

Hidden Meanings of Sheffield's River Landscapes

An exploration of how Phenomenological philosophy can provide a basis for understanding landscape meaning in landscape architecture theory and contribute to the use and development of the concept of dwelling in landscape practice and research

Ruth Mary Barker

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Department of Landscape,
University of Sheffield.

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IMAGING SERVICES NORTH

Boston Spa, Wetherby

West Yorkshire, LS23 7BQ

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Abstract

This thesis combines the study of a philosophical approach to landscape with an exploration of experience in landscape. It explores the perspective of phenomenology, in particular that defined by Merleau-Ponty, as an approach to understanding relationships with landscapes. This unveils meanings and values in landscapes hidden by other approaches, and suggests how an understanding of dialogue, time and embodiment, with, in and within landscape, can improve and enhance landscape architecture theory and practice. A critique is offered of the ways Enlightenment thinking and its dualisms have influenced approaches in the Landscape discipline, in particular the attitude of the master, the disembodied visual, and the predominance of spatial dimensions. Through an extensive literature review these effects are studied in relation to three problematic themes in Landscape – Nature, Beauty and Time. These related to a phenomenological perspective suggest new approaches to landscape, based on human embodiment, practiced in the concept of Dwelling. Dwelling is defined as a process of immersion and not separation from a position in landscape situated in space and time; it leads to engagement with nature which ultimately leads to care – Heidegger’s “concernful dealing with the world”. The possibilities for dwelling, or for “Being in the landscape”, are explored in four research projects in Sheffield’s river landscapes, adopting a methodology drawn from phenomenology. Experience is revealed in moving through the landscape, and sensing with more than one sense together; the subjective view of the researcher is tempered with the subjectivity of others, to produce an intersubjectivity. Stories, the recounting of interpreted events, is a way people express meaning and value, tell of attachment and belonging to landscape, and show freedom from controlling influences and structures. Following concluding assessments of the research and methodology, the study points to ways its findings may redirect and strengthen landscape theory and practice towards an attitude and practice of dwelling.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

1.1 Introducing the Research

This thesis takes as its focus Sheffield and its river landscapes in order to ground a discussion and exploration of landscape architecture theory. A cultural study, it aims to show that by paying attention to the quality of experience in the landscape, both now and in the past, which has meaning and value for people, there may be developed a way of interpreting landscape which can offer a more sensitive approach to design and lead to a new landscape architectural philosophy. This philosophy would rely neither upon binary rationalism nor a subjective individualism, but, through a collaborative and embodied approach, lead to a shared 'dwelling' in place and time and reengagement with the natural world. To this end, alongside academic explication and argument, stories are gathered and told, the lyrical and the imaginative are offered, to shed light on this search for meanings and lived experience in landscape.

The study claims phenomenological philosophy may offer an authentic and firm basis of authority for landscape architecture practice grounded in the human body and the relation to the natural world. It outlines how the basis of authority of landscape architecture is confused, originating from conflicting sources, and weakens professional practice, undermining confidence, at a time when the landscape itself is under serious threat from many directions. The study draws from many streams of contemporary discourse to offer new approaches, concepts and language towards a clearer base of authority. This new authority found through the phenomenological approach may give challenge to the current cultural hegemony of the mastery and exploitation of nature, which much evidence shows is leading to the destruction of the earth's resources and an increase in the separation of human beings from their place within nature. It therefore relates to the care for the earth's long-term future, both locally and globally.

To this end this study concludes that authority for landscape architecture may have its base in three aspects of landscape experience : in the embodied, in dialogue, and as unfolding in time. From this re-found authority in the body may be found ways forward to a more creative future enabling human dwelling within nature, to which landscape architects may contribute with sensitivity and confidence.

1.2 Introducing the Thesis

The first part of this thesis, Part 1, sets the scene. It establishes the aims and research questions, explores the context and the material for study. It introduces the literature review, which weaves through the work, and the methodology used, with phenomenology as tool and perspective, in particular from the insight of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, the French philosopher, of the primacy of perception and embodiment, and from the work of Martin Heidegger on "Being" and in particular Being in Time. These are developed as a basis for understanding "Being in the Landscape". Dialogue is seen as important in all parts of the process, while aspects of landscape that are often hidden are brought out to be seen as of value, with reference to the work of Kristeva, Foucault, de Certeau and Bourdieu. The context of the work is described, the geographical context of Sheffield, whose river landscapes it meditates upon, and where the practical projects or case studies took place. It also acknowledges the academic, professional, philosophical contexts and, as relevant within the study, the personal context of the researcher.

In Chapter 4 landscape itself is discussed, and the context of landscape architecture. Aspects of theory and practice of landscape architecture are critiqued and the basis of authority examined, including connections with binary rationalism brought out, in order to establish a base for an embodied landscape architectural philosophy. The aim of landscape is discussed, what it is for, and why it might be important that it holds meaning for us. The work of landscape architecture theorists and others who have proposed a

phenomenological approach to landscape is offered, such as Corner, Howett Seamon, and Abram, and the use of the concept of dwelling.

In the later parts of the thesis, Parts 2 and 3, the contextual and literature review themes, of Nature, Beauty and Time in landscape, are investigated in parallel with the practical projects undertaken during the study which explored aspects of the river landscapes of Sheffield. These three themes and four projects are discussed and developed, for a practical bringing out of the meaning of dwelling. The work of Tilley, Ingold, Mabey and Cameron is cited, and illuminated in the practical.

In both the literature review and the practical, the study broadens cultural perception of Nature and the natural world and the human place within it. It re-examines the part played by the visual, reaffirming its place in perception with all the senses working together, synaesthesia. The importance is indicated of an understanding of landscape where the bodily experience of moving through the landscape, often in walking, and the living interrelationships, with and within the landscape, human and otherwise, in dialogue, are central. Reflections on the experience of boundaries and views, the paying attention to the "rhythms and textures" of the landscape, and on the development of nature awareness are offered in the light of the practical studies. It explores the importance of space-and-time in landscape, including the activity element, landscape not just in three but in four or more dimensions. It advocates engaging deeply and sensitively with the landscape, both in detail and in particular, including what may be hidden and takes time to unfold or be revealed. As it has uncovered meanings and values, and quality of experience in landscape, it also looks to ways of changing attitudes, towards restoring creative human relations with the earth, in particular the concept and practice of dwelling. This 'shared dwelling' is seen as crucial to an embodied, grounded approach to theory and practice. The study finally offers reflections on the study and conclusions which may be drawn and points to ways that this practical and theoretical understanding of dwelling may inform and enrich landscape architectural education and practice.

1.3 Introducing this chapter

In this first chapter the study is outlined and the aims and research questions are introduced. It begins to identify the approaches taken to the thesis, and indicates reasons for choosing the subject matter and how the structure and form of the thesis connect with this. Some clarification of terms is offered.

2. The Research Study

This research study took the form of an extensive study of contemporary and other literature related to landscape together with the series of projects in Sheffield investigated in a variety of ways. The literature review, which continued throughout the course of the study, included material from a wide range of academic discourses and disciplines to gain insight into ways of perceiving, experiencing and understanding meanings in landscape. These discourses are seen in dialogue or conversation. In addition to the contribution from other disciplines, literature about Sheffield itself and the background to the projects was reviewed, including archive material. The three themes of the Nature, Beauty and Time in Landscape, seen to be problematic, gave focus to the exploration.

The practical projects undertaken were as follows: a series of walking journeys along the River Don; active participation in a community group preparing a Village Design Statement in the Loxley Valley (later published); conversations with Sheffield artists (a sculptor, a potter) about their work which is inspired by the landscape; and a river boat trip with Bengali women writers, in which poetry and the landscape was discussed and composed (also later published). In addition, chance, unplanned conversations and experiences occurred which confirmed and illuminated the work in unexpected ways, and therefore were considered worthy of a recognised place in the study.

2.1 Research Aims

The study aims firstly, by introducing theoretical points to landscape architecture from other disciplines, to broaden the basis of discussion and contribute to enlarging and deepening the scope and validity of landscape architecture. In particular the study aims to evaluate the current status of phenomenological theory in relation to landscape architecture, and to propose how it might more effectively be integrated into mainstream practice.

The perspective of phenomenology, the study aims to show, may offer an authority for landscape knowledge based in experience and in the human 'body'. This authority, it suggests, has the potential to be a common basis for the different knowledge streams from which landscape knowledge has been derived. By this means the study also aims to add to challenges over recent years to the basis of the paradigm of "Enlightenment thinking" which has in the past underlain much of landscape theory and practice, indeed within which the concept of landscape itself emerged.

It critiques cultural assumptions derived from this binary rationalism, which have in some ways distorted or biased interpretations and understanding, in particular those associated with the claim to "objectivity", views of 'nature' as a commodity for human 'use', and views of "aesthetics" which either dominate, as of overriding importance, or are dismissed as optional. To complement this challenge, the study aims, through key themes of nature, beauty and time in landscape experience, both in cultural discourse and in relation to particular places in Sheffield, to explore the notion of "dwelling" in landscape, and to explicate how this could contribute to creative practice.

The study also aims to explore an embodied methodology, derived from phenomenology, which might be effective in detecting meanings and values, both personal and shared, and methods which might give voice to these and present material in a way which may express these, and promote the usefulness of the concept of intersubjectivity. This would offer the

developing further of "walking" methodologies, and insights from sensory geography, as a basis for practitioners to engage with the sensitivities of place, and the use of participant observation in revealing local meanings of river landscapes.

2.2 Research Questions

The study does not begin with a hypothesis, but with questions which are central to method and methodology. The questions are open-ended and emerge from the context, in dialogue between Sheffield and the academy, and the answers are not predictable. As answers reveal meanings, they raise further questions which overlay further meanings and discoveries, leading towards understanding, a spiralling and layered process.

The early questions began from the context of Sheffield and the rivers which have been an integral part of its formation and growth, with such enquiries as why river landscapes are valued by people (or not) and what meanings rivers hold for people. Studies by Burgess on rivers and on valued environments led into this approach.¹

These early questions arising from the place, led to more existential questions, from the literature review, stimulated by phenomenology, alongside the review in the progress of the projects, as to how river is experienced as a landscape by human beings, with the body understood as the medium and primary point of perception (phenomenological embodiment), and the basis by which people come to know and experience landscape. This was accompanied by: "what is it like to be here in this place?", which I termed "Being-in-the-landscape".² It was considered how all these questions would affect landscape practice and theory.

¹ Burgess, (1993), "Rivers in the Landscape: A Cultural Perspective". in *River landscapes*, edited by E. Penning Rowsell and J. Gardner. London: Belhaven; Burgess, J and Gold, J eds.(1982). *On the significance of valued environments*. London, George Allen & Unwin

² Explored in Chapter 3, Merleau-Ponty.

In view of the conceptual shift in academic ways of thinking and research methods over the previous twenty years, which the anthropologist James Clifford described as "...tectonic' in its implications... We ground things, now, on a moving earth. There is no longer any place of overview (mountaintop) from which to map human ways of life", and its challenge to landscape discourse as much as to other disciplines, I came to ask what is meant by the term landscape itself.³ Contributions from landscape architecture theorists and others revealed the prevalence of conflicting concepts about landscape and the study explored further into how this shift, which Clifford describes, has affected themes fundamental to landscape. These are namely how "Enlightenment thinking" has and does affect landscape practice and theory, in particular in such themes as "Nature" and ideas of "Beauty", and "Time", and what possible creative ways forward this upheaval in thought might offer in landscape practice.

These were formulated into a series of key questions in landscape architecture, as explained in Chapter Four: What is landscape? How can we know landscape? including What is and should be the basis of authority in landscape knowing? What do we mean by nature? What is beauty in landscape and how do we value landscapes? What part does time play in landscape? And what are implications of time for landscape creation? What effect might the attitude of the designer her/himself have?

Underlying all these questions are the larger questions: What is landscape fundamentally for? And what, most importantly, is our relation as human beings with the landscape, with the Earth itself? This moves the question of Being-in-the-Landscape, being in a particular landscape – "what is it like to be here", into an ontological question, raising the concept of Dasein, of "Being" itself, "being there", as in the work of Heidegger.⁴

³ James Clifford quoted in Barnes, Trevor and Duncan, James, (1992) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* London: Routledge. p.3

⁴ See Chapter 3. Heidegger, (2007), *Being and Time*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing; see Moran, D, (2000) *An Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge.

The work of the phenomenological philosophers led the way. The questioning of the accepted paradigm and the enquiry into the effect of the phenomenological approach opened up the concept of dwelling and a closer understanding of time in landscape in order to help in finding new or re-finding creative relations with the earth rather than destructive or exploitative ones and to contribute to an embodied basis for landscape theory and practice.

3. Approaches to the study

The methodological approaches taken to the thesis are introduced in outline here. They are explored in full in Chapter Three. Reasons are indicated for choosing the subject matter. Some clarification of terms is offered.

3.1 Phenomenology and Embodiment, Dialogue and the Intersubjective

The philosophical approach of phenomenology can be both an approach to study and a method. Phenomenology is both empirical *and* subjective. It is for this reason it is viewed here as a very appropriate *approach* to studying landscape, which is by its nature both a personal experience and a material, topographical reality. Advocating a “return to the things themselves” (Husserl et al), to the “life–world”, “the world of our immediately lived experience as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it”, phenomenology strengthens the basis for a balance between the subjective embodied perception of the researcher (which colours all research) and the empirical and the concrete.⁵ With insights from phenomenology the subjective is seen as a useful tool towards an intersubjectivity which goes beyond the limitations of the objective. Chapter 3 discusses the approach and use of phenomenology in this research study, and affirms the value of intersubjectivity.

⁵ Husserl, quoted in Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. p.vii.

Empirical and theoretical methodologies, paying attention to the detail as well as the ideas, used alongside each other can give unexpected insights and depth to enquiry. In the process of both walking and reading, talking and thinking, the study moves towards establishing a dialogue, so that the internal and the external, the practical and the theoretical, the literature and landscape might speak to one another, and to suggesting a framework for them to continue in dynamic dialogue in landscape study and practice.⁶

3.2 Structure and Form – The Presentation

The thesis is a presentation of a few of the many cultural layers in a few of Sheffield's river landscapes, and of landscape theory; it does not attempt to be an exhaustive account of Sheffield's landscapes, nor a report.

Landscape experience and writing about it have place and time, space and movement. This writing may represent or express something of the experience of being there - past and future also being present in the enduring moment. The walker on the journey anticipates and expects, informed from past experience, and for whom senses, mind, memories, feelings, etc, are all active simultaneously, both unease and delight, strain and tranquillity. In the recalling and the writing these are present too. With the concept of embodiment the whole person is involved in both journeys, the physical walks along the Don, and, just as much, the intellectual exploration of ideas and discourses, in the process of mental digestion and production of thought or 'writing' and interaction with others and their experience. There is dialogue too with the reader.⁷

⁶ de Certeau, (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, pxxii, "significant practices"

⁷ Eco, Umberto, (1994), *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. This author and intellectual, Umberto Eco, reflects on the hidden but deliberate nature of this relationship, seeing how this may engage, "the reader with the experience of confusion and uncertainty, with multiplicity and rich delight in ambiguity and the mysterious". The reader, when acknowledged, is freer to take an active part in the process and make his/her own interpretation of the work.

3.3 Some definitions and explanations

3.3.1 *Hidden*

The study seeks to bring to light aspects which are not usually examined, which may raise questions about meaning and value, enable the imagination, and bring out both conflict and richness. There have been many important aspects of the topics under discussion, both theoretical and practical in Sheffield, that in the first encounter are hidden from view, in the data-gathering, in the landscapes of the study, as well as in methodology and in use of language and epistemology. By the spiralling process of questioning and probing, some are brought to light, then further layers of hiddenness are brought to the surface, and so on. In these multiple layers in landscape, not all is easy to find, or recognised, or wanted. In some instances there may be an unwillingness to acknowledge some of what begins to appear, especially if there are powerful vested interests involved which are difficult to challenge. If recognition is permitted, however, with a "return to the things themselves", with the eye of phenomenology, the search becomes more truthful and richer. The subjective and the intuitive also play their part in searching for what is hidden. The philosophical work on aspects of Hidden, of Heidegger on Disclosure and Kristeva on the Abject, are discussed in Chapter 3, and reflected on in the projects.⁷

3.3.2 *Meanings*

On the basis that it is meaning which gives rise to values, and it is from these values that decisions are made (whether we recognise that or not), it seemed important to investigate meanings and values, both individual and shared. This was in the hope that, once these meanings were articulated, decisions, in this case about landscape, might reflect more closely the values we would like to have. These might be public or private decisions,

deliberate nature of this relationship, seeing how this may engage, "the reader with the experience of confusion and uncertainty, with multiplicity and rich delight in ambiguity and the mysterious". The reader, when acknowledged, is freer to take an active part in the process and make his/her own interpretation of the work.

⁷ Heidegger, Martin, (2007), *Being and Time*, tr. Macquarrie, John, and Robinson, Edward, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing; Kristeva, Julia, (1982), *Powers of Horror: an essay on Abjection*, New York and Chichester, W. Sussex: Columbia University Press.

that is, decisions of users, planners and of landscape practitioners, may reflect these meanings. In this study it is not intended to imply that these meanings and values are (morally) absolute nor that their importance is relative; put simply the enquiry is into significance to people, individually and perhaps collectively, the subjective and the intersubjective.⁸

How does this study look to understand meanings? Within the related sphere of garden, David Cooper's *A Philosophy of Gardens* quotes Ogden and Richards "*The Meaning of Meaning*" as identifying sixteen distinct senses of the word meaning, and from this himself goes on to discuss the meaning of the idea of "The Garden" in a number of ways.⁹ From his discussion of garden meaning we may relate to meaning in landscape, about importance to people, what the landscape represents or signifies to people, what it exemplifies or embodies. This study does not look for a tight definition of meaning in landscape however, but more loosely looks for ways of knowing, and ways of perceiving meaning in landscape, which will offer a more holistic understanding. This study looks at what it is like for a person to "Be there" in the landscape, and for meanings and significances through the medium of the body as the primary point of perception This includes immediate sensation but also what a person brings with them from past experience and cultural formation.¹⁰ From both of these a person interprets and forms a meaning, afterwards or at the time. It may mean something at different levels at the same time. This holistic approach reflects landscape itself, inclusive not exclusive – as whole and parts.

Meanings have relationship to their setting, their context; they are not fixed and isolated. They have subtlety. Meanings need language to be expressed and recognised. Anne Whiston Spirn talks of the "language of landscape".¹¹ Just as landscape can be read like a text, meanings in landscape are understood through a circular process. By exploring the parts and the

⁸ Discussion in Moran, (2000), *An Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge. Ch 13, "Derrida: from phenomenology to deconstruction"

⁹ Cooper, David, (2006), *A Philosophy of Gardens*, OUP., p110. Ogden and Richards, 1923, "*The Meaning of Meaning*", Kegan Paul.

¹⁰ "habitus" in the work of Bourdieu discussed in Chapter 3, see Webb, (2002)

¹¹ Spirn, Anne Whiston, (1998) *The Language of Landscape* New Haven and London: Yale University Press chapter 1

whole we find a circular process, "the hermeneutical circle", an interpreting, described by Bortoft and derived from the earlier work of Heidegger.¹² And just as this study challenges the approach to landscape as the single, universal, all-encompassing view, nor is it looking for single, universalist, all-encompassing answers or theories.¹³ Generalities are not appropriate. In addition, experience of life itself is chaotic, not neat and tidy.¹⁴ An holistic approach allows for this and will not impose a framework; it will look for meanings to emerge, some of which may be in the form of fragments; some may have to be waited for. The study moves towards the development of a vocabulary which may express more articulate meanings in landscape and may be used by designers and by users or dwellers to protect and develop what they find of value there.

Meanings too have a time dimension: they too are subject to change. In *Primacy of Perception*, the theorist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, discusses the life of ideas, meaning, knowledge, truth in this way:

Can I seriously say that I will always hold the ideas I do at present - and mean it? Do I not know that in six months, in a year, even if I use more or less the same formulas to express my thoughts, they will have changed their meaning slightly? Do I not know that there is a life of ideas, as there is a meaning of everything I experience, and that every one of my most convincing thoughts will need additions and then will be, not destroyed, but at least integrated into a new unity? *This is the only conception of knowledge that is scientific and not mythological.*¹⁵

¹² Bortoft, Henri. (2000), Counterfeit and authentic whole: Finding a means of dwelling in nature. In *Dwelling Place and Environment*, ed. Seamon, Malabar, FL Krieger, p285 "Hermeneutics as the art of understanding...We understand meaning in the moment of coalescence when the whole is reflected in the parts so that together they disclose the whole. It is because meaning is encountered in this "circle" of the reciprocal relationship of the whole and the parts that we call it the hermeneutical circle." See also Moran 2000, Chapter 7 on Heidegger

¹³ see discussion of dualisms and Enlightenment thinking, Chapter 3

¹⁴ As Gillie Bolton has commented, "our modern culture tries to force our understanding of our lives into the school essay form. Life, on the contrary, is extraordinarily muddled and chaotic, certainly not made up of clear beginnings, middles and ends" Gillie Bolton, (1999) *The Therapeutic Potential of Creative Writing: Writing Myself* London and Philadelphia: Jessie Kingsley Publishers.

¹⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (1964) *The Primacy of Perception*, tr James M. Edie. p20. (*my italics*)

Later he adds:

*Our ideas, however limited they may be at any given moment - since they always express our contact with being and with culture - are capable of being true provided we keep them open to the field of nature and culture which they must express. And this possibility is always open to us, just because we are temporal.*¹⁶

Meanings in landscape are 'nested', not linear.¹⁷ Nesting can be depth-linear like a Russian doll, and also hidden away like a bird's nest.¹⁸ Meanings are formed and hidden in people's minds and may have to be looked for. What is familiar and predictable to one person may be disturbing to another.

But must *landscapes* have meaning? This is a topic of debate, especially in the light of deconstructionist, postmodernist questioning of meaning. Yet as the landscape academic James Corner has pointed out, "just because one might deconstruct a landscape in order to see it afresh does not necessarily mean that it has to *appear* fragmented and disorienting". It can retain its meaning.¹⁹ Meaning may be individual or shared, will be affected by the spirit of the place, though it may have different meanings for different people.

"Local distinctiveness", a concept put forward by the organisation Common Ground, to define the special qualities of a place as valued by the people

¹⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Ibid.* p.21 (*my italics*)

¹⁷ Bortoft, (2000), p285, p288 "the whole is already present, present in the fractions, coming fully into presence in the totality. The superficial ordering of the fractional parts may be a linear series - this next to that, and so on. But the ordering of the parts with respect to the emergent whole, the essential ordering, is nested and not linear."

Tim Ingold, (1993) "The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 152-174; Also Spirn, 1998, *The Language of Landscape*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press.p16"Verbal texts and landscapes are nested: word within sentence within paragraph within chapter, leaf within branch within tree within forest

¹⁸ Patrick Geddes, the biologist, botanist and planner, used imagery of "nesting". In his concept of "place", he thought in "nested layers", spatial layers, which were each important in their own right, but only properly comprehensible (and therefore 'plannable', as it were) by reference to those other spatial layers nested in it or in which it was nested". Jonathon Porritt, 2006 "Patrick Geddes, a pioneer of sustainable development," *Resurgence* 235 49.

¹⁹ James Corner, (1991) "Discourse on Theory II: three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," *Landscape Journal* 10.2. p.124

who dwell there, links meaning with identity: "meaning implies many associations, deep significance and is sensed in the power of the place".²⁰

3.3.3 Rivers and Meaning

In Sheffield the rivers and their landscapes have significance in the formation and the life of the city in many ways. This will be explored in the discussion of context in the next chapter. However, it is worth noting in this cultural study that rivers and the water they carry have huge cultural significance for all human beings. Water as river can be a symbol of enabler of life itself, of the power of nature, can carry meanings of purity or pollution. As such, any water body in a landscape is or becomes a highly significant feature, impacting on the experience within that landscape. It will always attract attention, i.e. active perception, whether with movement, sound, reflection of light, giving a sense of space, or with what lives within or around it.²¹ The water introduces animation: it draws the human body, whether in reality or in imagination, to paddle, to bathe, to be carried on, to play with: the water of life. This study considers both individual and shared meanings. One person's expectation of river is very different from any other, for example, little streams for playing in, or vast waterways reaching to the horizon; the colour of the river may be yellow or red, green or brown or blue; the feeling it gives may be tranquil or delightful, or overpowering and dangerous. There is no one image of river, which automatically or instinctively comes to mind. Everyone's is different depending on her/his past experience of river, of the landscape(s) in which they grew and their perception was formed, as well as on the present situation. Others are shared meanings. Sheffield rivers have meaning through a cultural narrative of the history of the city, and also as source of inspiration, of refreshment, as a holder or bearer of identity. As stated above, meanings gain power from being identified and expressed, in language, often in the form of stories, narrative, written or oral, many of which were gathered in the course of this study.

²⁰ Clifford, S and King, A. (1993), *Losing your Place*, In: Mabey et al, (1993) *Local distinctiveness*.

²¹ Manning, O.D. (1997), "Design Imperatives for River Landscapes" *Lsc. Res Vol 22*, 1

3.3.4 Culture

While defining the way meaning is used, and shared meaning, some words need to be said on the word culture, also used frequently in this study.

Culture itself may be understood as the complex web of meanings present in a society. Peter Jackson reflected the inherent relationship between culture and meaning in calling his introduction to cultural geography, *Maps of Meaning*, and wrote:

At its most deceptively simple, "culture" refers to the artistic and intellectual product of an élite. More generally, *it refers to a system of shared beliefs or a whole way of life*. Rather than being a source of confusion, however, the very fact that "culture" is a contested term is a vital key to its understanding. For "culture" is not the safe preserve of an élite who dominate a country's major cultural institutions and define its "national culture". *It is a domain, no less than the political and the economic, in which social relations of dominance and subordination are negotiated and resisted, where meanings are not just imposed, but contested.*²²

Landscape itself is a cultural domain, a cultural phenomenon.²³ Landscapes come from and are a highly political agenda, based on ownership, power and ideology. Often our approach in landscape as practitioners is technical or stylistic, functional or social, and "culture" seems unimportant – something to do with historic landscapes or ethnic minorities, something marginal and static.²⁴ But, in a landscape, in this study, culture is seen to be the whole context in which we operate, perhaps easily taken for granted because we are *in it*. Something evolving, something dynamic, contested, on the move. James Corner, in recognising culture as, "a thick and active archaeology, akin to a deep field that is capable of further moral, intellectual, and social cultivation," considers it crucial that culture be taken account of in

²² Peter Jackson, (1989) *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography*, Contours London: Unwin Hyman. (*My italics*)

²³ Cosgrove, Daniel and Stephen Daniels, (1988), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. p.1. discussion of culture and landscape.

²⁴ Discussion in Thompson, Ian H., (2000) *Ecology, Community and Delight: Sources of Values in Landscape Architecture*, London: E.F. Spon. p35 and elsewhere.

landscape practice. An awareness of culture should provoke more than a purely functional and stylistic approach to practice.²⁵

3.3.5 *Local and Global*

As the new field of cultural geography was establishing itself in the late-1980s, it was considered by some to be reflecting a broader intellectual shift. In line with this shift from the Enlightenment paradigm, and centring on concepts of place, space and landscape, it was one part of a movement to lead the humanities and the social sciences away from an emphasis on individuals, isolated communities, separateness, and towards a seeing of the connection and the interdependencies binding "the local" to the global. "Local knowledge" undermined universalised answers but offered the prospect of new, multi-faceted yet valid, answers. Since then, our world society has developed further in this multi-cultural and interdependent direction. As the human geographer, Derek Gregory, predicted:

events in one place are caught up in rapidly extending chains of events that span the globe; [we are] depending upon an increasingly fragile and volatile physical environment whose complex interactions require sophisticated analysis and sensitive management, recognising that the human impact on the face of the Earth has become ever more insistent...²⁶

For Gregory, this called for an enlargement of what he called "the geographical imagination". Landscape too should enlarge the scope of its imagining.²⁷

In this study's use of material sourced, created and experienced in Sheffield, it emphasises the local; the next chapter introduces this material grounded in this place. Yet this research is caught up in the global also. The

²⁵ James Corner, (1999) *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* Princeton, NJ.: Princeton Architectural Press.

²⁶ Derek Gregory, "Foreword" in Jackson, (1989), *Maps of Meaning*. pvii,

²⁷ Corner, James ed., (1999) *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, Princeton NJ., Princeton Architectural Press. P23,; he describes "the simple planting of seeds within the wilds of the landscape imagination, hopefully propagating a field more diverse and enabling than ever before".

relation of humans to their environment in Sheffield, or residents to their landscape of rivers, is very much part of the broader relationship with the earth. While reflecting on practice and theory in landscape architecture, the study, with awareness of global issues and pressures on the landscape, has a part to play towards devising new and effective approaches to living in relationship with the Earth. Theory and practice can work hand in hand towards this aim, rather than blocking or disrupting one another. The local study, the micro-level of these river landscapes, can offer clues.

This chapter has introduced the aims of the thesis and the research questions and how this study of Being-in-the-Landscape could contribute to Landscape architecture theory and practice. I have described the two main elements of the study, the projects and the coextensive literature review, and their interlinked nature. I have outlined the approach which runs through the study, phenomenology and embodiment, dialogue and the looking out for the hidden. It has introduced the structure and the looking for meanings and value, with definition of terms. Concluding with a reference to the exciting ferment of ideas bubbling in the academic context, it now turns in the next chapter to the placing of the study in context of place and of time.

PART ONE

CONTEXTS

CHAPTER 2

SHEFFIELD

1. The Academic Context

For the purpose of acknowledging 'reflexivity', for the making explicit of where the research - and researcher - is coming from, the study arises from its academic context of the Landscape Department at the University of Sheffield between 2000 and 2004, under the supervision of Catherine Dee, and the personal context of the researcher, female, in middle age, from a background in the United Kingdom, of classical and modern languages and horticulture and garden design, as well as landscape architecture more recently. Reflexivity is considered an integral part of this study, grounding it, enabling it to be embodied, in actual place and time.¹

2. The context of Sheffield and subject of Sheffield

The city of Sheffield gives the geographical and cultural context and its rivers the focus, the lens, with which to see into people's valuing of landscape. Exploring what it is like to "be there" within this landscape, it opens insight into the differences in perception of landscape, and expectation from it, from one person to another, the meaning it may have for them. Grounding the study in an actual place gives opportunity to test out the theoretical, and the philosophical, to increase and deepen understanding. In line with phenomenological methodology, I started from the place of Sheffield where I lived throughout the course of the research.

Sheffield is a city which cannot be seen or perceived at first glance or in one visit. Because of its topography it can never be seen as a whole, and it is its rivers which have made it so. These six rivers, today named the Don,

¹ Rose, G, (1993) *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Webb, Jenn, Schirato, Tony, and Danaher, Geoff, (2002), *Understanding Bourdieu*, London: Sage.p2

Loxley, Rivelin, Porter, Sheaf, and Rother, which over time immemorial cut through the rock and formed the river valleys, divide up the terrain today into a city of seven hills, like Rome, and six valleys. It is so divided that wherever you stand you can see only a few prospects (and aspects) at once. From Sky Edge, for example, above the Manor, one would gain a good panorama up and down the Don Valley and across to the city centre, but most parts south and north of the city are hidden beyond a hill. It was some of these landscapes formed and distinguished by the rivers that offered the material for the main part of this study, in particular the Don and the Loxley, with reference also to the Sheaf and the Rivelin. The nature of the city and these landscapes, deeply worked in the industrial era and now adapting to changing economics, themselves could be said to represent many of the challenges facing landscape practice today, so seemed suitable for a study linking theory and practice.

2.1 “Being There” in Sheffield – First impressions and becoming familiar

Walking through the city today one encounters Sheffield's present, a jumble of styles and patterns, of demolitions and renovations, patches of confidence and back views of depressing grime. Arriving by train, as many visitors or “incomers” do, old industrial areas, southeast and northeast, blackened with grime, meet the eye. To reach the city centre from the railway station, a steep climb challenges the visitor. This topographical fact also represents the city in other ways – it seems to be like a cryptic puzzle; it can be appreciated only by a gradual coming to know it. One could almost say it is through its topography, the bodily experience of the place, through walking, up and down and through and round about, through its parts, rather than primarily by sight, that one comes to know Sheffield.²

² Bachelard, Gaston, (1994) *The Poetics of Space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Translated by Maria Jolas, Boston, Mass, Beacon: p11 “when I relive dynamically the road that “climbed” the hill, I am quite sure that the road itself had muscles, or rather, counter-muscles”; see also Solnit, Rebecca, (2002), *Wanderlust: a History of Walking*, London, Verso; Wylie, John, (2005), “A Single Day's Walking: narrating self and landscape on the South West Coast Path” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol.30, No.2, pp.234-247.

In contrast, arriving in the city by another route, by road from the north, the wooded, route along the A61 skirting Ecclesfield, or from the west and south, by routes from the Peak District, from Manchester or Derby, you would gain a very different impression. Sheffield is here a green city; from the height and distance of Blackmoor it is a tranquil and ordered metropolis, of patterns of roofs, threaded through with belts of trees, wooded slopes, and the occasional landmark building. A vast sky gives it scale and context within a moorland foreground.

Sheffield's past is all around. The city is a text in itself.³ Sometimes clear and sometimes abstruse, it may be read in its landscape, revealing as much as, perhaps more than, a book or an enthusiastic local study or carefully archived collections. This reading takes time and offers scope for many interpretations. What is hidden may reveal itself slowly.

2.2 The Placing of Sheffield – Boundaries and Bridges

Geographically situated as a gateway to the North of England, Sheffield's border runs with Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, counties which are defined as of the Midlands. From earliest times it has been a boundary and crossing point: of three kingdoms of Saxon times, Mercia, Elmet and Deira and of two dioceses, of Lichfield and York. Since the Romans, who built a bridge over the Don for transport across the Pennine hills, it has also been a crossing point from the east to west coasts.⁴

2.3 The Working of Sheffield – Coal and Steel

By the 1720s, Daniel Defoe described the city in these terms:

³ Landscape as text: Barnes, Trevor and James Duncan, (1992) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* London: Routledge, p12: Cosgrove, Daniel and Stephen Daniels, (1988), *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge: CUP,
⁴ Derry, John, (1915). *The Story of Sheffield*. (Issued under the authority of the Sheffield Education Committee.). Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons: London

This town of Sheffield is very populous and large, the streets narrow, and the houses dark and black, occasioned by the continued smoke of the forges, which are always at work: Here they make all sorts of cutlery-ware, but especially that of edged-tools, knives, razors, axes, &c and nails; and here the only mill of the sort, which was in use in England for some time was set up,... for turning their grindstones, though now 'tis grown more common.⁵

Sheffield had been known for making knives and cutlery from the middle ages, and was mentioned in this context by Chaucer.⁶ From the beginning of the eighteenth century it expanded greatly from a small town to become a very large industrial city by the Victorian era. David Hey, in a recent history of Sheffield, quotes two nineteenth-century descriptions of the city.⁷ The first compares the city with its rural surroundings:

A thick pulverous haze is spread over the city, which the sun even in the dog days is unable to penetrate, save by a lurid glaze, and which has the effect of imparting to the green hills and golden corn-fields in the high distance the ghostly appearance of being whitened as with snow... The three rivers sluggishly flowing through the town are made the conduits of all imaginable filth, and at one particular spot.. positively run blood. These rivers... are polluted with dirt, dust, dung, and carrion.⁸

Hey's second quote is from J.S. Fletcher's, *A Picturesque History of Yorkshire*, from 1899:

Under smoke and rain, Sheffield is suggestive of nothing so much as of the popular conception of the infernal regions. From the chimneys, great volumes of smoke pour their listless way towards a forbidding sky; out of the furnaces shoot forth great tongues of flame.⁹

⁵ Defoe, Daniel (1971) *A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. Pat Rogers Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.482

⁶ Chaucer Geoffrey, *The Canterbury Tales* quoted in Defoe (1971)

⁷ Hey, David (1998), *A History of Sheffield*, Sheffield: Carnegie Publishing. p.189

⁸ "A report on the "Condition of our Chief Towns – Sheffield", published in *The Builder*, 21st September 1861: quoted in David Hey, (1998). p189

⁹ Hey, *ibid.* p.193, Fletcher, J.S., (1899), *A Picturesque History of Yorkshire*, The author seems almost to enjoy putting his description of Sheffield in terms fitting for a Gothic novel – with its horrors and terror.

These vivid descriptions of the furious industry of the city testify to its appalling environment. The Gothic nightmare of the cityscape compared with the romantic, picturesque countryside.

Though polluted air and industrial smog persisted up to the 1950s, clean air and other legislation transformed the city's atmosphere. Today thirty years of a shrinking industrial base and consequent social upheaval has also left its effect on the city and its landscape. The valley of the River Don, Sheffield's main river, into which the others flow, bears the marks of this history of the city to this day. It is this which gave rise to the practical project of walking the Don, described in Chapter 6. Unfortunately Sheffield's reputation from its heavy industrial past persists today in the minds of many.¹⁰ In 1936 George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* wrote:

"Sheffield, I suppose, could justly claim to be called the ugliest town in the Old World; its inhabitants, who want it to be pre-eminent in everything, very likely do make that claim for it."¹¹

When Natural England chose, in 2005, to site its headquarters in Sheffield a derogatory remark in *British Wildlife* magazine to it being "a remote northern city" seemed to continue the theme of disparagement.¹² Known across the world for its cutlery and steel, Sheffield is to this day often called "Steel City". Large city though it is, it must always be defined within its setting, beside the Peak District, in intimate relations with (rural) landscapes all around it; it has been the "Golden Frame".¹³ The city's landscapes urban and rural in dialogue are part of Sheffield's distinctive style and contributes to the spirit of the place.¹⁴

¹⁰ Binfield, Clyde, et al, ed. (1993), *The history of the city of Sheffield, 1843-1993*. Vols. 1, 2 & 3. Sheffield. Sheffield Academic Press, for a thorough coverage of politics, society and images of Sheffield life over that period.

¹¹ George Orwell, (1936) *The Road to Wigan Pier*, Harmondsworth, Penguin.

¹² Marren, P, (2005), "Twitcher in the Swamp", *British Wildlife*, Vol 17.2, Dec 2005, p146.

¹³ Lane, Megan, (2006) "Is Sheffield Britain's most cutting edge city?" *BBC News Magazine* 11/09/06. Locals describe it as "a mucky picture in a golden frame", a former steel working centre nestling amongst the crags of the Peak District.

¹⁴ Local distinctiveness defined by Common Ground; Mabey, Richard et al, (1993), *Local Distinctiveness : Place, Particularity and Identity*, Shaftesbury, Common Ground.

2.4 The Peopling of Sheffield – Cheap Labour

Neither of the above descriptions of the infernal appearance of the city, mention the inhabitants of Sheffield, those who contributed to the industry, and had to endure, and die, in these conditions. Nor does it mention those who were in a position to exploit them, become wealthy and benefit from them. Who were they? How did they live? where did they come from? What was it like for them to “Be There”?

The process of land enclosure affected Sheffield mainly in the eighteenth century, as the agricultural revolution dispossessed many people of their subsistence on what had previously been common land.¹⁵ These people were driven to the growing industrial city as low-waged labour for the metal industries where they lived and died in the city’s polluted atmosphere. It is two to three centuries, i.e. six to nine generations, since the families of these people worked and lived in close contact with the land, which had been their home for millennia before.¹⁶

Sheffield’s origins as a city can be linked to land-ownership, rivers and water power. The river landscapes of Sheffield, as I have said, comprise almost the whole city. Deeply carved and moulded by the power of the rivers over hundreds of millennia, they collect rainwater in the Peak District and the South Pennine uplands, which tumbles down to the lower country of the South Yorkshire coalfield.¹⁷ These fast-flowing streams, such as the River Loxley, provided the waterpower for the growth of cutlery- and steel-making, the industrial base in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.¹⁸

¹⁵ For example, Paul, C. (1907) *Some Forgotten Facts in the History of Sheffield being an Account of the Attercliffe-cum-Darnal and short accounts of the Sheffield Ecclesall Brightside and Bradfield Inclosure Acts.* Pamphlet from British Library archives

¹⁶ *Discussion of city and countryside in Chapter 5, and in Chapter 10, Loxley Valley.*

¹⁷ Countryside Commission, (1996), *The Character of England Map 37 The Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe.*

¹⁸ Miller, W. T. W, (1949), *The Watermills of Sheffield*, Sheffield, Pawson and Brailsford; Crossley, D. with Cass J. et al, (1989), *Water power on the Sheffield rivers*, Sheffield Trades Historical Society and University of Sheffield, Division of Continuing Education; Davey, S.R., (undated but received by Sheffield libraries) (1983), *Where t’watter runs o’er t’weir.*

For much of the nineteenth century the pattern of factories and workshops in Sheffield was on a small scale. This in contrast with the much larger units of production of the Leeds textile mills.¹⁹ The “little mesters” of Sheffield worked their own small workshops. This fostered an independence of mind rather than a dependence on the large employer and a passive fatalistic attitude. Perhaps one could say that the river landscapes have inscribed the culture of Sheffield as much as vice versa, both in past and present, in reciprocity, a kind of dialogue.

From the 1950s onwards post-imperial migration has brought in many other newcomers, from the Asian subcontinent and elsewhere, who though now well-established in Sheffield, have nevertheless a sense of alienation from their own place. They are in exile, many of them, from villages in a natural setting. This study reports and reflects on a river project with a group of Bengali women, comprising a river-boat trip and composing poetry on river landscapes. Also prominent today, the university institutions, from the 1960s, and especially since the 1990s, have also drawn education-seekers and educators to the city from all over the globe. Both artists interviewed for this research came to Sheffield initially to study.

2.5 Rivers and Sheffield

The rivers, as I have explained, formed the valleys and the landscapes of Sheffield and were a primary resource in the growth of the industrial city, but despite this, paradoxically, they are not a focus of pride and sense of worth – compared with say the Tyne in Newcastle. Below I give two instances where they have become part of the city’s myth, one a major threat of the force of nature, the second playing its part in averting disaster. However, more generally river has been a “source of shame and filth”, a dustbin for disposal of rubbish, with houses and factories turning their backs to it, and long stretches of river in the centre covered over and culverted, hidden away.

¹⁹ Thrift and Williams, (1987) *Class and Space: The Making of Urban Society* London: Routledge.

2.5.1 *The past*

The two major historical events connected with the rivers, recalled by myth and legend in Sheffield, are the Great Sheffield Flood of 1864, and the Blitzing of the city in World War II.

As the city expanded massively in the early part of the nineteenth century, the demand for water, for both domestic and industrial use, increased too. The plentiful water needed to be conserved, and reservoirs were planned in the valleys to the west. The Loxley River was to feed four reservoirs, but the first construction led to a disaster known as The Great Sheffield Flood. In a stormy night of March 1864 the newly constructed Dale Dike reservoir above Low Bradfield, eroded it seems by undetected springs beside the earth dam, burst.²⁰ A huge wave of water engulfed Low Bradfield, swept down the valley and into the River Don, devastating the whole valley and parts of Sheffield downstream. Two hundred and fifty-four people died, thousands were made homeless and countless buildings were destroyed. It exposed to public gaze the squalid living conditions of many of the citizens, and led to public commitment to decent housing.²¹ Industry in the Loxley Valley was later restored – ironically, the rebuilding after the flood gave the local forges and factories a new lease of life; it may help explain why industry in the Loxley lasted well into the twentieth century while it withered and died in the adjacent Rivelin Valley.

In 1941 the German bombers' target was the armament factories of the Lower Don Valley – but it was the many windings of the river which confused them and their load was dropped in error on the centre of the city.²² The war effort meanwhile continued at full strength. These events are still commonly talked about in terms of pride and horror; they are part of a shared city identity among old Sheffielders. The later incomers tend not to

²⁰ Heywood (1864). *The Sheffield Flood, containing a full and consecutive account of the Disasters caused by the Bursting of the Bradfield Reservoir on March 12th 1864, including a list of names of the Dead and Missing*. Manchester John Heywood, 143 Deansgate,

²¹ Refer to description of the Sheaf in Don Journeys in Chapter 9

²² Binfield, C, et al, ed.(1993), *The History of the City of Sheffield, 1843-1993*. Vols. 1, 2 & 3. Sheffield. Sheffield Academic Press.

be aware of these events, this history, this significance. No equivalent dramatic events have bound today's people together, until the sudden summer floods of 2007, where the city was marooned by its hugely swollen rivers, with devastation everywhere. Everyone has a story to tell.²³

The city's commitment to decent housing for its citizens was renewed later in the twentieth century. Modernist planning and design of the 1950s and 1960s has also gained a place in the books of history of architecture, with the story of Park Hill. Park Hill is a famously (and infamously) innovative public housing scheme for early sixties' Sheffield, in the Corbusian mould, complete with 'streets in the sky'. Though the project was at first very popular among the residents it rescued from back-to-back slums, it has since suffered from under-maintenance, poor community cohesion and deterioration. In the 1990s, the scheme was very controversially given Listed status for its contribution to design. More recently it has undergone major reorganisation and renovation, also controversially, amid the debate about public housing, private enterprise and private home ownership, and how far the original aspirational vision was lost or compromised. Park Hill sits on a summit above the railway station opposite the city centre overlooking the Valley of the Sheaf and its hidden junction with the Don, and is in view from much of the city, a landmark. Its presence there provoked a disparaging remark made at the 2002 "Materialising Sheffield" conference, that: "Sheffield doesn't hide its ghettos".²⁴ The relevance of these "beautiful"/"not beautiful" judgements is explored in this study in Chapter Five.

2.5.2 Life in the rivers

What is still hidden however is the life in and around the rivers, which existed long before industrialisation; wild nature left alone once more, after the demise of the industrial base, has crept back and made itself at home. The rivers all run into the city from rural sources where they are visible, accessible and green, with a sense of an active wildlife. Once inside the

²³ From conversations with the researcher

²⁴ "Materialising Sheffield", (2002), day conference Sheffield Millennium Galleries, Material cultures institute, University of Sheffield.

built-up areas, and only occasionally visible between buildings, they have much more limited diversity and attractiveness to human perception, therefore largely ignored.²⁵ The underlying ecological systems continue whether we are aware of them or not, adapted to the differing circumstances.²⁶ The living creatures and their world are mostly hidden to us, because their physical scale is smaller and time scale slower or faster than ours. Their habits follow patterns, such as nocturnal or seasonal ones, that are out of step with ours. Close and patient observation is needed and the passing of time for us to decode and decipher for us before we can be sensitive to them.

2.5.3 *A past, a present, and a future?*

Sheffield, as a city, has undergone changes of both a dramatic and traumatic kind over the last thirty years. Decisions and actions taken now, revolve around persistent recurring doubts and questions. As the land and labour use changed from the domination of the steel and ancillary industries, acres of land, as seen in this study's project of the Don Journeys (Chapter 9), have become empty or now have other uses, such as retail, leisure, sport, "knowledge" or education in the shape of two universities. These experiences have seriously shaken the city's identity. As it searches for a new economic base, there are many questions which should be asked in active public debate. These should look at what Sheffield is now, and who dictates, controls, or has a say in its future.

Facilitators of change in the regeneration of landscapes urban and rural are holders of European money, public/private partnerships, and sometimes use techniques of "community consultation".²⁷ The values being acted on, the aims which guide decision-making are not explicit. In today's Sheffield the

²⁵ Urban rivers, value and attraction of water, see Penning-Rowsell, E. and Burgess, J. (1997), "River Landscapes: changing the concrete overcoat?" *Landscape research* Vol 22, 1, pp 5-12; And Manning, O.D. (1997), "Design Imperatives for River Landscapes" *Lsc. Res* Vol 22, 1, p 68 mentions canalising of rivers within Sheffield.

²⁶ Barker, D. (2003), "Rivers and running water – a Habitat Action Plan" In: *Sheffield Biodiversity Action Plan*. Sheffield Wildlife Action Partnership; Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Wildlife Trust, (2000), *Sheffield Biodiversity Action Plan*, Sheffield City Council.

²⁷ South Yorkshire Objective One funding, a European regeneration programme running for 7 years from 2000. For levels of consultation: Arnstein, Sherry R. (1969) "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Planning Association*, Vol. 35, No.4, 216-224.

rivers are cleaner and many people have more leisure - though this is sometimes enforced leisure because of unemployment. The public debate should openly consider what landscape changes are envisaged which reflect people's hopes and aspirations. The question is "*what do we want to become?*" The answer to this, whatever it is, impacts on the landscape, both within and outside the city.

Should the former industrial valleys, perhaps some of them, return to the pre-industrial past, to farming? Or to an "ecological" utopia, to greenery and biodiversity? These issues are touched on in the Loxley Valley project in Chapter 10. In the city centre, as in other cities worldwide, flats and nightclubs with squares and shopping malls of a standardised style and nature are being planned and implemented, dense housing estates with community parks have sprung up, historic parks restored; it needs to be asked whether they have been widely discussed as appropriate for Sheffield, for this distinctive place and people. As to the strong connection between the city and its rural surrounding, and the extensive green and nature within the city boundary itself – one third of the land within the city boundary is in a rural area - whether they have been imagined in the renewing of images of Sheffield. Both universities have well-respected departments which are engaged with Sheffield's environmental setting; they should have much to contribute, *if* asked.

These are some of the live issues in the regeneration of the city in this post-industrial era. Apart from those officially charged with planning and implementing new directions, there is widespread passionate engagement and identification with the place – among artists, community groups, historians, ecologists and others, as seen in the study's projects of Loxley Valley and the artists in Chapters 10 and 11. Aspirations and values of these different interest groups and individuals within the city must be very varied. Attempts are being made to define and protect local distinctiveness, and this concept, identified by the organisation Common Ground in 1993, is featured in the city council website.²⁸ At the same time it is important to

²⁸ Mabey, Richard et al, (1993)

note that, while it is not the main focus of this study, there are huge threats and obstacles to the retention and valuing of local distinctiveness. These will be discussed in the context of the projects in order to better address the recovery of the dwelling perspective and its potential in a holistic relationship of human with the Earth and approach for a sustainable landscape design.

In Sheffield, the past is dominant: much is talked about how it used to be. The present is usually condemned as depressing or not as good as the past, but the future seems blank, except as more of the present but only worse!²⁹ What about the future? What about "possibility"? – as Bourdieu says:

"The simple possibility that things might proceed otherwise...is sufficient to change the whole experience of practice and, by the same token, its logic."³⁰

These are crucial concepts for anyone involved in the creative professions, for landscape designers, planners and managers, yet the context of Sheffield shies from engaging with them. Michel de Certeau, writing of the attitudes of the landless in French society, could be referring to Sheffield when he discusses the tactics of: "You make do with what you have".³¹ "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" is a favourite in Sheffield; "If you want anything done, do it thasen," another. Should the limited sight, this closed, introspective view continue, possibilities to resist the negative effects of these pressures and open out a creative inclusive non-standardised future are also limited. If the origin of these attitudes to the past and to the future, and what holds them fixed might be uncovered, perhaps new self-understanding and aspiration could grow through.

Sheffield has a peculiarly localised character for a big city. It is often described as "the largest village in England". This probably comes from its

²⁹ Personal conversations with residents

³⁰ Bourdieu Pierre, *The Logic of Practice*, Quoted in Osborne, (1994) *The Politics of Time*, In: *Radical Philosophy* 68

³¹ de Certeau, (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press

historic development and growth; for much of its history it had no large roads, it was rather “off the beaten track” from the main national routes, in valley neighbourhoods everyone knew each other. Sheffielders are sometimes accused of having a parochial outlook. Despite this, nowhere today can escape being part of the “Global Village”, influenced in thought, aspirations, preferences, and materials from elsewhere in the country and world. Cultures influence and mix in a thousand different ways. Sheffield is no longer isolated; the pace of social change is rapid today. The challenge is to face and aim to shape that change rather than be swept along and swept away. The city, its citizens, its planners and its designers need to look at what are its values, what are the meanings it cares to retain, which can inform and resource a creative future.

This study is looking for meaning and significance in these river landscapes; with the tool of phenomenology it looks at the detail, present and past. In so doing it searches out a new understanding of the city and its people in relationship with the whole landscape, with the natural world. Again the question should be asked: *What do we want to become?* Whether to see landscape, and nature, as a resource to be exploited and enjoyed, as for an easier life, leisure, excitement, and exaggerated sensation for humans, or a nature in which all may dwell, with a commitment to restoring of the Earth, and a heritage to be left for our grandchildren and theirs, a nature which frames and supports it and runs through it.

This chapter has established the geographical context, which leads on next to the interdisciplinary context of ideas and a full discussion of the ways the research has been approached, its philosophical basis, methodology and method.

CHAPTER 3

APPROACHES TO THE RESEARCH

"Seek nothing beyond the phenomena; they are themselves the theory"
J.W. von Goethe, 1790

Research must be situated within a discourse; methods of research can have their precedents, or be formulated for the specific research context. In this chapter, a number of philosophical themes drawn from other disciplines are discussed which have influenced my approach to research. Four "experiential" methods of research are introduced which were adopted in response to the research context and this wider philosophical discourse, and some of the methods of data collection are clarified. The first and most general characteristic of this landscape research method is that it should be related to theories and insights present in other disciplines.

1. Methodology – relating disciplines.

In this study the process of reviewing the literature that relates to the subject is not a closed exercise at its opening, but a progression throughout. Determining the many discourses and streams of enquiry and knowledge, both academic and local, which may contribute to this landscape study has been a deliberately open and flexible undertaking. The method of seeking to understand what may be said on this subject has been about establishing a dialogue, how the literature and landscape might speak to one another - and suggesting a framework for them to continue in dynamic dialogue, applied to landscape study and practice. This method is ultimately about making connections between subjects which are not usually seen as connected. Such an inter- or cross-disciplinary approach is well established in a range of fields, and has been influential in the work of American scholar Edith Cobb, and the French social-scientist, Pierre Bourdieu who deliberately made use of empirical and theoretical methodologies alongside each other, reflecting his conviction that they are

inseparable.¹ While conventionally such eclecticism might be seen as 'suspect', as too determined by the researcher's own subjectivity, it has advantages, such as the fresh eye of the outsider who is not bound by the ways of seeing of one particular discipline. He/she can also bring other ideas from elsewhere to pose unasked questions, and sometimes give a practical, even "political", dimension.

This study may be termed holistic in the way it attempts to bring all its constituent parts into relation with its methodological thinking: extending its review of literature through discussions of approach, theory, conceptual definitions, and themes. The extent to which this becomes possible is discussed in Chapter 12.

This study aims to understand rather than to prove, to interpret more than analyse. In this way, its approach may be defined as phenomenological. The mid-twentieth century theorist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, following Husserl, the first phenomenologist, defined phenomenology as the study of things as they are experienced as a "return to the things themselves", to the phenomena as they are, before thought intervenes.² The contemporary French philosopher, H  l  ne Cixous, in *rootprints*, hints at the preliminaries of thought, of the sense of the mysterious and unknown, and curiosity stimulated by the phenomenon.

In the beginning there is thinking, and unknowing. ...I think that - even if the word 'thought' bothers me - I begin by thinking. ... I do not begin by writing. But when I begin to think it is always applied to... something that presents itself to me as unknown and as mysterious. ... It is almost the origin of science: I observe a phenomenon.³

¹ Cobb, Edith, (1993), *The Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood*, New Haven, Conn.: Spring. (reprinted; first edition 1977). J. Webb, Tony Schirato, & Geoff Danaher, (2002) *Understanding Bourdieu*, London: Sage p2

²Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1962 - page refs to 2002 edition) *The Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge. pvii

³ Cixous, H  l  ne, (1997) *rootprints, memory and lifewriting*, London: Routledge. p.243

The implication of this approach for landscape research is my standing *within* the context, *within* the landscape. As I do, I see closely the detail, the intimate, the parts, but also trying to look at the distant view, gain a perspective on it, the whole, and think as if I were “*outside the box*”, bringing the two in dialogue. I am within AND outside. The aim is to look with the clear, observant, reflexive, “eye” of phenomenology. Yet inevitably there are also my own preconceptions, assumptions. It requires sensitivity and critical rigour to try to detect and own what are these assumptions that may cloud *my* “eye”. Where do I find or develop tools which may dissolve or minimize their negative effects? The philosophical themes which influence my approach raise these questions of “ways of seeing”; their theorists point to answers.

2. The philosophical basis of the research

2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology is an approach to study as well as a method. It is a philosophical movement derived from the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859-1938). Husserl studied and worked in Germany and then Vienna, where, in 1900, he unveiled phenomenology as a “bold, radically new way of doing philosophy”. With it, he was attempting to return philosophy from “abstract metaphysical speculation wrapped in pseudo-problems”, to bring it back into contact with “the matters themselves, with concrete living experience”.⁴ Phenomenology was adopted and developed later, following Husserl, in two strands relevant to this study, by Martin Heidegger, the German philosopher (1889-1976), and by the French philosopher, Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-61).⁵ Both Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger explore “Being-in-the-World”, which I draw out for my theme of

⁴ Moran, Dermot, (2000) *An Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge. p.xiii. See also Corner, (1990), A Discourse on Theory I: “Sounding the Depths” – Origins, Theory and Representation. *Landscape Journal* 9, no. 2. 60-77 and Corner, (1991), 'Discourse on Theory II: three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics'. *Landscape Journal* 10, no. 2. 115-133. discussion in Chapter 4.

⁵ Heidegger M (2007) *Being and Time* See also Dermot Moran, (2000), Merleau-Ponty, (2002), *Phenomenology of Perception*, first published in 1945 as: *Phénoménologie de la perception*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1945).

“Being-in-the-landscape”. Heidegger talks of Being as temporal, always unfolding in time, of disclosure and revelation. For Merleau-Ponty Being-in-the-World is reciprocal, a dialogue, two ways – also temporal. The phenomenology I discuss in this study derives both from Heidegger’s work, particularly, *Being and Time*, and more largely that as interpreted by Merleau-Ponty in his work on perception and embodiment, and further developed from Merleau-Ponty’s thought by North American philosopher and cultural ecologist, David Abram.⁶ Other phenomenological thinkers in different disciplines have also influenced element of the study.⁷ ...

From its beginnings with Husserl, phenomenology has centred on an empirical approach: Husserl advocated a “*return to the things themselves*” hoping it would become a rigorous “science of experience”. On the opening page of his seminal work, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty defined it as an attempt, “to give a direct description of our experience as it is, without taking account of its psychological origin and the causal explanations which the scientist, the historian or the sociologist may be able to provide”.⁸ David Abram has emphasised how the phenomenological approach is a departure from the objective view of much modern scholarship and a return to “the taken-for-granted realm of subjective experience”. This is “not to explain but to pay attention to its rhythms and textures, not to capture or control it, but simply to become familiar with its diverse modes of appearance; phenomenology would articulate the ground of the other sciences”.⁹ A re-evaluation of the modern scientific method, and in particular of the concept of the individual researcher’s objectivity, was at the heart of the development of phenomenology. Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both questioned the position that was assumed to be “objective”.

⁶ Abram, D. (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, New York: Vintage.

⁷ Especially the contributions in: Seamon, David, (1993) ed. *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, New York: State University of New York Press. and Seamon, D. and Mugerauer R, 1985, eds (2000), *Dwelling, Place and Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*, Malabar, Fl.: Krieger.

⁸ Merleau-Ponty, (2002), p.vii.

⁹ Abram, (1997), p.35.

All my knowledge of the world, even my scientific knowledge, is gained from my own particular point of view, or from some experience of the world without which the symbols of science would be meaningless. The whole universe of science is built upon the world as directly experienced, and if we want to subject science itself to rigorous scrutiny and arrive at a precise assessment of its meaning and scope, we must begin by reawakening the basic experience of the world, of which science is the second-order expression.¹⁰

For Husserl, what we think of as objectivity is in fact someone's subjectivity added to another someone's subjectivity; nothing is known without subjectivity. Adding these together is intersubjectivity, which is as true an objectivity as is attainable. Phenomenology is intersubjective; it reframes the objective/subjective divide into subjective/intersubjective. For Merleau-Ponty, "the chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality".¹¹

In his theory, Husserl introduced the concept of the "*life-world*". This has been defined as, "the world of our immediately lived experience as we live it, prior to all our thoughts about it".¹² Experienced at the level of things such as our everyday work and enjoyments, the "life-world" is reality before any human mental analysis is applied whether in theory or scientific explanation. Husserl argued that in Western scientific thinking (which is also termed elsewhere in this thesis Enlightenment thinking) this had been ignored and forgotten – at great cost. In assuming objectivity, the modern world had come close to forgetting "the life-world", this dimension of life, where in fact most human activity, creativity and endeavour have their root. In Husserl's view,

In their striving to attain a finished blueprint of the world, the sciences had become frightfully estranged from our direct human experience. Their many specialized and technical discourses had lost any obvious relevance to the

¹⁰ Merleau-Ponty, (2002). p.ix

¹¹ Ibid. p.xxii

¹² Abram, 1997). p.40.

sensuous world of our ordinary engagements. The consequent impoverishment of language, the loss of a common discourse tuned to the qualitative nuances of living experience, was leading to a clear crisis in European civilization.¹³

This crisis was a blindness to the experiential world; a blindness which was leading to the destruction of that world, despite Western science and its technological innovations depending for their meaning and existence upon it, as if cutting off the branch it sits upon.. The phenomenological philosophers stressed the significance of the "objective/subjective divide", as they considered it (and the mode of thinking it represented) as the root of this crisis. Emphasising the body and experience was for them an answer to this divide and a route to overcoming this destructive blindness. We see the results of this blindness today one hundred years later writ large.

Husserl's "life-world", our immediately lived experience, and Merleau-Ponty's perception, are applied generally to human experience; sometimes they give examples in landscape. In landscape study I suggest this same approach be applied to the actual living landscape. In parallel, landscape practice's initial survey work on the site, the living place, is a "return to the things themselves", the empirical. The first stage should be the experiential, *experiencing* the place, not first an abstract space on a sheet of paper or a computer screen.

At this point I need to state that while this is a study of the application to landscape of phenomenology as developed from Husserl and those who followed, antecedents of this approach and method can also be found in the approach to science of the German poet and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). Certain phenomenologists, in particular David Seamon and Henri Bortoft, have revived interest in this earlier forgotten work and linked it into phenomenological studies. This has particular relevance to landscape as will be shown later in the study.¹⁴ Though much earlier than Husserl many of his insights complement the phenomenological

¹³ Abram, *ibid*, p.41.

¹⁴ Bortoft, In Seamon, ed, (2000); Seamon D, (1998), Bortoft, H. (1996).

philosophers' work. Goethe advocated "Dwelling within the phenomena" as a way to understanding.

