experience. Hence the value of a two-track approach to understand semi-(defended)(semi-exploratory) tellings as products of the histories of semi-defended

1.6.1. From 'told story' to 'telling of told story'

lives in semi-repressive societies in which the BNIM interview is inserted: which what happens and doesn't happen in that interview has to be understood in that way (Wengraf 2004).

The degree of fixity/continuity of a person's subjectivity (or of a societal context) over their life-span or other period being studied (even within an interview) seems now to be much more an empirical question: looking at the period of the telling and the period being told about, we look for discontinuities and mutations as much as for continuities and deep-structures.

I hope this note has helped to clarify why – when talking about the TFA -- we talk of interpreting not the 'textual told story' but the interactive interview's 'telling of the told story'.

To register the explicit 'themes' of the told story (of what is 'said') is an important component of BNIM interpretation procedures. However, BNIM interpretation goes beyond the 'what is said' (the self-presentation) to understand the situated subjectivity that is constructing the story (the self-presentation). That is why it works through two interpretive procedures, and not just one.

1. The themes of the 'told story' – abstracted from the telling – is a first step. Many researchers stop at this point, for good or bad reasons.
2. The second step is to generate hypotheses about the the longitudinal improvisation over the period of the interview about the 'telling of the told story'. Many researchers stop at this point, for good or bad reasons.
3. The third step is to intensify the 'historical relativisation' of that 'telling of the told story' by engaging independently interpreting the data about 'the living of the lived life' in an unfolding historical period in which the interview that elicited the telling of the told story is the most recent moment.
4. The fourth step is to integrate the pattern suggested by the investigation of the 'living of the lived life' with that suggested by the 'telling of the told story' in a two-track-based and two-track integrative 'case-account', typically the (HCE) History of the Case Evolution.

And their self-presentation in the interaction is not the end of your understanding of them; it is its beginning.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Since writing this note, I've come to distinguish the phase of Thematic Field Analysis - *Flow* from the later phase of Thematic Field Analysis – *Structure* in the overall "TFA operation" (see p.130 above, and p.444 below).

1.6.2. Interviewing as ethnographic participant- observation: a note

Interested in the historically-situated subjectivity that expresses itself in the telling of the told story, the interviewer has a *further serious investigative tool* from within BNIM to understand the subjectivity of their interviewee. It is one that tends to be neglected or under-estimated. What is it?

Built into BNIM interviewing procedure is a measure of the classic anthropological-sociological practice of fieldwork: namely, participant-observation. Or, more truthfully, observant or unobservant participation.

In the interview, you, the interviewer, are a participant.

You are a potentially observant (or, if you aren't careful, a rather blind) participant in the process: you are not just collecting words said and pushing for more words. You are also collecting (or neglecting) crucial impressions of the situated subjectivity saying those words, becoming silent, becoming excited, embodied, terse or abstracted, responding to questions this way or that. You are collecting (or neglecting) also your own complex responses *as well*.

As distinct from a researcher who just picks up the recorded tape and transcript from an interviewer (who writes no field notes and just disappears), the BNIM interviewer-researcher observes the embodied interpersonal practice of the interviewee, engages in an intersubjective 'action research project' of co-performing a successful interview, is constantly 'sensing' the interviewee and being affected by him or her, and writes up field notes which should be able to re-evoke that original intersubjective experiencing interaction and events.

Along with the specificity of communication that is possible with verbal symbols, less well defined and often contradictory thoughts and feelings are communicated through the look in one's eye, the tension in one's forehead, the timbre of one's voice, and so on. Without the nuances and ambiguities provided by these... modes of communication, [interview recalling] would be stark and machine-like (Ogden 1992: 70).⁸⁵

The interviewee may engage in complete fabrication about extra-interview and pre-interview realities; he or she cannot lie consciously or unconsciously to you as the interviewer-observer having your own experiencing, your experience of pre-interview arranging and intra-interview realities, as well as post-interview interacting as well.

