

Workshop 2 - Approaches to researching landscape and environment: theories, sources, methods

Notes from group discussions

What is the future of arts and humanities research in landscape and environment?

Public engagement: walking tours
using senses other than visual (ie sound local narrative)

Facilitate rather than dictate

Make academic research accessible to a wider audience not just academia

Get exhibitions to “public spaces” and hold local presentations and activities to engage local community

More practical applications/results in the “real world”

Engaging with sound artists and other kinds of artists and media such a tv, radio and internet

To become critical and politicised – feed research to policy makers

Local government

Research content: senses, perception and representation of

Encourage TV documentary makers to widen their scope (eg natural history programmes)

Expand our ideas of who are ‘policy makers’ eg. Arts councils, architects

Who would be interested and can we convince them ie. DEFRA/MOD ↙

Post PhD we WILL (or want) to engage with:

- Archaeologist – Heritage Industry for cultural work
- Archaeologist – Research for academic to teach, publish
- Anthropologist – Be a civilian
- Legal anthropology – NGO or Academia
- Architect – Private consultation and academia

Why do we do this?

Build relationships with National Trust, Arts Councils, local governments and others with a big say in the landscape

Encouraging innovation in existent cultural mediums addressing landscape (ie TV, radio, magazines) reinvigorating reputation of ‘nature stuff’

The Internet

Engaging with alternative uses of the landscape especially practical interfaces eg. Farming, outdoors activities, nature groups to include all ways we (as humans) relate to landscape and environment

Why do academics stay away from politics?

Define: Arts and Humanites and Landscape and Environment! Broad terms and shifting field of research.

Do it! Be part of it! Don’t just observe! = engagement Both public activities – easier and policy making – more tricky.

What are the operational and theoretical issues surrounding the use of archives?

Too shallow?

- Relying on someone else's selection
- Initially provides accessibility (remote study)
- Route to deeper research

'Archive' – a term which validates the landscape as a resource in the eyes of policy makers

Can you digitise personal experience?

Landscape can become frozen in one perceived time and loses its sense of change

Landscapes can become 'virtual' – a digital archive which can be accessed by future researchers

Creating present objects with view to their future archiving in design eg. Nazi Germany, posterity

Changing landscapes – memory – archaeology

But also problems with kind of image and categories produced – administrative viewpoint

- Accessibility
- Sourcing
- Finding

Danger in blurring meaning/appropriation of terminology: 'archive' may have cultural significance but can be mistranslated as a concept

Palimpsest – issues of reading landscape as an archive

Theoretical context and compatibility with theoretical literature

Archive and technology is not being explored enough at postgraduate level. What about the *process* of research being an accessible resource for the public? This is an archive.

Archive of geology

- Animal/vegetable
- Human intervention
- Human representation

Archive as environment

- power/knowledge
- different time periods

Any representation of landscape (in digital form) discloses *and* occludes

Virtual reality landscapes as digital archive – specific implications of this

PALIMPSES

Danger of archiving – musealisation of landscape – has to be a living active archive if to have a future (growth/change etc.)

Different rules/photo costs etc.

Digistised formats

- maintenance

- technology/advance
 - file format etc.
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- Leads to more collaboration
 - Maintains preservation
 - Can be added to more easily
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What are the contributions of experimentation and creativity in furthering landscape and environmental research?

Creative adaption of method to subject matter

Might link to something unexpected

Testing new methods and hypotheses

Adapting to new disciplines can also be creative

Bringing diverse methods together

Creating new methods

A new method creates new data

Experimentation and creativity encourage challenging received notions of landscape

FRESH PERSPECTIVES

Academic acceptability of

- methods
- presentation

Sometimes thinking 'inside the box' forces creativity

Creating an archive for the future

Quantum physics is the new black

Difference between 'borrowing' from other disciplines and assimilating

Restrictions

- in proposing project to funders
- in actual project – otherwise never finish! – time issues etc.

We're bothered about the implicit assumptions re. what creativity and experimentation ARE and MEAN

Critical perspective on data, assumptions of specific methods

Who needs them!

Management = experimentation (?)

Isn't creativity implicit in all human activity?

Experimentation and creativity can have intangible outcomes of unknown benefits and lacking the authority to convince funding bodies

Define limits of creative process

How far can you cross methods between disciplines? Is there such a thing as incompatible knowledge?

Being imaginative think outside the box!

Internal

- imagination
- liberation

Experiment

- mental (labour) – not always physical connections

Space, place, landscape, religion, nature, environment, site

Space	}		{	Physical
Place	}	Different scales and	{	Cultural
Landscape	}	dimensions	{	Biographical
Religion	}		{	Memory
Site	}	high ↔ low	{	Interactions
			{	Geographical
			{	(historical/
				scientific)

However maybe can only be linked by scale, but can't be sorted/ranked
(this depends on one's disciplinarity position)

Place specific or infinite

Site, region – finite

Depends on:-

- scale
- use
- “definability”
- Purpose

“Nature” – does this fit?....

- Where is common ground?
- Nature much wider

Environment - suggests science

Landscape – suggests arts and humanities

All are related to geographies or imaginative geographies – or is this term too ambiguous? – inclusivity of disciplines.

Scientific connection of environment?

Romantic and/or visual connotations of landscape?