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**“Different cities, different stories”? Sense of place and its implications for residents’ use of public spaces in the heritage city of York.**

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Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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Business School

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## **Abstract**

Focusing on the embodied encounter with place, this study investigates how sense of place manifests itself for residents of the heritage city of York and explores its implications for how individuals use the city's public spaces. Recognising the significance of the public realm for civic engagement, the research seeks insights into how residents may be engaged more effectively in debates about the city's future.

The study views sense of place through the lens of stories, considering the interplay between the "big stories", told from positions of authority, and the "small stories" of the individual's everyday experience of place.

The study takes a qualitative approach employing bricolage. It identifies the "big stories" of York in writings about the city and in social media whilst the "small stories" of everyday encounter with public spaces are captured in fieldwork, involving map drawing and "go-along" interviews, through which respondents address the question of what York means to them.

The study draws on scholarship concerned with assemblage and, in particular, the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, to elaborate a concept of sense of place as assemblage with three dimensions: the affective / sensorial, the political, and the temporal / mnemonic. Sense of place, seen as an opening up of oneself to the potentiality of the encounter with space, is characterised as a disrupting concept.

In considering the implications of sense of place for the individual's use of public spaces, the study employs the notion of "urban nomad" to describe how the individual moves in smooth space, in spaces of "becoming" that are "in-between" the points of the city's topology designated by its "big stories". It is argued that, through reterritorialising the big stories of the city, the urban nomad uses them as a resource in the working out of their individual subjectivity.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This opening chapter sets the scene for the study, introducing the key terms to be used and explaining how they will be deployed in the context of this research. The importance of the chosen topic is explained, setting residents' engagement with a city's public spaces in the wider context of the local authority's efforts to foster active citizenship. Attention is then paid to the particular context of the heritage city of York and a justification is made of York as the site of the study. The objectives of the study and the research questions are set out. The chapter concludes by identifying the gap in knowledge that the study aims to fill and providing an outline of the thesis as a whole.

### **1.1 Aim of the study**

The overall aim of the study is to explore the relationship between sense of place and the way that individuals use (or do not use) public spaces in their daily lives across the city of York. It focuses on embodied engagement with place, how people interact with and function in the city's public spaces. It seeks to understand how their day-to-day use of space is influenced by their relationship with place, their affective response to it, the understandings, beliefs, feelings and emotions that they have about it, as well as what is said about it, the stories of place that both shape and reflect those understandings, beliefs and feelings.

### **1.2 Some key terms**

#### **1.2.1 Sense of place**

At the heart of this study lies a concern with sense of place. Although arguably an elusive concept (Ardoin 2006), sense of place is widely understood to be a fundamental part of human experience (Altman and Low 1992; Patterson and Williams 2005), central to our immediate experiences of the world (Relph 1976) and our ability to make sense of it. Place, in the sense of space endowed with meaning (Tuan 1977; Godkin 1980; Hay 1998), is not just something in the world but rather a way of understanding the world. It is where actions, experiences, intentions and meanings are drawn together spatially (Seamon 2014): 'when we look at the world as a world of places ... we see attachments

and connections between people and place. We see worlds of meaning and experience' (Cresswell 2004, p. 11).

As a concept grounded in the tradition of geography as 'the study of the earth as the home of people' (Tuan 1991 b, p. 100), where place is the locus of "dwelling" (Heidegger 1993), sense of place is particularly pertinent to the experience of daily life. It concerns place as a site seen from the inside, familiar, explored, intimate and bound up with the processes of living within it (Lippard 1997), where the interaction with its particular character (Norberg-Schulz 1977) has the capacity to satisfy not only the individual's basic bio-social needs but also their 'higher aesthetic-political aspirations' (Tuan 1991 b, p. 101). As such, it represents a rich and important subject for study (Blunt and Varley 2004).

Like place studies generally, sense of place is seen in the literature as a 'domain of research informed by many disciplinary research traditions' (Patterson and Williams 2005, p. 361) and this study, noting Proshansky, Ittleson and Rivlin's (1976) call for place studies to 'evolve in an interdisciplinary superstructure of theoretical constructs and principles' (p. 5), will draw upon a range of disciplines including geography, psychology, environmental psychology, architecture, and leisure studies. Sense of place is generally found in the literature as an overarching concept, with a range of terms emerging from within it to describe more specifically people's interaction with their surroundings (Rogan, O'Connor and Horwitz 2005), as well as a proliferation of concepts and measurements for characterising the relationships between people and places (Lewicka 2008; 2011; Scannell and Gifford 2010; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996; Hernandez, Hidalgo and Ruiz 2014). This study will seek to develop a more fully articulated concept of sense of place capable, firstly, of explaining what factors are at work in the immediacy of the individual's embodied encounter with place and, secondly, of shedding light on why and how individuals use particular spaces.

### **1.2.2 The city**

Sense of place functions at various scales in the literature from the level of the body up to the global level (Smith 1992). The sense of place pursued in this study, however, is distinctively that of a city. Specifically, that city is York,

which, with a population of just over 200,000, is small compared to those larger scale cities that have typically been the main focus of geographical research (Hubbard 2018). As a city with a buoyant economy that has been voted the nation's most beautiful and the best city to live in (York, North Yorkshire and East Riding Enterprise Partnership 2014), it is not associated with the negative connotations that scholars such as Amin (2006) see carried by the contemporary city with its 'increasingly indistinct geography as a place' and its 'vast sociology of hopelessness and misery' (p. 1,011). Nonetheless, it shares the fundamental characteristics of all cities in that it can be viewed as a complex system, comprising a complex web of relations (Allen and Sanglier 1981; Graham and Marvin 2001). As well as being home to its residents, it is a place of work and business, of leisure and tourism; it encompasses many different kinds of activity, different types and densities of development, and a diversity of communities (Barnett 2016). Like all cities, it is subject to processes of constant change, flexibility, social polarisation, and fragmentation (Castells 1989). Its particular characteristics will be described further below.

### **1.2.3 Public spaces**

The study seeks to identify the city's sense of place in the lived experience of residents' everyday use of its public spaces, in the 'routine encounters, shared experiences and daily rituals of urban streetlife' (Knox 2011, p. 174). Public space is taken to be all those spaces that are generally seen to be open, to a greater or lesser extent, to public participation (Smith and Low 2006), those places where people mingle, where strangers meet (Sennett 2010). It includes streets, parks, public buildings and other buildings and spaces that are available to the public, that provide "social infrastructure" (Latham and Layton 2019). As such, public space is far from homogenous, the nature and extent of its "publicness" being very distinct in each particular instance (Smith and Low 2006). Reflecting the desire, expressed in the title, to understand to what extent "different cities" (Furness 2014) can be identified in residents' perceptions of the heritage city, it includes the mundane, unremarkable spaces, as much as the well-trodden paths and the much photographed and often written about heritage sites.



In its commitment to engage directly with all manner of the city's spaces, the study will share something of the psychogeographer's concern to venture beyond the predictable paths, to evoke a new awareness of the landscape and to look for historical and spatial connectivities (Debord 1955; Chtcheglov 2006). It will share too psychogeography's political commitment, strategically reconnoitering the everyday city and being alive to how what is encountered may stand in juxtaposition to the established order of the day. At the same time, the study will go beyond psychogeography's concern with the precise laws and specific effects of the geographic environment on the emotions and behaviour of individuals to consider the social construction of space, focussing on embodied engagement with place, reflecting an understanding that people learn about themselves and the world around them in the first instance through the bodily sensations of movement (Sheets-Johnstone 2009) rather than by observing the moving (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

### **1.3 The motivation for the research**

My interest in this research and its political dimension relates to my role as a chief officer, working for City of York Council, with a brief that, over time, has included public realm functions as well as policy areas relating to community engagement and democratic participation. I am motivated to explore how residents use public spaces by an understanding that insight into what goes on in those spaces will be an essential precursor to developing effective and imaginative approaches to improving them (Koch and Latham 2014). Furthermore, I am aware that how residents feel about and engage with the city's public spaces is critical to wider council aims of promoting increased citizen engagement in decision-making processes, empowering local communities and increasing resilience and self-reliance (City of York Council 2019 c), aims which can be seen, in part at least, to be consistent with a national trend whereby local authorities in England have responded to the reductions in public expenditure brought about by austerity by placing a focus on enhancing quality of life for individuals and communities and promoting active citizenship and inclusion (Hastings et al. 2015). My professional role in York gives me a unique opportunity and perspective as researcher in respect of these issues.

The context for the study is the city's "place-shaping", defined in the Lyons inquiry into local government in the UK as 'the creative use of powers and influence to promote the general well-being of a community and its citizens' (Lyons 2007, p. 3). Like the over-lapping term "place-making", it implies rooting the shaping, development and management of the city's physical infrastructure and public spaces in processes of community-based participation. Whereas "place-making" is often used with a specific focus on public space, for example by Historic England who refer to it as the 'process we use to shape our public spaces and buildings' (Historic England 2019), "place-shaping" implies wider aspirations concerned with shaping local identity, building community cohesion and promoting civic engagement.

A particular focus of government policy in recent years has been active citizenship, encouraging citizens to act as good neighbours, donate time and money, involve themselves in decision-making and so on (Richardson 2012), in order to reduce reliance on the state, tackle social exclusion and increase social capital, the network of ties, information, trust and norms that bind communities (Brannan, John and Stoker 2007). Such concerns are pressing in York where, despite a strong economy (City of York Council 2016), some fear that widening inequality is 'slowly changing the fabric and character of a place famed for its historical association with fairness and social justice' (Butler 2014). These local concerns can be seen in the wider context of an age when exclusion is increasingly evident in global urban trends (Graham and Marvin 2001) with cities seen to be divided on lines of class, religion, ethnicity, sexuality, age and so on (Hubbard 2018), and when, in Britain, the unprecedented pace and scale of population change, combined with concerns about terrorism and immigration and the fallout of Brexit, pose questions about our unity as a nation (Casey 2016). Failure to act on these issues could lead to an age of urban extremes, characterised by an 'acute sense of relative deprivation among the poor' (Massey 1996, p. 395), with the accompanying risk for the city's public spaces that they become pervaded by an "ambient fear" (Doel and Clark 1997) arising from social difference, crime and insecurity (Jackson 1998).

The public realm is critical to active citizenship: 'as the common world, [it] gathers us together and yet prevents our falling over each other, so to speak' (Arendt 2010, p. 105). Cities exist because people both like and need to spend

time together and the “good city” is one that facilitates an ‘expanding habit of solidarity’ (Amin 2006 b, p. 1020), that sustains and nurtures, enabling its inhabitants to live good lives together (Kemmis 1995). As Jacobs (2010) explains, public places set the tone: if people say a city or part of it is dangerous, what they mean is that they feel unsafe in its public spaces. Just as the public realm is central to the quality of urban life, to the “liveability” of the city (Ley 1990), so it is central to the identity of the city and, since identity-based social movements are the most salient in changing the cultural foundations of society (Castells 2000), in determining the way that the city changes and develops.

The extent to which individuals feel empowered as citizens has much to do with their relationship with the physical communities in which they exist (Manzo and Perkins 2006). One 57-year-old West Philadelphian, dancing in the street as Joe Biden’s US presidential election victory came into sight, testified to this saying, ‘I love that this is what democracy looks like. It’s just being together on the streets, having a good time’ (BBC 2020). If people are to be empowered as citizens, their ability to engage with the city’s spaces and to have influence over them, to experience them as inclusive and nurturing and as a resource that builds social capital, will be of vital importance. The right to access public spaces is central to the over-arching right to the city, set out in the work of Lefebvre (1996), part of “reclaiming” the city and reasserting its value as a space of ‘everyday life’ (Mitchell and Villanueva 2010, p. 667). Mitchell (1995, p. 115 emphasis in original) argues that:

By claiming space in public, by creating public spaces, social groups themselves become public. *Only* in public space for example, can the homeless represent themselves as a legitimate part of “the public” ... in this sense, public spaces are absolutely essential to the functioning of democratic politics.

These issues are made more pressing by anxieties about a perceived growing privatisation of urban public space (Peterson 2006), anxieties that some have argued have been accelerated by austerity (Carmona et al. 2019).

The public realm, it can be argued, should be characterised by 'proximity, diversity and accessibility' (Zukin 1995, p. 262), free from the pressure of conformity and the requirement to fit into fixed roles (Amin 2006 a). It should be a place that allows for "copresent encounters" (Urry 2010), where people can express themselves to strangers, where exchange takes place between people who may not share the same assumptions or interests, and where people can access new knowledge. "Geographies of Encounter" (Wilson 2017; Valentine 2008 b), which focus on how people negotiate social diversity and urban difference in their everyday lives, have foregrounded the value of encounters in catalysing change and creating new forms of sociality. It can be argued that on such encounters democracy depends (Sennett 2010).

Engagement with the city is a factor in creating a sense of community, whether that elusive term (Herbert and Thomas 1990) is defined in terms of place or territory, social interaction, or as a symbolic construction consisting of normative codes and values that create a common sense of identity (Cohen 1985). Whilst "community" might generally be considered a positive goal, a concept of community that 'privileges unity over difference' (Young 2010, p. 228), on the other hand, brings with it the danger of excluding those who do not fit the prevailing view of community identity. Urban streets that would once have had a central role as the contested domain of the city where social encounter and political protest take place, sites of domination and resistance, (Fyfe 1998), of authentic political action (Valentine 2013), are put at risk of "domestication", 'reducing the risk of unplanned social encounters and promoting the familiarity of privatised places' (Jackson 1998, p. 177). Many scholars argue that urban policy and design are increasingly pursued in ways that are undemocratic and that prioritise the needs of business and the wealthy (Attoh 2011), segregating space accordingly in terms of 'legitimate and illegitimate user groups' (Malone 2002, p. 161). This "purification of space" (Sibley 1998) bears a high cost in terms of social exclusion and increased inequality.

In an age of increasing polarisation and exclusion (Castells 2010), with its concomitant impacts on the management of urban public space, a study of sense of place and its implications for how people use urban, public spaces has the potential to make an important contribution to understanding how those leading work on place-shaping may promote the renewal of citizenship as an

active, human engagement with and within the city. It has the potential to point up the barriers that exclude individuals, disempower communities, and lead to social exclusion, and to furnish knowledge from which initiatives to tackle barriers may be designed.

#### **1.4 Stories - big and small**

The study seeks to capture sense of place in the city through the lens of stories. This reflects an understanding that the creation of meaning happens within society, that we live publicly, 'by public meanings and by shared procedures of interpretation and negotiation' (Bruner 1990, p. 12) and that we make sense of things by telling stories about them (Weik 1995). Indeed, the telling of stories is one of the most powerful currencies available to us (Lorimer and Parr 2014), allowing us to weave together and order our otherwise confused and unformed conception of temporal life (Ricoeur 1980), bringing cognitive and emotional coherence to experience and constructing and negotiating social identity (Bauman 1986). Stories are also our chief moral compass because we use them to motivate and explain our actions and because, through their power to affect, move or incite (Rose 2016), they change the way we act in the world (Cronon 1992).

Stories illuminate how thought takes place. They should be understood not as linear expressions that correspond with the "real" world (Rose 2016), but rather as "multivalent" forms, constituted by a diversity of types of experience, and open to a variety of potential readings (Bakhtin 1968). What is significant about them is not their literariness but rather the sense of context and of social action that constitute them as a form of social practice (Bauman 1986; Johnstone 1990). Shaped by the discourses or "ways of speaking" (Foucault 1989) from which, according to Foucault (1971), cultures are constructed, stories play a key role in the social construction of reality, shaping our perceptions of the world and how we behave. Thus, they do not merely reflect culture but are constitutive of social life.

It has long been understood that stories are told in and by the city in many ways, not just textual, with townscape itself seen as a "spatial narrative", telling of the interaction between the materiality of the urban landscape and the symbolic meanings that are imposed on it or drawn from it (Hubbard 2018;

Meethan 1996). Massey (2005) makes another kind of link between the city and story. In describing the nature of space as constituted through interrelations and interactions, always under construction, she characterises it as a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far' (p. 130). Our movement through the city can also be understood in terms of story. Ingold (2019) suggests that our movement through space is sequential, temporal and narrative, rather than spatial, and that "knowing where you are" is not about being able to pinpoint a spatial position, but rather about being able to tell the story of the place that you are in. He argues that narrative ability is the same as perceptual acuity, that "knowing" and "articulating" are inherently linked, and that perception and memory are bound up in the narrative activity of perceiving and remembering.

An important piece of context for this study, whilst it was in progress, was an initiative by the city council to develop a "York Narrative" as 'a way of describing York' and with the purpose of 'help[ing] partners and residents understand how we can better present ourselves to local, regional and national partners ... whilst also identifying the values the city cherishes to inform future policy making' (City of York Council 2019 d, p. 37). The starting point for this exercise, which explicitly recognises the importance of story-telling for a city, was a hypothesis that the current 'perception of York and what it offers is out of kilter with the day to day experience of living, working, studying or visiting the city', in that 'the reality of York is overwhelmed by its heritage tourism image' (ibid., p. 56). To address this, the initiative set out to find out what people value in, and want of, the city, and what they would like it to be known for in the future, in order to create from this a cohesive place narrative reflective of many voices. The study will reflect upon the outcome of this exercise.