⁸⁵ The original has 'mature relatedness' inside the square brackets, but Ogden's insistence on the importance of the paralinguistics of the word, but also the non-verbal expression of the body, is just as true for interviewing. My discussion of the experiencing of interviews by the 'him' and the 'her' of 'Interview with Isobel' in ch.2 of *Wengraf QRI 2001* may also be helpful, especially the different 'attributed personalities': see Wengraf 2001: .34-7.

1.6.2. Interviewing as 'ethnographic observant participation'

Hence the importance of field notes by you, the observer-interviewer, on all interaction, real or imagined!

Your post-interview interpretive process of considering the living of the lived life and the telling of the told story can be powerfully supplemented by your thinking very carefully about the enacting of the intersubjective experiencing between you and interviewee (and any relevant others) before during and after the interview.

There are different models for thinking about and recording your experiences in a way that helps you to do something like re-experience that situated interview.

- For a discussion of field noting, see the discussion on p. Chyba! Záložka není definována..
- For one model of the dimensions of the 'situated activity' of all research interviewing, see Wengraf: 2001: 38-50.
- For the psycho-dynamically informed Tavistock Observation Method as used by Nicholson (2009), see for example Hinshelwood and Hogstad (2000), Frank and Griffiths (2002), and McKensie-Smith (1992).

If you are interviewing the interviewee in an environment habitual (or even otherwise) to that interviewee (their home, office, neighbourhood, etc), then you might wish to consider the 'senses-cape' in which that occurs, and think about modalities that include but go beyond the visual. One way of thinking about sensorily-situated nature of the interviewee and the interview situation is to click on www.sensescapescapes.co.uk.

So. Don't neglect the ethnographic opportunity of observant participation in all your interactions (of any sort) with the interviewee and those around him or her before, during and after the interview! Develop your ethnographic competence.

This involves an attention to outer-world societal realities (Briggs 1986, and the appendix on foreign-ness p.Chyba! Záložka není definována. below. For the school of Institutional Ethnography (IE) founded by Dorothy Smith, see Campbell and Gregor 2002, and Devault and McCoy 2003, and its use by O'Neill 2010 who combines BNIM and IE).

It also requires an equal attention to inner-world psycho-dynamics as well.

1.6.3. A full Psycho-Societal and ‘Glocal Contradictions’ approach?

I’ve just argued that ethnographic observant-participation in the interaction with the interviewee (within, before and after the interview itself) is an important source of understanding. One can go further. BNIM can be very productively combined with a whole variety of other methods to understand the historically-situated subjectivity or the historical-situation subjectively experienced.

Even if fieldwork is confined at some point to dealing with a single informant, there is great benefit in being able at least to observe that informant interacting with other members of the group. Though there is no way of proving it, I suspect that a good deal of the confidence an anthropologist may feel in a particular informant arises from his or her judgements of how others regard that informant, as manifested in their interactive behaviour. *Even in confining my interest in interviewing for the life history, I would certainly not argue that communication between biographer and informant can or should be the sole source of relevant information* (Mintz: 1979: 20, cited Wikan 2000:222)

There is a welcome trend to expand the number of methods used for what might be called a something starting to approach a full-spectrum psychosocietal methodology.

What might a *full-spectrum psycho-societal methodology* be like?

If the ‘psycho’ is primarily concerned with data about inner worlds, then such ‘inner worlds’ show themselves most directly in symbolically-expressive behaviour like people’s spoken words (overheard conversations, interviews) and written words and other symbolisations.

If the ‘social-societal’ is mostly about data about outer worlds, then such ‘outer worlds’ show themselves through observation of behaviours and settings, as well as statistics of actions and events.

Hence I would say that *a psychosocietal methodology needs* at least two sorts of independent data: *direct inner-world data* (as in talk, as in interview), and *direct outer-world data* (as in observation, as in institutional description and/or descriptive macro-statistics and other tools of comparative and historical sociology and ethnography).⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Catherine O’Neill (2009) study used both sustained institutional ethnography (IE) and also some 42 BNIM interviews in her account of treatment situations for elderly patients in two Irish hospitals.. To very good effect. Michael Burawoy’s ‘global ethnography’ and ‘extended case method’ are attempts to take on key aspects of the macro-societal and the importance of ‘regime’ (Burawoy 1991, 2000). Most intra-societal studies typically are flimsy on societal regimes. However, In BNIM studies, work on ‘migration’ (between different societies, each with their current macro-societal regimes) typically nearly always *brings out the importance of regime*. If you are interested in strengthening your understanding of the macro-societal, then in Bibliography A check out material on migration.