2.2 Heidegger – Being and Time

Heidegger saw phenomenology as an approach rather than a method, a "way of seeing".¹⁵ He saw it crucial to study not the "things", Husserl drew our attention to, but that which lay behind the things, Being itself, *Dasein*, which he said was a forgotten question.¹⁶ Phenomenology he saw as self-manifestation, and that description alone of the phenomena was not enough. Moran put it that "phenomenology is seeking after a meaning which is perhaps hidden by the entity's mode of appearing", which is sometimes dissembled.¹⁷ Therefore it needs to be *interpreted*.¹⁸ How things appear or are covered up must be explicitly studied. What is *hidden* needs to be brought out in the open and revealed by discourse.¹⁹ Heidegger was concerned with the nature of truth and how we can know:

All neutral understanding of things, eg scientific, presupposes an existential encounter with things and our original interpretation of them in the light of our concerns and dealings with the world. If this is forgotten (according to Heidegger) we end up with a theory of truth as judgement instead of an experience of truth as revelation.²⁰

He saw truth being disclosed, unfolding in time, in a process of *revelation*. He addressed questioning itself, rather than the traditional assertion or statements of facts, as a means of finding out truth: asserting and

¹⁵ Moran, (2000), p228.

¹⁶ Heidegger, (2007) p1; Moran, (2000) *An Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge

¹⁷ Relph puts it: "Phenomenology is a way of thinking that enables us to see clearly something that is, in effect, right before our eyes yet somehow obscured from us - something that is so taken for granted that it is ignored or allowed to be disguised in a cloak of abstractions. For Heidegger this something was pre-eminently *Being* - the fact that things exist at all. The elucidation of Being requires not a rejection of scientific knowledge so much as an attempt to understand the relationships between scientific and pre-scientific consciousness". Relph, in Seamon, (2000), p 16.

¹⁸ Heidegger introduced the idea of the hermeneutical circle; Moran, (2000), p 237.

¹⁹ Moran, (2000), p229.

²⁰ Moran, *ibid*, p 235

questioning, he said, are both forms of *disclosure*.²¹ Meaning is formed by the crucial agency of language, then must be disclosed, expressed *through* language.²²

Heidegger is also concerned with *authentic and inauthentic living*; authentic being those "moments when we are most at home with ourselves" with the possibility of "getting ourselves together with a potential-to-be-whole".²³ He attempts to show *Dasein*, Being-in-the-World, as having the fundamental structure of the world, being with others in such a way that its whole existence is structured by care and that "knowing" is a subspecies of a kind of *concernful dealing with the world*.²⁴ It becomes clear that *Dasein's* Being-in-the-World is essentially a kind of disclosing of the world.²⁵ He finds an attitude of *wonderment* at the mysterious nature of the world. *Curiosity* is linked with wonder in inquiry.²⁶

It is Heidegger who introduces the concept of *dwelling*, as "both a state of being and a process" of "entering a personal and close relationship with a place, as home, and from which to relate to the rest of the world".²⁷ This dwelling becomes an important theme of this study, discussed more fully in later chapters, as a crucial concept for landscape theory and practice. Dwelling and Being-in-time are the most important aspects of Heidegger's work for this study, though many of his other themes are echoed throughout.

From Heidegger's theoretical study of being and truth, we turn to the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. This next concept, embodiment, is directly relevant to landscape practice, the human relating to landscape. Merleau-Ponty's

²¹ Moran *ibid* p236.

²² Moran, *ibid* p234

²³ Moran *ibid* p239-40

²⁴ Heidegger (1966), *Discourse on Thinking*, tr Anderson & Freund, New York, Harper & Row.⁴

²⁵ Moran *ibid* p238.

²⁶ Relph in Seamon (2000) p16 "Wonder is the mark of a pre-scientific attitude - that is, of a compassionate intelligence that seeks to see things in and for themselves. Heidegger's term for wonder is "marvelling", within which there is an admiration for the earth with its myriad places and landscapes. What we understand of the world derives both from wonder and from curiosity."

²⁷ Seamon and Mugerauer, (2000),p125

work may be said to bridge the gap between theory and practice, for him phenomenology can be both approach and methodology.²⁸

2.3 Merleau-Ponty – Embodiment

A key concept in phenomenology is Embodiment; in this research I explore and make use of this in both approach and method. This concept was developed by Merleau-Ponty as he explored perception and his understanding of the state of “Being-in-the-World”. Merleau-Ponty was fascinated by the mystery, the paradox and the ambiguity, in the nature of our embodiment in a world seemingly “preordained to meet and fulfil our meaning-intending acts”.²⁹ Merleau-Ponty questioned the basis of authority for our knowledge; like Heidegger he asked “how can we *know*?” To find an answer, he suggested a return to *pre-reflective experiencing* – the way of experiencing the world in childhood. This was to experience the world “in one blow”, not with one sense or another, or with a brain with organs attached, but in a single yet total way. Merleau-Ponty explained this with the observation that, “I *am* my body, rather than I have a body”. The body becomes the subject; it is a *living, attentive body*. Such an approach reasserts the importance of the senses, of perception – the means by which we have direct contact with the world in which we live.

Merleau-Ponty drew attention to ways perception of the senses could be under-valued in prevailing approaches to knowledge. In certain ways of thinking, the mind can be encouraged to leap over the immediate evidence of the senses, or to reduce or suppress what is not expected or does not fit into an existing mental structure. This leads to some things being left out, which may be equally important aspects of reality. As Merleau-Ponty wrote, “The real is a closely woven fabric. It does not await our judgement before incorporating the most surprising phenomena or before rejecting the most plausible figments of our imagination”.³⁰ An assumption that the world was already understood – that we had in our possession “the law of its making” -

²⁸ Seamon, (1993), p15 and passim

²⁹ Moran, (2000), p.391

³⁰ Merleau-Ponty, 2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*. p.xi

was wrong-headed. Instead, the world is "the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions". Perception itself is "not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them".³¹

For Merleau-Ponty, perception amounted to a "transcendent condition... our means of communication with the world". In perception, all the senses act together, integrated with each other, in *synaesthesia*.³² There is an overlap and blending of the senses to the point they cannot be separated. Merleau-Ponty saw the senses as being so connected that if only one seemed to be stimulated in an experience, then the experience was suspect: "If a phenomenon – for example, a reflection or a light gust of wind – strikes only one of my senses, it is a mere phantom". He emphasised the importance too of imagination as part of embodied experience; it is not a separate faculty, but an attribute of the senses, drawn from the senses together, "the way the senses have of throwing themselves beyond what is immediately given", as Abram expresses it, extending towards "the hidden or invisible aspects of the sensible" – in anticipation and projection of the side of things we sense *indirectly*.³³

Perception is about immersion in the world and the body as the primary locus of communication. In this communication there is participation, drawing the body into relationship with all other things. And in this relating, there is *reciprocity*: each thing has a presence and is therefore conceived as more than an inanimate object. When I touch a tree's bark, stroke an animal's fur, dip my toe in water, I am myself touched by them. To see the world is also to experience oneself being seen. As David Abram observes: "We can experience things – can touch, hear and taste things – only because, as bodies, we are ourselves included in the sensible field, and have our own textures, sounds and tastes."³⁴ In all this reciprocity, I am not

³¹ Ibid. p.xi

³² Abram, (1997) p.59.

³³ Abram, (1997) p.58.

³⁴ Ibid. p.68

alone or separate; I am an integral part, a component of the whole, with constant introjecting and responding.³⁵ In exploring the possibilities of communicating perception, Merleau-Ponty uses an example of two people experiencing a landscape. He and a friend are standing and viewing a landscape, but he sees something his friend does not. In this,

...there is a kind of demand, that what I see be seen by him also... And at the same time this communication is required by the very thing which I am looking at, by the reflections of sunlight upon it, by its colour, by its sensible evidence. The thing imposes itself not as true for every intellect, but as real for every subject who is standing where I am.³⁶

For Merleau-Ponty, this scenario reveals *the inter-subjectivity of view*. Just as no one person sees colour in the same way as another, the viewer must come to acknowledge that another's perception is different, and that different perception is part of the viewer's first perception. He continues:

It is thus necessary that, in the perception of another, I find myself in relation with another "myself", who is in principle open to the same truths as I am, in relation to the same being that I am. And this perception is realised. From the depths of my subjectivity I see another subjectivity invested with equal rights appear, because the behaviour of the other takes place within my perceptual field...

Thus, the body of the companion enters the equation, moving beyond just being another object to sense, and becoming the means by which a truer, fuller perception of reality may be attained. It is significant that this "separation of consciousnesses", as Merleau-Ponty terms it, is only recognised in the effort and the failure to communicate to the other.

³⁵ I suggest comparison with Ingold's taskscape, chapter 5 – one cannot isolate one person's act from the interweaving nature of everyday living. Ingold, Tim, (1993), 'The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society'. *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2:152-174.

³⁶ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, (1964) *The Primacy of Perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history, and politics*, trans. James M. Edie, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press. p.17

Just as my body, as the system of all my holds on the world, founds the unity of the objects which I perceive, in the same way the body of the other – as the bearer of symbolic behaviours and of the behaviour of true reality – tears itself away from being one of my phenomena, offers me the task of a true communication, and confers on my objects the new dimension of inter-subjective being or, in other words, of objectivity.³⁷

These are the terms which indicate Merleau-Ponty's understanding of perception : pre-reflective experiencing, the living, attentive body, synaesthesia, reciprocity, imagination as part of embodied experience, and the inter-subjectivity of view, which will be recurring throughout the study.

Since it was first published in English in the 1960s, Merleau-Ponty's work on embodiment has influenced approaches to research in a number of disciplines and brought insights to many academic fields, including architecture, art criticism, human geography, landscape archaeology, and social and cultural ecology. The light his theories have shed on objectivity, has made Merleau-Ponty especially influential in postmodern theory and cultural and feminist studies.

Those who have written on phenomenology as theory, including Merleau-Ponty himself, have linked landscape with embodiment; and landscape architecture is arguably the art for which it has the most potential relevance. More than any other, landscape architecture is perceived not just in three but in four dimensions, flowing and growing in time, and is always experienced in the context of surroundings and movement. I consider concepts of the embodiment of perception to offer ways of reconnecting with the landscape environment - where we live and where we dwell – of moving beyond touching and being touched, introjection and response, to an immersion within, being part of, the living landscape.

Although Merleau-Ponty's model of perception recognises the inter-subjectivity of knowledge and communication with another, feminist scholar

³⁷ Ibid., p.18

Shannon Sullivan has challenged his scheme is limited as biased too heavily on the experience of the male human being; a limitation that can be overcome by the use of dialogue which is the subject of the next section of this chapter.³⁸ As my research approach is influenced by the concepts of embodiment from phenomenology, my use of dialogue is with a view to moderating the suggested narrowness of some of Merleau-Ponty's original theories of perception. More generally, linguistic research has suggested that dialogue is an approach prioritised by women more than men and dialogue is an approach which does justice to the feminist perspective. Luce Irigaray's *Sexes et genres à travers les langues* demonstrates that women are more likely than men to engage in dialogue, and that while men privilege the relation with the world and the object, women privilege interpersonal relations.³⁹ My use of dialogue is therefore closely linked with my position as a researcher.

2.4 Dialogue

Dialogue is our primary state of being; we are in communication with, responding to, constantly receiving and giving impressions of what is around us. It is by dialogue that we come to have knowledge and learn how to negotiate our life within the world. All of our senses engage in dialogue: it is the fundamental basis of learning about each other and the natural and physical world. This relating reflects the physical connections inherent in all created life from its origins. Yet, as feminist ecologist Charlene Spretnak has argued, our awareness and valuing of these connections is not a given:

All species participate in the metabolic exchange of the biosphere and are molecularly linked with one another from their earliest origins in the birth of the universe. Human culture can either enrich and build upon that physical

³⁸ Sullivan, Shannon (2001) *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press. p.86

³⁹ Irigaray, Luce, (1990) *Sexes et genres à travers les langues: éléments de communication sexuée français, anglais, italien*, Paris: Grasset. See also Luce Irigaray, 1993 *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, trans. Alison Martin, New York and London: Routledge. Whitford, Margaret (ed.) (1991), *The Irigaray Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell. p.4

level of community, and thus enjoy a rich ecosocial experience, or deny and ignore it, as the modern worldview tends to do.⁴⁰

Concepts of dialogue and the physical connections between things, were explored in the work of the Russian literary scholar, Mikhail Mikhailovitch Bakhtin (1895-1975). Bakhtin lived through and suffered in the darkest years of the Soviet experiment, but the work he produced in these conditions has led him to be considered a leading thinker of the twentieth century.⁴¹ In the context of existence in twentieth-century Russia, Bakhtin saw the cosmic dynamic as dialogue, with human and natural forces not just acting on one another but in communication – in “language” of one sort or another. He used the imagery of centrifugal and centripetal forces working continually on one another in the bringing forth of language, both at the everyday level of articulation and at the more subtle level of culture.

Bakhtin’s view of forces at the cosmic level was from the opposite position to Merleau-Ponty, who began with the personal, from the perception of the human being. These two approaches reveal how our being in the world is always two-way, from the inside-out and from the outside-in. The phenomenological approach, observes in close detail from, as it were, the inside. It begins with the connection of the human being with the world around, from inside the experience of perceiving through the senses. A phenomenological approach can be allied with and developed into one of dialogue, as shown by the work of David Abram, who talks of the “body’s silent conversation with things”, a continual responsiveness to the world around.⁴²

2.4.1 *Dialogue and landscape*

Landscape archaeologist, Christopher Tilley has defined a landscape as a means of conceptual ordering that emphasises relations within, and

⁴⁰ Spretnak, Charlene, (1999), *Resurgence of the Real, Body, Nature and Place in a Hypermodern World*, Routledge, New York. p.4

⁴¹ Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovitch, (1981) *The dialogic imagination: Four essays.*, ed. Michael Holquist, Austin and London: University of Texas Press.

⁴² Abram, (1997), *Spell of the Sensuous*. pp.49-53. Abram looks to this being the basis of a reorientation and recovery of engagement with the natural world and environmental action.

dialogue between, its constituent parts. While the concept of place or locale is inherently about difference, about defining the singularity and the uniqueness of a space over and against what surrounds it, the concept of landscape undermines this difference and distinction. Landscape is holistic, it acts so as to encompass rather than exclude, it highlights inter-relationship, patterns, how elements speak to each other, and thus exist in dialogue.⁴³

The way dialogue may be present in a landscape is suggested in the writing of the American landscape architect and academic, Anne Whiston Spirn, who writes of landscapes as language, and as being “loud with dialogues, with storylines that connect a place and its dwellers”.⁴⁴ I return to the discussion of language and landscape in Chapter 12.

2.4.2 Explaining my viewpoint

I see landscape not only in conversation with itself, but with the human passing through it and experiencing it. Landscape is expression, expression of life. Within the whole ecosystem every life form expresses its uniqueness, performs its own function. Primary to life processes such as respiration is the taking in and giving out. Flow of the breath, in, out, flow of the tides connected with the movement of celestial bodies – from micro to cosmic. Everything in the cosmos is in continuous active relationship with the rest. With every breath, we take in from the world around, and return something of ourselves to this world. Air, smells, dust, nourishment, poison, with every contact, physical, sensual, emotional, we take or receive and leave a mark or gift. We walk a path; we leave our footprints, or dust from our shoes, or even particles of plastic or rubber from the shoe itself, hairs, skin cells..., a residue of smell which can be detected by a tracker, human or non-human. Our boundaries are permeable, our skins are porous. Landscape is a place of dialogue without words, with itself and with us. This points to an approach to landscape where the focus moves from the individual subject viewing and perceiving, to being within, among, amid

⁴³ See Tilley, Christopher, (1994) *The Phenomenology of landscape*, Oxford: Berg p.34

⁴⁴ Spirn, A W, (1998) *The Language of Landscape*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. p.17

landscape. An individual's dialogue with a landscape in this way, links them into the landscape's own dialogue, and brings a new understanding and knowledge of this landscape and her/his own place within it.

2.4.3 Our dialogue with each other

Dialogue is, by its nature, always relational, between two or more entities. It might first be considered as being between two or more persons. Speaking is just one form of dialogue; the communication between a reader and written material is another. In this, the writer and the reader are in dialogue with each other, and also with those writers both writer and reader have read before whose dialogues remain in their minds. In this activity there is a continual interacting of ideas and of different subjective lives and experience. This is, in fact, at the heart of knowledge, as the phenomenologists claimed. It is through subjective experience and intersubjectivity that we discover knowledge. Hence, knowledge is always situated; there is no such thing as abstract knowledge, or disembodied knowledge. It is always known by someone and comes from somewhere; it is related to where, when and who, and deriving from dialogue with someone or something.

2.5 Hiddenness

Hiddenness is a theme which threads throughout the study, including its title. As briefly introduced in Chapter 1, it appears in the study's use of language and epistemology, in methodology and data-gathering, as well as in the landscapes of the study. This next section brings out some of the philosophical background of hiddenness, and why it is important.

2.5.1 Revealing what is hidden

There seems for some students and practitioners of landscape to be certain "acceptable" layers of knowing, but a shying away from questions of significance and meaning, of depth, of beneath the surface, of what might

perhaps seem to introduce controversy and challenge.⁴⁵ I suggest that there is purpose and importance in revealing what is hidden; it relates to what we want and value, for the present and for the future. The search for what may be hidden involves questioning and dialogue. Aspects left unexpressed or suppressed lead to only a partially truthful response, which can therefore also lead to falsehood or misapprehension. According to Heidegger, truth hidden behind appearances must be brought out into the open, disclosed, examined.⁴⁶ "Culture is a thick and active archaeology" claims James Corner.⁴⁷ Through the lens of what is hidden in the "landscape as text", you can read, between the lines, and write and interpret.⁴⁸ Landscape meaning can be excavated to give insight and animation.

Aspects of hidden include the past and its leftover feelings, personal and cultural. This includes childhood experience and memory, and the sensation of bodily experience, which, I have pointed out, is often the forgotten aspect of landscape architecture, and also feelings of heart and mind - the poetic. It also includes what is hidden in the structures of our understanding.

2.5.2 The hidden in people's memories and minds

This study looks at two aspects of memory. The first is closely connected with history, and asks the question of whose memory history is recording. This has repercussions for whose history it is. The second aspect of memory is the role that past experience and personal memories play in engagement with landscape.

Memory – interpretation and history

In a classic reflection on historiography, David Lowenthal has written:

"Memory, history and relics of earlier times shed light on the past. But the

⁴⁵ Personal Discussions with landscape students and others. See also Thompson, Ian, (2000). *Ecology, Community and Delight: Sources of Values in Landscape Architecture*, London: E.F. Spon. in which he conducted interviews with landscape professionals.

⁴⁶ Moran, (2000), p236

⁴⁷ Corner James, ed., (1999) *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* Princeton, NJ.: Princeton Architectural Press.

⁴⁸ Barnes, Trevor, and Duncan, James, (1992) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* London: Routledge; Davey, J.R. N., (2000) "Writing and the in-between," *Word and Image* 16, no.4 378-386

past they reveal is not simply what happened: it is in large measure a past of our own creation, moulded by selective erosion, oblivion, and invention".⁴⁹ Simon Schama, meanwhile, has similarly explored in great depth the connections of culture and landscape, history and memory:

... although we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception into two realms, they are, in fact, indivisible. Before it can ever be a repose for the senses, landscape is the work of the mind. Its scenery is built up as much from strata of memory as from layers of rock.⁵⁰

Both these scholars and others raise questions of who selects, erases and invents, in order to create a history; whose memory is recorded and passed on, who the interpreter is and for what purpose. It includes one's own memory and interpretation of one's own life events or narrative. This too may undergo sea-changes over periods of time.⁵¹ The view of philosopher Michel Foucault was that history is not linear - "a chronology of inevitable facts that tell a story which makes sense", but "a multiple overlapping and interactive series of *legitimate versus excluded histories*".⁵²

To take the context of this study, Sheffield, the city has had and still has many recorders and enthusiasts for its history. This study refers to work by people such as John Holland, Joseph Hunter and Reginald Gatty in the nineteenth century, and David Hey, Chris Firth, and Ray Davey, - with very different styles of writing - in the twentieth.

Memory – landscape experience

Past personal experience and memory play a significant role in the way people engage with landscape. This emerges strongly in all the projects in

⁴⁹ David Lowenthal, (1985), *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge, CUP

⁵⁰ Simon Schama, (1995), *Landscape and Memory*, London: Fontana. p.7

⁵¹ The selective nature of memory in transforming and reinterpreting a past landscape experience – what at the time did not feel particularly pleasant and appeared to arouse feelings of disappointment – seems sometimes to be remembered later with enjoyment and positive significance. (observations in MA dissertation data collection Lockley Ruth (1999), *Uplifting Landscapes*, Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Sheffield.

⁵² Appignanesi R., and Garratt, C. (1999), *Introducing Postmodernism*, Cambridge: Icon. p.83.

this study.⁵³ Childhood experiences of landscape in particular have been shown to be extremely significant in landscape preferences and enjoyment in later adulthood, in studies by Rachel Sebba, Colin Ward and Clare Cooper Marcus.⁵⁴ The opportunity for childhood play outdoors, for hiding places, local 'wildernesses', trees and vegetation, in landscapes at or near home are also shown by both Catherine Higgins and Randolph Hester, as important for the development of the imagination.⁵⁵ The imagination too is part of the hidden in our minds; it leaps and links the past and the future, nurtured from the past and forming the future.

2.5.3 *Hiddenness and Creativity*

Imagination

Earlier in this chapter imagination was seen by Merleau-Ponty as an "attribute of the senses... throwing themselves beyond what is given". Gaston Bachelard, French physicist turned philosopher, has explored the inner spaces of a house through a "phenomenology of what is hidden". In *The poetics of space*, he considers the *productive* imagination, which he distinguishes from the "play of fantasy": "The imagination is a major power of nature.... By the swiftness of its actions, the imagination separates us from the past as well as from reality; it faces the future... If we cannot imagine we cannot foresee."⁵⁶ In his work, Bachelard seeks to determine the human value of the spaces in a home, spaces we love, the house, as it were, becoming the topography of our intimate being. "Not only our memories, but the things we have forgotten are "housed". Our soul is an abode. And by remembering "houses" and "rooms", we learn to "abide within ourselves." House images that are "in us as much as we are in

⁵³ In Loxley Valley, local people see landscape often through the lens of memories of past events there, eg the workplaces in the former industrial life along the river, or of past people they knew living there with whom their lives were interwoven in those places: also through the lens of the myth of earlier historic events such as the Great Sheffield Flood of 1864..

⁵⁴ Rachel Sebba, (1991), "The Landscapes of Childhood: the Reflection of Childhood's Environment in Adult Memories and in Children's Attitudes" in *Environment and Behavior* 23, no.4, 395-422; Ward, Colin, (1978), *The Child in the City*, Pantheon, New York; Cooper Marcus, Clare (1978), "Remembrance of Landscapes Past" in *Landscape* 22 no.3, 34-43.

⁵⁵ Higgins, Catherine (1995), "Childhood Romanticism and Landscape", Conference Proceedings; Hester, Randolph (1979), "A Womb with a View: How Spatial Nostalgia affects the Designer" in *Landscape Architecture*, 457-459.

⁵⁶ Bachelard, Gaston, (1994) *The Poetics of Space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Translated by Maria Jolas, Boston, Mass.: Beacon, p xxxiv

them". This holds good also for landscape as home, as the "house of our being": landscape is within us as much as we are in it.⁵⁷ Bachelard also recommends reverie, which allows the imagination to develop.

Edith Cobb goes further in her work described as a "philosophical meditation on the importance of children's deep experience of nature to their adult cognition and psychological well-being".⁵⁸ Cobb shows imagination itself, to which childhood landscape experience contributes crucially, to be a driving force of evolution and the flexibility to change, to adapt to and to respond creatively to new circumstances. She sees the child to be "innately connected with the natural world", which stimulates this inner growing: "inner powers alone do not further the imagination".

Creativity and Design

For landscape design this element of the phenomenological approach is highly relevant. It does not just observe empirically the "things in themselves", through perception. It encompasses too the imaginative process. Creativity in design involves a grounded possibility, through what Bachelard calls the productive imagination, of bringing something into being – to see the pot in the clay, or the statue in the stone – intuiting its potentiality, even inviting it. A designer looks to see the underlying bones of a landscape, patterns revealing themselves, and to work with them to integrate new uses and bring forth a new harmony. In Merleau-Ponty and the phenomenological method, perception with the senses also allows for intuitive sensing, and for creativity, a process of both the conscious and the unconscious working together.⁵⁹ Artists too can be interpreters of the landscape, to show what is hidden.⁶⁰ Past childhood experience and regular landscape encounters in adulthood may offer inspiration, as seen in Chapter 11 of this study.

⁵⁷ Spirn, Anne Whiston, (1998) *The Language of Landscape*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press; Ingold Tim, (1993), The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society. *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2: 152-174.

⁵⁸ Cobb, Edith, (1977), *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, New Haven, CT.: Spring.

⁵⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, (2002)

⁶⁰ Crowther, Paul, (1993), *Art and Embodiment; from aesthetics to self-consciousness*. Oxford: Clarendon.

2.5.4 *The hidden in the structures of our understanding: The Abject*

What is hidden in the structures of our understanding includes the hidden dualities in our thinking, and Bourdieu's "habitus" and the abject. These have their effect on societal and intellectual values and on landscape discourse and practice. They pervade attitudes which are unconsciously influenced and directed and put threats and obstacles to human dwelling, cultural constraints which obstruct awareness and delight.⁶¹ The dualities create and define the concepts, and then reject and hide them, of the "Other"/ le féminin and most hidden of all, *the abject*.⁶² Many benefits may have been lost in the defining of what is permitted, in the hiding of what is not. The result of hiding the unwanted may be more "orderly", "tidy", but also more impoverished. What has voice and what is voiceless, is silent? Throughout the study the edges, the forgotten, the despised, came to my attention frequently as of interest within the whole picture.⁶³ The hidden, and even the abject, might offer the delights of secret, mystery, lost treasure, even catharsis and *jouissance*.⁶⁴ The philosophers suggest that the more hidden something is the more the release of positive energy when it emerges. By bringing to light the unexpected, the unknown, the unarticulated, it stimulates, enables the imagination.

The work of French philosopher Julia Kristeva uses psychoanalytic theory to draw attention to the repellent, to what is conventionally "better kept out of sight", beyond acknowledgement, the abject. In her essay "Powers of

⁶¹ Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, (2002). p.36-37.

⁶² The Other, le féminin, and the abject see discussions below

⁶³ Ecologists and others look to the edges as areas of great interest and richness. See Marion Shoard, (2001) "Edgelands," in *Remaking the Landscape: the changing face of Britain*, ed. Jennifer Jenkins, London: Profile, 117-146

⁶⁴ Julia Kristeva, Michel de Certeau, Luce Irigaray, all mention the release of *jouissance* frequently in their work; one definition: "*Jouissance*, contrasts with *plaisir*, which is a controlled state that happens within cultural norms. *Jouissance* is pleasure (and any stimulation) that can be too much to bear. It may be very largely felt as suffering. It is pleasure and pain together, a feeling of being at the edge. It can indicate a breaking of boundaries, a connection beyond the self. This can range from a mother feeling intense connection with a breast-feeding baby to meditative feelings of oneness with the universe. One of the goals of life is to manage *jouissance*. Unchecked emotion will control and overwhelm you. Society helps this through controlling mechanisms such as education and cultural norms. It has been said that *jouissance* is 'drained' from the body throughout life, leading to the calm of old age."

Horror: an essay on Abjection”, Kristeva examines the process of early formation of human identity and self-definition in which some aspects are developed at the expense of others, by rejecting, casting out from notice, refusing to acknowledge, in order to give ourselves boundaries, “this I am, that I am not”.⁶⁵ The abject she defines as what is discarded, repulsive, considered of no worth. At a practical level this may be vomit, faeces, polluted food that our digestion refuses, cadavers. At a psychological level, it may be aspects of relationships (at first with primary bonds with parents) which are forbidden, obscene, shameful. While this process is necessary for healthy growth to maturity, Kristeva points out that in this process of refusal to acknowledge we may lose other things which could be valuable to us. She suggests the importance of bringing to consciousness what is suppressed, repulsive, and discarded, and acknowledging it in order to reclaim these benefits.

Kristeva's writing style is rather contorted and ambiguous, difficult to follow, just as her subject is difficult to grasp, dealing with what in our psyches we push away as abhorrent.⁶⁶ The abject challenges expected ways of thinking and habits. Study of it suggests perhaps there is after all a need for horror and danger and pollution and fear and rubbish and untidiness, even if there is some threat to our physical health. These might include *jouissance*, a sense of joy in life, a release from the rigid boundaries set early in life to keep away the abject, resulting in a catharsis. Food for imagination, the thrill of fear or horror, the challenge to courage, face fear, become stronger by coming out the other side.

The ‘Sublime’ as mentioned in section of Chapter 6, includes these “delightful feelings of horror”. Later superseded by Modernism and its aspiration for ‘purity’, it could be said that Abjection is the dark side of Modernism, what gets left out from Modernism’s passion for intellectual

⁶⁵ Kristeva, Julia, (1982), “Powers of Horror: an essay on Abjection”, Columbia University Press.

⁶⁶ This might be seen as Foucault’s ‘dividing practices’ taken to extreme, screening out what we do not wish to see. See below section 2.6.1.

clarity.⁶⁷ The writer Henry David Thoreau refuted this split between the worlds within us and outside us:

It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brains and bowels, the primitive vigour of Nature in us, that inspires that dream. I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than ... I import into it.⁶⁸

The wildness of this bog within us and outside, within the landscape, may seem threatening to stability, alarming and disruptive, may contain the “dark side” of life, but is also the source of creativity, the “primitive vigour of Nature,” and our hope for meeting the future with flexibility and inventiveness.

We need the abject to clarify our sense of self when young, to set boundaries so that we may grow, but we also need later to recover some of what has been cast out, the “abjected”. Bringing the rejected to light, reclaiming the abject, offers space for feminist expression and interpretations – and for interpretations of the experience of the Other, the non-dominant, the voiceless, the oppressed, which may have got lost in the dominance of the accepted world view.

As to the effect on landscape practice, perhaps there is a need for abject landscapes, the unwanted ones, what society has rejected and cast out, which hold the marks of time, wear, use, abuse. Who and what is being excluded?

Abject landscapes put questions to what is of value, to beauty, positive sense experience, landscape value. Sheffield has many landscapes that could be called abject; one such, along the river Don, is explored in Chapter

⁶⁷ See Time, in Chapter 7. “Space became the supreme concept – space as autonomous sets of Cartesian co-ordinates, floating infinitely, without context or place. “Space”, crystalline product of the Enlightenment, was put forth as an ethereal substitute for the continuity of lived experience. ... Imagine the audacity or simple suspension of belief, necessary to reduce the complexity of living landscape to the sheer placelessness of ‘pure form’.” James Corner, (1990), “A Discourse on Theory I: “Sounding the Depths” – Origins, Theory, and Representation”, in *Landscape Journal*, 9, 2. p.61.

⁶⁸ Henry David Thoreau, (1856) *Journal*, quoted in Schama, *Landscape and Memory*.

Six. "Being-in-those-landscapes", it is worth asking what value they have, to user, to nature, what is lost by paying them no attention, what delight they may release. Aspects of the feminine too are kept out of some Sheffield landscapes, I discuss, unexpressed, inexpressible, unspoken, *silent*.⁶⁹ The Five Weirs Walk described in Chapter Six is a masculine working landscape. Women are infrequently seen, and do not feel comfortable unless accompanied.

Also hidden within the landscape, behind its appearance, text to be read, are other influences, threats and obstacles to human dwelling, cultural constraints which obstruct awareness and delight. The following sections outline philosophical discourses addressing some of these constraints: power and control in landscape, everyday living and the freedom to be, the influence of habitus, and the hegemony of dualistic thinking. These are themes secondary to those discussed above, but nevertheless important, and necessary to reveal hidden meanings in landscape.

2.6 Power and Control

The late twentieth-century French theorists, Michel Foucault, Michel de Certeau and Pierre Bourdieu are associated with the development of the "post-modernist" approach to research and academic knowledge; they too were influenced by the work of the phenomenologists. The theories of these three have influenced almost all academic disciplines in the last few decades. Landscape is an area in which their work has perhaps been under-considered, yet their work does have much to offer landscape theory and understanding, in particular their analysis of power and the effect on everyday living. The premise of much of their work is that our lives are increasingly controlled and directed by the centralising tendencies of modern institutions and corporations, narrowing and restricting our experience. These philosophers explore how we can describe in language, understand and challenge these power structures and cultural habits of

⁶⁹ Mortensen, "Woman's Untruth and le féminin". In: Whitford, M ed(1991), *The Irigaray Reader*, London, Wiley/Blackwell.

thought which dis-empower people, keeping them in subordinate, unthinking, unresponsive and passive positions. In addition they have looked to identify modes of operating which enable people to re-claim freedoms and enjoyment in spite of such restrictions.

In this study I hope to show how the application of some of their theories of power and control can assist with thinking critically about landscape, exposing how landscapes do support and retain structures of (oppressive) control, yet also suggesting how landscape can itself enable subversion, and offer the opportunity of freedom and escape from these relationships. I also explore how a landscape research approach influenced by aspects of the approach of such theorists may be of use in developing landscape theory.

2.6.1 Michel Foucault

Michel Foucault (1926-1984) worked predominantly in the fields of philosophy and history. His thought developed directly from Husserl's early twentieth-century work on phenomenology, adopting direct experience as the basis for human knowledge. However, he asserted that experience was fundamentally historically based and grounded unavoidably in philosophical and scientific discourse, therefore, though personal, was already determined from beyond the person, and by which we are controlled. This contention led him to examine the structures of power and control in societies. He defined his goal as, "not to analyse the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis", but rather, "to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects."⁷⁰

In his work on *The Subject and Power*, Foucault explored the "separating out and dividing practices which control us".⁷¹ Examples of "*dividing practices*", or the tendency to separate into categories prevalent in Western

⁷⁰ Foucault, Michel, (1982) "The Subject and Power," in *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow Chicago: University of Chicago Press p.208

⁷¹ Rabinow, Paul ed. (1986) *The Foucault Reader* Harmondsworth: Penguin. p.7

society, that Foucault identified included distinguishing the sane from the mad, the beautiful from not beautiful (or ugly), and culture from nature. These dividing practices he called techniques of domination: they act to exclude and reduce the value of the less preferred, as if they are objects, to be used or abused, open to exploitation by the more privileged. Foucault saw the starting place, for such oppositions and categorisation, in the development of scientific classification and the attempt of humans to adopt a "scientific" view of themselves and other things.

A key term for Foucault was "subjectification"; the course by which an individual becomes a subject, or the processes of self-formation in which a person takes an active part.⁷² Foucault saw this taking place through a "variety of operations on [people's] own bodies, on their souls, on their own thoughts, on their own conduct".⁷³ Though the process was one of internal self-understanding, it was almost always mediated by an external authority figure; two such figures he identified were a confessor or priest and a psychoanalyst. Yet, these external influences, which are very often the face of institutions, do not, Foucault argued, enable us to discover what we are, but rather encourage us to "refuse what we are", to conform. The institution Foucault railed most against, and indicted for the worst excesses of mediating the internal self-understanding of individuals to become subjects was the modern nation state. A central tool in the subjectification of an individual was the control of knowledge by institutions, most especially the state. Knowledge and power are inextricably linked, and when "truth" can be controlled and asserted, it becomes the "mask of power".⁷⁴ Refusing the form of individuality which the state and its institutions had imposed, was, Foucault argued, the means to promoting "new forms of subjectivity", enabling each individual to break free and "be his own project".⁷⁵

Crucially for the relevance of his thought to landscape, Foucault identified *space as fundamental to any exercise of power*. A recognition of this raises

⁷² Ibid. p.11

⁷³ Foucault, M (1980) "Howison Lectures, Berkeley," in Paul Rabinow 1986.p.11

⁷⁴ Rabinow, ed.,(1986), *Foucault Reader*. p.12; Chris Horrocks and Zoran Jevtic, (1999) *Introducing Foucault*, Cambridge: Icon. p.144

⁷⁵ Rabinow, *ibid.* pp.7-12

questions of the way ownership, design and control of space may be further tools in the subjectification of the individual. This study takes these questions as one starting point for exploration, and reflects on them in relation to the Sheffield landscapes studied.

2.6.2 *Michel de Certeau*

Michel de Certeau (1926-1986) also studied the relationship of place and power, and the strategies which the powerful use, in their ownership of land and space, to limit the freedom and exert control over others. De Certeau drew attention to the structures present in relationships over land and explored the ways the power-less, the dispossessed, those who do not own land, negotiate their place within these constricting structures. These people develop tactics at the individual level which exert some freedom, operating within, and yet outside, the control of these structures which they are unable to change. None of these tactics involve standing apart, a taking of the distant view; they only operate and subvert at close quarters, in "close combat" – a view of the whole structure is always lacking.

De Certeau explores what he calls "*significant practices*" in everyday living, which enable everyday creativity and the taking of freedom, "produce without capitalising, that is without taking control over things". He includes in these, walking, talking, reading, cooking, moving about, shopping and dwelling. These everyday practices, ways of operating within the system, are to be considered and articulated, rather than taken for granted as the background of social activities. Many of these practices are apparent in the projects in the later chapters of this study, and, once seen in the way de Certeau describes, take on greater significance for landscape design practice. One starting point is *reading*, which seems a "controlled activity" in contemporary culture and its consumption; on the contrary, says de Certeau, the activity of reading has all the characteristics of the individual choosing his/her own response. I note that this can apply equally to reading landscape, the process of appropriation, one's own completely individual

way of responding, "slipping into the author's (designer's) place".⁷⁶ In his work he concentrated above all "on the uses of space, on the ways of frequenting or dwelling in a place.... and on the many ways of establishing a kind of reliability within the situation imposed on a individual, that is, of making it possible to live in them by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires - an art of manipulating and enjoying."⁷⁷ The relevance to this study of this understanding of "everyday practices" is seen not only in this *reading* of the landscape, but also in *walking*, as a research method described later in this chapter, in *talking*, with the development of language with which to form and articulate meaning and value, and in *dwelling* as both an aim of design and as a research method.

The future prospect of a redemptive utopia for the landless, is a further theme De Certeau explores as a tactic to overcome structural control. Such ideas are ubiquitous to landless groups throughout history; a view of a future which could "reverse the relationships of power and ensure the victory of the unfortunate in a fabulous utopian space". These ideas, which are usually religious but have also been secular since Marx, inspire hopes of change for justice and greater power over the individual's own life; the victory of the weak over the strong. The unknown, the indeterminate, the unformed future of land and its distribution, are of key importance. This work finds echoes in the second project explored in this study, in the Loxley Valley, in the attempt of local residents to express and defend a valued environment from diminishment by landowners and others.⁷⁸

De Certeau always intended his theory to be in close relation with reality, with practice. His aim was to join "the most demanding and abstruse of scholarly analyses to the humblest concerns of men and women who are simply trying to survive while retaining a fundamental sense of themselves".⁷⁹ His studies covered a vast range of literature across

⁷⁶ Reading the landscape, Barnes, Trevor and James Duncan, (1992) *Writing Worlds: Discourse, text and metaphor in the representation of landscape* London: Routledge.

⁷⁷ de Certeau, (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Translated by Steven Rendall, Berkeley and London: University of California Press.p xxii

⁷⁸ Chapter 10 of this study.

⁷⁹ De Certeau, *Ibid*.

disciplines, all in an effort to take study out into the world where events themselves happen. De Certeau writes of the choice “to leave Vienna or Cambridge [the ivory towers of academia], but not to leave Wittgenstein”, the philosophical task; and sets out towards “the open sea of common experience that surrounds, penetrates, and finally carries away every discourse”.⁸⁰ This intention of the rooting of theory and practice in one another, their dialogue, was also present in my third theorist who addressed the subject of Power and Control, Pierre Bourdieu.

2.6.3 *Pierre Bourdieu*

The French social-scientist Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) Bourdieu addressed the question of what limits us from within ourselves, what produces tendencies in us to act, in certain ways?⁸¹ Using concepts such as “cultural field”, “cultural capital” and “habitus”, Bourdieu attempted to make sense of the relationship between objective social structures (institutions, discourses, fields, ideologies) and everyday practices (what people do and why they do it). As I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, his style of study was especially cross-disciplinary.

It is Bourdieu’s concept of “habitus” which I particular wish to explore. As the values and dispositions gained from our cultural history, habitus was briefly introduced above in the discussion of our dialogue with the past. Such is the unconscious influence of the habitus, Bourdieu contended, the individual is convinced they act from self-interest. There is some allowance within these influences for improvisation; we can respond to cultural rules in a variety of ways. Nonetheless, our responses are still determined, regulated by where (and who) we have been in a culture.⁸²

To counter the effect of these unconscious directings, Bourdieu stressed the importance of “*self-reflexivity*”; it is essential not only to be conscious of, but also to examine, what is happening. Because, as Bourdieu points out,

⁸⁰ De Certeau explains that Wittgenstein was a teacher in a village elementary school 1920-1926, and therefore qualifies for de Certeau’s category of popular culture and the everyday! Ibid. p.15

⁸¹ Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, (2002). p.36-37.

⁸² Webb, Schirato, and Danaher, (2002), *Understanding Bourdieu*. p.36

“we are too enmeshed to see what it [habitus] is doing to us”, we must distance ourselves, and from distance detect the patterns of social control. Using this link between the distant and the intimate – the use of distance to be aware of the intimate – Bourdieu questions the separation of practice and theory. He himself tackles his own habitus in his work: in the relation of the academic ivory tower to the world. Like de Certeau, Bourdieu sees a challenge to the methods of power and control in practice and activity. While, de Certeau endorsed everyday activity, Bourdieu advocated the importance of the use of language.

In expressing ourselves in language Bourdieu says, we “*make the world*”. By this he means that language determines how we understand the world. Language is not reflecting pre-given reality, but is a “practice” itself. We are continually remaking the world as we form it in our use of language. This implies that a much more dynamic process, a more flexible relationship is possible between language and the world we see and relate to - a relationship more free of the control and limitation inherent in the habitus.

2.6.4 Power and control and landscape

In considering the work of these theorists on the links between knowledge and power, and space and power, so their relevance to landscape becomes clear. Factors of ownership, use, exploitation, access, and interests in conflict emerge as worth greater consideration in the assessments of land and therefore landscape architecture.

For landscape designers, planners, and all those working with space and land affected by the time dimension, it is essential to understand the background of where power and control lie; to question assumptions made, and to examine the unexamined biases and distortions of assumed ways of thinking. In considering time, in particular, in landscape practice, questions emerge of the client: not just the present client, but how a landscape will serve future clients; who will use the landscape, besides the client? Who do we design and build landscapes for? Will the landscape serve to enable activities and events, the significant everyday practices in which people may

win a little freedom and enjoyment? Or will it serve to increase control and restriction? ("No ball games here" signs on grassed areas of estates of social housing) How will it enable our "more-than-human", as David Abram puts it, fellow creatures and plants?⁸³ David Peat calls them "all our relations":

Many native American groups have long seen the world in this way, as evinced by their prayer "all my relations", in which the definition of relations starts with members of the tribe and then extends to other two-legged creatures, then to four-legged creatures, then to fish, birds, trees, rocks, thunder and "beings" under the earth.

David F. Peat⁸⁴

The decisions taken in landscape architecture are, like everything else, directed and formed largely through our habitus. If we have not examined this and tried to understand and counter it to some extent, can we have confidence the decisions taken will in fact be appropriate for the situation?

Through Bourdieu it is also seen as important to pay attention to and develop freedom through the use of language. The way that de Certeau sees structures being subverted at the intimate level, not from a distance, raises questions of the expectation of distance in landscape view and practice. Distance may give overall clarity, but it can omit detail and the truth of what is "really" going on.⁸⁵ There is also a need for close engagement to find intimate connections, recalling David Abram's "paying attention to the rhythms and textures" and Bortoft's whole and parts.

Having looked at power and control and ways of understanding and attempting to subvert oppressive cultural influences, it is time to open out

⁸³ Abram,(1997), *passim*.

⁸⁴ Peat, D.F. (2006) "The Saving of Planet Gaia" *New Scientist* 18 March 2006

⁸⁵Illustrations in Chapter 10 highlight the contrast between the long "beautiful" view of the Loxley Valley and the detail of abuse at the micro level.

the issue of dualisms in Western scientific or Enlightenment thinking that Husserl and phenomenology at the beginning of this chapter were addressing.

2.7 The Subject and the Other - Dualisms and Enlightenment thinking

Views of the world within western culture haven been found very often to be based on dualisms – on binary opposites, around which values, preferences and interests centre. Many of these dualisms seem universal - masculine/feminine, mind/body, culture/nature, rational/irrational – others are more obviously culturally, intellectually and historically specific. In fact, recent research in areas such as gender studies and social anthropology has sought to underline the contextual basis of even those dualisms considered universal.⁸⁶

2.7.1 Enlightenment thinking

The way of thinking that gives precedence to this dualistic approach may be seen to have its origins with the seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes and his defining of the mind as separate from the body. His famous dictum, "cogito ergo sum", "I think therefore I am" sums up his elevating of rational, mental activity – that of the mind – as the defining characteristic of human identity, as superior to the body. After Descartes, the application of critical reason to the natural world was developed by succeeding philosophers through the eighteenth century, in the broad historical movement termed the Enlightenment. This movement marked a complete epistemological break from earlier paradigms or worldviews. From this new way of thinking emerged the "scientific method" – the collection and analysis of empirical data from nature by the method of separating out, identifying and classifying. It led to the belief, as theories revealed the rules of how things worked, and how processes might be controlled and

⁸⁶Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* Cambridge: Polity Press; .Also Cixous, Hélène (1997) *rootprints, memory and lifewriting*, London: Routledge; Irigaray, Luce, (1993) *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*. Translated by Alison Martin, New York and London: Routledge.

manipulated, that everything could be known. In the course of this, categories were developed, some of which came to be preferred or given higher value than others.⁸⁷

mind	body
thought	feeling
rational	emotional
logical	intuitive
analysis	empathy
objective	subjective
abstract, conceptual	corporeal, sensual
detached	engaged
culture	nature
ideologies	experience
male	female

Table 1: Dualisms –
Binary opposites in modern Western thinking

Table 1 sets out some typical dualisms in modern Western society which have resulted from this separating tendency. The categories on the left are considered of higher value than those on the right. These dualisms and privileges affect not only academic life, but also pervade the discourse of public life and everyday language. These values and privileges have led to relations which are unbalanced and uneven; they lead to distortion, inaccuracy and injustice. They have led to, and are linked with, a mind-set that the privileged and their privileged attitudes may manipulate and exploit the resources of the less preferred. To challenge or change this is not straightforward, because these oppositions and polarities are deeply embedded in our social systems, in the power structures of our societies.

2.7.2 *Dualisms and hegemony*

⁸⁷ James Corner has discussed the dualist tendency in a landscape context. See James Corner, (1990) "A Discourse on Theory I: "Sounding the Depths" – Origins, Theory and Representation," *Landscape Journal* 9, no. 2.

Several theorists working in the field of gender studies have drawn attention to the tendency in western culture to prioritise and privilege not just men over women, but the natures and characteristics of the masculine over the feminine. French philosopher Luce Irigaray has argued that all thought and language is gendered, and attempted to show how the language used by women, a woman's way of communicating, is distinctive and needs asserting to counter-balance prevailing male approaches.⁸⁸ Helene Cixous, another French feminist theorist, has not only explored sexual and gender difference, but also asked questions of the distinction between the subject, usually the masculine subject, and "the other". The development of the concept of the individual, their singular view and subjective opinion - and its now central position in Western thinking - has come through the continual distinguishing of and separating the self, called the subject, from what is not itself, from "the other". As society and culture's collective view has been dominated by the male's view and opinion, the "other" which that view has been formed against, has been the female's. Yet, the hegemonic view has not only been male, but also white, Western, and wealthy. This has produced a variety of "others" - and research into race and ethnicity has developed these theories to demonstrate their relevance to the experiences of, for example, immigrants to Britain from former colonies in the post-war period, and colonial subjects themselves during the Empire period.⁸⁹ In a collection of articles entitled "Why I mourn for England", the Bengali commentator Nirad C. Chaudhuri explores the meaning of a country to which he related as a colonial subject, and demonstrates a view compellingly different from that of a conventional English citizen.⁹⁰ This is touched on in this study in the project with the Bengali women writers group in Chapter 11.

⁸⁸ Irigaray, (1993) *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*.

⁸⁹ See for example the work of Dyson, Ketaki Kushari, (2001), *England and the Others*, In: ed Watt, Stephen, *Mother Tongues: Non English-Language Poetry in Britain*, Exeter, Modern Poetry in Translation; Mitra Tabrizian, (1990) *Correct distance* Manchester: Cornerhouse.

⁹⁰ Chaudhuri Nirad C. (1998) *Why I mourn for England*, London: Mitra & Ghosh.

These concepts have implications for landscape, most particularly in the ways that some views of space and approaches to the natural world can be prioritised over alternatives; may even be assumed to be universal, with no “alternative” – the *only* view, approach or interpretation. It is the contention of this study, that landscape is an area of scholarship which has still, notwithstanding the efforts of individual academics (some of whose work is discussed in Chapter 4) until quite recently been grounded in the modernist “enlightenment” system of thinking. Table 2 sets out some opposing definitions of terms in landscape that reflect hegemonic and under-considered views in scholarship and practice. In remaining in this system of thought, its theory is in danger of becoming distorted and inaccurate, perhaps even sterile.

landscape polarities privilege:		
perspective	from a single point the overview the focal point	multiple viewing points being within the landscape
visual	disembodied, distant view	integrated with other senses
“beauty”	as a concept, can be judged, with abstract qualities	an inner response, rising from sensation and feeling
processes	built, engineered	ecological systems, natural processes
uses	technological, eg motor traffic	human ease, pleasure, comfort, walking about on foot
“style”	“high design”	low-key, integrated solutions
	hard landscape constructed	Living creatures and organisms within the landscape
space/time	ownership of land	activities enjoyed there and living dynamic processes within it

Table 2 - Some Dualisms in Landscape Practice

Through exploring ideas of “the Other”, the way individual subjectivity has been defined against it, and the destructive potential for hegemonic relationships within binary concepts, it is intended that this study may point

the way to new approaches to thinking about landscape, and new directions for its theoretical basis.¹

Foucault's "dividing practices" has drawn attention to threats to the direct experiencing of the world around us; the study makes links with parts of Sheffield landscapes in Chapter 9's Don Journeys. De Certeau's "significant practices" has shed light on Sheffield people making themselves at home, dwelling, within the landscape, when and where they can. Bourdieu has pointed to the influence of cultural habitus and the importance of how in expressing ourselves in language, by which we "make the world", construct the way we understand and therefore experience the world, through the language we use. Finally, an understanding of the constraining effect of Enlightenment thinking and alternatives to it has been necessary in order to move on to an embodied approach deriving from dialogue. The methods of research looked to take this into account.

3. Methods and Data collection

3.1 Experiential Methods

In response to the above philosophical concepts and in addition to more conventional methods, I have developed methods of research applied in other disciplines, methods which would allow their insights to influence my approach. In particular, I explored ways to emphasise experience, to bring out, record, evaluate and communicate an experience of landscape. In addition, I have looked for ways where the process of research could become a method in itself: method was experience and experience method. The four methods I term Question-asking, Walking, Gathering, and an appreciation of Happenstance. All these methods reflect embodiment of the subject; they are all linked and overlap. Each depends on subjective experience and knowledge, put together with that of others, both directly

¹ Corner, (1991), 'Discourse on Theory II: three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics'. *Landscape Journal* 10, no. 2. 115-133. and Corner, 1990, A Discourse on Theory I: "Sounding the Depths" – Origins, Theory and Representation. *Landscape Journal* 9, no. 2. 60-77

and through literature, in dialogue, by a process of “triangulation”, which enables the production of an intersubjective knowledge in the manner of Merleau-Ponty in an earlier section of this chapter.

3.1.1 Question-asking

All research is about asking questions; this is a distinctive feature of scientific inquiry. Edward Relph describes Heidegger’s discussion, in *Being and Time*, of curiosity in this regard: “Curiosity is a kind of dissatisfied knowing that always pushes on to further questions.” He goes on to say that by asking questions and offering *answers*, conventional science also dispels wonder, which Heidegger saw as essential in inquiry.² The relation of questions to answers can be a cyclical, spiral pattern, the answers can in turn generate the generate more questions, and answers. The questions must themselves be questioned. In this way the process towards data and towards knowledge becomes an evolving and dynamic one; the method arises from the methodology of dialogue, and from the attitude of curiosity, and requires a paying of close attention.

3.1.2 Walking

To connect this study with embodied knowledge and experience, to ground it in the body and in actual place, I used the method of walking - bodily moving through the landscape. Walking is so habitual for human beings it is easy not to notice its many contributions to living, and what experience it opens up.

In the latter years of the twentieth century, with a rising interest in environmental experience and “embodiment” in many disciplines, walking began to be used as a medium for artists, such as Hamish Fulton and Richard Long.³ This was followed by academic researchers, especially

² Relph in Seamon(2000)p16 “Wonder is the mark of a pre-scientific attitude - that is , of a compassionate intelligence that seeks to see things in and for themselves. Heidegger’s term for wonder is “marvelling”, within which there is an admiration for the earth with its myriad places and landscapes. What we understand of the world derives both from wonder and from curiosity.”

³ Fulton, Hamish, 1991, *One hundred walks: a few crows, wide river, ants*, Den Haag, Nederlands, HaagsGemeentemuseum.Long,R, 1997,*A Walk across England* Thames & Hudson Ltd

cultural geographers, in exploring the multi-sensoriality of landscape, which they termed "sensory geography". Geographer J. Douglas Porteous, for example, He advocated a "ground-truthing" mode of exploration for geoscientist and travellers which he called "intimate sensing".⁴ Cycling and climbing are other options used in sensory geography for particular kinds and scale of sites. The work of Christopher Tilley on the phenomenology of landscape, from the perspective of archaeology, used walking as a primary medium for understanding landscapes of the past.⁵

The early years of the 2000s saw published much more work on walking as method and experience. For the purposes of this study, I draw from Tilley, the writer and essayist Rebecca Solnit and cultural geographer John Wylie.

Theory and practice join in the body; both theoreticians and practitioners claim walking as central to landscape experience. In walking is involved human sensing and physicality, and engagement with the earth and the landscape around; so too the time dimension, and feeling and thinking and the making and discovery of meaning – the inner and outer experience. As Rebecca Solnit writes:.....

"Walking returns the body to its original limits again, to something supple, sensitive and vulnerable....Walking shares with making and working that crucial element of engagement with the body and the mind with the world, of knowing the world through the body and the body through the world."⁶

Moving through walking allows what you pass to keep pace with your thinking, your talking, and your feeling. While walking, says Rebecca Solnit:

⁴ J. Douglas Porteous, 1990, *Landscapes of the Mind, Worlds of Sense and Metaphor*, University of Toronto Press Howes, David, 2005, "Architecture of the Senses" Sense of the City Exhibition Catalogue. Montreal, Canadian Centre for Architecture Porteous compared them thus: Remote sensing is clean, cold, detached, easy. Intimate sensing iscomplex, difficult and often filthy. The world is found to be untidy rather than neat. Intimate sensing is rich, warm, involved ...and the rewards involve dimensions other than the intellectual.... Different senses produce different takes on the same space, and while auditory and olfactory perception are discontinuous and fragmentary, tactile perception is aggregative, and visual perception is detached and summative

⁵ Tilley, Christopher, 1994 *The Phenomenology of Landscape*, Oxford: Berg.

⁶ Solnit, R ,(2002), *Wanderlust – a History of Walking*. London, Verso p29

“the body and mind can work together, so that thinking becomes almost a physical, rhythmic act.”⁷ It is in walking that the mind, the body, and the earth are aligned, “as though they were three characters in a conversation”.⁸ Solnit claims that the subject of walking is...about “how we invest universal acts with particular meanings”.⁹

Christopher Tilley, has compared walking to speaking, appropriating “the topographical system” as speaking appropriates language. In this way, walking is: “a spatial acting out of place, as speech is an acting out of language”.¹⁰ Walking brings the time dimension, a narrative to the experience of space. Tilley writes of walking being a movement with “reference to a differentiated series of locales”.¹¹ Locales, specific spaces, follow a chosen sequence as they are walked through, and taken in, one part at a time, given an ordering for the mind to interpret. Like Solnit says, moving through a landscape allows it to unfold or unravel before the observer; the pace of the human body allows the eye and brain to process and respond to what it sees. Tilley argues the “importance and significance of a place can only be appreciated as part of movement from and to it in relation to others”. This means, “the act of moving” may become “as important as arriving”. For Tilley, the path walked along may be understood as paralleling the path of life:

...a symbol not only of inter-connectedness and social relations but of movement through life.an *art of understanding of place, movement and landscape must fundamentally be a narrative understanding involving a presencing of previous experiences in present contexts.*¹²

For Tilley the experience of moving along a path through a landscape relates to one’s own past and to the world, a “tactile world of impression,

⁷ Solnit, R. *ibid* p xv

⁸ Solnit, *ibid*, p 5

⁹ Solnit *ibid* p1

¹⁰ Tilley, (1994), *A Phenomenology of Landscape*. p.28

¹¹ Tilley, *ibid*. p.28

¹² Tilley, *ibid*. p.28 (my italics)

signs, sights, smells and physical sensations".¹³ Views and impressions slip away as others are gained in constant change. Yet understanding a landscape comes not just from "feeling" it, but, Tilley argues, in conveying a sense of it to others, putting it into language : "it has to be talked about, recounted, or written and depicted."¹⁴ This is again a "subjective" method, in relationship, in dialogue with the landscape itself. De Certeau has described walking, as an "art... which is simultaneously an act of thinking and an art of practice or operating in the world"; it is one of his 'significant practices' of everyday life, which enables everyday creativity, and becomes a tactic of resisting the dominance of institutions over our lives.¹⁵

Like Solnit, John Wylie, deals with the physicality of walking. He writes of his experience walking on the Cornish Coast Path, that instead of a "distanced looking-at", he found the possibility of a "*seeing with*" the landscape, and a pacing together of body and mind and world, which walking offers.¹⁶ Wylie challenges accounts, in cultural geographical phenomenological discourse of corporeal practices, of a merging of self and landscape "mutually configured", in the "placing of the self in the body and embedding the body in the landscape". In his walking the Coast path, he experiences both being *in* the landscape, a "folding together of self and landscape", and also a being "up against it" as he struggles with obstacles, mood and physical exhaustion, which he interprets as a "particular separation of subject and object"; he calls it a "double reversible articulation".

3.1.3 *Gathering*

This method, which I sometimes saw as "fishing anywhere and everywhere", like question-asking, involves being in a place, a context, and, in my bodily presence, becoming part of the dialogue at work. There is an affirmative similarity with the methodology described by Isis Brook of the

¹³ Tilley Ibid. p.31. Jacks, B. "Walking and Reading in Landscape" In: *Landscape Journal*.26: 270-286.

¹⁴ Tilley, Ibid. p.31 see also Bourdieu, in Chapter 3, "in language we "make the world""

¹⁵ Tilley, *ibid.* p.29; de Certeau, (1984)p.xvii

¹⁶ Wylie J, 2005, p6

“Goethean science as a way to read landscape”.¹⁷ This involves sequential stages, a preparatory stage of a first impression, which is then acknowledged and shared, - which in the process may be bringing out assumptions and subjectivities which need to be recognised so as not to cloud later stages; then after that, “exact sense perception”, “exact sensorial fantasy”, “seeing in beholding”, “being one with the object”.

I am looking for holistic connections, connections I am aware I may not consciously recognise at the time. It is the reflection later which is crucial to the seeing of these connections. This stands in the tradition of Pierre Bourdieu, and his connecting of subjects, fields and theories not usually seen as connected, and his promotion of “self-reflexivity” – examining what is happening, questioning the influence and control of the “habitus”.¹⁸ It also follows the work of Edith Cobb explored her subject over many years picking her way through the insights of many different disciplines in pursuit of the truest understanding she could attain to, before writing. The reflective dimension to this method also follows Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s advocating of an “intuitive embodiedness”, where perception is tempered by reflection, and reflection by perception. “Left to itself”, Merleau-Ponty argued, “perception forgets itself and is ignorant of its accomplishments”. Meanwhile, reflection must always have an awareness of its origins – in life: it should not be carried away with itself.¹⁹

When gathering, I do not start with a hypothesis, but with a framework. In this I gather, and to this my senses are attuned. The framework applied to gathering in the landscape environment is informed by initial background gathering: in historical archives, in reading, in interviews and conversation with those who inhabit, live with and experience the space themselves, and

¹⁷ Brook, Isis, (1998), “Goethean science as a way to read landscape” In Landscape Research, Volume 23, Issue 1 March, pages 51 - 69 See also Bortoft, (1996), and Seamon (1998).

¹⁸ For Bourdieu, see Webb et al(2000); Cobb,(1993) *Ecology of the Imagination in Childhood*.

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, (1964), *Primacy of Perception*. p.19

this framework grows and shifts in response to the dialogue happening within it.²⁰

3.1.4 *Happenstance*

My fourth method is an acknowledgement and valuing of the role of “happenstance” or coincidence and the seeing of possibilities in the unexpected. This involves following up and integrating that which is come across by chance into the course of research. This approach derives from and is fed by the other experiential methods – in what I come across in “gathering”, in the chance encounter in walking, in the unexpected answer in question-asking, and in the overall dialogue that the research engenders; sometimes a dialogue with the unexpected. Whereas walking and gathering are located primarily in place, happenstance like question-asking is a method in time; open to the unexpected, it is about a momentary crossing of events which offers disclosure.

This whole research project had its origins in a chance encounter with an article about Jarvis Cocker, lead singer of the Sheffield band Pulp, taking a boat on the hidden river underneath Sheffield Midland Station. This apparently random incident at the start set a pattern for the rest.

In parallel, in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Michel De Certeau acknowledges that research of this kind, “is complicated by the fact that these practices themselves alternately exacerbate and disrupt our logics”. He quotes the poet Jacques Sojcher:

And I forgot the element of chance introduced by circumstances, calm or haste, sun or cold, dawn or dusk, the taste of strawberries or abandonment, the half-understood message, the front page of newspapers, the voice on the telephone, the most anodyne conversation, the most anonymous man or woman, everything that speaks, makes noise, passes by, touches us lightly, meets us head on.²¹

²⁰ Brook, Isis, (1998),

²¹ Jacques Sojcher, *La Démarche poétique: lieux et sens de la poésie contemporaine* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1976); de Certeau, (1984) p.xvi

While it was felt important to acknowledge and appreciate that happenstance made a contribution to the direction of the research and added to its richness, it should be noted that it has not been relied upon as, by its very nature, at all replicable or predictable in its effects!

3.2 Methods of data collection

The experiential methods devised required supplementing with other, perhaps more conventional methods of data collection to work effectively.

To study

Sheffield's rivers is to study a physical place, people and documents – and the relationships between them. The projects described in Chapters 9-11 demonstrate the variety of qualitative methods employed and those particular to each project. These qualitative methods applied to landscape research are common to related disciplines such as cultural geography, ethnography, archaeology, architectural criticism, and cultural and social anthropology. Their use is therefore a further dimension to the interdisciplinary character of the thesis.