The question posed in the thesis title, "Different cities, different stories?" (Furness 2014) is provoked by the observation that stories of the city are told not only through many different means but also at different scales, on different planes and with differing degrees of authority and power. Just as photographs of cities are often taken from an aerial viewpoint, aiming to encapsulate as much of the iconic skyline of the city as possible in a single frame, so the city's story is often told from "on high". De Certeau (1984) talks of being "lifted" to the top of the World Trade Center and being able to look down 'like a god' (p. 92) and read the city as a text. He contrasts this with the perspective of the

'ordinary practitioners of the city [who] live "down below", below the thresholds at which visibility begins ... they are walkers, *Wandersmänner*, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban "text" they write without being able to read it' (ibid., p. 93).

The authoritative account of the city, produced from on high, tends to be written from the perspective of those most likely to occupy the high-level domains, the penthouse suites and luxury hotels associated with elite power (McNeill 2005), the privileged, generally male, citizen. Insofar as the ordinary citizen is represented in these accounts, they appear as something akin to the stilted figures that one sees in an architectural model (Miles 2002). The study recognises the risk that, if the agency of those who experience the city at the ground level is repressed, the story of the city will be written exclusively by the "great and the good" for the "great and the good", ignoring the many and various ways that ordinary citizens engage with and shape the city through the course of everyday life. In this context, the title question asks how the stories from on high and the stories of every day urban encounter of those who live "down below" interrelate, and whether the dichotomy between them leads to fundamentally different experiences of the city. Recognising this dichotomy, the study will work with the idea of "big stories" and "small stories" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008; Georgakopoulou 2006; Lorimer 2003).

The term "big stories" will refer to those grand narratives that survey the city as a whole, those powerful stories that we carry with us into our encounter with the city and that can be expected to shape our experiences and perceptions (Bruner 2005). Typically, these will be found in strategy documents, such as the Local Plan and other local authority plans, as well as in histories of the city, travel guides and other writing that seeks to give an overview of the city or to encapsulate its character. They may be told by the cityscape itself, by York's well-known and much visited heritage sites, the city walls, the Minster and so on. These sources reflect an association of the big story told from "on high" with positions of power; however, the study also recognises that ordinary residents can also help to create the big stories that overarch the city, when they stand back to survey their city and when their voices are aggregated and the study will also seek to engage with these facets.

“Small stories”, on the other hand, will be used to refer to the minutiae of the everyday experience of the city. By capturing small stories, the study will seek to analyse the lived spaces that individuals experience, as Lefebvre (1994) advocated, as a route to a more holistic understanding of social life in the city and the broader complex that is human life. Small stories will involve a wide range of stories as social practice, as talk-in-interaction (De Fina and Georgakopoulou 2008), stories which shed light on why particular things happen in particular settings and on particular occasions as well as on how individual identities are practised and tested out (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008). They will take many forms including ‘tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell’ (ibid., p. 381), things that may or may not have actually happened.

Small stories will include more than just the textual; they will be written through the various facets of the individual’s embodied engagement with the city, shedding light on the impact that individuals have in shaping the city as they engage with its spaces. According to de Certeau (1984), there is a ‘rhetoric of walking’ (p. 100) whereby the perambulations of passers-by, with their turns and detours, can be compared to “turns of phrase” or “stylistic figures”. The choices that the walker makes about where to go compose ‘a manifold story’ through the ‘fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces’, (ibid., p. 93). The walker ‘condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance and composes with others spatial “turns of phrase” that are “rare”, “accidental” or illegitimate’ (ibid., p. 99). The study will seek to capture these stories.

The study will experiment with small stories to look at the city from all aspects and perspectives. Recognising that ‘cities are maintained through networks that combine human and nonhuman agency’ (Hubbard 2018, p. 192) this will encompass interrelations between fellow citizens as well as between the individual and the materiality of the city. It will take a lead from Latour and Hermant (2001) who, in their engagement with the city of Paris, explore why the city cannot be captured at a glance, and why any search for the essence of the city is one that requires the researcher to look at the city from different vantage points and angles, including through an array of mundane objects, ‘humble mediators that alone give it its meaning and scope, Economics, sociology,



water, electricity, telephony, voters, geography, the climate, sewers, rumours, metros, police surveillance, standards, sums and summaries' (p. 101). The study will pay attention to an active landscape considering the "agency of things" (Latour 2014) in seeking to explain how individuals engage with the city's public spaces.

The focus on small stories will ensure that the voices of ordinary residents are heard in the study through all the noise of the city's big stories. Just as de Certeau (1985) writes about the practice of the ordinary walker in terms of "resistance", whereby the pedestrian "reclaims" the city through improvisational tactics such as the simple act of walking where they are not expected, thus 'appropriating' the 'topographical system' (p. 130), small stories may be understood as acts of resistance on the part of the individual to the city's big stories. In seeking out these acts of "appropriation" against the backdrop of the city's dominant narratives, the study will heed Lefebvre's (1994) advice that 'Representations of space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists [is] the dominant space in any society' whilst lived space, 'representational spaces, the space of "inhabitants" and "users" ... the dominated ... space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate' (pp. 38-39) is much less visible and requires concerted attention if it is to be brought into the foreground. The study will seek to hear the voice of the ordinary resident through small stories whilst, at the same time, seeking an understanding of how the big stories and small stories of the city intersect, how a '*migrational*, or metaphorical, city thus slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city' (de Certeau 1993, p. 128).

Finally, the idea of "big stories" and "small stories" will help to inform how the terms "place" and "space" will be used in this study. In this regard, the study will follow Massey (2005) in steering away from the commonly made distinction between place as every day, lived and meaningful, and space as theoretical. Instead, space will be used here to refer to those meaningful sites of everyday life and engagement with the city whereby small stories are generated. It will be used to refer to the granularity of specific locations where the practice of everyday life occurs, in this case the public spaces of the city of York. These spaces will be identifiable in Massey's terms by a 'simultaneity of stories-so-far' (p. 130). Place, on the other hand, will be used to refer to a collecting or

weaving together of those stories, an articulation of stories 'within the wider power-geometries of space' (ibid.). In this study, this collecting together is most likely to be seen at city level, though it may also manifest itself in respect of particular areas or parts of the city. Place thus conceived remains open, 'the coming together of the previously unrelated, a constellation of processes rather than a thing' (ibid., p. 141). With no presumption of a pre-given coherence or of community or collective identity, place, according to Massey, requires negotiation, invention, and a response not only to involvement in the lives of others but also to entanglement with the materiality of the city. Understanding place in this way will help to facilitate an understanding of how the big stories of place and the small stories of everyday encounter inter-connect and interact to create the city.

## **1.5 The setting for the research**

### **1.5.1 York the heritage city**

The heritage city of York is a particularly suitable and, indeed, important site for a study of how "big stories" and "small stories" intersect within processes that give rise to sense of place. What makes York particularly interesting in this regard is the sheer power of the big story of the city itself. [Appendix 1](#) provides some background information about the city of York. The document appended here is a briefing produced by the city council for the benefit of overseas delegations to the city, in this case from the city of Kristiansand, Norway. It is noteworthy that the story this briefing tells about the city takes, as its starting point, a description of York as "a historic walled city". York is typical of cities in the UK in the way that the council and civil society organisations frame the city in various ways, through their plans and their marketing strategies, in pursuit of particular economic or social outcomes. Brands and logos make this framing explicit, with York's current brands including: Human Rights City, City of Sanctuary, Science City, UNESCO Creative City, Fairtrade City, City of Festivals, Cycling City, to name just a few of the most visible. Some of these brands may achieve a degree of traction. The Cycling City brand, for example, has helped to make York third highest in England for regular cycling (Kemp 2016), regularly cited in national media as a good place to cycle. Yet these relatively recent contrivances cannot compete with the longevity, the force, the common currency or the organic origins of York's framing as a heritage city.

The framing of York as a distinguished heritage city goes back at least as far as the civic chronicles of the seventeenth century, which sought to create a sense of continuity and identity for York, as the country's second city, through claiming an antiquity greater than any other (Sweet 2003). This framing of York as a beautiful historic city continues to stand out above all others in the way that York is written about and referred to in popular discourse. It is predominantly this framing that gives the city its strong international brand recognition as a tourism destination associated with heritage and traditional Englishness (York Without Walls 2016). Harvey's observation, made back in the seventies, that 'York's image to the outside world is pre-eminently that of a historic city' (Harvey 1975, p. 21) remains true today.

The heritage story is told powerfully by York's cityscape. York Minster, the largest Gothic cathedral in Northern Europe, dominates the skyline and is the most iconic symbol of the city of York. It is constantly photographed for all kinds of printed and web-based material as well as by individual residents who often share their images on social media. Its name is much appropriated for businesses ranging from vets to car hire, aerial fitters to law firms, whilst York City FC are known as the "Minstermen". The city walls present another powerful manifestation of this heritage "framing". Considered to be the finest medieval walls in the UK, they form a unique, identifiable image of the city and, alongside the Minster, generate recognition amongst residents and tourists alike (City of York Council 2015 b). Moreover, the walls can be seen to define what is important in York as lying within their ramparts, reinforcing York's tradition of looking inwards (Harvey 1975). This (tight geographical) framing of York as a heritage city, the polarity that it sets up between "inside" and "outside" the city walls, and the inference that only the historic core is truly important, will inevitably impact upon how the city's residents, living and working in the range of urban, suburban and village settings that make up the modern administrative area of York, experience their city.

The big story of York the heritage city is loudly told in city plans and strategies such as the draft Local Plan, which speaks of York as 'this world-famous historic city' (City of York Council 2018, p. 3), or the cultural strategy, which refers to York's 'exceptional heritage' (City of York Council 2019 a, p. 22), and the study will look at these sources in more detail. York's heritage story is, of

course, also told for the purposes of promoting York as a tourist destination, attracting 6.8 million visitors a year (Visit York 2016). The current *Only in York* campaign (Visit York 2019), for example, promises the visitor “special experiences”, ‘where cobbled medieval streets and Georgian architecture tell the stories of the people and its history’. It can be argued that York is typical of other historic sites in the way that the tourist’s experience of its historic core is commoditised, packaged and consumed (Heitmann 2011), made “factitious” in order to be repeatable (Boorstin 1962), and that the authenticity of its cultural products: buildings, artefacts, performances, culture and lifestyles (Cohen 1988) is replaced by a surrogate, *staged authenticity* (MacCannell 1973). It can also be argued that the city is organised in a way that is commensurate with presenting its heritage story to the visitor. In the regard, Meethan (1996) sees York as typical of tourism sites in the way that the council exercises aesthetic control over the environment and what goes on in it in order to create the city as a site of consumption for retail and tourism.

This commodification of the city for consumption as a heritage tourism site is sometimes thought to create a tension between the big story presented to the visitor and the “self-authored” story (Voase 1999) of everyday encounter with the city. This tension can be seen to play out in the touristic sites, understood as “performative” spaces, within which residents’ and visitors’ “performance” of them ascribes and contests meaning (Chaney 2002; Edensor 2000 a). The outcome of this contestation, in terms of what become the optimum activities or types of performance that may take place in these spaces (Mordue 2005), is seen to reflect wider issues of socio-economic power (Griffiths 1993), with an expectation that it will be those who consume the touristic sites who will have most influence over them (Zukin 1990), whilst the residents, who are generally marginalised in socio-economic terms, will have the least influence. At the same time, however, it should be noted that residents also have power to influence how touristic spaces are used through their “disciplinary gaze” (Urry 1990), controlling the behaviour of tourists in various ways, whether through informal face-to-face interaction or through scripting the stories that govern what the visitor can know about the site (Cheong and Miller 2000).

The foregoing does not imply that the interplay between the big heritage story of York and the small stories of individual encounter can be reduced to a resident /

visitor dichotomy. Whilst a concern about the extent to which the city is organised for the purposes of tourism features large in residents' discourse about what it is like to live in York and leads to a diversity of views about the relative benefits and disbenefits of tourism (Snaith and Haley 1999; Lee, Li and Kim 2007; Jackson 2008), it is evident that most residents, at least some of the time, also enjoy using the city's spaces, amenities and visitor attractions for leisure purposes, in much the same way as tourists do. It is to be expected that residents, as they use the city's spaces, will, like visitors, be alive to and to some degree "consume" the heritage story of York whilst, at various times and for various reasons, "resisting" it in the small stories of their everyday lives. The task of this study is to examine the interplay between these things in the formation of sense of place.

York's framing as a heritage city is made particularly significant for sense of place by the role of heritage in forging social identity. Smith's (2006) notion of an "authorized heritage discourse" suggests that heritage operates as a symbolic representation of identity serving to forge a common identity based on the past by assessing, negotiating and affirming particular identities, and legitimising the narratives, values and cultural meanings that underpin them. The authorised heritage discourse particularly concerns the things that current generations must take care of for the sake of future generations. It is very much a "big story", privileging 'monumentality and grand scale, innate artefact / site significance tied to time depth, scientific / aesthetic expert judgement, social consensus and nation building' (ibid., p. 11). In York, where its heritage has been described as representing all that is good and important about York, 'the sum total of a great past' (Harvey 1975, p. 21) it is to be expected that the "authorized heritage discourse" will be particularly powerful.

### **1.5.2 York the contested city**

York is not just a heritage city but also one with a particular history of contestation over place, a history that makes York a particularly relevant site for a study concerning sense of place. A desire to maintain York's perceived characteristics has often led to fierce debate over the way that its streetscape, buildings and spaces, should develop. In some cases, this has played out in the form of resistance by individuals and stakeholder groups to the plans of the

civic authorities: '[in York] the great conflicts are those between the men in the street, regardless of origin, and their elected rulers' (Harvey 1975, p. xiii). Such contestation can be traced back through the civic record. For example, in 1596 when Clifford's Tower was in a ruinous state and facing demolition, it was the strength of local opposition to the plan that led the corporation to intervene to save it (Cooper 1911). In 1800, the corporation itself was forced to back down in its plan to apply for an Act of Parliament to demolish the city walls, which they felt were impeding movement and hindering the city's expansion, due to the fierce opposition of citizens, including influential figures such as painter William Etty (History of York 2016 a).

This tendency towards contestation over place is fuelled by the characteristic attitude of York citizens, which Nuttgens (1976) describes in terms of a seriousness or a solemnity even, which overlies a 'profound concern and a real, not uncritical pride' (p. 16). It is also fuelled by the presence of a wealth of heritage and other civil society organisations in York with a plethora of informed, confident voices heard in all areas of civic debate. Preeminent amongst these is the Civic Trust, which is credited by the council as doing 'more than anyone else to re-orientate planning in the city' (City of York Council 2015 c, p. 36). This "heritage mafia", as it is often referred to behind closed doors within the council, is never afraid to speak up in opposition to any scheme it considers detrimental to the city's heritage.

The power of the authorized heritage discourse may work to silence the voices of ordinary residents. Sometimes this silencing of the native voice is explicit, as by Palliser and Palliser (1979, p. viii):

The main principle behind this selection [of writings about York] has been to concentrate on descriptions by visitors and strangers, who were more likely than citizens to view York objectively and to avoid the gushing prose that seems to afflict some York-born writers. Only two natives are included and then on the grounds that they were men of wide experience who could view their birthplace with detachment.

York's demographics also point to a city where some sections of the population are in a better position to wield influence than others and where there is a real risk of some voices being marginalised. Whilst the population as a whole is comparatively healthy and economically active with full employment and the highest skills levels of any city in the North, there are indicators of marked and growing inequality, with wages below the national average, due to the preponderance of low value sectors in the city (City of York 2016), and high numbers of workers forced to accept part-time hours, especially women (City of York 2015 a). Significant health inequalities are also evident with a gap in life expectancy between those living in the wealthiest and poorest parts of the city of 7.2 years for males and 5.9 for females (City of York 2017). A sense of exclusion can also be glimpsed in the attitudes of York residents. So, when last polled in 2017/18, 94% of residents expressed themselves satisfied with their local area as a place to live, only 27% agreed that they were able to influence decisions affecting their local area (City of York Council 2019 b).

In a city that is particularly rich in expert heritage and other specialist bodies, all making their voices heard in debates around the big stories of the heritage city of York, the question will be how sense of place emerges for those who are not members of this elite or party to their debates. The implication for this study is that to look for sense of place in the heritage city, giving due weight to the small stories of everyday encounter by its residents, it will be necessary to look beyond the authorized heritage discourse and the commodified narratives of the touristic spaces. It will mean seeking to hear the voices of those residents who are not routinely heard within civic debates, capturing these voices both inside and outside of the city walls, not only at the well-known heritage sites but also in the mundane spaces of the city.