1.4.3. Combining BNIM with other psycho-societal methods

However, somebody trained in a single-discipline may acquire data (often termed ‘secondary sources’ or ‘secondary data’) from another discipline, but will handle such data in a far less critical, far less sophisticated, manner than a specialist in that other discipline. This weakened form of thinking about other-discipline data may be apparent, or it may be subtle.

Let us take for example, the would be trans-disciplinary study of the ‘psychosocial’ (one to which, I must add, I subscribe).

The notion of the ‘psycho-social’ (and even more so, the ‘psychosocial’ with no hyphen) tends to start from direct ‘inner-world data’ and have some reluctance in engaging with equally-direct ‘outer-world data’ and especially with ‘outer-world data’ of a macro-societal sort.

Three examples of psycho-societal differently-sourced data:

(i) A course advertised for May and July 2008 at the University of the West of England’s Centre for Psycho-Social Studies listed the following “methodologies of deep inquiry”:

1. *Life history/ biographical interviewing*
2. *Psycho-social action research*
3. *Methods of group inquiry: innovations from the Group Relations and Group Analytic traditions*
4. *Visualisation techniques: imagery, artwork, photography as methods of exploration*
5. *The use of dreams: individual and social dreaming from Mass Observation to the present day*
6. *Dramaturgical techniques of group inquiry*
7. *Psychoanalytic ethnography*

(ii) Julia Brannen and her collaborators (2007a) summarised a study into *Coming to Care* as follows:

Aims

The study focuses on four groups of childcare workers: residential social workers, foster carers, family support workers and community childminders who care for children placed with them by social services. ... The study’s main research questions were:

- What shaped an ethic of care among these four different groups of childcare workers?
- What specific contextual factors prompted childcare workers to enter a childcare occupation?
- How did childcare workers shape their childcare ‘careers’ and their identities over time?
- How do different groups of childcare workers currently understand their work?

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- How do they currently experience their working conditions?
- Over a year, how much job change took place among these four groups? Why did they leave these childcare occupations and why did they stay?
- How do childcare workers manage their work and family responsibilities?
- How can care workers' conditions be improved to ensure good quality care for vulnerable children, and what would help recruitment and retention of staff?

Methods

The study employed biographic-interpretive methods to explore how care workers 'come to care'. Its research design was iterative, providing samples and sampling criteria from one phase to the next, as well as data to feed into the overall analysis.

The study was comparative and the groups theoretically chosen on the basis of: workplace (home-based or institutionally based); different life course characteristics (for example, childminding being often undertaken by women when their children are young); and an expectation of different work orientations and financial remuneration for some groups such as foster carers.

The study combined quantitative and qualitative methods: a postal survey of 305 workers across the four groups (achieving a response rate of 56%) in several English local authorities; twenty four biographical case study interviews with selected workers drawn from the postal survey; semi-structured interviews with managers in local authorities, children's services and children's homes; and a follow-up telephone survey one year later with the postal survey respondents addressing loss from and movement within the childcare workforce and the reasons for this. The postal and telephone surveys provided a backdrop to the detailed understandings of care workers' past and present lives provided by the biographical interviews, while the manager interviews provided contextual data on workplace policies and practices (Brannen 2007a)

(iii) Jacqui Gabb (2007) reports on another more qualitative-only multi-method ESRC research project.

Behind Closed Doors used seven different qualitative methods of data collection – participatory diaries and emotion maps, biographical narrative interviews, vignettes and photo interviews, observations and focus groups. ...