Initial forms of data gathering involved the study of existing documents, 'fiction' and 'non-fiction' – though, when it comes to documents of an historical nature, the lines between these can blur! "Factual" archive material and local studies – old documents and maps, newspaper cuttings, 'local histories', were supplemented by more literary interpretations of the subject - novels, poetry, plays relating to Sheffield and topics in hand. Visual material, fine art and artefacts were as important in what they communicated as the written word. These pointed the way towards the reading of the landscape itself as a text.

The method of question-asking was applied to this documentary data, such as: What is this saying? What is it not saying? What does it mean? What does it not mean? Who is saying what? Whose meaning is it? What is the context? What is the position of the creator/researcher?

In response to these explorations, I created new documents. In what I termed 'action research', I reflected on my practice. In 'field' work, I recorded data in journals and diaries; 'mapping' of place and event; conversations and interviews on tape, then reflected on. This was a process of noting everything I could – "gathering" again - including my own responses and feelings, and including my mistakes. This created data of its own, and honed my capacity to be, myself, an instrument of research.

In this chapter I have made clear the inter-disciplinary nature of this landscape research, and introduced the philosophical concepts, instigated in other disciplines, which form the basis of my approach. I have shown how the methods of research formulated for this project have been shaped in response to the insights of these concepts. These include walking and moving through the landscape as the means of gaining direct experience of the landscape. It has also been shown that ways of thinking and even direct experiencing itself are affected by hidden influences.

Dialogue is another of these philosophical concepts, yet the whole approach is one directed at forming dialogue. While a review of current discourse might conventionally be the subject for an early chapter of a thesis, this study eschews that approach, to present the scholarship which might be defined as "the discourse" across several chapters, interlinked with the practical. In doing this, it attempts to draw attention to how a dialogue can emerge between the discourse, my experience and the place of study. The full voice of my experience is intended to be communicated through the experiential methods arrived at in response to the discourse. The character of the place is responded to in experiencing it. The outcomes of the research, in turn, stand in relation to the discourse. There is triangulation here, and a dialogue, which, as suggested at the opening of this chapter, is maintained in a framework which it is hoped will point to new possibilities in landscape study and practice. Now to turn in Chapter Four to landscape architecture, theory and practice, and to discuss landscape itself.

CHAPTER 4

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

This chapter deals with landscape architecture, the origins of landscape-making, and of the profession. It raises questions of authority in landscape, why theory is needed for practice, and the need for exchange of ideas with other discourses. It poses the question of what is or is meant by "landscape" itself, and takes views from within and outside the profession. It discusses the limits and omissions of traditional interpretations of landscape, and looks to the possibility of redefining landscape towards a way it can serve the needs of both the human and the living world around us.

1. The Origins of Landscape Architecture

Landscape-making is as ancient as human living, a craft and activity, a human working with the environment, first for survival, later for satisfactions of varying kinds. The marks of this working - in the culling of prey or growing of food crops, in the taking or using for shelter, in the channelling of water-courses for drinking, irrigation or power, in the creating of sacred spaces to make sense of the powerful and inexplicable forces of nature, and for the respecting of human life in the provision for the dead - are all around us. The landscapes of Britain today, both rural and, more recently, urban landscapes, are the result of this working and reworking over millennia.²²

Most of this working has always been driven by these other motives, rather than for the conscious creation of landscapes themselves. The more conscious creating of landscapes emerged alongside the development of human dwelling into "civilisations", and is documented and narrated in "histories" of architecture and of gardens. For the purpose of this study I

²² Jones, Melvyn, (2000), *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape*. Barnsley, Wharnccliffe Books. P101

only wish to mention the development of gardens of the nobility of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, such as Louis XIV's at Versailles, which were a visual demonstration of power. Geoffrey Jellicoe describes the work of André le Nôtre to include:

Totally organised space... The science of optics, to direct the eye firmly without power to roam, and illusionist devices to make distances seem nearer or further; the apparent revelation of the whole project in a glance...²³

Such gardens impressed both in their spatial extent and in the clever manipulation of space and of the eye of the beholder. The effect of this distant viewing was to emphasise form and the visual. The eighteenth-century English landscape garden school made its revolt against this geometric "classicism" in landscape, taking for its inspiration the flowing lines and patterns from the 'natural' landscape. Nevertheless, while this "school" had many other associations too, both with classical literature, myth and allegory, and emotional and cognitive ones that were stimulated by the landscapes they constructed, the tendency continued to favour a rationalised form and the distant visual and, led by landscape painters, to put the landscape, as it were, in a "frame" to be looked at, *ut pictura poesis*.²⁴ (Some landscape designers of that era were also connected with the design of sets for the theatre - concurrently developing). The advocates of the following "picturesque" style attempted to "re-humanise" the landscapes with more intimate spaces and more textured featuring, but the visual continued to be predominate over the other senses. Chapter 6 develops this discussion of beauty and the visual (p125) . From its origins, therefore, landscape was a product of the binary tendency of Enlightenment era thinking. This attitude or preference for the picturesque still persists to today's gardens, even dominating, in the general perception of the importance of set "views" in garden and landscapes, these days the

²³ Jellicoe, Geoffrey and Susan, (1995) *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day*, London, p179: Thames & Hudson; Mosser M, and Teyssot G eds., (1991) *The Architecture of Western Gardens: a design history from the Renaissance to the present day*, London: Thames & Hudson.

²⁴"*Ut pictura poesis*, so that the picture may be poetry", John Dixon Hunt In: Mosser and Teyssot, (1991); Jellicoe, (1995) pp205,245. Geoffrey Jellicoe saw in the development of the English landscape garden a "new conception of space and of man's relation to environment".

photographic view rather than the painting.²⁵ This has been called the “disembodied visual”.

1.1 The profession of landscape architecture: managing and planning

While landscape-making is ancient, landscape architecture as a “profession” is comparatively new. Landscape gardeners of the “English Landscape School” of the eighteenth century, led by the work of William Kent and “Capability” Brown, and their successor, Humphry Repton, worked for massively-wealthy private landowners, and were to some extent the fathers of the profession.²⁶ Yet as a professional occupation, landscape architecture itself only really emerged in response to the social changes following the industrial revolution, and the rise of a domestic, urban and suburban middle-class in late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century Britain, Europe and North America.²⁷

The Industrial Revolution resulted in a new form of human society and way of living emerging in nineteenth-century Britain – a majority of the population became urban- rather than rural- dwellers. This development resulted in managing and, eventually, the large-scale planning of towns and cities.²⁸ Through the course of the twentieth century, as a result of economic change and war, landscape professional work came to involve the reworking of urban areas for new uses (and disuses). This aimed to facilitate economic development while also trying to curb excess pollution and spoliation, make large-scale provision of homes to set living standards, as well as the infra-structure to go with it (water supply and disposal,

²⁵ Very little appreciation is given, rather, to the experience of being in the garden, as engaging all the senses, and relating to the living world of creatures and plants, temperature and space, light and shade, and so on. These are regarded as the province of “nature” programmes which are usually in the “wild” wider landscape, not in the making of public city or home gardens. The influence of the modernist movement in twentieth-century landscape resulted in even clearer examples of the picture-making style, where architectural form and the use of plant material, are entirely subservient to the purity of the designer’s vision.

²⁶ Jellicoe, (1995) p 233ff; Crowe, S. (1991) *Garden Design*, London, Packard Publishing Ltd

²⁷ I will concentrate in this account on the development of the landscape profession in Britain; in North America - though the profession developed by Olmsted and others also followed largely British precedents at that time - it developed differently, in response to different social needs. Jellicoe, (1995).

²⁸ Fairbrother, Nan, (1970), *New Lives, New Landscapes*, London, Architectural Press.

transport and roads). Landscape architecture has also come to include the regeneration of ex-industrial sites in urban and rural areas, particularly sites for coal, chemicals and steel. In addition, the provision of urban leisure spaces and facilities such as parks, became part of the landscape architect's brief, as did the management of access to rural spaces, including National Parks, and its protection from leisure-seeking city-dwellers. The city of Sheffield carries clearly in its fabric and its patterning the marks of all these phases of economic expansion, decline and regeneration.²⁹

In this evolution of the profession, however, the connection between those who planned and constructed, and those who were to dwell there (by this is meant to live, work, use) was lost completely. Decisions were, and still are now, made at a distance, without thorough knowledge of context, of needs, of desires; the values which guide the construction are those of the decision-makers, not the users. This all came into sharper focus from the 1960s onwards, when it was realised what destructive effects the wholesale industrialisation and ruthless economic exploitation of natural resources was having on the global, and local, environment. The writing of Nan Fairbrother (1913-1971) in Britain, and of Rachel Carson (1907-1964), in the USA, though read widely here, drew public attention to urgency of this.³⁰

The original of the Landscape Institute was established in Britain in 1927 to represent the profession, though it only gained chartered status in 1997. Meanwhile, professional training courses developed in UK universities from the 1950s, the first being in Newcastle, with another at Sheffield soon after. Though progress in changing opinion and practice has a tendency to be slow, there have, in recent years, been increasing opportunities for landscape professional knowledge and expertise, even if this has been little recognised, and not been well-recompensed. In general, the profession has seemed to lack confidence in its standing and voice in public affairs, which, though it believes its own work important, is often unheard.³¹

²⁹ Fairbrother, N. (1970).

³⁰ Fairbrother, N. (1970), Carson R. (1958) *Silent Spring*, SI, Hamish Hamilton

³¹ In 1999 the government set up an Urban Task Force to encourage urban regeneration. No landscape architect was included in the "think tank".

2. The Practice of Landscape Architecture

2.1 Priorities in Landscape Practice

In reflection on the above brief summary, it is important to notice that in practice some aspects of the design and construction of landscapes seem more highly respected than others. Much of landscape architecture's work is about what is added on to, or constructed in the built environment, rather than interpreting the setting, or letting the context determine the landscape architectural "intervention". Function, materials and form may or may not be closely related to the imposed architectural form, but are often unrelated to context or local knowledge. These are widely thought to be what landscape work is about. As with the aristocrats' gardens mentioned above, often "impressiveness", superficial appearance or novelty, seems more important than cultural context, style than the needs of users, and thinking about "sustainable" aspects for the future does not even seem an option.³²

Aspects of human value in landscape, about users' attitudes, about biodiversity and ecological viability, appear to be less important than appearance or speed; longer-term effects and the maintenance and growth and development (the vital fourth-dimensional difference between a garden and, say, a painting) are less important than the short term, and the easily photographable. Sometimes what is called "value for money", or the cheapest option, seems a priority, but it is also noticeable that vast sums may also be available to be spent on certain kinds of materials, but not on high quality maintenance or knowledgeable staffing to make the landscape work as a living, dynamic system over time.

All these preferences, choices and decisions are made because of sets of values, whether recognised or not. It should be asked whether the publicly-acclaimed, constructed landscape which derives from these preferred values, does offer or produce the landscape which is of quality that users also will value? Attitudes and opinions in the profession are divided, both

³² McCloud, K, (2008), *Kevin McCloud and the Big Town Plan*, Channel 4, television. . A recent television series featured a design for a new development in Castleford, W Yorkshire, adjacent to ex-coalminers terraced houses. The commissioned design by American Martha Schwartz seemed to bear no relation to the existing site or expressed aspirations of the existing community, nor added anything to the natural environment.

about the final product (a created/recreated/ managed landscape) and about attitudes to the process. Some say there is something significantly lacking in contemporary landscapes. Criticisms may be muted, or, as in this quote from James Corner, British academic in the USA, vitriolic:

Today, stillborn landscapes are produced en masse around the globe. We seem unable to recall landscapes of seduction, where the elusivity of incompleteness and mystery engages the poetic imagination; landscapes that breathe with emotional content, unlike those corpse-like constructs of such obscene explicitness that nothing is left to the imagination. In such closed and final networks, nature, memory, myth and theory come to an end.³³

This provokes questions about what Corner means by a "stillborn" landscape, where he sees landscape having gone wrong, and what he is expecting of landscapes, so that they presently disappoint and provoke such anger in him. As I suggested above, general practice and public expectation seem to value outer appearance, style, use of certain materials, novelty. Corner uses the words seduction, elusivity, incompleteness, mystery, imagination, poetic, nature, memory, myth, breathe, emotional. This is landscape with a different vocabulary, landscape in a different language, and suggest a complete difference in the *experience* of a place. Corner may criticise a landscape in these terms by what it is not, but it should be asked what landscapes can – whether conserved or created – offer this. What would be the values which would underlie such landscapes, and whether these experiences would be ones the users would value. Walter Hood, professor of landscape architecture at Berkeley University, has warned of encroaching "standardisation" in public space. He explores the theme of homogeneity, which he says is "the perpetrator"; he argues in favour of "messy" landscapes and open spaces that are hybrids of design.³⁴

³³ James Corner, (1990) "A Discourse on Theory I: "Sounding the Depths" – Origins, Theory and Representation," *Landscape Journal* 9, no. 2. p.76

³⁴ Hood, Walter June (2006), *Vista*, Landscape Institute. Nassauer, Joan Iverson, (1995) *Messy Landscapes, Orderly Frames*

2.2 Values in Landscape: the public

I started this study with the intention to explore questions of what qualities in a landscape are valued by people. Much research, including that by Ulrich, Rohde and Kendle, and others, as well as indeed my own MA study, "*Uplifting Landscapes*", has suggested that valued qualities include beauty, closeness to nature, and tranquillity and a sense of peacefulness.³⁵ In this research I hoped to look at what meaning people give to or derive from these qualities. But as I looked more closely at each of them, nothing was as clear as it seemed at first. They rather led to many questions about assumptions that were being made, by me as well as by many researchers, and also in general parlance. This led me to look particularly at "aesthetics" where some issues of beauty and landscape value were discussed. Here the uncertainty became even more pronounced, even to the point of muddle – and the questions about aesthetics eventually led right to the heart of the landscape profession, how it sees itself and how it is practised. I will now explore this more closely, looking at public perceptions of what (and for whom) landscape is for, and the perception of landscape architects themselves in what they envisage their role to be.

2.3 Values and aims – the profession

In 1957, the President of the Institute of Landscape Architects, Sylvia Crowe, described the profession as a bridge between science and art; the greatest task of landscape architects was to "heal" what she defined as the "breach between science and humanism, and between aesthetics and technology".³⁶

In the late 1990s, Anne Whiston Spirn, in *The Language of Landscape*, pointed out that, forty years later, landscape architecture was still

³⁵ Ulrich, R S., (1984) "View through a window may influence recovery from surgery," *Science* 224 420-421. See also Molly Dannenmaier, (1995) "Healing Gardens" in *Landscape Architecture* 85,1, 56-58; Rohde, C.L.E. and Kendle, A (1995) *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas*, London: English Nature
Lockley, R, (2000) "*Uplifting Landscapes*", unpublished MA, University of Sheffield,

³⁶ Crowe S(1957)"Presidential Address," *Journal of the Institute of Landscape Architects* p4

“struggling to integrate its diverse roots”.³⁷ The professional body of knowledge is drawn from many diverse disciplines, as are practitioners and academics. This researcher notes from her own observation that many enter as a second profession, with an earlier training and practice, from engineering or art, from ecology or architecture, from geography or horticulture, and even those beginning at eighteen have already chosen and been prepared for university within a distinct course of study, from a “creative” or “humanities” or “scientific” approach to learning. Whiston Spirn observes that the “tensions and contradictions in landscape architecture... stem from the intellectual biases and unresolved conflicts among the disciplines it draws from”. This is because each of these are “based upon disparate ideas about the relationships of human to the non-human”.³⁸ She puts the questions: Is landscape architecture aiming to “improve upon nature”? - to observe it, conserve it, and interfere as little as possible? Are we stewards to manage nature for human use and pleasure? To work with its powerful and fairly unpredictable forces? Or to control and overcome them? Or is nature scenery inspiration, a site to occupy and transform?³⁹ She declares these contradictions are not being addressed or even articulated openly, which would bring out of a full debate which might come to some sort of broadly agreed shared basis. The differences within the profession are accentuated by the fact that each discipline recognises “different types of authorities in their understanding of the world and in justifying their actions”.⁴⁰

I suggest there are key questions which have so far been under-addressed in the landscape profession and academic discipline. Firstly, what is the basis of authority on which decisions about landscapes are made, priorities decided, values determined? Secondly, is there a case for a theory base for landscape architecture? - Can there be one base which brings together the different strands of the profession? Is it needed and if so what for? What might it offer?

³⁷ Spirn, Anne Whiston, (1998) *The Language of Landscape*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press. p.246

³⁸ Ibid. p.244

³⁹ Ibid. p.245

⁴⁰ Ibid. p.245

2.4 Sources of authority in landscape practice – polemics or paradoxes?

Whiston Spirn outlines and discusses different sources of authority under the headings of “The Authority of Nature”, “The Authority of the Past”, “The Authority of Function and Expedience”, “The Authority of Art”, and “The Authority of Power”, and makes very clear the active, and at times violent, conflicts between them. She points out that “landscape architects draw from each of these and other disciplines, often without examining and reconciling the contradictory beliefs and traditions”. Although this borrowing and application of both methods and theory from various disciplines could result in “a rich marriage of ideas”, Spirn sees this too often turning out a “shotgun wedding” – where “disparate ways of knowing and working” end up in “hostile juxtaposition”. There is great potential in fusing art, science, gardening, engineering, but the landscapes that achieve this are rare. Whiston Spirn instead recommends the cultivation of paradox, the fusion of seeming contradictions. She says, “apparent oppositions need to be seen not as unsolvable dilemmas but as part of a larger whole”, and follows this by examples, from practice, of landscapes which bring together these different sorts of knowledge.⁴¹

Whiston Spirn discusses this crucial topic right at the end of her long and densely packed book, tucked away in a rather inconspicuous part of her Chapter 9 - “Polemical Landscapes”. It comes after discussing changes in Berlin after the fall of the Wall, under the sub-heading of “Polemical Dialogues”. “Polemics spawns polemics” she says, which applies as much within the profession as in post-wall Berlin. It is not the main theme of her book, in putting forward her thesis of landscape as language. But I am not convinced that these sharp contradictions and “hostile juxtapositions” can be dealt with satisfactorily in passing, nor what might be deemed as a diversionary tactic, emphasising paradox.

The very centre, the heart of landscape architecture, is contested, it is polemical. There needs to be open debate about the basis of authority on

⁴¹Spirn, A W, (1998) p.262

which decisions about landscape are based, about “what is known”, how priorities are decided, and values determined. There is a need for a strengthening of landscape architecture discourse, so as to explore and promote active dialogue, which will help to clarify and enrich our working and the landscapes we create.

Perception of landscapes – cultural paradigms contested

Geographers who discuss landscape experience, such as Jay Appleton, have looked to ethnographic and anthropologic interpretations of human perceptions of landscapes.⁴² Appleton’s “Prospect and Refuge” theory asserts that our responses to landscapes are linked to our origins in the savannahs of Africa, many millennia ago – that we prefer environments which offer both cover and long-range views, where we can see food but remain protected from enemies in the landscape.⁴³ Cultural geographers, such as Daniels and Cosgrove, in *The Iconography of Landscape*, and John Berger, in *Ways of Seeing*, have brought into sharper focus how the way we look is affected by the cultural paradigm of dualisms, as discussed in the previous chapter. What it is we see there, and how what we see is formed by what is already in our minds.⁴⁴ Gillian Rose and other feminist geographers developed this further, revealing how this dualistic viewing dis-benefits both “nature” as opposed to “culture” and women rather than men.⁴⁵ Each new discourse, with each set of insights and ways of viewing landscape from different perspectives, opens up new questions: Who sees what? What do they make of it? Whose voice and way of seeing is heard? Who makes decisions? All these questions show an effect on landscape architecture practice, but I have rarely heard them being asked or even formulated. Whether or not it is discussed or articulated, it has a political stance. As the twentieth-century American landscape commentator, John

⁴² Appleton, Jay (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*, London: John Wiley.

⁴³ Appleton, Ibid. p. 73. See also, G.H. Orians, (1986) “An ecological and evolutionary approach to landscape aesthetics” in *Landscape meanings and values*, eds. E.C. Penning-Roswell and D. Lowenthal, London: Allan & Unwin.

⁴⁴ Cosgrove, D. and Daniels S, (1988) *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press; John Berger, 1972 *Ways of Seeing* London, Penguin.

⁴⁵ Rose, G. (1993) *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* Cambridge: Polity Press. Rose, Gillian, (2001) *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Interpreting Visual Objects* London: Sage.

Brinkerhoff Jackson, once wrote: "I suspect no landscape, vernacular or otherwise can be comprehended unless we perceive it as an organisation of space; unless we ask ourselves who owns or uses the spaces, how they were created and how they change".⁴⁶ Hidden cultural influences need to be examined and if necessary contested.

Lack of questioning and debate

In his work for *Ecology, Community and Delight: Sources of Values in Landscape Architecture*, Ian Thompson interviewed a number of landscape practitioners.⁴⁷ One of his conclusions was that most practitioners avoid involvement in controversy. I suggest that in practice or in preparation for practice, in university, there may be a lack of debate; the constraints of power structures on practitioners may go unexamined, as too the ways these are reproduced in their work, leading to the frustration and suppression of aspirations. There is a case for much more self reflexivity, about who the landscape architect is working for - the landowner, government or public body, developers, or users, about control being exerted, or freedom being enabled.

The landscape profession is a small profession. Its lines of discourse are linked with many other disciplines and often overlap, but don't seem to communicate much with them. In fact it sometimes seems quite unaware of the existence of others, or the implications of what they too are doing, in the landscape area. There is a lack of questioning of structures, of assumptions, in other words, the "cultural agency", both in relation to the public debates and needs and to academic discourses. This is also the case in landscape education.

When it comes to the issue of authority with which a landscape architect can make a decision or produce a design, things are still unclear. If a landscape architect were to need to respond to the public, or government,

⁴⁶ John Brinkerhoff Jackson, quoted in Lucy Lippard, (1997) *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentered society*, New York: New Press, p.7

⁴⁷ Thompson Ian, (2000) *Ecology, Community and Delight: Sources of Values in Landscape Architecture*, London: E & FN Spon.

or planners in a local authority, to justify a design decision, it would not be apparent that their professional training would equip them for the task. It would more likely come down to their previous training background and personal view, than any professional grounding in landscape knowledge. This raises doubts about the unity or possibility of any kind of shared approach present within the profession. In other disciplines, a depth, an authority in the subject has come from a development of theory. This is something landscape architecture has historically lacked. Over the last nearly twenty years or so, there have been increasing calls for a theory base for landscape architecture itself, in academic journals and professional publications. It has been suggested that the use of theory should go beyond just importing theoretical approaches from related disciplines for distinct aspects of landscape. Despite these calls, there would seem to have been few attempts to put something together.

3. Theory for Landscape

3.1 Arguments and attempts

Landscape is largely an applied profession, with little attention given to reasons why. What could theory offer the practice of landscape architecture? Stanislaus Fung, in his article in *Recovering Landscape*, gave his own response to this question.

Does landscape architecture need theory? Does landscape architecture need theory that is internal to it? Do you think landscape architecture should be developed with resources that lie outside its domain? On most

occasions when I am confronted with these questions I find myself very much puzzled, lost for words, for the cultural agency of landscape architecture is rarely raised at the same time. I want to ask, Why are we not attacking the cultural horizons that are tacitly called up by these questions? Why do these questions sound as though they are inviting us to debate whether, *in principle*, something is needed? Why are we not articulating the predicaments and asking whether these have been, or conceivably can be, effectively addressed *without* the conceptual resources of "theory"?²⁷

Anne Whiston Spirn has commented on the need for theory in the profession, asserting: "theory gives fresh meaning to old places, connects the seemingly unrelated, and guides action."²⁸ James Corner has perhaps been the figure in landscape most prominent in asking questions of theory in landscape. Back in 1990 and early 1991, he asked "Why bother? Why theory?" and, in two articles presented "A Discourse on Theory", he discussed three standing arguments against the need for theory, and then demolished each in turn. The first argument was that there is no need or time for theory today – what good is it? The second argument was that we have too much of it already, too much talk and intellectual games. The third, that landscape architecture is primarily a craft profession, an artisanal practice requiring multiple skills and talents, which take a lifetime to learn and master, and therefore theory would get in the way of this. For Corner, the profession needs theory because needs *motivation*. This is distinct from and goes beyond the acquisition of skill; landscape architecture needs to know its purpose clearly. We need to know why we are doing it.²⁹

Corner argued the potency of motivation: "it employs the feelings found in cultural memory and personal experience to generate meaning, wonder, and expression"; it "engenders a heightened sense of purpose"; at its best

²⁷ Fung, Stanislaus (1999) "Mutuality and Cultures of Landscape Architecture", In *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory*, ed. James Corner, New York, Princeton Architectural, p.148 my italics.

²⁸ Spirn, (1998) p.3

²⁹ Corner, J. (1990), "A Discourse on Theory I: "Sounding the Depths" – Origins, Theory, and Representation", in *Landscape Journal* vol.9, 2 (1990) pp.60-78; and Corner, J.(1991) "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics" in *Landscape Journal* vol.10, 2 (1991) pp.115-133

it can lead almost to “an epiphany, a new way of seeing the world”. And the space where craft and motivation come together – in relating the two – “the how and the why”, this is “the forgotten role of theory”. But there is a crisis of meaning, a crisis of purpose at the heart of landscape, and Corner saw this coming from the epistemological break – the rejecting of established ways of doing things – that marked the beginning of the modern approach in the eighteenth century with the Enlightenment. Before, Corner argued, the meaning of working with and shaping the land was about “a collective participation in cosmic meaning”. The new thinking led to a more aggressive relationship: the purpose was in its serving only as an instrument of autonomy, control, authority, and legitimacy. Primacy was given to “the immanent and the material over transcendence and imagination”. The theoretical foundations of the contemporary profession have evolved directly from the limitations of this epistemology of the eighteenth-century. The two approaches present within the profession, which might be termed the technological and the aesthetic, each with their respective schools, have contributed to this. Landscape now suffers, Corner claimed, from the excesses of the technological school, based either in positivist problem-solving or in ecological mechanics and management, and the equal excesses of the aesthetic school, based on the combination of “historicist and formalist doctrines”.³⁰

For Corner, these developments have produced a human world where the “mythical and the metaphoric depth” of the natural and cultural worlds have been “neutralised”. They have been made subject to instrumentation and control, as our culture has been “anaesthetized” to its common, shared relationship with Nature. There is a profound role which landscape architecture could play in the reconstitution of meaning and value in our relations with the Earth. Corner believed, advocating phenomenology, that a landscape architecture theory that reflected “the poetics of human dwelling, the very consciousness of humanity”, might lead to this role. Corner acknowledged that this insight through theory depends on a grounding in perception, it “cannot exist outside the *a priori* of the human

³⁰ Corner, ed (1990) p.77

body and its engagement with the world". A theory of landscape architecture theory must, therefore, "find its basis in the realm of perception and the phenomenological, the essential origins of existential meaning".³¹ He saw the foundation of a new theory for landscape in phenomenology and embodiment.

In this talk of meanings, values and multiple interpretations, there is no great clarity. Corner also himself acknowledged that if a theory of landscape were established, it could be utilised within the profession in two opposing ways. It might be used to control, offering "prescriptions for action, stability and coherence", and to keep the discourse static, or it might bring a "breakout and rupture, a disruptive catalyst", subversion of the status quo, "foster new thought and inquiry" and allow the discipline to move on.³² He describes this relation as poorly understood: "Theory is in fact a much more elusive and enigmatic phenomenon than would first appear".

The first attempt to bring the results of these early 1990s' attempts to work out a theory for landscape was Simon Swaffield's *Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader*, published in 2002.³³ In his introduction to the collection, Swaffield pointed to the tension between landscape architecture, which he called "interventionist" – and landscape management of existing landscapes, which he named "conservationist". He asked whether they are wholly different and contradictory, and whether they could be brought together with an underlying value system and aims. He also offered a broad range of landscape architecture issues, and affirmed the approach of the designer should be "situated, phased and reflexive".³⁴ It is noticeable, however, that Swaffield's own work and place in the book is curiously anonymous, ungrounded and un-situated. No information was given about his own position. The extracts by different authors were only referenced at the back of the book, not on the page, as to the journal or book they are published in, so that the context of each piece is (in the first instance)

³¹ Corner, (1990), "A Discourse on Theory I" p.77

³² Corner, (1990). p 61

³³ Swaffield, Simon (2002), *Landscape Architecture Theory A Reader*, Philadelphia: Penn.

³⁴ Swaffield, (2000) "Introduction" in *Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader*, pp.1-6

unacknowledged to the reader while reading it. Nor were the many individual writers "situated". Although, in his short concluding piece, Swaffield approved reflexivity in principle, the origins of himself and the contributors are obscure, as is the context from which they were writing.³⁵ Reading these extracts made me want to ask why Swaffield as editor chose this piece rather than another. And what audience each piece was originally written for. It is not clear whether the whole article appears in the book nor how it had been edited, nor the context of the discussion it was contributing to. I wanted to know what was the position of the writer, academic, or for practitioners, whether in the United States, the UK, or somewhere else. *Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader* is published in the US, while Swaffield is from New Zealand, and it seemed to be assumed that whole debate was in the US context. Very little European or Asian perspective is given, or even referred to, unlike the variety of contributions in "Recovering Landscape" under Corner's editorship.³⁶

Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader is an example of the problematic nature of unexamined, un-reflexive discourse. Despite being about theory, it, for me, ends up raising further questions of how theory itself should be grounded.

3.2 A Theory for Practice?

The academics, practitioners and commentators discussed have all put forward their arguments for theory and what it could offer landscape architecture, in relation to its practice. Stanislaus Fung saw it as the only way to address the current predicaments of practice; James Corner defined it as being about motivation and clarifying *why* we are practising at all; and Anne Whiston Spirn regarded it as a guide to action in practice, like Corner a route to uncovering fresh meaning, and also a way of making unexpected connections. Finally, Simon Swaffield has seen it as a way to bring together

³⁵ Swaffield, (2000) "Conclusion: The Theoretical Terrain of Landscape Architecture" in *Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader*, pp.227-230

³⁶ Corner ed.,(1999) *Recovering Landscape. Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, Princeton NJ., Princeton Architectural Press

landscape architects and managers – the interventionist and conservationist practitioners – to give them a shared set of values. These all offer the prospect of theory being grounded in practice, but perhaps we should ask instead how practice can be theorised, and in addressing theory, how it may be grounded, how it attains authority.

It is not envisaged that there be one all-embracing theory to straddle the disciplines and take from them all, but one which gives a strong coherent base, so that the professional knows what they stand for, from which to fight against the dominating assumptions of the other professions; which because of its inner coherence allows for flexibility and new insight.

If this landscape architecture theory base were to be established, I would suggest some key questions, which I propose to explore both in this section, in the context of current discourse, and through specific studies of particular landscapes later in the thesis.

3.2.1 *What is landscape?*

Landscape itself – what do people say it is? What do they expect of it, value in it or value of it? What kind of places? What kind of experience? What could, and should, it offer to people's lives and the living earth? Many people's vision of and inspiration from it in a rural context, yet practice is usually in urban areas. How does this affect practice? what is it for?

3.2.2 *How can we know?*

The plurality of sources of authority in contemporary society raises significant questions of the way knowledge is approached, acquired, digested, mediated and passed on. What knowledge of landscape has authority? What place has knowing a particular landscape in this context? How can we "know" a landscape? Phenomenology places authority for knowledge in the body and embodied experience in the world as explained in chapter 3. The study explores this through embodied experience in the projects, and points to an answer: by living and dwelling there.

3.2.3 *What do we mean by nature?*

What is natural? In landscape architectural discourse and in the debate over the environmental crisis, there is seemingly a ceaseless battle between

ecology and design. Should landscape be an imposition on or management of nature? Or a linking of both, or something yet to unfold?

3.2.4 *What is beauty in landscape?*

The area of aesthetics is a contentious one. How do we value landscapes? Do we prioritise some over others, and base our values in perceptions of beauty. How do sense and intuitive experience, , and the insights of embodiment relate to this view of beauty? This also involves the idea of dwelling.

3.2.5 *What part does time play in landscape?*

Landscape works in four (or more) dimensions. The fourth dimension of time changes a landscape designed in three. What are implications of time for landscape creation? This involves activities, dwelling and taskscape.

3.2.6 *What is the attitude of the designer her/himself?*

Swaffield has defined the approach of the designer as "situated, phased and reflexive".³⁷ Is it? Would greater confidence be gained from knowing the base on which professional practice stands, making this clearer? Is the political nature of decisions about landscape understood? How does a designer recognise his/her lack of neutrality of these decisions and acknowledge his/her positionality, the influence of the *habitus*, the work of power and control in their landscape subject?

Landscape architecture as a discourse appears slow to absorb and be challenged by questions of cultural diversity and hegemonic values. It would benefit from being engaged with these cultural questions. Although these cannot be dealt with in full here, the task of this thesis is to flag up, to connect up, and to shed new light by juxtaposing. This study is looking to

³⁷ Swaffield, 2002, "Introduction" in *Landscape Architecture Theory – A Reader*, pp.1-6

bring together many issues and concepts which are in circulation in related discourses and to suggest ways they could contribute to landscape architecture discourse and its movement, with theory, towards a vision of how it could be.

The other questions of knowledge, nature, beauty, time and attitudes will be looked in the following chapters, in part two. The last section of this chapter addresses what is perhaps the first question – what *is* landscape? Answer to what is landscape for? May be disclosed in the course of the explorations.

4. “What *is* Landscape?” What do people mean by Landscape?

Tellingly, this is a question which does not tend to be posed or explored far in landscape architectural training. And it is also not exclusively the territory of the landscape professional. Landscape is in fact the “maternal home”, the “home ground”, of all of us, and enters the discourse of the general public as well as many academic fields.³⁸ When seeking an answer to this question it is appropriate therefore to take opinions and reflections from a range of writers from different backgrounds, not just landscape architecture.

4.1 The origins of the term landscape

The term ‘landscape’ seems to have emerged both in relation to Renaissance Dutch painting developed from depicting the landscapes of Holland which had just been drained and made into useful land, and later to Italian ‘landscape painting’ of the eighteenth century, with the idealised world of the theatre set, the Arcadian rural scene, and ‘nature’ as the setting for the elegant villa. As ‘wild’ nature was tamed throughout western Europe in the eighteenth-century period, either through cultivation, or by

³⁸ “maternal home”, Spirn, (1998), *Language of Landscape*, p.16; “home ground” - Mabey, Richard,(1999), *Selected Writings, 1974-99*, London: Chatto and Windus p.123.

being perceived as less threatening, travel became safer. Many more people of the well-to-do classes began to travel from home, becoming "tourists", encountering "scenes" and "landscapes" very different from their home. Both these dramatic "views" of mountains and wild places, and their own, would be painted, set in picture form. A landscape painting was a portrait – and a view for sale: "landscapes [were] literally and metaphorically enclosed by human business".³⁹ Meanwhile the actual English word landscape had its origins in the Dutch term *landskip*, and the German *Landschaft*.⁴⁰ These had specific definitions of a peopled landscape, a shaped place, distinct from a wilderness or uninhabitable land. From its origins, therefore, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, landscape was both about picturing and viewing - *the disembodied visual* - and defined by its opposite: it was a product of the binary tendency of Enlightenment era thinking.

4.2 The development of the consciousness of landscape

During the very period of landscape terminology entering the English landscape, people's relationships to the land in Britain were changing dramatically. Richard Mabey has identified this period as when: "landscape ceased to be merely a place unselfconsciously dwelt in, and became – especially for those with leisure and money – an objective prospect, a possession, a medium for planning and survey, for overview."⁴¹ In the era of enclosure and industrialisation, individuals became either owner, or employees, of the earth – the age-old middle positions based on rights to the common-land were lost.⁴² A similar lost connection with earlier larger patterns might be said to have occurred with the way taught knowledge

³⁹ Richard Mabey, (2005), "A Brush with Nature". *BBC Wildlife*.

⁴⁰ Spirn, (1998), p.16f; Lippard, 1997, *Lure of the Local* p.8 also refers to John Stilgoe's interpretation of the German (fifteenth century term) *Landschaft* "a shaped land, a cluster of temporary dwellings and more permanent houses, the antithesis of the wilderness surrounding it".

⁴¹ Mabey, (2005).

⁴² "Owners of the earth": John Berger, (1991), and Gillian Rose, (1993), Ch 5, have both critiqued the 18th century landscape painting, *Mr. and Mrs Andrews*, by Gainsborough; About the privileges of ownership, the freedom of the man, to move over the property, have a gun; immobility of the decorative, productive wife, part of nature; omission of the waged workers who toil and cultivate the fields for the landowner; nature for the master's pleasure and benefit.

separated us from knowledge gained through sense perception. David Abram has suggested, interpreting the work of Edmund Husserl, that the split between actual bodily perception - the real world as we experience it - and the theoretical understanding of the way the cosmos works - came with Copernicus.⁴³ Abram points to the way we continue to feel that the sun moves round the earth, and "rises" and "sets", even when it is "proved" scientifically that the earth moves round the sun. In this way, taught knowledge takes over from the experienced knowledge; the bodily perception is no longer trusted as a guide to the real and becomes ignored. Much else is lost besides; experience is no longer used as a check on learned theory. Direct contact with nature is considered irrelevant to understanding the world. In many ways, this split has led to a detachment from the body, and an abstracted interpretation of events.

4.3 Problems in inherited thinking about landscape

Though landscape work derived from urban expansion, the "idea" of landscape remained in the garden or the wider countryside. It was hooked into the "landscape gardening" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and did not transfer to the urban/rural dilemma.⁴⁴ It has retained its roots in the disembodied visual. The practice of landscape has developed and remained concerned with views, ownership and the possibility of mastery of land and nature. The prioritising of split of thought from feeling, the visual from the other senses, and the rejection of their opposites have led things of value to be lost. In particular, in the realm of aesthetics, prioritised conceptions of beauty, the disembodied visual and the opposition of nature and culture, have led to destruction as much as preservation.

One source of this is the glorifying of distance and detachment inherited from artistic interpretation. Richard Mabey has written, "landscape painting encourages a view of the natural world which is distant, complacent,

⁴³ Abram, (1997), *Spell of the Sensuous*, p.42

⁴⁴ Howett, Catherine, (1993), 'If the Doors of Perception were cleansed': Toward an Experiential Aesthetics for the designed landscape. in *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, edited by David Seamon. New York: SUNY Press.

over".⁴⁵ This disembodied, objective view of landscape seeking to control, is highly gendered. Gillian Rose has written of "the masculinity of the gaze" in landscape, and of a "specific masculinity... [being] the norm through which to access visual knowledge" in the subject. Rose sees this undermining the authority of conventional claims to interpret landscape objectively; it "encourages a retreat back to a disinterested and therefore disembodied search for evidence and truth", thus denying the possibility of an holistic view.⁴⁶

The roots of the modern ideologies of denial are deeply entwined with, though not limited to, imposing order over *nature and women*. Charlene Spretnak, has tried to define the range of modern and "postmodern" worldviews and their approaches to ecology, in her book *The Resurgence of the Real, Body Nature and Place in a Hypermodern World*. Within a postmodern view, she delineates a "deconstructionist" view, concerned above all with social power relations, and a "constructive" ecological view.. Each of these she relates to modes of "ecological thinking", arguing that predominant views in the twentieth century were inherently about relationships to both nature and women.⁴⁷ To be truly *postmodern*, she claims, is to be, among other things, *ecological and feminist* – a calling open to all.⁴⁸

The inadequacy of oppositions and the dualist view to landscape has been stressed by Elizabeth Meyer: "landscape is a hybrid activity, not easily described using binary pairs as opposing conditions".⁴⁹

4.4 Recovering a more holistic position

Moves to establish a position nearer to how landscape is actually experienced, rather than thought about, and a recovering of how the other

⁴⁵ Mabey, (2005).

⁴⁶ Rose Gillian, (1993), *Feminism and Geography*. p.101

⁴⁷ Spretnak, Charlene, (1999), *The Resurgence of the Real, Body Nature and Place in a Hypermodern World*, New York: Routledge, p.223

⁴⁸ Spretnak, *Ibid* p.223.

⁴⁹ Elizabeth Meyer, quoted by Fung, "Mutuality and the cultures of landscape architecture" in Corner, (1999)

senses beyond sight relate to landscape, began with Jay Appleton and *The Experience of Landscape* in 1975.⁵⁰ Stephen Bourassa made further explorations in *The Aesthetics of Landscape*.⁵¹ Both these works expanded thinking about the subject beyond the merely visual, yet still worked from objectivist positions. They therefore did not challenge the received basis of authority in landscape understanding. The concept of embodiment and perception as the basis of authority trickled through discourses in the humanities after American translations of the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty in the 1960s. Landscape architects who have tried to move away from hegemonic approaches, and taken up phenomenology as the basis of landscape understanding include James Corner and Catherine Howett.⁵² Both advocate changing and renewing the way we “see” the landscape. Howett, echoing William Blake, urges “cleansing the doors of perception” and encountering nature “intimately”, working with rather than looking at nature.⁵³ James Corner, meanwhile, has pointed to ecology and landscape as agents of creativity, to new ways and new “worlds”, “the revitalisation of wonderment and poetic value in human relations with Nature” to be made possible by stripping away “the crust of habit and convention that prohibits fresh sight and relationship”. The “transfiguration” enabled by getting “behind the veneer of language in order to discover aspects of the unknown within what is already familiar”, is “a process of finding and then founding *alternative worlds*”. This Corner considered a “raison d’être for landscape architecture”.⁵⁴

Academics and writers in other fields have taken the insights of phenomenology much further: ecologists and environmental activists, such as David Abram, Richard Mabey and Jonathon Porritt, and landscape archaeologists Christopher Tilley and Tim Ingold, have each aimed to explore more holistic relations with landscape and nature.

⁵⁰ Appleton, J. (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*, London: John Wiley.

⁵¹ Bourassa, S (1991), *The Aesthetics of Landscape*, London: Belhaven.

⁵² Howett Catherine, (1993)

⁵³ Howett, (1993).

⁵⁴ Corner (1997), p98

4.5 What is landscape beyond the profession or academy?

Landscape is outside. Landscape is anything which is not wildness; it is wherever there has been intervention by humans. John Brinkerhoff Jackson has defined it as "a space deliberately created to speed up or slow down nature".⁵⁵

Landscape is what surrounds me, us, artist and researcher Lucy Lippard identifies it with seeing: landscape is "everything you see when you go outdoors - if you're looking". Whether seen from a moving or stationary point of view, it is a "set of surfaces, the pictorial or the picturesque, "as far as the eye can see" (without aid or microscope or telescope)". Lippard contends that "the scene is the seen". She differentiates between "place", which is for her what is seen from the inside, and "landscape", which "can only be seen from the outside, as a backdrop for the experience of viewing. The word landscape is used interchangeably for a scene framed *through* viewing (a place) and a scene framed *for* viewing (a picture)".⁵⁶

Yet landscape is also inside. It is in our minds, our cultural spectacles, and in our memories, through formative experiences, it moulds us and is part of our uniqueness. And it can also bring these two together, as Denis Cosgrove has written, it is: "the external world mediated through human subjective experience".⁵⁷ He and Stephen Daniels opened their work *The Iconography of Landscape* with the words:

"Landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing, structuring or symbolising surroundings.... A landscape park is more palpable, but no more real, nor less imaginary, than a landscape painting or a poem."⁵⁸

It is both tangible and sensible, and imaginary.

⁵⁵ Jackson, John Brinkerhoff (1984), *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, quoted in Lippard, (1997), and in Corner, (1999).

⁵⁶ Lippard, (1997) p 8

⁵⁷ Cosgrove quoted in Lippard, *Ibid.* p.7

⁵⁸ Cosgrove, D and Daniels S, (1988) *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments*, Cambridge: CUP. p1.

Landscape is many opposites. It can be both distant and close, intimate and detailed; as a home ground", a "native patch", it is refuge.⁵⁹ It has time: it is the captured moment *and* activity – we do it, we make it, we imagine it.⁶⁰ Landscape is the surface of the immediate present and yet has the depth of layering in time and history.

Landscape is nature *and* culture. As a "cultural image.....it reveals clues to a culture" explained Daniels and Cosgrove.⁶¹ Lucy Lippard has observed that "our human landscape is our unwitting autobiography... the culture of any nation is unintentionally reflected in its ordinary vernacular landscape".⁶² Landscape is also material *and* spiritual: it is both topography and form, water and rock, sky and soil; and good landscape can inspire, refresh, heal.

Landscape is whole and inclusive. It is not separable into bits, even as it may be understood in parts as well as whole.⁶³ Landscape is owned yet cannot be possessed. It belongs to all, and is at work in relationships, between people and place, people and people, even people and themselves.⁶⁴

As much as landscape is about what can be seen, it contains the hidden, the less obvious, meanings which are ready to be opened up to us. And yet, how do we uncover these meanings, if we cannot perceive them through sight? Perhaps instead of looking at landscape, we must find a way to live in landscape.

4.6 Defining landscape

⁵⁹ Mabey, (1999), "Landscape: the real stuff" in *Selected Writings*, p.123

⁶⁰ Alexander Wilson, (1991) *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez* .

⁶¹ Daniels and Cosgrove, (1988) p.1

⁶² Lippard, (1997) p .9, referring to Pierce Lewis and Mae Thielgaard Watts

⁶³ Tim Ingold, (1993) "The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 152-174; Henri Bortoft, (2000) "Counterfeit and authentic wholes: Finding a means for dwelling in nature". In: *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, ed. David Seamon, Malabar, Fl., Krieger. 281-300.

⁶⁴ Christopher Tilley, (1994) *The Phenomenology of landscape*, Oxford: Berg; Spirn, (1998); Lippard, (1997).

If the "idea" of Landscape is just confined to a "way of seeing" – at a distance, from a one-pointed perspective - and this is its only definition, then the term would seem to be limited to its origins in enlightenment thinking. However if Landscape can be redefined, the term itself can deepen its meaning to include what we now value because we are losing it. We could want to belong *within* landscape. We might want to look for the intimate, the sensual, the close at hand, the refuge. Landscape could relate to "what we are within". There is a danger that if landscape remains distant and visual only, the concept will become hollow and empty and unconnected with the needs of people today. The way of thinking where the earth is to be "risen above", where a landscape must be seen in perspective, controlled, these will not serve a human society increasingly realising its need to renegotiate its relationship with the earth. A definition and an approach which is grounded in everyday experience, in "*dwelling*", in finding a relationship to nature, a place where we are at home, and live our lives, in time, sensual and immersed, could be called "the dwelling perspective", and would rather allow landscape to nourish us, and establish a relationship where ecological balance is attainable.⁶⁵

In this chapter we have seen that landscape architecture has its roots in Enlightenment thinking and that there are conflicting sources of authority for landscape architecture. It is suggested that landscape could be redefined with a new source of authority in the human body in relation with nature, and with a theory base in phenomenology, in perception and the sensual..

Some landscape architects have introduced, from the approach of phenomenology, the concept of dwelling, as a way of integrating different sources of landscape authority, and circumventing the problems of binary rationalism. The next chapter investigates three landscape themes very common in landscape discourse, examine the way they have been influenced by Enlightenment thinking, indicate how to move on to based on

⁶⁵ Ingold, Tim, (1993)

concept of dwelling, bring together sources contemporary understanding, way forward in design. The questions for theory, posed in section 3.2 will be explored during the course of the investigation of themes, as well as in the discussion of practical projects which follow.

PART TWO

THEMES OF "BEING IN THE LANDSCAPE"

Nature, Beauty, Time. These are each everyday words, yet are key concepts in landscape. They are at once familiar, and so their meaning would be assumed to be obvious. Yet as St Augustine contemplated in the writing of his life, in the fifth century: "What then is time? If no one asks me, I know it. If I wish to explain it to someone who asks, then I know it not."¹ And on closer inspection, we realise this might apply to nature and beauty as well. As I came across these terms, over and over again in my research, I noticed their definitions produced interesting uncertainties or difficulties. Probing the uses of these three themes, and their meaning in landscape, revealed things hidden below the surface; they are complex, rich and contradictory. Their meaning seemed not to provoke open controversies, yet they were unavoidably problematic. They are all connected with aspects of the experiencing of landscapes, of "Being-in-the-Landscape", within a holistic understanding, but have suffered from a dislocation, a being separated off into categories or compartments; they have become *only* "an aspect" of landscape-making, not central to its practice.

Nature, Beauty and Time can be thought of as threads of colour in a tapestry, illuminating what may otherwise be seen as ordinary and prosaic. They are about human experience, how we find meaning and value in the world around, and about the way we structure our understanding. What all these themes have in common is a process of selection and interpretation, which is part of what culture is – the "spectacles" through which we make sense of the world around us, formed by "habitus" and subjectification.² They are also variables – our responses to them may depend on our personal background and experience.

¹ St Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 11:14

² See the discussion of Foucault and Bourdieu above, Chapter 3, section 2.6.; Mugerauer, (2000), "Language and the emergence of the environment" In Seamon and Mugerauer, eds, *Dwelling, Place and Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*. Malabar, Fl.: Krieger.

This part will explore and develop deeper definitions of these themes which are so important to landscape. First, "Nature" is used as a term which collects together all sorts of cultural values and expectations, rich with associations. It also contains many contradictions and preconceptions which need to be challenged. The discussion leads on to a new understanding of "playing my part" in Nature. The second term "Beauty", is used regularly by people to describe desirable aspects of landscape experience, but is its meaning so clear? Interpretations can vary. To classify some places or landscapes as "beautiful", and others not, may in fact be extremely destructive of the very qualities and experiences we wish to conserve. This raises questions of quality and value, of measuring or evaluating landscapes, and about to whom they are of value. The third theme, "Time", is perhaps the most elusive, but discussed in relation to space in Landscape, it has many insights to offer, illuminated by twentieth-century scientific discoveries. Chapter 8 considers a fourth concept, "Dwelling", which offers the opportunity to bring the insights of these other three themes together to inform a distinct approach to landscape and lay the groundwork for the experience of "Being in the landscape" in the practical projects.

CHAPTER 5

NATURE

1. Nature in British society

1.1 The need for access to nature

In twenty-first century Britain, access to "nature" is considered important; for activities, recreational needs and general wellbeing, nature is recognised as vital. "Nature" here could include an environment which is green and growing, following the annual seasonal cycle, with a variety of plant habitats (and the animals that dwell within these habitats). These places may be larger, as in a park, river or canal path, or smaller, in people's gardens, single trees or patches of waste ground. Research studies show an increasing awareness of the need for people to have access to nature in their daily lives. Rohde and Kendle's *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas* was an extensive study of published research on all aspects of this subject.³ Several of the gaps and under-researched areas recognised in this original study have since been given attention in research, including by Tony Kendle himself.⁴ Other studies have shown the importance, for the healing process, of access to nature, hastening recovery from surgery, and from stress,⁵ plus the opportunity for play in natural surroundings as vital to children's growing, and the development of the healthy imagination in childhood as essential to adult formation;⁶ and this imagination nurtured by the character of spaces in the childhood home and landscapes⁷, including hiding places, dens, trees etc, can stimulate

³ Rohde C.L.E. and Kendle, A (1995) *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas*, London: English Nature.

⁴ Kendle A and Forbes S (1997) *Urban Nature Conservation*, London: E & FN Spon.

⁵ Roger U (1984) "View through a window may influence recovery from surgery," *Science* 22.4. 420-421; Ulrich, Roger S. et al, 1995 "Stress recovery during exposure to natural and urban environments," in *Readings in Environmental Psychology - Landscape Perception*, ed. A. Sinha, London: Academic, 149-151.

⁶ Cobb E (1993) *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, New Haven, Conn.: Spring.

⁷ Bachelard G (1994) *The Poetics of Space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Tr. by Maria Jolas, Boston, Mass. Beacon

increased awareness of self, as part of a well-developed emotional life in later adulthood.⁸ Philosopher Gaston Bachelard has also pointed to the importance of reverie, in health and wellbeing, which a natural environment can enable.⁹

1.2 The decline in availability of nature

As awareness of the need for nature access is increasing, the opportunity for it has decreased within the city. Decline and impoverishment of the public park and public landscapes has continued for several decades now and is well documented, as is the (perceived or real) lack of safety there.¹⁰ While some reverse of this is being attempted, with funding streams from the National Lottery and others, but this restoration is more often for "special" and historic parks, or in areas of extreme disadvantage where there is a general major regeneration programme, such as in the Manor Estate in Sheffield. At the same time as this dilapidation in public landscapes, there is a widespread decline of biodiversity and the rich balances of living things, in city and countryside.¹¹ Habitat and species loss has accelerated as a result of the impoverishment caused by intensive farming techniques.¹² Habitat loss results also from new house building, not just on greenfield, but also on brownfield sites in urban areas, where abandoned industrial sites had become havens for wildlife. House-building is removing these too.¹³ At the same time new houses are given even

⁸ Higgins Catherine (1995) "Childhood, Romanticism & Landscape", *Conference Proceedings*; Clare Cooper Marcus, 1997, *Home as a Mirror of Self: Exploring the Deeper Meaning of Home*, New York: Conari,

⁹ Bachelard (1994)

¹⁰ Worpole K and Greenhalgh L (1995) *Park Life: Urban Parks & Social Renewal* London: Demos.; Burgess J (1993) "Rivers in the Landscape: A Cultural Perspective," in *River landscapes*, ed. Penning E and Rowsell J, London: Belhaven.

¹¹ Part of the Green Estates programme funded through EU Objective 1 regional development money. UK Govt has used Manor Estate as a case study of this programme.

¹² Harvey Graham (1998) *The Killing of the Countryside*, London: Vintage; Buckingham, Chapman, and Newman (1999) *Meadows beyond the Millennium: the future for Hay Meadows in the Peak District National Park* Peak District National Park Authority; Riley M (2005), Silent meadows: The uncertain decline and conservation of hay meadows in the British landscape In: *Landscape Research*, Vol 30,4, Oct 2005

¹³ One example of this is the case of Britain's rare bumblebees. These have some of their biggest strongholds on the derelict brownfield sites of the Thames estuary east of London; but these may vanish when the area is redeveloped to build 120, 000 new homes as part of the Thames Gateway development.

smaller gardens and infilling between existing houses is reducing the size of existing gardens.

For Sheffield, the Peak District National Park, of which much of Loxley Valley sits at the north-east corner, is Sheffield's "back garden" and playground (as well as that of the many other centres of population also nearby). The National Park is heavily overused and as a result many sites, even when protected, are deteriorating rapidly. However, the derelict industrial sites in parts of Sheffield which have been colonised by rich varieties of plant and animal wildlife are not recognised as valuable by decision makers or the public generally.¹⁴ They are "waste ground", rubbish. Marion Shoard describes these sorts of places, which range from gravel workings to sewage disposal plants set in a scruffy of unkempt fields and ignored by public and planners alike, as 'Edgelands of Promise'.¹⁵ As Richard Mabey has commented: "It is amazing how romantic these pockets of ragamuffin greenery can begin to seem."¹⁶ At a local level, groups of concerned users of Sheffield's landscapes, who enjoy them and see them as valuable, are coming together to work to protect and enhance them. These groups, examples of which include the Loxley Valley Design Group and the Five Weirs Walk Trust, show an increasing public awareness of this need for access to nature and its value. This is not just physical and psychological, but has multiple cultural connections. Yet, the work of such groups, and the parts of nature they value, throw up questions about what we mean by and recognise as nature. Do we mean rural or urban? pure or polluted? tranquil, or vicious? fearful, or a lost Eden - a paradise longed for?

The meanings of 'nature' often used in today's society are beginning to look confused, confusing, even contradictory. That nature is good for us has perhaps become a glib truism, that it is safe and pure. There is something *unhealthy* about this superficiality. There is a "Dark" side to nature, as there is within ourselves. We have to engage with it, learn to be careful, or to face

¹⁴ Gilbert, Oliver (1989) *The Ecology of Urban Habitats*, London: Chapman & Hall.

¹⁵ Shoard Marion (2001) "Edgelands," in *Remaking the Landscape: the changing face of Britain*, ed. Jenkins Jennifer London: Profile, 117-146.

¹⁶ Mabey Richard (1973) *The Unofficial Countryside*, London: Sphere. p.43

danger, uncertainty, the harshness of the elements. Physical and psychological trials challenge us; successfully negotiated they can nurture courage and confidence - and increased engagement.

1.3 What do we mean by nature?

When we talk about "nature" do we have in our mind's eye a fine hilltop view over green fields or moorland? Or a winding path through a bluebell wood, a badger sett, a flowery hay-meadow, or birds coming to garden feeders? Or is it mown grass, with occasional trees, beside a block of flats, or well-tended, luxuriant front gardens offering delight to the passer-by, or a patch of waste ground beside a derelict canal ablaze with dandelions? Or the wildlife within these varied habitats? Relevant to current concern about urban renaissance and halting the flight from city to suburbia, or rural living, a study of Sheffield's river landscapes sits at the heart of the debate about nature and how our society perceives it, in that the City includes both urban and rural landscapes.

In the way we talk, our cultural myth, we both fear and perceive nature as "red in tooth and claw", and idealise nature as pure and uncontaminated by the foulness of life, healthy and safe! "Nature" is considered simpler and more restful, but also inferior to culture and civilisation. In *Rivers in the Landscape: a cultural perspective*, geographer Jacquelin Burgess points out that "idealisations about nature and relations between country and city are deeply embedded in English culture." Burgess's reflections could easily be referring directly to the historic perceptions of Sheffield rivers, discussed elsewhere throughout this study. She contrasts the country, connoting "ideas and feelings of peace, tranquillity, harmony and naturalness, often symbolised by clean running river water" with "dirty, polluted and stagnant water" which symbolises the "city" and all its "noise, discord, conflict and unnaturalness". Burgess argues that, in our present secular society, "clean water now symbolises "naturalness", through its associations with the richness of wildlife and vegetation, ecological harmony and the right of

nature to exist."¹⁷ Yet, now that the rivers in the city (of Sheffield) are clean and full of fish, will such perceptions change? At the same time, will the knowledge of rivers in the countryside being polluted with nitrate run-off from agriculture, quarry dust, and acid mine drainage from shut-down coal mines, change other views of a pure countryside? The myth Anne Whiston Spirn counters, even prevents understanding of the interdependence of both and the taking of necessary action:

The isolation of the city and the refusal to grapple with its environmental problems will only hasten the deterioration of the countryside. It is in the common interest of the city and the countryside surrounding it to manage the region as an interlocking, interdependent system.¹⁸

There is not just a cultural myth of nature, but of the countryside in particular. The novelist, Ian McEwan, has reflected on the dreams and longings and illusions which make up this myth. In this myth, the countryside is seemingly the last vestige of a (pre-industrial) Garden of Eden we have left and lost, perhaps for ever; a place of purity, innocence, nourishment, "from which we have been expelled". There is longing for a return to what is past, which is reinforced by folk memories. This nostalgia is not universal, but culturally specific: in many other cultures the city is regarded as offering excitement and opportunity, an easier, more lucrative life than that of exacting toil in agricultural cultivation, with its unpredictability and deprivation, especially in less reliable climates than ours. McEwan uses 'we' and 'our', yet whom does he claim to represent? Many of Sheffield's city-dwellers were driven to the city from the land, by the Enclosures of common land two hundred or more years ago. Their link with the land was severed six or seven generations ago.¹⁹ Does today's generation feel what McEwan is talking about?

¹⁷ Burgess (1993) "Rivers in the Landscape: A Cultural Perspective." in *River landscapes*, edited by E. Penning Rowsell and J. Gardner. London: Belhaven.

¹⁸ Spirn (1998) p.194

¹⁹ Chapter 2, 2.4, and Chapter 10, 2.2.

The nineteenth-century poet, John Clare wrote of seeing the whole living landscape as a kind of common and himself as just one of the commoners. "Unbounded freedom ruled the wandering scene", he wrote in his elegy for the open spaces in his native village lost to Enclosure:

Moors, loosing from the sight, far, smooth, and blea,
Where swopt the plover in its pleasure free
Are vanished now with commons wild and gay
As poet's vision of life's early day.²⁰

Jarvis Cocker, the lead-singer of Sheffield pop-band Pulp, once spoke in an interview about wanting to live: "near the countryside and where normal "day-to-day existence" matters – just like in Sheffield..." He recognised the relationship to be had with the countryside from the city, yet saw its interest in its difference: "I never really understood the countryside, but still find nature quite awe-inspiring and impressive... It is nature's unique characteristics that make it exciting."²¹

Over thirty years ago Richard Mabey, in *The Unofficial Countryside*, was exploring ideas about nature in the city, still as relevant today. Our attitude towards nature is a strangely contradictory blend of romanticism and gloom... If we are looking for wildlife we turn automatically towards the official countryside, towards the great set-pieces of forest and moor... The needs of the natural world are more prosaic. A crack in the pavement is all a plant needs to put down roots... In these places the labels 'urban' and 'rural' by which we normally find our bearings in a landscape just do not apply.²²

The idealising of countryside is useless for city- and town-dwellers; nature must be nearby where we live, or in our own place, to be available for our

²⁰ Bate J, ed, (2003) "The Moors", in: *John Clare Selected Poems*. London, Faber & Faber p.89.

²¹ *Sheffield Star*, "Interview with Jarvis Cocker," 20 September 2001.

²² Mabey (1973) *Unofficial Countryside*. pp.13-14

frequent nourishment.²³ This polarised perception of "Civilisation" versus "Nature", city versus countryside, has negative results in terms of the distribution of resources. While idealised on the one hand, the countryside is exploited on the other as a source of raw material supply or disposal of waste for city-living, and as a recreational playground for the benefit of 'tired' city-dwellers. The conservation and creation of National Parks and designated areas are often advocated on the basis of *increasing* their human recreational use.²⁴ The mutual interdependence of city and country is not recognised, culturally; this is to the dis-benefit of both, and contributes to social breakdown. In practical ways city and countryside need each other, but why do they seem opposed? The answer lies in cultural complexities: "nature is an abstraction", Anne Whiston Spirn has observed. It is: "a set of ideas for which many cultures have no one name... [while also being] a singular name for the real multiplicity of things and living processes."²⁵ Lucy Lippard's simple line "nature is a place where we are not" catches somehow this ambiguity.²⁶

2. Relationships with Nature

It seems from many of the above examples that the prevalent approach to nature in Western society that nature is considered separate from humanity, distinct, "out there. This considering nature as separate from humanity is ultimately about an alienation from a balanced and mutual relationship with nature. Humans as a life-form are intrinsically part of nature. To view nature in this "anthropocentric" way is seemingly to consider it only in terms of "what it can do for us", how it benefits humankind. The anthropocentric view can and does engender concern for the state of the natural world, but

²³ 1. Rohde C.L.E. and Kendle Anthony (1995) *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas*, London: English Nature. 2. The BUGS project: Biodiversity in Urban Gardens –University of Sheffield, Animal and Plant Sciences study to find out if wildlife can thrive in Britain's Gardens and the fact that many people do place great importance on urban ecology, as it is what most directly influences their lives, and through care for "our own" patch connects us with concern for the rest of the planet.

²⁴ For example, Natural England has advertised the countryside as a "Green Gym" - an anthropocentric approach encouraging an attitude of exploitation toward the natural world.

²⁵ Spirn (1998) p.246

²⁶ Lippard (1997) p.12

only from the attitude of need – the provision of food, of clean air, water supply and so on.