## **1.6 The research questions**

This introduction has suggested a number of themes that will need to be considered in order to explore the potential of sense of place as an organising principle in understanding the factors that determine how people engage with public spaces. The importance of focussing on individuals' embodied interaction with space has been stressed with a view to considering practices in place and how place is "performed". The intention has also been declared to

look at sense of place through the lens of stories, to consider how the “big stories” of place intersect with the “small stories” of everyday spaces. These themes come together in the following research questions.

### **Research Question 1:**

How does sense of place manifest itself for residents of the heritage city York?

Objectives:

- a) To explore the relative salience, in the formation of sense of place, of:
  - The “big stories” of place: the role of ideologies, discourse and narrative
  - The “small stories” of embodied encounter with public spaces: the role of identity and belonging; the affective response to place, emotion, aesthetics and affordances; practices and performance of place
- b) To engage critically with the question of how “sense of place” operates for individuals within York’s public spaces, both the “ordinary” as well as the “iconic”

### **Research Question 2:**

How does sense of place impact upon the way residents use the city and engage with its public spaces?

Objectives:

- a) To evaluate how sense of place influences propensity to use or not to use particular spaces
- b) To contribute to an understanding of how sense of place influences how people engage with the city’s public spaces and their embodied practices in those spaces

## **1.7 Contribution to knowledge**

The study seeks to make an original contribution to knowledge in three dimensions. With regard to theory the study draws together place constructs that hitherto have been deployed separately in the literature in order to elaborate a concept of sense of place capable of accounting for both the



immediate, direct, embodied experience of the materiality of place, as well as the social dimensions, the culturally determined understandings and practices and the discourses that are both constitutive of and constituted by place.

Understanding sense of place as an assemblage (Deleuze and Guattari 1988) the study casts it as a disrupting concept (Colebrook 2002) constantly pointing to new becomings. It deploys this idea of sense of place as an opening up of oneself to the world, to the potentiality of the encounter with space, to elucidate how and why individuals are drawn to use particular spaces.

In the area of methods, the study offers a set of tools with which to work with ordinary residents in examining the complexities and subtleties involved in person-place relationships where respondents are not able to provide explanations for their actions and intentions and it is therefore necessary to piece together the small stories of everyday encounter, gathering fragmentary data through a variety of means and from multiple perspectives. With regard to practice, the study seeks to draw out the practical implications, for those who have influence over place-shaping in the city, of this conceptualisation of sense of place, in terms of the potential it opens up to the individual. New approaches that might be taken to engage citizens in debates about the future development of the city and its public spaces are pointed up.

## **1.8 Structure of the thesis**

The next chapter reviews the literature about place within three broad areas: place as story; place as site of people-place relationship; and place as embodied experience.

Chapter 3 concerns methodology. Here I discuss issues concerned with my positionality in the research, the research strategy pursued, and the research methods adopted.

Chapters 4 to 10 set out the findings from the research. The first of these chapters discusses the “big stories” of York that emerge from discourse and ideology. The later chapters are concerned with the small stories of everyday encounter with the city’s public spaces. Emerging themes are discussed.

Conclusions and recommendations are drawn out in the final chapter.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

The aim of this study is to examine the potential of “sense of place” as an organising concept in understanding the factors that determine how people use public spaces in the heritage city of York. “Sense of place” is currently found in the literature as a general, over-arching term (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001); it is not ready-made for explaining how and why people use particular spaces. To develop a more functional concept of sense of place it will be necessary to draw out the main terms found in the literature that relate to the person-place relationship and to test their potential to contribute to the formulation of a conception of sense of place that has explanatory power. As was previously noted, few fields of enquiry are so markedly interdisciplinary in nature as that of place (Williams 2014; Shumaker and Hankin 1984) and, as a result, this study will need to draw upon literature from a wide range of disciplines. It is recognised that the task will be made difficult by the terminological confusion that is found in the literature concerning place (Kaltenborn 1998), leading to methodological weakness (Stedman 2002) and a consequent lack of progress in place research (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001; Lalli 1992). The study will need to rise to Patterson and Williams’s (2005) call to adopt a ‘critical pluralist perspective and a reflective dialog’ (p. 377), working with a range of paradigmatic approaches.

This review of the literature will encompass three broad areas of place-related literature. Reflecting the declared intent for the study to consider the interplay of “big stories” of place and the “small stories” of everyday experience within the processes that lead to the creation of sense of place in the heritage city of York, the first section considers the relationship between “story” and place in the literature. It looks at the role of ideology and discourse and considers story-telling as a spatial practice. It then considers how the concept of the small story is developed in the literature as a way of giving value to individual experience, providing a counterweight to the hegemony of the big story, and as a vehicle to reflect the materiality of an active landscape.

The second area of literature reviewed concerns the relationship between person and place in order to consider how this might contribute to sense of place. It looks at the various ways that the person-place relationship is

characterised in the literature including “place identity”, referring to a process by which, through interaction with a specific place, individuals may describe themselves in terms of belonging to that place (Hernández et al. 2007); “place attachment”, generally used to describe a sense of belonging, the affective bond that people form with specific settings and the meanings they attribute to that bond (Morgan 2010); and “place dependence”, referring to the extent to which a place satisfies the individual’s goals and needs (Stokols and Schumaker 1981). This section draws on social and environmental psychology to consider how these various, overlapping terms (Bonnes and Secchiaroli 1995) contribute to place as a social construct.

The third section focusses on sense of place as embodied experience, the affective, aesthetic, and emotional mechanisms by which place and the body interact. Moving away from the representational, this body of literature considers place as performed.

The chapter as a whole highlights gaps in knowledge and sets the context for the study.

## **2.1 Stories**

### **2.1.1 Introduction**

This section considers literature concerning the story in order to understand how stories might contribute to sense of place. It looks first at how the story is understood within the context of the “cultural turn” that predominated within geography in the 1990s, whereby the ideological, discursive and structural aspects of the story were considered to be of primary interest (Cameron 2012). This provides context for the examination of the “big stories” of place that are likely to be encountered in the heritage city of York and how they may impact on the individual’s sense of place. It then moves on to consider more recent literature that opens up a path to capture the “small stories” of personal experience reflective of the individual’s embodied encounter with a particular space in all its materiality and specificity. The possibility is opened up of considering sense of place in terms of an interplay between stories at these different scales.

### **2.1.2 Ideology**

Through the cultural turn, story became a locus for observing the workings of ideology, knowledge and power. This theoretical and methodological approach reflects an understanding that the creation of meaning happens within society, through participation in culture: we live publicly 'by public meanings and by shared procedures of interpretation and negotiation' (Bruner 1990, p. 12). Our very individuality is shaped by 'cultural patterns, historically created systems of meaning in terms of which we give form, order, point, and direction to our lives' (Geertz 1973, p. 52). The cultural turn revolved around a concern with how these frameworks of taken-for-granted assumptions about the world (Tennant 1993) shape our experience in place, not only reflecting the way that places are but acting as a construction of, or argument about, the way that places are (Hummon 1990).

Hummon argues that "community ideologies", public, learned, shared, and sustained through communication with others, serve to categorise, characterise and explain reality in ways that produce and legitimise commitment to a form of community, providing individuals with community accounts, that is explanations of differences among communities. According to this view, an individual's sense of place will depend not just on what their senses are telling them but also on their prior beliefs about place in the form of these community ideologies. Indeed, prior belief will also influence what their senses are telling them since "believing is seeing" (Weik 1995): according to Weik, beliefs influence what people notice and how events then unfold since to believe is to notice selectively, according to our preferences for particular outcomes and our expectations concerning particular behaviours, and to act in ways that reinforce our belief. For Weik, it is a "question of ideology".

According to this body of literature, ideology also determines what is and what is not said about a place (Billig 1990), providing 'the interesting and contrary topics for debate and argumentation' (Cresswell 2004, p. 78). These processes of social controversy or "arguing" (Billig 1996) shape our beliefs and, in turn, frame our experience. What is framed is then remembered, systematically shaped in memory to conform to our 'canonical representations' of the world (Bruner 1990, p. 56). Memory is thus socially constructed (Edensor 1997), a

function of ideology as well as a process by which ideology is reproduced. This suggests a significant role for memory in the formation of sense of place. Place can be seen as the repository of collective memories (Entrikin 1997) where the beliefs that these memories contain sustain the identities of particular groups, engendering commitment and serving as justification for past action and a guide for future action (Sproule 1981).

Through these processes, places are socially constituted whilst at the same time constitutive of the social: 'Space and the political organisation of space express social relationships but also react back upon them' (Soja 1980, p. 207). Sack (1993) in his concept of *spatiality* describes territorial rules about what is in or out of place, rules that pervade and structure lives, arguing that territorial and social rules are mutually constitutive, and constitutive of nature, social relations and meaning. The "new regional geographers" also look for 'rules of inclusion and exclusion that give places and regions their character and identity' (Entrikin 1997, p. 266), engaging with social theory to look at questions of how far social structures and processes are context-dependent (Sayer 1989). Place is seen as socially produced through historical interactions between large-scale institutional and ideological developments on the one hand and place-specific activities, interactions and understandings on the other (Murphy 1991). Social practices are seen as "spatially patterned" and understanding the "local" involves analysis of a mixture of social and spatial processes (Urry 1987).

### **2.1.3 Discourse**

In the work of Foucault (1971), cultures are constructed out of numerous, competing discourses which play a key role in the social construction of reality, shaping our perceptions of the world, pulling together chains of associations that produce meaningful understanding, and then organising the way we behave towards other people. In this way, discourses constitute and generate knowledge and "truth". To know anything is to know it in terms of one or more discourses (Davies and Harré 1990). Foucault sees knowledge and language as being 'rigorously interwoven' (Foucault 1970, p. 86): knowledge is not simply communicated through language; it is organised through the structures, interconnections, and associations that are built into language. Discourse, as "a way of speaking" (Foucault 1989), communicates knowledge not only about the

intended meaning of the language, but also about the person speaking, particularly their relationship to the people around them.

Discourses are intimately involved with socially embedded networks of power, mirroring and creating social power (Schein 1997) and their articulation needs to be recognised as ‘meanings generated to reinforce social power’ (Entrikin 1996, p. 218). Because certain types of discourse enable specific types of individuals to “speak the truth,” or at least to be believed when speaking on specific subjects, discourses also give these individuals degrees of social, cultural, and political power. Discourses create ‘shared meanings which are socially constituted, ideologies, sets of “common sense” assumptions’ (Duncan 1990, p. 16). They are regulated by society. As Foucault puts it (1971, p. 8):

In every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events.

Competing discourses emerge from the ideologies that reflect the beliefs and interests of the social groups that give rise to them, shaping competing group identities through “ideological reinforcement” (Chronis 2012). Schein (1997) argues that individual discourses take material form as a “cultural landscape”, creating social and visual “disciplines” or “strategies” that combine to determine how individuals and communities interpret a particular landscape and how they act within it: ‘The cultural landscape, as discourse materialized, is simultaneously disciplinary in its spatial and visual strategies and empowering in the possibilities inherent for individual human action upon the landscape’ (ibid., p. 664).

#### **2.1.4 Discursive practice**

The literature suggests, then, that discourses, as ‘practices of signification’, provide ‘a framework for understanding the world’ (Barnes and Duncan 1992, p. 8). Looking at prevailing discourses will give insight into how “reality” is constructed through the way discourse “rules in” certain ways of thinking, talking or speaking about a topic, ruling out or limiting other ways of talking (Grant and Hardy 2004; Barad 2003), defining which statements count as meaningful,

enabling certain ways of acting whilst restricting other actions (Palli, Vaara and Sorsa 2009), and thus determining what future may come into being (Austin 1962). Examining discourse will shed light on how members of a particular community create alignments and oppositions between people and places based on the various value and belief systems prevalent in the community (Modan 2007), constructing place through their performance of particular social practices and relations – ‘blaming, justifying, derogating, excusing, excluding and all the other things that people do with words’ (Dixon and Durrheim 2000, p. 32). In this way, residents territorialise the neighbourhood ‘as a place with a certain character, a place which embodies a particular set of values’ (Modan 2007, p. 90), intertwining it with a moral framework to create a “moral geography” (Hill 1995), which allows them to take up stances in relation to particular places.

The concept of “discursive practice” is articulated in the literature in terms of its capacity to shape the construction of reality. Shotter (1993) postulates a ‘special third kind of knowledge, embodied in the conversational background to our lives’, a knowledge-in-practice, held in common with others within a situation, group, or institution, ‘what might be called a “knowing-from”’ (p. 19). The “dialogical reality or space” this knowledge constructs is experienced as an external reality (Shotter 1998), a ‘nonrepresentational, sensuous or embodied form of practical-moral understanding, which, in being constitutive of people’s social and personal identities, is prior to and determines all the other forms of knowledge available to them’ (Shotter 1997, p. 8). Only from within a “living involvement” within dialogical activity can we make sense of what is occurring (Shotter 1998).

Discursive practice sees the activity of talk as action rather than communication (Laurier and Philo 2006; Thrift 2008 a), reflecting an understanding that our speaking can “move” people, can affect their bodily behaviour (Shotter 1997). It is embodied (Reckwitz 2002), deriving from ‘the body as an unfolding locus for the display of meaning and action and the temporally unfolding organization of talk-in-interaction’ (Goodwin 2000, p. 1,517). “Talk-in-interaction” is key to the individual’s understanding of a world that is worked out in joint action, where meanings are interactionally accomplished (Edwards 1997) and ‘the primary human reality is persons in conversation’ (Harré 1983, p. 58). Where many

actions require co-operation to complete, talk can be seen as dialogical action (Thrift 1996): 'the subject is engaged in embodied affective dialogical practices, that is it is born into and out of joint action' (Thrift 1997, p. 128). Taylor (1993) argues that 'language itself serves to set up spaces of common action, on a number of levels, intimate and public' (pp. 52-53).

In our talk, as we attempt to link our practical activities with those around us, we construct a living social relationship (Shotter 1997): we speak in order to 'create, maintain, reproduce and transform certain modes of social and societal relationships' (Shotter 1990, p. 121). The 'rhetorical traditions' through which we locate ourselves with regard to these societal relationships are also '*ideological* traditions that sustain relations of domination' (Dixon and Durrheim 2000, p. 33 emphasis in original). According to this understanding, our actions can never be wholly accounted as our own since they are shaped by those of the individuals or groups to whom we are responding. This leads to the notion of "joint action" (Sebanz, Bekkering and Knoblich 2006) where the overall outcome is emergent from the coordinated behaviour and cannot be traced back to the intentions of any one individual.

### **2.1.5 The nature of stories**

This section considers what the literature tells us about how the discursive and dialogical emerge in the form of stories. It reflects an understanding that postmodern thought and, more particularly, post-structuralism, assigns a central role to language in the construction of the self and the social world, viewing it as both reflecting reality and constituting reality, not merely an interpretive or analytical tool, but having ontological status (Shankar, Elliott and Goulding 2010). We saw in the previous section that language is the embodiment of the shared practical understanding of a society or social group (Crossley 2001) and underpins how a society defines reality: 'The reality of the world is sustained through conversation with significant others' (Berger and Kellner 1964). Social community and linguistic community are 'faces of the same coin' (Johnstone 1990, p. 126) with shared talk amongst members of a particular community creating language whilst shared language in turn makes community possible.

Central to this shared construction of reality is narrative, drawing together as it does the beliefs and values of the group and communicating its particular



knowledge about the way the world is (Hopkinson and Hogarth-Scott 2001). 'Storytelling is at the core of what goes on when people talk' (Johnstone 1990, p. 8) and stories are central to learning and socialisation (Gabriel, Geiger and Letiche 2011). According to Gabriel (1995), the story is a 'loud social process' (p. 494) with the teller engaging in a social process with the told whereby the teller makes assumptions about what can appropriately be discussed under the circumstances, according to their understanding of the audience's likes and dislikes, and the meanings they are likely to read into different images. Stories do not pop out fully formed: they emerge as "collages", adjusted according to the conversation. The characteristics of stories include 'omissions, shifts in emphasis, and a licence to ride roughshod over the facts' (Gabriel 1995, p. 480).

Stories transcend the individual and can become identified with the community as a whole (Johnstone 1990), a device for interpreting experience, part of *Sense-making* (Weik 1995) where people try to shape the environments they face at the same time as they react to them: they are both proactive and reactive. Stories can be seen as a form of social action (Johnstone 1990) through which we structure our experience and give it meaning and express our identity (Gutting 1996). Just as narrative structures our sense of self and our interactions with others, our sense of place and community is rooted in storytelling. One is at home in a place when that place evokes stories; the 'texture of a familiar neighbourhood' is a narrative texture whilst 'coming to know a place means becoming a character in its stories and making it a character in yours' (Johnstone 1990, p. 10). Ingold (2010) argues that a person who can tell a story about place is one who is perceptually attuned to picking up information in the environment that others, less perceptive, might miss, and the teller, in sharing his knowledge, 'conducts the attention of his audience along the same paths as his own' (p. 60).