I will illustrate how different methods accessed different aspects of family relationships. For example participant diaries illustrated patterns and routines of interaction, household 'emotion maps' charted the spatial dimension of family relationships, biographical narrative interviews accessed stories across life course framed through participants' own emotional framework, vignettes and images generated discussion around normative values. The richness of data from these methods, especially innovative methods such as 'emotion maps', illustrates the benefits of creativity and responsiveness in research design. Mixing data from

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these methods together provided a depth of understanding of how parents and children experience and understand intimacy and sexuality and how these are managed in their everyday lives. (Gabb 2007; italics added).

For a very interesting discussion of *participatory theatre* as a research tool and a representation tool with refugees, deploying techniques of Playback and Forum Theatre, see an exciting and excellent article by Kaptani and Yuval-Davis (2008).

Provided each methodology used is properly mastered – rather than just fashionably snatched at -- then such multi-method experiments are very exciting in their promise of generating fuller psycho-societal understanding.

(iv) Froggett, Chamberlayne, Buckner and Wengraf 2005 in a study of the Bromley-by-Bow Health Centre) used four families of psycho-societal research methods –

- i. Interviewing (including BNIM interviews)
- ii. Documentation,
- iii. Observation, and
- iv. Participatory action research –

in order to triangulate lived experience and the individual and collective projects pursued reflexively at the Centre. The Report on that project (Froggett et al 2005) attempts to evoke this multi-methodology. A suggestion of that triangulated psycho-societal methodology can be found on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována..

In my view, a full *psycho-societal* approach that encompassed the societal would have to brave several taboos, including the following:

1. the *taboo on 'macro-history'* as a discipline (world systems theory, for example) which uses documentation as a basis for whole-society descriptions
2. the *taboo on 'political economy'* as a conceptual framework, both making up what you might call societal-dynamics,

and

3. the *taboo on statistics* (for example income and life-chance statistics, surveys)
4. the *taboo on depth psychology* (for example, psycho-dynamics)

If these taboos were overcome in practice, then the statement of the 'aims and purposes' of the recently-founded Psychosocial Studies Network would start to become realised:

The 'psychosocial' (also the 'psycho-social' or 'psychosocietal') has, in recent years, emerged as a significant new field of enquiry in the UK. As an emerging field, its precise definition is necessarily subject to ongoing development and debate. However, some major strands in current thinking suggest that psychosocial studies are characterised by:

- a) their explicit inter or transdisciplinarity; and

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b) their interest in the tensions between, and mutual constitution of, the social and the psychic.

As this implies, psychosocial studies have a broad theoretical commitment to the notion that psychological issues cannot be validly abstracted from social, cultural and historical contexts and to the task of accounting for the social shaping of subjective experience without deterministically reducing the psychic to the social. Equally, they have a parallel commitment to the notion that social and cultural worlds have psychological dimensions and to the task of accounting for the ways in which the latter shape these worlds without deterministically reducing the social to the psychic. Psychosocial studies draw inspiration from a range of sources including critical theory, post-structuralism, process philosophy, feminism and psychoanalysis, and various 'dialects' are in the process of emergence |(Psychosocial Studies Network: <http://www.psychosocial-network.org/aims.htm>)>.

However the taboos are well-entrenched, particularly in the one-sided training we receive. impacting differently in different social-science tribes. They will no doubt continue to hamper our understanding.

Given that, what can we say in general about the restricted-to-qualitative study of the mostly 'psychosocial' aspects of the larger sphere of the psycho-societal?

Observation methods (e.g. ethnographic or institutional observation) can observe actual behaving in context (but only rather brief and selective samples) but requires some sort of interviewing to get at the motivations and the strategy of the actors doing the selection of current behaving that is being observed. Traditional present-day interviews ("why did you do that bit of behaviour I observed last week?") may just get defensive rationalisations in terms of locally-accepted 'legitimate self-explanations' and 'press-release official positions'.

Biographical-narrative interviews get at experiencing earlier than the point at which the 'observation period' started; they also get at times and locations within the observation period from which the selective observer was absent. Above all, by asking for 'narrative(s) of experienced experiencing', they get closer to actual experiences than do non-narrative interviews (as well as providing a plethora of explicit 'position-taking', explicit description of 'situations', explicit self-representations, etc., which can be productively compared to those versions of positionality, situation, subjectivity which appear to the researcher to be implied by the narrated particular incident experiences).