Robyn Eckersley has argued that this view fails to recognise nature's intrinsic value beyond its benefit to humans, and is inadequate to tackle environmental issues.²⁷ Instead, Eckersley advocated an alternative, "ecocentric" view of nature, which encourages humanity to learn its place within the natural cycle, to fit into and co-operate with it, and recognising itself as only one small part of it. With this ecocentric approach, there comes greater appreciation for the whole functioning system of nature, not just the valuing of individual species and types of places.²⁸

How can a more balanced and mutual relationship be developed? First is to consider what the alienation from nature might be and second where it comes from. This is discussed by John Berger, with particular reference to human views of other animals.²⁹ Berger suggests that what we see when we look at nature is highly conditioned by our cultural expectations and experience. This may even be distorted to a point of gross illusion about the real and physical world around us. In the case of animals, which were the daily companions and first symbols of primitive man, they have become, through such means as Beatrix Potter and Disney films, "totally transformed into human puppets", resulting in a nostalgic "cuddly" lions and foxes, divorced from the reality of savage carnivores.³⁰ New stories demonstrating this kind of gross illusion with regard to wild creatures are not uncommon. There was recent case of a woman fascinated by lions, who tried to get close to them in a lion cage in a zoo. She died. In another case, a man in the US who thought he could live with bears, was eaten by them.³¹ There

²⁷ Eckersley Robyn (1992) *Environmentalism and Political Theory*, London: UCL Press.

²⁸ Eckersley, *Ibid.* p.47

²⁹ Berger John (1980) *About Looking*, London: Writers and Readers.

³⁰ Richard Mabey wrote: "shallow wildlife documentaries and sentimental nature writing reflect a growing malaise. And that unless we transform our attitude to other species, we face a dismal future". Mabey (2003) "Nature's voyeurs", *The Guardian*, March 15, 2003

³¹ Humans have lived alongside great apes, however. For a BBC television documentary, David Attenborough did on one occasion interact with a group of mountain gorillas led by a huge male silverback in Rwanda. Appropriateness of choice of species, and, no doubt, personal knowledge and attitude, are crucial to showing that humans can live alongside large wild mammals. Attenborough. Appropriateness of choice of species, and, no doubt,

are endless similar cases of people setting out for walks in wild or mountainous landscapes, ill-equipped for the risks of weather-change and exposure. While these cases may reveal a lack of "respect" for the power and force of nature, they are also part of this estrangement from nature and our real relationship with it.

The basis of these false attitudes and dangerous anthropocentric mindsets come from attitudes of mastery, control, exploitation and the state of nature starvation.

2.1 Mastery

To go for a walk on a mountain without appropriate clothing is foolish behaviour; it is in fact a form of behaviour resulting from a perception of a nature which cannot do us harm. This stems from an expectation that humanity can master nature – and a sense of mastery can only come from a separation, disjunction from "the Other", separate from yourself. Val Plumwood has paralleled this concept of mastery of nature to three other conceptual oppressions of the modern world: of class, race and gender.³² These four oppressions overlap and strengthen one another, drawing from the cast of thought, the "master" tendency, that one (individual, or group, or race) may consider themselves superior to another or others and therefore have and take the right to control and exploit the other for their own advantage. Plumwood believes that this mastery tendency cannot be displaced unless it is challenged wherever it appears – not just in relation to class-prejudice, racism and gender-injustice, but in attitude to the natural world too. To fight on just one or two of these issues, or each separately, does not touch its root.

Gaining mastery over "the Other", and perceiving the world in dualisms of privileged and ignored views, are part of the systems of thought derived

personal knowledge and attitude, are crucial to showing that humans can live alongside large wild mammals. (The question of hundreds of free living wild boar (escapees from farms) roaming the British countryside is an interesting example! Do we greet them as long lost former native animals or evict them!).

³² Plumwood Val (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, London, Routledge.

from the eighteenth-century European Enlightenment discussed in chapter 3. Michel Foucault also saw, as the starting point of the "dividing practices" inherent in Western thinking, the development of scientific classification, stemming from the Enlightenment. The process of classifying, separating out, asserting an objective distance between the human observer and the natural world observed, are all parts of this mastering approach. They are each techniques of domination: they define by comparison with an Other, by exclusion, and they promote judgements of value, prioritise some aspects of nature over others.³³

2.2 Control

Nature is an ideological word, in that it can be defined to serve a political view, it can be co-opted by ideologies to aid their purposes. Nazi Germany peddled An "ecological fascism" which mirrored their racial ideology. Any non-native plants in their countryside were to be rooted out and destroyed as "unnatural", and unsuited to the purity of the Germanic race. While the ideology of the master race has been largely confined to the dustbin of history, ecological fascism is alive and well today, in the action programmes of conservation groups in Britain and else where in the world. Such groups are becoming "fixated with scarcity and species purity". From these people, "the common mongrel things of Earth can expect no quarter".³⁴ Such threatened creatures common to the UK include the ruddy duck, and the grey squirrel.³⁵ If the grey squirrel, which has adapted to urban environments, were to be eliminated, the red would not replace them in cities. In fact, the grey is the only wild mammal that people can expect to encounter while walking through a park environment during the day; they give great delight and interest in this visible and animated aspect of living

³³ For a discussion of Foucault's thought see Chapter 3.

³⁴ Mabey (2003) *BBC Wildlife*, 21 no.7 p.21

³⁵ Ruddy duck are to be culled by the DEFRA/RSPB, as they threaten to breed with and contaminate the genes of the white headed duck, native to Spain, and the grey squirrel, to be culled in certain areas by DEFRA, because of their supposed threat to the "native" red squirrel. Targeted grey squirrel control will take place in 'buffer zones' near red squirrel populations because of the threat to the red, deemed to be native, by the introduced grey. *British Wildlife*, Dec 2005, 17, no 2. It is a moot point that the 'native' red populated these islands from southern Europe some 10,000 years ago following the retreat of the last ice sheet.

nature, to which access is so short in urban areas. Indeed, squirrels may play an important part in reawakening interest in other living creatures in 'nature'.

Such attempts to keep an ecology "native", to keep ourselves pure and uncontaminated by foreign, strange, fearful, unpredictable things, demonstrate an arrogance, a short-sightedness, an assumption that nature can be controlled. They display ignorance of natural history, the evidence of fossils and other archaeology, which reveal the "alien" creatures which once made their home in Britain's nature.³⁶ And landscape architecture practice has a tendency to adopt this way of thinking, this approach to the "native". But, as Anne Whiston Spirn has noted: "those who cite nature and the natural to justify their designs or to evoke a sense of goodness rarely examine precisely what such words mean to them. Most are ignorant of the ideological minefields they tread."³⁷

2.3 Exploitation

Perhaps the single most dominant relationship with nature in modern human society is one of exploitation. The resources of the natural world are used and abused, for subsistence and profit, taken without reciprocal restoration. This tends to reach the headlines when it involves oil and gas, the rainforest, and endangered exotic animals, so seemingly takes place far away from home. Yet, this relationship with nature is also predominant in the UK. For example, twentieth-century agricultural practices, particularly since the Second World War and encouraged by the European Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) have threatened biodiversity and industrialised the life-cycle of animals. Hay-meadows, with their myriad plant species and habitat for many invertebrates, birds and mammals, have disappeared replaced by monocultural silage with management practices which work

³⁶ There is fossil evidence of hippopotamus, straight-tusked elephant, rhinoceros and spotted hyena existing on these islands - long gone due to the effects of other climate change.

³⁷ Spirn (1997) p.246

against species life-cycles.³⁸ Fishing policies have endangered the viability of fish-stocks, and the living systems of the sea. Quarrying and mining industries have scarred the landscape, with little sense of responsibility for restoration. In Loxley Valley, the brickworks site is an example of this with dilapidated structures and acid mine drainage. Places set aside as National Parks have been seen primarily from the human perspective - as resources of leisure and recreation. Space in nature, most particularly in urban areas, is overwhelmingly perceived in terms of productivity - "wild" is considered "waste" but to be turned "productive" use when it is economically advantageous. Abandoned and demolished workspaces in the Don Valley are left to become wildlife habitats until it becomes "economic" for them to be "redeveloped" for human profit.

2.4 Nature starvation

Some who have stressed the human need for "access to nature", for relaxation and refreshment, have related it to overcoming a modern sickness from being cut off from the primary nourishment the Earth can give. The early twentieth-century environmental thinker Patrick Geddes described this phenomenon as "nature starvation". Geddes believed that, since the Industrial Revolution, there had been, "an organised sacrifice of men to things, a large-scale subordination of life to machinery". He saw this starvation only being made worse by systems of education which told children about nature, had them read about it from afar, behind safe windows and walls, and never permitted them to be placed in nature itself.³⁹ A disciple of Geddes' ideas, Jonathan Porritt has argued that most of us are still suffering from chronic nature starvation; and it is "as much a challenge to planners today as it was when Geddes was alive."⁴⁰ Themes that Geddes explored, such as play, imagination, sense perception in childhood, and the

³⁸ Chapter 10, Loxley ecological survey, 4.1. Buckingham et al, 1997; Riley, M, 2005.

³⁹ Walter Stephen ed. (2004) *Think Global, Act Local: the Life and Legacy of Patrick Geddes*, London: Luath; Jonathon Porritt, 2005, *Capitalism as if the World Matters* London: Earthscan.

⁴⁰ Porritt Jonathon (2006) "Patrick Geddes, a pioneer of sustainable development," *Resurgence* 235 49.

role of outdoors, all arise and are discussed in the findings of the Sheffield projects considered in Part Three.

2.5 Landscape Architecture and these relationships

How do landscape architects perpetuate or challenge these ways of perceiving nature and of relating to it? As explained above, landscape architects are subject to cultural ideas about nature as much as anyone else. These colour perception, expectation and value. Landscape practitioners may try to avoid an approach to nature of mastery, control and exploitation, but, as Anne Whiston Spirn has again pointed out, to seize on an “ecological” approach as an answer, may still not solve these issues. The meaning of ecology is complex: ecology can be a science (a way of describing the world), a cause (a mandate for moral action), and also an aesthetic (a norm for beauty) as well as the natural system itself, of forms and relationships.⁴¹

The perception of the world as a complex network of relations, with humans as but one part of that web, has been a significant contribution of ecology, but there has been a tendency to jump from such insights to prescription and proscription, to cite ecology as an authority much as nature was cited in the past as the source of laws for landscape design and as providing a single norm. ... To Laurie Olin this approach is “a new deterministic and doctrinaire view of what is “natural” and “beautiful” reflecting a “chilling, close-minded stance of moral certitude”.⁴²

“Sustainable development” is frequently advocated, though this is rarely defined. It may be asked, sustainable from whose and which point of view? There are dangers of assumptions and distortion here too. John Tillman Lyle, landscape architect, has pointed out that, “when we reshape a landscape, we radically alter a system of forms and relationships that are

⁴¹ Spirn (1998) p.249

⁴² Spirn (1998) p250

the current manifestation of some 4.6 billion years of evolution. The results are unimaginably complex."⁴³

So where can landscape architects look for a base for changing attitudes, both personal and public, that may overcome these relationships of mastery, control and exploitation, and the dangers of nature starvation? I have called this "Playing my Part in Nature". Strong feelings of attachment to place, and of harmony with nature, are recognised as vital to social and spiritual health, and these may be part of the solution in changing our cultural values.

The next paragraphs look at possible ways of reconnection with nature, including encouraging poetic or artistic expression, and developing or recognising a deep attachment to place, to significant places, to "our own" place, whether we are urban- or rural-dwellers. These approaches are influenced by concepts of "Being in the Landscape", of embodiment, from phenomenology.

The embodied approach, where the human body is central to experiencing landscape, is barely explored, researched or made explicit at all in landscape architecture practice. In practice, landscapes are designed, created and maintained, but with very little reference to the total sensory and physical experience of place, or to what is already living there.⁴⁴ Examples will be offered in later chapters, of contexts and practice in the study's projects.

3. Alternatives: playing my part in Nature

3.1 New myth or old myth uncovered; poetic testimony

In an attempt to address the cultural gap in our perception of nature, environmental historians and others have considered the part that may be

⁴³ Tillman Lyle John (1994) *Regenerative Design for Sustainable Development*, New York: Wiley.

⁴⁴ Campbell Alison and Thwaites Kevin (2003) PhD Seminar, Landscape Dept, Sheffield University.

played by myths, even newly created ones, in re-orientating public and personal attitudes. While some try to create new myth, such as bioregionalism.⁴⁵ Others like the historian Simon Schama who has explored many aspects of cultural relationships with nature: "Instead of assuming the mutually exclusive character of Western culture and nature", he suggests that myths can reveal the "strength of the links that have bound them together. ... That strength is often hidden beneath layers of the commonplace."⁴⁶ Schama advocates uncovering the hidden, "veins of myth and memory that lie beneath the surface". He suggests that nature is not outside us, to be conserved and respected, but rather within us, and, with Thoreau, he declares it to be a "wild nature", a "primitive vigour of Nature, the bog in our brains and bowels".⁴⁷

In addition to myths, which may be shared and read or spoken, the act of composing poetry itself has its role. Fraser Harrison, in *The Living Landscape*, suggests "another kind of testimony, if not evidence, which can be called up to build the case for conservation, and that is poetic testimony – the description of feeling in response to nature". Chapter 11 gives an example of poetry-making as an expression of and fostering a connection with Nature.

3.2 Recognising local distinctiveness; discovering an attachment to place

"Common Ground" an environmental charity in the UK, has developed the concept of local distinctiveness, in uncovering old myth and connections at the local level where people live. Common Ground sees this as where we need to rediscover ourselves and our identity. Our local landscape is, "characterised by elusiveness, it is instantly recognisable yet difficult to describe; it is simple yet may have profound meaning to us." Understanding it can come through the poetic quest. Sue Clifford and Angela King have written of how local distinctiveness can be "as much about the

⁴⁵ Taylor B (2000) Bioregionalism: an Ethics of Loyalty to Place, *Landscape Journal*, 19.

⁴⁶ Schama Simon (1995) *Landscape and Memory*, London: Fontana. pp.13-14

⁴⁷ Thoreau, Henry David (1856) *Journal*, London.

commonplace as about the rare, about the ordinary as much as the spectacular", and the strong allegiances which are possible with places in Britain. They talk of "spirit of place".

"We sometimes forget that ours is a cultural landscape. It is a great creation: underpinned by nature, it is a physical thing and an invisible web. It is held together by.....(examples are given from around the country...)"⁴⁸

In the Loxley Valley, described in chapter 10, these distinctive features might be round barn windows and local carols, carved stone gate-posts and dry-stone walls mad of grit-stone pieces, and "moonpennies".

Compare these landscapes with James Corner's descriptions of landscapes of "corpse-like constructs of such obscene explicitude", in chapter 4. These landscapes already are, they exist and are alive. This description from common ground takes a national perspective, across the localisms of the whole island of Britain. But, as Kirkpatrick Sale has commented: "to become dwellers in the land, to come to know the earth, fully and honestly, the crucial and perhaps only and all-encompassing task is to understand the place, the immediate, specific place, where we live."⁴⁹ In the nineteen seventies, cultural geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan explored the importance and character of attachment to place.⁵⁰ At the same time, Edward Relph argued of the danger of "placelessness" the weakening of distinctive experiences of places.⁵¹ Relph maintained that to each of us, "significant places" are vital, they are a fundamental aspect of our existence, and therefore must be cared for. Loxley Valley Design group and the Five Weirs Walk Trust have taken on this task for their local place.

⁴⁸ Clifford Sue and King Angela (2006) "Losing Your Place", in *Common Ground*. See Clifford Sue and King Angela (2006) *England in Particular: A Celebration of the Commonplace, the Local, the Vernacular and the Distinctive*, London, Hodder & Stoughton.

⁴⁹ Sale Kirkpatrick quoted in Bate Jonathan (2000) *The Song of the Earth*, London: Picador. See Sale Kirkpatrick (1996) *Dwellers in the Land: The Bioregional Vision* London: New Society.

⁵⁰ Tuan Yi Fu (1974) *Topophilia: a Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*, London: Prentice Hall.

⁵¹ Relph Edward (1976) *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion.

3.3 Renewing connections with nature, and each other

To overcome the tendency to mastery and exploitation of nature requires a realisation of our place within nature so that we may “play our part”; to restore perceptions of nature which acknowledge its power and effect on us requires a renewal of our connection with nature. Our connection with nature is also about our connection with one another., shared meanings, and recognising the different ways women and men have of perceiving, and therefore, of connecting with nature.⁵² In chapter 3 I introduced the work of David Abram. Abram has suggested the approach of phenomenology as a means to renewing connections with nature, and discusses the insights of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty for what they could contribute to this. Husserl’s concept of the “life-world”, and attitudes to it, relates to approaches to nature. Husserl’s life-world is “the world of our immediately lived experience”, of perception.⁵³

Husserl saw the body as the means to perceive and acknowledge the place of the life-world, because the body is a person’s “insertion in the field of common or intersubjective experience”. Merleau-Ponty developed the idea of the body as the true subject of experience, not a separate incorporeal self, of innermost essence.⁵⁴ These conceptions of the body point towards the possibility of reconnecting with nature through the experience of embodiment, the individual rooting themselves in landscape experience.

3.4 Embodiment - Being in the Landscape

A phenomenological approach values all the senses together, synaesthesia, as the primary contact with the world around; the perception of the senses being the source of knowledge. This approach has the potential to overcome the binary concepts in landscape and replace approaches based

⁵² Irigaray Luce (1993) *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*, London, Routledge.

⁵³ Abram David (1997), *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, New York, Vintage. p.40

⁵⁴ Abram, *ibid*, pp.44-45

on theatricality, distance and one-point perspective, which claim universality and hegemony. An embodied experience of landscape, "being" in a landscape, starts from the body and contact with the world through perception and the senses, including intuition and feeling. It is based on connection with others through common physicality, and is about a range of feelings and experience. It is about 'being in', 'within', 'among' rather than 'separate from', distant; experiencing rather than judging a landscape. It is a realisation that I act on it and am acted upon by nature, rather than controlling and owning it. The landscape is not a "picture" to look at, but is related to in a sense of belonging, activity within it, in *dwelling*. In experiencing the ground and horizon, the presence of past and future is offered⁵⁵. Through the sensory perception of everything around, the natural world makes its presence felt, speaks to us, and works upon us. Such experience of nature is only available at the local, personal level, paying attention to the detail, the rhythms and textures, as this is the scale and dimension of the human body itself. In an embodied experience of landscape, it becomes clearer that everything in nature has an effect on something else. This disclosure and revelation of the landscape can lead out in to a strong personal knowledge of the place of the individual within its dynamic processes. It may make possible "peak" experiences in Nature, as described in Rohde and Kendle's study of *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas*, and as first proposed by Maslow; these experiences rate high in Maslow's self-actualisation pyramid and are very affirmative of the person.⁵⁶ "Being" in the landscape is therefore not passive or static, but active in everyday living, enjoying, receiving, and, above all, sensitively, contributing; a dialogue.

A significant contribution to reconnection with nature could be made through landscape practice adopting the insights of a phenomenological approach to landscape. This has been advocated by both Catherine Howett and James Corner and develops the concept of dwelling.

⁵⁵ Abram, (1997), pp.44-45

⁵⁶ Rohde, C.L.E. and Kendle A (1995) *Human Wellbeing, Natural Landscapes and Wildlife in Urban Areas*, London: English Nature. Describe peak experiences in nature, identified by Abraham Maslow, Maslow, A. (1970). *Religion, values and peak experiences*. New York: Viking

This discussion of the term nature has looked at contemporary social views of nature, the difficulty of defining what is meant by nature, and the simplistic assumptions often made about it. It has explored ways of relating with nature, and the damage and mistakes that many of these approaches engender. This has led to discussions of alternative understandings of nature, the possibility of closer relationships, and stronger connections between humans and nature have also been discussed. Finally, an approach to landscape, where the person finds their place within it through embodiment, has been put forward as a means to establishing a right relationship with nature, and recommending a new approach to design for this engagement. This discussion of problematic themes now turns to "Beauty".

CHAPTER 6

BEAUTY

Beauty as a noun can denote a range and combination of qualities. These include shape, form, proportion and colour, mostly when appreciated in sight, but can be applied to sounds and smells, perhaps less so for taste and touch, but it can be used in reference to a combination of sensory experiences, and, indeed, beyond that, in moral and intellectual senses. In traditional academic terms, its appreciation is thought to be in the realm of “aesthetics” – the philosophy of what is beautiful.

In its application, “beauty” denotes quality and is suggestive of value. As a concept in Landscape, “beauty” connects closely with feelings about “nature”, and any approach to aesthetics in the field. Although the word beautiful is frequently used in common parlance about landscape, in academic cultural discourse, and generally in art circles, it is now either hotly contested or unmentionable, positively taboo. In landscape architecture practice, both these strands appear, along with a third, where it has an assumed meaning and its complexities go completely unexamined. This chapter explores what can be meant by beauty in landscape, with its implications for what might be considered of value and deemed of quality. As with the discussion of nature, it looks to overcome weak, limited or exclusive definitions of beauty through practices which acknowledge and embrace holistic connections.

Beauty in landscape

Beauty is an official term in landscape: in Britain and many other countries, certain (rural) landscapes are given official designations as beautiful, in order to protect them from destruction. The UK government has designated “Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty” since 1949. This move was originally

under the guidance of two reports by John Dower and Sir Arthur Hobhouse.¹ Dower claimed his selection of conservation areas was personal, but in accord with “the consensus of informed opinion”, based on work of nineteenth-century artists and poets. The term “outstanding natural beauty” in effect means outstanding landscape quality, and is based on a series of factors which are heavily influenced by the judgements of the “picturesque”.² Burgess and Gold suggested, in the study they edited of valued environments in 1982, that these assessment of beauty are culturally conditioned and reflect the class and educational background of the professionals concerned, but no consideration was given of the values to a wider range of people or environments.³

In recent decades there has been increasing doubt as to the usefulness of this “official” beauty: it prioritises some landscapes over others (for example, it was forty years before the first National Park was set up for a flat landscape) – protecting only “exceptional specimens” – and relies on a grading of beauty which some question. It could be asked “Can beauty be measured?” “Local distinctiveness” has now become more acceptable in conservation terms, following the lead of Common Ground.⁴ Far more areas are now considered in need of protection, as their intrinsic value is realised along other terms, beyond the classically defined “beauty” of the picturesque. Beauty is still approved as valuable, but what now is meant by this? Does it mean the same to all people, and all cultures, and the same as it meant in the past? In general in the UK, as discussed in the previous chapter, countryside is understood to be (mostly) beautiful, and city as not beautiful. This is a cultural perception, but questions need asking of it and its helpfulness to Landscape. Despite some change in assumptions, Landscape is still largely a discipline whose discourse lags behind others in

¹ Dower's and Hobhouse's Reports were presented in 1945 and 1947 respectively.

² This was particularly emphasised in the Countryside Commission's designation of further AONB's in 1985.

³ Burgess, J and Gold, J. eds.(1982) On the significance of valued environments. London, George Allen and Unwin

⁴ Common Ground. Mabey et al (1993) *Local Distinctiveness : Place, Particularity and Identity*, Essays for a conference, including papers by: Mabey Richard, Darley Gillian, Ascherson Neal, Wright Patrick, Dower Michael and Deakin Roger. Common Ground Shaftesbury,

its discussion and debate of aesthetics. Other subject areas are more likely to ask far more searching questions about concepts of beauty, and in particular landscape beauty. This debate in other disciplines needs now to be considered, before returning to the meaning of Landscape's valuing of beauty.

1. The Discourse on Beauty in Landscape (mostly beyond Landscape)

Perceptions of beauty in landscape have changed significantly in Europe over the last six centuries. In the Middle Ages and Renaissance periods, perceptions of natural beauty followed those of the development of gardens. Nature beyond the wall-enclosed, well-tended garden was dangerous and to be feared; Beauty was to be found in the garden, nature beyond the garden "tamed" with views over well-ordered and tended Italian hillsides. These gardens of the Italian Renaissance and then those of the French seventeenth century, as explained in chapter 4, celebrated ownership and man's power, and appealed to the intellect. Enlightenment thinking increasingly influenced cultural perception and from the eighteenth century Romantic landscape painters the quality of "wild" nature became popular, in Arcadian landscapes, with flowing lines, rugged rocks, but was termed 'sublime' rather than beautiful. These appealed to the emotions, rather than the mind. This attraction of the sublime in nature was to be looked at from a privileged perspective, rather than near to and should not offer danger to life and limb. Philosophers discussed distinctions between the Beautiful and the Sublime – the different types of view, the different kinds of feelings induced. In this period, Edmund Burke wrote: "All objects that were in any degree pleasing, attractive, smooth and gentle... were called Beautiful. All those that aroused passions connected with fear, infinity, difficulty, or pain... were Sublime".⁵ From this period's perception of beauty, the "picturesque" way of seeing landscape followed. Though the prominent champions of the picturesque, Richard Payne Knight and Uvedale Price, took a perhaps surprisingly holistic position, critical of the earlier Brownian simplified,

⁵ Burke Edmund (1757) *A Philosophical enquiry into the origin of our ideas of the sublime and beautiful*, London

rationalised, landscapes, the picturesque came to be associated with a series of fine views judged by certain universal criteria, at a distance, seen from one perspective, as similar as possible to the composition of composed, controlled and constructed paintings.⁶

Eighteenth-century philosophical ideas and the changes in traditional social patterns and conventions brought about by the Industrial Revolution, resulted in a challenge to aesthetic and cultural values in the artistic representation of landscapes. The very precise, constructed "picturesque" way of seeing landscape began to be subverted towards the end of the nineteenth century, particularly in response to the advent of photography and its undermining of the traditional requirements of representational art. Subversion of earlier conventions came with the Cubists, such as Picasso, Braque, Duchamp, and their successors. They challenged hitherto fundamental aspects of the practice of art.⁷ In their work they moved from representation of reality to the effect of perceiving it. They abandoned the use of perspective, the capturing of one single moment, the need for "beauty", and for order. Instead they expressed more than one viewing point at once, and more than one moment in time. Meaning and experience, whether pleasant or not, even if fragmented and disconnected, were more important.

Aesthetics was at the forefront of the intense modernist experimentation with ideas in literature, music, visual arts and architecture. Over the twentieth century, there developed among many artists a bankruptcy of ideas about "beauty" and its representation, and deep suspicion as to whether it has any meaning at all. In the last decades of the century, art critics, cultural geographers and others, began to put questions to

⁶ Price Uvedale (1810) *Essays on the Picturesque*, vol. 1, reprinted 1971, Farnborough Christopher Hussey (1927) *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View*, reprinted 1967, London, Frank Cass. Howett Catherine (1987) "Systems, Signs, Sensibilities; Sources for a New Landscape Aesthetic.," *Landscape Journal* 6, no. 1. p.4; idem. (1993) "If the Doors of Perception were cleansed, Toward an Experiential Aesthetics for the designed landscape." in Seamon ed. *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing*.

⁷ Rosenblum Robert (1961) *Cubism and Twentieth Century Art*, London: Thames & Hudson; Hughes Robert (1991) *The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change*, London: Thames & Hudson.

conventional aesthetics of the influence of authority and power relationships, of class and gender. These have been touched in chapter 4, in relation to problems in inherited thinking about landscape". John Berger indicated the power of the one who defines what is beautiful, and the political dimensions of those choices, while Susan Sontag stressed the power of the photographer in how the choice of moment affected the message of the picture, and the assumptions of the photographer which are communicated through the choice of shot.⁸ Gillian Rose, Griselda Pollock and Lucy Lippard each explored the role played by men and by women in these judgements as to what is seen, and acknowledged as beautiful.⁹ They raised questions of who and what is ignored in these judgements; and drew connections between Woman being viewed as object (by men) and Landscape viewed as object. In the case of both, men seem to take the role of detached arbiters of a universal standard of attractiveness, the "masculine gaze". This work still does not, however, solve how to assess value in landscape practice.

The particular preferences and origins of aesthetics in landscape have been subjects of research in social sciences, environmental psychology and biological theory. Psychologist James Gibson with his Affordance Theory opened up the study of visual perception.¹⁰ Geographer Jay Appleton and others, introduced in this thesis in Chapter 4 in relation to how landscape is experienced rather than thought about, suggest that aesthetic preferences derive from the ancient human struggle for survival, that our deep-seated feelings of satisfaction or excitement aroused in landscapes connect with

⁸ Berger John (1991) *About Looking*, London: Writers and Readers; idem, *Ways of Seeing*, revised ed., Harmondsworth: Penguin; Sontag Susan (1977) *On Photography*, New York, Anchor Doubleday

⁹ Rose Gillian (1993) *Feminism and Geography*, Polity Press, Cambridge; Pollock Griselda, (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, London, Routledge; Lippard Lucy (1976) *From the Centre – feminist essays on women's art*, New York: E.P.Dutton,

¹⁰ Gibson, James, J, 1950, *The Perception of the Visual World*, Visual perception was studied, by Gibson, for the first time in real situations rather than in laboratory conditions, resulting in his Affordance Theory of "ecological perception" stating that the environment provides us with all the information we need for our eyes to make direct sense of what we see. A higher processing or interpretation by the brain is not needed. "Chairs afford sitting, a cliff affords avoidance, a bottle affords drinking or throwing". The affordance of an object is what it means to the observer. The observer knows what to do with it without thinking

primeval experience.¹¹ Parkland, seashore and river valley, which then offered refuge, food, transportation etc, still satisfy today, though having lost their original purpose.¹² Appleton refused to ask the question "what is beauty in landscape?" choosing instead "What is the source of that pleasure which we derive from the contemplation of landscape?" and suggested it was to do with "prospect and refuge".¹³ However, the urban planner, Stephen Bourassa, drew on this research on the biological and cultural dimensions of landscape preference and aesthetics, to challenge this idea of pleasure in "contemplation", which he takes to be purely visual.¹⁴ He explored aesthetics and experiencing in landscape from all the senses rather than from the visual alone.¹⁵ Bourassa sought to develop "a paradigm for research in landscape aesthetics", beyond quantitative studies, as he felt relying solely on these – which follow public preference – leads to aesthetic standardization.¹⁶

These scholars represent a movement in thinking about landscape aesthetics which attempts to move away from a purely visual approach to design. They discuss ways of escaping this approach, but fail, in my view, really to move beyond a reliance on sight and the single interpretation.¹⁷ Such works on aesthetics tend to begin by criticising strongly those who wrote before, and those who practise in landscape design. There is clear dissatisfaction, but each critic points to different reasons and to differing solutions. They all seem to want to move to a more holistic understanding and basis for practice, particularly to take account of environmental concerns. The variations in these discussions display the distinct lack of a unifying theoretical basis to the subject of landscape aesthetics. Bourassa acknowledge the biological and the cultural drives as well as a third

¹¹ Appleton Jay (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*, London: John Wiley.

¹² Orians G (1986) "An ecological and evolutionary approach to landscape aesthetics," in *Landscape Meaning and Values*, ed. E.C. Penning-Rowse and D. Lowenthal London: Allen and Unwin.

¹³ Appleton (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*. London: John Wiley.

¹⁴ Contemplation : I sense a different meaning in contemplation in the work of Clare Cooper Marcus, "contemplation is where we are most truly ourselves." Cooper Marcus, C, 1995, *House as a Mirror of Self: exploring the deeper meaning of home*, Berkeley, Conari Press:

¹⁵ Bourassa Stephen (1991) *The Aesthetics of Landscape*, London: Belhaven Press.

¹⁶ Bourassa, *Aesthetics of Landscape*, p.xiv.

¹⁷ Appleton, *Experience of Landscape*; Bourassa, *Landscape Aesthetics*

influence of personal strategies of creative individuals, to overcome the dominance of the visual.

Moves from concepts of "seeing the landscape" to "living in the landscape" have been taken up by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell's studies, though without any convincing resolution. Ian Thompson, of Newcastle University Landscape Department, in investigating sources of values in landscape architecture, makes a thorough review of works on aesthetics such as these outlined above, as well as the work on psychology of landscape design in Geoffrey Jellicoe's work.¹⁸ He seems however to treat these "brands" of aesthetics as choices the designer may make for his/her work.

In these discussions of aesthetic theory, I notice a lack of the broader contemporary dimensions. Almost all of the references on aesthetics dated from before 1950 and many much earlier. Later references tended to be from psychological and other social science literature. No reference was made to the changes of perspective taken across the century by artists, and no awareness of contemporary philosophical understanding of embodiment, and ways of addressing dualisms. In Thompson's, the most recent work, he does refer to the displacement of 'beauty' in twentieth-century art, but again seems to treat 'art' as an optional extra in landscape design. The use of language in all these works was positivist and reductionist. It referred to problems, contradictions, arguments, rather than the insights of paradoxes, or richness, complexity, or a groundedness in nature. The effect on this reader was to leave a sense of clumsy and plodding staleness, and the emphasis on the insights of behaviourists suggested a looking backwards, a lack of dynamism, of connectedness with other live issues. There continued to be a classifying and separation of subjects considered from the outside, detached.

By contrast James Corner was writing in 1997 of bringing together the creativity of both ecology and landscape:

¹⁸ Thompson Ian H (2000) *Ecology, Community and Delight: Sources of Values in Landscape Architecture*, London: E.F. Spon.

Whether biological or imaginative, evolutionary or metaphorical, such processes are active, dynamic, and complex, each tending towards the increased differentiation, freedom and richness of a diversely interacting whole. There is no end, no grand scheme for these agents of change, just a cumulative directionality toward further becoming. It is in this productive and active sense that ecology and creativity speak not of fixed and rigid realities but of movement, passage, genesis, and autonomy, of *propulsive life unfolding in time*.¹⁹

The language ranges from plodding to explosive! Different again would be Goethe's "dwelling within the phenomena", referred to in Chapter 3, 2.1.

2. Beauty in the Landscape Architecture context

In Landscape Architecture practice, assumptions are made about how landscapes look, and "should" look, and about how they function. This is the case for landscapes as a setting for a building or buildings, landscapes for use by the public, landscapes in private ownership, landscapes to preserve historical assets, and landscapes for protecting, conserving and enhancing ecological biodiversity. As in the sister field of architecture, design and 'looks' goes through phases, or fashions; emphases change, and there is variation in form and function; on the one hand pragmatism, on the other still hooked in the visual.²⁰ Assumptions are made both by designers, constructors and managers of landscapes, and by the public, owners and commissioners and users of the landscapes. As has been said earlier in this chapter, little attention is given to how people feel about the landscapes and why, and what makes up the experience people have when using the landscapes, and little discussion about the aim of landscape - beyond functionality, what is a landscape for?²¹

¹⁹ Corner James (1997) "Ecology and Landscape as Agents of Creativity.," in *Ecological Design and Planning* ed. Thompson G.F. and Steiner F. London. p.81.

²⁰ Howett (1993)

²¹ Burgess and Gold (1982)

Although many landscape practitioners themselves will perhaps have been drawn to landscape practice by something more than pragmatism, inspired by special experiences or enjoyment of or relationships with landscapes, in practice theories of aesthetics may at times be referred to and drawn on when "landscape quality" is being assessed, but this tends only to be in cases where landscape professionals are called on to advise for decisions about national parks and other "special" landscapes. The reality for the discipline is that in the built environment and its construction landscape tends to be the last expenditure, so the first to be squeezed when other parts of the project overrun. Economic constraints mean funds are not made readily available "just on the look of it" – so pragmatism and utility rule over aesthetics in considerable sections of landscape practice.

3. Moving beyond the picturesque

In spite of this history of the contested meaning of beauty in art and other discourses, of ways of viewing landscape, in the culture of landscape architecture the impression can be given of not having moved beyond the "picturesque" stage of the late eighteenth century. Landscape architecture practice can still seem to be about static visual pictures (the photographic view) rather than dynamic process, experience and feeling, in actual places. It can seem to be about using the simplified 2-dimensional plan view – exaggerated even more in the use of computers, which reduces factors (including 3-dimensional viewing) to what can be simplified to fit the paper or the screen. In other words, about abstracted "geometric space" rather than what can be understood as "real" "lived space".²²

Catherine Howett, in charting the evolution of approaches to the visual in landscape design in western society, has complained that "few arts in modern times have been so conservative" as Landscape, which depends on an attitude seemingly inherited, unchallenged from the Romantics. She further asks:

²² Dovey Kimberly (1993) "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process" In Seamon ed. *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing* pp.247-270

How can we, accustomed to seeing things as we do, imagine a work of landscape architecture that does not give priority to how a place *looks* that does not expect the designer to impose conventional forms upon the chaos "out there" in which the act of design originates, transforming it into a pleasing object of contemplation?"²³

She turns to phenomenology, perception and "working with" nature rather than looking at it.

To sum up, the disembodied visual – upon which the prioritising of the "picturesque" is based – is rooted in deep layers of power structures and language. It is based on "ocular-centrism", privileging the sense of sight over the other senses, and privileges the (distant) viewer, the single perspective and the large, expansive view, at the expense of the intimate, the near at hand and the multiple viewing point.²⁴ It is about a removal from physical interaction with the material landscape and environment, and positions itself as the hegemonic, authoritative and dominant interpretation, though defines itself as universally self-evident.

There is a need to recover an integrated sense experience of landscape and allow this to influence the design of landscapes where possible. This is part of the need to rethink our relationship with the environment in a holistic way. James Corner and Catherine Howett have both written of turning to the phenomenological approach as a means of escaping a dominance of the disembodied visual and the picturesque. But how could this affect conceptions of beauty? For an answer to this, I think Landscape must paradoxically return to its relationship with art – though to movements in art which have developed more recently than the eighteenth century.

²³ Howett Catherine (1993) 'If the Doors of Perception were cleansed', p. 66

²⁴ Weiss Gale and Haber Honi Fern eds. (1999) *Perspectives on Embodiment: the intersections of Nature and Culture*. London: Routledge.

4. Artists – returning to the senses

Although the field of art might still be in its “modernist” mode - with its anguish, detachment and confusion about beauty - there are many artists and creatives who continue to feel and express intensely in relation to landscape, in art forms, including literature, which satisfy and draw others to greater appreciation. To help renew the world of the sense and connections with nature, the work of Andy Goldsworthy and others brings together a working with the natural world and expressive art forms.²⁵ Robert Hughes, art critic, offers:

One of the projects of art is to reconcile us with the world, not by protest, irony or political metaphors, but by the ecstatic contemplation of pleasure in nature. Repeatedly, artists offer us a glimpse of a universe into which we can move without strain. It is not the world as it is, but as our starved senses desire it to be: neither hostile nor indifferent, but full of meaning – the terrestrial paradise whose gate was not opened by the mere fact of birth.²⁶

According to Lippard, one of the roles of the artist is to “help people see their places with new eyes”.²⁷ At the same time as modern art was subverting inherited conventions from the eighteenth century, through multi-perspective, and multiple interpretations, some artists took this movement forward whilst retaining a closeness to nature. Significant among them was the Bauhaus painter Paul Klee. Klee wrote: “For the artist, dialogue with nature remains a *conditio sine qua non*. The artist is a man, himself nature and part of nature in natural space.”²⁸

Sometimes It has been artists who have bridged the gap between the modern abstraction of the mind and the materiality of the world, through

²⁵ Goldsworthy's books include *Time, Wood, and Stone*; Goldsworthy Andy (1990) *Andy Goldsworthy: A Collaboration with Nature*, London: Harry N Abrams.

²⁶ Hughes (1991) *Shock of the New*: p.112,

²⁷ Lippard (1976) *From the Centre* p.292.

²⁸ Klee Paul quoted in Spiller Jurg ed (1961) *The Notebooks of Paul Klee Vol.I: The thinking Eye*, London: Wittenborn. p.63. Originally published 1923 as “Wege des Naturstudiums”. See also Ernst-Gerhard Guse ed. 1990 *Paul Klee: Dialogue with Nature*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag.

developing ways of interaction with the natural world as though in it, a part of it, and grasping its meaning and beauty.²⁹ As Paul Crowther has written, "The essence of art is nothing less than the conservation of human experience itself". Artwork can reflect:

our mode of embodied inherence in the world, and by clarifying this inherence it brings about a harmony between subject and object of experience – a full realisation of the self. In the creation and reception of art, we are able to enjoy a free-belonging to the world.³⁰

Richard Mabey has written on environmental artists in portraying landscape from the inside; on Julian Cooper's "riveting close-ups of rock faces"; Kurt Jackson's work where "explosions of light and living matter" take place in the very heart of woods, celebrating "...the energy of creation, not 'scenic views'".³¹ While art has moved on, shown in this study in Chapter 11 in interviews with artists, Landscape may still tend often to appear to hold to its origin in the separation of the outer appearance from the inner experience. Yet art has now shown the possibilities of expanding this and creating a new form of beauty or delight out of the direct experience.³² Landscape Architecture needs increasingly to look further to the techniques of artists in conserving the human experience of the natural world, and wondering at it, and introduce these insights into the design process.

Yi-Fu Tuan is one theorist who has discussed the possibilities of engaging with nature through additional senses to sight, recalling that this is how children approach nature. "A child places little importance on picturesqueness", Tuan noted, in his 1974 study of environmental perception; "Nature yields delectable sensations to the child, with his openness of mind, carelessness of person, and lack of concern for the accepted canons of beauty". Tuan suggests that adults who allow

²⁹ Crowther Paul (1993) *Art and Embodiment, from aesthetics to self-consciousness* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

³⁰ Crowther (1993) p.7

³¹ Mabey (2005) "A Brush with Nature".

³² Nicholas Davey J.R.1 (2000) "Writing and the in-between," *Word and Image* 16, no. 4, 378-386.; Fowles J (1985) in: *Land*, ed. F. Godwin, London: Heinemann.

themselves to recover a childlike unselfconscious involvement with the physical world will discover that "an environment might break all the rules of euphony and aesthetics, substituting confusion for order, and yet be wholly satisfying".³³

It may enable the landscapes to offer full, whole, sensory experience, in multiple perspective. Whether it is called "beautiful" or something else is unimportant. What matters is the quality of living experience, satisfaction and the drawing into relationship, a recovery of the sense of delight, of an attitude of wonder.

Ways of doing this will be discussed more in Chapter 8 on "dwelling" and Chapter 11 takes up the theme with practising artists, but before that, the third problematic landscape theme is explored: time.

³³ Tuan Yi Fu (1974) *Topophilia: a study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*, London: Prentice Hall. pp.96-96.

CHAPTER 7

TIME

Landscape architecture is most frequently conceived as being about space - spatial arrangement and spatial thinking.³⁴ Many landscape architects work creatively with time in their designs, and may even delight in the four-dimensional plasticity of their medium. However it may sometimes appear. From some finished constructed work to have been considered less integrally, as if it were only an "aspect" of landscape, or tacked on as an extra, when considering the maturing of plant material, perhaps the development of a patina on certain hard materials, or inevitable, but regretted, deterioration and degrading of a "finished" project. There may still be a tendency to an understanding of landscape as a static picture to be "seen" and "captured", persisting the cultural myth of the ideal of the picturesque, as shown in the last chapter.

As Richard Mabey suggests:

Landscape painting's intrinsic beauty and seductiveness may be its chief problem. It encourages a view of the natural world which is distant, complacent, *over*.³⁵

This is perpetuated at the popular level in gardening television programmes like BBC's *Groundforce*, where gardens are "made" in 48 hours of turf-rolling, "mature planting", decking and "water-features".

This study however puts forward that time in landscape is firstly about contextualising space. It is the dimension of activity, of the movement of human and other living things within the landscape, in fact the living of the landscape itself. Secondly, it is about the relationship we have with past and the future, and our attitudes towards them, and the relationship with the (at least) 4-dimensional world we live in. It is the way we live within landscape, the interweaving of our lives with it, dwelling within it. Being too attached to the past, or envisaging the future only as enfolded from the past, prevents us from moving forward, and inhibits 'possibility' and a creative

³⁴ It was seen In Chapter 4 that André le Nôtre in 17th century France had developed gardens of "totally organised space". Jellicoe, (1995)

³⁵ Mabey, (2005) "Brush with Nature", *BBC Wildlife*, November, 2005

adaptable approach to the future. This impacts on what is aimed at in landscape, and on the creativity of landscape design in general. Human understanding of space and time and their relationship to each other has been subject to radical change in the last hundred years. The practice of landscape has yet to catch up and integrate this understanding into the creation of landscapes appropriate for this age. This chapter will explore meanings of Time - the word and subject - and its relation to landscape, and look to what these might offer landscape architects to be more attuned to its movement and meaning in their design and practice.

1. Time and space convergence

In his critique of landscape architecture theory, James Corner singles out the early twentieth century, when ideas of form were imported from modern art into modern landscape architecture, as when space was made to rule completely over time. An aesthetic evolved, "... where form alone could motivate the content. No longer did form have to express or convey an idea, as an icon or figure. It was now possible for form itself to be the content."³⁶ Traditional art had drawn its meaning and *raison d'être* in representing something beyond it, in the world, or simply "an idea outside itself", it was now the case that "pure form only referred to itself,... autonomous, self-referential, self-generated".

Space became the supreme concept – space as autonomous sets of Cartesian co-ordinates, floating infinitely, without context or place. "Space", crystalline product of the Enlightenment, was put forth as an ethereal substitute for the continuity of lived experience. ... Imagine the audacity or simple suspension of belief, necessary to reduce the complexity of living landscape to the sheer placelessness of "pure form".³⁷

In this same period, science was making discoveries that time and space were not separate, but one. Though this had been sensed by artists at points in the nineteenth century (and the ancient Greeks also two millennia

³⁶ Corner, James, (1990) "A Discourse on Theory I: "Sounding the Depths" – Origins, Theory, and Representation" in *Landscape Journal*, 9, 2. p.74

³⁷ Corner (1990) p.74

before), the work of Albert Einstein and his contemporaries proved this in a series of calculations and experiments in the first three decades of the twentieth century. Their findings are now the given basis of contemporary science. In a "spatial" art such as landscape, the impact of this major shift in the agreed understanding of one of the fundamental processes of our cosmos cannot fail to be significant. In the closing pages of *The Landscape of Man*, Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe suggest that this concept may be "so overwhelming and the break with history so abrupt, that this may be the main reason why today, significantly, time plays little part in the arts."

It is the present that matters ... It is possible, for instance, that the present disruption of the environment can be traced beyond the manifest reasons to one basic cause: the subconscious disorientation now in man's mind concerning time and space and his relation to both.⁵

Where such an impact is claimed, it is worth examining something both of what this convergence of space and time might consist of, for the lay observer, and what this impact could involve in landscape thinking and practice. First some clarification of language is in order about time, space-time, and about time processes. For this I will turn to Stephen Hawking's, *A Brief History of Time*, claimed by some to be the least-read best-seller of all time.⁶

Firstly, the relation of time to space. Hawking writes:

It is a matter of common experience that one can describe the position of a point in space by three numbers, or coordinates... An event is something that happens at a particular point in space and at a particular time. So one can specify it by four numbers or coordinates... In relativity, there is no real distinction between the space and time coordinates, just as there is no real difference between any two space coordinates... It is often helpful to think of the four coordinates of an event as specifying its position in a four-dimensional space called space-time. It is impossible to imagine a four-

⁵ Geoffrey Jellicoe and Susan Jellicoe, (1995) *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day*, 3rd ed, London: Thames & Hudson. p.398

⁶ Stephen Hawking, (1988) *A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes*, London: Bantam.

dimensional space. I personally find it hard enough to visualise three-dimensional space! However it is easy to draw diagrams of two-dimensional spaces such as the surface of the earth.⁷

Hawking explains that it is the theory of relativity which since 1915 has put an end to the idea of absolute time. Before that, it was natural to think space and time went on forever, "space and time were thought of as a fixed arena in which events took place, but which was not affected by what happened in it" ...

The situation however is quite different in the general theory of relativity. Space and time are now dynamic quantities; when a body moves, or a force acts, it affects the curvature of space and time – and in turn the structure of space-time affects the way in which bodies move and forces act. Space and time not only affect but are also affected by everything that happens in the universe...⁸

By the mid-twentieth century, this new understanding of space and time had produced a revolution in human understanding of the universe. Before, the universe was understood to be unchanging, it had always existed, and would always continue. Now the universe was dynamic, expanding and finite (in its own way) – it had a beginning and it would have an end.

These ideas have been current and accepted for close to a century in the scientific community - the Jellicoes claim a huge impact on human subconscious - yet their implications have not necessarily been explored fully in all areas of social or academic discussion and research. These ideas have not regularly crossed over into conscious awareness of their significance. That Hawking indicates the difficulty or impossibility of imagining a four-dimensional space, for himself as well as for others, demonstrates the difficulty of accessing and assimilating these concepts, and this may to some extent account for the lack of widespread knowledge and assimilation of them into broader thinking. While wondering at the extraordinary nature of the universe and how much has been found out

⁷ Hawking, (1988) p.23

⁸ Hawking, (1988)

about it in the last century or so, the obvious needs to be stated frequently, namely that human knowledge is limited by the limits of human imagination, or intellectual capacity, however much some scientific spokespeople may assert theories as absolute truths.⁹

2. Meanings of Time

Time is of course a generic term which has many general and specific meanings. In an attempt to navigate a path through these varied meanings, I will first borrow from the work of the philosopher Peter Osborne, who has distinguished three main perspectives on time, or three different "times". These are, the time

...associated with the objective or cosmological perspective (concerned with the time of nature); the subjective, lived or phenomenological perspective (concerned with duration or individual time-consciousness); and the inter-subjective or social perspective (associated with a historical multiplicity of forms of time-consciousness which together make up the time of history or "historical time").¹⁰

All three of these perspectives on time have an important bearing on landscape and in particular on this study, so here I shall discuss each in turn, in more detail. In addition, I shall point out that discussion of these is always affected by personal "attitude", so shall also discuss the effect on people and the effect on landscape study and practice.

2.1 The Time of Nature

This is "objective", cosmological, quantifiable time. The canonical literature which identifies this begins with Aristotle.¹¹ This can be understood as linear time – that of an expanding universe with a beginning and end, of days that begin and end; as cyclical or periodic time – following the various cycles of

⁹ For examples of this see any work by Richard Dawkins, Professor for the Public Understanding of Science, University of Oxford.

¹⁰ Osborne, Peter, (1994) "The Politics of Time," *Radical Philosophy* 68, no. 2.

¹¹ Aristotle, *Physics*, Book IV

biology; and "relational time", the subject of twentieth-century physics and astronomy.¹²

2.1.1 Linear time

This time can be envisaged as an arrow – it is single directional, a straight line, moving forward from the past to the future. It is, in essence, "a way of measuring movement" and imagines time as, "an infinite succession of identical instants, split in relation to any one instant into a before and an after, an earlier and a later".¹³ This is the measured day, week, month, and year. These are derived from solar and lunar time. It has come to be seen as the time of the clock, though the standardised time of the clock is itself culturally constructed.¹⁴ Time as an arrow seems easy to conceptualise, at least in Western civilisation, where language is carefully structured by "tenses", varying slightly from one individual language to another.¹⁵ Each tense conveys very specific meanings of when and how events happen, happened, or will happen. In languages spoken in other parts of the world, this is not so clearly differentiated; there is more flexibility of expression of time events.

Time with a before, present instant, and after, includes geological time, which is written large in the landscape in the marks of weather and climate. The Earth is supposed to be 4,600 million years old. The geography of the continents has changed repeatedly over this time. What used to be called continental drift is now known as plate tectonics. The British Isles was once welded to the rest of the continents as they moved around the Earth. These islands have experienced polar, tropical and desert climates with a variety of

¹² Osborne, (1994) p.4

¹³ Osborne, (1994).

¹⁴ "Clock time" came into being in Geneva in 1780, when the calculation of time was changed from being based on the actual position of the sun overhead, to one of the sun's mean noon position on a local meridian, were it to moving at a constant and uniform rate of motion. World Standard Time was agreed at the Meridian Conference of 1884.; in this chapter section 2.3; George Woodcock, (1977) "The Tyranny of the Clock," in *The Anarchist Reader* London: Fontana

¹⁵ In Indo-European languages, present, future, imperfect, perfect, pluperfect, and future perfect tenses (sometimes more and sometimes fewer) structure the way events are narrated and expressed, In other language traditions this is less important and the same verb form may be used to express present, past and future.

floral and faunal species over millions of years.¹⁶ The landscape archaeologist, Tim Ingold, has talked of landscape being a solid form of time, a "collapsed act", congealed time.

...landscape is the congealed form of the taskscape... the landscape as a whole must... be understood as the taskscape in its embodied form, a pattern of activities 'collapsed' into an array of features.¹⁷

This aspect of time, of marks, of uses, of events, written in the landscape is illustrated more fully in the Don Valley Chapter 9 and in the discussion of the Loxley Valley, chapter 10..

2.1.2 Cyclical time

Cyclical or periodic time is the time of the seasons, the patterns of the planets circling the sun, of life/death/rebirth, of renewing and recycling. This process evokes - in many cultures, such as aboriginal, as well as nature - cleansing, a cleaning out of the system, a thinning out the weak while the strong survive the winter, old leaves breaking down, while new shoots appear. As human beings, we are part of nature and its cycles – seasonal and diurnal. We are immersed in it, we cannot stand outside it. We have to recognise and accept the cycles of our own lives. Some may try to step outside it, halt the ageing process, hurry childhood away, create "instant gardens", but we cannot really achieve any of these. We do not operate separately by mind or will from our own life, our own body, and organism, or the living earth on which we exist.

The effect on landscape practice of this understanding is surely to encourage an holistic approach, recognising that landscape is part of the natural cycles, is not static; it is itself in movement, in time. All landscape planning has to take into account these factors, both in relation to display and use, and to wear and tear, sometimes over decades or centuries. Examples of resisting this change may be suggested in landscapes of

¹⁶ Richard Fortey, (1997) *Life, an unauthorised biography*, London: Harper Collins,

¹⁷ Tim Ingold, (1993) "The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society," *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 152-174.

Studley Royal, Stourhead, Blenheim, which seem to stay the same for ever, because their rate of change is slow, and maintenance is intended to keep the appearance of change year on year to a minimum.

2.1.3 *Relational time*

This is the time which contemporary physics is exploring and discovering – a time which is capable of expanding and stretching, is unpredictable and contradictory. As discussed above, time and space have converged, and are not distinct, but in far closer relation to one another. The effect of this on humans is perhaps that nothing is what it seems. What seems solid, (rock, earth, furniture) is in fact moving and changing. Though it looks flat, the earth is curved; by appearances the sun moves round the earth, when in reality it is the other way round. Our lifespan as humans is shorter than some and longer than others in this universe. The effect of this is that mature trees or rocks, of a longer timescale, seem to us to be permanent, while flies of a few days lifespan are seen as unimportant, disposable. Time is not constant in its passage – space can curve and expand, producing a relational effect on time. Though this may be hard to conceive of in the context of the earth, and is mostly discussed in terms of black holes etc, there are still many aspects of our modern experience of the earth, which require this characteristic of time to be grappled with. All these views demonstrate the ways we disconnect learned knowledge from experienced knowledge.

What effect does a knowledge of relational time have on attitudes to time and change? It may in fact produce a fear of change, a tendency to opt out of thinking. Such knowledge can undermine the boundaries we conceive of in our experience, producing uncertainty, where we want comfort. As David Abram has pointed out, everyday speech testifies to the difficulties of assimilating views of the world with intellectual change: the sun still “rises” and “sets”, as though Copernicus had never lived.¹⁸ The discoveries of Copernicus and Galileo were the point at which the physical experience of

¹⁸ Abram, (1997) *Spell of the Sensuous*, pp.42-43

the world around us had to be disregarded as a guide to truth. Trust now had to be put in received theory, taught knowledge even if apparently contradicted by experienced knowledge, but this has still not been entirely obeyed. The conventional understanding of science is that there are set laws, incontrovertible rules by which things happen; if things happen which don't fit with these rules, they must be rejected as fraud or illusion, or rationalised away. This is of course a reversal of the ways of Galileo's time, when there was an alternative basis of authority – received knowledge, not rational calculation. With the rise of science, rational calculation became the new authority, and it is miracles, complementary medicine, "peak" or mystical experiences, which are now beyond the pale, beyond the paradigm, rationalised away.

A phenomenological approach looks at the event or experience as it is, as well as one can investigate it or understand it through perception. When a person undergoes an experience, they can follow two possible courses: they can seek a rational explanation for it through further, open-minded (unbiased) investigation or they may act as if it were true, and "see what happens". This second action is perhaps what Goethe meant by his suggestion: "Seek nothing beyond the phenomena; they are themselves the theory".¹⁹ One of the implications of the knowledge of the flexibility of time and space has been the way we view matter, where physical objects begin and end. Judith Butler, a feminist philosopher, has discussed the implications of the flexibility of the form of matter on our understanding of boundaries, in her work on bodies and gender and identity. This work has many wider implications in our understanding of our world generally, as Butler discusses, "a return to the notion of matter, not as site or surface but as a process of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity and surface we call matter".²⁰ Boundaries and surfaces can be understood as more like membranes.²¹ The effect of this on practice

¹⁹ Goethe, J.W. von, (1790) *Sprüche in Prosa*, No. 165

²⁰ Butler, Judith (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Space*, New York and London: Routledge. p.372

²¹ See also Shannon Sullivan discussion of transactional living, in Shannon Sullivan, (2001) *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

could be to assert a conceptualising of landscapes in time, where landscapes are created and managed for experience and activity, not primarily to look at. This would overcome the “visual untruths”, the appearance of boundaries and surfaces as fixed, when in actual fact they are flexible, moving and changing; and permit a greater engagement and fuller experience of a landscape through sensory perception, and acknowledgement of the dimension of time. This could be very important in landscape design, but it demands a positive conceptualising determined to expand the possibilities it offers. This understanding of relational time is grounded in the Loxley Chapter 10, for walking and moving through the landscape and horizons and boundaries related to the human body, and also in the discussion of Don journeys in Chapter 9.²²

2.2 Lived Time

The second philosophical perspective on time to be considered is the human subjective view, time-consciousness, where time is subordinated to consciousness or human existence. The canonical literature for this time begins with St. Augustine’s reflections mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.²³ Augustine’s dilemma may be said to derive from the “conflict between time felt and time understood”; We live time, but without being really aware of it.²⁴

2.2.1 Embodiment in time

We are embodied in time in the way we are participants, not observers, in this lived time. Maurice Merleau-Ponty believed we must: “... get over the view that, in our thinking, our thoughts only connect with each other; rather they are rooted in the historical event”.²⁵ Our thoughts emerge from where and when we are – from our past, even when we are not conscious of them, but they affect our response. Perceived this way, this time cannot be measured - it is qualitative, it is experienced. The past is present with us in

²² Abram, (1997), p209-11

²³ St Augustine, *Confessions*, Book 11:14

²⁴ Fraser, J.T. (1999) *Time, Conflict and Human Values* University of Illinois Press. p.40

²⁵ Merleau-Ponty, (2002) *The Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge. p.426

our memory, the future is with us in expectation.²⁶ The present is thus three-fold in that there is a present past, a present present and a present future. Not only the past of distant memory, however; the time in which we are is not point-like on a line, but, as Lucy Lippard has written, inevitably retains "...elements of the recent past... if continuity of experience is to be possible".²⁷ There is a duration to the lived present, it endures into the future, with expectations of what will come next in life. This sense of expectation has significant potential in landscape, as anticipation - of creativity, refreshment, coming benefits - brings a new dimension to landscapes in time – they add to the enjoyment of a space in the moment and its comparisons with the past.

Time can be experienced also in relative ways in experience and activity in landscape: it sometimes seems to stretch, or to shrink..."The watched pot never boils", time "stands still", time "flies" or "runs away", "I lose track of time" are all common expressions of time experienced. Time escapes control for example, in walking, playing and reverie – de Certeau's significant (subversive) practices, exercised in time.²⁸ Some encounters in landscape can be perceived as being "outside time". For some kinds of activity it appears necessary to let go of the clock and permit oneself to be wholly absorbed. These kinds of activity include making music or art, dance, love, and meditation, as well as some kinds of landscape appreciation. These are sometimes described to be like "standing outside oneself" (ekstasis or ecstasy). In addition to a loss of awareness of the passage of time, may come alertness and clarity of mind while also relaxed and absorbed, as well as pleasure and excitement and satisfaction.²⁹ It may give a sense of connection and ease with the world; sometimes "peak

²⁶ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice (1964) *The Primacy of Perception and other essays on phenomenological psychology, the philosophy of art, history, and politics*, trans. James M. Edie, Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press. p.48

²⁷ Lippard, (1997)

²⁸ de Certeau Michel, (1982) *The Practice of Everyday Life*, Transl. Stephen Rendall, Berkeley and London: University of California Press. p.xx

²⁹ Fraser, (2000) *Time, Conflict and Human Values* p133ff. Betty Edwards (1979) *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, p. 57, describes the experience of drawing while in what she calls the "R-mode (or Right Brain) state", for which a shift from "left brain mode" is necessary (though the shift itself, while intended, is not a conscious one).

experiences “ are possible.³⁰ That landscape can offer this is most important in the reconnecting with the Earth, discussed above in the ‘Nature’ chapter, and for growing into Dwelling.

This study explores aspects and experiences of this time in the Don journeys project of chapter 9, as it has often unrealised implications for landscape. Landscape appreciation is full of this feeling of past and future enfolded in the present. This is the lived experience which takes place in landscape, by users and designers, interpreted through their own experience. A place with “time to stand and stare” is a place where we can stop, and rest, watch or think,³¹ as well as places to play, whether games or creative and exploratory play.

2.2.2 *Human temporality*

All human beings face towards an horizon of temporality.³² Life is circumscribed, for each living being, by birth and death. Death being the final horizon. Thinking of life as “a process of growth through self-organisation” is only half the story, Fraser reflects. “The whole story is that of a conflict between growth and decay co-ordinated in the organic present.”³³ The Greeks faced their backs to this horizon. As Robert Pirsig, has reflected, they:

...saw the future as something that came upon them from behind their backs with the past receding before their eyes. When you think about it, that's a more accurate metaphor than our present one. Who really can face the future? All you can do is project from the past, even when the past shows that such projections are often wrong. And who can really forget the past? What else is there to know?³⁴

³⁰ Rohde, C.L.E., and Kendle, A, (1995); Maslow's pyramid of self-actualisation.

³¹ Cooper Marcus, Clare, (1997), *Home as a Mirror of Self, Exploring the deeper meaning of home*, Conari Press, US

³² Heidegger, (2007) *Being and Time*, ed. Macquarrie and Robinson, Oxford: Blackwell.

³³ Fraser, (1999) p.40

³⁴ Pirsig Robert M., (1974) *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry into Values*, New York: Perennial. p424

The time facing this horizon is lived time, both as an individual and a shared experience. It takes place in the shared business of everyday living, tasks etc, as "we attend to one another".³⁵

2.3 Historical Time

The third philosophical perspective on time is "historical" or socio-historical time. This is inter-subjective time – it has a social perspective to its experience. It is qualitative, being always an interpretation and in the form of narrative. It includes moral judgements, and is culturally formed and affected. The French philosopher, Paul Ricoeur saw "properly historical time" as "the product of narrative inscriptions of lived time onto cosmic time".³⁶ Historical time includes the time of the clock which was invented in Switzerland in 1780, was imposed uniformly in Britain in the nineteenth century with the need for working railway timetables.³⁷

This perspective on time affects landscape projects through the presence of the past in artefacts, architecture, and spatial arrangements which represent and recall other past events and people. Landscape intrinsically has time depth - the experience of a place includes knowledge and memory of the imagination of the past, but also the recognition of the marks of the past, and the valuing of the process of its making.