Stories about place reflect the socially constructed character of places (Shields 1991) and the fact that the public realm is shared space 'both materially and imaginably' (Shibley, Schneekloth and Hovey 2003, p. 1). Communities construct identities by producing meanings with which its members can identify and these are 'contained in the stories which are told about it, memories which connect its present with its past, and images which are constructed of it' (Hall

1992, p. 293). The telling and re-telling of these stories, the 'repetition of images, recitation of judgements, and reproduction of attitudes' both builds up and tears down 'our sense of self and place' (Shibley, Schneekloth and Hovey 2003, p. 1). In this way, stories create *place identity* binding people to place through 'place-based meanings [which] form the glue of familiarity' (Hull, Lam, and Vigo 1994, p. 110), creating an "imagined community" (Anderson 1983).

### **2.1.6 Stories and place**

The literature suggests, then, that stories of place will be of great significance to any effort to conceptualise sense of place, revealing the ideologies and discourses that shape our understanding of the world and legitimising particular social practices and relations. Whilst this review of the literature has so far focussed on language as the primary vehicle for the transmission of stories, stories of place are understood in the literature to be told not just through text or other forms of human communication but also through many facets of place itself. Scholars argue that a city tells stories in various ways, whether through visible signs such as parking tickets or floral displays, through newspaper and radio news stories, and through the roles that it plays, e.g. collector of taxes or provider of social housing (Johnstone 1990). 'A great city may be seen as a construction of words as well as stone' (Tuan 1991 a, p. 685), its construction linked to visual and non-verbal media such as photographs, architecture and the artefacts of material culture (Stokowski 2002), as well as to ruins, old buildings, souvenirs, antiques, and museums (Zerubavel 1996). The word "text" is often applied to architecture and landscape so that townscape becomes a "spatial narrative", a repository of a particular set of values deriving from interaction between the materiality of the urban landscape and the symbolic meanings that are imposed on it or drawn from it (Meethan 1996).

According to this view, places need to be interpreted through their images, myths and signs, the shared social meanings of a city or neighbourhood that enable an individual to order and interpret the diversity of sensory data that emanates from urban spaces (Reitzes 1983). It is to be expected that this will be a contested and actively involving process (Lichrou, O'Malley and Patterson 2008), involving not so much a passive reading of signs but an active rewriting of them (Barnes and Duncan 1992). Stories about place as the product of

social processes will inevitably be multiple for any place. This is consistent with the post-modern approach where the idea of socially constructed realities is extended to envisage a juxtaposition of multiple realities existing within the social world, where identity is a flux, a fragmented, discontinuous mode of experience (Urry 1995). In this narrative environment, the individual “browses”, appropriating aspects from social narratives in order to explain events or objects (Hopkinson and Hogarth-Scott 2001).

A key facet of stories is that they cannot be validated: they constitute revealing truths even though they contain confusion or even errors or lies. They are ‘both singular, “true”, and felt, *and* crafted, disciplined and generic’ (Cameron 2012, p. 574 emphasis in original). They demand interpretation: their effects, be they emotional, moral or normative, are derived relationally, by means of interpretation, rather than being conveyed directly. They are not meant to be read as an exact record of what happened nor to put a mirror up to the world out there, yet are plausible to those who constructed them, fitting within a “standpoint perspective” which holds that reality lies in the lived experience of people within their situations and contexts: a local, contextualised, situated knowledge which moves away from a universalised, value-neutral knowledge (Humberstone 2004).

### **2.1.7 Stories and spatial practice**

The literature reviewed thus far would suggest that it would be feasible to investigate the way that individuals use public spaces in York with reference to the dominant discourses at play in the city. The individual’s actions could be understood and accounted for as being not entirely their own, but rather shaped by the rhetorical and ideological traditions that have the power to structure relations in that place (Dixon and Durrheim 2000). It would principally be a matter of identifying the “knowing from” (Shotter 1993), the knowledge-in-practice that comes from living in this particular place and that governs how people act within it. De Certeau (1984) makes a connection between stories, power and spatial practices (p. 115):

Narrative structures have the status of spatial syntaxes. By means of a whole panoply of codes, ordered ways of proceeding and constraints, they regulate changes in space (or moves from one

place to another) made by stories in the form of places put in linear or interrelated series ... More than that, when they are represented in descriptions or acted out by actors ... 'Every story is a travel story – a spatial practice.

De Certeau draws on Foucault's understanding that power is 'a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions: it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult: in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely' (Foucault 1982, p. 789), postulating that, if the exercise of power is not simply a function of the relationship between individuals and/or institutions but is found throughout social space itself, resistance to such power must take the form of practices that creatively reinterpret that social space. He sees practice as the field of resistance of the weak to the domination of the powerful, distinguishing two types of practice in relation to operations of power within the city: strategies and tactics. Strategies are available to the institutionally powerful, notably the city planner who seeks to regulate the behaviour of the city dweller through regulating the city spaces, or the enterprise that plans its expansion. They assume a place that de Certeau describes as a "proper"; they are (1984, p. 38):

Actions which, thanks to the establishment of a place of power (the property of a proper), elaborate theoretical places (systems and totalizing discourses) capable of articulating an ensemble of physical places in which forces are distributed.

Then, according to de Certeau, there are tactics. These are 'determined by the *absence of power*, just as strategy is organized by the postulation of power' (ibid. emphasis in original). They are the mode of practice of those who do not have a place of their own from which they can deploy strategies. Tactics cannot count on a "proper": 'The space of a tactic is the space of the other' (ibid., p. 37). Many everyday practices are tactical in nature, ways of operating by which the city's inhabitants conform to the strategic power of the city only in order to evade it. Through tactics, the weak are active agents, able to turn the tables on the strong, "pulling tricks" in order to "get away with things".

According to de Certeau, each tactic has the capability of changing the discourse: everyday practices such as walking through the city disrupt the

ordering of reality produced by the strategic practices of the powerful, continuously and creatively reinterpreting the places and landscapes that shape action and perception. Whereas in Bourdieu's (1990) *habitus*, day to day practices are capable of making only slight, autonomous variations from the structures of action and response imposed by systems of power prevailing in social space, de Certeau sees individuals walking in the city as using their bodies to resist the discipline and habitus imposed by social space, 'thereby cultivating a subjectivity that allows them to autonomously interpret the environment around them, and to not be subjected to interpretation by it' (Kosnoski 2010, p. 115). These tactics of resistance become equally tactics of identity or identification (Maffesoli 1991), where everyday life is 'the focus for a politics of identity and resistance' (Hetherington 1998, p. 67).

### **2.1.8 Broadening the thinking about what stories can do**

This body of literature describing the workings of ideology, power, knowledge and practice is undoubtedly significant for understanding how the prevailing stories of the heritage city influence the actions of individual citizens, how they constitute 'nexuses of systems of discipline' (Amin and Thrift 2002, p. 130) that '*construct the world in particular ways ... modes of practice which are also modes of thought*' (Amin and Thrift 2002, p. 106 emphasis in original). In de Certeau's work we see a clear and compelling working through of its implications. More recent literature about stories, however, opens up their potential to be revealing of more than just ideology and the workings of discourse and power, putting more weight on the story as revealing of personal experience and challenging the view that an individual's actions can never be accounted as entirely their own (Dixon and Durrheim 2000). This will be an important body of literature for a study seeking to examine the "small stories" of the individual's everyday activity in place and the granularity of their embodied encounter with public spaces. This section will consider some of the ways that the concept of story has been developed in recent literature before turning to think about the implications of these developments for examining stories of place and their role in conceptualising sense of place.

The concept and significance of the story has been developed in a wide variety of ways. A common thread can be found running through this diversity,

however, in the way that the pre-eminence of ideology, representation, power and knowledge has been challenged, whilst new connections have been opened up, especially with practice, with embodiment, with affect, and with materiality, facilitating the tracing of relations between people, places and things (Cameron 2012). A notable development in this regard has been the practice of some scholars of relating personal, experiential geographies in story form in order to express the affective dimensions of an experience. These nonrepresentational approaches, which reflect an understanding that knowledge is in part at least a product of the capacity of bodies to produce affects and to be affected (Braun 2008), employ stories in order to help think about or even represent affect, telling the stories, rather than studying other peoples' stories (Cameron 2012). For example, Wylie (2005) describes a single day's walking along the South West Coast Path. "Narrating self and landscape", he details the various 'affinities and distanciations of self and landscape' (p. 234) in terms of 'foresore, doleful spaces of self-pity', involving 'bruised shoulders, aching hip-joints, kneecaps and, above all, heels and toes' (ibid., p. 243). McCormack (2003) narrates his experience of participating in therapeutic dance focussing on the 'importance of *affect* to geographical efforts to apprehend and intervene in the non-representational powers of spaces of embodied movement and practice' (p. 488). He reports how the experience shifted his attention away from seeking information in terms of how the practice was revealing of 'hidden interests, internal or external' and towards 'an effort to cultivate a way of attending to and attending through the movements and relations that gave consistency to this practice' (ibid., p. 494). What emerges as most important for him is to cultivate 'a fidelity to the affective event' (ibid., p. 488). The storytelling inherent in these studies has the capacity to "touch" us, as Haraway (2008) puts it, in ways that cause us to 'inherit' different relations and to start to 'live' different 'histories' (p. 37).

The story thus becomes a powerful mode of producing and expressing knowledge gleaned through embodied and intersubjective experience (Cameron 2012) functioning, as Rose (2006) puts it, as an "orientation" or "inclination" that draws our attention to places not as representations, but as sites of our embeddedness in the world where 'we actively mark the world to orient our unfolding selves' (p. 539), thus making our subjectivity possible. So,

Wylie (2002), in his essay on ascending Glastonbury Tor, considers the experience in terms of embodied practices, recognising 'the constitutive roles of embodiment, practice and performance' (p. 441) as the visible landscape, and the sensations that accompany it, give rise to an emergent subjectivity.

Lorimer's (2006) narrating of herds and herders focuses on how 'individual understandings of geography emerge from repeated motion over a local terrain' (p. 499), following the movements of the herd 'to compose microgeographies of worldliness' (ibid., p. 516). In presenting a specific landscape in the northern Cairngorms, he draws on four subject positions: the memories of humans about animals and about themselves in the company of animals, the collective capacities of the herd, the dispositions of individual animals, and sentient experiences that are familiar to both humans and animals. This he describes as privileging 'multivalent encounters with people and animals ... [to] unearth ... a vital landscape of interconnected phenomena, processes and presence' (ibid., p. 506). The landscape that he reveals is built on the affectual relations between herder, herd and the land with herder and herd forming a kind of embodied knowledge of each other and of the land.

Many scholars have also recognised and deployed the performative capacity of the story to transform the social world (Cameron 2012). Cronon (1992), a passionate advocate for the role of storytelling in academic writing, emphasises that stories have a social and a moral purpose, stressing the importance of crafting a story that 'makes us *care*' (Cronon 1992, p. 1,374 emphasis in original). Scholars interested in the capacity of stories to bring about social or political change have tended to foreground individual experience, both as a counterweight to the totalizing effect of the "grand narrative" but also from a political intent to give value to the local and the specific (Cameron 2012). Indeed, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, under the influence of postmodernist / poststructuralist thought, disciplines such as sociology and anthropology paid particular attention to biographical and autobiographical writing both as methodological sources and as "methodologies" per se (Valentine 2008 a). This strategy of weaving together the personal and the political by combining personal stories with theoretical argument, can be seen across various disciplines such as gender and geography studies (Domosh 1997). For example, Lawson (1995) worked women's stories into her study of the social

adjustments to economic austerity policies in Ecuador, policies that led the clothing industry to incorporate women into its workforce in different, and seemingly marginalized, ways. Doreen Massey (1995) similarly worked with people's stories while exploring the experience of highly skilled men working in the high-technology sector in the UK.

Gibson-Graham are significant for their long-standing interest in the transformative power of stories (Cameron 2012). As part of what they call a "performative ontological politics" (Gibson-Graham 2008) that involves describing, writing about and performing the alternative ways of being in the world that they wish to see brought about, they view stories as participatory acts of political and creative reproduction capable of calling into being alternative worlds. For them, stories do not just represent, they have affective power, creating 'emotional opening' (Gibson-Graham 2006, p. 136), moving people, making them change their point of view. They relate the personal to discourse, showing how stories can translate what is personally felt and known into a more collective realm, making legible the 'tacit' and the 'bodily' (p. 151) within broader, dominant discourses, such as those concerning the building of the economy. Gibson-Graham are interested not just in the form of the story but the way that stories are practised in a particular place and their capacity to generate change. There are parallels here with Haraway's "materialized refiguration" (Haraway 1994) which brings together story, materiality and social change in an effort to 'get at how worlds are made and unmade, in order to participate in the processes ... the point is to reconfigure what counts as knowledge' (p. 62).

This body of literature sees personal experience as critical to social theory. If we discount stories of experience as ideological constructions, we risk not only silencing marginalised voices but also overlooking the importance of experience to critical social theory (Stone Mediatore 2003). It also recognises that oppositional politics operate in mundane settings and through everyday acts (Domosh 1997) with scholars such as Maddrell (2008) or Driver and Baigent (2007) advocating the ordinary, everyday life over that of the great and the good, arguing that individual histories can challenge our understanding of big stories: 'the specific lives and times infuse the very substance of the works produced' (T. Barnes 2001, p. 410). In this regard, Stone Mediatore (2003)



points to the example of Hannah Arendt and the way that she drew on literature, biography and testimony in order to deal with events in all their specificity, their strangeness, their moral intensity and their situatedness within the world, in order not to create definite knowledge, but rather to forge a story whose value lay in helping her community come to terms with disturbing aspects of their heritage.

These conceptions of story open up a diversity of understandings of what form the story might take: as an object of knowledge, a form of practice, literary or oral or, indeed, any kind of tracing of relations between personal experience and the wider world (Cameron 2012). What they have in common, however, is 'a concern with the ways in which personal experience and expression interweave with the social, structural or ideological' (ibid., p. 574). The next section will consider how this interweaving of the personal and the wider world might operate in ways that are of particular relevance to sense of place. It takes as its starting point Hayden Lorimer's (2003) conception of "small stories" as expressions of everyday experience, the particular, the mundane, the quotidian, the personal and the hyper local.

### **2.1.9 Small stories**

Lorimer's (2003) article tells a "small story" about the doing of geography' (p. 197) in order to shed light on specific episodes in the development of geography within a framework of 'networks of action – understood through the intersection of social sites, subjects and sources' (ibid.). By combining personal recollections of key participants in a 1951 Glenmore field-course with various material artefacts such as letters, diaries, and other records from the time, he aims to 'authorise thicker versions of a partial ... geographical plot' (ibid., p. 199) whilst, at the same time, enquiring into the role of the story within geography as an academic discipline. Story, for Lorimer involves an assemblage of memories, practices and artefacts which together are revealing of particular narratives, but which are themselves more than simply narrative forms. He places particular emphasis on the embodied, emotional and affective dimensions of his protagonists' experiences.

Centring on one 14-year-old attendee, Margaret Jack, and field studies instructor Robin Murray, Lorimer examines their personal encounters as

localised enactments of a wider history, in this case the development of geography. In making sense of the events, he seems to be interested in them not for what they typify but rather, for what is particular and specific about them: 'Particularity and mundanity are, I contend, the qualities that matter most' (ibid., p. 200). This 'other way' (ibid.) of writing the history of geography does not place the particular in opposition to the general, so much as resist the way that the particular is sometimes characterised in the grand, scholarly stories.

Lorimer describes it as "complementary" and "supplementary" to the traditional way of knowledge production that looks towards high academic debate. He argues that it gives the ability to shuttle between different scales of enquiry, 'here, the institutional and the intimate' as well as between different practices, 'here, the academic debate and the embodied experience' (ibid.). He is interested in the detail of Margaret Jack's and Robin Murray's particular stories for their own sake showing a concern to demonstrate how they represent 'wider communities of practice' and warning against conscripting them into a 'pre-determined disciplinary orthodoxy' (ibid.).