The power of BNIM's 'biographical' methodology is that it allows for both psycho- and societal- deepening of understanding beyond the point where our undergraduate or postgraduate 'single-discipline' training typically leaves us.

And, by way of the interpretive panels, it also allows for an immediately-productive mutual sophistication of all those involved in multi-disciplinary work, (e.g. Froggett et al 2005).

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Access to ‘experiencing prior to the observation period’ of the historically-situated subjectivity-in-action can also be very powerfully supplemented by the characteristic resource of the professional historian;

Documents. To complement the memories evoked and reported in the biographical-narrative interview, the well-funded researcher can usefully explore *what historical documents can be found* to shed light on the period, the milieu and the circumstances involved. These may be more personal (diaries, letters, emails, etc.) or they may be less personal (official documents, minutes of meetings, etc.). To be interested in the pasts of particular people but to ignore documents from that past and stick only to oral reports might be thought of as slightly perverse. Institutional ethnography makes a very powerful use of ‘ordinary institutional documents’, especially but not only “the forms that have to be filled in”.

They may just be documents produced for other purposes *capta* or they may also include documents generated especially for the research *generate*.

Secondary research literature into the milieux and the epoch (and the organisations and institutions) in question are usually crucial documents in ‘situating’ what the situated subjectivity has been and currently is situated *in*. In addition, since people and situations are always subject to mutation, grasping the ‘datedness’ of transitional things is important, and other people’s research and historical primary documents make this possible for times and places at which you weren’t present.

Reflexivity method. Whatever methods you use (for example, those above) devoted to understanding *their inner and outer worlds* will be subtly and largely frustrated if you do not practice a systematic method of *inspecting your inner world* as well. You don’t just need to be inspecting your inner world; you need to be recording it and having your records discussed and illuminated.

A crude indicator of this is the amount and type of *Field-Notes* and *Memos to Self about Self* that you write (in an attempt at an externalised ‘inner conversation, in terms of Margaret Archer, see p. Chyba! Záložka není definována. on Critical Realism. . You need to generate as much dated and located material as possible on your subjective reaction in your lived life as a researcher about them. If you can, you should bring this to a subjective-reaction supervisor or a group of peers. The ‘Tavistock Observation Method’ (first infants, then institutions/organisation) is one model of this. Your field-notes must include you-in-the-field and the you-writing-the-notes-on-the-field.....

So: if you want to remedy the one-sidedness almost certainly deposited in you by your single-discipline undergraduate course, do BNIM in conjunction with others and consciously work to deepen whatever is the side of the innerworld/outerworld complexity that you know to be the ‘neglected function’ in your own professional psycho-societal research project.

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Since December 2007, a new UK study group, the 'Psycho-Social Network' is functioning at PSYCHOSOCIALNETWORK@jiscmail.ac.uk. A dedicated website started at the beginning of 2009.

Ideally, in my fantasy world, *full-spectrum psycho-societal researchers investigating historically-situated subjectivities or historical situations subjectively processed* would either

(a) have full training in *an inner-world discipline* such as psycho-dynamic psychology, plus *an outer-world discipline* such as societal-dynamics sociology, plus a *historically-informed discipline* such as history.... and use panels as well... or, better,

(b) *work in small teams of no less than two or three* other single-discipline specialists in which the others bring to a collective research the knowledge and functions that any one single-discipline person cannot provide..... and use panels as well,.... or better..... The 'psycho-societal' is unlikely to be investigated well by a single single-discipline researcher, to put it bluntly.⁸⁷

I have discussed some of the weaknesses of the psycho-social in the light of a projected psycho-societal in a paper for the October 20-22 Conference in 2010 Wrozlav, Poland, on "Social Agency: theoretical and methodological challenges of 21st century humanistic sociology", entitled *The Biographic-narrative-interpretive method (BNIM) within psycho-societal approaches to a realistic study of agency and inner-world/outer-world regimes* (Wengraf 2010b). I plan to complete a book on the psycho-societal for publication in 2011-12.