3. Time and temporality in landscape

The remainder of this discussion of Time turns to the importance and influence of approaches to time, and explores the ways that conceptions of the past, the present and the future each affect Landscape practice.

³⁵ Ingold, (1993)

³⁶ Ricoeur, Paul (1985), *Time and Narrative* Vol 2., (1990): Vol 3. transl. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer, Chicago: Chicago University Press, p.9; Osborne, (1994) "Politics of Time." p.4

³⁷ See above in 2.1.1; Woodcock, George (1977) "The Tyranny of the Clock," in *The Anarchist Reader* London: Fontana.

3.1 Past

In almost all human cultures there is a tendency to look backward in relation to time - to the "Golden Age", a lost Eden. Just as time can seem to control us, forming our behaviour and activity, so we can try to work with it, use it to bring some sense of control and order to our lives. Or we try to take back some control – through interpreting it in narrative, putting it into our own story. Many human relations to time can be about fear, through attachment to the past, fear of chaos as certainties decrease; if we don't hold on to time, manipulate it, keep pace with it, it is almost as though we will be swept away. Envisaging the future only through eyes comfortable with the past, limits and restricts us, inhibits possibility. The past can be something to be run away from, clung to, or always to be recreated. The effect of this thinking on landscape results in a static landscape, a picture. Questions need to be asked of the restoration of historic landscape from the past, which time, which view, which aspect is recreated? And will it be held static at that point?³⁸ By its very nature, this exercise can only ever achieve a landscape seen in two-dimensions, seen from a distance (literally, temporally and metaphorically), and with no possibility of creative connection with now.

3.2 Present

As Lucy Lippard has written, the present is longitudinal.³⁹ It includes and enfolds both past experience, memories, and future hopes, longings, fears. Engaging in the present, is with what is here, what is now; we cannot see a way to the future but need a base from the past on which to stand. The imagination has the vital role in establishing the links with the past and with the future.⁴⁰ Time unfolds around you as you walk through it; you, as yourself, are always at the centre of your experiencing. This recalls Christopher Tilley's idea of "locales" in landscape where the process of

³⁸ See also Corner, (James 1999), "Eidetic operations" In: *Recovering Landscape:*

³⁹ Lippard, (1997)

⁴⁰ Cobb, (1993) *Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*; Higgins, (1995) "Childhood, Romanticism & Landscape"

moving through a landscape, allows it to unfold or unravel before the observer.⁴¹ Landscape design has the potential to play on ideas of the longitudinal present, on our ways of experiencing time, through the spaces it creates, and the experiences it encourages those who dwell within it to enjoy.

3.3 Future

Envisaging time as a straight line allows for change, for better or for worse. The pervasiveness of this way of thinking in western history and culture has created a tradition of judgements of either progress or decline. However Pierre Bourdieu considered an appreciation of, "the simple possibility that things might proceed otherwise", was "sufficient to change the whole experience of practice and, by the same token, its logic".⁴² Entertaining the possibility that things could be different in the future, indeed grasping *possibility* itself, affects ways of operating, ways of seeing the world, now.⁴³ When markers from the past are permitted to define what is possible in the future, define our limits, then we are being short-sighted. But these markers, be they literal or metaphorical landmarks, can be part of the leap into an unknown future, and, when worked with, provide a solid base from which to embrace it.⁴⁴ Landscape practice can *plan* for the unknown possibilities of future in its plans, its designs; the future is a flexible dimension to be embraced, not just to permit, but to encourage its possibility, in practice. James Corner envisages this in his *Ecology and Landscape as Agents of Creativity* and calls for ecology and landscape to combine forces on creative explosion to address urgent planetary issues.⁴⁵

4. Time and scale; time and the senses

⁴¹ Tilley, Christopher (1994) *A Phenomenology of Landscape*

⁴² Bourdieu, Pierre (1990) *The Logic of Practice*, tr. Nice, R. Cambridge, Polity, quoted in Osborne, (1994) p.4.

⁴³ Osborne, (1994) p.7

⁴⁴ Lippard, (1997) p.8

⁴⁵ Corner 1997 "Ecology and Landscape as Agents of Creativity" In: Thompson G.F. and Steiner F. eds, *Ecological Design and Planning*. New York, Wiley.

There is a sense in which time and space are now too large to comprehend, in relation to our own size and lifespan, whether in millions of years of evolution or billions of miles of outer space. In the context of the world, we can experience landscapes of an scale beyond the human.⁴⁶ In the natural world, these can inspire fear and awe and a sense of human smallness and dependence; huge scale in designed landscapes, such as seen in former Eastern bloc countries, can lead more to apathy, despair. These can be overcome by design principles which use intermediaries, variation between the middle distance and the intimate space, both human intermediaries, and spatial ones, which relate humans closer to the landscape.⁴⁷

It is a struggle to conceive of the scale of time present in the creation of the natural world. As Tim Ingold reminds us,

... what appear to us as the fixed forms of the landscape, passive and unchanging unless acted upon from outside, are themselves in motion, albeit on a scale immeasurably slower and more majestic than that on which our own activities are conducted.⁴⁸

There are seemingly animate and inanimate timescales in nature, yet "life is a name for what is going on in the generative field within which organic forms are located and 'held in place'".⁴⁹ Nature is alive with change, and there is a need for humans to grapple with ways of engaging with that change, from an awareness and sensitivity to it.

The senses need the time element to register an experience. The speed of the eye-brain connection gives the impression of instantaneity, but to take in a visual, static picture or landscape picture, fixed at one chosen moment in time, nevertheless needs the movement of the eyes to be appreciated; the eyes travel to take it in. Merleau-Ponty has called this "the exploratory

⁴⁶ Conversations with people whose home landscapes are in Canada and Australia, respectively, compare the vast scale of landscapes there with the small scale of Britain, where humans can have the illusion of being able to dominate the forces of nature.

⁴⁷ Jellicoes, (1995) p.395

⁴⁸ Ingold, (1993) p.164

⁴⁹ Ingold *ibid* p.164

gaze". The ear hears sound in time. Each of the other senses needs time for the sensation to register.⁵⁰

5. Landscapes for time

In the modern world, there is a perception that our sense of time has diminished – "action supersedes contemplation".⁵¹ Peter Osborne responds to this by stressing the importance of regaining a sense of history and of possibility, in order to unblock barriers to change. To realise the present, the past and future must be held in appropriate balance; there needs to be a "social production of possibility" within people's minds – culture can enable a view of the future engaged with the possibility it can contain, to believe that change for the better is possible. As Osborne reflects, "the simple possibility that things might proceed otherwise' must be produced as experience if the otherwise is to proceed".⁵² This is significant for the creativity of landscape design. Imagination needs to believe in possibility – to connect with ecology and the present context.⁵³

If landscape were to be looked at, practised, as *temporal* as much as *spatial*, taking account of the dynamic of space-time, what difference would it make? It would reflect the greater importance of *process* rather than form, flexible, malleable, ready to grow and change. This embraces the way that place can be experienced in the longitudinal present – the present that brings with it the past and the future – and is engaged with *latitudinally*, in the space around. Each place, each landscape, would be worked with as "a layered location" with its human histories, memories, natural sediments, deposits and remains.⁵⁴ Landscape design would connect with this, bring depth beyond surface, reveal the continual shaping of space and not rest in the finished form.

⁵⁰ Merleau-Ponty, (2002) *Phenomenology of Perception*. p.367

⁵¹ Jellicoe and Jellicoe, (1995), p398

⁵² Osborne, (1994) pp.7-8

⁵³ Corner (1997)

⁵⁴ Lippard, (1997). p.7

CHAPTER 8

DWELLING

"Dwelling" is a theme which has been discussed in landscape and related (ecologically concerned) discourses over the last twenty years. This closing chapter of Part 2 looks at what landscape theorists seem to be envisaging in their use of the concept of dwelling, and relates it to the three "problematic themes" discussed above, to which it connects closely, and suggests approaches to creating rich and healthful landscapes, in which humans may learn again to perceive, to dwell within, and take part in a landscape's temporal nature.

"Dwelling" as discussed here comes from the verb "to dwell" – to abide in one place, i.e. "the abiding in one place". As a noun it is, of course, an old word for a building itself, perhaps in a rural setting. The verb and the noun are both old words, old English and old-fashioned, being poetic, recalling images of a modest rural life. And they are in many senses out of keeping with today: many people do not "abide in one place" throughout their lives; many migrate between two or more places on a regular basis. What then could this concept offer to our mobile urban society? Landscape theorists, in their discussions of dwelling, envisage an extension of landscape concepts and practice. We need, therefore, first to understand the concept's use in theory.

1. What is dwelling, as a landscape approach?

David Seamon has edited two books on Dwelling, first with Robert Mugerauer in *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, (1985, reprinted 2000) and second, *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing* (1993).¹ With a wide range of contributors from a number of disciplines, offering fresh insights to

¹ David Seamon is an American professor of architecture, with background in behavioral geography and environmental psychology. Seamon D and Mugerauer R (2000) *Dwelling, Place and Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world.*, 2nd ed., Malabar, FL: Krieger; Seamon ed. (1993) *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, SUNY.

environmental and architectural concern, these collections aimed to demonstrate the “cohesive conceptual power of the phenomenological approach” in showing “how qualities of nature, place and architecture contribute to human experience, in a positive, sustaining way”.² In his introduction to the first collection, Seamon interprets Heidegger on place and dwelling, seeing dwelling as “both a state of being and a process”, a process by which a place in which we exist “becomes a personal world and home” and from which to relate to the rest of the world.³ It is about immersion in, rather than separation from, the world in which we are situated. It does not limit itself to the present but invites a creative expansive future, open to new experiences. In seeking harmony between people, and people and world, it transcends oppositions, yet celebrates mystery and the unknown. Central to its discussion is the authority of perception, as understood in phenomenology.

2. Designing for dwelling - methodology

Discussions of dwelling in a landscape context invariably relate to the implications for designing landscapes. Seamon and Mugerauer saw a strength in the union of theory and practice in design, and aimed to encourage “sensitive seeing and building grounded in dwelling,” as this would “strengthen the world ecologically, humanly, and spiritually”.⁴

Charlene Spretnak’s more recent work has added the need for a spiritual link between ecology and design.⁵ James Corner also advocates an ecology joined with landscape as creative agents, and an attitude of “phenomemological wonderment, doubt, and humility, rather than the emphasis on rational prowess in landscape design”.⁶ This all emphasises how, in the relationship between dwelling and design, the attitude of the designer her/himself is important; it includes a need for “heartfeltness”, for

² Seamon and Mugerauer eds (2000).

³ Seamon and Mugerauer eds (2000): p.8; Moran (2000) p 238, on Heidegger

⁴ Seamon and Mugerauer eds (2000). p11

⁵ Spretnak, (1999) *Resurgence of the Real*:

⁶ Corner (1997) p 105

self-understanding. It involves an experiencing, a process of growing, a responsive attitude, an openness to learn on the part of the designer.

A criticism of this approach may be an apparent lack of concreteness; there is no spelling out of what might be needed to enable these things. How would it match up with the world of practice against commercial or cultural pressures? Too often, in landscape practice the attitudes of the client, developer or planner drives the design: a responding to and sensitivity to the possibilities of dwelling, requires a greater degree of bottom up control where the landscape architect has more input and freedom.

What might be a landscape designed to enable others to dwell? Several landscape writers have touched on this subject. Anne Whiston Spirn has called for practical functioning systems (rather than dysfunctional ones), of sun, water, air, and earth, as a basis for home, to dwell within. For her, this creates a fluency of language, landscape language, which we can read as we live, be at home in. In *The Language of Landscape*, she expresses landscape in terms of “native language”, of home, “the material home”, “the original dwelling”. To dwell – to make and care for a place – is self-expression.⁷

Catherine Howett has advocated looking for landscape design that would engage people, rather than give something just to look at, encounters with nature, working with rather than looking at nature.⁸ This involves the designing having a sensitivity to the spirit of the place, the *genius loci* of every site, and being aware of her/his own taken-for-granted design definitions and preferences. These might be sometimes allowing nature to express its unruliness, rather than be tidied up, and of seeing landscape design as a living process rather than as a static product.⁹

⁷ Spirn (1997) pp.15-16

⁸ Howett (1993) p.69-71

⁹ The British and more particularly the English have a particular need to be constantly ‘tidying up’ even wild places. Richard Mabey wrote in BBC Wildlife magazine (Feb. 2003, vol. 21. 2, p.39) about the Chiltern Hills where the landscape was muddled “What was this ‘nature’ that I used as a happenstance habitat? As I grew up and started to write, it seemed nothing like the orderly managed, ‘man made’ environment that the English tradition insisted on”. Also Nassauer, Joan Iverson June 2004, talk at the University of

James Corner, meanwhile, has pointed to new ways and new "worlds" available, "the revitalisation of wonderment and poetic value in human relations with Nature" to be made possible by stripping away "the crust of habit and convention that prohibits fresh sight and relationship". The "transfiguration" enabled by getting "behind the veneer of language in order to discover aspects of the unknown within what is already familiar", is "a process of finding and then founding *alternative worlds*". This Corner considered a "raison d'être for landscape architecture".¹⁰

Tuning into site and community, Frank Chaffin, a landscape architect and teacher in America, has explored how a designer may become tuned to the landscape s/he is engaged to work with through its spatial rhythm; by canoeing down the rivers of the Isle Brevelle, in the Mississippi delta, he was able to experience the landscape's value and significance to the community who lived there.¹¹

Kimberly Dovey and Randolph Hester have written of landscape practice where they have attempted to tune into a community's aspirations, special places and patterns, as preparation for regeneration programmes or landscape intervention.¹² In each, feelings and meaning to users are seen as important to the design process, as well as identification of particular places of special meaning to the users. Randolph Hester helped the residents of a rundown fishing village in America chart the places which were important to them (what they named the Sacred Structure) to be preserved; these were not at all those an outsider would select, but had special meaning for them. As a result the community was able to retain its integrity through a regeneration programme. Kimberly Dovey, working in Australia, distinguishes between and the disjunctions (and its results)

Sheffield; Nassauer, J.I. 1995. Messy Ecosystems, Orderly Frames. *Landscape Journal*. 14:2, pp. 161-170

¹⁰ Corner (1997), p98

¹¹ Chaffin, V. Frank (1988), "Rhythm and Dwelling: the Isle of Brevelle as a landscape of home", *Landscape Journal*, 7: 96-106

¹² Dovey Kimberly (1993) "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process"; Randolph Hester, (1993) "Sacred Structures and Everyday Life: a return to Manteo, North Carolina," both in: Seamon ed. *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing*: 271-297.

between the “geometric space” of two-dimensional maps, drawings, plans, which are devoid (deliberately wiped clean) of feeling and cultural meaning, for the sake of clarity for practical construction purposes, and the “lived-space” where people do or will dwell, with all the habits and values and meaning of living human lives.

In suggesting sensitivity and attentiveness to people and to the site, this discussion of dwelling and design is runs along well-recognised marks of good design. There seems to be a caution, a tentativeness about going further, to offer concrete indications of what it is to produce in practice a landscape for dwelling.

3. Designing for dwelling - in practice

What is it ecologists and landscape architects are truly aiming for, when talking of a landscape for dwelling?¹³ There can be no one blueprint, no “master-plan” of the process and product, of creating this landscape. The attempts at such management and control in twentieth-century design have shown this to be a fallacy, as they have engendered mistakes with vast destructive consequences. A grand plan would be inappropriate in a world which recognises plurality and multiple viewing points. Outcome cannot therefore be determined; to plan for dwelling might well be to set in train a process which then takes on its own dynamic, its own ecology, and may be worked with as it unfolds. Other writers have pointed to several important ingredients to a phenomenological method for a landscape for dwelling.

3.1 The importance of the local; landscape from the inside

¹³ When planning a landscape, designers can fall into the trap of the 'Field of Dreams Hypothesis' - if you build it they will come'. This is where it is assumed, in creating a space for habitat – for creatures, for humans – it will then be used, just as the designer intended. There is, of course, no guarantee of this. And in designing a space for dwelling, the designer must be ever aware that not everyone will dwell there.

To become dwellers in the land, to come to know the earth, fully and honestly, the crucial and perhaps only and all-encompassing task is to understand the place, the immediate, specific place, where we live.¹⁴

When experiencing a landscape, its interpretation is made from within the landscape, not from the outside. It is the detail that makes the character. Richard Mabey writes of "landscape from the inside", "home ground", "native patch".¹⁵ He also insists on the importance of each individual unique species or type with its own particular contribution to the place; that we cannot just casually replace one species by another:

"A plantation will not "do" for an ancient wood. A dandelion cannot stand in for a primrose. When the swifts return it is crucial that they are swifts, not starlings, and that they are returning. They become, for their brief stay, a symbolic reminder - as the whole natural world is, in a way - that the *alternative to progress is not stagnation but renewal*. This is the revelation that Ted Hughes celebrated in his own tribute to the swifts' return:

They've made it again,
Which means the globe's still working,
The Creation's still waking refreshed, our summer's still all to come -
And here they are, here they are again...¹⁶

The question is, how can people learn to be attentive to landscapes, to Nature? Where can they gain this sensitivity, this reading of the signs, that will reveal how the "alternative to progress is not stagnation but renewal"? There is a need for awareness of fellow creatures – "all our relations", as David Peat calls them – and an imagining of other ways to live, to design, to construct places to live within, based on a deeper understanding of our relationship with the natural world around us.¹⁷

3.2 The need for mentors

¹⁴ Sale Kirkpatrick quoted in Bate (2000) *The Song of the Earth*. London, Picador

¹⁵ Mabey Richard (1999) and (2005)

¹⁶ Hughes Ted "Swifts", quoted in Mabey Richard (1980) *The Common Ground: A place for nature in Britain's future?*, London: Hutchinson, p.251. (my italics)

¹⁷ Peat David F (2006) "The Saving of Planet Gaia", *New Scientist* 18 March 2006.

Mentors are needed to introduce people to Nature in its richness, to help them to begin to see, to hear, so be sensitised to what is around them. Who might these mentors be? They might be the nature writer, the teacher, the poet, the artist, and most frequently, the parent, themselves with knowledge passed on within the family. (what of those families where the parent-figure does not know?) The landscape architect may also become mentor. John Cameron, a social ecologist in Australia, has devised ways of (re)introducing people to the Australian landscape, through courses of re-education and immersion and interpretation. These short courses, called "Coming into Country" are a preparation to see and understand, to enter into relationship with the landscape, especially for city-dwellers where the deep links with the "country" were ruptured long ago.¹⁸

James Corner sees the approach of social ecology as of particular interest for landscape architecture.¹⁹ While highly critical of the modern cultural paradigm, social ecologists look to the power of human imagination and creativity for cultural reformation – an "ethics of complementarity".²⁰ They call for "a new animism" in which human societies, through reinvigoration of the cultural imagination, would see the world with new eyes – with wonderment, respect and reverence; a dialogue and "more profound inquiry into the nature of our embodiedness – as thinking, feeling humans, and as thinking feeling earth".²¹

¹⁸ Cameron John (2001) "Place, belonging and ecopolitics: learning our way towards the place-responsive society" in *Ecopolitics*, 1:2; John Cameron and San Roque, (2001), "Coming into Country: Social Ecology as Catalysing Process", *Philosophy, Art, Nature*, 2.

¹⁹ Corner (1997) p.92.

²⁰ Corner (1997) p.92. "This approach targets technoeconomic aspects of the modern cultural paradigm, and is especially critical of social practices of domination, commodification and instrumentality" In the development of a "new liberatory project", social ecology believe that the greatest potential for cultural reformation lies within the power of human imagination and creativity although they insist as well on the parallel development of alternative social structures (political, institutional, ideological, ethical and habitual) to those that sustain the modern paradigm. They aim for a dialectical synthesis between rational thought, spontaneous imagination and spiritual development."

²¹ Zimmerman ed. (1993), *Environmental Philosophy*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.: Prentice Hall. Quoted in Corner "Ecology and Landscape".

Landscape and story

Telling a story – a narrative – is a way of introducing people to knowing the place where they live (used in many cultures), a way of directing a learner to the way to see. Tim Ingold recalls:

Native dwellers...learn through an education of attention. The novice hunter, for examples, travels through the country with his mentors, and as he goes, specific features are pointed out to him. Other things he discovers for himself, in the course of further forays, by watching, listening and feeling. Thus the experienced hunter is the *knowledgeable* hunter.²²

Ingold goes on to say: "Telling a story is not like weaving a tapestry to *cover up* the world, it is rather a way of guiding the attention of listeners or readers *into* it."²³

I find the way Ben Okri describes the writer of stories is suggestive of the designer of landscapes:

The superiority of one writer to another is not just in the quality of language; but also in the quality of the storytelling; the quality of enchantment; and the timelessness of that enchantment. It is therefore futile to speak of superiorities. There is only that which lives and which keeps on living. It is in the creation of story, the lifting of story into the realms of art, it is in this that the higher realms of creativity reside.²⁴

A designer of landscapes can seek to enchant those who experience it. Like the winding narrative of a story, the features of a landscape can keep the person within it, keep their attention, play to their intrigue and curiosity. As Okri writes, "a good story keeps on growing"; and so can a landscape - literally. And taking up a telling landscape theme, Okri notes, "Like water, stories are taken much for granted. They are seemingly ordinary and neutral, but are one of humanity's most powerful weapons for good or

²² Ingold (1993) p.153

²³ Ingold, *ibid* p153.

²⁴ Okri Ben (1996) *Birds of Heaven*, London: Orion. p.31

evil".²⁵ The power of story is recognised in many cultures; In this television and film era it is disguised, as if reality, but just as much the power of story.

3.3 Encouraging dwelling

Designers cannot make people dwell, they can only offer the opportunity to people, who then have to take that opportunity to "dwell" in the designed landscape. The designer can be attentive to existing human, and more-than-human, uses and ways of living in a place. S/he can pay attention to the rhythms and textures of the place, and highlight where the character of a place lies, its spirit. S/he can develop an imagining of other ways to live, to design, to construct places to live within, based on a deeper understanding of our relationship with the natural world around us.²⁶ This is an inner attitude which usually needs mentors, has to be learned and fostered, but can also be found anywhere.

Stephen Harding has recounted an experience he had on one of his first research projects, a study of the Reeves muntjac deer in a wood near Oxford. This involved a painstaking quantitative survey of the area's vegetation. In the midst of this "mind-numbing number-gathering", Harding would relax and feel himself merge with the environment, until he came to realise that he was learning more in this way, as a "sensing organism", than through factual analysis. His conclusion is that a scientific approach to ecology must be tempered with a deep reverence that allows our powers of intuition to bring us into contact with the natural world. It is a move towards what the eco-theologian Thomas Berry calls "a communion of subjects" rather than a "collection of objects", and towards Goethe's "active looking" and "deep questioning".²⁷

This a landscape architect can enable, with design to highlight richness, variety, surprise, following the changing of the seasons, in growth, in

²⁵ Okri, *Ibid.* p.157

²⁶ Peat David F (2006) "The Saving of Planet Gaia" *New Scientist* 18 March 2006.

²⁷ Harding Stephen (2006) *Animate Earth: Science Intuition and Gaia*, London: Green Books.

movement, in the visible creatures it might attract, thus producing a landscape textured in many ways. Such a landscape contrasts with other methods of design which engender empty, dull, brutal(ist), and obvious spaces, which do not stimulate or awaken our human sensibility. This could answer James Corner's cry, in Chapter 4, against the "corpse-like constructs of such obscene explicitude" of much contemporary landscape design, and his call for landscape of "seduction, elusivity, incompleteness, mystery, imagination, poetic, and memory.

4. Dwelling in urban as well as rural areas

In Britain, the planning and building process can work against a landscape architect's ability to design new landscapes that encourage dwelling, in perhaps the way that rural areas or longer established town areas can. Landscape architects are often brought into projects too far into the concept to fulfil a landscape's potential for dwelling in design. The academic discourse on the need for dwelling hardly faces up to this reality. In the British context, government regulation for much development has in recent years encouraged high-density building, for example in residential areas, 30 houses per hectare (2.47 acres). This invariably leads to buildings with tiny plots of land attached, and little scope for larger design concepts that might stimulate a relationship of dwelling through an encouraging of wildlife. Tiny plots may discourage entering into an absorbed relationship with one's space and creativity. There are however some projects, which are deliberately set out to nurture a relationship between an urban area and wildlife. There are now many such projects.

The ideas of "native ground" and "home patch" may conjure images of rural living but these examples are in cities, for a mobile society, where many commute, and change jobs and cities regularly. These are both adaptable terms, and it is possible to learn to be "at home" in new places. This is the real challenge to design for dwelling for landscape architects, as, although they may have been inspired by their own experience in countryside

landscapes, they mostly work in urban areas, and create landscapes for city-dwellers.

To dwell in an urban landscape can still be about being in touch with nature. To live in the city is as much to live among other living things, animals, insects, birds, plants as in rural areas, with the same scope to consider their importance. Design of urban landscape can realise the importance of street trees, of back gardens, and of the walk through a park (not just a grass patch with a swing or two) or along the river to urban dwellers. In the city, there are still possibilities to watch the buds waiting for the longer hours of daylight, the snowdrops, the daffodils, the trees in fresh leaf, the fruit blossom opening to pollinating insects, to smell spring in the air, see the first swallow, hear the screaming swifts returned from Africa; to listen to the blackbird's song at dawn, the warblers hidden in the branches of trees; the micro-delights of beetles, hedgehog, butterflies, moths, to watch ants and bees at work; dig the earth, touch the vegetables, fruits; to kick the fallen leaves in the park, and find the track of the fox in the snowy garden. All this happens for people in cities and towns too – and they could be more frequent, if planning and design included much fuller understanding of their importance and insisted on inclusion of suitable vegetation strategy and maintenance planning and skills.

It requires public landscapes to be kept “well-enough”, which does not mean bowling-green perfect, but good-enough for people and nature dialogue.²⁸

5. Coming into relationship with place

This study has critiqued ideas of beauty and the disembodied visual. Dwelling offers a different perception, a continuous relationship in time. There are stages of perceiving a place. The tourist relates to a place with unfamiliarity. They come to see, yet often with a preconceived expectation

²⁸ Like “good-enough” parenting – good enough for growing but not for an idealised perfection, which can inhibit growing. “Good-enough mothering” described in Winnicott D.W. (1968) *The Family and Individual Development*, p.18.

and interpretation.²⁹ There is an element of imposition. If a landscape is designed for this relationship – that of the tourist gaze – then it need only deal in appearance, in superficiality. But landscape can be designed to have more, to allow the seeing of more with each encounter, the longer one dwells there. Familiarity can build up with a staying with the landscape, and comparisons can be made with other visits. What can be aimed for is a totality – an interpretation of the place from within the experience of it – not looking from the outside, but a looking from within, and involving the very person in the looking. Spending time to see-with the landscape as John Wylie has called it.³⁰ Goethe's phrase was "dwelling within the phenomena" in order to come to know and understand.

Tim Ingold has written, "A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there...". This affirms the dimension of time in any relationship of dwelling in – and so *knowing* – a landscape.³¹ David Seamon has stressed the importance of a "suitable balance between home and journey, memory and expectation, past and present" for dwelling in a place to be possible.³² Each of these is needed – time in one place, time in the changing of places.

Again, Tim Ingold has described dwelling as "the temporal dimension and expression of landscape – the music rather than the painting". Perhaps his reason for taking this metaphor in particular, is that music is only perceived over time, in the resonance of notes over time, either heard through the ear, or in vibration in the body. Music cannot be paused on one note and be perceived, in the same sense. Music is experienced in the present, through its replaying. Painting, on the other hand, in its visual beauty, is often a capturing of a single moment – that one paused note – and remains as that, viewed over and over again, but with this too a relationship can develop through time – each time of looking at the painting more or something else

²⁹ Harrison (1986) *Living Landscape*. See also Corner, *Recovery of Landscape*, p.156f

³⁰ Wylie John (2005), "A Single Day's Walking: narrating self and landscape on the South West Coast Path" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, Vol.30,2,234-247

³¹ Ingold (1993) p.155

³² Seamon David (2000) "Reconciling old and new worlds: The dwelling journey relationship as portrayed in Vilhelm Moberg's "Emigrant" novels," in Seamon and Mugerauer eds. *Dwelling, Place and Environment*: pp.227-245.

can be seen within it, and the imagination too can be stimulated³³. Dwelling in a landscape allows its distinctiveness, its own beauty, to be experienced through time, like a “symphony” of diffused sensation, with all the senses, Merleau-Ponty’s *synaesthesia*, not taken in, in the one, single, focused viewpoint.³⁴

Ingold advocated the “dwelling perspective”, which recognises a landscape to be constituted, “as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves”. In this, such a perspective moves beyond “the split of naturalistic or culturalistic views of landscape”.³⁵ For landscape architecture I suggest the exploration moves further beyond this discovery of the past to what constitutes dwelling here and now, and what it might be to design for dwelling here.

To dwell in a landscape, this “dwelling perspective” is therefore to grow into a rich relationship with a landscape, with nature; shared with, in interaction with, in mutual attention to the other dwellers there, both animate and also what is seen as inanimate. It is to be open to the where, when, how and why of the special qualities of that place, with perhaps a response of awe and wonder instead of a judgement of “beauty”. To develop a sense of home may happen in more than one place; it depends upon the person’s attitude, (and may give an even richer appreciation of living in our planet earth). An understanding of space-time may help put right the balance between senses of space and time in landscape, so that the dwelling in time, the event, the happening, the interaction within the landscape takes its rightful place in planning and design.

³³ I have heard in conversation people describe imaginative engagements with a picture – having adventures within it, and reminders of quite different past experiences. This method may be used in many educational or therapeutic environments. Visualisation can be a powerful tool. See Bortoft (2000)

³⁴ See Merleau-Ponty and perception, Chapter 3.

³⁵ Ingold (1993), p.152

PART THREE

EXPERIENCES OF "BEING IN THE LANDSCAPE"

CHAPTER 9

DON JOURNEYS

This thesis so far has engaged with the literature and theory. It is time to introduce the practical elements of the study to test out and shed light on those ideas and their potential in design. In the preceding chapters it was seen how some landscape architects introduced the concept of dwelling as a process of becoming at home in a landscape, as a way of integrating different sources of landscape authority and circumventing the problems of binary rationalism in landscape theory and practice. The practical projects of this next part of this thesis look at what this might mean at ground level, and, with the insights of phenomenology, move towards a weaving together of practical and theoretical understanding of the hidden meanings within landscape and of the concept of dwelling.

The gathering of the material of the literature review involved an intellectual journey, which explored streams of discourse. The chapter which follows describes the first of the series of practical projects which encountered and engaged with the river landscapes of Sheffield. This material is gathered from a series of physical journeys, five one-day rambles, which explored an actual river, the River Don. These walks followed a designated walking route named the Five Weirs Walk, between Lady's Bridge in central Sheffield and Meadowhall, to the north east.¹

The River Don and the Five Weirs Walk

The landscape along the River Don in Sheffield has never been *designed*, but it has been *made* and used by human beings over years, layer upon layer of many different generations. As Sheffield's principal river and a landscape deeply connected with the history of the city, it offers an opportunity for reflecting on and grounding the theoretical understanding so far introduced in this thesis.

¹Five Weirs Walk Trust, (1998), *Five Weirs Walk, River Don, Sheffield*.

The landscape along the River Don today is functional, an active working landscape of a particular rather rough distinctive style, but is also complex and diverse, reflecting part of the style of the city itself. It sits within but cut off from the wider River Don Valley, much of which has been redeveloped since the demise of much of the city's industrial base since 1980. Though some of the industrial activity has changed and some works and buildings have been demolished and some replaced, still today the marks of history are everywhere. The weirs of the Five Weirs Walk by their role in harnessing the energy of waterpower for industrial growth symbolise this history over the last two to five hundred years.² Now the river is very vegetated along much of its course, with pockets of wildlife, some wilder, some tended; it used to have none. For more than two centuries of the industrial era, the Don, abused like the other rivers within the city, was a conduit of shame and filth, and therefore neglected, hidden, lost to sight, abandoned, until legislation and new technology, and eventually economic change, cleaned it up.³ Though once more full of life, and of interest and value to sectors of the population, the River Don for much of its course within the city has been hidden along its banks by the industrial buildings whose backs are turned towards the river with no outlook onto the water. Until the Five Weirs Walk was begun along the Lower Don in 1988 only glimpses were available to the determined pedestrian at crossing points, or between buildings; there was no continuous path beside it for access. The last stages of the Walk still await completion, and the Upper Don path is now open.

² The weirs were constructed to direct the river's flow into dams or millponds, which built up a head of water, which then gushed through great water wheels, which turned the grinding wheels for the manufacturing of metal, cutlery and steel. The weirs that survive to this day, though no longer supplying power for industrial processes, are symbols of the city's claimed identity as "Steel City". More about this in Chapter 2, and in the Loxley Valley, Chapter 10.

³ Firth, C, (2001), *Domesday to the Dawn of the New Millennium – 900 years of the Don Fisheries*, Environment Agency. Also Hey, David, (1998) *A History of Sheffield*, Sheffield: Carnegie Publishing passim. And Binfield, Clyde, et al, ed. (1993), *The history of the city of Sheffield, 1843-1993*. Vols. 1, 2 & 3. Sheffield. Sheffield Academic Press

The purpose of the walks, for me the researcher, was to engage over a period of time with a landscape with which I was not already familiar, a landscape which was easily accessible, a linear landscape of a size, length and scale which could be explored in chunks of time within a day.⁴ It was, from the start, important for practical reasons that it could be explored on foot; it then *became* important philosophically that walking was the medium by which it could be engaged with, exploring spaces from the scale and rhythm and perception of the human body. This led on to developing understanding of embodied landscape experience and of dwelling. The researcher was accompanied for most of the walks by Catherine Dee – they were not solitary, but shared, in dialogue with each other as well as with the landscape.

A landscape experienced in space and time

The Walk could be described as one continuous landscape, or as many differing linked spaces, with infinitely varied detail and quality. The aim was to discover what could be learned about meanings in landscape by being exposed to the landscape itself. The approach involved getting in there, feeling it, encountering and being exposed to whatever came along, reflecting and being inspired or informed. This methodology, as I have explained, included walking, question-asking and gathering.

A linear landscape in space, it was also experienced in time. The walks followed a sequence, but not the same sequence each time – sometimes begun at the Sheffield end, sometimes at the Meadowhall end, and once in the middle. The walks took place over a period of fifteen months, between July 2002 and October 2003, in different seasons, different hours and days of the week, and after different intervening weather events, for example one walk after the heavy flooding in November 2002.

Detecting meanings in landscape - whole and in parts

⁴ Inspiration for walking the landscape as research from walking the landscape as art, by artists such as Richard Long and Hamish Fulton. Long, R, (1997), *A Walk across England* Thames & Hudson Ltd; Fulton, Hamish, (1991) *One hundred walks: a few crows, wide river, ants*, The Hague: Haags Gemeentemuseum; also Chaffin (1988) in his canoe see Chapter 8. Roger Deakin (Deakin (2000) *Waterlog*, swam.

To detect meanings, suggests Henri Bortoft, from the insights of particle physics, we begin to understand the parts by looking at the whole, and vice versa; but we cannot perceive the whole by "standing back to get an overview." On the contrary, he claims, "because the whole is in some way reflected in the parts, it is to be encountered by going further into the parts instead of by standing back from them".⁵ In similar vein, Tim Ingold, from the point of view of landscape archaeology, which is particularly relevant in this historic as well as contemporary landscape of Sheffield, also urges the involved, embodied approach, as a way to engaging with and trying to understand a landscape.⁶

As it happens, the walk along the River Don cannot be looked at from the outside. Topographically, you cannot stand above it and evaluate or assess it, even from the nearest hillsides of the valley itself. You could not get any fense of the quality of it from a helicopter looking down, except as a very detailed two-dimensional "map". You would not know what it is like *to be there*. Perhaps to swim the river or paddle a canoe, ride a horse or cycle, would give some sense of this; for these, like walking, involve *being within the landscape* itself, down in among it, surrounded, embraced by it, excited or frightened or suffocated.⁷

I am therefore walking and looking at the river as a whole and also in individual parts. This river journey is also representative of the bigger whole, of Sheffield itself, and meanings derived from its history, its industrial connections, and its people.⁸ So though the river pattern itself is linear, the meanings of the whole are nested within each part.⁹ Spaces and places, social production and power relationships, human sensing and experience, events and activities, these are all linked in dialogue, both in ideas and practicalities, and unfold in the narrative of the Five Weirs Walk.

⁵ Bortoft, Henri (2000), p.284, quoted in Chapter 1.

⁶ Ingold, (1993) "The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society". *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2: 152-174

⁷ Chapter 5, references for experiential surveys, and Brook, I. (1998).

⁸ See chapter 2 for The Context of Sheffield

⁹ Nesting of meaning already mentioned in Chapter 1, subsection *Meanings*. For a discussion of "nesting" see Bortoft, (2000), p.285. Also Spirn, (1998), p 16.

The "dwelling perspective"

The exploration of this landscape, along this section of the river Don, aimed to arrive at an understanding of dwelling and specifically the "dwelling perspective", described in Chapter 8, in a landscape with "as an enduring record ofpast generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" and to include what is dwelling here now, and what it might be to design for dwelling here in this place. ¹⁰

The dynamic of the journey starts always with the local, the subjective, the direct human experience and perception, from *within* the landscape, then moves understanding on towards theory based on experience.¹¹ The journey, both the river journey and the intellectual journey of exploration, proffer new experiences and understandings, and open up further possibilities.

Recording the walks

These Five Weirs walks were recorded and the route was mapped in various ways. These were later written up and collaged in six sections, with a map or plan of each stage, description of the place, photographs, with notes and diagrams on what was observed there, what was experienced there, the marks of history, uses of the landscape, encounters with people, impacts on the senses, and personal response to the place.

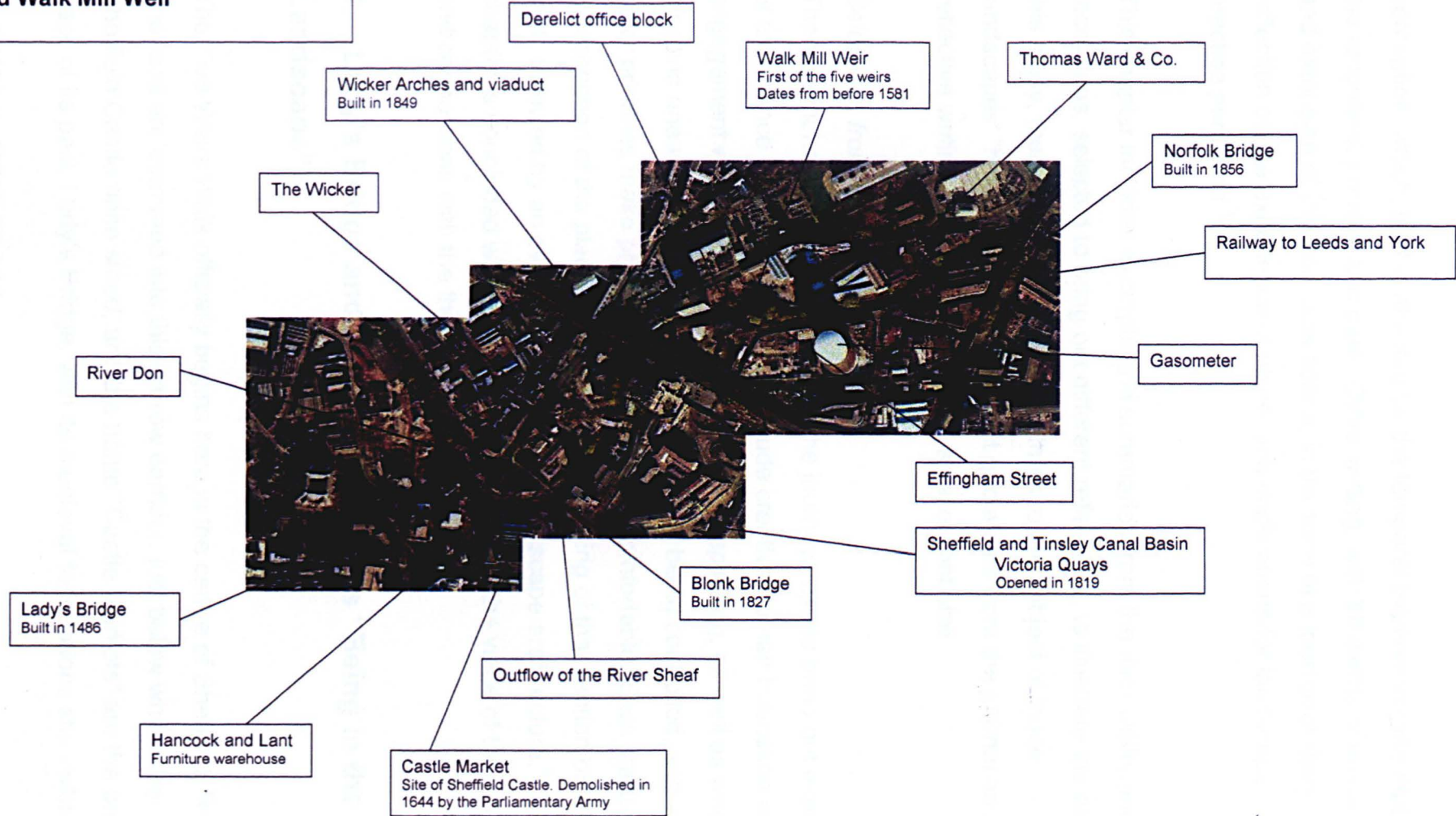
Another account of rambles along the Don, by John Holland, in 1836, and other archival, anecdotal and pictorial material, also informed the study and the walks themselves.¹² All these together build up a picture of the layers of the river and its landscape, and were included in annotation of the drawn maps of the river. These layers are of time and experience, and of

¹⁰ Ingold, (1993), p.152

¹¹ "Immersion in, rather than separation from" Seamon and Mugerauer, (2000); Interpretation from within the landscape, Ingold, *ibid*, Mabey, (2005).

¹² In 1836, John Holland wrote a series of sketches for the Sheffield Mercury newspaper, based on rambles he had made along the Don and other rivers of Sheffield. He described the places and the features, landscape and industry, good views and eyesores, and filled in with detail of significant people in Sheffield life and allusions to historical events and characters connected with these places along the rivers. His observations were very informative both about the Sheffield of the time, complementing contemporary maps and other written commentaries, and about what he considered worthy of comment.

**Lady's Bridge to Norfolk Bridge
and Walk Mill Weir**



perception, which itself is affected by the temporal experience and status of the recorders, present and past. Other writing, with elements of imagination and extension of intuition, was added, in the form of a journal or diary, after reflection on the experience of place, and implications for landscape practice pondered.¹³

This chapter includes excerpts and summaries from the river walks and recordings, selected to bring out different reflections, to illustrate the aims of this study, then evaluates and relates them to the subject of those landscapes' "hidden" meanings. Direct quotations from the journal and from reflective writing are shown in italics in smaller font size.

Selections from the Journeys

The selections from different parts of the journeys aim to bring out aspects of experience of the place. These include creative human habitation and engagement with the landscape, delight and inspiration, as well as where fear and unease emerge, and an oppression of being controlled, and where other priorities make presence for humans uncomfortable. Each starts with a description of the place, events from the walking of that section of the walk, followed by an evaluation in terms of landscape architecture.¹⁴ The chapter is concluded with a general assessment of the value of the walk and connections with the themes of the study.

1. Lady's Bridge and The Castle – Is this “Being in the Landscape”?

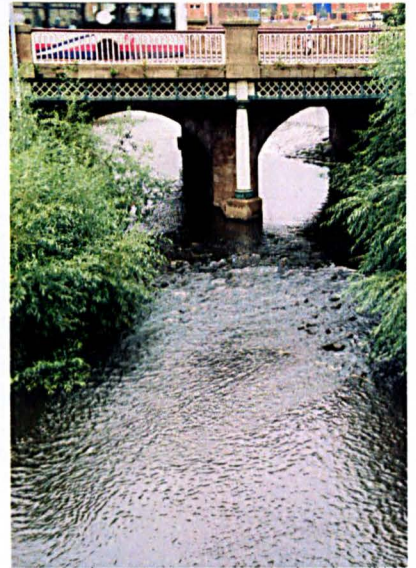
The Five Weirs Walk officially begins here in the centre of Sheffield. River and road are crammed into this narrow corridor, just below where the Sheffield Castle once stood, and the name “Castle Markets” are the only trace of its past. Lady's Bridge, with its medieval foundations still visible

¹³ Abram (1997), p58, after Merleau-Ponty: imagination as part of embodied experience, ;; See chapter 3, 2.3 and 2.5.3; Cobb, Edith, (1993) *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, New Haven, Conn.: Spring.

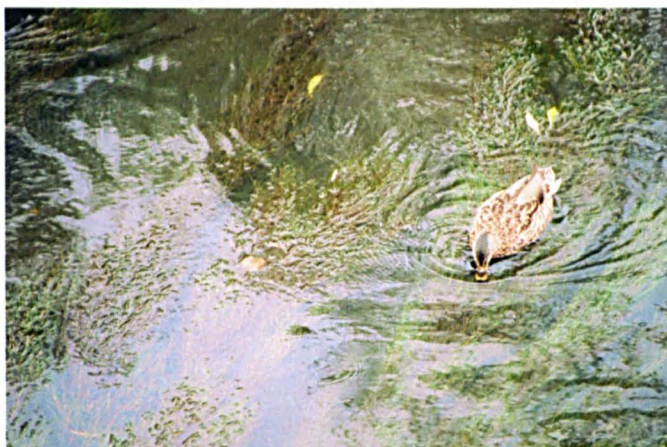
¹⁴ Brook, Isis, (1998), “Goethan science as a way to read landscape” *Landscape Research* Vol 23, 1.



crossed and re-crossed, rumbled and
roared over, used and abused by
thousands every day,



to the living flow and non-human life beneath it



Lady's Bridge

beneath the later iron bridge, takes all the traffic to the Wicker, Meadowhall and the M1 motorway.¹⁵ Several buses a minute swing round the traffic lights, or hurry up the hill of Waingate to the waiting queues of market shoppers and workers. Speed, noise, exhaust fumes and greyness assault the senses. This old bridge is crossed and re-crossed, rumbled and roared over, used by thousands every day, with no connection with its ancient past, its gracious foundations, to the living flow and non-human life beneath it. There is little chance of a glance, even to notice there is a river there.

One rainy Thursday a pair of bedraggled-looking German tourists were exploring the sights of Sheffield and looking at the notice board beside Lady's Bridge, which recalls the past history of the place. On a Sunday afternoon a chatty fisherman had a line over the parapet.¹⁶

Below the bridge along the base of the steep dark, stone-clad, culverted sides there are traces of uncontrolled nature - wildlife, swans, ducks, fish, prolific willow trees, out of sight of the road.

In Castlegate, there is a strange feeling of space and quiet alongside the river, despite being surrounded by roaring, hurtling traffic, long buses, heavy trundling lorries, burly vans, speeding cars. Today there are no other pedestrians. The medieval stone arches which support the Lady's Bridge are obscured by vegetation, but ducks swim and willow grow, water flows.¹⁷

Leaning over in this quiet by the river it is just possible to register the colours and textures, of the red brick-built furniture store opposite, the ripples of the water over the weir, and to see the blue sky reflected. The stone lining of the culvert is marked with passage of water over years and industrial pollution – and even, within the stone itself, rusty-coloured marks

¹⁵ Lady's Bridge was constructed in 1486, widened in 1761, 1852 and 1909. It was however the main crossing point over the Don from at least Roman times. Five Weirs Walk Trust leaflet., and talk by Simon Ogden, 18.6.03, Five Weirs Walk Trust public lecture, *Bridges across the Don*, Sheffield Hallam University,

¹⁶ From Research Journal

¹⁷ From Research Journal



Being-in-the-Landscape at Lady's Bridge.

A time to endure until released by a bus

of geological time, from when it formed in the earth millennia before it was cut out for this construction.

Glancing to the right, beside Blonk Bridge, is the discreet outflow into the Don of the River Sheaf.¹⁸ The Sheaf flows from the south, one kilometre of its length suppressed and hidden underground for a hundred years. Here it looks like a drain or sewer, only to be seen by determined looking.¹⁹ Today the Alexandra pub is the only sign remaining of the former Alexandra music hall, which was built out over the join of Sheaf and Don.

In this road of Castlegate, "being in the landscape" involves exposure to the noise and pollution, as were the pedestrians I noted standing waiting for the bus. With imagination:

Tall buildings hug the sides of the roadway, with only narrow pavements for the pedestrian, who must stand there waiting at the bus-stop (buses to the east of the city), as the constant 3-lane traffic of the central A61 one-way system whizzes (as the traffic lights turn green) or grinds past (slowing to red). The noise and the fumes and dirt in the air dominate her senses (for mostly it is women who wait), making it difficult to breathe.

Behind her back is a six metre high, 25 metres long, wall of grubby grey moulded corrugated concrete of a multi-storey car-park, too harsh even to lean on to rest. The only way not to run away is to go numb, ignore the poison entering the body, the mind, with every breath, to feel nothing, to withstand, to endure, until the bus comes. This makes for a state of tension, to withstand these assaults on the body (and if you don't keep your eyes skinned and your arm at the ready to hail it, the bus approaching round the corner will sail past without stopping). With the senses numbed, this "place" recedes, becoming just a "time" to endure until released by a bus.²⁰

1.1 Power and landscape

¹⁸ The sheaf, see below section 3.2.

¹⁹ Built 1827, the bridge was named after cutler Benjamin Blonk.

²⁰ From Research Journal

Looking and seeing here reveals traces of the past - medieval foundations, marks of past habitation, bridges and factory buildings, stone culverts and drains, telling many stories. Tarmac and concrete cover over the past of stone and sett and rutted mud. Motor vehicles replace cart horse and foot traveller. At the main crossing point of the River Don from earliest times, this has always been a political landscape; throughout the past and into the present it has been hotly contested and full of controversy. This is a landscape full of the marks of power and control, of the dominant authority.

The Castle displayed the military might of the Normans, (preceded by the Romans 1000 years before) taking taxes and tolls, administering justice, taking custody of prisoners both criminal and political, controlling the passage of people over the rivers, into the town and out, north and south. Close by was the ground for archery practice. Even today, the Magistrates' Court sits on the corner and administers justice and disciplines criminals. The modern building style of the Court also reflect the concentration of power; the fortress-like concrete office blocks demonstrate an alternative power of commerce.

Political power is accompanied by the power of the river, whose water has been used, for cleansing the city, for washing away refuse and debris, and for the metal manufacturing process. The Beast Market and slaughterhouses along the river here were central to the collection and distribution of food and livestock for the city and beyond, and so crucial to the city's working and trade.²¹ The idea of a river as central to the city's identity, and something to be proud of, has had no meaning here for centuries. The River Don has been a nuisance to be suppressed, a source of shame, loaded with filth and waste. Today the power is of the need for motor transportation of people and goods, to keep the economy moving. This priority dominates, excluding all other uses.

²¹ Material gathered from David Hey, (1998), *a History of Sheffield*. Sheffield, Carnegie Publishing.

1.2 Hidden landscape

Meanings in this landscape today are hidden – in the past, out of sight, the senses and bodily experience confused by the suffocating air and roaring traffic. This is one landscape in two parts; parts which do not relate, with no dialogue. This landscape's possibilities for integration of human use and enjoyment, for dwelling, are not realised,. The priority of plans in favour of motor traffic has resulted in an environment along the road that is not just difficult to enjoy, but positively hostile to walking, standing humans. The other part of this landscape hidden below the road beside the river offers relations and dialogue with the animate earth, wildlife, vegetation, water, air, stone, and with the past. To walk, even to look, where we are not directed, begins to feel like a subversive act. There are scarce suggestions of human activities, of enjoyment and freedom of fishing, walking and talking.²² To look for value in such a suppressed landscape seems worthwhile.

1.3 Redesigning the landscape

Are there implications for landscape planning, management and design in this? Though at present it is experienced as a hostile landscape, the river has the potential for great value, which lies in its access to the centre of the city and availability to everyone, the strong marks of the past holding the city's identity, the cleaning and the freshening of the air provided by the movement of the water and the vegetation, and the availability of this natural life, the living plants and creatures, at the heart of the city, to be engaged with and to refresh urban dwelling.

In this place a designer should avoid relying on a ground plan, but allow for a proper exposure to the place itself as an essential part of a sensitive pre-design survey. With the visual priority of a 2-dimensional plan or map – the major source of information for many design and planning decisions – or

²² These recalled De Certeau's "significant practices" of everyday life, ways of resisting the dominant power and control under which we live.

**Norfolk Bridge to Attercliffe
Bridge - Burton Weir.**

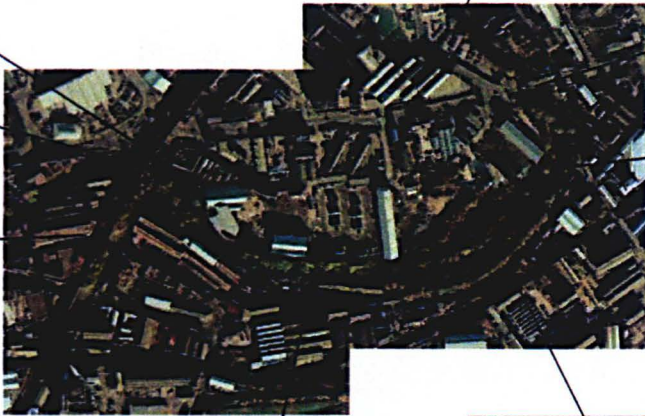
Royds Mill-THESSCO
Dates from 1787

Burton Weir
Second of the five weirs
A weir was on this site
before 1578

Attercliffe Bridge
Formerly Washford Bridge
an ancient crossing point
First built in 1795

Norfolk Bridge

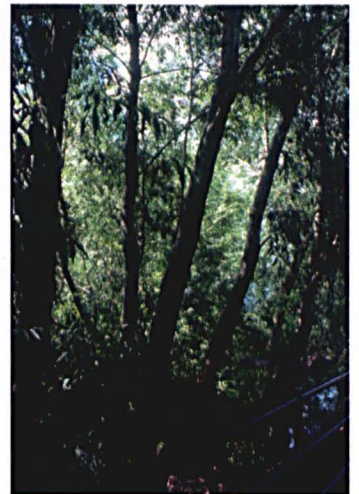
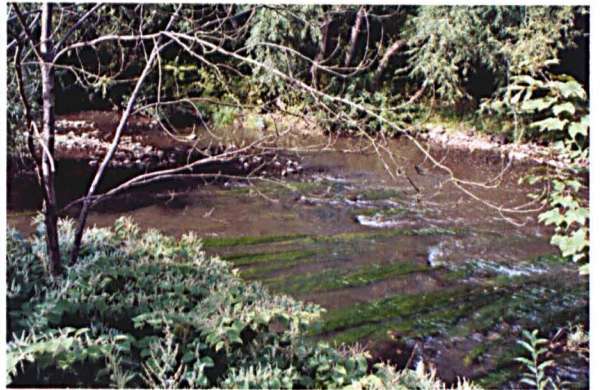
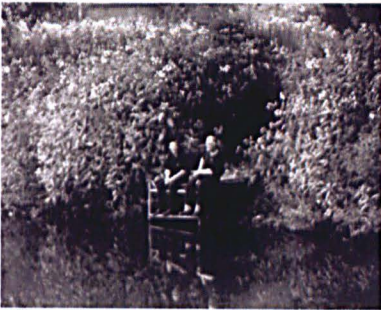
River Don



Railway viaduct to Leeds and York

Sheffield and Tinsley Canal

Salmon Pastures



“Nature” a “good thing”
near Burton Weir

photographs, the experience of the other senses is omitted and the implication of what it is like to be there is distorted.²³

Is dwelling possible in such a place? If all the senses *were* engaged, rather than numbed, this place is intolerable, impossible. The natural world, does, despite all, dwell and thrive there, but is ignored, excluded. The Five Weirs Walk is an attempt to integrate the two, offering a moving through at the pace and size of the human body, but the rest of the traffic landscape is dominating.

If this place could be reset, recast, within a newly restored landscape designed for dwelling, its rhythms and textures could be allowed to be expressed, the human body could be at ease rather than assaulted, time could be taken to reflect, to observe, to engage with nature and its processes; the design could neutralise the negative, encourage the engagement and give a balance between the two, a dialogue between the busy traffic and the slow river.

2. Burton Weir – Pockets of human negotiation with the landscape

Walking on, at Burton Weir the water widens, a broad stretch of smooth, often sunlit water. This feels like the real beginning of the Walk, contrasting with the messy, tiring, trafficked area by Blonk Bridge and Lady's Bridge, just left behind. Beside the weir is a small factory which opens directly onto the river bank; above are the high dominating double-arches of Norfolk Bridge and the London to York railway bridge. The factory has been making precision steel augers since 1850.

Ducks and swans swim along the weir in the sunshine and feed among the trailing vegetation. Sometimes there are fishing rods hanging out of factory

²³ Dovey, Kimberley Chapter 8, section Dovey, Kimberley, (1993) "Putting Geometry in its Place: Toward a Phenomenology of the Design Process" In Seamon, ed. *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, Albany: SUNY Press. p247-270

windows and a tray of birdseed on a makeshift wooden platform set out to attract birds. We once watched the forges through the window, seeing and smelling the burn and twist of red-hot metal to make the augers.

The bridge arches and the factories on both sides, with the rounded open plane of water above the weir, somehow give a comfortable feeling of enclosure, a sort of welcoming place, and a stopping place, in this otherwise linear landscape, to watch the ducks and the fishermen at the factory and to stand in the sunshine. The activities we see here seem homely compared with the harsh functionalism of much of the Walk.²⁴

Across the road at Norfolk Bridge, workers from a nearby engineering factory came out to feed the trout in their tea-break. Further on we came across two men fishing from a wooden 'peg' (to avoid mud) who waved cheerfully as we passed.

A second factory, at the other end of the Five Weirs Walk gave another such "homely" experience. "Rileys' Machinery and Tools", is another active works beside Meadowhall Road. There river runs alongside road with its thundering traffic; yet just four metres below the carriageway, invisible to motorists and the very few passers-by on foot - except those who are inquisitive or by chance look over the wall - is a tiny garden, or rather, a string of tiny gardens along the outer curve of the river. These have been built up with great care, just above water level, it seems, as a result of a personal passion of the owner of Rileys' for fishing.

For this project, the soil was all carried in, to lay the garden. Shrubs and flowering plants flourished luxuriantly, patches of mown grass a few metres square gleam green, and little bridges of timber cross from one section to the next. In flood the river comes up to the top of the stone banking and the gardens are washed away; regularly the gardens are remade.²⁵ Fishing has become possible over the last 10-15 years as the river water has become cleaner. "It used to be a horrible brown colour" and was too polluted for fish,

²⁴ From Research Journal

²⁵ Once more swept away in the summer floods of June 2007.

we were told. The riverbank is now "alive with kingfisher, coots, fox," while "cormorants kill a lot of fish". "Some put up such a fight, such a noise that you might as well put them back or they disturb all the other fish for an hour". Fish in the Don now include trout (brown and rainbow), and many other species. Even occasional salmon have been seen.

2.1 Fishing anywhere and everywhere

There seemed to be fishing anywhere and everywhere. This theme itself seemed to mirror my own research method of Gathering. A striking feature of the river walk was how often we came across this activity of fishing. There was great diversity in the spaces where people chose to fish and showed an interest in the fish population of the river. Formerly, during the heyday of heavy industry, the valley of the river Don was so polluted, trees could hardly grow, and fish were absent. Since clean air and water legislation was passed in the mid-twentieth century, the river valley has been slowly colonised and repopulated, by wildlife, vegetation and fish.²⁶ It was this renewal of the natural which drew people I met into engagement with the landscape in one way or another, with and for care and enjoyment. In this still industrial, rugged, working environment, these were small pockets of human negotiation, a management of the landscape at the human scale, without outside imposition or control. It is a freedom seized by some in the gaps of everyday working life – de Certeau's significant practices, here much more fully developed than those suggested faintly near Lady's Bridge. This care and interest taken by the fishermen, trout feeders and garden-makers demonstrate the possibilities and potential for individuals to share and shape spaces with energy and passion. Heidegger calls this "concernful dealing with the world", flowing from the experience of dwelling - "the process by which a place in which we exist becomes a personal world and home".²⁷ I should point out that the fishing itself could be considered to derive from an anthropocentric and exploitative attitude, for

²⁶ Firth, Chirs,(2001), *Domesday to the Dawn of the New Millennium – 900 years of the Don Fisheries*, Environment Agency. Guissani V. (1994), *The UK Clean Air Act 1956: An Empirical Investigation CSERGE* University of East Anglia

²⁷ Heidegger, quoted in Seamon and Mugerauer eds.,(2000) p.8

Attercliffe Bridge to New Hall Bridge

Disused railway

Sanderson's Weir
Third of the five weirs
Built before 1588

River Don

East Coast Bridge
Named after East Coast Railway Yard

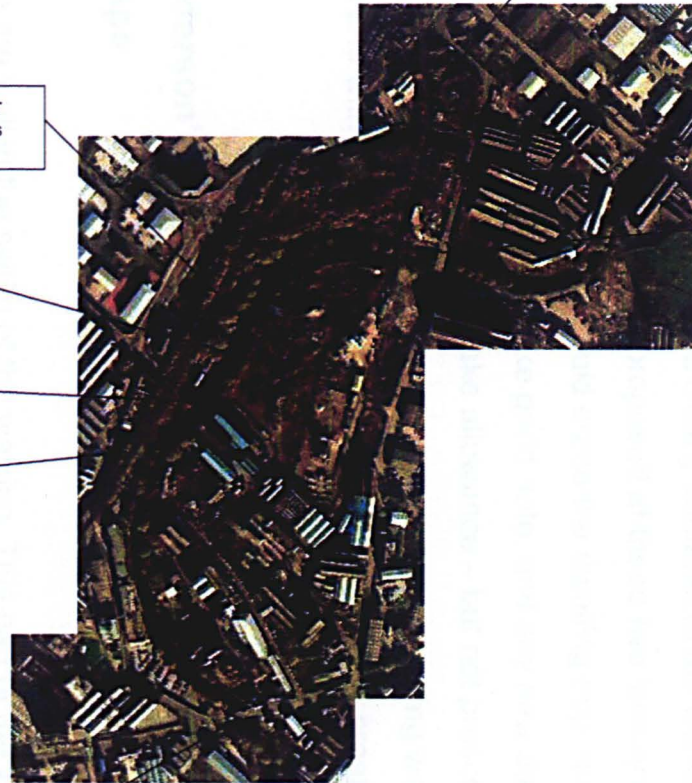
Railway line

Attercliffe Bridge

Newhall Bridge

Stevenson Road Bridge

Attercliffe Cemetery



personal pleasure and achievement, but in terms of reconnecting with nature and snatching freedom, I have interpreted this largely as an example of people making a home in the landscape. The activity though questionable from nature's point of view did increase their awareness of nature and natural processes.