Lorimer's small stories serve as a means of 'disclosing how in minutiae it is possible to find small kingdoms of worldliness, and to craft short stories as outcrops of global history' (2009, p. 269). They fit within a body of literature that seeks not to turn away from the large-scale, but rather to understand what is uniquely revealed at micro level and to rethink the relationship between the two, challenging an over-emphasis on the hegemonic (Cameron 2012). Naylor (2008), for example, argues that stories are not just local and particular but nor are they easily generalisable, whilst England (1994) appeals for the importance of the local, the specific and the personal and challenges the impulse to "scale up", asking how we incorporate the voices of "others" without colonizing them in a manner that reinforces patterns of domination. Short and Godfrey (2007) seek to develop "micro-histories" in order to express the complexity of reality whereby, '... individual agency, the one-off action, the local, become sites for a consideration of wider issues, using the particular to explore broader societal and historiographical themes' (p. 46). They argue that micro-history offers a richness and depth of analysis impossible at a national level and that a focus on small-scale, human interactions facilitates dealing 'holistically with life-in-the-round' (ibid.). They see the attraction of the approach being derived 'from the

tension between two scales of analysis - the local or exceptional event alongside the national or *longue durée*' (ibid., p. 47). They warn equally against 'easy leaps from local findings to national generalisations ... since the very particularities of place inherent in microhistory imply the uniqueness of places and events,' as against "reading off" the local events from national changes' (ibid., p. 69). Rather, they argue that local processes of change, being discrete versions of the macro-picture, require their own attention. Further, they argue that as the national discourse can be seen to work itself out through very concrete local examples, 'it could be said that the national discourse was fashioned or enabled by the local - there was, in other words, a two-way power relation between actors operating within and across the two scales' (ibid.).

Powell (2007) argues that the small-scale: people, places, objects, natures, exchanges, actions, all actively manufacture the large-scale: things like economies, empires, institutions, discourses, knowledges, and are therefore as a good a starting point for investigation as any. He draws attention to biographical writing and particularly to eyewitness accounts of events, for example of the effects of a flood, for their explanatory power. This interweaving of the public and private, the personal and professional, can be seen in studies such as Cameron's (2006) who looks at events at the Malting House Garden School in terms of 'powerful scientific networks, tangles of human relations, and minglings of psychoanalysis and ecology' (p. 870). It can be seen too in the work of Jackson (1999), who examines people's relationships with the world of goods, Jackson (2010), who considers geographies of food, or Thomas (2007), who attends to the interplay between the body, material culture and textual representation in constructing a material and embodied biography of the clothes and the clothing of Mary Curzon, Vicereine of India. In so doing, Thomas seeks to illuminate debates concerning the politics of identity, transnational circuits of consumption, clothing as material culture, and the place of dress and colonial power.

#### **2.1.10 Small stories and the material landscape**

As has been argued above, storytelling and sense of place are closely connected; indeed, storytelling can be seen as a mode of dwelling (Stewart 1996; Rose 2006), intensifying everyday experience, stimulating and evoking

memory, inciting emotion, and drawing out more stories. Small stories can be seen in the literature to have particular relevance to a study of place through their ability to connect with the materiality of the landscape, a materiality that it will be essential to take seriously in any attempt to grasp sense of place. Materiality 'has indirect ways of telling us stories ... about power, agency, and history that we could never grasp through more direct forms of representation.' (Hetherington 2001, p. 39). Shanks and Pearson emphasise the effects of this materiality (2000, p. 135):

We begin to walk. We feel the ground beneath our feet, the wind in our face. And as we do we leave traces. We are involved in the landscape ... We leave the prints of our body, the touch of flesh on metal and stone ... And we leave the traces of singular actions: the unintentional, the random, the intimate, unplanned touch of history's passing: we break twigs, move pebbles, crush ants ... all the signs that trackers learn to read.

DeSilvey's (2007) article on "material histories on a hardscrabble homestead" is a significant study in this regard, in the way that it gives serious regard to what is a fragile and uncertain materiality in its attempt to construct stories of place. DeSilvey describes her study as an experiment 'with a process of recollection that moves associatively among the discarded material remains of a Montana homestead' (p. 401). Her aim is to bring forth "situated stories" and to "take up the proposals" offered by things. The "materiality" that she brings forward involves a creative and catalysing process on the part of the researcher, manipulating, describing, displacing, using her imagination, employing 'a poetics of suggestion and conjecture' to recover 'stories that might not allow themselves to appear through more direct methods' (ibid., p. 420). Recognising that some things can only be made legible by placing them in relation to other more immediately intelligible items, she proceeds by taking the "fragmentary", "abject" and "devalued" objects found on the homestead: a grocery list, a pickle recipe, a newspaper clipping and so on, and, working through a process of associative links, draws stories from them 'through their alignment with other, equally inscrutable remains' (ibid., p. 404). DeSilvey sees in the homestead's residues, the material objects used and then discarded in the course of the daily lives of the homestead's inhabitants, an entanglement of stories of minor events

and everyday decisions in the lives of those who lived there. This entanglement is revealing of their “complex personhood” (Gordon 1997), an intermingling of their troubles with those of the social world they inhabited, ‘of politics and particulars, economics and intimacy’ (DeSilvey 2007, p. 413).

DeSilvey’s study can be seen in the context of literature that sees landscapes as belonging to an active rather than a passive world. In this view, a landscape is not a natural feature of the environment, but rather a “synthetic space”, a man-made system of spaces superimposed on the face of the earth, shaped not by natural laws but deliberately created to serve a community (Jackson 1984), forged by the labour needed ‘to make some thing out of it’ (Mitchell 2003, p. 241): ‘The human landscape is not a work of art. It is a temporary product of much sweat and hardship and earnest thought’ (Jackson 1997, p. 343).

Landscape has agency as demonstrated by Revill (2007) who explores how the making of landscape, engineering practice and geographical knowledge are mutually constituted in eighteenth century landscapes of improvement.

Landscape seen in this way is a practised landscape whereby practices, over time, become embedded in the world and leave ‘traces of varying degrees of solidity, opacity or permanence’ (Shanks and Tilley 1992, p. 131). Being simultaneously visual and practical, representation and embodiment, landscape is both a product and producer of practice (Matless 2003). Cresswell (2003) develops the concept of “doxic” landscapes, to account for the ways that taken-for-granted knowledge of landscape develops from practice. Doxic landscapes denote a world that is the product of a particular history that is made to seem natural and thus becomes an important site for the reproduction of established ways of being. Doxic landscapes cannot easily be ‘decoded’ as there is no code that the landscape can be reduced to. Instead landscape is brought into being through social praxis. In light of this, Cresswell argues that (p. 281):

the challenge for cultural geographers of landscape is to produce geographies that are lived, embodied, practised; landscapes which are never finished or complete, not easily framed or read. These geographies should be as much about the everyday and unexceptional as they are about the grand and distinguished.

These studies can be seen in the context of attempts to write more process-oriented and nonrepresentational accounts of specific landscapes and the way that people live and work in them. One such example is Merriman's (2005) study of the building of the M1, the UK's first motorway. Merriman writes of traversing 'a landscape which was and is being continuously and contingently assembled, achieved and worked through the presence and movements of a range of subjects, materials and atmospheres, as well as thoughts, talk, sounds and other registers' (p. 129). Merriman takes seriously the role of the machinery through which the work was accomplished as well as artefacts such as films, booklets, paintings, newsletters, photographs and sound recordings, arguing that, far from being static objects, they are "complex achievements" performed in various different ways in different temporal and spatial contexts.

#### **2.1.11 Some pointers to a way forward**

What the literature reviewed so far suggests is that, to conceptualise sense of place through attending to stories of place, it will be necessary to pay attention to stories at various levels. It will mean attending to the "big stories" of place that are revealing of those place ideologies, discourses and power structures that shape individual and community perception of reality and influence individual and group behaviour in place. At the same time, it will be essential to capture the "small stories" that both give value to personal experience and expression in order to understand what is uniquely revealed at micro level in the fragmentary and the everyday and in the traces of a material and active world. It will be necessary to consider the relationship between the two, examining how practices, embodiment and affect, as revealed through small stories, interweave with the social, discursive and ideological facets of the big stories of place in order to trace the relations between people, places and things. Through rich and nuanced local stories the aim will be to explore 'the permeabilities between human and material worlds' (Hicks and Beaudry 2006, p. 7).

The sections that follow give further consideration to those facets that are likely to be salient in creating both the big stories of place and the small stories of individual, embodied encounter. They will pick up and further develop some of the themes broached in this section, notably regarding nonrepresentational

approaches and the role of affect and of practices within the person-place encounter. Before that, the next section turns to consider the psychological dimensions of the person-place relationship and their potential role in constructing sense of place.

## 2.2 The person-place relationship

### 2.2.1 Introduction

The person-place relationship in the literature has a strong yet elusive emotional component. Tuan (1974) coined the term *Topophilia* in an attempt to describe this: 'Diffuse as concept, vivid and concrete as personal experience' (p. 92), *Topophilia* may be expressed as a strong sense of place, which often becomes mixed with the sense of cultural identity of the group to which an individual belongs, but may, equally, simply be an individual's love of certain aspects of a place. It is closely related to the *genius loci* (Lewis 1979; Norberg-Schultz 1980) or spirit of place, the unique ambience and character of a place. According to Relph (2000), sense of place is the faculty by which we grasp spirit of place: 'Whereas spirit of place exists primarily outside us (but is experienced through memory and intention), ...sense of place lies primarily inside us (but is aroused by the landscapes we encounter)' (pp. 2-3).

The person-place relationship is seen in the literature as central to the individual's sense of identity and functions as the means by which they navigate the world. According to Norberg-Schulz (1980), 'To gain an existential foothold man has to be able to *orientate* himself; he has to know *where* he is. But he also has to *identify* himself with the environment' (p. 18 emphasis in original). Following in the footsteps of Tuan and Relph, humanistic geographers such as Sack, Casey and Malpas have elaborated a concept of place as a central component of meaning in human life and the basis of human interaction (Cresswell 2015). Their phenomenological approach, after Heidegger (1962), 'seeks to define the essence of human existence as one that is necessarily and importantly "in-place"' (Cresswell 2015, p. 56).

Social constructionist approaches to the person-place relationship are prevalent in the literature. These see place as socially constructed; indeed, according to Harvey (1996), 'the only interesting question that can then be asked is: by what

social process is place constructed?' (p. 294). According to social constructionists, a place only becoming a place as individuals invest them with meaning and value (Tester et al 2011). Harvey (1990), for example, synthesising de Certeau's, Bourdieu's, Lefebvre's, and Foucault's concepts of space (amongst others), outlines a set of arguments about how spatial production occurs, arguing that neither space nor time can be understood outside of the context of social action. These scholars argue that meanings are ascribed to the appearance of a place, its attributes and the events that happen there by residents, visitors, the media and politicians. Social memory, as 'organised social action' (Middleton and Edwards 1990, p. 43) is one such social process by which place meanings are constructed. When people remember things together, seeking to construct and defend plausible accounts, they articulate the grounds and criteria for what is remembered. Studies show that places conveying a sense of history, of continuity with the past, and historic places in particular, are valued highly by respondents, inducing pride and maintaining identities (Devine-Wright and Lyons 1997).

Beneath these overarching social-constructionist conceptions of sense of place in the literature there can be found, broadly, three related concepts that seek to explain the meaning given to a place by an individual or group. These are respectively place identity, place attachment and place dependence and the next sections will deal with each of these in turn.

### **2.2.2 Place Identity**

Place identity can be seen as a 'particular element contributing to sense of place' (Hunziker, Buchecker and Hartig 2007, p. 47), a 'self-definitional attitude towards a place' (Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston 2003, p. 274) which indicates the ways in which a place is imbued with personal and social meanings and functions 'as an important sign or locus of the self' (Hummon 1992, p. 258). Place identity operates at a variety of scales in the literature: it is 'wide-spread, rich in its attachment to multiple locales, and complex in spatial structure (Cuba and Hummon 1993, p. 126). The term is also used with a wide range of extended meanings in the literature: as formative of group identity; mental representations of place by an individual; group perceptions of place;



identification of a group with a territory; and as a sense of a place's, "character", "personality" or distinctiveness (Kalandides 2011).

The origins of "place identity" lie in social identity theory where people's experience of the environment is seen to be socially constructed (Bonaiuto and Bonnes 1999). Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983, p. 59) put forward a formal definition of place-identity as:

a sub-structure of the self-identity of the person consisting of, broadly conceived, cognitions about the physical world in which the individual lives. These cognitions represent memories, ideals, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behaviour and experience which relate to the variety and complexity of physical settings that define the day-to-day existence of every human being.

These cognitions, which may be positively or negatively valenced, are drawn from the "environmental past" of the individual, the places and spaces that satisfy their needs. The most salient ones are significant in defining the individual's self-identity. "Place-belongingness" occurs in those people whose positively valenced cognitions relating to place-identity outweigh the negative. Proshansky et al. see the cognitive structures relating to place-identity as "elusive" in that people will be less aware of their physical setting than of the people with whom they inter-relate; physical settings are merely the backdrops for social events.

Where Proshansky et al. saw the self as the result of the agglomeration of experiences of which place-identity is one element or sub-identity in its own right, Korpela (1989) argues that human beings construct a personal theory of themselves and of the world that exists at a pre-conscious level and directs behaviour, a coherent conceptual system of themselves. Emotional attachment (or aversion) to places is at the core of Korpela's definition of place-identity because places are a means of regulating one's self-esteem: 'Place-belongingness is not only one aspect of place identity, but a necessary *basis* for it' (p. 246 emphasis in original). This view is supported by Bonaiuto, Breakwell and Cano (1996) who observed a multi-level place identity consistent with the

idea that people experience the self-concept as discrete self-images that are dependent on context. Wyman (1985) argues that this emotional attachment to place transforms the local landscape into a symbolic extension of the self by imbuing it with the personal meanings of life experiences with the individual maintaining an “environmental autobiography” made up of positive feelings about memorable places in their lives.

A criticism made of this view of place identity, drawn from social identity theory, is that it varies from individual to individual, being derived from individuals’ engagements with their material contexts (Dixon and Durrheim 2000). There is a danger of seeing place identity purely as an individual mental construct, at the expense of the collective nature of the relations between people, identities and settings. It is clear from the literature, however, that there is also a strong group dimension to identity formation. Central to social identity theory is the concept of “self-categorisation” (Hogg and Abrams 1988) whereby people order and render predictable, information about the world in which they live, whether objects or other people, allowing them to find meaning and order by specifying norms or stereotypically “ideal” attributes which apply to self as a group member. Group members compare themselves to other groups and this intergroup differentiation elevates self-esteem because, through self-categorisation, the individual imbues the self with all the attributes of the “reference group” (Shibutani 1955) specifying attributes that reflect well on self (Tajfel and Turner 1979). Belonging to groups that are positively evaluated by self or others enhances social identity giving a substantive identity for an individual and providing an answer to the questions, “Who am I?” and “How well am I doing?” (Allen, Wilder and Atkinson 1983). A person’s social identity can be viewed as a composite of social positions or statuses – the occupancy of which he or she has made good by performing appropriate acts (Sarbin and Scheibe 1983).

These social categorizations represent sites of contestation in which competition over definitions occurs (Schlesinger 1991), creating cognitive tools that not only segment, classify, and order the social environment but enable the individual to undertake various forms of social action (Lyons 1996). Such processes of categorization and social comparison ‘operate together to generate a specific form of behaviour: group behaviour’ (Hogg and Abrams

1988, p. 23) and the public performance of this group behaviour can be seen as the expression of identity (Abrams 1992). This behaviour in place includes territoriality, which serves to 'provide predictability, order, and stability in the environment' (Taylor 1978, p. 129), organising interpersonal interaction within a space and allowing varying degrees of control (Sundstrom 1977).

Hetherington (1998) sets out a notion of "expressive identities" where 'identity formation as a process of identification is a spatially situated process' (p. 17) and identity is 'fundamentally about issues of belonging, expression, performance, identification and communication with others' (ibid., p. 62). The production of identities takes place through "performances" in which identity processes are "played out". Some sites are distinctive, having 'social centrality' (Hetherington 1996, p. 44) around which a sense of belonging and community may come to be ordered. Hetherington calls these "heteropia". Here, social structures are challenged by the 'communitas of intensely affective forms of sociality in order that the structure of rules, norms and accepted social identities may be renewed and reproduced' (Hetherington 1998, p. 18).

The literature suggests that people are attracted to and remain in environments that are compatible with their self-conceptions (Swann 1983; Twigger-Ross and Uzzell 1996). Twigger-Ross and Uzzell use Breakwell's (1992) four principles of identity: distinctiveness, place-referent and place-congruent continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, to suggest that people who have chosen a particular place, who are "attached" to it, will express place identifications by which they will distinguish themselves from others; will express positive self-esteem from their attachment to the place; and will talk about the local environment in ways which show how manageable they feel it to be in terms of its functional aspects.

### **2.2.3 Place Attachment**

What we see from the literature, then, is that people form psychological bonds with types of settlements that relate their identity to the identity of a type of settlement (Feldman 1990) and provide other psychological benefits (Brown, Perkins and Brown 2003) or feelings of well-being (Giuliani 1991). Intimately connected to preservation of a sense of self (Rowles 1983) these bonds lead to "place attachment", 'the cognitive and emotional linkage of an individual to a

particular setting or environment' (Low 1992, p. 165), a specific setting where they feel comfortable and safe (Hernández et al. 2007).