⁸⁷ In selecting members of BNIM interpretation panels, as heterogeneous as possible, it is therefore a good idea to have at least one 'inner-world specialist' and one 'outer-world specialist'.... and defer to neither!

The argument for a full psycho-societal methodology is taken further in sections 3.2.1-2 (starting on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována.) and will be taken even further in an *optional strongest polemical form* in a very excessive appendix E.3. Once it's spelled out and properly worked over, it will start on p.Chyba! Záložka není definována..

A very optional 'Glocal Contradictions' approach

On the next couple of pages, I suggest an image/model (or an image which you might use for developing the sense of a model) of 'situated subjectivity' as thinkable in terms of 'internal' and 'external' contradictions. How you personally prefer to conceive the 'drivers, contradictions and dynamics' in general or in relation to a particular case is obviously up to you.

This 'Glocal Contradictions Model' has the advantage of weakening thinking in terms of 'static essences' and fostering a sense of the 'historicity' (datedness) of mutating situations and subjectivities, of the psycho-societal as an evolving field or set of relatively open 'systems'. It is a pragmatic tool for helping to think the 'psycho-' and the 'societal-' at the same time.

Figure 2 A Glocal Contradictions image

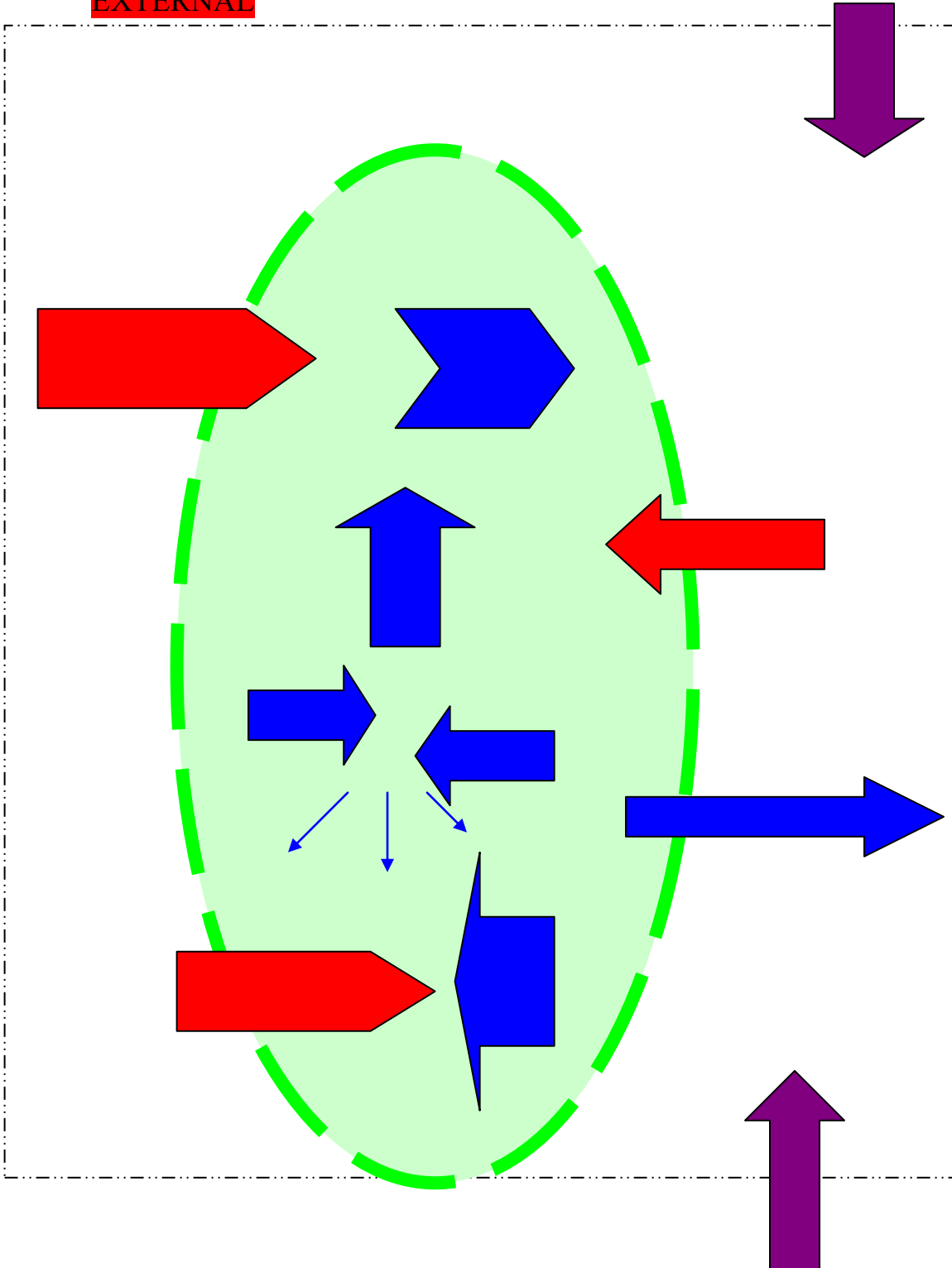
GLOCAL CONTRADICTIONS IMAGE

Contradictory [dated, porous] *situated* subjectivity

INTERNAL

hour/day/month/1990 or 2010; you where you were then / now are?

EXTERNAL



A 'Glocal Contradictions' Model for possible (non)-use

A GLOBAL CONTRADICTIONS MODEL (added January 2010)

This model (see previous page for image) is one that you might possibly wish to use or, equally possibly, ignore. It suggests that as far as the '(dated) situated subjectivity' is concerned, it can be helpful to think of it in terms of both internal (inner-world) and outer (outer-world) contradictions, and to think that the boundaries of both 'situation' (the dotted outer square) and of the 'dated located subjectivity-in-situation' (green oval in the centre of the image) are more or less 'porous'.