The fishing garden - swept away and remade - yet un deterred, is care and pleasure, beneath the thundering lorries. Here is a river alive with fish, a minute space, but rich in meaning, in wildlife, in story, in use, in people's input. Here is value and meaning in these unlikely, unpolished places. Significant practices, signs of dwelling, the river and the opportunities it gives for enjoyment and interest are clearly valuable to the workers and the fishermen. If redevelopment were proposed at these two factory sites insensitive renovation or design could erase the dwelling opportunity. A full and sensitive site survey should take good note, and any new design, if planned in such a place, should make allowance – but not prescribe or control - for space for this kind of informal creativity, engaging with the landscape and with the people who are using, dwelling and creating within it..

3. Sanderson's Weir – Place of Unease; the Abject Landscape

By now we are well in the swing of the walking. This part of the Walk is crossed by three intermediate bridges, and these three sections of path vary in atmosphere.

The first section runs beside the railway embankment which carries the line to Leeds and York, and, next to the railway, Brightside Lane, a main arterial road along the Don Valley. Road, rail and working factories combine to fill the air with noise and clatter, though road and rail are not visible, because these factories sit tight against the river, showing their backs, and grilled windows. The path is cantilevered in places into factory walls, with railings that secure the pedestrian in. This gives a "tunnelled", enclosed effect for



The path curves quite sharply with the river itself towards and past the next weir, Sandersons. We could not see ahead round this bend. ; overhung by hazels and sycamores, the path runs below a high wall, therefore shaded from the sun's light and warmth

..quite wide and open where the weir itself lies, and it looked peaceful, but the path was cut off from the waterside obscured by the strong-growing vegetation, causing a sense of exclusion from its quietness.



Beside Stevenson Road Bridge the river runs under an arch of disused railway bridge, ..piles of rubbish dumped alongside

Sandersons' Weir

the walker, highlighted by an single brief view out to the south towards Park Hill Flats.²⁸ For the next half mile or so the path becomes totally enclosed with no ways out and no escape routes. This sudden contrast, of the view with the enclosure, highlights an increasing absorption, I noted, in the linear experience of the river landscape, which excluded any awareness of the bustling roads and retail and leisure complexes of the "redeveloped" Don Valley to either side of this narrow corridor.

The second section of the path crosses to the south side of the river at East Coast Road Bridge and curves quite sharply with the river itself towards and past the next weir, Sanderson's.²⁹ We could not see ahead round this bend. With much less enclosure from industrial buildings here the muddy uncanalised river bank is wide and heavily vegetated with colonising invasive species (including Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam) and tall willow, but slopes down between the path and the water; the path itself, overhung by hazels and sycamores, runs below a high wall, therefore shaded from the sun's light and warmth whatever time of year we visited. The whole section was very green and lush in the growing seasons, almost like a green tunnel, by contrast with sections before and following. There was no sign of recent maintenance, neither of the luxuriant growth nor of litter and rubbish.

A kingfisher flashed past us on one visit; in summer many invertebrates hummed around the balsam flowers. After winter storms we noted much debris caught under the banks and around the riffle below the weir, which had left a high water mark of domestic litter and rubbish caught on trees, after the flood waters reduced. It is quite wide and open where the weir itself lies, and it looked peaceful, but the path was cut off from the waterside and our viewing of it was obscured by the strong-growing vegetation, causing a sense of exclusion from its quietness.

²⁸ Park Hill, the innovative public housing scheme for 1960s Sheffield, in the Corbusian mould, sits on a summit above station opposite the city centre and is in view from much of the city.

²⁹ This was formerly the East Coast Railway Yard, accounting for the disused railway bridge near the road bridge.

Sandersons' Weir is the oldest existing weir on this part of the Don and was built in the 1580s on the orders of George Talbot, the Lord of the Manor and husband of Bess of Hardwick.³⁰ This was also the first section of the Walk to be completed in 1990, and includes a fishing platform with disabled access, and artwork by sculptor David Nash, a sculpture called "The Eye of the Needle".³¹

Passers-by varied over the visits, sometimes no one in this section, other times one or two. They included two schoolboys, who asked us anxiously for the time, at about 3pm, and ran on, and a single man carrying fishing gear.

Beside Stevenson Road Bridge the river runs under one arch of a two-arched disused railway bridge. The arch over the path had piles of rubbish dumped alongside. On one visit we saw a large unkempt man in a wheelchair; his companion was openly urinating beside the path.

At the third section, beyond Stevenson Road Bridge, different industries line the river, including scrap yards, for metal and tyres. Very loud and sudden clanging noises from heavy metal objects being dropped disturbed the air and ear, while fork-lift trucks and lorries revved and raced.

We were abruptly challenged by a security guard as we passed a scrap yard and looked in: Why were we looking in and taking photos? He had suspicions of industrial espionage.

The path in this third section was more open and light. It had an urban feel, with some sensations like a dock: looking over the river in some parts was like looking down from a ship.³² Constructed in 1994, this section was generally easy to walk along and visibility good. The path was clean and

³⁰ The weir is named after the Sanderson family who ran the Forge Wheel off the weir from 1638.

³¹ Five Weirs Walk leaflet (1998).

³² This was in fact where it was planned to build Sheffield an inland port, from a canal to the coast like the Manchester Ship Canal. Difficulties of cost and benefit prevented success.

well-made with block-paving, had good railings and walls to it, and ran high up above stone-clad walling which channelled the water; from there we were looking down on the, still prolific, willowy vegetation so it did not obscure our sight of the water. There was plenty of sky from the open aspect to the south side, where the path runs high above the water,

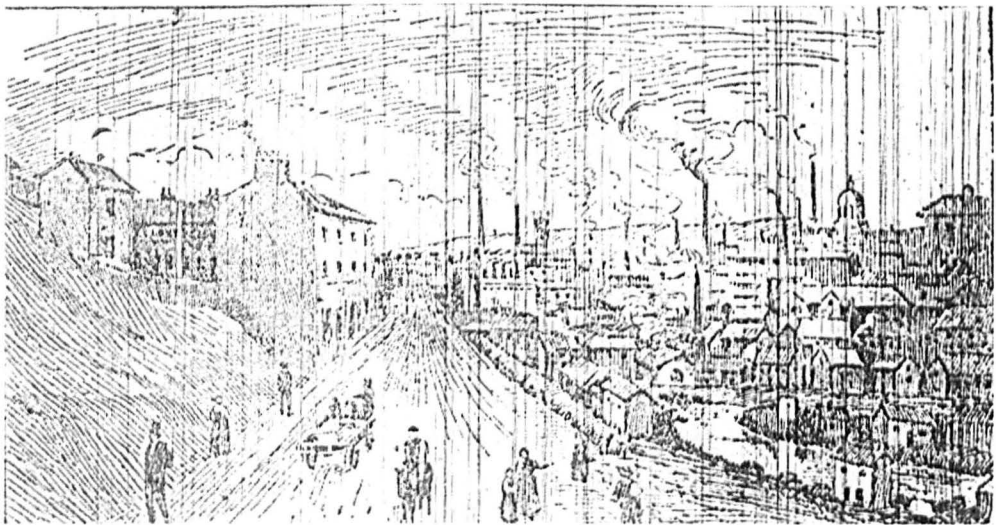
3.1 Place of Unease

This triple section of the Walk passing Sanderson's Weir had interesting rhythms, a contrast of enclosure and views, of narrow and broad, of noise and quiet, of wild nature and human uses. It had a great deal of natural vegetation and bird and other wildlife. It had a sense of mystery, as the river curved and the surroundings varied. However these were tinged with the sense of apprehension and even, at times, fear. Despite being well-established as a path, this section, particularly the middle part near Sanderson's Weir, felt the most desolate of the Walk. When we met anyone, we felt cautious. The *shadowy* path hung with thick vegetation on the *unsunny, cool* side of the water, the *sudden clanging* metallic noises, the *disused* railway bridge with *piles of rubbish* under the arch beside the path, the antisocial behaviour of the man in the wheelchair and his *urinating* companion, the few signs of human habitation or maintenance, *no escape routes*, and the *infrequency of passers-by* all added to our feeling of this area being the most uncomfortable and threatening along the walk. Unnerved by noise and encounters I was glad to move on.

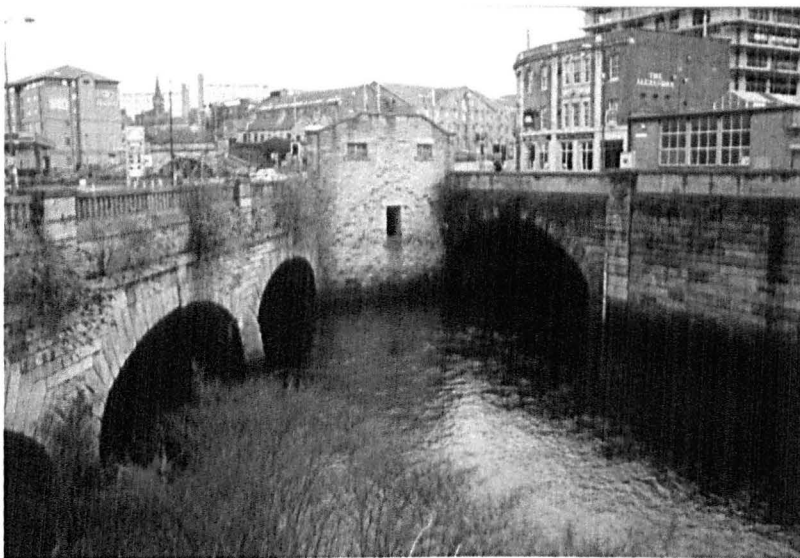
3.1 Recognising the abject

Recalling the work of Julia Kristeva, I found myself thinking of this landscape around Sandersons' Weir as an "abject" landscape.³³ Kristeva drew attention to the repellent, what is considered of no worth and is suppressed because thought conventionally "better kept out of sight". She suggested the importance of bringing to consciousness the repulsive and discarded, and acknowledging it in order to reclaim benefits which may

³³ Chapter 3 section 2.5.2. Kristeva, J, (1982)



Looking south towards the Ponds area, before 1860 and present day.



“where the gay Sheaf’s clear waters meets the Don”

The River Sheaf

have been lost in the discarding. As mentioned before, Sheffield's rivers were for centuries a conduit of filth and source of shame rather than pride. Though today so much has been cleared and cleaned and uses have changed, this section of the path seemed to offer an example of a landscape which might be termed abjected, because not attractive in a conventional way and giving a sense of threat and apprehension rather than pleasure. I set myself to look at what value there might be in an abject landscape. This required patience and repeated visits.

3.2 Exploring the abject: the River Sheaf at Sheffield Station – a city's hidden identity

The Don is not the only river in Sheffield to be rejected, hidden and stripped of its dignity. The river from which the city takes its name – the Sheaf – has been completely hidden under the centre of the city for one hundred and fifty years. At this point it is worth reflecting briefly on meanings in this truly hidden Sheffield river, this most abject of landscapes.

The River Sheaf flows from the south of the city into the Don near Lady's Bridge at Blonk Bridge. It used to flow beneath the old city on the hill as one wide waterway, with ponds and dams and wheels which drove early metal working.³⁴ But since the 1860s it has disappeared from its key place in the city, when it was diverted into tunnels for its last kilometre and buried under what is now Sheffield's railway station.³⁵ The Sheaf has been (until a recent station reorganisation) invisible except for a twenty yard stretch behind walls at the corner of the bus station. All that remained to be seen of the Sheaf when I visited it was the barred entrance to the tunnel at Granville Road, to the south of the station, and its outflow, as unmarked as a sewer, into the Don at Blonk Bridge, to the station's north. Enough of the contours of the land remain to suggest the river would have originally flowed in a

³⁴ Davey, SR, (undated but received by Sheffield libraries (1983), *Where t'watter runs o'er t'weir*. This booklet collates historical information about all the mills that had once existed along the rivers of Sheffield including the Sheaf; Miller (1949) ;Crossley (1989).

³⁵ Then called the Midland railway station, as opposed to the Victoria station near the Beast Market, by Blonk Bridge

wide attractive, open space, with banks and soft edges like at Millhouses Park.

The visitor to the city, by train, walks out of Midland Station into this false valley, once full of water and called the Ponds; arriving by car they invariably drive down Parkway to the large roundabout beside 'Ponds Forge' in the same valley. Only the name of Ponds Forge has been retained: Sheffield's public face was once an iron works, now it is an international swimming pool, as the city attempts to rejuvenate itself through associations with sport.

For many years, however, the river tunnel under the station was open. The popular musician Jarvis Cocker of "Pulp" has told of his experience under the station tunnels as a teenager one summer when he and a friend took a dinghy into the darkness where the Sheaf flows underground.³⁶ I have also come across a young woman who recounted how she and her brother as children, perhaps fifteen to twenty years ago, when living beside the Sheaf, would play and swim in the river and occasionally swam into the underground tunnels.³⁷ I reflected on this:

Why would they do this? What is it that fascinates someone to want to experience these places? What is hidden is mysterious – "anything could be down there!" – it is frightening, it is the unknown; in the subterranean world no light shines, it is dark and slimy; there is a fear of slipping on slime, and sliding helplessly into the water, immersion in this dark and slimy, rushing liquid. What if I am not able to get out, and drown, with no one hearing? What a way to go! This is the horror that fascinates. There is both fear of real dangers like rats and infection, but also primeval horror of the monstrous which this evokes.³⁸

Due to growing current awareness of the dangers of disease, the authorities intervened to prevent these youthful adventures. There is now a large grille

³⁶ Jarvis Cocker interview *Sheffield Star*, 20th April, 2001.

³⁷ Personal conversation with resident, while "loitering" along the accessible parts of the River Sheaf.

³⁸ From Research Journal

across the entrance to the tunnel. Safety gained, as the river is lost. The only people to experience this river now are maintenance workers, or trained equivalent.³⁹ They must wear extreme protection when experiencing this river.

3.3 The idea of hidden repels and attracts

But some of us still want to see for ourselves and others want to hear of the experience of this hidden river. There is a vicarious horror of it, while we are completely safe ourselves. And this river is hidden in other ways – its past and true course are hidden in maps and records in the city's archives. I found in the library a newspaper report of an organised visit to the tunnels in 1936, by a reporter who took part; the style of his piece quite Gothic, horrifying but exciting.⁴⁰ I found myself asking: Does this hidden, suppressed landscape offer us anything? The presence of water in a landscape is important, so it should be asked if rejecting and hiding it away is short-sighted and wasteful of opportunities.

3.4 Loss in the abject landscape

The fate of the Sheaf testifies to something in the changes in uses of and attitudes to water and the city's rivers in the nineteenth and twentieth century. The river made way for a railway station – requiring the space of the even, open valley – and is also passed over by the central ring-road. Routes were needed in the city for transporting goods north and south; power requirements changed – water gave way to coal and steam. Sheffield came to define itself by its new rivers of iron and steel, tar and asphalt, not its rivers of water. The horror of nineteenth-century pollution, of water full of blood and excrement, disease and death, blackness and refuse, was best kept out of sight, taken away, removed.⁴¹ Now many of Sheffield's rivers are no longer such open sewers, and have come back to

³⁹ Midland Mainline, the then owners of Sheffield station, refused me permission to enter the tunnel, unless I underwent a full week's health and safety training.

⁴⁰ Sheffield Telegraph, 10.11.36

⁴¹ The Builder, 1861, "A report on the condition of our chief towns – Sheffield". Hey (1998)

Brightside Weir to Brightside to Brightside Bridge and Meadowhall Road

Meadowhall Road

Meadowhall Road Bridge

Brightside Bridge

Weedon Street
Dates back to 14th Century

Brightside Weir
Fourth of the five weirs
There has been a weir here since 1328

Brownfield site of former steelworks

River Don

Weirhead
One of the few sections of ancient riverside walk which survived the Enclosure Acts

Abyssinia Bridge

Sheffield Forgemasters





Imagination at Brightside

life, with abundant wildlife and vegetation. And this has taken place largely away from human view, as the city's orientation, of buildings and layout, perpetuates and prolongs the inherited aversion to the rivers. The Sheaf however remains a hidden river, and runs where life cannot sustain itself.

4. Brightside Weir – Being “Within” the Landscape

This section of the path winds between the weir at Brightside and the derelict demolished factory floor of Hadfields' East Hecla steel plant, passes a disused railway embankment and Riley's factory fishing gardens (already described in Section 2 of the Walk). Within this landscape beside Brightside Weir four incidents and snapshots of time from the several walking journeys offered stimulation to imagination and experience.

4.1 Water and weir

The still pool above Brightside Weir reflects the black towering steel mill. A deafening rush of white foaming water pounds the weir. Only a slim sheet of water slides down the stone slope, sending ripples across the stream towards old tyres and large willows overhanging the far side of the river. A little farther on, a riffle caused by stone debris in the middle of the river changes the flow and sets cross-currents. The blowsy willows survive the variation of water level and strength of flow over seasons and over years.

Stillness, space, sky; the huge steelworks, reflected in the smooth surface of the water, appears in certain lights to my imagination like some vast palace above a lake; there are hints of a mysterious history, of force and uses of weir and water, of raw materials made and worked and sent out across the world, for ships, or pipes, or weapons, or other unknowns. I could spend hours just watching the water cascading down the weir at Brightside, though the atmosphere is slightly forbidding, even on a sunny day. Sight and sound, the water draws me into contemplation and reverie.⁴²

⁴² Bachelard, . Gaston (1994) , See Chapter 3, section 2.5.3

4.2 Flowering factory floor

Across the path, acres of concrete have burst into flower. Once steel works from three manufacturers, all the walls have been demolished, but the factory floor remains. Littered still with steel shavings and old leather gauntlets, stumps of old walls and piers, masonry and rusting iron bars, yet the palette of colour would be the envy of Chelsea Flower Show; for us, here is sunshine and shelter and place for a snack and heady scents of herbs and purple buddleia. I wander from one old workspace to another. The clang of steel from Forgemasters rings across the river; the fantasy fairytale towers of Meadowhall shopping rise distant above the flat expanses of concrete. Suspended between the bustle of the everyday, thickets of thistle, forests of buddleia and verbascum spires turn the expanse of cracked concrete and rubble into chambers of ruined palaces, sheltering our secret picnic.

*Buddleias of every colour, ragwort, toadflax, mugwort, wormwood, weld, lady's bedstraw, rosebay willowherb, michaelmas daisy, catsear, all growing high and blooming prolifically. Hawthorn seedlings begin to establish in the cracks of the floor. A feast for invertebrates, the hum of bees, scraping of grasshoppers, flitting of butterflies seen and heard – many thousands more living creatures I cannot see and am not aware of, but marvel at this derelict place intensely alive. Somehow, seated here, I am very small, hidden within this forest of tall flowers.*⁴³

The roar of steel mills fades to a distant hum across space and across time.

4.3 Conversation with two fishermen at Weirhead

The path at Weirhead, that is just beyond Brightside Weir, running alongside the demolished factory floor, is much more frequented, with much more open landscapes, so we could see at a distance who might be approaching. The path here is well-formed and wide and straight, easy to see ahead. There has been a riverside walk here from ancient times; it alone survived

⁴³ From Research Journal

the Enclosure Acts which took away most land hereabouts from public access.⁴⁴ A party of French tourists with rucksacks gather and look around. I wonder what they make of this demolished landscape, suspended between past and future. This is the first opportunity along the whole walk to view out both sides of the river path, giving a sense of distance and space after the "canalised" corridor experience of the rest; there is the choice to turn to one side for different experiences, then return to the walk.

On one visit, two anglers sat with rods over the parapet a few yards below the weir. I "loiter with intent" and when they begin to pack up their rods I venture conversation.

Is the large black building part of Forgemasters?

"Yes, though it is much smaller than it used to be. Over there was Firth Brown's, Hadfield's, English Steel" indicates the derelict, flattened sites behind us.

"Me grandma used to live on't corner over there; them houses came down 35 year ago. We lived roun't 'ere.

We catch trout, perch, bream now, all sorts. Before all firms used to empty their waste in't watter. It were yellow, and black and gooey.

'Is ole bike's in't river theer!

(Why? did you put it there?)

No. 'Is mam did. She were fed up with 'im messing about and not learning to ride it, so she threw it in! (both laugh)

(Is it still there?)

Probably!

(Do you live near here now?)

Up on't ridge (points) in them 'ouses up theer.

It's not safe 'ere now, we come down in pairs; there's druggies and the like."

They leave and I tremble at these horrors which await those who come here alone.⁴⁵

4.4 The railway meadow

⁴⁴ 5 Weirs Walk publication,(1998)

⁴⁵ From Research Journal – record of conversation at the time.

The disused railway embankment by Weedon Street is steeply raised. It was broken off where the bridge would have crossed roads – to let high vehicles through, perhaps – so has become a secret raised island. One day, we climbed up the side; we sat cautiously on the remains of the gravel which had bedded down the railway track, and munched our second picnic of that day among the flowers, butterflies, humming of bees, swooning perfume of buddleia; vegetation, verbascum, crambe, swathes of white starry flowers, and many I did not recognise – a very distinctive habitat for wildlife – dry, sunny, with its own sheltered microclimate. There is a sense of vast space, high up, above the rushing world, full of sky and light. The only reminder of being in the Don Valley was the distant clang of steel at Forgemasters' works. The next time we walked here we found the railway embankment fenced off, our way barred; now it belongs to nature alone.

4.5 Implications

This landscape does not fit criteria of an orderly managed landscape, nor of conventional interpretations of beauty or quality. Nevertheless, for this study this was the richest part of the Journeys. It offered something of each of the areas of research questioning. Here I was aware of the difficulty of perceiving without pre-formed cultural assumptions, and the tendency to put labels on, and classify experiences.

The "Romantic" view of the Forgemasters steelworks and reflective water challenged conventional ideas of beauty and quality. Though the clanging and thudding of the steelworks was near, somehow the nearer rushing of the water over the weir softened their effect, permitting an absorption in the contemplation of the scene and of the water itself, and even a sense of stillness within the river sounds. Backlit, in context of this working landscape and in association with the water, the effect of the vast building is

striking, and stimulating. "Beauty" is irrelevant, it has value in its scale and contrast, its strong identity, a landmark, a reference point.⁴⁶

The experiences "within the landscape" on the factory floor, and the immersion in the railway meadow came the nearest to Merleau-Ponty's *pre-reflective experiencing*.⁴⁷ The senses took over, every one of them, and I found myself hesitant even to find words to express the experience. This was *synaesthesia*: the heady perfumes, the silence of the vast open spaces under the sky and, within the silence, the humming and buzzing and clicking sounds of the insects, the sunshine sparking the vivid colours and warming the body, even the taste of the picnic. A sense of being *hidden* away from predators, in a secret world, being permitted an absorption in this experience of the senses, stimulated the *imagination*, making associations with childhood adventures, the tall flowers closely surrounding, and feeling very small. This recalls Bachelard's exploration of intimate spaces which house and help form the imagination.⁴⁸ These places offered a freedom snatched in everyday life, a fleeting escape into "nature", with fear edged away until reminded of the hostile world around. Fleeting because there was in fact no security on this abandoned public space, itself temporary, waiting for new uses. The embankment of the railway meadow gave an excellent vantage point, high above the Don valley, the ideal position of the age-old desire for "prospect and refuge", to see but not be seen, discussed by Appleton in his *The Experience of Landscape*.⁴⁹ This high seclusion and wild profusion gave space and scope for the imagination, room to expand, for reverie, for contemplation. Cobb explored imagination as the driver of evolution, and its vital importance in children's developing into mature adults.⁵⁰ Bachelard and others link imaginative experience of this kind with the poetic.⁵¹

⁴⁶ Herrington, Susan, (2006), Framed Again: The Picturesque Aesthetics of Contemporary Landscapes, In: *Landscape Journal* 25:1-06

⁴⁷ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, (2002), *The Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge

⁴⁸ Bachelard, G (1994)

⁴⁹ Appleton, Jay, (1975) *The Experience of Landscape*, London: John Wiley. Chapter 4

⁵⁰ Cobb, Edith (1993) *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*, New Haven, Conn.: Spring.

⁵¹ Bachelard, Gaston, (1994)

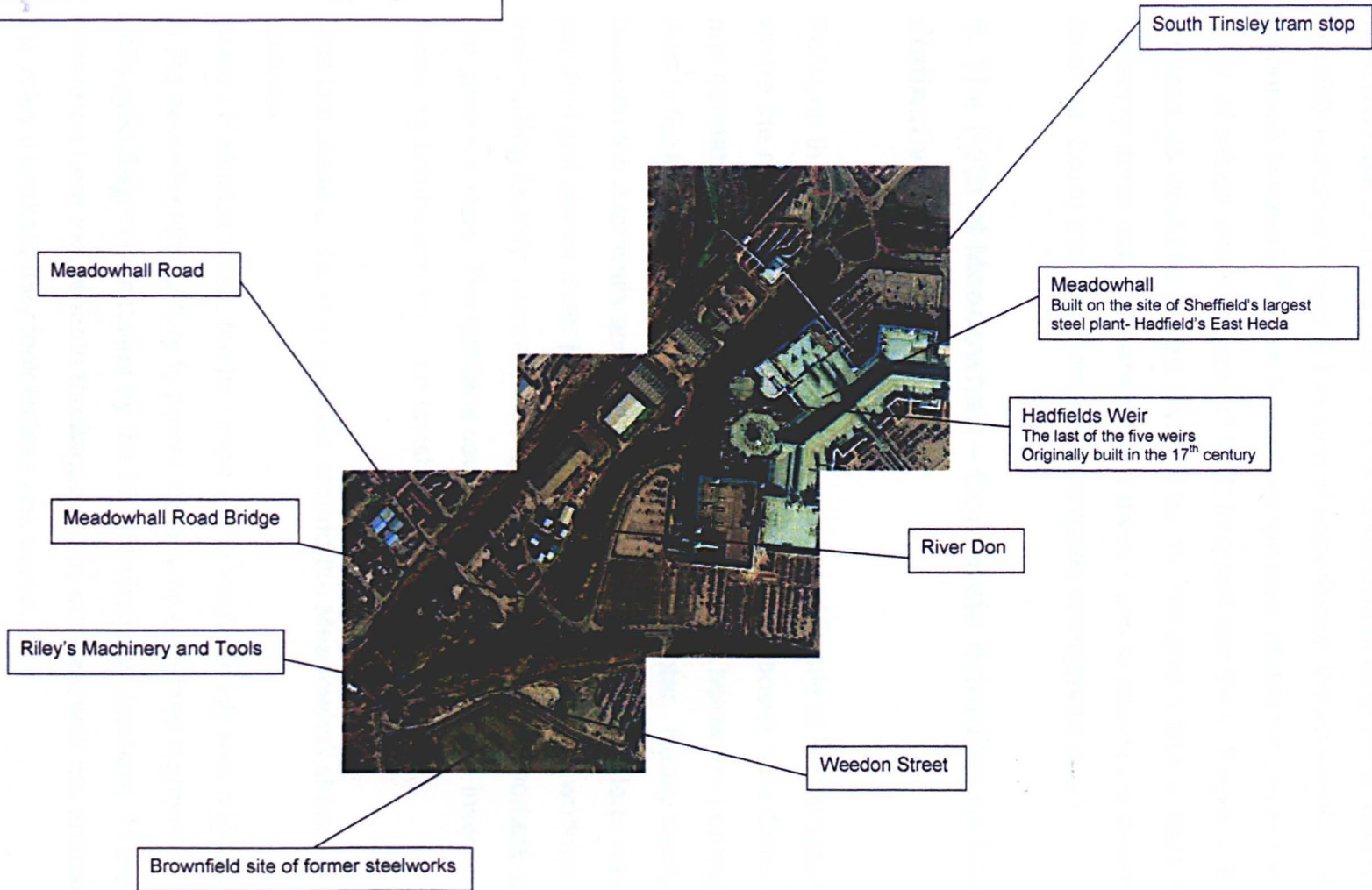
Thirdly, the conversation with the fishermen for bathos, with an unexpected slant on what is below the calm surface of the water to reveal rubbish long since thrown in the river and sinister people threatening safety. This shed a colder light on the "freedom" and delight this factory floor seemed to offer. This freedom has a temporal dimension – it depends when you come and who else is there at the same time. The "druggies and the like" remark surprises me because this section felt much safer than that near Sandersons' Weir.⁵²

If *dwelling* is described as making one self at home, even if temporarily, we too were dwelling here in these places. Here is hidden and the senses and event in landscape. It is a derelict space; stripped of its former use, it waits indefinitely for a new one, abandoned and even with legitimate healthy and safety queries, it is a place frequented, I was told, by those outside the law, shunned by those who "do not want trouble". However, it has views both near and distant, light and huge sky and space, it has colour and abundant life of plant and animal, it has mystery and food for the imagination; its rhythm and textures stimulate engage the visitor. This place is an example of the brownfield site as an extremely rich habitat for wildlife which would be lost in redevelopment.

This section of the river journey held meaning for the fishermen who lived nearby, for their fishing passion, and as holder of identity and childhood memories. It offered the value of a temporary "home" to us travellers, to dwell, to engage with the landscape. It offered value to the rich profusion of wildlife, plants and creatures. As the junction space between Forgemasters steelworks and Meadowhall retail shopping centre, with views of both from the path and factory floor, it even links the two significant large enterprises persisting there, the huge works from the old era – Forgemasters making - and the sprawling today's "out of town" shopping centre – Meadowhall spending; industry and retail. The sense experience around Brightside weir puts a question to both, in terms of value to the human spirit.

⁵² Kong Lily L. L et al, (1997) Nature and nurture, danger and delight: urban women's experiences of the natural world. In: *Landscape Research*, Vol 22, 3 pp245 – 266

Meadowhall Road to Meadowhall shopping centre



If it were no longer be permitted to be derelict, had to be “redeveloped”, what new use could be found for this landscape at Brightside, which could possibly continue to permit this kind of experience, the intoxication of being immersed in nature?⁵³ - this kind of perspective, of distance from the hurly-burly, of refuge and of prospect? With frequent use these fragile and fleeting landscapes would be ruined; it would be the designer’s task to seek to conserve these qualities somehow. It gives clues to aspects of designing for dwelling. Could this experience be recreated somewhere else?

5. The Path at Meadowhall – Corporate Branding or Local distinctiveness?

Between the railway meadow and the rush and bustle of Meadowhall Road, where the river runs alongside the heavy traffic, opposite “The Crown” pub, and beneath another iron railway bridge, sits, deep below the carriageway, Riley’s fishing garden, described earlier in this chapter. Neatly wedged between the river walls and the water, this series of tiny gardens was perched just above water level, for fishing by the owner and workers of the tool-making factory. Conversation with enthusiastic Riley’s workers told us the garden’s story. The gardens seemed to shine with bright insect-buzzing flowering shrubs and the care lavished upon them.

This last stage of the Walk passes around the Meadowhall shopping complex.

Beside Hadfields’ Weir, the last Weir of the Walk, which was originally built in the seventeenth century to power cutler wheels, stand eighteen unflagged flagpoles installed by the Meadowhall development. There are fishermen here too beneath the flagpoles; by contrast with the animation of the Riley’s workers they look listless and bored.

⁵³ Ling, Christopher et al, (2007), “Restructuring the post-industrial landscape: A multifunctional approach” *Landscape Research*, Vol.32, 3, pp 285 - 309

*Reeds invade above the weir. We watch trout leaping. Waterweed looks slimy, but shines iridescent in the sunlight. The smell of cooking meat escapes from The Oasis cafés, tempting at first, then catching the throat...*⁵⁴

We were accosted by a security guard with dogs. "Can I ask you what you are doing?" He had seen us looking around, taking photographs, looking at the river, and discussing. He proprietorially and rather officiously, informed us that the land is "private". Meadowhall (Properties plc) owns the whole land up to the edge of the waterfront. Loitering was clearly not acceptable. We wondered what damage he thought we could do with cameras and notebooks. There was also a Gatekeeper, in his sentry box, controlling traffic in and out, practising surveillance; perhaps he had guard dogs too. Walkie-talkie, backup, an unknown voice crackling from a distance; perhaps reinforcements, ready in case of attack?

This well-maintained path with its mown lawns to either side was empty of people, despite the large crowds to be seen crossing the river to enter the shopping centre. Not a single entrance or exit from this vast retail building opens onto the path; not even windows open to the outside world on this side. The shopping centre is self-contained; doors admit customers from car parks and tram and bus stops, not, it seems, to enjoy a landscape experience.

I noted a difference between the manicured path, pruned shrubs and lawns at the top of the riverbank – owned by the shopping complex - and the vegetation down the slope towards the water. The latter comprised mostly native species and colonisers such as buddleia, ash, willow, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, sycamore and alder: some trees were dying or already dead, but left to rot where they stood.⁵⁵ As we returned to the tram stop we saw large fig trees growing in the River Don. This is one

⁵⁴ From Research Journal.

⁵⁵ Most vegetation is recent, grown since the Clean Air Acts of 1956, though one ash tree of 500mm in diameter might have survived from earlier. Guissani V. (1994), *The UK Clean Air Act 1956: An Empirical Investigation CSERGE* University of East Anglia

unexpected but unrepeatable sign of the past use of the place, leftovers from when the river waters were warmed by the outflow from the steelworks. Oliver Gilbert, the Sheffield-based urban ecologist, suggested that fig seed, not usually able to germinate in Britain, had entered the water from untreated sewage and from pickle factories and found enough warmth to germinate on the banks and grow tall.⁵⁶ With the reduction of industry these conditions no longer exist. Now *that* is local distinctiveness!⁵⁷

5.1 Contrasting care for landscapes

The most surprising thing about this section was the contrast between the small and care-fully constructed gardens at Riley's and the manicured and security-patrolled walk at Meadowhall – and yet again with the vegetation along the riverbank, rank, ruderal species mingled with the historical fig trees. The individuality of the Riley's garden, full of stories and personal meaning, human pleasure and endeavour, was startling in comparison with the bland landscape around the shopping centre which could have been in any public landscape anywhere, the seats, paths, cycle-ways, mown grass, fences, standardised, unremarkable.⁵⁸ In fact human input is almost excluded, denuded of meaning. Apart from the fig trees and the riverbank species, which have escaped control – so far - there is no local distinctiveness at all to affirm the particular and distinctive place, or recognise its past in the major steelworks which made and exported metal goods all over the world and employed much of the then local workforce. The difference in ownership and management, of purpose and value, showed itself in the vegetation.

The gatekeeper and the roaming security guard seemed to represent the "private" territory and imposed identity, controlling its use and guarding

⁵⁶ Gilbert, Oliver, (1989) *The ecology of urban habitats*, Chapman and Hall. Gilbert, formerly ecologist of the University of Sheffield, did a study of the fig trees on the Don and found that Sheffield's Bessemer steel furnaces raised river temperatures to more than 20C.p274.

⁵⁷ Mabey et al (1993) *Local Distinctiveness* Common Ground Shaftesbury- especially the article by Clifford S and King A, *Losing Your Place*. Kingsnorth, P, 2008, *Real England, the battle against the bland*, Portobello Books, London

⁵⁸ Corporatisation: Relph, E. (1993), *Modernity and the Reclamation of Place*, In Seamon, ed *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing* SUNY, New York

boundaries against invaders. Ownership and materialism, shopping, consuming, took precedence over everything: even the old factory gates and bridge of Hadfields' works had become a new "drawbridge" to the bewitching towers of Meadowhall.⁵⁹ Curiosity, looking over the wall at Riley's factory, led us to the surprise of the fishing garden; curiosity also got us into trouble with the security guard. Perhaps curiosity, and asking questions, are yet further "significant practices", and can be considered dangerously subversive?⁶⁰

6. Evaluating the Don Journeys

The landscape of the Five Weirs Walk along the River Don can be experienced and interpreted at many levels: one continuous landscape, or many linked spaces, with detail and quality, whole and parts interweaving in texture and meaning, helping to interpret one another.⁶¹

6.1 The experience of the journey

The experience of the "Being-in-the-landscape" along the Don was far more complex than I could ever have imagined before I undertook the Walks. My expectations of what it would be were formed partly from reading specific literature about the Walk and from hearsay. The rest was from previous experience of landscapes in my life and my cultural formation through which I already experienced and interpreted places, both places of my everyday life and places I had visited.

At my first visit I had found myself somewhat repelled by the whole landscape and considered not returning. My first impression were that it was rough, uncomfortable in parts and a bit alarming, noisy from machinery

⁵⁹ The green-painted iron bridge by the shopping centre was the old entrance to Hadfields' works, but in the context of Meadowhall with its fantasy towers, looks like a drawbridge to a mediaeval castle.

⁶⁰ Heidegger links curiosity essentially with wonder or "marvelling" at the world. Goethe also saw wonder as essential in thorough examination of phenomena. Relph, (1985);Also Brook, Isis, (1998), See Chapter 3 section

⁶¹ Bortoft, (2000).

and activities of the metal industries, dirty-looking from soot-blackened bricks, unkempt overgrown vegetation, derelict factory buildings –and infrequent passersby. I found it difficult to read, to interpret, to orientate myself, and that the unexpected that might be encountered might not be pleasant or easy to deal with. But the more frequently I visited the more I found I wanted to return. I became intrigued by it and then fascinated. I found the Being-in-the-landscape putting questions to landscape architecture in line with all the landscape themes of this thesis, time, nature, beauty and offering light on all the philosophical themes.

6.2 Walking and seeing

The contact with the ground, the earth, grounded the theory, as I experienced the earth through the body. The struggle, the aching muscles, the pushing through the air, between undergrowth. All the while I was looking and sensing, the eye and the mind were trying to make sense of the surroundings from within the perceiving. The preconceptions that I brought with me but was barely aware, were being challenged by the new perceptions. The pace of perception was both quick and slow: quick in glance, slow to understand. The seeing was grounded by the walking, by the pace of the body. The eye was seeing from within the bodily experiencing, which is within the landscape, nested.⁶²

To discuss seeing itself brings all sorts of questions about these preconceptions which affect interpretation of what is seen. Robert Mugerauer has pointed out how much our seeing is determined by the language in which it is already interpreted for us.⁶³ The problematic “gaze”, with “notions of control, separation, authority and voyeuristic judgement” as John Wylie describes it, was discussed earlier in the thesis in relation to the work of Susan Sontag and John Berger about the authoritative position of photographic imagery, and Gillian Rose, Griselda Pollock and Lucy Lippard

⁶² Solnit, (2002).and see Chapter 3.

⁶³ Mugerauer, (2000) Language and Environment , In Seamon and Mugerauer p51.

on the gendered nature of “views” and the picturesque.⁶⁴ This “gaze” is based on a position of distance from the view, from a point outside the landscape, looking at it.

Wylie wrote of instead of “*seeing with*” the landscape instead of a “distanced looking-at”.⁶⁵ My own experience recognises this sense of my becoming part of the landscape as I walked within it and set the mark of my boots upon it; it was becoming part of me at the same time, as I experienced the effect of it in my muscles and senses, embedding the experiences in my brain and memory for ever.

*Walking in rhythm, in step with my companion
Limbs ease into movement, ow! My hips are stiff, my knees complain
My feet.....the weight of my boots
In touch with the grittiness, bumpiness, smoothness, unevenness,
springiness, hard resistance of the ground.*⁶⁶

However there is also my separateness, distinct: I was able to walk away, disentangle myself from it, to move on write this short piece; also reflect upon it both at the time and now, a long time later. Perception needs reflection, according to Merleau-Ponty, and to be articulated in language, or it is nothing, is gone.⁶⁷

6.3 Rhythms and Patterns

I adjusted my rhythm of walking to the rhythms of the river and the journey. The dynamic of the river itself has narrative and sequence, includes relationships, and dialogue. Enclosed for much of its course the Walk seems to shut off any focus on the individual places to either side of the river, then offers other connections within itself which may be looked for; it is as if it draws one into a strange absorption, as a world of its own, and it

⁶⁴ Discussion of the disembodied problematic gaze in Ch in Wypter 6 section 1, and in Wylie J. (2005), and Sontag S, (1977), Berger, J, (1980), Rose G. (1993), Pollock G. (1988), and Lippard, (1997),

⁶⁵ Wylie J, (2005), p6

⁶⁶ From Research Journal – record of conversation at the time.

⁶⁷ Merleau-Ponty, (2002)

heightens the experience of the senses almost suspends time. I was pulled into the landscape, immersed, experiencing within the landscape.⁶⁸

Over time, with increasing familiarity, patterns were revealed, patterns of spaces, of alternating enclosure and open views out. Mostly the eye is channelled between high sides of wall or vegetation; the only really large view is at Brightside. Patterns of water-flow give contrast, muddy, broad and vegetated, or stone-channelled, tight, and directed, smooth planes of water above weirs at Burton and Brightside, to foaming cascades and bubbling riffles.

On one visit I looked for the first time at the bridges as crossings. When travelling by road across the river, by contrast, it seems as if the river is just short sections of water, with no sense of progression, and the road is dominant, whereas when travelling up and down river, the bridges are barriers, boundaries, landmarks or staging posts, even musical bar lines, while the water is the tune. The two flows of water and of traffic and human use cross at the bridges, a kind of contrapuntal pattern.

6.4 Beauty and quality

Little in this whole landscape would meet terms of conventional beauty. But there are features and moments within the landscape that are striking to the eye and exciting to sense experience. The imposing dark bulk of Forgemasters against a vivid blue sky, the welcoming curve of Burton's Weir with its arched background, the heady perfumes, bright colours and intense life of the factory floor and railway meadow. All leave long-lasting impressions. I asked myself at what level of cultural formation these impressions are operating – Appleton's primeval experience of 'prospect and refuge' for survival, of the appeal of the Romantic 'sublime', now accused of authoritative and voyeuristic 'gaze', or even Bachelard's concepts of immensity and intimacy, and the intensity of childhood

⁶⁸"Immersion in, rather than separation from" Seamon & Mugerauer (2000)_Ingold (1993), Mabey (2005). See Chapter 7 Lived Time Section 2.2.

experiencing of intimate spaces.⁶⁹ I find some recall even Maslow's 'peak experiences' as described by Rohde and Kendle.⁷⁰ Impressions retained long afterwards stood out, and crystallised experience into a meaning which nourishes.

6.5 The natural river

Along the Five Weirs Walk nature has many guises, in an urban area much of it was also in wild nature. Richard Mabey's comment "It is amazing how romantic these pockets of ragamuffin greenery can begin to seem" applied here.⁷¹ Where the landscape was very controlled, for example at the beginning, Lady's Bridge, and end of the Walk, at Meadowhall, it was orderly and predictable, with few surprises. Where the landscape of the Walk was uncontrolled, near Sanderson's and Brightside Weirs in particular, there was opportunity for mystery and imagination and the senses. This derived not so much from features of the landscape and environment as from the fear of hostile humans, in a heavily-populated urban area. At Brightside this apprehensiveness was moderated even in the dereliction of the factory floor in the delight of the prolific natural surroundings of that seasonal visit. The combination of sun and light and sky, flowers and bees, stimulated imagination, recalled childhood perception.⁷²

6.6 Encountering people

Owen Manning documented the universal attraction of water, a "magnetic subject of human play or contemplation."⁷³ However, along the Don, in some sections and on some of our visits we saw no one. Lunchtime was the most frequented, of the hours and days we visited. Over the whole period of several visits, we saw a few tourists, perhaps "doing the Walk", and workers from the nearby factories (along the walk) or offices (on the main roads at

⁶⁹ Appleton, (1975), Hussey, (1927), Rose, G. (1993), Bachelard, (1994)

⁷⁰ Rohde, C.L.E., and Kendle, A, (1995)

⁷¹ Richard Mabey, (1973) *The Unofficial Countryside*, London: Sphere. p.43

⁷² Bachelard, (1994), and Merleau-Ponty, (2002)

⁷³ Manning, O,(1997), "Design Imperatives for River Landscapes" *Lsc. Res Vol 22*, 1

either side), eating lunch, taking a smoke break, taking a walk alone or with colleagues, and fishing was the most frequent activity. Almost all were male, in ones and twos. We saw one woman jogging, another woman taking a snack on a bench, and once or twice a couple, male and female, as walkers. Because of this infrequency of visitors, together with the types of property either side of the river and the sense of insiders and outsiders, that is those who belong and those who do not, the quality, despite its richness of interest, as a place for human dwelling is muted.

As a woman I was aware that without a companion I would not have been able comfortably to the Five Weirs Walk, certainly not to have dawdled at times, as we did, or dwelled with picnics in hidden corners. Here was an experience of the constraints on women in public spaces to which Rebecca Solnit devoted a whole chapter in her history of walking, *Wanderlust*.⁷⁴ This was also a Sheffield echo of Jacquelin Burgess' findings in a study of South London river landscapes, where constraints on women were mapped. In Sheffield as in South London river landscapes, seemed a landscape of men only.⁷⁵

6.7 Valuing the Place

As I paid attention to its rhythms and textures, it was revealed in its local distinctiveness as unique and expressing a spirit of place unlike any other.⁷⁶ As I continued to visit, became increasingly clear that this river landscape can be seen as representing the landscape of the city of Sheffield itself. Forming and marked by this history, of industrial working practices, and by people's activities and events making and using it in the past, the river continues to animate the city today. This river landscape challenges something of the superficiality of the post-industrial redevelopment of the

⁷⁴ Solnit, (2002), chapter 14, pp232ff see also Rose, G 1(993), Kong Lily L. L et al, (1997) *Nature and nurture, danger and delight: urban women's experiences of the natural world Landscape Research*, Vol 22, 3 pp245 – 266.

⁷⁵ Burgess, J (1993) *Rivers in the Landscape: a cultural perspective*. In: *River landscapes*, edited by E. Penning Rowsell and J. Gardner. London: Belhaven

⁷⁶ Abram, (1997), p35 "rhythms and textures", Norberg-Schulz, C., (1980), *Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of place?* London: Academy Editions

city in changing economic times, and of the wider Don Valley. However, as well as the city's human past, the river also continues to hold and express meanings derived from its raw materials of water and stone and living plant and animal life, layer upon layer, from earliest geological time to the present. It keeps the past alive and is constantly making the future.

No longer a major artery for the city, with factories and industrial concerns turning their back to it, River Don and its walk seem to have interest for a minority of local workers or some history-orientated citizens. Even those tempted to walk there by tourist board brochures or obliged to as school geography field-trips, find the atmosphere rather forbidding.⁷⁷ In some parts there felt a sense of ease and relaxation, especially on a sunny day, for example, at Burton Weir, where the Five Weirs Walk path is on the north, sunny side and runs past inhabited buildings, and shows signs it is fairly well frequented. But in other parts of the Walk, as I described under the heading of Sanderson's Weir, the effects of lack of appropriate maintenance, and of scarcity of links with the outside world, felt beyond the law and at times uncomfortable, especially for women. These parts were more hidden away from the outer world.

6.8 Landscape of Abjection

At first it was the Sanderson's Weir section I felt as abjected, but with greater familiarity both with the landscape and with the literature about abjection I came to think of not just that section but of the whole River Don corridor in terms of abjection, that the whole river-walk could itself also be said to be an abject landscape, forgotten, with a hidden history.⁷⁸

In relation to these walks I raised the question of the value of the abject, and of this landscape. I reflected on the meaning of this place for Sheffield. I suggest that despite this abjection, this sense of being put aside as

⁷⁷Two girls from Bradfield School in personal conversation reported feeling an intense unease on the Five Weirs Walk on a Year 9 field trip in 2000.

⁷⁸Kristeva, (1982), *Powers of Horror: an essay on Abjection*, New York and Chichester, W. Sussex: Columbia University Press. discussion in Chapter 3, Section 2.5.4.

worthless and unwanted, there are three main areas of value in the landscape of the Walks. Most importantly is this value of its local distinctiveness, its sense of place and its huge variety of texture and experience.⁷⁹ This variety is of great value, keeps curiosity alive, stimulates imagination, including about the past. It is the opposite of the bland, as seen in the many-times-reproduced landscape beside Meadowhall which smoothes over and reduces or excludes distinctiveness.⁸⁰

Secondly, it is accessible and used by many people in different ways, in everyday "significant practices" of walking and talking, eating and fishing, looking and moving around. This makes it possible, as De Certeau argued, to live and dwell in spaces "by reintroducing into them the plural mobility of goals and desires - an art of manipulating and enjoying."⁸¹ It is a space not controlled by third party owners, as at Meadowhall, who have their own agenda.

Thirdly, it gives access to nature. It serves and has always served as a green and blue-water corridor winding through the centre of the city, bringing air and freshness in and flushing away rubbish and staleness, and is not only valuable for biodiversity in an urban area, for fresh air and abundant wildlife, but also available for people in our "nature-starved" society to have nature experience, to reconnect with the living earth.⁸² It offers experience for all the senses and stimulates the imagination, to creative activity, and offers a change of mood and tempo, embodied in the walking. In this industrial river plain, parks and green spaces are less frequent than in the leafier hills of the west of the city, and the Don corridor offers nature within walking distance of work place and home for thousands of people. This "wild nature" is perhaps more available because the landscape is abject, forgotten and ignored. If it were in a municipal park it would be tidied up, and maintained to certain, even if minimal, culturally-

⁷⁹Clifford S. and King, A. (1993), *Losing your Place*. In: *Local Distinctiveness*

⁸⁰Kingsnorth, (2008), *Real England: The Battle against the Bland*. London, Portobello. p7, et passim

⁸¹de Certeau, (1984), *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p xxii

⁸² Nature starvation, Jonathon Porritt, (2006) "Patrick Geddes, a pioneer of sustainable development," *Resurgence* 235 49.

expected standards, with distinctions between “weed species” and “proper plants”.⁸³ If it were in an agricultural area, it would be considered perhaps poor and waste ground which should be exploited where possible for production, or might be spoiled by pollution from chemical run-off.

Therefore it seems much of its value of the River Don Walk is indeed because it has been left alone and not valued in the conventional way. However, to protect this “unvalued value”, its worth should be expressed and championed. Landscape architects and others in positions of authority in matters of landscape planning should be made aware of its importance, so that this landscape may continue to offer these precious experiences.

6.9 Landscape management

Management and development of this sort of landscape needs sensitivity, skill and thought to address the reduction of this threatening atmosphere, while making the most of opportunities to engage with wild nature. The task for landscape architecture is to conserve this individuality, while making more comfortable the sections of the walk which give apprehension. For example, at Sanderson’s Weir this could be the renegotiation of the path on the sunnier north side of the river which is lighter and where there is better visibility, seeing ahead and behind a concave curve. In addition “escape routes” could be introduced along those more closed sections to give better connections with the world outside.

The approach of the methodology to the Don Journeys was holistic but not generalised. Few generalities could be observed, because its variety all along its course could not be universalised. It remains to some extent fragments strung on a necklace of path, a mosaic of different textures juxtaposed making up a whole.

⁸³ Jorgensen, Anna, Tylecote, Marian, (2007), Ambivalent landscapes—wilderness in the urban interstices, *Landscape Research*, Volume 32, Issue 4 August 2007

The process of gathering and of analysis and on Being there was a kind of meditation, a process of disclosure, of increasing insight and understanding. It included wondering and marvelling at diversity, detail and texture, activity and particularity.

CHAPTER 10

THE LOXLEY VALLEY

While my experience of the Don journeys took five days, my experience of "Being-in-the-Landscape" of the Loxley River valley took place over more than five years. In this section, I record and reflect on my experience over the years of this research project, engaging with this valley as a second river landscape in Sheffield. As a project for this thesis, my study of the Loxley Valley was made up of a number of elements, schemes and small research projects, varying in length and degrees of involvement. The extensive time of interaction with the Loxley Valley during the research phase of this study, evolving throughout, offered the opportunity for an exploration of the experience of dwelling in a particular place and landscape. The social and the personal, the political and the scientific, the ecological and the historical were interwoven in this engagement, offering a rich picture of one distinctive place. This experience informed my developing understanding of the concept of dwelling, stimulated by the concurrent literature review, and realisation of the potential importance of this concept in landscape design, management and research.

1. The Research

It started with experience. It began because I lived there. I walked the paths, enjoyed the views and open space, the green "naturalness" of the countryside, the sky and clean air. I became involved with local groups interested in the valley. I wondered about the patterns of the land, about its past, what had made it look like it does today.

As a result the research project developed in three parts, historical research, participation in a local community group, and an ecological survey. I studied documents in libraries, which gave me a perspective on historical and contextual aspects of the valley. As a participant observer

in the Loxley Valley Design Group, I reflected on the process and on the contributions by other participants, on their experience of the place as they described it and their evident care and concern for conserving its special qualities. The practical ecological survey was of a small area close to my home in the valley – the hamlet of Storrs. The material from the survey was presented in an exhibition and events, with the intention to raise local interest in surrounding biodiversity.

Overall, I heard many stories, delved into archives, took part in action, walked in the landscape, paid close attention to biodiversity in small areas and to reading the marks on the landscape as a whole, as well as living there for six years and visiting regularly for three more. This was my own extended experience of place, balanced by encounters with many people for whom this particular place has aroused passion (literary encounters as well as contemporary residents) and commitment which drives them to action to protect it. The resulting reflections on experience of this place and shared meanings follow here; they include historical meanings and associations, people's personal events and experiences, their sense of identity and belonging in their common past and present and their aspiration, and connections with the natural environment.

1.1 Research questions explored

The study put the question how can phenomenological philosophy provide a basis for understanding landscape meaning in Loxley Valley. This could also be expressed as what it is like to "Be-in-the-Landscape" and to dwell in the Loxley Valley? I explored this question both in individual experience and in linking up with others, in the activities described above. Informed by the philosophical work relating to landscape introduced in Chapter Three, of Merleau Ponty on perception, Heidegger on disclosure and revelation, Bortoft on whole and parts, Abram on dialogue, engagement and reciprocity, and paying attention to the rhythms and textures, and the landscape archaeologists, Tilley and Ingold, led me to ask of myself, of the people I met and of the marks of

the past “What meanings do this river Loxley and these river landscapes hold for people? What do they find of value here?” and looked for answers as to how this place is experienced as a landscape by humans.

Themes about experience of and in this place which were brought out in the process both of the Design Statement and of the surveys and archive, were found to link closely with the landscape themes of the literature review discussed in Part 2. My journey through the literature, with the methodology of asking questions about Nature, Beauty and Time in landscape, honed my awareness and led me to the concept of dwelling as a more fitting and appropriate way of understanding “Being in the Landscape”. In the historical research and in the Loxley Valley Design Group (LVDG) study, Time was illustrated as the activity in the landscape, the living dimension, in its present past and future, without an understanding of which landscape can only be sterile. Beauty became seen in the LVDG project as revelation not judgement, as a response to and recognition of quality of experience. Nature, particularly through ecological surveying, was affirmed as the animate world in which we live and with which we are in relationship.

2. Historical research

2.1 The Landscape and its past

The River Loxley is one of the tributaries of the River Don, collecting water from the Peak District uplands on the west of Sheffield, and, joined by the River Rivelin, flowing into the Don near Hillsborough.¹

Like the Don, the Loxley was from the eighteenth century an industrial valley, using the water power of the fast-flowing brooks and streams and river, to drive the machinery for metal and ancillary manufacturing (such

¹ Countryside Commission, (1996), *The Character of England Map 37, The Yorkshire Southern Pennine Fringe*.

as pocket-knives and wire), in small workshops and mills.² With the nineteenth-century development of steam for power and for much larger steel-making processes, the flatter, more spacious and more accessible Don Valley became the major centre for steel; but works in the Loxley Valley continued until the late twentieth century to be major employers of the local workforce. Related to the metal industries here were clay-mining and brick-making (refractory, from that clay) for the steel furnaces.³

2.2 Exploring the past

“Loxley Valley still represents the history of Sheffield itself – it is the last chance to preserve it,” an inhabitant told me in an interview.⁴ To explore this history, I sought out archive materials in the Sheffield Libraries, Sheffield Archives and the British Library, conducted oral history interviews with long-time residents about their earlier experience here, and gathered another set of images of the valley, images from past times laid upon one another, of events, which made towards the texture of the place today.

A series of hand-drawn and printed maps shows something of the history of the valley. Early ones, 1730 onwards, were drawn for land sales, for the Enclosures, for various transactions, or to prove a point. They show landmarks – they have different ways of representing what is there and what it wants to say, before the standardisation of Ordnance Survey, which was the 1850s in the Sheffield area. Through these old maps it is possible to see the field patterns, and road and path networks and what happened to the river, the many and varied manmade alterations to the river for water power and industrial use, up to today, and so to note what

² See Chapter 2 of this study; Miller, W.T.W, (1949), *The water mills of Sheffield*; Crossley, D., (1989), *Water Power on Sheffield Rivers*, p.24ff; Hey, (1998). Davey, S.R.,(1983), *Where t'watter runs o'er t'weir*, Zimmermann, J, 1863

³ Castle, J, (1981). Ganister, a rare clay mined around Loxley, suitable for refractory bricks. Batty, R. (2004), *The Forgotten Mines of Sheffield*.

⁴ From Loxley consultation day

is included and what is excluded or left out, and the parts which are still recognisable today.⁵

Documents relating to the Enclosures of common land, which affected Loxley Valley in the late eighteenth century, gave clues to the major changes in the landscape at that time. In 1819 contemporary commentator Rev. Joseph Hunter, FRS, FSA, Assistant Keeper of the Public Records, interpreted a period of rapid change with his own “cultural spectacles” and offered a vivid picture:

The Sheffield manufactures have extended to these regions. Many grinding wheels are erected on the Rivelin and the Loxley. Many of the little farmers... join with their rural employments the labour of the forge or of the wheel, hammering out the blades of razors or knives in small sheds attached to their dwelling houses or polishing them on the wheels of the stream below.

This district is now rapidly passing into the state of general cultivation, such parts I mean as are capable of being productive. The business of enclosing was begun about eighty years ago. A country which is passing from a wild into a cultivated state has a naked and unpleasing effect; especially when as in this instance the new fences are all of stone.⁶

These “new fences all of stone” are today the treasured and threatened dry-stone walls, characteristic of the Dark Peak.

It was in this valley, in March 1864, that the Dale Dyke reservoir newly constructed beyond Bradfield to supply water to the growing city of Sheffield burst its earth bank dam and caused the Great Sheffield

⁵ Jones, M. (2000), *The Making of the South Yorkshire Landscape*, p101, Jones, M, 2003, *Sheffield's Woodland*

⁶ Joseph Hunter, (1869), *Hunter's Hallamshire, The History and Topography of the Parish of Sheffield in the County of York*. First Edition 1819. A New and Enlarged Edition by the Rev. Alfred Gatty, DD, Vicar of Ecclesfield and Sub Dean of York.

Flood.⁷ The huge volume of water devastated the valley all the way to Hillsborough, causing even greater havoc as it joined the Don and passed through the city, killing about 250 people. Early archive photographs show the devastation of the valley.

By contrast, soon after that, the writer John Ruskin paid a visit to his friend, the Rev Reginald Gatty, Rector of the village of Bradfield at the head of the valley:

Before him were the rocks of Rocher, a magnificent cliff overhanging the woods which slopes towards Agden Dam. All around stood the heather covered hills, reaching almost 1800 feet above sea level and holding in their bosoms the broad reservoirs of Strines, Dale Dyke and Agden. It is one of the fairest scenes in Hallamshire.⁸

It appears he was so impressed by this picturesque viewing that he considered siting his art college there, later built in Oxford.

By contrast with this and with the valley today, one interviewee recalled sense experience from forty years ago:

"There were three refractories, low down in the valley along the river. They all used coal-fired kilns to fire the bricks, with the old, low, brick chimneys. There used to be a trail or band of smoke running down the whole valley, blown eastwards by the prevailing west wind. The steep valley sides could not allow smoke to escape until Malin Bridge where it dispersed into the city. With 40 to 50 coal fires at a time ...you could taste the sulphur in the air, when you went out for a walk at lunch time. The trees that were

⁷ See Chapter 2 in this study. Heywood, John, (1864). Draper, E.G. (1995),

⁸Gatty, Rev. Reginald, Rector of Bradfield, (1880), "Bradfield", British Library MS. 010352.c.12; Gatty, Rev. Reginald (1884), "Topographical Note", BL MS. 010352.g.9(1)



Surviving hay meadow



Historic footpaths



Dry stone walls need maintenance.



River Loxley

Loxley

near the river were stripped bare by the smoke, the sulphur dioxide."⁹

Becoming acquainted with these faces and voices of and from the past and present, my experiencing of the landscape of the valley in the "longitudinal" present became enriched with their experience too, filled with event and incident.¹⁰ They contribute to an understanding of shared meanings.

3. Research as participant observer: the Loxley Valley Design Group

3.1 The Loxley Valley Design Group

The Loxley Valley Design Group was a community-based initiative formed in 2000 to respond to issues of development and regeneration in the valley in a post-industrial context. By the late-1990s, of the former string of works along the valley from Damflask reservoir, only one small rolling mill and one refractory (now using imported clay) remained open.¹¹ Of the rest, rusting machinery and dilapidated buildings now stood along the river or were beginning to be cleared to make way for other uses – most notably, housing. A proposed redevelopment of the former Storrs Bridge brickworks site, to include a new village of 250 houses beside the river, where previously there was a hamlet of just six houses, provoked massive local opposition, and was turned down through negotiation with the local Parish Council. In response, the Parish Council, anticipating further plans for large-scale housing developments on this and other sites, encouraged the production of a Village Design Statement for the whole valley. This would open up community discussion of development, of what was in or out of character with the

⁹ Oral history interview

¹⁰ Lippard, L.(1997), *Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered society*,

¹¹ Waple, A, (2001)"Trouble at' Mill"

valley, and wider options for the site.¹² If adopted by the planning authorities, this Statement was intended to help guide and modify any new development and contribute to the retention of local distinctiveness.¹³

Participation in the resultant Loxley Valley Design Group over five years enabled me as a researcher to become acquainted with many aspects of the life of the valley - its social and cultural life, and built environment - and to gain insight into many people's appreciation of what it is like to "Be there" in the Loxley Valley. While fully engaging with the production of the Design Statement, the process lent itself to using selections from responses and from observations, as well as my own reflections on aspects of how people valued this landscape, expressed in various ways, for the purpose of this PhD study.

Contributions, both written and verbal, were "gathered" and interpreted from the official consultation process, through group meetings and individual encounters.¹⁴ As participant I took part in the process, but as an observer, I did not ask my research questions directly; I allowed the process to uncover whatever participants wished to offer, about this river landscape, about this place where they (most of them) lived and others visited frequently. I was alert to what "paying close attention to the rhythms and textures" could offer through the eyes of participants.¹⁵

¹² Village Design Statements were introduced in the Conservative Government in 1995, as a way of giving rural communities more of a say in local planning. With backing from the Countryside Agency, communities draw up their own Design Statement, setting out what is distinctive about their locality, and how they would like to see it change and develop. The local authority may then adopt it into Supplementary Planning Guidance. A Design Statement is primarily focused on local distinctiveness and the built environment, but it reaches more widely to what local people value in a place and are concerned about. It can be a real and effective tool for involvement for local people in the planning process and a future for their place. In recent years government policy has moved away from local involvement; Village Design Statements are no longer a recommended way for communities to contribute. In this move, an inevitable impression is left that the local voice has become viewed as inconvenient to decision-makers.