Whilst "place attachment" is commonly referred to in the singular it may actually be a set of distinct but interrelated phenomena (Altman and Ginat 1992). Ryan (2005) suggests that it is a "complex construct" shaped by the physical features of the landscape, the experiences that the individual has within the place as well as the individual's knowledge of it). Altman and Low (1992), in their major work on place attachment, suggested that its main characteristics are concerned with emotion or affect; cognition, including knowledge and belief; practice, that is action and behaviour; social relations; and temporal aspects such as memory. Scannell and Gifford (2010), propose a three-dimensional framework within which to organise the concept of place attachment found in the literature involving person, psychological process, and place dimensions.

In the person dimension it can be seen in the literature that place attachment occurs at both individual and group or community level (Hummon 1992). At individual level it involves one's connections to place; the stronger the personal memory associated with a place the stronger the place attachment associated with it. In this way place attachment contributes to a stable sense of self (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell 1996) and a general feeling of well-being (Harris et al. 1995). At group or community level, place attachment is associated with a sense of "bondedness" or "rootedness" (Tuan 1980; Tester et al 2011; Riger and Lavrakas 1981). It is expressed through the symbolic meanings of a place that are shared by members (Low 1992) the cultural links that bond members with place through shared historical experiences, values and symbols (Scannell and Gifford 2010), as well as through relational processes and actions, the '*practice and performance* of commonality, reciprocity and mutuality (Mattes et al. 2019, p. 301 emphasis in original). Guest and Lee (1983) delineate two aspects of community attachment: emotional or psychological ties to place, and overall satisfaction with the community. Kasarda and Janowitz (1974) define community attachment in three dimensions: a feeling of being "at home" or belonging in place, having an interest in knowing what goes on in the community, and being sorry if compelled to move away.

The second dimension of place attachment in Scannell and Gifford's framework concerns the psychological processes by which individuals and groups relate to a place, and the nature of the interactions that occur in those environments that are important to them. They identify three psychological aspects within these processes of place attachment: affect, cognition, and behaviour. Affect recognises the strong emotional component of the person-place relationship as reflected in "topophilia" (Tuan 1974). Relationships with place can generate a spectrum of emotions (Giuliani and Feldman 1993), whether the extremes of love and hate, contentment and fear, or simply the mid-ground of ambivalence (Manzo 2005). Emotions are usually defined in the literature in terms of the positive emotions that a place may evoke (Giuliani 2003) and are often evidenced through studies showing the negative effects of displacement from place, e.g. Fried (1963) who described post-relocation feelings of "painful loss", continued longing, distress, helplessness, direct and displaced anger.

Turning to the cognitive, person-place bonds include the memories, beliefs, meaning and knowledge that individuals associate with a setting, that make it personally important and create the individual's self-definitions (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff 1983). Through memory, individuals create place meaning and connect it to themselves. The behavioural level of place attachment is characterised by Scannell and Gifford (2010) in terms of desire to remain close to a place. Typified by proximity-maintaining behaviours it is 'a positive, affective bond between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is to maintain closeness to such a place' (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001, p. 274).

The third dimension of Scannell and Gifford's (2010) framework of place attachment concerns place itself. In this regard, the literature delineates both social and physical place attachment. As Altman and Ginat (1992) asked, '... is it possible for people to be attached to places separately or independently from psychological, social, and cultural features of places?' (p. 127). Whilst it may, therefore, be the case that the physical forms our attachment, 'it is the social that gives essential meaning to the physical which then informs the elements of our attachments' (Burley 2007, p. 8). Place attachment can be seen as a social construction, formed through personal experiences, but constituted by a whole range of meanings that are rooted in the physical place (Kaltenborn and Bjerke

2002). If we have less physical experience of a place, we will be less attached, but the affective meanings that underpin attachment nonetheless remain socially constructed.

Place attachment involves lasting positive bonds between people and the settings that are socially and physically important to them (Brown, Perkins and Brown 2003), operating at a range of scales, such as house, neighbourhood, and city (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001) and including not only residential settings (which predominated in early research) but also other domains important to the individual's life experience including recreational and work settings (Shumaker and Taylor 1983). These bonds are dynamic: as places change, our attachment to those places also changes Burley (2007). The strength of these bonds correlates with "rootedness" (Shumaker and Taylor 1983; Chawla 1992), which relates to factors such as length of residency, knowledge of the environment, intensity of use of neighbourhood facilities (Brown, Perkins and Brown 2003; Lalli 1992) and the extent to which the setting meets the individual's needs (Stokols, Shumaker and Martinez 1983), and "bondedness" (Shumaker and Taylor 1983), which is related to feeling a part of the neighbourhood and being able to distinguish between residents and strangers, close proximity to local landmarks (Gerson and Gerson 1976) and absence of negative factors such as fear of crime (Hummon 1992).

Studies that look at place attachment together with satisfaction show a strong correlation, with satisfaction levels being influenced by social ties, aesthetic qualities, and household characteristics (Stokols and Shumaker 1981) or sense of community (Riger and Lavrakas 1981). Place attachment and place identity, on the other hand, may correlate in some circumstances but, in others, behave differently. Hernández et al. (2007), for example, demonstrated that they function similarly in the case of natives born and raised in the same place but differently in the case of residents non-native to that place.

#### **2.2.4 Place Dependence**

The literature on place attachment suggests that the bonds between people and their settings are in part determined by the physical and social amenities of the environment, including landscape features (Stedman 2003; Brown and Raymond 2007) as well as perceived choice and comparison level for

alternatives (Shumaker and Taylor 1983). This is reflected in the concept of place dependence, the third sense of place related construct to be considered here. Place dependence has been defined as ‘an occupant’s perceived strength of association between him and herself and specific places’ (Stokols and Shumaker 1981, p. 457). Studies such as Moore and Graefe (1994), Halfpenny (2010) and Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) suggest that dependence on the setting precedes emotional attachment to it and point up place dependence’s role in increasing place identity.

In theories of place that view place as a confluence of human cognitions, emotions and actions, for example Canter (1991) or Scannell and Gifford (2010), place dependence represents the conative domain, embodying the actions or behavioural tendencies of an individual towards place (Halfpenny 2010). It is a functional attachment reflecting the ‘importance of a resource in providing amenities necessary for desired activities’ (Vaske et al. 2008, p. 265). It concerns how well a setting serves an individual’s goal achievement, how well it compares to others for what I like to do (Jorgensen and Stedman 2001). Place dependence can be negative as well as positive in that a place can function to limit one’s desired intentions. While residents may not be explicitly aware of the transactions they make within a place, or of making direct comparison with the quality of their life with that in other communities, particular circumstances can serve to heighten their awareness, for example, where a sudden downturn in the local economy makes aspects of quality of life in that place the subject of public debate (Pretty, Chipuer and Bramston 2003).

Place dependence suggests an ongoing relationship with a particular place. Regular users of or visitors to a place will use its amenities evoking place dependence; the one-off tourist, on the other hand, may be thought simply to “consume” it (Urry 2010; Meethan 1996), ticking it off a list before moving on.

### **2.2.5 The explanatory power of person-place relationship concepts**

The person-place relationship concepts reviewed above clearly have potential to contribute to a construct of sense of place that can be used to theorise individuals’ use of the city’s public spaces. They appear to have salience in explaining individual and group processes showing that ‘our thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about our local community places ... impact our behaviors toward

such places' (Manzo and Perkins 2006, p. 336). They help to explain people's life choices at a practical level (Green and White 2007), for example the desire to remain close to a place (Hidalgo and Hernandez 2001), or a propensity to relocate (Gerson and Gerson 1976). Other studies have demonstrated their salience in influencing residents' ability and willingness to address local problems (Manzo and Perkins 2006), to engage in civic participation (Cuba and Hummon 1993) or neighbourhood revitalisation initiatives (Brown, Perkins and Brown 2003; Ryan 2005), or to adopt pro-environmental behaviours (Vaske and Kobrin 2001; Scannell and Gifford 2010).

There are, however, limitations with these person-place relationship concepts for the purposes of this study. Firstly, exploring place meaning primarily by examining attachment to, or rootedness in, a community leads to an assumption that those who do not have strong, positive affective bonds with their residence are placeless (Manzo 2005). This creates a potential difficulty in examining and understanding the way that those who lack attachment to a place experience sense of place. Secondly, place attachment and identity tend to focus on positive experiences or feelings about place. This makes it challenging to interpret disaffection and negative experiences of place (Giuliani and Feldman 1993). These are significant weaknesses from the point of view of this study which seeks to examine sense of place amongst residents of York including those who may have arrived recently in the city and may lack attachment as well as those long-standing residents who show attachment but whose experiences of and views about the city have negative characteristics.

Furthermore, the conceptualisation of place primarily in terms of sites of social processes opens up the possibility of "non-places" (Relph 1976; Augé 1995). Augé cites as "non-places" spaces marked by their transience, such as motorway service stations, airports, or supermarkets where the space 'creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude, and similitude' (p. 103). Yet it seems unhelpful to discount in this way spaces that are likely to play a significant role in the everyday lived experience of many citizens (Sheller and Urry 2006). The city contains many mundane spaces which, despite the social memories associated with them being less resonant than, say, those associated with the city's iconic heritage sites, are nonetheless important to individuals for a variety of reasons. Just as the psychogeographer (Sinclair 2003; Atkins and



Sinclair 1999) explores the outer, forgotten and superficially unappealing paths of the city so this study must retain a focus on a sense of place that accounts for how residents understand and use the whole city.

Finally, place identity and place attachment tend to present a rather static view of place. In this view, place is defined at various scales from the level of the body through to the global, where scale, as a socially constructed instrument expressive of the power relations between actors (MacKinnon 2010), “demarcates” the sites of social contest (Smith 1992). The understanding that the boundaries of material space are responsible for the creation of difference, which underpins the notion of scale, is, however, challenged by a poststructuralist understanding of the relational nature of space and a relational construction of the identity of place (Moore 2008). Here identity is constituted through ‘practices of interaction’ (Massey 2004, p. 5), while scale is understood as both territorially and network based, and difference, rather than being fixed, is constituted through our engagements with others (Swyngedouw 2004).

This relational understanding of place, which will be more appropriate for a study concerned with an analysis of place that begins from the everyday, from lived experience (Massey 2004), sees place more in terms of process (Massey 1997), an “extrovert” sense of place, defined by the outside, its uniqueness defined in part by its ‘positive interrelations with elsewhere’ (p. 169). According to this understanding, the identity of a place should, by its very nature, be seen as “provisional” or in flux, its boundaries permeable and unstable, its identity and meaning unfixed (Mallett 2004), multiple (May 1996; Keith and Pile 1993), ceaselessly created and recreated over time (Pred 1984) through various people interacting with them (Smaldone, Harris and Sanyal 2005).

Place identity and place attachment do not adequately describe the dynamic nature of people’s relationships with their environment (Rogan, O’Connor and Horwitz 2005), the sense of an intimate, on-going relationship between people and place ‘operating on personal, social and biophysical levels’ (p. 157). They say little, for example, about how individuals and groups are impacted by changes to the fabric of places (Devine-Wright 2014). Critically, they do not account adequately for experience-in-place (Manzo 2005), experience that will be influenced in part by the wider socio-political context of the place (something

that studies looking at how people feel about places tend to overlook (Manzo and Perkins 2006)) but also, importantly, by the materiality of place.

The next section turns to literature that may be of more help in elucidating the “small stories” that give value to personal experience at micro level in the everyday engagement with a material and active world. This literature will see places ‘not so much as enduring sites but as *moments of encounter*, not so much as “presents”, fixed in space and time, but as variable events; twists and fluxes of interrelation’ (Amin and Thrift 2002, p. 30 emphasis in original).

## **2.3 The embodied experience of place**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

This third section of this literature review turns to consider the individual’s embodied experience of place, seeking to understand what role the materiality of place has in the creation of sense of place. It will trace a line of scholarship that sites place at the centre of our embodied experience of the world and will examine a series of literatures that offer tools and concepts by which to apprehend this experience: phenomenology, non-representational theory, affect, emotion, practices, aesthetics, and affordances. Where scholars such as Harvey (1990; 1996) focus on place as social process, this section considers those writers who see place as a force in itself, a phenomenon that cannot be reduced to the social, the natural or the cultural, but one that ‘brings these worlds together and, indeed, in part produced them’ (Cresswell 2015, p. 47). The space opened up by these writers is a space that both provides a means of engaging critically with theoretical issues as well as the space itself, a lived space where political engagement occurs (Moles 2008).

Ed Soja is one such writer of the “spatial turn”. He argues that what he describes as “spatiality”, “historicality”, “sociality” and the complex interactions between them, should be studied together as fundamental and intertwined knowledge sources – what being-in-the-world is all about. Coining the term “Thirdspace”, for a lived space that interrupts a distinction between perceived space and spatial practices, he argues that, where “Firstspace” is empirically measurable and mappable and “Secondspace” is subjective and imagined, “Thirdspace” is a ‘newly spatialized form of individual and collective struggle’

(1999, p. 277). It is 'multi-sided and contradictory, oppressive and liberating, passionate and routine, knowable and unknowable ... a space of multiplicitous representations' (ibid., p. 276). Like Lefebvre's lived space (1994), Foucault's heterotopia (1986) or bell hook's (1990) homeplace, it is a space where marginalised voices can speak, a space of resistance and an 'inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/colonizer' (hooks 1990, p. 152). It is a space where place and politics can be mobilised in creative ways, combining previously polarised elements in order to produce ideas, 'flexibly combining ideas, events, appearances and meanings' (Anderson 2002, p. 304).

### **2.3.2 The "spatial turn"**

Scholars following the "spatial turn", see place as defining the frame within which the social and the cultural is located (Sack 1992). As individuals, we can be characterised in terms of our "being in the world" (Heidegger 1962): our perception, experience and thought are grounded in the corporeal and the concrete, intimately connected with the world in all its particularity and immediacy (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and we cannot therefore construct anything without first being in place: 'the very structure of the mind is intrinsically tied to locality and spatiality' (Malpas 1999, p. 10). Knowledge of place is not subsequent to perception, 'but is ingredient in perception itself' (Casey 1996, p. 18). Since to perceive is also to be constituted, 'by cultural and social structures that sediment themselves into the deepest level of perception', place, rather than being merely a portion of space, 'is as primary as the perception that gives access to it' (ibid., p.19). As Foucault (1993) says about the development of the medieval bricked-in chimney, which of itself creates new social relations but which would not have been developed had there not been in play something in human relations which tended in that direction: 'What is interesting is always interconnection, not the primacy of this over that' (p. 141).

Our lived bodies, then, not only experience place, they make it. As Casey (1998) puts it, 'It is the lived body that makes places live as the "basis-places" for the things we perceive ... The lived body not only activates places but needs them in turn; it finds them as well as founds them' (p. 226). For Casey, a place is not merely physical; it is more an event than a thing, both spatial and

temporal: 'Places gather things in their midst ... animate and inanimate entities ... experiences and histories, even languages and thoughts' (Casey 1996, p. 24). They afford possibilities to their inhabitants (Gallacher and Zahavi 2008). Places are thus revealed through lived experience, 'constituted by means of bodily movements and actions in specific situations' (Relph 1976, p. 166). As such, they cannot readily be characterised in terms of their location or appearance. Relph argues that they are rather 'sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home, and in the context of other places' (p. 29).

According to this body of literature, then, it is through our bodies that we experience place, 'The world is given in a bodily presence and my experience is shaped by the insistence of the world as much as it is by my embodied and enactive interests' (Gallacher and Zahavi 2008, p. 100). This understanding of embodiment derives from a line of scholarship tracing back to Spinoza, and through Husserl, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu, concerned with the centrality of theorising time and the concrete structures of worldly experience. It is reflected in Sartre's (2001) view that the body is 'a permanent structure of my being and the permanent condition of possibility for my consciousness as consciousness of the world and as a transcendent project toward my future' (p. 304). From the moment of birth our body is, 'the centre and origin of our being in the world ... our first world and reality' (Sheets-Johnstone 2009). We do not first experience ourselves as embodied and then experience the world as impinging on our bodies, but rather we are completely out there in the world: 'The concrete is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls "being-in-the-world"' (Sartre 2001, p. 3). The body is not an object (Merleau-Ponty 1962); rather, it is 'this inapprehensible given ... a necessary condition of my action' (Sartre 2001, p. 303), 'the context' (Grosz 1994, p. 86) through which I am able to have a relation to the material world. The question becomes not what a body is or what it means but rather what a body can do (Deleuze 1992; Harrison 2000).

In this understanding of embodiment, Cartesian mind-body dualism is rejected. "Mind" and "body" are not separate but elements of one organic process whereby meaning, thought, and language emerge from embodied activity

(Johnson 2007): 'An action in the mind is necessarily an action in the body as well, and what is a passion on the body is necessarily a passion in the mind' (Deleuze 1998). What happens to our body also happens to our mind so that we can come to know the one via the other (Buchanan 1997). As Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 231) puts it,

I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out in it, and losing myself in it. I am my body, at least wholly to the extent that I possess experience, and yet at the same time my body is as it were a "natural" subject, a provisional sketch of my total being.