The BLUE ARROWS represent mostly dynamics and contradictions in the 'inner world' of the situated subjectivity. Note that there is at least one dynamic reaching out and affecting the 'outer world'. 'Situated subjectivity' should not be assumed to be passive in relation to people and the material world around it. Some of the internal drivers and contradictions will be completely or partly within subjective awareness; others may not (sub-model of subjectivity defended against anxiety-making inner-world knowledge).

The RED ARROWS represent mostly dynamics and contradictions in the (immediate and global) outerworld 'situation' of the situated subjectivity. Some of the external drivers and contradictions will be completely or partly within subjective awareness; others may not (sub-model of subjectivity defended against anxiety-making outer-world knowledge).⁸⁸

Note that RED ARROWS put pressures and strange attractions on the 'drivers' of the 'inner world': for example, the RED ARROW in the top left of the diagram "fits" an internal driver or impulse within the 'situated subjectivity', while at the bottom left, the Red Arrow meets a strong counter-impulse from a BLUE ARROW.

Finally, there are PURPLE ARROWS which enter the somewhat bounded 'situation' of the 'situated subjectivity' from some unspecified "outside". They at least represent the limits of our 'systems thinking' as researchers about the known life-world or situation of the situated subjectivities that we study and the systems/situations that we consciously represent them to have been in, to be in, and to be likely to be in. The PURPLE ARROWS come from outside, surprising perhaps both the subjectivities we study and our own subjectivities that represent their situatedness to ourselves. An economic recession, an enemy bombardment, an asteroid, or a new source of pleasure or self-knowledge can always 'arrive' from the unknown.

The term 'glocal' suggests both the 'global' and the 'local' nature of the inner- and outer- world 'situatedness' with all the mediations between the two.

A final note: there are serious philosophical issues around the metaphor of 'inner' and 'outer', and serious conceptual alternatives around the models of drivers, contradictions and dynamics that you may wish to deploy for your psycho-societal interpretations of glocally-situated dated and defended subjectivities (including your own). Some of these issues are discussed very broadly in this *BNIM Guide and Manual*, especially in Appendix E.3. Nonetheless, you may find this 'glocal contradictions model/metaphor' pragmatically useful in thinking about the patterns of the living of the lived life, the telling of the told story, and the mutations of the case.