¹³ A concept introduced by the charity Common Ground in 1983. See Mabey, Richard et al, (1993), *Local Distinctiveness : Place, Particularity and Identity*, Shaftesbury: Common Ground.

¹⁴ See Chapter 3.

¹⁵ Abram,(1997), as discussed in chapter 3

Contributions addressed subjects as diverse as sense experience, sights and sounds, aspects of views, aspects of nature, quality of experience and the valuing of material and detail, with thoughtful comment about distinctiveness to be retained. In addition, threats to this quality and distinctiveness were recounted. This "field" material contributed, alongside the literature review, to my growing understanding of dwelling, the practical and the theoretical interweaving.

3.2 The Loxley Valley today

Since industrial use has largely ceased in the Loxley Valley, much of the river corridor has been colonised by willow, alder, and sycamore. Some of the mill ponds and goits (channels) have silted up, while others remain, some with new uses, such as fishing ponds.¹⁶ Since local employment has diminished, most residents commute elsewhere in the city. To the west, up the valley, are the reservoirs supplying the city with water, and to the east, down the valley, are the remaining industrial sites. With the closing of industry the valley has become greener and cleaner. Agriculture continues as before on the slopes and upper plains of the valley and is the main source of local employment.

Unlike the Don, the Loxley Valley is situated on the edge of the Peak District National Park, whose boundary passes down the middle of the valley north to south, although the whole valley does sit within Sheffield city boundaries.¹⁷ Today in this post-industrial era the valley has a quality of landscape equal with any of national importance. The river corridor is designated Green Belt from Malin Bridge outwards, tucked between the suburbs of Loxley Village and Stannington which lie on the slopes above the river.

¹⁶ It is traditional in Sheffield to use the term mill pond rather than dam, which is more commonly given to the upland reservoirs e.g. Damflask. "Mill ponds serve as biological oases for many species of flora and fauna in a largely artificial and sometimes contaminated setting". Wood P.J. and Barker, S., 2000), "Old industrial mill ponds: a neglected ecological resource" *Applied Geography* 20 (65-81).

¹⁷ Shoard, Marion (2001), shows the importance of "Edgelands" of cities.

The Valley is now largely a recreational and residential area, increasingly “exclusive” as farmhouses are sold and barns are converted, and house prices rise beyond the reach of those who grew up here. The former industrial sites within this admired landscape hold an obvious attraction to housing developers, as they hope - so critics perceive - to sell “the countryside as a place to live and commute from”, the valley “as a view” from house or car, on the drive to work. Large-scale redevelopments, dramatically out of keeping with previous usage and local tone, such as the Storrs Bridge brickworks, present a further threat to a Valley landscape already under increasing pressure from destruction of its ancient fabric such as dry stone walls, and changing agricultural practices – like so many parts of the British countryside. Threats from irresponsible landowners, careless proprietors and developers are perceived to be rapidly undermining local character and the qualities of the landscape.

3.3 The Design Group Consultation

The Loxley Valley Design Group (LVDG) was made up of a range of people living in the valley. Some were farmers and owned land, some had grown up there or had worked in the brickworks, others worked in the city or had worked there till retirement, while some had recently moved to the valley. Through research into many different aspects of life, including the built environment, ecology and historical aspects, and with wide consultation within the local community and statutory bodies, the group worked to sum up what local distinctiveness was in the Loxley Valley. In 2004, the LVDG produced a document of which parts were accepted as Supplementary Planning Guidance both by Sheffield City Council and by the Peak Park Planning Board.¹⁸

The opinions and values to emerge from the LVDG consultation touched on three themes or ideas related to the experience of “being in the landscape”: first, moving through the landscape; second, experiencing

¹⁸ Loxley Valley Design Statement, 2004.

boundaries; and third, views and tranquillity. All three expanded the idea of landscape as the spatial into a spatial-temporal understanding of landscape, and shed light on how this fills out the understanding of “dwelling”. It even began to seem that dwelling itself could be a methodology for gaining greater understanding.

3.3.1 Moving through the landscape

Through the consultation a strong theme emerged of the way the Valley offered good access to the landscape from the city to the country, and vice versa, and within it by historic footpaths throughout. There is a circular bus route round the head of the valley, running twice an hour, from Hillsborough Interchange. On the bus one day a lady said in conversation:

“I haven’t been well so I’m not out at work now, but I have a bus-pass. Whenever I can, I get the bus to Hillsborough (from Parson Cross) and catch this little bus and go for the ride all round Loxley Valley, even when it’s raining. I get out at Bradfield, have my lunch, and get the bus back. Sometimes I sit on the bus and just go round and round. I just love this place.”

Horse-riding, cycling and running were recorded as physical activities – embodied experience - within which to experience the landscape, but the most common and resonant form of movement for people was walking.

Walking has already been discussed in the previous chapter in relation to the bodily and sense experience along the Don. In the Loxley Valley responses this understanding was taken further: the Valley was experienced through the moving through it, very often by walking, that is, at the pace and rhythm of the human body. Walking brings the person into direct contact with the landscape. Walking was seen not just for pleasure but as a practical part of life:

“People have always walked to work here. The footpath patterns show that. We want to see a return to this pattern, with a renewal of work opportunities, small scale along the valley bottom...”¹⁹

The ancient network of footpaths and bridle paths offered to many a pattern of regular walking, with a dog or without, giving time for exercise, enjoyment, and reflection. Walking gives the opportunity to experience the landscape in the body with all the senses, and take part in it.

Heidegger declared that “being”, here understood as “being-in-the-landscape”, is always in time.²⁰ Furthermore, this moving through the landscape is also about the experience of disclosure, of revelation. The new, the unexpected, is unfolding before you. This disclosure, and the dialogue and the reciprocity of landscape, claimed by the phenomenological philosophers in Chapter 3, are illuminated here, in dwelling in the Loxley Valley.²¹ Tilley, in his *Phenomenology of Landscape*, described this unfolding in moving along a path: “something is constantly gained in a relational tactile world of impression, signs, sights, smells and physical sensations... Beyond one chain of hills another is revealed.”²² He claimed the importance and significance of a place can only be appreciated as part of movement from and to it in relation to other places, that it is in movement, rather than stationary, and in relation rather than isolation, that insight may come.

Tilley further stresses that to understand the landscape it is not only necessary to experience it, by moving through it, but also to put it into language, “to convey some of this feeling to others it has to be talked about, recounted, or written and depicted”.²³ The Design Statement process also showed and confirmed this, that in bringing out and articulating their experience and feelings, participants found their sense

¹⁹ Loxley Valley Design Statement, 2004.

²⁰ Heidegger, (2007), See discussion in chapter 3

²¹ See Merleau-Ponty and Abram, in chapter 3

²² Tilley, (1994) *The Phenomenology of Landscape*, Oxford: Berg. *ibid*, p31

²³ Tilley, *ibid*,

of connection with the place being reinforced, which motivated them to a heightened care for the place.

Tilley points out the temporal connection between paths and memory; that the larger the number of people who have shared in the purpose of the path the more important it becomes. Paths link memory and events with places, "connecting up spatial impressions with temporally inscribed memories".²⁴ In the Group project the walking of the paths, whether in solitary or otherwise, emerged as a shared experience which contributed to shared meaning and value. I found another aspect of memory and place experience may also be that, at a later date, while recalling from memory the activity in the landscape, the sense of the experience is also revived and felt more clearly, with added value. Events and sights are remembered vividly, and especially seasonal or occasional ones, as for example, "Those fields over there used to have huge flocks of lapwings in winter feeding on the grain left from the harvest".²⁵ The spatial and the temporal cannot be separated.

It was noted that landscape experiences take place while people are on the move, or engaged in activity; they are always temporal. The other two themes arising from the consultation reinforced this. The LVDG worked willingly with the planning system to define local character and distinctiveness for the purpose of guiding new development decisions, but found they needed to challenge the conventional attitude towards both "boundaries" and "views".

3.3.2 Experience of boundaries

Boundaries in the planning process began as defined by land and property ownership and by administrative regulations, for example, boundaries between rural and city suburb, separating Sheffield City Council's authority from the Peak Park Planning Board, and Bradfield Parish Council's jurisdiction. But for the purpose of defining local

²⁴ Tilley, *ibid*,

²⁵ Loxley consultation day

distinctiveness these dividing boundaries across the valley were challenged by the participants in the Design Statement process: they refused to be persuaded, for administrative convenience, to make the Statement to cover only one part of the valley – the area of the valley in the national park for instance, or the more suburban area. For the local residents, to live in the Valley is to experience it as a whole, regardless of boundaries of ownership and of administration. Everywhere can be seen from everywhere else, within the horizons of the high ridges from Loxley outwards and from Stannington outwards, which meet at the head of the valley above Bradfield. It is possible to see one or more of its “edges “ or horizons, from anywhere you stand or look. These edges or horizons are the boundaries of one’s experience.

The *experience* of boundaries is to do with the scale of the human body within the landscape, as “so far as I can see or walk to”, “from where I live”; in other words derived from “embodiment”, and defined by “perception”. I am always at the centre of my experiencing, and as I move through the landscape that centre moves with me and the boundaries shift to the new horizons. As has been said, embodied experiencing of landscape is realised by moving through it, most obviously by walking. The Loxley Valley has been defined as a “human-scale” landscape. Taking its topographical shape, it is possible to walk from end to end (7 miles), or across from one ridge to the other (2 miles), comfortably, within a day, and back too if you are feeling energetic. The whole landscape is bounded by topography and experienced in movement, and so the boundary line becomes the shared experience of the place; the sense of the whole place, undivided, is revealed by moving through, and matters more and has more meaning than the divisions between ownerships.

3.3.3 Experience of Views and Tranquillity

The local people’s assessment also differed from the planners on views and how they experienced tranquillity. The landscape setting, the views, “in all directions, both from houses, and between buildings, as well as in

open landscapes” were frequently mentioned as significant to people, “a major factor in the enhanced quality of life here”, both in relation to the rural villages and to Loxley on the city edge.²⁶ This sense of the quality of landscape included both its visual aspects and the “huge positives” of tranquillity and the rural character of the villages and surroundings, as expressed here by one participant, “In Dungworth you have the best of both worlds – sheep outside the door but close to the city”.²⁷

These multiple “views” are accessed from home and also by moving through the landscape, usually by walking, and often by the network of footpaths. The planners repeatedly pressed the group to designate particular set views to be preserved, but the participants refused on the basis that to define some would downgrade others, and in any case everyone had different special views depending on where they lived and where they walked; glimpses from different angles, different times of year, were always changing and seen by different people.

In our culture the “view” is valued in landscape paintings. The Picturesque style in landscape was discussed in Chapter 6 in relation to Beauty in landscape, as “associated with a series of fine (composed, controlled and constructed) views, as similar as possible to the composition of paintings”.²⁸

At first I did not question this use of the term “view”, but through the group came to see that the appeal of a view as it appears was much more than this. I found that people were not concerned with the “picturesque” when they talked about views. They were not standing outside looking on, and making value judgements as to good or not, beautiful or not. In fact, I would suggest, they were *experiencing* the view, feeling a connection with the landscape from within, a part of it, and with familiarity giving a sense of belonging and being nourished. As one respondent commented: “Every day I thank God for the beautiful view

²⁶ Report on Loxley consultation

²⁷ Loxley and Dungworth consultation day

²⁸ Hussey, C. (1927), Howett, C. (1987;1993).

from my kitchen window - it often means I take too long over the washing up!"²⁹

The term beautiful derives here from feeling and quality rather than judgement, and thus relates to the earlier discussion on Beauty. Other contributions affirmed the quality of the natural environment and its impact on the other senses too, such as: "What is the most beautiful sound on earth? Answer: Running water."³⁰ A member of the LVDG described with great care the significance of stone and of water in that landscape, observed and reflected on during her daily horse rides along the lanes:

Natural stone is a significant feature of the whole Valley - not only in its buildings. The beauty of the area is particularly enhanced by its use in construction of walls demarcating fields, roads, paths and gardens. Many of these walls are ancient and, sadly, in a poor state of repair. There are also many gateposts made of huge single slabs of stone - some plain, some worked and carved dating from different historical periods, ...and stone roadside troughs fed by worked stone runnels reflecting ancient cattle droving practices and the greater use of horses in previous times.³¹

Repeatedly was expressed a sense of care for the valley as precious. Referring to decaying and abandoned industrial sites in the valley bottom, one participant urged, "The Valley is beautiful and natural and should be cared for and tidied up", though it should be said opinions differed as to how that care and tidying should be effected, with what result.

²⁹ Participant in Dungworth consultation day

³⁰ Participant in Bradfield consultation day

³¹ SH in Report on Dungworth consultation

Along with the beauty of the view, it was considered by local people just as important to plan for conservation of tranquillity itself.³² Part of the unusual quality of experience in the valley, the tranquillity, which was frequently mentioned, was still possible so near to the city centre because the valley, having no through routes, was not currently overused by cars or visitors, unlike other neighbouring valleys, and industrial and agricultural noise levels were low or intermittent, but traffic would be sharply increased with any new housing development.³³

Like the boundaries, views and viewing are not static. Nor is tranquillity, though it may conventionally have been considered to denote an absence of activity. Not so, they are a quality of the place where the activity happens. The view is more than just a "sight", a composition of lines, shapes, colour and landscape features; it is part of activity within the landscape, also situated in time as well as place. This activity may be of the senses: it might, I suggest, be described as a few moments of time of a person relating, paying attention, to what is there at that moment, and includes more than the sense of sight. To recall Merleau-Ponty a phenomenon must speak to more than one sense at a time: "If a phenomenon – for example, a reflection, or a light gust of wind – strikes only one of my senses, it is a mere phantom."³⁴

The activity may also involve movement. A view, the group consultation found, may be an element in a walk, which has the 'view' as background or as punctuation in a perambulation, or the view may be what is seen from the kitchen window while washing-up. None of the instances of view mentioned to me involved staying in one position and, primarily, looking at views. Whether of a sunset or tree, or a landscape revealed stretching into the distance, what is remembered seems to be the activity in which the person were engaged when the special event or view, took place or was present. For example, "I heard the bubbling call of a curlew

³² Countryside Commission, (1985), "Landscape Character Maps; Tranquil Areas Maps"

³³ Design Statement consultation

³⁴ Merleau-Ponty, (2002), p.371.

then saw it, when I was walking on Blackamoor".³⁵ In the viewing the human eye moves around the view, and often follows the activity within the scene, whether the clouds moving, the birds, the people, vehicles; it follows any movement, with the result that the body is moving, the eye moving and also what is viewed - the combination of context and event, of space and time.

3.4 Quality in landscape experience

The experience of boundaries and of views, and walking along, is about the everyday, people going about their everyday business. This recalls the work of de Certeau, Irigaray and others in Chapter 3 who wrote of *jouissance*, and the snatching a little freedom or enjoyment in between the daily duties, in the gaps between activities controlled by external pressures.³⁶ What matters is the "being there", and the sense of belonging, the engaging with the place. This contributes to the "dwelling perspective", the immediate event, and the future recalling of place and event together in memory, creating new experience in reflection, present, past and future.³⁷

Other significant landscape activities included play in childhood. The opportunity to play and its importance was valued: "People ridicule the rivers in Sheffield, because they are not large like the Tyne and the Thames, but they are much more accessible – but you can't play in the Tyne."³⁸

One participant recalled "white water rafting" in the Loxley between Malin Bridge and Hillsborough, while another as a boy watching clouds:

³⁵ Oral history interview

³⁶ Kristeva, Julia, (1982), "Powers of Horror: an essay on Abjection. Michel de Certeau, and Luce Irigaray also use *jouissance*," *Jouissance*, contrasts with *plaisir*, which is a controlled state that happens within cultural norms.

³⁷ Ingold, Tim, (1993), 'The Temporality of Landscape

³⁸ Member of Loxley Valley Design Group.

“lying in the grass, bracken behind my head, looking up at the sky, watching clouds, for hours. Feeling what inspires me That copse, that line of trees. I’m going to get up there one day, to that copse on top (of Rod Moor), and I did eventually! I found it wasn’t a copse, just the end of a woodland. The buzz you get from a local landscape; from the top of Wadsley Common you can look for miles.”³⁰

The significance of childhood play outdoors in the landscape is documented in work by Sebba, Higgins, Cooper Marcus, Hester and Cobb, especially with regard to the development of the imagination.³⁹

3.5 Acknowledging abuse in a landscape

Loxley Valley today, although, like the Don Valley, formerly industrial, and on the very edge of the city, would be considered a very high quality of landscape, including by its residents. Earlier in this chapter threats from development were described which would affect the future quality of landscape experience there. While what was valued in the valley, the locally distinct, was being defined in the LDVG consultation process for the purposes of protection from future development, the process also brought out many abuses which already spoil the landscape and threaten its special qualities.

Previous chapters have discussed the effect of binary Enlightenment thinking, of the attitude of the Master and exploitation of nature, of the privileging of certain landscapes at the expense of others with the distant gaze of the disembodied visual, of beauty as a standard of judgement. The distant gaze in Loxley Valley which judges the high quality of landscape would not see the detail, the local, the micro, level, where the

³⁹ Cooper Marcus, C (1978), *Remembrance of Landscapes Past*; Hester, 1979, “A Womb with a View: How Spatial Nostalgia affects the Designer”; Sebba, Rachel, 1991 “The Landscapes of Childhood: the reflection of childhood environment in adult memories and in children’s attitudes”; Cobb, (1993) *The Ecology of Imagination in Childhood*; Higgins, (1995). “Childhood, Romanticism & Landscape”.

abuse takes place.⁴⁰ The effect of this distance and consumerist attitude (a taking without giving back), is to ignore or conceal what is inconvenient or unpleasant to look at, but is nevertheless part of its truth – this adds to the discussion of the *Object* in chapters 3 and 9.⁴¹

The following annotated photographs taken from a distance show the highly valued “natural-looking” landscape, but arrows point to the detail, unseen in the general ‘view’, where abuse occurs, which the landscape is suffering. A lack of enforcement of breaches of planning regulations or closing of gaps in the regulations allow some people to exploit local resources at the expense of the whole environment; landowners, private individual and corporate, control land as an asset to be utilised, even stripped. There is continual fly-tipping, littering and filling-in of flushes and ponds and natural features. Fine old buildings are allowed to become derelict, to serve the purposes of controlling owners, or through changing use. Agricultural and cultural patterns are changing also to the detriment of local distinctiveness. Carved stone gateposts are dug up and sold and replaced with iron girders, dry-stone walls with wire fencing. Though the grand and beautiful views still seem to look much the same as a hundred years ago, and of course cleaner with the closure of dirty industry, the reality on the ground is of land still being abused, exploited and worked in such a way that loses much each season and year. It is hidden beneath the apparently innocuous and attractive exterior, an unhealthy beauty, rotten inside.

However, quick solutions and “tidying up” of past and present pollution may cause more damage. One participant reported that despite the clean and tranquil surface appearance of the water, he once fell in and came out reeking of petroleum. Based on his knowledge of local bio-diversity and ecological conditions, this participant pointed out an imposed, engineered method of clearing such pollution, for the purpose of building

⁴⁰ Shoard, M, (2003), “The Edgelands”, describes the effect of ignoring the forgotten edges of city and country which often have high value for habitat and for human use for those who live nearby, in favour of landscapes preferred for cultural reasons by decision-makers.

⁴¹ Kristeva, (1982)

Unseen changes in the landscape Loxley Valley looking North

Paper Mill Sludge

Waste from paper-making process at local factory, eg toilet roll making.

Spread on the fields as "soil ameliorant", but in layers so deep it suppressed all existing vegetation and seedbank. (and coloured pink blue and white).

Landfill site above Myers Lane

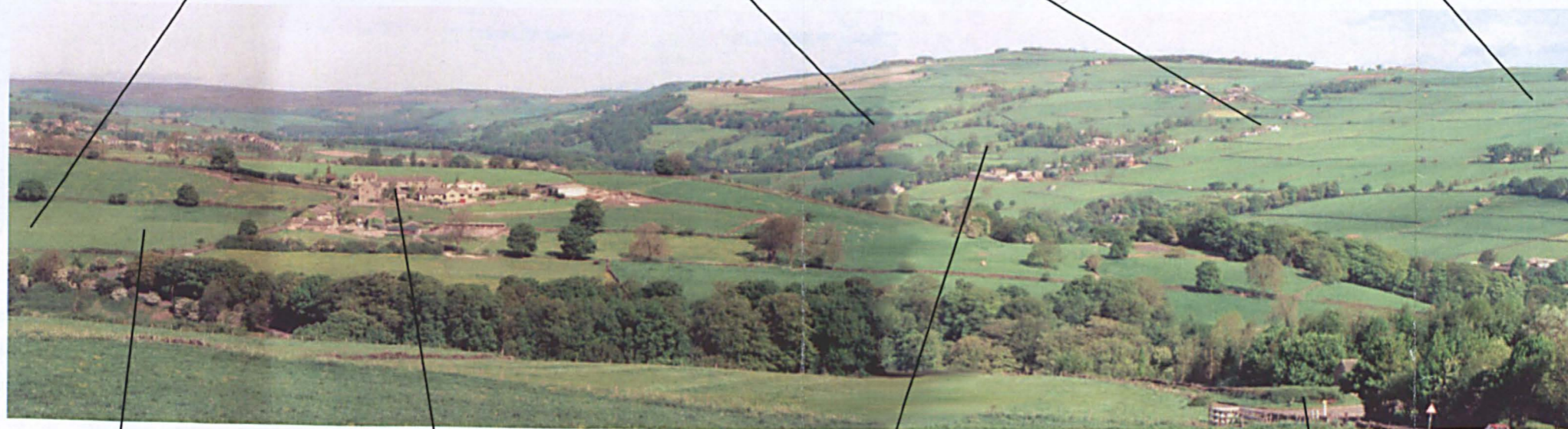
Old gannister workings filled up with rubbish, old appliances etc, and capped.

Landfill site near Dyson's

Formerly channel of Storrs Brook filled in with clay spoil, contours lost
Grassed over for car park.
Biodiversity lost

Expansion of Hillsborough Golf Course

Destruction of remnant heather moorland on the edge of the city



Conversion of barns to houses

Increased population; Increased traffic.
Change of field use to 'horsiculture'

Destruction of walls, gateposts, and grass verges

To permit entrance of heavy construction lorries to spread the waste. Gateposts (stoups) replaced with iron girders and gates with wide cheap metal gates.
Gateposts vanished from area.

Dry stone walls removed

Sold for stone; Replaced with stock fencing.

Changes in farm management practices

Hay-making to silage; effect on birdlife

In 1960s flocks of 200 lapwing; Now very few

Unseen changes in the landscape continued Loxley Valley looking South

Haymeadows
One surviving

Old tracks and green lanes
New owners gate off

Pot clay and Ganister Mines

Deep mining under cliffs, now disused; Entrances closed
Vegetation re-colonising north-facing slopes; Acid Mine
Drainage
Potential for collapse of tunnels
and shafts opening in fields above.



Old Wheel Pond

Profile of deposits sedimented over the years:
Slurry; Syringes from veterinary activities;
Fertiliser runoff – Nitrates – eutrophication;
Surface runoff – oil and petrol;
General debris from brickyard;
Brick waste.

Fields at Old Wheel Farm

Heavily fertilised; Cut for Silage instead of Hay; Draining
of Nitrates into water table and pond; Hollows and paths
of streams filled in with rubbish for flatter surface

New house building

Potential development of brickworks site for new "village" of 200 houses;
Increase of traffic, noise and pollution; Increase of pressure on wildlife areas
24 hours a day, all year round.

houses on the site for example, might well bring more problems than solved, if the extent of pollution spread in the process. As it is, the pollution is locked into the sediment at the bottom of the river and ponds, and may well be inert if not disturbed, and so degrade over years naturally with micro-organisms working on it. Development is thus not required to pay for “clean up”: “it doesn’t take 1000 new houses built to pay for the clean up – nature is cleaning it up over time, as long as no one disturbs it.”⁴² That the pollution may already be being addressed by hidden treasures of nature reminds that within what may be understood as abjected, in this case nondescript plants and unseen organisms, may also be precious and may offer solutions.

By engaging with their place, both the beautiful and the abusive and abjected, the people of Loxley Valley were seeking to protect what they valued. In the above paragraphs I have indicated some of the findings of the consultation process of the LVDG which I considered relevant to this PhD study, about value and meaning, and about the experience of “Being there” in the present.

4. The Ecological Survey: “Paying Attention to the Rhythms and Textures”

The Design Group dimension of the project’s engagement with the Loxley Valley tended to look at the valley as a whole, at the scale of planning and of the built environment. Yet as Bortoft maintained “the whole” and “the parts” give mutual interpretation and understanding.⁴³ An attention to “parts” of the Valley in detail was offered in the ecological survey I conducted in the Dungworth and Storrs area of the valley, in 2000-01.

This survey, I found, offered a unique opportunity to view within the landscape, to experience it through getting to know the natural boundaries of topography, the differences in vegetation and habitat, of

⁴² Participant in Loxley Valley Design Group interviews.

⁴³ Bortoft, (2000).

aspect, and also to be enriched (rather than “nature starved”), to wonder, for reverie, to become part of nature.⁴⁴

4.1 The Survey

The undertaking of an ecological survey of an area about one square-mile of the valley around Dungworth and Storrs, focused my attention on the detail of nature in the valley. Funded by the National Lottery, a Peak Potential Millennium Award enabled me to learn surveying skills and carry out a simple habitat survey under the supervision of a Derbyshire Wildlife Trust surveyor, during 2000 and 2001.

While approaching the survey as a scientific study, the effect was also to help me to “pay attention to the rhythms and textures” as described by philosopher and ecologist David Abram, in Chapter 3, and thus to develop a greater acuteness of perception of the natural life surrounding my home, Abram’s the “more-than-human” world, the living plants and creatures (Peat’s “all our relations”), about habitat and natural history, about land management, its history and its effects, about soil and water patterns, about seasons and climate, microclimate and topography.⁴⁵ It is not the place here to report on this fully, but to note what seemed relevant to the themes of this PhD research study.

4.2 Summary of outcomes and reflections

Under the tuition of this surveyor as mentor, I began to see with new eyes and delight in detail I had previously seen only in general terms. I saw bird’s foot trefoil entangled in long grasses at edges of fields,

⁴⁴ Porritt, (2006), writes on Geddes on Nature starvation; Bachelard, (1994), on Reverie. Mabey, (1999) *Selected Writings, 1974-99*, London: Chatto and Windus. p.123 on landscape from the inside.

⁴⁵ Jones, Melvyn, (2003), 3rd Edition, Sheffield’s Woodland Heritage; Rotherham, Ian, et al, eds. (1991), *The Sheffield Nature Conservation Strategy*; Whiteley, D. ed.(1985), *The Natural History of the Sheffield area and the Peak District*; Levan, M, (2000), *Sheffield River Corridor Surveys: Loxley* p6; Abram (1997), passim “more-than-human” world, Peat, D. F (2006) “The Saving of Planet Gaia” *New Scientist* 18 March “all our relations”

“moon-pennies”, as ox-eye daisies are known locally, dotting meadows and verges, the pattern of foxgloves under dry-stone walls where they had escaped cutting or grazing, relict patches of diversity alongside green lanes and on damp footpaths crossed by trickling springs, on steep hillsides and field corners which were of “no use” to the farmer.

I noted also the threats to survival of many species which had become isolated in small pockets. The loss was mostly an effect of changing agricultural practices, but also from redevelopment of agricultural buildings and their surroundings into homes and gardens (mentioned also above in the Design Statement process). For example, in 1980, there were twenty hay meadows in the Dungworth and Storrs area of the Valley.⁴⁶ At the end of the century there was just one, though since then this has increased to two.⁴⁷ Meadows cut for hay after the middle of July, rather than cut for silage at the beginning of June in the middle of the reproduction cycle, are vital for the conservation and survival of many species of plant, invertebrates, birds and small mammals. The varied habitats I discovered still surviving in the area are all small remnants, not considered valuable in planning protection terms, because each too small, but added together their loss forms a threat. These changes in local cultural patterns were affecting local distinctiveness quite as much as altered employment patterns or the developers of brownfield sites.

The survey offered a process of coming to see what was there – close up; it showed me that, for these fragments to find a future, they needed to be protected together. For this they needed local people to be aware of their riches and of the threat of their loss – and to care about them. This led to the culmination of my survey project with a photographic exhibition at local summer shows, to stimulate awareness and knowledge and to encourage existing knowledge and affection to be

⁴⁶ Sheffield Wildlife Trust Survey (1980)

⁴⁷ Buckingham, Helen, et al. (1997), *Meadows Beyond the Millennium: Future for Hay Meadows in the Peak District National Park*. Riley, Mark, (2005), “Silent meadows: The uncertain decline and conservation of hay meadows in the British landscape”.

shared, and action for their survival. Responses of visitors to this exhibition gave me further material for my enquiries into value in this river landscape.

I noted that there were two main kinds of responses to the ecological exhibition, from long-term inhabitants, and from newer residents, "incomers". From the first group, comments included comparisons with the past, treasured memories recalled with animation of earlier times when floral diversity was more plentiful, additions to the knowledge I had put together in the survey, such as a thicket where linnets nested, and local names for wild plants such as moonpennies, another aspect of local distinctiveness. These were treasured but, I surmised, not so treasured as to make the person enquire what caused the decline or whether they could act to prevent it, or not increase it, themselves.

The second kind of response from "incomers", more recent residents unfamiliar with the range still existing in these small pockets, showed interest and a recognition that this diversity was of value; "I didn't know all that was there". Another response challenged the value of the static photographic image: "why would I need a photograph to show me that tree when I see it everyday, in all weathers and seasons?". The living dynamic changing presence of the tree itself had more value to this respondent. Putting on the exhibition gave the opportunity to pass on the knowledge which had been shared with me, a mentoring in turn.

5. Interpreting the responses

5.1 Nature awareness - hidden threats

The Loxley Valley is a landscape which offers the opportunity to get to know it by living there, by regular visiting, by engaging in it. It inspires attachment, draws one in to reciprocity, to care for it and be nourished - a

place where Sheffield and its inhabitants may “come into country”.⁴⁸ Untold numbers benefit; the surveys and reports from the pub landlord indicated that people visit the valley regularly, not just from Sheffield, from all over the country too.⁴⁹

However it was striking on reflection that two important elements in the valley were hardly mentioned in the consultation: the river itself and the ecology of the valley. Though my study was of this river landscape, and the consultation was of the Loxley River valley, river was rarely mentioned. Unlike the Don project, where the focus was on the narrow river corridor, Loxley included the whole visible landscape in which river was often implied but hidden. It was as if a river gives sense to the planes and topography of the landscape, river gives habitat, river gives movement, continuity and newness and seasonality, but it is the event within the landscape which gives meaning.

Though the ecology was indeed included in the written Design Statement as a very important part of its quality, and the valley is named for the river, neither the natural environment nor the river, were mentioned in any detailed way, except by certain participants who had particular specialist knowledge or interest. However, because of this limited articulation of awareness of the natural environment, I did have cause to reflect whether perhaps the general valuing of the “natural” “greenness” of the environment as background to their activity and as good to look at and tranquil to “be” in, was masking a much reduced detailed attention and valuing of the specific factors, the real particularity, which add up to the whole “spirit of the place”. That without this detailed attention, this “spirit” could easily slip away or quietly be eroded, without any protest or attempt at protection or restoration.

So what kind of awareness did the participants I encountered have of the natural world of the valley? It was in the process of my own ecological

⁴⁸ John Cameron (2001a, 2001b). Place responsiveness in Australia, reintroducing non-Aboriginal city-dwellers to experiencing landscape.

⁴⁹ Loxley Valley Design Group surveys and conversations.

survey and exhibition that I attempted to draw out some of this, reflecting also on responses in the LDVG consultation. I have mentioned the enjoyment of views and of walking the footpaths; the words "I like it; it is beautiful" were frequently used, but less about actual features and detailed knowledge. I also noted the limited range of vocabulary and means of expression for what was valued. To express meaning, to be strong in identity and identify important experience and value, Loxley need a *language*.

I suggest this lack of detailed awareness may itself be a threat to the valley. A landscape can be appropriated by many as a "leisure" activity, as a "consumer", for personal benefit. However, to become familiar with its detail, "its rhythms and textures" takes time and commitment, *effort*, which means giving something back. Without this learning and valuing of the detail much local distinctiveness can be lost without even being noticed. Landowners or not, the dwelling there is available to all, residents or visitors; the attentive attitude of care, the taking time to become familiar is needed. Ownership is less important than engagement – anyone can choose to engage. No one really owns a view or the earth or wild nature. Anyone can be prepared to become part of the landscape, to dwell, within nature. As Merleau- Ponty states, "the world is not what I think" or, perhaps, see, "but what I live through".⁵⁰

Heidegger links this attitude of care, "concernful dealing with the world" into the dwelling a phenomenological approach can engender. Without awareness of this detail those who value this landscape will not have the authority to stand against the changes, the threats, to quality of experience and to dwelling in their place.⁵¹

Many people pass up and down the Valley in their cars, on the way to Bradfield, hurrying through. Others look out from their windows. They see this green view, how lovely, so refreshing and calming. Looking at

⁵⁰ Merleau-Ponty, (2002), PP, xviii

⁵¹ Heidegger, (1966), *Discourse on Thinking*, tr Anderson & Freund, N.Y., Harper & Row

the long view of the Valley shown above neither of two things are visible: the riches of the "more-than-human" world and the threats and abuse. However both are vital in understanding and addressing the future of this landscape. It takes time to read, and for the marks of the past it takes knowledge and mentors - and attitude of care. Paying attention to the "rhythms and textures" is not an optional extra; it is essential in design for and protection of dwelling.

5.2 Reflections on Time and the Landscape

The Loxley Valley gives many examples of aspects of time in the landscape, explored in Chapter 7, and shows how "being there", dwelling, includes all of them - that the experience of landscape is equally spatial and temporal. "Being in Time" and "Being in the Landscape" offer disclosure, but you have to wait for it. Lived time, both individual and shared experience, takes place in the shared business of everyday living, tasks, etc, as we "attend to one another".⁵² Embodied experience of time, the landscape unfolding around one as one walks, as one "views", was discussed in relation to walking, a spatio-temporal experience. The animation of the landscape is all in time, brings alive the spaces and shapes, lines and planes. With familiarity, the more often you look the more is revealed to you, awareness of nature increases and this frequent walking the landscape brings the dweller into consciousness of the cyclical time of the seasons, and of the linear time of growth and change from year to year.

Time reveals and is revealed in geographical patterns, the layers of geology appearing in rock and soil, in plant and animal species, as I found in the ecological survey. The valley, rich with historical layering, the time of events, tells of the Great Sheffield Flood, the working of metals and water power along the river, the nonconformist chapels, as well as the earthworks of Norman motte and bailey at Bradfield, all signed in the land and recounted in stories, culturally interpreted.

⁵² Ingold, (1993), as discussed in Chapter 7

Memories of events are linked with place. This knowledge with understanding is not instantaneous, but revealed in the place as time passes. The Valley moves towards its future as yet unknown, squeezed by pressures of all kinds and sparking with possibility, alike. The Loxley project added to my growing understanding of time in landscape, experience in unfolding, walking, event and activity, of dwelling.

5.3 Conclusions

My research question was: What is it like to "Be there"? I gathered clues wherever available, of people's experience. These may have been described in a factual way, or implied, or explicit. I noted the animation with which they give voice to the experience. The description of the activity, the observation, the feeling, was interpreted in the communication of it by the speaker or writer; there was in addition their expression and gesture; it seemed sometimes an added special feeling of revelation or disclosure of something important within the self.⁵³ In other words the landscape has evoked a response, which leads to an attachment, a desire to repeat the experience, to enjoy familiarity and take part in it, and to a sense of care.

At the same time, however, more awareness both of its richness in detail and of the threats to its very existence is needed, and a language in

⁵³ Solnit, (2002); Cooper Marcus, Clare, (1995), *House as a Mirror of Self: exploring the deeper meaning of home*, Berkeley, Conari Press. This approach to house could also be applied to landscape. Also, Maslow's peak experiences, "self-validating, self-justifying moments with their own intrinsic value" identified in Rohde, C.L.E., and Kendle, A (1995), among nature experiences. Maslow, A. (1970). *Religion, values and peak experiences*. New York: Viking. Maslow described peak experiences as self-validating, self-justifying moments with their own intrinsic value. Peak experiences are described by Maslow as especially joyous and exciting moments in life, involving sudden feelings of intense happiness and well-being, wonder and awe, and possibly also involving an awareness of transcendental unity or knowledge of higher truth (as though perceiving the world from an altered, and often vastly profound and awe-inspiring perspective). They usually come on suddenly and are often inspired by deep meditation, intense feelings of love, exposure to great art or music, the overwhelming beauty of nature,

which to express this importance. They need to find words, a language to tell their story, so that it can be preserved, escape destruction. importance of mentoring to share knowledge, mutual encouragement to increase understanding

As a result of the community and group processes of the Design Group's generating of the Design Statement, people became much more conscious of their place, articulating value and celebrating detail and the intimate experience of the place. It brought and enabled to be expressed feelings of attachment and a sense of belonging, of receiving from and wanting to contribute to this place where they live. This included shared meanings connected with particular place, and this intersubjectivity allowed richer understanding. In the reflections of the inhabitants – in their noticing what they value, in their speaking up for what they are passionate about – there is a pointing towards what it is to *dwell* in a landscape, to relate to it in that sense, a place satisfying to live in, in which to grow in increasing understanding and harmony.

This chapter, this project, brings into focus the potential of the “dwelling perspective”, the taskscape, within the landscape, the temporality, that landscape is both spatially and temporally situated, related to the discussion in Chapter 8. What *happens* in the landscape, the interweaving of human and more-than-human, of past and future with the present is more important than what it looks like. What is needed is more knowledgeable protection and embodied basis for a way forward; an allowing of the landscape itself to disclose its values and reveal a future for dwelling in.



Roger with Rivelin Waymarker



Geraldine and her pots



CHAPTER 11

CREATIVE PROJECTS

Two further projects were undertaken to make connections between landscape experience and the creation of art. Two Sheffield-based artists were interviewed and a project was set up with a Sheffield group of women of Bengali-origin who write poetry.

1. Artists and the River project

Sheffield is home to a significant number of artists, with its plentiful, large-scale and affordable accommodation for studios in old industrial buildings, and support available from public bodies. I decided to interview two artists based in the city. The aim of the interviews was to investigate how some artists interpret Sheffield's (river) landscapes, and from what they derive inspiration.

Roger Gibson, I came across through an "Open up" event, when local artists open their studios to the public, and some community ecological work we had both been involved in. Roger had recently worked on, with groups of schoolchildren, a six-metre ceramic frieze representing the River Don and its history, *Life of the River*, to be hung on the new Environmental Education centre at Kelham Island Industrial Museum. Geraldine Hughes was exhibiting and selling her pots at village shows in the Loxley Valley, where I saw her marketing her stoneware ceramics by the way they "echo the landscape".

1.1 Roger Gibson

Roger Gibson talked to me in his studios, first in Portland Space, then for a later interview, in Persistence Works, a new purpose-built block, supported by the Arts Council, in Sheffield's Cultural Industries Quarter. Roger had been a free-lance sculptor and artist for three years, previously working as a

lecturer in a local further education college. He has worked on a number of community projects in Sheffield, as artist-in-residence with schools, and on other commissioned work including wind sculptures at Deep Pits and Wedge Park on the Manor Estate, both in East Sheffield, and with a conservation group in Rivelin Valley, to create waymarkers to mark the sites of the old water-powered workshops now in ruins or overrun by undergrowth. Roger is soft-spoken, friendly, and has a genial, relaxed manner. Frequently in the conversations his mood was laughing and enthusiastic, while at the same time showing how carefully he thinks everything out.

His community projects have been typically large-scale sculptures with clay, metal and wood. His personal work is quite small-scale, and exquisitely detailed. He takes inspiration from environmental artists such as Andy Goldsworthy, Richard Long and David Nash, to create art in context.¹ Roger developed a particular interest in working with found objects, both collected over years and found on site, both natural and man-made, and in historical context. These objects he puts together in unusual combinations with their meaning carefully thought out. While our interviews ranged over a wide range of topics including his community art projects I was particularly interested in Roger's recounting of landscape experience and vivid sensual awareness of nature. This seemed to be a direct inspiration for his art work:

"man-made things in a natural setting. There's something evocative about finding the remains of an old mine. Even things like a path that is not walked anymore but is still there. You think *"Who walked this path? And why and who put it here and what was it doing there?"* and, in a way, having something man-made in a natural environment gives you a contrast which helps you appreciate nature as well."

1.1.1 Embodied experience; relationships with nature

¹ Goldsworthy, Andy, (1990) *Andy Goldsworthy: A Collaboration with Nature*, London: Harry N. Abrams; Long, R. (1997), *A Walk across England* London: Thames & Hudson.

Much of Roger's work is connected with rivers, though he says he had not noticed this before I drew his attention to it. He lives "over Rivelin" (Valley) on Stephen Hill, and frequently walks along the river there; he finds the Rivelin and Loxley more like big streams, compared with the River Don, which is more of a navigable river. He recalls cycling as a student along the Humber at Hull - "an intriguing river: it was flat, boats, remains of lost jetties, strange marshlands, sea birds." The bird life and variety of experience by another river, he described as "not a static thing. It is ever changing, a habitat; you know you're going to see birds, flora, you're going to hear sounds, smell smells, a multifarious experience".

1.1.2 Landscape experience in childhood

Where might this interest in rivers, in landscape, have been fostered? Roger recalls many hours of outdoor play, with friends and alone, during his childhood in Leeds, in the valley of the Gledhow. He "did a lot of messing about on small rivers...." Though it was in the city, there were fields and woods opposite the house. It felt more like a rural experience than an urban one. "We had this outdoors and we were out there all day". Landscape experience was directly physical, falling in the water, damming streams, swinging on ropes; daring to do awkward and risky things, building up courage:

We used to go through great pipes which took the stream under the road. We had to walk up it by straddling the water with our feet on the slanting sides of the pipe. They were really tunnels, very long, 100 yards long or so. I didn't like doing it, but it was one of those things you just felt you had to do. (*Grins*)

Another incident he recalls now, he had more mixed feelings about:

There was a huge rectangle of rose bay willow herb. We had a gigantic maze of trodden down passages. We could spend all day in it. You couldn't see over the top. One day for some reason I was on my own. I made a track, six foot wide, right across it in a straight line. (Later I saw

Land Art and thought I've done that!) I spent all day. I must have been bored. I beat it down with a stick. Must have been 40 metres or so...

Roger felt both the triumph of achievement and a vague sense of guilt, as if it were "a kind of vandalism". He asks himself whether he, or anyone, had any right to put his mark in such a dramatic way on landscape "that doesn't belong to you or anybody in particular".

Being outside in the landscape offered freedom and scope for trying things out, giving experience of fun, of fear, of satisfaction and guilt, in company and alone.

1.1.3 *Sensory experience and being in landscape*

So what is it in landscape which inspires Roger, is important to him? His senses are alert and responding to stimuli, birds and flowers, a living habitat, always changing, himself moving through the landscape; he calls the experience of being in the landscape multi-dimensional, multifarious and he calls himself a nature lover, always liking being outside, walking: "you hear things, you smell things, you see things, you touch things."

Smell in the landscape has a particularly powerful effect on him:

I went out last night, from Ringinglow Road down to Whirlow Park and ... I was stood in an open space in Whirlow Park and suddenly this *perfume* hit me - incredibly powerful perfume, and I thought "what? I can't see any plant this perfume is coming from", looking all round.. it was about 20 yards away, a perfumed azalea. You know the ones. They smell like honeysuckle but somehow they're a little bit more exotic than that, bit heavier.

Sound is also important. He talks of birdsong as, "totally lyrical, like skylark, or curlew... Every time you go walking on the moors you hear them and it's just wonderful". The experience of both smell and sound in landscape offer him more than pleasure for the senses. He mentions several times a sense of delighted surprise, of gift, "Wow is that for me? Thank you", and of the

numinous, transcending the everyday, he calls it “a foretaste of a greater experience”.

With touch, Roger gives an example of experience in the Orkneys, of a sense of touching space and time: “this thing is aeons old – it’s almost eternal, isn’t it? I know it has a beginning, but you’re almost touching eternity when you run your hand over the surface of a rock”.

1.1.4 Landscape and materials

Roger’s creative approach is by developing ideas in the landscape itself. He gave the example of the initial stages of his Rivelin Waymarkers project. The materials in the landscape itself inspired one aspect: a line of twigs led from a tree stump to the sandy river bank, a progression from wood to sand to water. This “...gave us the idea [for] a path, from the waymarker to the remains of the water wheel.”

1.1.5 Beauty as an Artist

I was interested to know how Roger perceived the concept of beauty in landscape and uses the word ‘beautiful’.

Beauty – people feel the need to use the word because they have these experiences which move you in your heart, and you need a word to describe it; these experiences and responses to them suggest that “beauty” exists...

For Roger, the beautiful is connected with surprise and variety, with curiosity value and strangeness, with excitement, the “Wow! factor”. What is beautiful can be unexpected: “When you actually go up close to a rosebay willow herb they’re a beautiful plant aren’t they? We tend to see them as a big, big weed, that we perhaps hacked our way into like a jungle... But they are actually a beautiful plant...”. He went on: “The word curious is key for me – I want to apprehend the world intelligently. Things that have a wow! factor, because of their strangeness or humanness, something special about the object”. He calls this a numinous thing.

Reflecting on the beautiful, he considers the ugly too, which he connects with a lack of care, no love for the environment, something which human beings make, by careless attitudes, whether in town, on marginal areas like industrial estates or in the countryside. These distress him.

1.1.6 Relationship to nature – and time

The experiencing of nature for Roger includes a sense of time, reflecting on the time of nature, and the horizons of the human timescale. Even as a child he felt there was something, "mysterious about landscape that I could never pin down, ...that numinous nature of the landscape ...it moves you but you don't know why". Being in nature for Roger can rebalance human living: "however wound up you get with what you're doing you can always go out there and see something much, much bigger than yourself and much... that puts whatever you're into, into perspective." For him, being in a landscape is mysterious, refreshing and numinous.

1.2 Geraldine Hughes

Geraldine Hughes is a potter based in Oughtibridge, one of the villages beside the Upper Don between Stocksbridge and the northern edge of Sheffield. Here the Don Valley is steep-sided, with a flatter space at river level where roads join, and the former railway line passes. A number of brooks and streams flow into the Don here, and it is up a leafy hidden-away valley of one of these that Geraldine Hughes lives with husband, dogs, cats and other creatures, and works her pottery.

Geraldine has been a potter for twenty-five years. She had always wanted to be a potter since watching the television programme "Interlude with the Potter's Wheel", from the age of four or five, despite her grammar school discouraging art studies as "not academic enough". She is very confident of her own process and approach. She is always developing her creative ideas within her own approach, which is very personal; she is not interested in "fashion" and is amused to see different styles coming and going and

coming round again. She expresses content with potting. She makes bowls, plates, jugs, domestic pots for life in the home.

She is enthusiastic, down to earth and seems quite self-contained. She is responsive to landscape, to her material, to ideas, to my presence and questions.

1.2.1 Landscape experience in childhood

Geraldine grew up in Morley, Leeds and recalls playing with friends in streams nearby, jumping over, paddling, looking for tadpoles. She recalls many landscape experiences on holidays with her family by the sea. She was interested in pond and river life, up-turning stones, caddis flies, and collecting wild flowers. This led her to a training in biology before she became a potter, her life vocation: "I'll do it 'till I keel over aged about a hundred into the clay! I'm not a homey person. I've always been a landscapey person."

1.2.2 Being in landscape and creative expression

She walks frequently in the landscape and also has a pilot's licence. From the aeroplane she looks at the landscape from above. She has always felt a connection to water through swimming, and continues to swim in the sea wherever she finds it.

The many hours I spent in the sea, big waves and everything, are still really important. I am still a mad swimmer. Just the exhilaration of being in the waves, and part of the scenery as it were, the tumbling over, feeling the power of the sea....

She is intensely interested in shape and form, and in detail. It is a very important part of her life, and source of all the development of her work. She doesn't use the term beautiful, nor does she talk directly about her feelings about landscape; her engagement with the landscape is implied in all she says. Of her work she says all her representational work includes a river, winding through interlocking hills. This started initially from walking in another Yorkshire landscape - the Dales. She looks for shapes, colours and

patterns. The elements of nature she mentions as inspiration are jackdaws flying overhead, birds flying beneath her aeroplane when flying, fossils and shells, ammonites, fish and seaweed, skeleton leaves. Sea-slugs are a particular favourite, spicules appear as white triangles in her work, and egg-cases. She features patterns on her bowls derived from the interfolding of hills, the joining of sea and sky, from little clumps of trees on hills, as found near Bakewell.

Sometimes if I want to do a really V bowl that goes out, I think of this landscape where we walk in the Lakes – as I'm throwing it I think of the shape of the valley and it does transmit itself into the bowl

The colours of her pots and glazes, she explains, come from lichen on rocks, blues and greens of landscape scenes enclosing white patches of snow in the hills.

1.3 Evaluation of the artists project

The artists in the study were very receptive to the natural world around them, in active relationship with the landscape. Both walked regularly; Geraldine also flew and discovered the world of the air and ground from above. Both referred freely to play, as children and as adults, in rivers, in the sea, flying, exploring, discovering, experimenting, and as a prelude to artworks. Roger explored the overgrown banks of the River Rivelin searching for clues for ideas for a new installation to commemorate its water-power past. Geraldine was intensely curious about the world around her. As a biologist, the mysteries of the microscopic sea-slug offered her patterns, the line and fold of a valley shaped a bowl, detail of forms interested her, the diversity of the natural world always stimulated new ideas for her work.

Roger talked of the "multifarious experience of being out in landscape" its smells, touch and sight in multi-dimensions. He was delighted by the

surprisingly powerful perfume of the azalea, and when he “touched space” and time in Orkney. He saw nature as a place to put life in perspective.

Both were articulate in words about their art and landscape, as well as expressing their relationship with the landscape in the language of their art, most notably Geraldine in the way she saw herself transmitting the shape of a Lakeland valley into her bowl. Roger as a boy had his first experience of sculpting with the stand of rose bay willow herb. This relationship, they both appeared to be constantly renewing by regular landscape experience, mainly on foot – embodied, sensing, in activity.

James Corner has called for a dialogue between the scientific and artistic worlds in order for a “culturally animate ecology” to emerge, embracing “those poetic activities that create meaningful relationships between people, place and earth”.² He has claimed an eco-imaginative landscape architecture would be creative insofar as it reveals, liberates, enriches, and diversifies both biological and cultural life. This project with two artists working from within their relationship with landscape seemed to offer pointers for landscape architects. Their art was embodied, drawing inspiration from their being in natural environments, from sense experience and activity. They had an active sense of wonderment and humility, patience in expectations for what would come. Corner’s linking of ecology and creativity speaking of “movement, passage, genesis, and autonomy, of propulsive life unfolding in time” seemed here with these artists to be “bodied forth” in “the form of things unknown”.³ Their methodology for their art was phenomenological. It could not be tied down to a formula; it was allied with the imagination and a responsiveness to the animate earth. Landscape architects have much to learn from this.

² Corner, (1997) “Ecology and landscape as agents of creativity” in *Ecological design and planning*, George F. Thompson and Frederick R. Steiner eds., Chichester: John Wiley. p.88
³ Ibid. p.81. Corner quotes Coleridge’s use of this famous description of ‘the Poet’s eye’ from *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, (Act 5.1.7-12).

2. Mandākini on the Don – when Bengal meets Sheffield

2.1 A River Boat Trip with the Bengali Women's Support Group

An all-age Bengali-speaking women's group meets in Sheffield, for both social and literary purposes. They have published their writing, especially poetry, in Bengali and in English. I came across one of the group's leaders, Safuran Ara, through Yorkshire Arts.⁴ When I got in touch with the group I was warmly greeted. Some of the group were born and grew up in Bengal - the delta region where many of the great rivers of the Indian subcontinent meet the sea. Most have lived in Britain for much of adulthood. Almost all the younger members of the group were born, brought up and educated in Britain. They maintain regular and active links, with Bangladesh and India, sometimes with visits.

I broached the idea of a picnic and ramble with the group, to start off a river project for their literary work, but the group enthusiastically suggested a boat trip instead – to be *carried on* the water, in a vessel, rather than walk, would be much more inspirational. They explained that they are a 'riverine people', and that poetry-making is a national, cultural pastime. They were delighted to sing Bengali river songs, and create poetry, prose and artwork from the boat trip experience.

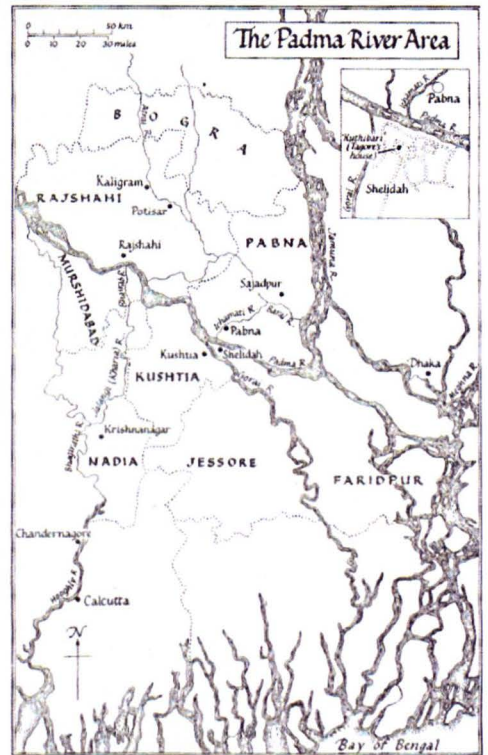
In the preparation and events, I was a participant observer. I had in mind part of the action research model, as discussed in the work of Carr and Kemmis.⁵ I was the observer who sometimes was called on to contribute, compared with the Loxley Valley project, where I was involved in every way. I also used the method of interviews-as-conversations in order to probe

⁴ This was a meeting – and an element of the research - which occurred and developed through happenstance, not intention.

⁵ Carr, W. and S. Kemmis, (1983), *Becoming Critical: Knowing through Action Research*, Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press; idem, (1986), *Becoming Critical: Education, Knowledge and Action Research*. London: Falmer.



Sociability of landscape



"We are a riverine people"



Bengal meets Sheffield

gently into more individual life experiences and feelings.⁶ I discuss some of these issues in Chapter 12 when evaluating all the projects together.

2.1.1 *The river boat trip*

The river boat trip took place in June 2002, with a view to a publication afterwards of poetry about rivers, inspired by the day on the boat. Part of the aim of producing an anthology was to share with others of the 'host' culture (i.e. others in UK) how 'refreshing' it is to take a river journey. The lottery-funded "Arts for All" programme met the costs of our hiring of a narrow-boat on the South Yorkshire Canal at Rotherham, and anthology publication.⁷

It was a rather cool, damp summer day when thirty adults and children piled into the narrow boat cabin. As "an expression of celebration and culture and home", most of the women wore traditional clothes – saris, but these were not very practical on the boat, for climbing in and out, and cold. The cabin atmosphere was close and airless; sitting in the bows of the boat at least offered a slight breeze. I found this small space outside the cabin best for talking and listening, and setting up my tape recorder, with fewer distracting noises (such as the tannoy which was in constant use for the conveying of instructions), and for the singing of Bengali songs and reciting of poetry, both new and old. The children were encouraged to draw pictures, play games about the river, and make paper boats which then were sailed on the water. I engaged small groups or individuals in conversation, around the boat. Many were keen to talk to me about their experiences, which I found I had not expected. I interviewed two women with contrasting experiences at greater length.

We ate a sandwich picnic, '*sando*', beside lock gates at Sprotborough, sitting on grass, and afterwards the children had a 'fashion parade' on the tow path. Despite the slightly awkward conditions there was a very warm

⁶ Scheuerich, James Joseph, (1997), *Research in the Postmodern*, London: Falmer Press; G. McCracken, (1988) *The Long Interview*, London: Sage.

⁷ The Don itself is not navigable as far inland as Sheffield; the Sheffield canal, built in 1814, links the river to central Sheffield canal basin.

atmosphere of festivity and kindness. Considerable interest was expressed in the sighting of ducks, swans, cormorants, and a kingfisher.

The day trip was followed by two workshop days where poems and drawings, inspired by the day, were shared. Debjani, the group's leader, reflected on the day in her introduction to the poetry anthology published later:

It was the first time that most of us had been able to sail in South Yorkshire... Although we were a boisterous lot with our singing and adda,⁸ there were also quiet moments when the water and the riverside seemed to reveal themselves in a striking and insightful way.

Our boat trip allowed us to make a tangible link in our own minds and therefore lives, between the rivers of the homes we had left behind in India and Bangladesh and the rivers of our South Yorkshire homes. As diaspora Bengalis, we warmed to the rivers of South Yorkshire.⁹

2.1.2 *An embodied experience?*

The embodied experience was less the experiencing of 'nature', more the experience of, from water, looking out at the landscapes of the sides of the canal framed by the windows. Nevertheless it could be called a 'landscape experience'. In noted in my journal at the time:

The enclosed safeness of cabin gives a sense of disconnection from the experience of the riverbank, but there is no threat from unexpected encounters. There is the physical closeness of others in the very restricted space of cabin and boat, of the boatmen passing to and fro; ... There is a sense of movement on the water, of being carried, with a slight adjustment to balance when wash from other craft creates turbulence.

⁸ Adda is the Bengali word for "passing the time in chatting" – a popular Bengali pastime. Chatterjee D. and Sen, A. (2003), *Daughters of a Riverine Land*, Sheffield: Bengali Women's Support Group, (BWSG) Book Project.

⁹ Ibid.

Many different elements contributed to the 'embodied' experience of landscape: the mode of transport, the being carried in a part-enclosed boat, and the sensual experience of climate and temperature, that is cool and damp despite it being late-June.

The experience included the presence of others and *their* experience and personalities. It was affected by the preparedness of individuals, say, in what they choose to wear, the anxieties or anticipation they brought, their previous experiences and memories, including of landscape, as well as the purpose and atmosphere of the trip. All these subtly affected the way one perceived, what enjoyment and satisfaction was gained, individually and together, and made a difference to what new things were learned or experienced.

The event involved activity within the landscape not just a static viewing; though the participants were mostly sedentary and in contact with the boat rather than with the ground, they were moving through the landscape and viewing as they travelled; it unfolded around them. The experiencing of the landscape took place over a period of a day, and then was reflected on over months, and then became part of the bank or reservoir of cultural and landscape memory indefinitely. Over a year after the event, participants continued to talk enthusiastically about the experience.

It is another example of dwelling within the landscape, of interaction with the landscape and within the landscape. It includes many of de Certeau's "significant practices", talking, cooking, and one could add to these eating and singing and surely making poetry, practices in which a little freedom is taken, from the social constraints and controls. It involved sense experience, feeling, emotions and sensitivities, memory and cultural-formation; it enhanced, refreshed.

2.2 Themes arising from the experience

This project brings out three aspects of the wider study: the sociability of landscape experience, the idea of "home landscape", and the language with which to articulate experience. First, the sociability has been underlined in the way the boat trip was a very social experience in 'nature', as the surrounding landscape was shared and enjoyed together. This contrasts significantly with the solitary experiences described in the work of John Wylie and Rebacca Solnit, and recalls feminist scholars' debating with Merleau-Ponty on how individual sensing may be a more masculine pattern compared with the more dialogic experience of women. Among the Bengali women this was indeed much of the point of the day, the shared experience of the travel and seeing new places, the making poetry and song, and the shared picnic, bringing a treasured, shared meaning.

Second – responding to Richard Mabey's stress on the importance of the "home ground" or "native patch", Clare Cooper Marcus's explorations of special landscapes from our pasts, and Randolph Hester's concept of "landscapes of the heart" - this project raises the question of whether, in cases of migration, one can have *two* "home" landscapes or "landscapes of the heart"?¹⁰ Can introduction to a host landscape - its features, its familiarity, its themes - help to integrate an exile to their new place? Moreover, does reflection on the experience of those exiled from home landscapes shed light on our experience of homelessness and "placelessness" here?¹¹ This touches on the extent "home" is important, its necessary part in dwelling in a landscape, and the possibilities for making home in a new landscapes.

Thirdly this project sheds more light on the importance of language too in landscape, how we talk about landscape, think about it in language, share it, and articulate its meanings.

2.2.1 *Exile: poems of longing for "home"*

¹⁰ Cooper Marcus, C. (1978) "Remembrance of Landscapes Past". *Landscape* 22, 3: pp.34-43; Hester, R., *Places, Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart*. Yi Fu Tuan discusses home in a new place. Tuan, Yi Fu, (1974) *Topophilia: a Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values*, London: Prentice Hall.

¹¹ Relph, Edward, (1976) *Place and Placelessness*, London: Pion.

Bengali woman in Britain...

*Though far from home, she is no straw adrift on the tide.
The scent of lemon, moonlight dancing on tamarind leaves,
Music in the drizzling of Monsoon nights, grip her in nostalgia.
Even today such sweet memories have not dimmed.*

A Bengali woman in Britain

*Has yearnings unfulfilled but her head is unbowed.
She is no wretch to crawl in anyone's dust.
Do not view her with pity, she is no beggar.¹²*

Migrants from Bengal, both Muslim and Hindu, have come to Britain for educational and economic reasons. Many have a family history of earlier migrations in the recent past: when India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947, after independence from the British Empire, many families migrated across the new borders to escape persecution and make a new life in a state with those of the same religion. All have a mixture and variety of landscapes in their past.¹³

Safuran Ara, a founding member of the Bengali women's group, came to Britain from Bangladesh, and has worked for Sheffield Libraries for 22 years. She said she transferred many things from Bangladesh to this country: most of the decoration in her house, the vegetables she tries to grow, her dress. Bengali is spoken in her home.

I can't totally bring Bangladesh to England. I couldn't bring my near people's, my dear people's, love and affection. So many wonderful things are here, very organised systems and routines. No worry, anxieties. But I am missing the love and affection, the crowds and noises. They cannot be

¹² Safuran Ara, in Ara, S. (1999) *Songs in Exile*. Transl. D. Chatterjee, Sheffield: Sheffield Libraries.

¹³ A recent BBC Radio 4 programme, by the reporter Clare Balding, featured a group walk for asylum seekers and refugees living in Sheffield, along another of Sheffield's rivers, the Porter Brook, through Endcliffe Park and Bingham Park. This ramble was planned to help them become acquainted with this new landscape so different from their own. Radio Broadcast, "For a Reason: asylum seekers and refugees in Sheffield Endcliffe Park and Bingham Park", 17 Oct 2008, BBC Radio 4.

transferred. But this is where I belong – a combination of security and my belonging. I feel Sheffield is home. ... I feel relief that this is home. (*physical movement, stretching, breathing, opening out arms*) "I can stretch my legs". My "work place" I feel is very much mine in Sheffield libraries, the combination of my desks, my colleagues, the doing of the work. In town, the city centre is my city centre. I feel very good, comfortable, walking around.