Our embodiment is essential to our ability to create meaning and to 'draw rational inferences' (Johnson 1987, p. xxxviii). The body both thinks and perceives: 'Every perceptual habit is still a motor habit and here equally the process of grasping a meaning is performed by the body' (Merleau-Ponty 1962 p. 153). Deleuze (1988 a) follows Spinoza's parallelism in arguing that, 'one seeks to acquire a knowledge of the powers of the body in order to discover, *in a parallel fashion*, the powers of the mind that elude consciousness' (p. 18).

According to this literature, then, inside and outside are inseparable: 'The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 407). Whatever exists does so thanks to my knowing consciousness: it is 'the experienced of my experiencing, the thought of my thinking, the theorized of my theorizing, the intellectually seen of my insight' (Husserl 1977, p. 82). To try to prove the existence of an "external" world on the basis of the contents of 'inner' experience was, according to Husserl, a *nonsens*. This inseparability of inner and outer means that we are both a part of the world and coextensive with it, constituting but also constituted: 'To be born is both to be born of the world and to be born into the world. The world is already constituted, but also never completely constituted; in the first case we are acted upon, in the second we are open to an infinite number of possibilities' (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 453). Any study of the perceived therefore always reveals the subject perceiving; embodiment is a 'reversible and reflexive fold between subject and object' (Thrift 1997, p. 139).

It follows from this that perception involves the perceiving subject in a situation, rather than positioning them as a spectator who has somehow abstracted themselves from the situation. There is an interconnection of action and perception in as much as perception has an intentional structure (Gallacher and Zahavi 2008): it is not merely a passive receptivity, but rather a kind of “passivity in activity” (Meek 2011). Equally, there is no distinction between the act of perceiving and the thing perceived: ‘In the natural attitude, I do not have *perceptions*, I do not posit this object as besides that one, along with their objective relationships, I have a flow of experiences which imply and explain each other both simultaneously and successively’ (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 281 emphasis in original).

We connect with our world at a visceral level ‘and it is the quality of our “being in touch” that importantly defines what our world is like and who we are’ (Johnson 2007, p. 20). According to Johnson, it is through our movement in a particular place, our intimate connection to and interaction with the contours of that place, that we gain knowledge of the world, and it is through this embodied experience that meaning is created. Meanings come “from the bottom up” through increasingly complex levels of organic activity; they are not the constructions of a disembodied mind’ (ibid., p. 10). Embodiment is practical: never an isolated or elemental process, it is always *about* something or *of* something, always involving reference to the world (Gallacher and Zahavi 2008). Meaning is therefore relational: ‘it is about how one thing relates to or connects with other things’ (Johnson 2007, p. 10). It is also expressive: not a passive surface but a positive force having symbolic, sensual and affective resources Thrift (1997).

Seen in the context of the spatial turn, then, place is at the centre of our embodied experience; it is where ‘we experience the meaningful events of our existence’ (Norberg-Schulz 1971, p. 19). It is ever part of us and we are part of it: ‘It mingles with our being, so much so that place and human being are enmeshed, forming a fabric that is particular, concrete and dense’ (Grange 2000, p. 71). The unique quality of place is its power to order and to focus human intentions, experiences, and actions spatially. It is central to the creation of meaning and of action and intention, ‘In short, those aspects of the lived-world that we distinguish as places are differentiated because they involve a

concentration of our intentions, our attitudes, purposes and experience' (Relph 1976, p. 43).

If places are to be examined and understood, a language is required to describe place 'as a phenomenon of direct experience' (Relph 1976, p. 6), and to examine the entire range of experiences through which we know and make places. The following sections of this literature review turn to consider how this language might be constructed, beginning in the next section with phenomenological thought, as the interpretive study of the lived world of human experience (Relph 1970), the 'exploration and understanding of meaning and value' (Buttimer 1974, p. 37).

### **2.3.3 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is hard to summarise (Relph 1970) but it can be said that phenomenological thought takes as its starting point the wholeness and indivisibility of human experience and the fact that meaning, defined by human intentions, is central to human existence, allowing 'human experience to arise in a rich, unstructured, multidimensional way' (Seamon 2000, p. 164). It seeks the 'phenomenological essence of place - as a psycho-social-environmental whole larger than the sum of its parts' (Seamon 1987, p. 20). If geography is thought of as a thematization of experience, 'phenomenology is the act of recovering and mediating that original geographical experience' (Pickles 1985, p. 43). Taking as its starting point the lived-world of immediate experience, it seeks to clarify its phenomena 'in a rigorous way by careful observation and description' (Relph 1976, preface). It looks for particular patterns that transcend specific contexts and points to the essential human condition, the 'irreducible crux of people's life-situations' (Seamon 1980, p. 149) that remains when all cultural, historical and personal idiosyncrasies are stripped away through phenomenological procedures.

Phenomenological procedure means suspending the "natural attitude", that is the unquestioned and unnoticed acceptance of the things and experiences of daily living. This is done through "epoché", disengaging from the "lifeworld", the world of the natural attitude, the taken-for-granted pattern, context, and pre-reflective certainty in the reality of the world that informs everyday life, in order to re-examine its nature afresh (Seamon 1980). In seeking to describe a

phenomenon 'the researcher works to free himself from prejudices, preconceptions and other constraints that might distort or discolour his understanding' (Seamon 1979 b, p. 41), bringing a change in perspective through phenomenological reduction in order to focus on the lifeworld (Seamon 1980). It is a way of thinking that enables us to see clearly something that is right in front our eyes but which has somehow been obscured from us, 'something so taken for granted that it is ignored or allowed to be disguised by a cloak of abstractions' (Relph 2000, p. 16).

Whilst cognitive theorists work on the basis that the cognitive map is key to understanding spatial behaviour, and behaviourists look towards the sequence of stimulus-response, phenomenologists look at everyday movement as experience (Seamon 1980). Seamon (1979 a) looked at the habitual nature of everyday behaviour in place and argued, after Merleau-Ponty, that at the root of these behaviours is the body as preconscious but intelligent subject. Place, as the locus of these behaviours, comes to be seen not as a set of things and points in terms of which behaviours must be figured out cognitively, but rather as a field of pre-reflective action grounded in the body.

Seamon (1980) discusses three characteristics of everyday movement pertinent to this study of people's engagement with place. First, there is its habitual nature, characterised by acquired behaviour that has become more or less involuntary. This is exemplified in the common experience of driving to work and, on arrival, having no recollection of the journey by which you got there. Many movements are conducted by some preconscious impulse that guides behaviours without the person's need to be consciously aware of their happening (Seamon 1979 a). Secondly, Seamon (1980) refers to the notion of "body-subject", a term that Merleau-Ponty used to describe the intentional but taken-for-granted intelligence of the body (1962, pp. 138-39):

Consciousness is being toward the thing through the intermediary of the body. A movement is learned when the body has understood it, that is, when it has incorporated it into its "world", and to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call.



The preconscious intelligence of the body has the inherent capacity to direct behaviours of the person intelligently (Seamon and Nordin 1980), suggesting that the habitual nature of movement arises from the body 'which houses its own special kind of purposeful sensibility' (Seamon 1980, p. 154). Underlying and guiding many everyday movements, this intentional bodily force manifests automatically yet sensitively ... 'the inherent capacity of the body to direct behaviours of the person intelligently and thus function as a special kind of subject which expresses itself in a preconscious way' (ibid., p. 155). Interpreted phenomenologically, 'movement involves a body that is intelligently active and efficiently transforms a person's needs into behaviours' (Seamon 2002, p. 43).

Thirdly, Seamon (1980) describes body and place "choreographies". He observes that, through training and practice, basic movements of the body-subject fuse together into wider bodily patterns, or time-space routines, sets of more or less habitual bodily behaviours. Time-space routines extend through time in order to sustain a particular task. One of the more complex behaviours contained within body-subject is "body-ballet", 'a set of integrated behaviors which sustain a particular task or aim, for instance, washing dishes, plowing, house building, potting or hunting' (p. 157). A sizeable portion of a person's day may be organised around such routines. Time-space routines are important because they maintain continuity in life, allowing people to do automatically in the present what they have learned in the past. In managing repetitive aspects of daily life, time-space routines free the individual's conscious attention for more significant events and needs. Routines unfold and the individual follows them; they generate familiarity to which the individual may grow attached. They are 'grounded in the habitual force of body-subject which supports a continuity grounded on bodily patterns of the past' (ibid., p. 159). Through body-subject the individual can orientate themselves in relation to those familiar objects, places and environments which constitute their everyday physical world. The bodily lived-space can therefore be described as pre-reflective.

Seamon (1979 a) made group observations that suggested that place ballet may occur at all manner of environmental scales: inside or outside, at street or neighbourhood level, in public or private spaces. Body-ballets bring people together physically and thereby helps foster the visible collective entity. They promote inter-personal familiarity and create a web of public respect and trust,

joining people, time and place in an organic whole and portraying place as a distinct entity in its own right: 'Conducting their own daily activities people come together in space, which takes on a sense of place. Individual participants, using the same space, unintentionally create a larger place with its own tempo of activity and rest, bustle and calm' (Seamon and Nordin 1980, p. 35). Seamon and Nordin observed the weekly Varberg market as it "unfolded", noting that this unfolding happens 'largely through a regularity of place founded in habit' (p. 39). This creates a foundation of "taken-for-grantedness" out of which 'a certain amount of novelty, variety and surprise can arise' (ibid.).

The potential strength of phenomenological thought for this study lies in its understanding that experiences or events are comprehended through embodied experience. It seeks to understand phenomena by putting aside established beliefs and ideas, going beyond cultural understandings (Sokolowski 2000) and uncovering the truth of an event through embodied perception, 'through the experience of moving through space and across time' (Starks and Trinidad 2007, p. 1374). To what extent phenomenology offers explanatory power depends in part on which tradition of phenomenological thought is employed. Whilst descriptive traditions of phenomenology, inspired by Husserl, aim only to uncover the general structure of meaning of a phenomenon, restricting themselves to what they have observed in all its rich detail, interpretive phenomenology, inspired by philosophers such as Heidegger, seeks to "read between the lines," seeing interpretation as an essential and inevitable facet of our "being-in-the world" (Finlay 2009).

There are difficulties, however, in applying phenomenological thought to a geographical study of sense of place, notably in relating the notion of the "lived world" to geographical thought and concerns (Buttimer 1976). Buttimer highlights in particular the way that phenomenologists, in seeking the universal human experience, have focussed almost exclusively on the individual as the prime initiators of experience, downplaying the role of place and space in shaping experience. Furthermore, geographical phenomenology, it has been argued, does not take sufficiently seriously the society external to the individual (Pickles 1985). Whilst accounts of individual and cultural experience have been produced, phenomenology frustrates us in the way that it says little about the 'societal creation and manipulation of reality' (Smith 1979, p. 367): There are

'objective social forces' that phenomenology cannot fully apprehend (Gregory 1981, p. 16) limiting its potential insights (Smith 1979). Phenomenology conceals the tension that inevitably exists between the different frames of reference of the observer and the observed, failing to account for the 'constraints on social actions' (Gregory 1978, p. 166) that these create. Phenomenology treats society as intersubjectivity, whilst action is understood as 'a dialectic between subjective intentions and their intersubjective consequences' (Eyles 1981, p. 1,382), to the neglect of social categories such as family and community. Eyles argues that, developing within a specific social and historical framework, these categories and the consciousness that they produce, are important in terms of the way that they shape 'the production of sociality and consciousness' (ibid.).

A further problem with phenomenological thought for a geographical study of sense of place lies in the emphasis that it places on the generalizable aspects of place and environmental experience (Seamon 1997). Its tendency to separate out and categorize distinct types of experience does not fit well with the view of place emerging from this review of the literature that sees people's on-going relationship with place as dynamic, complex, personal and therefore multiple in nature. Equally, this separating out is at odds with the way that scholars such as Buttimer (1976) understand that the lived world presents itself as a 'dynamic unity, and ... is experienced in a holistic way until thought begins to reflect on it' (p. 280).

Finally, the transcendentalism of phenomenological thought has been subject to the criticism that it reduces what is real to the product of subjective experience. Phenomenology argues for attending to experience and doing away with theoretical presuppositions (Reynolds and Roffe 2006), yet Deleuze (1990) suggests that phenomenology cannot actually return to pure immanence because it conserves the form of consciousness within the transcendental. By this account, phenomenology is a philosophy, one that conserves a certain essential form, in that 'the entire dimension of manifestation is given ready-made, in the position of a transcendental subject, which retains the form of the person, of consciousness, and of subjective identity, and which is satisfied with creating the transcendental out of the characteristics of the empirical' (Deleuze 1990, p. 100). Elsewhere, in *What is Philosophy?* (1994) Deleuze and Guattari

argue that this finding of transcendence within immanence is ontologically suspect (Reynolds and Roffe 2006). We cannot take up a position outside of the processes of life-making as no such position exists. Human experience cannot be understood as the foundational form of living and life cannot be reduced to a unified notion of experience (Tucker 2012). For Deleuze, what is required is relational thinking that grants relations a reality of their own, 'in order that we might affirm an exteriority that subsists at the very heart of the world' (Deleuze 2004, p. 163). Rather than beginning from a subject-object distinction, one where the subject has primary status, we are to begin from the relations themselves (Nancy 2000).

The tendency of phenomenological thought to deny for things experienced a reality independent of the human mind conflicts with the sense of the importance of materiality and an active landscape thus far developed in this literature review. Post-phenomenological thought has attempted to address this problem, restoring the idea that the world is something that is made evident to human experience, as an assembly of things that have real existence, impinging on the material capacities of our own embodied existence (Roberts 2018). Rather than viewing the subject as directing its intentional, sense-bestowing attention toward the world, post-phenomenological thought is more concerned with the ways in which the self, objects and the world itself, are formed or appear through the relations they enter into (Simpson and Ash 2014). It acknowledges a world that perpetually exceeds human beings, where experience is a "more-than-human" affair (Whatmore 2006), a world whose reality lies not in a transcendental structure of consciousness, but rather in the very materiality of things encountered, human or non-human. In this worldview, things make themselves evident through their autonomous reality and, in so doing, involve themselves in the production of subjective experience (Simpson 2017). The subject of experience is no longer the locus of the real but rather emerges through its involvements in a world whose materiality and effects are no longer dependent on the powers of conscious discernment pertaining to Husserl's transcendental Ego (Roberts 2018). As Ash and Simpson (2016, p. 54) put it, central to post-phenomenological approaches is the idea that 'experience emerges with the world rather than being a product of a subject's directedness towards it'; much of human consciousness does not take place "in"

the bodies of the human but “with” the complex framework of things that enables and shapes human thought (Hutchins 1996).

The following sections continue to focus on the relationality of embodied experience, turning first to the concept of “affect”, a key component within Spinoza’s understanding of bodily experience.

#### **2.3.4 Affect**

Any study concerning a city’s sense of place must engage with affect since it is central to the experience of place: ‘The lived sensation, the feel, and emotional resonance of place, defines much of the routine and tumult of city life’ (Duff 2010, p. 881 emphasis in original). As Thrift (2004 a, p. 57) puts it:

Cities may be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect. Particular affects such as anger, fear, happiness and joy are continually on the boil, rising here, subsiding there, and these affects continually manifest themselves in events which can take place either at a grand scale or simply as a part of continuing everyday life ... Given the utter ubiquity of affect as a vital element of cities ... you would think that the affective register would form a large part of the study of cities – but you would be wrong.

Since Thrift wrote these words, affect has indeed come to be understood to be ‘a crucial part of the everyday infra-structural materialities of urban experience’ (Latham and McCormack 2017, p. 370) within what has been described as the “affective turn” in the social sciences (Clough 2007). The concept of affects, which for Spinoza (1996) were states of mind and body, was further developed by subsequent thinkers, notably Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Brian Massumi. For these writers, affect concerns potential, the plane of immanence where there are no preeminent beings or structures, only a complex network of forces, connections, relations, affects and becomings, and where becoming refers to the subject’s capacity to affect and to be affected (Blackman and Cromby 2007). Affect is bound up with subjectivity, ‘a process of change – a line of flight – through which stable identities are dissolved’ (Buser 2014, p. 231). The body is in constant movement, tracing a path from one location to

another (Pile and Thrift 1995) and this unceasing movement constitutes the process of becoming (Massumi 2002).