A hopefully-fruitful question for yourself, or any case you are studying, might be:

What intermeshing of internal and external dynamics (and contingencies) at previous moments (e.g. 1990, 2008) led to the 'present constellation of contradictions' (at moment of interview e.g. 2010) which drives – or lays conditions of probability or possibility or their opposite – for alternative futures (2020, 2050) for the situated subjectivities being studied?

⁸⁸ The submodel of the situated subjectivity being at any moment varyingly 'defended' against some inner-world knowledge and some outer-world knowledge may or may not appeal to you. Or, for some reason, you may feel happy about one, but not about the other....

A difficult but rewarding study of one approach to such an understanding can be found in Bertell Ollman's account of dialectical understanding (1971). He cites Engels as asserting that the key components of dialectical understanding are:

Transformation of quantity into quality – mutual penetration of polar opposites and the transformation into each other when carried into extremes – development through contradiction or negation – spiral form of development (Ollman 1971: 55, citing Engels 'Dialectics of Nature').

More interestingly for us, perhaps, Ollman's whole work (2003) is devoted to exploring Marx's thought as based on a philosophy of internal relations such that the study of a given 'situated subjectivity' means that such a historically-evolving relationship (a given situated subjectivity in 2010) will be understood *less well* if we try to think the situation outside the subjectivity, the subjectivity outside the situation, or either unhistorically.

The apparently two different 'things' inside the dotted square box need to be understood in relation to each other, as co-constituting each other, if they are to be properly understood.

Even more understanding will be gained if the 'world in motion' outside the dotted square box – the world from which the purple arrow arrives – is also grasped as being not as an 'external variable' but as part of the relational universe. Any actual study can only be partial and incomplete, but the more extended in relational time and space, the less partial and the less incomplete.

Bibliographies

The first bibliography starting below (A) is a list of BNIM-type studies, mostly but not exclusively in English.

Some of these studies are merely BNIM-influenced (most frequently in terms of interview technique) some are mostly/entirely-BNIM studies (using interviews and also all or most of the BNIM /QUATEXT interpretive procedures; most are on the spectrum between these two poles.⁸⁹

I've read most of them, but some I know only by abstracts as they appear in 'Google Scholar' or elsewhere. You can't subscribe to all the world's journals!

The three (non-exclusive) headings are (i) descriptive and policy-oriented, (ii) professional practice, (iii) methodological.

Please send me any corrections or additions. The URLs were correct at the time of insertion, but they appear to have quite a short accuracy-life....

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Descriptive and policy-oriented:

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⁸⁹ *For work deriving more directly from Gabriele Rosenthal and her collaborators, put "Gabriele Rosenthal" into GOOGLE-SCHOLAR and perhaps specify 'in English'*

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In general, nearly all BNIM PhDs that I've looked at contain chapters on BNIM: some just outlining the method in its classical form, others showing the adaptations they've made and/or the lived experience of struggling with it and learning from it.

The eight SOSTRIS Green Working Papers also contain useful material, showing some of the 'workings' of 'doing BNIM' in a three-year cross-European project. Many are now on-line at <http://www.uel.ac.uk/cnr/working.htm>.

The Archives of the dedicated BNIM e-list can be inspected by going to the JISCMail link below:

<https://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/cgi-bin/webadmin?A0=biographic-narrative-bnim>

These provide a variety of BNIM discussions dating back to July 2003 when the list started. If you wish to join the list and join in the discussions, please contact me at tom@tomwengraf.com with your name, your institutional affiliation, and for what purpose you would like to join the list. If you are doing, or envisage doing research using BNIM, please give details.

If you go to that web-link, and look under July 2007 you can find a list of what seem to me to be the more significant debates on the list up to that date.

NB: This bibliography involves a not always easy work of tracking down, beyond the copies and references that people are kind enough to send me, or tell me about.

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I've mostly used GOOGLE SCHOLAR using key phrases such as "biographic(al) narrative", "biographic interpretive" "biographic-narrative interpretive", "BNIM", and others that came to mind.

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