Ashoka Sen was born in what is now Bangladesh, but her parents (Hindu) moved to the (later) Indian side before Partition, for business reasons. Ashoka later moved to England. She taught her son Bengali alongside English and by the age of five he could read and write both. When he went to school he chose not to continue. "Why should I learn two languages?" However now, as an adult, he writes to her and speaks in Bengali, and this is important to him.

Ashoka is quiet and looks nervous. Her confident poetry-making, such as *The Banyan Tree*, is not apparent in her manner. She writes in both Bengali and English and took a creative writing course at Sheffield Hallam University. Ashoka talks of her feeling of not belonging anywhere. Her parents talked of places and landscapes from their past which she did not know; in turn, she talked to her son of places of her past that he did not know. The past landscapes and the present are not linked or continuous, as though in Britain and a member of the women's group for a good number of years, she does not quite feel she belongs in either – her Hindu background not fitting the her easily into the group.

During the boat trip it was clear there is a great attachment to past landscapes, in Bengal, neighbouring Assam, and South India. With a little encouragement, quite a lot of detail was given about places, wildlife, customs and events in those landscapes. It was also clear that British landscapes were not at all familiar or explored – in fact social customs and mobility made it difficult to explore, and it was not seen as particularly interesting. Wildlife and plant-life along the canals including willow, were unfamiliar and names unknown, even among those who were born here. It

was commented, however, that the weeping willows look like miniature versions of banyan trees. Banyan trees are large, but come down, sending roots down at various places.

Asking a young British Bengali speaker, "What would you say was your home landscape?" she laughed and said she did not know. Looking back to the past, or to occasional visits "home", younger generations tell of the excitement of going to Bangladesh, with its vast landscapes, enabling them to nurture their own roots and connections. One recalled a moonlight swim in the village pond in Bengal, remembering the screams of the girls who swam out of their depth. Another cherished the dramatic difference of movement in the Bengali landscape compared with England – how you had to be taken by boat to visit family in a nearby village, because there was no road. Older members of the group look ahead to retirement, and discuss either going back – "I prefer it in Bangladesh", or staying in Britain – "I belong here – I wouldn't want to go back".

2.2.2 Language and Landscape: loss in translation

As I am not literate in Bengali, my research for this study required material translated into English. I could also only communicate with the women in English. Poetry written in the original Bengali is an expression of the feelings, aspirations, and values of the people of Bengal, and the effect of the poetic inheritance upon cultural sensibility, both in the past and today. Much of this is difficult to appreciate in translation.

The making and enjoying of poetry and song is a Bengali cultural norm. The quality of performance and writing is not as important as expression, feeling, communication, sociability. Writing poetry inspired by the landscape of Bengal has a strong tradition. Why is language important? This group was formed for both support, and to celebrate writing. It was both to chat and to encourage one another, and to promote and develop the Bengali language. Why this combination? I asked Safuran how the difference in language, and the need to talk not in your own tongue affected her. She answered:

The interpretation, I feel it a lot. A lot of things cannot be translated, often I cannot translate my feelings to my dear English friends, and humorous things. When I cannot translate especially these two things. I see "the gap" – and that gap makes distance. Very personal things. Language – is about power. I wish I could speak in Bengali if I prepare a paper. ...I feel the weakness – in expression. I don't feel dominated because of language. The generation gap within the group – The younger ones have less Bengali vocabulary – they only have the essential words, because their environment is English. Their attitude is different, they have adapted to Western lifestyle and ways of things. They have learned some of Bengali attitudes, behaviour and courtesy. With my bringing up I got it. They had to learn.

The civil war in 1971 between East and West Pakistan, which resulted in the independence of East Pakistan and the formation of the state of Bangladesh, centred on conflict over the right to be educated in the mother tongue of the East, Bengali, rather than in the language of the West, Urdu. Threats to the Bengali language under British rule in the nineteenth century, roused opposition and led gradually to the growth of nationalism and re-discovering of the value of local culture. Leading writers began to revive and develop a literature from folk tales, songs and religious practice. The national literary hero of that era was Rabindranath Tagore, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1913, following a collection of poems and songs translated into English. The remaining body of his work is largely unknown in the West. His wide range, written over a sixty year period, defined as well as developed the language of Bengal. No later writer could write without reference to him. Tagore wrote much on the vast flat landscape, wide skies, green wooded fringed horizons, and broad rivers of Bengal.

The language, the national and personal identity and the landscapes of the country are profoundly intertwined. The Bengali women in Britain carry on this tradition of conserving language and identity, while adapting to the customs and landscape of their adopted home, or the home their parents

adopted for them. Three women described the river landscape of Bengal like this:

IBrahmaputra [river] - that one is the biggest, very famous one. It is in between Assam, the part of India where I came from, and Bangladesh. It is massive. You can't see – like if you stand one side you can't see the other side, they reach the horizon... *Many miles wide.*

You just see the view of water and trees and everything, and drop down, and all these waterfalls, and all you see is the water...and sky...¹⁴

Debjani Chatterjee brings the two landscapes together, interpreted and expressed in English, and in the ancient poetic form of the Persian ghazal.

An Indian Summer Ghazal

*September and I see the urban fisherfolk
dreaming of salmon leaping in roaring rivers.*

*Sunday in Sheffield and I walk by the canal
The high Himalayas drum with roaring rivers.*

*The dragonfly flits in the Yorkshire afternoon
while Mandākini descends in roaring waters*

*Once a laughing goddess roamed along these banks;
Now unknown, her name resounds through roaring waters.*

*Ducks swim, ruffling their feathers over the landscape
Yards away, industry storms its roaring waters.*

*Whatever she is called, Ganga meditates
on Summer rippling the calm of English rivers.¹⁵*

¹⁴ Conversation with Fatima and Salma Bibi and Chandra Gangola.

¹⁵ Mandākini is both river and goddess in Hindu mythology. She is the name given to the sacred river Ganges when it flows through heaven. Chatterjee writes: "Although the Ganges is the most sacred river for Hindus, every river is sacred and if we choose to view the Don as another form of the Ganges, then it becomes so." Chatterjee, D. and Ara S. (eds.) (2001), *My birth was not in vain: selected poems by seven Bengali women*, Sheffield: Sheffield Libraries, 2001. The form of this poem is the ghazal, so it is written in couplets, each ending with a typical refrain.

3. Evaluation of the projects

3.1 Sensory perception, identity and attachment

I noted the positive feelings toward landscapes that participants manifested as a guide to value and meaning, expressed both in word and in gesture. Animation and enthusiasm shone forth and people came alive as they talked with pleasure about what interested them in a landscape, gave them joy and inspiration. I heard and saw expression of delight in living creatures, in water itself, smells, touch and sounds, which animated the senses, animated the people. Roger vividly recalled both the perfume of azalea from only the night before; Geraldine's described the "exhilaration of being in the waves" and therefore "part of the scenery", the sense of power present in water.

In some cases it was striking where landscape could give a sense of identity; the Bengali women declared "We are a riverine people". Roger defined himself a "a nature lover". Geraldine significantly stated she had "always been a landscapey person." Her combining this reflection with her vision of herself "potting 'till I keel over aged about a hundred", underlined her commitment to her activity of potting and passion for the landscape. These active landscape experiences seem to evoke and promote feelings of attachment, matching those of the Don and Loxley projects, in responses to where the threat of unsuitable development in the Loxley Valley, and in the repeated rebuilding after floods of the fishing garden at Riley's.

3.2 The language of landscape experience

People answered my questions often by telling a story. It seems that what mattered to people, what stood out and was remembered, was something occurring linked with a particular place: landscape could be recalled as an event as much as a place.

Family outings and childhood events were often described, both in Bengal and Yorkshire, and incidents recounted, in a particular place. Rock-pooling, damming streams with friends, are the sort of things that are remembered and come at once to mind. The moonlight swim in the Bengali village pond; the journeys by boat to visit family in nearby villages; the memory of “all you see is water... and sky”. All of these, working, playing, walking or exploring, are Being-in-the-landscape, building individual and shared meaning in landscapes related to events in time.

On reflection, I realised the importance here of the relation of meaning-generation to language: meaning was only formed when articulated in language and vice versa. Recalling Mugerauer, the language we have available to us forms the way we see things, in turn forming the meaning we give to what we see. Bortoft explained this, after Heidegger, as the hermeneutical circle. Yet, in these projects, it became apparent that experiences were described through a language, well-developed or well-adapted to express meanings and value, in the one case through their art, in the other through poetry. This suggested that language of one sort or another, language of the human experience of landscape is important— one theme I will revisit in the concluding Part of this thesis.

PART FOUR

OUTCOMES

CHAPTER 12

EVALUATING THE METHODOLOGY

The first part of the thesis explored the context and methodology of the study, the second and third parts the themes and the experiences of being-in-the-landscape, in literature and in place, putting them in dialogue. This, the fourth and final part, evaluates the methodology used in the study, makes recommendations for landscape architecture, and draws conclusions.

Just as culture “is a thick and active archaeology”, so is landscape.¹ Landscape is not an exact science which can be measured; much is hidden below the surface, layered, nested. However, it can be studied empirically through the phenomena it presents, that is phenomena physical and cultural, social and emotional, and it does respond to attentive observation. The phenomenological approach and method adopted in this project is a methodology of experiencing, in time and in place, and it is appropriate to consider its wider application in landscape research and practice. This methodology does not have a formula which can be applied straight to a site or brief, with an instrumental or interventionist approach to design. It nevertheless promotes landscape experiencing and the development of an attitude of dwelling in the designer, and offers a basis for designing for dwelling.² As I have said, to shed light on this question, to explore the inner experiencing of landscape and well as its outer physicality and particularity, I tried to position myself both inside and outside the subject of study.³

1. Qualitative methodology –

1.1 *Processing, interpreting and validity*

¹ Corner, James (1999), *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture*, Princeton, NJ. Princeton Architectural Press.

² The work of Isis Brook on Goethean Science and reading landscape, shows a 4-staged approach, closely aligned with phenomenology; it takes the form of a system but it is experiential and responsive to the site, not instrumentalist. Isis Brook (1998), “Goethean science as a way to read landscape”. *Landscape Research*, 23(1), pp.51-69

³ See page 34, above

To recall the reasons for choosing this methodology, in line with other qualitative research and phenomenological studies, this study of experience in landscape aims to understand rather than to prove, to interpret more than analyse.⁴ It is recognised that very little of the material was, nor can be, replicable. Experience is relational, and uniquely situated, not divisible, cannot be repeated.⁵ Generalisations and universal solutions may not be drawn. However, as to the reliability of subjectively-derived data, this thesis contends that, put together with that of other subjectivities, both directly and through literature, in dialogue, by triangulation, they may enable the interpretation of the data towards the production of an intersubjective knowledge in the manner of Merleau-Ponty described in chapter 3.⁶ In this it looks to multiple rather than single interpretations. This inter-subjectivity is seen as a strength, which may ensure the capacity to include more subtle nuances than quantified responses and may deepen understanding, especially in areas that have previously been little studied and little understood. The findings might be used later as a basis for more quantitative studies, once the ideas behind it are clearer. The validity of this type of research rests in settings close to reality, where the experience is happening rather than removed from it in "laboratory" conditions. It takes small samples, but aims to pay careful attention to real situations, people as they express themselves, and to be open to the unexpected.

1.2 *The width of enquiry*

The study began with questions, rather than one hypothesis, and with the intention of relating disciplines; it was an open and flexible undertaking, bringing together streams of enquiry and knowledge, both academic and local, into a dialogue. With the "fishing anywhere and everywhere" analogy,

⁴ For description of the philosophies and aims of humanistic and qualitative research see Johnson, R.J. 1986 *Philosophy & Human Geography*, 2nd ed. Edward Arnold Publishers Ltd. "To improve understanding, to increase depth of self-knowledge, to enable people to improve quality of their lives"

⁵: Riley, Judith, 1996, *Getting the most from your data: a handbook of practical ideas on how to analyse qualitative data*. Bristol, Technical and Educational Services Ltd, page 169; and Stanley Liz, 1993, "On Autobiography in Sociology", In *Sociology*, Vol27, No 1, 41-52

⁶ Ely, M., 1991, *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*, London: Falmer Press.

a net was thrown wide, which brought in a rich and hugely varied catch. Deliberately like a “scoping study” used at the beginning of a landscape assessment, where the site and context is unknown, it trawled both the literature and the practical experiences in the river landscapes. The whole “landscape” of knowledge was new to the me as a researcher, and no existing charts or manuals were found for guidance through. The strength of this broad approach included the quality of material brought in and its dynamic nature. It pulled the research in unexpected directions (helped by the method of happenstance) and opened interesting lines of enquiry. However this breadth also brought a vast quantity of material; it entailed a considerable, and time-consuming, sorting process as to what was valuable for this enquiry and what was not. The deliberate looseness of questions to keep an open enquiry made it difficult to tie down the material for use as research data without reverting to a conventional format. New charts were drawn, and, like for early geographers, these had gaps and misinterpretations which had to be corrected, as the underlying patterns and structures became clearer.

1.3 The processing of data

The large quantity of documentary data was processed by sifting and selecting and putting questions to the material, an interrogation and self-interrogation.⁷ Early interviews and conversation with those who inhabit, live with and experience the places themselves, added other dimensions, and this too was questioned. This early pattern of data collecting and questioning both formal and informal was part of the analytical method which helped form my approach to the subject and the putting in place of a framework for further enquiry. The framework grew over the course of the study and shifted in response to the dialogue happening within it.⁸ The key questions described in Chapter 4 and the themes of Nature, Beauty and Time in landscape, were selected in response to this process; these themes, as explored in chapters 5-8, (see page 102) all involved the dual aspect of an apparently outer cultural meaning and an inner personal

⁷ Self-interrogation recommended in Riley, 1996.

⁸ Brook, Isis, 1998,

experience, and a disjuncture between the two. The themes then in turn framed the questioning-in-depth of the longer-term experiential research.

The recording of data in journals and diagrammatic diaries, both from the written material and later from the experience in the landscapes, a practice recommended by researchers such as Judith Riley and Liz Stanley, was part of the process of digesting, analysing/evaluating and interpreting the data.⁹ They helped bring ideas out into the open and provoke reflection; from this process patterns emerged to give shape to the interpreting, and gave an encouraging sense of progress. Mapping of places and events were also important in developing a sense of the relationships within a place and between places.

The processing of the material both at the time of hearing and on reflection afterwards was a continuous selecting, an analytical task shaped by the questioning, the paying of close attention, the recording, and reflection throughout. Together with "self-reflexivity" advocated by Pierre Bourdieu, it gave a critical rigour. In this selecting and in the interpreting of data; analysis was conceived as a creative act combining a sensitive layering of stories, images and maps, infused with the phenomenological perspective, with a critical rigorous listening to this unfolding dialogue.

Once a provisional framework of enquiry was in place the projects were undertaken using a variety of methods, including interviews-as-conversations, an action research model and participant observation as well as the walking.¹⁰ These all included telling and hearing of stories, of rivers,

⁹ Use of journal, self-reflexivity and autobiography in research See "Keeping a journal or diary" In: Riley, Judith, 1996, page 87. She notes the contribution of the researcher's diary in helping patterns emerge from the data. Also Stanley Liz, 1993, "On Autobiography in Sociology", In *Sociology*, Vol27, 1, 41-52 And Merton R. (1972) "Insiders and Outsiders: a chapter in the sociology of knowledge" *American Journal of Sociology* 78: 9-47; Cook, Judith & Fonow M, (eds)1992 *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press

¹⁰ Scheuerich, James Joseph, 1997, *Research in the Postmodern*, London: Falmer Press; McRacken, G, 1985, *The Long Interview*, London, Sage. For action research see Kemmis, S. 1988, "Action Research", in *Educational Research, Methodology and Measurement. An International Handbook*, ed. J.P. Keeves, London: Pergamon Press; Also Carr, W and Kemmis, S, 1983, *Becoming Critical: Knowing through Action Research*, Geelong, Victoria: Deakin University Press. As well the depth of material these projects continued to give

of places and of experience there. All allowed the validity of longer periods of engagement with the people and with the landscapes, and the emergence of meanings and values as familiarity and trust were built, a depth of material otherwise difficult to access.

Participant observation in particular can be said to have a high level of validity. It has advantages of flexibility, (not prejudging issues and events in the way a questionnaire may, for example), quality and depth of information; a depth of insight into behaviour that comes not simply from close, detailed, observation but also from the researcher's own experiences within the group being studied, a technique that provides first hand insights into why people behave as they do. Though the material produced, from all the longer projects, could not be considered quantitatively reliable, there could be said to be a consistency of response to and from the people involved due to the extended length of time of the cooperation, about the meanings and values expressed. Wherever possible the recorded material was offered to participants for comment and verification as to intended meanings. Significance of data was seen in interpreting of the data as looking for patterns and themes, for which see work by Laurel Richardson.¹¹ As also from Richardson's and the work of other sociologists, as well as artist Lucy Lippard, the expression of this interpretation was shown in the thesis text in part by the use of quotations and poems. Prose is excellent for expressing certain forms of knowledge; to express inner experience and feeling in response to landscape the poetic may be preferable, and may better promote the understanding of it and towards an engagement with dwelling.¹²

It took time and reflection to see patterns emerging and dynamic connections between seemingly unrelated elements. Even after the "field" material was completed, the continuous literature review continued to

opportunities to pick up wider sources of information of experience and meanings offered, for example, within the Loxley Valley consultation days, or informal conversations along the river bank, and in the Bengali River Boat day.

¹¹ Riley, Judith, 1996, Richardson, Laurel, 1997 Poetic Representation. in *Handbook of Research on Teaching Literacy through the Communicative and Visual Arts*, edited by Flood, Heath and Lapp. New York: Simon and Schuster, 232-238

¹² See also Cixous, Hélène, (1997) *rootprints, memory and lifewriting*, London: Routledge.

contribute new insights, some of these essential to the emerging patterns; others regretfully had to be put on one side to complete the thesis. It was a slow process at times like a kind of discursive meditation, and described as such by Heidegger and by Zimmermann.¹³

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2. Phenomenology

2.1 Phenomenology as approach

Phenomenology as an approach was attractive and stimulating for me the researcher, opening up fresh ways of looking at the subject. It was surprising where its traces were found, in a wide range of discourses, from art to medicine, architecture to geography, psychology and gender studies.¹⁵ Never in a majority or predominant, its influence has been

¹³ Zimmermann, Michael (2000) "The role of spiritual discipline in learning to dwell on earth" in *Dwelling, Place and Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*, David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer eds. 2nd ed, Malabar, Fl.: Krieger, pp.247-257 B ortoft, Henri, (2000) "Counterfeit and authentic wholes: Finding a means for dwelling in nature," in *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, pp.281-300.

¹⁴ Zimmermann, Michael (2000) "The role of spiritual discipline in learning to dwell on earth" in *Dwelling, Place and Environment: towards a phenomenology of person and world*, David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer eds. 2nd ed, Malabar, Fl.: Krieger, pp.247-257 B ortoft, Henri, (2000) "Counterfeit and authentic wholes: Finding a means for dwelling in nature," in *Dwelling, Place and Environment*, pp.281-300.

¹⁵ Crowther, P (1993) *Art and Embodiment, from aesthetics to self-consciousness* Oxford: Clarendon Press; Ingold, T, (1993) 'The Temporality of Landscape: Conceptions of Time and Ancient Society'. *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2: 152-174; Irigaray, (1993) *je, tu, nous: Toward a Culture of Difference*. Translated by Alison Martin, New York and London: Routledge; Norberg-Schulz, C.,(1980) *Genius loci: towards a phenomenology of place?* London: Academy Editions Okri, Ben, 1996 *Birds of Heaven*, London: Orion; Seamon (1993), *Dwelling, Seeing and Designing: Toward a Phenomenological Ecology*, New York: State University of New York Press; Seamon (2000); Sullivan, S, (2001) *Living Across and Through Skins: Transactional Bodies, Pragmatism, and Feminism*, Bloomington, IN:

reaching into many fields of human studies, where the application of an understanding of embodiment, the relation of the human being to the world around, was clearly pertinent. Though nowhere more potentially relevant than in landscape studies, where it could offer insight into many dilemmas especially those linked with dualistic thinking, a phenomenological approach has been furthered only by a few individual landscape academics rather than widely disseminated, either in academia or in practice, most obviously the contributors to Seamon's edited works, and Catherine Howett and James Corner.

2.2 Phenomenology as methodology

To apply phenomenology as *methodology* was more difficult. In this study the methodology was applied most clearly in the Don Journeys where the experiencing of the landscape was the primary focus. It also applied to the more people-oriented parts of the study, interviews and group work, and to the literature.

By paying close attention to the phenomena, the detail of the place, its rhythms and textures and patterns, to the people who live and work there and their subjectivities, to the parts and the whole, I was able to develop a considerable awareness and sensitivity to landscape, to the spirit of the place itself. This would give a sound base from which to imagine and to design, towards an holistic and appropriate future and to creating with nature, designing with the place, the people and the animate earth.¹⁶

However, from me, the researcher personally, the methodology required self-reflexivity and a preparedness to change.¹⁷ It was easier to read about Bourdieu's ideas of *habitus* and the cultural formation of Enlightenment

Indiana University Press; Tilley, C, (1994) *The Phenomenology of landscape*, Oxford: Berg; Weiss, Gale, and Honi Fern Haber, eds., (1999) *Perspectives on Embodiment: the intersections of Nature and Culture*. . New York and London: Routledge; Wylie, J, (2005). "A single day's walking: narrating self and landscape on the South West Coast Path" *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 20:2, pp.234 – 247

¹⁶ Brook, I. (1998)

¹⁷ Webb, Jenn, Tony Schirato, and Geoff Danaher, (2002) *Understanding Bourdieu*, London: Sage.

thinking than it was to become aware of one's own preconceptions; while recognising that these must be colouring the researcher's experience and interpretation of the landscape and written material, the very fact that these are *pre-conceptions* makes it hard to see what they are. The cultural baggage is part of all research, as well as of all living. Furthermore, to set these aside and see with the clear, observant, reflexive, "eye" of phenomenology was also demanding.¹⁸ It is easier to recognise the sense of Husserl's "return to the things themselves", and of Merleau-Ponty's "pre-reflective experiencing" but quite another to observe *without* judgement. Success in putting preconceptions aside cannot be *measured* in quantitative terms. What was aimed for was an honesty and an openness to new material and to a continual revision of understanding, a process rather than a result. The attempt itself has opened insights and given worthwhile clarity from which to develop this understanding, both from these new "ways of seeing", and from evaluating experience of landscape, personal and other people's, *from within*, rather than standing on the *outside* looking at.

This methodology requires an attitude of patience, and being prepared to put in time and to wait and receive – *creative receptivity* the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel calls it – prepared to take part in the *dialogue*.¹⁹ The whole research was a process in dialogue unfolding in time, between the people and places which I encountered, and the material which came from the research, and I, the researcher, seeing all these in dialogue too. I was in fact beginning to learn, myself, to dwell. It is difficult to tell what dwelling is, comments Zimmermann.²⁰ It cannot be acquired by prescription, a set of rules; it requires us to change our whole outlook. I had to allow for the slow pace of my own learning – learning to, as in Goethe's phrase, "dwell within the phenomena".²¹ This did and does require self-discipline, and critical rigour.

¹⁸ Mugeraruer in Seamon and Mugerauer (2000)

¹⁹ Marcel, Gabriel, (2001), quoted in Cooper (2006), p.146.

²⁰ Zimmermann (2000), p.247.

²¹ Quoted in Bortoft (2000)

Discipline is also required, in research practice, for switching from the groundedness in the experience to the detachment necessary to report on and assess the process – being both participant and observer at the same time. This was in fact my position in all the projects, both the “people” projects and in the landscape experiences along the Don and the Loxley. That this switch is not easy was confirmed by cultural geographer John Wylie’s recounting of his experience of walking the Cornish coast path, *A Single Day’s Walking*, where the efforts of the body and the attempts of the intentional academic task pulled against one another.²² At the end of a long wet hike the body won.

There may be considerable social constraints which work against the opportunity of experiencing a landscape in this thorough and detailed way. John Wylie described the apprehensiveness of the solitary male walker on the coast path in case of threat from unknown human encounters. Similarly, as two women on the Five Weirs Walk, my companion and I were aware of this sort of constraint on women in an unfrequented urban landscape.

3. Evaluation of method in the projects

The methods used were about landscape as experienced rather than judged; walking, gathering, happenstance, all proved productive in the Don journeys and the Loxley project, and question-asking ran throughout. By the physical moving through the time and the space of the landscape, they gave insight into the spirit of each place and its value, into landscapes of abjection, into the experience of boundaries and viewing. I as a researcher was coming into relationship with the landscape, experiencing dialogue.

3.1 Embodiment – Sense experience

Along the Don I became aware I was both a participant experiencing the landscape and an observer of my own experience and processes. There was the sense of attempting to manage a dual process, noted by John

²² Wylie, (2005).

Wylie. I observed my difficulties, my sense experience. I noted that the focus could only be on one or the other. I became much more aware of how complex is the eye and what it selects and interprets before conscious recognition.²³ I was aware of a very intense looking, particularly on the first visit, almost straining, anxious to take in as much as I could, but found a frustration on later reflection that there was much I had not noticed. I had the sensation that my eyes were “out on stalks”, it was so intense a looking; or as Wylie puts it, “all-eyes”.²⁴ Only with repeated looking and return visits did I see many of the details I later found valuable. I noticed too that the effect on the ear varied, that with certain sounds in the landscape, there was a delay between the impact and the brain recognition: of noises, the oppressive atmosphere of thudding in a scrap yard – violent clanging I noticed at once, but repetitive thudding I had to note consciously, and the feeling of oppression it set up in me.

3.2 Question-asking and Gathering

This questioning ran through all the other methods too. Hand in hand with wonder or “marvelling”, it required an attitude of careful listening, of attention not only to what is said, recorded and expressed, but also to what is not, to what is silent, to what is missing. It expected a response – part of the reciprocity of dialogue. I became myself an instrument of research: my senses, my body, my feelings are in use, my life experience as a touchstone. Question-asking required both reflection and a reflexivity, to consider what I learnt, and how I had changed my views, or how I might be making things conform to my view of the world.

As I *gathered*, I learned to become attentive to the place, open to its insights, a *reciprocity*, in contemplation, and to have the opportunity to be part of nature, in *dialogue*. Being still and observant, awareness grew of natural processes, of the flow of the river, paying attention to its “rhythms

²³ Wylie, (2005)

²⁴ Wylie, (2005), p240

and textures".²⁵ I heard too perhaps what the landscape was saying, as David Abram explains, in his description of the attitudes of native American culture.²⁶ I found that these then affect the inner process of thought and feeling; time passes as does the water, and its flow leaves me almost outside time. It was easy to become absorbed in the world of the river corridor and the experience of "being there"; all else was forgotten, with no sense of time passing – a "lived time" experience. There is the possibility of imagining another future for a landscape, a space; not just a return to what was, the past. If fish return to the river, to imagine what this might mean, whether it leads to the same as before – it might be before the Industrial Revolution, or an earlier date, or that it might lead to something quite new. In contemplating change and possibility in Sheffield, I looked and recorded, at one time, the place with the eye of the designer, at another time the people with an ethnographic eye. There is something in these methods akin to the process of design and the making of art.²⁷ Much is seized and digested by the subconscious, as well as by the barely conscious, in order to bring forth the new. There is a synthesising process that can relate the place and the time to the people who will use it.

Gathering data in this way included what I termed "loitering with intent": I listened, I watched. This is a lateral approach: a discerning of pattern, where the eye is caught by one jewel then another, material seized and inserted at tangents, its recording and its links take on the form of a treasure chest or scrap book, defying logical sequencing.²⁸

When I was asking questions an answer was rarely given as a definition or put forward as an argument, but in the form of a story or relating of an event. In the nature of the research, since I did not know what kind of answer to predict, I could not cut short the story to get a clear-cut

²⁵ Abram, David, (1997) *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World*, New York: Vintage Books p.35

²⁶ Abram, (1997), p.153

²⁷ Edwards, Betty, (1979), *Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain*, London: Harper Collins.

²⁸ Lippard talks of her methods in terms of weaving, threads and fabric. Lippard, Lucy, (1997) *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered society*, New York: The New Press p.5.

“answer”.²⁹ The answer was often in the whole story, the unfolding, the subtext – or in part of the story, but I had to hear the whole in order to understand the relevant part.³⁰ Sometimes on reflection the answer was not what I first perceived but what I glimpsed later when I re-heard the tape or reread the text.

The subjective became the inter-subjective as I related the questions and their answers to existing knowledge, to the discourse, in a ‘triangulation’ of the phenomenon, my experience and reflection, plus other people’s experience and reflection, questions put to my own experience, in conversation with others, to the archive material and so on. In this triangulation another dialogue emerged; and this extended my perception.³¹

3.3 Walking as method

It was in walking however that the body and the eye with its own brain activity, the physical and the mental, came together.³² Walking, or perhaps rather, moving through the landscape at the pace and rhythm of the body, developed as method as the study went on. The Don Journey walks were first planned as research for this study as a way of accessing the place, to experience and explore it. The importance of walking as a primary way to engage directly in an embodied experience of landscape was reinforced in academic discourse and in practice.³³ From the point of view of experience, a place cannot be fully seen and known in one glance or visit, nor by a map, a picture, or a description. Sheffield is known by treading its pavements, struggling up its hills, down streets, round unknown corners, experienced in the muscles, in breathing, in strain, in shortness of breath, in the unexpected glimpses round a corner.³⁴ Through walking the river valleys I have discovered much, noted much, and felt myself in rhythm with the

²⁹ McRacken, (1985), *The Long Interview*, London, Sage.

³⁰ Bortoft, (2000)

³¹ Margot Ely, (1991), *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*, London, Falmer.

³² Solnit, (2002) *Wanderlust a History of Walking*, London, Verso. p.5

³³ Wylie, J, (2005); Solnit, R (2002) p.29

³⁴ Bachelard too describes this ache in the muscles. Bachelard G.,(1994), *The Poetics of Space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Translated by Maria Jolas, Boston, Mass.: Beacon; Wylie (2005), *passim*.

environment around, noted connections and internalised meanings. This method therefore has fostered a further dialogue.

Thus the landscape is inscribed in the muscles and the brain; the passing of the body, the footprints, is inscribed on the path, on the land. Air is exchanged.³⁵ I began to understand this experience of walking, bridging body and mind and earth, as a process of assimilating theory to the landscape and *vice versa*, a sort of intermediary practice. The pace of the human body keeps pace with the mind, the pace of the thinking and digesting.

In the course of the other projects too, walking in the landscape was also a regular activity. Both artists, Roger and Geraldine, derived refreshment and inspiration frequently from walking. All participants in the Loxley group walked and/or rode on horse-back, or cycled and this contributed to their identification with this place and their dwelling there. In the Bengali group, the preference was for moving through a landscape carried slowly by boat, reflecting their earlier experience in the river landscapes of Bengal, yet many of the participants also recounted walks which were clearly part of their regular lives. For everyone even a view was recounted as part of an experience or activity, often while walking. In the landscape no one was a spectator, all were participants experiencing the landscape while on the move or engaged in activity.

Just as walking runs right through the practical projects of this study, seeing and looking have run through the whole study. As I began to understand walking as bridging body, mind and earth, I also began to see the walking and the seeing not as two separate process but one linked – *walking-and-seeing*.

For Merleau-Ponty, at least two senses need to be operating at once, in *synaesthesia* for perception – for example, a reflection or a light gust of wind

³⁵ Abram, (1997), pp.225-227

– strikes only one of my senses, it is a mere phantom”.³⁶ There is an overlap and blending of the senses to the point they cannot be separated, and confirm each other’s perception. In walking with feet *touching* the earth, the sense of *sight* is usually operating too, whereas seeing from behind the barrier of a window of a car or house, or at a distance, without the other senses being stimulated, seems to have a thinness, does not impact in the same way. Walking is the means of bringing the person, the senses, in close contact with “rhythms and textures”, the detail of the landscape, both the rich variety at the micro level, and into awareness of abuses, which the distant view hides. Both valley projects illustrated that it is the walking which enables this contact.

3.4 Happenstance

Merleau-Ponty wrote: “The real is a closely woven fabric. It does not await our judgement before incorporating the most surprising phenomena or before rejecting the most plausible figments of our imagination”.³⁷ This whole study had its beginnings in a chance encounter with an article mentioning Jarvis Cocker’s school-boy adventures paddling a boat underneath Midland Station. In many ways, the randomness of this incident set a pattern for the rest of the study; I have made use of a range of material, much of which I have come across in unexpected, unplanned settings; and the research continued to be fed by coincidences in this vein. For instance, “chance” meetings with strangers on train journeys or with acquaintances in places away from a usual meeting place stimulated ideas and directions, revealed unrecognised mutual interest which opened opportunities and allowed access to new sources of data. Like Gathering, this process was akin to that of art and design: it involved a not completely conscious picking up from different sources and an inner fermenting, before producing something new (and adapted to site/study). I noted that the active subconscious has an effect on referencing too: sometimes something read or heard did not register till some days (or longer) later; when recalled

³⁶ Merleau-Ponty, (2002) *he Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge p.xi

³⁷ *Ibid.* p.xi

because it just fits into place in the framework of ideas, the source only being recalled with difficulty.

3.5 Being a participant and observer

Whereas in the Don Journeys I was both participant and observer of my own experience in the landscape, in the creative projects it was other people I was engaging with and observing. As participant in the Loxley Valley projects, I was both an insider of the group and an observer of the process. In the Bengali project I was an outsider who was permitted an entrée for the purpose of the project we were collaborating in, for their benefit in a social landscape outing, in writing and publishing, for my benefit in research material. I occupied a similar position with the artists. There were advantages to being an outsider; being trusted at face value with quite personal material, even *because I was a stranger and would go away afterwards!* The material was dynamic, emerging from the time and place and person, and would not otherwise have been available. My presence as a researcher must itself be considered a factor, whether in active introjections or simply being there.³⁸ In terms of more conventional research methods it is recognised that none of the material was replicable; no “control” was possible as a counterbalance to what was essentially subjective material. Nor can dialogue be quantified. It is a process. However with triangulation the interpretation of subjective experiences were to be added to other subjectivities, to make inter-subjectivity, and to deepen understanding. Generalisations and universal solutions could not be drawn. However this inter-subjectivity I saw as a strength, as ensuring the capacity to include more subtle nuances than quantified responses.

I recognised the limits of the outsider's interpreting of other people's experience. The flood of information and enthusiasm indicated to me positive outcomes for participants, and added to my findings about the benefits of landscape experience, of recalling it in memory and putting it into

³⁸ On Interviewing, McRacken, G.(1985); Ely, M., (1991), *Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles*, London: Falmer Press.

language. I was aware that it would be easier for participants to express positive feelings towards me and their experiences than negative ones. I had a sense of ethics about sharing their private thoughts and experiences and a responsibility for not abusing their trust in my interpreting. I attempted to mitigate against these by offering recorded and edited interview material to most participants, where possible, for comment and correction if desired. I did by this gain some positive feedback as to participants' own evaluation of being interviewed and benefiting from being listened to with interest.

In the Loxley and Bengali projects I asked myself about the potential conflict between being a participant and being an observer and what might be the boundary line between journalism and research in these projects. In both these projects I was using the spiralling model of action research to guide me, in which the researcher assists the participants to develop their own learning.³⁹ I noticed that help to and from participants encouraged both them and me in the making of connections and meanings, the exchange, the dialogue, benefited both. Participants showed a warm willingness to share what they loved with some one who shared their interest and wanted to hear what they had to say. It was important to me that I was also a participant and could contribute, give as well as take, which was part of the process of dialogue.

Another mitigating feature against outsider prejudice was, while still attempting to see with fresh eyes, the allowing of familiarity to develop with repeated encounters over a period of time. This became an important tool in allowing the hidden, the shy and elusive, to emerge, both in time and place. The more familiar I became with people, places, the more I noticed and experienced, and the more I found I was trusted, both in the one-to-one interview and as part of the groups which welcomed me – a privilege. I should acknowledge the same with the Don and Loxley landscapes – they too disclosed themselves to me over time. These landscapes too began to “speak” in the sense of David Abram's description of landscapes as “alive,

³⁹ Kemmis, S. (1988), “Action Research”, in *Educational Research, Methodology and Measurement. An International Handbook*, ed. J.P. Keeves, London: Pergamon Press.

aware and expressive”, similarly noted in Isis Brook’s account of the Goethean approach to landscape.⁴⁰ The time scale over which the projects took place increased the rich quality of the data and refined it. This both produced more data and matured my own awareness – in dialogue.

What would I do differently another time? If I were to repeat this style of research, I would be starting with knowledge, rather than unfamiliarity, with confidence and expectation of rich results. With an understanding from the first experience I would follow the process with less anxiety and would be more proficient both in the paying attention, in reading the spirit and detail of the place, and hearing it “speak”. This offers a strong basis for both research and design.

⁴⁰ Abram (1997), pp.139ff; Brook, (1998), the third stage of the Goethean way: “allowing the thing to express itself through the observer”.

CHAPTER 13

CONCLUSIONS

1. Summary of the thesis

1.1 Aims and Research Questions

The study set out to explore through the perspective of phenomenological philosophy our relationship as human beings with the landscape and to suggest how this understanding of embodiment, dialogue and time, and the notion of “dwelling” in landscape, might improve and add depth to landscape architectural theory and practice.

The study aimed also to explore embodied methodologies, which might be effective in detecting meanings and values, both personal and shared, and methods which might give voice to these and promote the usefulness of the concept of intersubjectivity. This would include the developing of a “walking” methodology, as a basis for practitioners to engage with the sensitivities of place, and the use of participant observation in revealing local meanings of river landscapes.

1.2 The limitations of landscape architecture

The study outlined the origins and development of landscape architecture and offered criticisms, noting conflicting priorities and values, shortcomings and ambiguities, which can result in “empty banalities” and only short-term solutions, as cited in the work of Spirn, Corner, Howett, Seamon and others. It was established that there are conflicting bases for theory in landscape, which weaken practice. The misapprehension of our human relationship with the landscape derived from the paradigm of Enlightenment thinking and its dualisms was further established, with its effects on encouraging a separate and exploitive view of nature, to be used for human benefit alone, like that of a master. These effects were studied in relation to three themes of Nature, Beauty and Time, about

which, in landscape practice, assumptions are commonly made and meanings taken for granted. In this discussion, it was made clear that an emphasis on Nature as both idealised and as subordinate, a judgement on Beauty as determined in sighting or landscape appearance, and an under-valuing of the dimension of Time in landscape (dominated by spatial interests) all have distorting effects on practice. The broad concept of “nature starvation” – the loss of regular, bodily contact and engagement with nature – was identified as a symptom of this distortion.

The three themes of Nature, Beauty and Time, in turn, opened up a new approach to landscape, based on embodiment, and on Dwelling. This sees us as a part of nature, and in constant dialogic relationship with the more-than-human world. Reconnecting with our place in nature offers a reorientation of priorities; learning to dwell offers belonging, identity and meaning, not homelessness. Through embodiment, Beauty is found to be feeling not judgement, detected by all the senses, not just sight. The quality of experience has greater value than “the beautiful”, while returning to the perception of all the senses picks up the multifarious variety of rhythms, textures and patterns of the landscape. An embodied approach to landscape counteracts the primarily spatial perception of landscape, to acknowledge the equal and co-extensive concept of time – its unfolding with events and the cycle of seasons and years.

All this has implications for design. The study has suggested this embodied, dialogic approach to landscape offers a position from which to challenge the authority of power and control and the “Master” attitude, which should no longer be seen as the primary perspective for design for land-holders or “consumers”. From this new position landscape architecture can take a vital part, together with those who dwell there, in reanimating the landscape, in finding, expressing and promoting meaning and value there, and caring for the landscapes which sustain us.

1.3 The contribution of phenomenological philosophy

The study shows that phenomenological philosophy may indeed unite and go beyond the existing bases of authority; it can provide a basis for understanding landscape meaning in landscape architecture theory and may contribute to the use and development of the concept of dwelling in landscape practice and research.

The phenomenological approach

The phenomenological approach aids us see that landscape is *experienced* rather than judged, a lived experience. With such an approach landscape theory is understood through the practical everyday lived experience, not through the separation and classification of parts and the detached perspective of universal ideas. Theory derives from the particular of rhythms and textures, but is not limited only to the practical. It looks for and senses patterns. This landscape experience is embodied, involving the interaction of the person, in her/his whole body, through the perception of all the senses, including the feelings and the projection of them in imagination, and in dialogue with other persons and with the natural, the animate, more-than-human world.

Beginning with the understanding that all Being is in time and that time and space are inextricably linked and rooted in one another, this interaction with place and time is experienced in physically *moving through* the landscape, usually by walking, and through everyday activity and events.

Landscape, as it is in time, is continually being disclosed, is rooted in the historical. This is an experience of revelation and disclosure, rather than a theory of judgement-making. This disclosure is reciprocal, two way; the landscape speaks to and through us, we reveal ourselves to it, leave our mark on it too, for care or for exploitation. This dialogue is one in which we participate.

Landscape is experienced from within it: it is *the whole* of nature that we are part of; we are within the landscape, we are immersed in it. We cannot stand outside it. Boundaries are experienced in relation to the human body as centre and horizon as limit. In this continuous dialogue, and negotiation, with the spatial landscape which surrounds us, it works upon us and we work upon it.

The concept of *dwelling* pulls these ideas together, in the way it allows a close relationship with place, through a process of immersion and not separation from a situated position. Dwelling in a landscape is a relationship which leads to engagement with nature, an engagement ultimately leading to care – what Heidegger called “concernful dealing with the world”. Such dwelling produces a dialogue encouraging an awareness of nature and an interrelationship with nature. The possibilities of this dialogue need crucially to be used, as urbanisation leaves large sections of global society needing an awakening to a lost orientation to nature. Mentors are needed in the landscape profession to foster this awakening, in design for relationships through dwelling.

A phenomenological methodology

Phenomenology offers a methodology for research and for design, but this brings an attitude more than a formalised scheme that classifies and analyses. This is an experiential methodology which emphasises perception, and an attempt to “return to the things themselves” (Husserl), to direct experience of phenomena, before making judgements. It does not try to explain but attends to the rhythms and textures of subjective experience, “not to capture or control it, but simply to become familiar with its diverse modes of appearance” (Abram). This requires from the researcher or designer an openness, patience and rigour, a sense of wonder and preparedness to be in dialogue, a creative receptivity. It requires time – the researcher cannot take or snatch at the data, as it might not yet be ready, might be perceived in the wrong formations, or with omissions. The methodology also requires being prepared to wait for disclosure and for the data, the people, the marks,

the landscape itself to reveal themselves. It involves an embodiedness, a sensual and emotional awareness, to be prepared to experience, to "dwell within", the phenomena (Goethe). The methodology recognises the usefulness of the subjective on tempering it with the subjectivity of others, producing an intersubjectivity. It expects response and wants a cooperativeness in finding the truth, leaving no room for arrogance and the ego. It requires a truthfulness, a "heartfeltness" and self-understanding. There is in this an ethical dimension to the methodology.

This study shows that this methodology is effective in finding data, but that it is not easy to apply it, and requires commitment and time by the researcher or practitioner. However, by methods of encountering the landscape in walking, paying attention to the phenomena through the senses, and being open to the unexpected, including happenstance, from within the landscape, this methodology does develop awareness and sensitivity to landscape, to details, to textures and rhythms, with the people who live and work there and their subjectivities. This is a sensitivity to the spirit of the place itself. It is a sound base from which to imagine and to design towards an holistic and appropriate future relationship with nature.

Familiarity with these rhythms and textures of a landscape, by repeated visits over a period, allows for sensitivity to change and an openness to the unexpected. In addition, it leads to the recognition of the importance of the everyday, the significant small but regular activities, the locally distinctive detail, which all contribute to the unique spirit of a place. These in turn contribute to an increasing sense of commitment and belonging in the researcher or practitioner. As the landscape reveals itself to us it is disclosing to us something not just of the place but of the nature of ourselves, and of existence within landscape. This familiarity is developed by dwelling.

A phenomenological approach to Sheffield's river landscapes

The study tested the theories of phenomenology and embodiment as an approach to "Being-in-the-Landscape" through four practical projects in Sheffield. This exploration of practical lived experience in landscapes shed light on a landscape theory as understood through everyday particularity, rather than detached universal ideas. It was found that the unique spirit of the city as a whole and of each place explored results from the combined detail of its history, the particular in each place, its local distinctiveness, and the experience it offers. This experience was revealed in walking, moving through the landscape, and sensing with more than one sense together, in the attention to the parts and to the whole. Places where dwelling already takes place were recognised and learned from; yet, it is argued, even the abject has value, for creativity and dwelling, imagination and care for the earth. The tragic fate of the River Sheaf, the river that resonates most clearly in the city's identity in its name, is an extreme example of an abject landscape, of how a landscape can be utterly unvalued. The Five Weirs Walk, following the River Don from the centre of Sheffield to the north-eastern edge, is another abject landscape though not so extreme. The experience of walking this river path, charting the variety and distinctiveness of this landscape, presents, however, a compelling argument for how such abject landscapes have value. The variety revealed keeps curiosity alive, stimulates imagination. It is the opposite of the bland which smoothes over and reduces or excludes distinctiveness.

In the Loxley Valley boundaries and views were reinterpreted from the way they are experienced in the body. An awareness of the importance of the detail of nature, both richness in diversity and in abuse, was raised. The projects with artists showed that sense experience and direct physical and regular engagement with the landscape, dialogue with nature, can offer inspiration for art and imagination, and a portraying of landscape "from the inside" (Klee). This can also arouse a sense of identity with place for people whose home landscapes are very different. Renewing connections with nature can provoke poetic testimony, expressing meanings and values which can be shared with others.

These explorations show that embodied material can disclose a sense of place, and that this is as much about the animation of the living landscape, the activity of nature including humans, of seasons and rhythms, the time element, as it is about apparently static elements. Stories too, the recounting of interpreted events, were seen to be a way by which people express meaning and value, and tell of attachment and belonging to place, and show freedom from controlling influences and structures. There also appeared to be a poverty in language to describe landscape experience among ordinary people, most notably in the Loxley Valley context, to express this meaning and value more directly and articulately. A language needs to be developed for this experience, to facilitate the creating and the protection of landscapes for dwelling.

From these studies, it is concluded that a methodology from phenomenological philosophy may support landscape architectural theory and practice towards an attitude and practice of dwelling.

Acknowledging James Corner's suggestion that if a theory of landscape were established, it could be utilised within the profession either for control, to keep the discourse static, or as a disruptive catalyst, to allow the discipline to move on, this study argues phenomenological methodology could foster new thought and inquiry, yet, without controlling or prescribing, also bring a coherence to professional practice with a unified basis of authority in an embodied understanding. In addition, it has the potential to subvert ways of thinking in the public domain, as well as in the profession, which at present prevent or detract from dwelling.

2. Implications for landscape design and education for design

This study was intended to have implications relevant not just for landscape architects, but for anyone in the construction or management of landscape, whether developers, planners, architects, or engineers.

The remainder of this concluding chapter brings together the insights of the study and its realised implications, and how they can contribute to landscape architecture; it draws particularly from Chapter Eight on Dwelling which concluded the section “Themes of Being in the Landscape” and Chapter Twelve which evaluated the section “Experiences of Being in the Landscape”.

Firstly, to clarify the aim of landscape design, posed in Chapter 4 as a question to theory, the thesis suggests that the purpose of landscape design is to enable dwelling and help restore and revitalise human relations with the natural world. This restoration does not mean to preserve or re-establish a cultural or ecological past, but to design with possibility, taking strength and inspiration from these landscape pasts, to evolve and create new places for dwelling. Landscape architects, Corner and Howett, have criticised current “ways of seeing” in landscape architecture and urged a closer and more experiential relationship with Nature. This study has further exposed the restrictions of the old ways of seeing and explored alternatives based on phenomenology, enabling an understanding of dwelling, by which a place “becomes a home”.

2.1 Designing for Dwelling in a landscape

There are three aspects to designing – the intended outcome, the method, and the understanding and attitude of the designer. First, to consider what sort of a place it could be, and what the design would be like, to encourage dwelling and “being”, a landscape should be designed to engage the attention more fully of the visitor or dweller, rather than to offer a visual picture or a neutral background. Like the artist, the role of the designer could be to “help people see their places with new eyes” (Lippard). No longer a spectator or consumer, the dweller would be drawn into the landscape, by the sensitive interpretation and use of space and light available, by attention to the existing rhythms and textures of location developed from an awareness of the seasons and the living dynamic of the landscape.

Second, as to method, this new understanding of engagement with landscape would recognise that, as authority of landscape is based in the body, perception and the senses and the dialogue with the animate world around, walking and sensing are the means and the method of exploring a site in this way. Not applying a formula but developing new skills of attentiveness, the method would ground the imagination in the place and set it free for site-sensitive design. It would prioritise the description of phenomena rather than their explanation, and view landscape not with an eye to control but to recognition, to gaining familiarity and closer relationship. This is an alternative to seeing landscape from a distance, framed, pocketed, with preconceptions. Such designing would involve engaging with the 'native patch', as a place of belonging for those who live and visit there, leading to a greater recognition of the intricacies present in the working natural world, intricacies we have no sight of when limited to the distant view.

Thirdly, as to attitude, there needs to be put into practice an understanding of the living landscape: that landscape is not static space, but its cultural and temporal dimensions are integral, and it is the activities within the landscape which makes it alive. Activities do not need to be *put into* it because given the right conditions nature and people will introduce their own; but the place needs to be designed to be ready for that possibility. This is an understanding of the dynamic of the landscape, both in the sense of the growing vegetation which changes shape and size and changes the experience of the place as a result, and also the dynamic in the sense of the interaction, the living relationships *within* landscape and *with* the landscape, the whole ecology, its system, which is not an extra the designer may opt out of.

This is an understanding which builds on cooperation within the landscape, how there is a collective character of experience in the landscape through the varied activities taking place within it, and with which the designer themselves interacts. Such an approach is adapted

from Ingold's concepts developed in landscape archaeology, where belonging is developed in the taskscape, the space where activity and mutual attending to one another, undertaking tasks for one another, listening to one another, takes place. This contrasts with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's discussion of the individual in the landscape, expanded further by Irigaray, Sullivan and feminist philosophers into a mutual listening. Realising the shared nature of landscapes is to realise the 'we-ness' of landscape – it belongs to us, or rather, I and we belong here, together, to it. The 'I-dom' of possession, exclusion and rights to exploitation, must dissolve away, be let go. As with knowing our place as a part of, within, a landscape, this further encourages an inter-subjective, inter-dependent model of living, working, moving, and standing within a landscape.

2.2 Recommendations for education of landscape architects

The study recognises the need for landscape architects themselves to learn to dwell, to approach any design with the sensibility and rigour of paying attention to the phenomena. As Merleau-Ponty directed, this would begin by re-awakening the basic experience of the world "of which science is the second-order expression". It would involve a landscape education which opens students to the experience of landscape dwelling, an understanding of the concepts, an education which awakens awareness. Some practical examples have been given by Clare Cooper Marcus, Randolph Hester, and John Cameron, of training students and others in new awareness of landscape; they have offered training exercises where each student chooses a special place which s/he visits regularly or weekly for a period, to encourage the development of familiarity and an attitude of attentiveness and a learning to value the more subtle aspects which may be not apparent on one brief visit. The exercise would also aim to foster attitudes of wonder as well as curiosity and observation skills, but also a learning to wait for the landscape, the "animate earth" and "all our relations", to reveal itself, for disclosure.

Theoretical insights into this have also been provided by Michael Zimmermann.¹ Henri Bortoft has described the directed use of mental images to encourage students' encounters with the phenomenon.² The role of mentors would be important, with personal connections, to develop shared understanding and collaborative approaches

This would lead into education in the living aspects of landscape. It would involve an understanding of "nature starvation" and its effects, and the need to design for a living engagement with nature as, not a luxury, but a necessity, to design for the encounter with Nature, in relationship, daily, whether garden or park or in the countryside. For this purpose of designing with the living landscape, a landscape education would also include gaining a much greater working knowledge of the animate world of plants and creatures. It would also be an education that encourages a healthy critique of the social and cultural pressures on landscape, and the development of understandings of cultural and personal "spectacles" which unconsciously affect the design process, and how power and control are exerted in the structures of society, and influence design solutions.

2.3 Recommendations for approaches to professional practice

It is indeed recognised that it is difficult to see how this time-intensive and reflective approach could easily or quickly be applied to "time-constrained, client-driven landscape design", and that the pressure of this context for landscape practising cannot easily be overturned, diffused or redirected. However this study suggests that as well as the application of the above for the education of landscape architects, many aspects and methodologies of the phenomenological approach might infuse or be adapted and advocated for practice.

¹ Zimmerman in Seamon, ed. (1993) Cooper Marcus Clare (1978) Hester (1978) Cameron (2001).

² Bortoft (2000) p 298 and Bortoft (1996).

Site survey

The practice of embodied landscape architecture begins at the site survey. The first encounter with the site, rather than through map or photograph, would be experiential, taking account of the "dwelling perspective", described earlier in the text (P 166 and elsewhere). Time would be invested in the beginning of the design process to understand the site and its unique living dynamic. The Don Journeys project showed something of the process of engaging with a phenomenological approach with an unfamiliar and complex site over a period of time, and the increasing perception and understanding which resulted (page 198 and elsewhere), entering into a "dialogue" with the place. The "Goethean science" approach to landscape could offer a model for a more formalised system of phenomenological site survey, referred to in Chapter Three, as researched by Isis Brook, offering several distinct stages of survey (pp71, 259).³ Of particular value in this system is the combining of sensing and feeling impressions of the landscape with the exact attention to its detail.

The initial visit would be followed by several more, as desirable that the landscape architect develop his/her own relationship with the landscape, offering the value of repeated experience and familiarity, as in the examples of Frank Chaffin with his canoe and Randolph Hester in Manteo, referred to in Chapter Eight (p157), with the opportunity for the disclosure of local meanings and to value the more subtle aspects and what may be hidden to first sight (p158). The Sheffield projects in this study have pointed to how attention to the perhaps unexpected value of the object in landscapes can offer depth and richness to the design process.

Embodied methodologies, such as walking, used throughout this study, are recommended for a sensitive site survey, depending on the size and topography of the site. Informal map-making, as in the Don Journeys,

³ Brook, Isis, 1998, "Goethean Science as a way to read landscape". In *Landscape Research* Vol 23, 1.

might also be helpful to develop understanding of spatial, temporal and other relationships within and around the site and of experiences and encounters which might have meaning within the eventual design. Informal mapping of this kind supports Dovey's (p158) contrasting of "lived space" with the "geometric space" of conventional maps, wiped clean of feeling. Journal-keeping, both at this stage and for further reflection on the material, self-reflexivity, could have much to offer in detecting patterns of meaning and experience; it may encourage the importance of the noting of impressions and feeling in response – both valuing them and distinguishing them from other data, to disentangle the subjective from the analytical. It is recognised that all these methods are indeed, among some practitioners, already used; what is recommended as a result of this study is their more widespread use as a deliberate and sustained combination of holistic embodied practices, towards the enabling of design for dwelling.

Interactions with clients and the public

Designing for dwelling not only involves an attentive site survey, it also requires paying attention to the human beings who do or will dwell there, to their patterns of living, to their landscape values and local meanings, and a sensitive interpretation of all this in the design. It necessitates an interactive consultation with existing users of the site, which would include listening to stories told by people of events which have happened there, of values and meanings that the place(s) holds for them, and the working towards the stimulation of the client's/s' imagination and aspiration for connections with nature. The method of participant observation also has a part to play where a deeper understanding is possible and desirable, as was shown in the Loxley Valley project, and the working with the Bengali women's group. It would take place over a longer timescale and, with the development of familiarity and the building of trust it could help detect deeper meanings and patterns to inform the eventual site- and people-sensitive design. It is noted that there is an ethical dimension to this method of working, a responsibility towards the participants and to the material, a sensitivity to the trust which builds up

and deserves careful handling for the benefit of all involved. It is also noted that this kind of investigation will produce high validity, but not replicability as each situation at each time is unique, though developing understanding of one site and situation helps develop and hone the designer's sensitivity in another too.

The designer is also part of the dialogue in working with nature and must pay close attention to the living inhabitants of more-than-human nature as well as the rhythms and textures of the land and the people. Asking questions gives rigour to this process, which includes responsibility: Is what I am envisaging, what I am proposing, of use to the more-than-human world in this place? Will it sustain this nature for future generations, protect it and give back more than humans are taking out?

Design development

Having heard the stories of the people and of the land the designer needs to retell them through the design. In explanations, through patterning, to recall and re-inscribe them in the landscape, reinforce them, reframe them, to let the stories of the land speak out, the events, memories, patterns of the dynamic life burgeon forth. The designer contributes to and channels the dialogue that will continue in the place.

Designing for dwelling does include the practical as well as the cultural: practical functioning systems insisted on by Anne Whiston Spirn (page 156) of sun, water, air and earth. It includes designing for engagement with and experience in the place. As described in section 2.1 above, the dweller would be drawn into the landscape, by the sensitive interpretation and use of space and light available, by attention to the existing rhythms and textures of location developed from an awareness of the seasons and the living dynamic of the landscape. This engagement would encourage a sense of belonging to a place, the 'native patch', and a greater recognition of the intricacies present in the working natural world. This is a designing with time (pages 148-152): it would involve a conceptualising of landscape in time created for experience, for

revelation, an unfolding, as walking through the Don Journeys showed, working with the movement in the site and planning-in a sense of expectation.

This kind of designing can also play on the longitudinal present, and with “lived time”, the being absorbed, and space to “let time go by”, time to let the senses register, places for contemplation, for appreciation of the numinous (Roger Gibson), to offer possibilities of peak experience, and bring value of “putting things into perspective”, and self-actualisation.

Designing with time also pays attention to use of scale, not just spatial but also drawing attention to the different timescales of different life forms. The animate earth speaks (as claimed by Abram and Peat), the trees, the land, the soil and rock, each holds the marks of its history. Valuing the past of the site, and highlighting richness and variety and designing for the longer-term, the land, the river, is seen as holder of memory and of meaning, and thus also of possibility, if we listen and look and wait to hear.

Designing is, by its nature, for the future of a landscape. Design can determine the ways people are able to interact in and with a landscape in the future; it has the potential to control, directing people to desist from undesirable activities and interactions, and to encourage other ones, such as enjoyment, imagination and creativity. Design can enable the taking of a bit of freedom in interaction with the living world, and remind us of our part within it. Designing for possibility, with the catalytic combination of ecology and imagination, can enable landscapes which, as Corner claims, “engage, enable, diversify, trick, emancipate, and elude”. Design for the changing of the seasons and for growth can be to encourage people to adjust to and welcome change and embrace the future.

Designing for dwelling is undoubtedly a challenge, but if designers can engage with the possibilities for themselves of dwelling in a landscape, of listening to the landscape, to its narrative, stories told by the land itself, they can then seek in practice to enable others to dwell within the landscapes they create whether in townscapes, industrial areas and rural areas. Answering the early research questions, it is a designing for meaning and value.

Implementation of projects

Design for the living landscape, as has been said, recognises and allows for the creatures that are there, those already existing and those which might be drawn in, to re-colonise, and to dwell in the newly designed landscape. Knowledge is needed of these creatures and their needs, for new planting and existing vegetation and an understanding of the skills in maintenance, and expect a landscape, not for a maximum of 5-10 years, but rather a minimum of 5-10 years, to allow time for the landscape to grow and mature, and plan for maintenance, management and supervision for the longer-term, well beyond five years. The findings of this thesis support the vital importance of the planning and management for the longer term of any development. There is also a case for encouraging mentors of the land, those people who know the place, the "experts" on the local, to be closely involved in the design and implementation processes, with the aim of future safe-keeping of the particular and of memory and identity.⁴

It is not suggested that all or any of these ideas are new and not already practised within the profession. What this study does is bring them together with the philosophical perspective of phenomenology, and with a developing understanding that these contribute to landscape dwelling. Answering the early research questions, it is a designing for meaning and value.

Communication of ideas

⁴ Kingsnorth (2008) suggests landscape itself may act as mentor.

Landscape architects need to find a language to be strong advocates of the landscape within which we dwell, a language of the experience of landscape. The worth of the experiencing of the dynamic living landscape and also of the unvalued landscapes, the abject ones, should be expressed, championed and protected by landscape architects and others in positions of authority in matters of landscape planning, so that landscapes like these may continue to offer these precious experiences. Many of the concepts and terms explored in this study could form the beginnings of such a language, of landscape experience and landscape value, and this forms my final recommendation.

2.4 Learning a language of landscape experience

For Anne Whiston Spirn, landscape is itself a language by being a "text" to be read - its topography, features and processes, of rock, water and clouds; and we "dwell within" this "house of being". Yet, what emerges from this present study is the need for a linguistic dimension to landscape practice distinct from – perhaps even reaching beyond – this metaphor: a language of the human *experience of landscape*. Landscape architects need not only to learn to design for dwelling in a landscape, they need to learn and facilitate the spread of language with which to express such an understanding of landscape experience.

Beyond designers, those who already dwell within landscapes need a language to express meaning and value in their landscape. In the projects, particularly those in the Loxley Valley where many participants were animated by their landscape experience, there was an apparent difficulty with expressing what was meant, with communicating what was really valued. Expressions such as "I like this" and "it is beautiful", do not go far enough. People for whom landscape is of critical importance were limited in their communication of this by the scope of their landscape vocabulary. A contrast was clear with the artists and poets interviewed,

who sought to express their experience of being in the landscape in creative activity – the languages of sculpted form and poetry. Some landscapes, like the Don Valley, had fewer to readily articulate its meaning and experience, yet with equal implication for any practitioner engaging with such a landscape. Landscape practitioners need to be aware of this inarticulacy, this potential silence, of the people and places they may be working with.

Much of the vocabulary of the approach used in this study could provide the beginnings of this new and needed language. For methods, “paying attention to the rhythms and textures”, acknowledging everything to be in “dialogue”, appreciating multiple “ways of seeing”, and approaching a landscape “as experienced rather than judged”, are some examples. Naming what has been unnamed, denied or unrecognised, with terms such as “the Hidden” and “the Abject”, though already known by some in landscape, could be used more readily. Terms that help articulate the constraints upon inherited approaches to landscape might also be adopted, such as “the Disembodied Visual”, “the Master” attitude and Foucault’s “dividing practices”. Phrases like “the animate earth” and the “more-than-human world” would encourage the remembering of relations with the rest of creation. Finally, such concepts as “local distinctiveness”, “spirit of the place”, and “nesting”, if made familiar, would enable the activity and the experience of dwelling in a landscape easier to communicate, and so recognise, and so prioritise.

This thesis offers a beginning of a conceptual framework, a methodology and a language which have the potential to bring clarity to concepts critical to the future success of landscape design. Through its exploration of Sheffield’s river landscapes, hidden meanings have been uncovered and understood. Such engagement with a landscape offers possibilities to Landscape practice, to discover the value in abject landscapes, the nature relationship available in dwelling, and the profoundly human meaning generated by “being” in a landscape.

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