Deleuze (1992), interpreting Spinoza, says that bodies can be defined by their capacities for affecting and being affected rather than according to their form or substance; what matters is 'what the body can *do*' (Blackman et al. 2008, p. 16 emphasis in original). Because it is about what the body can do rather than what it is doing, affect is virtual. It is a capacity for activation (Massumi 2002), the body's lived force or 'power of acting' (Deleuze 1988 a, p. 50). It describes the transition between states, an *intensity* characterised by an increase or decrease in power (Deleuze 1998). Affects are 'passages, becomings, rises and falls, continuous variations of power [puissance] that pass from one state to another' (p. 138). The importance of affect lies in its *transversal* quality, the way in which it operates as a catalytically eventful bridge between a multiplicity of movements and relations (Guattari 1996; Anderson 2006). It is relational, transferring to others and doubling back with increased intensity, placing us in a circuit of feeling and response (Hemmings 2005). Affect can thus be thought of as the capacity that a body has to form specific relations so that any analysis of the body must 'concern itself with the delineation of affects and relations' (Buchanan 1997).

According to Spinoza (1992), affects are modifications of bodies and ideas emergent within action, relations and encounters between two bodies. As Brown and Stenner (2001) put it, 'What takes place as an affect (an emotion) is an ordering of the relations between bodies and between ideas that shows forth as a decision or a determination for action' (p. 89). Affects take the form of either an increase or a decrease in the body's power to act: affects of joy increase power whilst affects of sadness decrease it. They are physical and in the body, transmitted between persons causing bodies to undergo physical changes that manifest themselves as feelings of sorrow, gladness and so on (Brennan 2004). They can be 'propagated both literally as molecular energy – in forms such as sound waves, light and heat – and, somewhat less directly, by virtue of the responses of bodies and brains to ideas circulating within society' (Conradson and Latham 2007, p. 236).

Affect is autonomous in that it is found neither in individual places nor individual bodies, but rather in the dynamic interaction between the two: 'Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is' (Massumi 1996, p. 35). 'Affect is thus essentially a pre-personal category, installed "before" the circumscription of identities, and manifested by unlocatable transferences, unlocatable with regard to their origin as well as with regard to their destination' (Guattari 1996, p. 158). It is "in excess of" conscious states of perception (Massumi 2002). This excess or residue, which is not socially produced, lies at the heart of our being, subsisting in matter as "incorporeal potential" (Clough 2009). Massumi (2002) points to a pre-conscious, "visceral perception" that is a prerequisite for conscious perception. Affect is visceral in as much as excitations gathered by the five "exteroceptive" senses are immediately registered even before they are fully processed by the brain (e.g. your heart misses a beat before you feel your friend's tap on the shoulder). Indeed, affect has a "virtual" dimension, as something that happens too quickly to have happened actually (McCormack 2003), reflecting the fact that much of what happens in a world of activities and relations happens before it is registered by conscious thought: the skin is faster than the word (Massumi 1996).

Affect is non-cognitive in that it 'cannot be grasped, made known or represented' (Pile 2010, p. 9). When we try to make sense of a state of being we empty it of that intensity that constitutes its capacity for change. It stands outside of social significations (Massumi 1996), having bodily meaning that overturns the logic of social interpretation (Deleuze 1998): 'As soon as one decides to quantify an affect one loses its qualitative dimensions' (Guattari 1996, p. 159). As unqualified intensity (Giardini 1999), affect is not discursive (Guattari 1996). Whilst, according to Massumi (2002), affect involves the notion of a field of sensible experience, it cannot be identified or delimited through discursive categories as a personally captured emotional state. Rather, feelings fold into each other, resonate and intensify in unquantifiable ways and unfold again in action. Affect is about attention to sensibilities that, whilst felt before reflective thinking comes into play, are nevertheless felt as ways of going on in the world, as 'joys and sadnesses, increases and decreases, brightening and darkenings' (Deleuze 1998, p. 145). It is about everyday experience: 'Affects

can be, and are, attached to things, people, ideas, sensations, relations, activities, ambitions, institutions, and any number of other things, including other affects' (Sedgwick 2003, p. 19). According to Sedgwick, affective attachments are unpredictable and surprising. Thus, 'one can be excited by anger, disgusted by shame, or surprised by joy' (ibid.).

In this body of literature, the mind is viewed as both affect and activity (Deleuze 1992) and thinking takes place with all the senses, indeed the entire body (Thrift 1996). Affect stands behind thought, the origin of which can be found in what Vygotsky (1987) describes as 'the motivating sphere of consciousness' (p. 282). This includes our 'inclinations and needs, our interests and impulses, and our affect and emotions' (ibid.). Vygotsky (1962) claims the existence of 'a dynamic system of meaning in which the affective and intellectual unite' (p. 8), whereby every idea contains a reshaped affective attitude. Thinking, therefore, is bound up with feeling and the individual's relation with the world is infused with affective aspects (Hobson 2010).

Whereas affect refers to states of being and is characterised by intensities that register in pre-individual strata (Leistert 2017), conscious perception can be understood as the narration or interpretation of affect, for example in the form of emotion (Hemmings 2005). Emotion is constituted within a set of pre-existing discursive categories through which the intensity of experience is articulated; 'it is intensity owned and recognized' (Massumi 2002, p. 28). Whilst, out of the complexity of affect, narrations of conscious states, such as emotion, may be "subtracted", there will always be 'a never-to-be-conscious autonomic remainder', a "virtual" remainder of affect (ibid., p. 25), like a reflux back from conscious experience to affect which is registered as affect. Thus, conscious experiences may be stored up in the body, together with autonomic responses to them, so that in the future the response precedes conscious recognition of the stimulus (Scott 2013).

What, then, is the implication of affect for a conceptualisation of sense of place? In this body of literature, place can be understood as a fundamentally embodied phenomenon (Jones and Evans 2012) where affects emerge from diverse encounters between bodies, contexts and events (Massumi 2002). Bodies are constantly affected by place (Due 2007) to the degree that place 'seems to be a



vital element in the constitution of affect' (Thrift 2004 a, p. 60). Transmission of affects can be seen as 'a property of particular spaces soaked with one or a combination of affects to the point where space and affect are often coincident' (Thrift 2008 a, p. 222). These affects are in turn 'dynamically involved in the production and reproduction of space' (Duff 2010, p. 885), not only reflecting the subjective mood of a place but also framing the types of activities and practices that may be enacted within that place. Each individual encounter with place thus understood will be unique in that each will produce different affective modifications in the body's power to act (Laurier and Philo 2006; Duff 2010).

Recognising the significance of affect for a conceptualisation of sense of place, the next section begins to think about what the role of affect might be in examining how individuals engage with particular spaces. To do this, it turns first to non-representational theory, which offers a significant body of literature offering a potential way forward in this regard.

### **2.3.5 Non-representational theory**

With affect as a central concept, non-representational theory was developed by Thrift and others as a means of thinking about everyday practice, the 'nonintentional, nondiscursive, and elusory nature of the everyday world' (Cadman 2009, p. 456), seeking to explain how our embodied experience relates to the creation of meaning (Johnson 1987). It is an "everyday theory" (Sedgwick 2003) concerned with the quality of one's own and other people's practices of knowing and experiencing, one which resists a split between what the individual does and the reasons that he or she does it. It lends itself to a view of the city streets where the goings on cannot be understood through theory or cognition alone but from "everydayness" as an imminent force (Amin and Thrift 2002), 'an excess that derives neither from a body or world in isolation, but from the banal movements of pure process: "the event"' (Seigworth 2000, p. 240).

Through practices we become embodied "subjects", 'the body-subject, not the body, engaged in joint body-practices of becoming' (Thrift 1997, p. 142), involved with others and with objects in a world continually in process, affective and expressive. Subjectivity is conceived of as 'lines or fields of concernful and affecting interaction taking place in time' (Thrift 2008 b, p. 85). These lines and

fields link up not only human but other kinds of bodies which are seen as proactive. In this way, the world is animated by actors who never work alone. In the “in-between” of shared situations, subjectivity is understood as ‘the shifting distribution of subjectivity in populations of actors’ (Thrift 2008 b, p. 85). Behaviour is understood not as localised in individuals but as a relational structure, the sway of ‘affective and relational virtualities’ (Foucault 1997, p. 138). We are invited to see the world as ‘a set of dynamic intensities that produce different spatial and temporal intelligibilities – territories of becoming that produce new potentials’ (Thrift 2004 b, p. 88), “ruptures”, that “unfold the next moment, ‘allowing change to happen’ (Dewsbury 2000, p. 475).

Non-representational theory draws on the thought of Deleuze who rejected the representational model of thought, arguing that ‘representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence, a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilises and moves nothing’ (Deleuze 2014, p. 70). Non-representational theory, on the other hand, is a project that Thrift (1997) describes as concerned with ‘the performative “presentations”, “showings” and “manifestations” of everyday life ... mundane everyday practices that shape the conduct of human beings towards others and themselves in particular sites’ (pp. 126–27). In non-representational theory, interpretation of meaning happens not through rules but through practices that constitute our sense of the real (Harrison 2002). Practices, as ‘thought-in-action’ (Thrift 1996, p. 6), cannot adequately be described or articulated in words: they are forms of experience that are not primarily cognitive. Rather than theoretically representing the world, non-representational theory is concerned with the ways in which subjects know the world without knowing it, the ‘inarticulate understanding’ or ‘practical intelligibility’ of an ‘unformulated practical grasp of the world’ (Taylor 1993, p. 50). This understanding comes from the way that we not so much discover how the world “really is” as “make a sketch”, reflecting ‘a continuity of engagement that allows us to know how things are because of what we did to bring them about’ (Radley 1995, p. 5).

Thrift (1996) likens the approach to that of understanding a person, a “phenomenalism of character” involving empathic and ethical elements. As Shanon (2013, p. 362) puts it:

One reads the story of the life of (or a period or a day in the life of) a person. One follows the story, one travels for a while together with that individual, and eventually one gains understanding of him or her. When understanding has been achieved one discovers that one can tell a story.

Wylie (2005) takes something of this approach, as we have seen, in narrating a day's walk along a Devon coastal path, as he relates his personal experience of walking to 'describe some of the differential configurations of self and landscape emergent within the performative *milieu* of coastal walking' (p. 236 emphasis in original). In describing relationships between landscape and the self, he emphasises the embodied nature of experience, performativity and intensity, moving away from established cultural assumptions to try to capture aspects and elements that would not otherwise be surfaced.

Non-representational theory takes representations seriously not as a code to be deciphered but rather as performative in themselves, as doings. It redirects 'attention from the *posited meaning* towards the *material compositions and conduct* of representations' (Dewsbury et al. 2002, p. 438 emphasis in original), drawing attention to the ways in which 'the world is emergent from a range of spatial processes whose power is not dependent on their crossing a threshold of contemplative cognition' (McCormack 2003, p. 488). Thus, for McCormack, in his study of Dance Movement Therapy, the creative process involved in a dance improvisation is not the realizing of a dance but rather the dance itself. To describe it requires a non-separation of thinking and doing (Sheets-Johnstone 2009), a shift away from figuring out hidden meaning from its enactment and instead attending to the movements and relations that give consistency to it as a piece of practice (McCormack 2003). McCormack observes the way in which the affective capacity of what happened during sessions always consisted in more than personal or interpersonal experience, drawing attention to the pre-reflective and non-human dimensions of the relations and movement catalysed in the space of Dance Movement Therapy as he tries to attend to the immediacy of events like a smile, a movement or a gesture.

Non-representational theory characterises many elements of the world as part of thinking, aiming to understand 'our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds' (Lorimer 2005, p. 83). Only the smallest part is explicitly cognitive; the rest lies in the body, through all the senses, what Ingold (2000) calls the "resonance to environment", 'in the specific circumstances of spaces and times which are able to be sensed and worked with but are often only partially articulated' (Thrift 2004 b, p. 90). Non-representational theory is sceptical of the "linguistic turn" in the social sciences, suggesting that to stress the verbal and visual as 'the only home of social knowledge' (Curt 1994, p. 139) 'at the expense of the haptic, the acoustic, the kinesthetic and the iconic' (Thrift 1996, p. 7) is to separate us from much that is most interesting about the embodied and situated nature of human practices (ibid.). De Certeau (1984) argues that there is an "immense remainder" constituted by that part of human experience that has not been 'tamed and symbolised in language' (p. 61) and it is in this remainder that there lies the potential for things to be otherwise (Harrison 2000). Whilst the discursive is not ignored in non-representational theory, linguistic elements are considered not so much as a matter of representation but as a matter of affect, as much about facilitating relations as about making meaning (McCormack 2003). Representations do not have a message; 'rather they are transformers, not causes or outcomes of action but actions themselves' (Dewsbury et al. 2002, p. 438).

What happens in the world is affective and therefore outside of our control. As a result, our way of knowing, according to Deleuze (1988 a), following Spinoza, 'condemns us to have only inadequate ideas' (p. 19). In non-representational theory, this *vagueness* of affect is to be valued as a way of enabling the emergence of new relations of movement (McCormack 2003). The world is incomplete and inconsistent and 'must be approached through a spirit of affirmative experimentation' (Thrift 2004 b, p. 87). It is also demonstrative, 'ruled by the imperative of performance: a desire to show and tell' (ibid.). It is 'built out of various "polyphonic" forms of relations' (ibid.) – interrelationships of assemblage. The whole environment acts as a "processual subjectivity" Guattari (1996) and the best means of understanding the world is 'as a set of constantly becoming ethologies' (Thrift 2004 b, p. 87).

Non-representational theory has evident potential to enable this study to bring into sharp focus the processual nature of the individual's embodied engagement with the public spaces of the city. Its notion of thinking with the whole body offers a "practical intelligibility" (Taylor 1993), offering the prospect that engaging with and through questions of affect will allow 'encounters with spaces of practice to have a life and force before and beyond the deliberative and reflective consistencies of representational thinking' (McCormack 2003, p. 490). Its understanding of a world that is emergent from a range of spatial processes, where place is "performed" by those who inhabit it, points up the significance of interaction with place as conduct, situated, "known from" a particular time and place, and worked out in action and joint action with others (Thrift 1996).

At the same time, non-representational theory presents difficulties for this study, which seeks to examine sense of place through the interplay between the big stories of place and the small stories of individual embodied encounter. This difficulty lies in the way that affect scholars focus on a realm of experience that does 'not operate through the structures of language, discourse, and meaning' (Blackman and Venn 2010, p. 9), seeking to work instead with the 'sensual, haptic, corporeal or kinaesthetic' (Blackman and Cromby 2007, p. 7), with the "somatically sensed" body, 'perceptions, memories, feelings, forms of muscular movement and proprioceptive responses to vibrations and rhythms' (Wetherell 2013, p. 352), the "extra-discursive" (Massumi 2002; Thrift 2008 a) that 'escapes or remains in excess of the practices of the "speaking subject"' (Blackman and Venn 2010, p. 9). For these scholars, 'power works "autonomically", bypassing reason and criticality and seizing the body at the level of neural circuits' (Blackman 2012 a, p. xi), creating a 'roiling mass of nerve volleys' (Thrift 2008 a, p. 7). If, then, we cannot represent feelings in words in a way that is faithful to our experience of them, how can we facilitate examination of how individuals' affective relationships with place are shaped by, and in turn emerge in stories? We are potentially left here with the situation that 'the encounter at the heart of fieldwork [is] ultimately unspeakable' (Laurier and Philo 2006, p. 1), 'unspeakable, unsayable and unwriteable' (ibid., p. 2), unable to be 'grasped, made known, or represented' (Pile 2010, p. 9). Such a position is self-evidently problematic for the purposes of fieldwork; but not only is it inconvenient, it is also at odds with the empirical observation that making sense

of relationships and encounters through talk is, in fact, exactly what humans try to do much of the time (Wetherell 2012).

The difficulty created by this aversion to the discursive amongst those affect scholars who focus on the dynamic, material dimensions of relatedness (Slaby and Röttger-Rössler 2018) is compounded, for the purposes of this study and its requirement to understand the link between action and prior belief, by the way in which, notably in the thinking of Thrift and Massumi, affect is separated from emotion. Their emphasis on immediate, direct experience runs the risk of negating how what is not consciously experienced may still be mediated by past experiences. Whilst displaying an emotion may be qualitatively different from those immediate sensations experienced before any conscious moment of recognition, it can be argued that even seemingly direct responses nonetheless evoke past histories, bypassing consciousness, through bodily memories (Wetherell 2012).

Sensations may not be about conscious recognition, but this does not mean they are “direct” in the sense of immediate. As Ahmed (2004 c) explains, ‘sensations are mediated, however immediately they seem to impress upon us. Not only do we read such feelings, but also how the feelings feel in the first place may be tied to a past history of readings’ (p. 25). Equally, an encounter may involve a reading, not only of the encounter itself, but of the characteristics of the person or object encountered (Wetherell 2012). An understanding of affect is therefore required that recognises that ‘the perception of others as “causing” an emotional response is not simply my perception but involves a form of “contact” between myself and others, which is shaped by longer histories of contact’ (Ahmed 2004 b, p. 31). Whereas Thrift and McCormack relegate emotion to a by-product of embodied relations (Thien 2005; Tolia-Kelly 2006), it can be argued that emotion should be seen as a critical actor in its own right and that an understanding is required of the relationality that is ‘so profoundly embedded in our everyday emotional lives’ (Thien 2005, p. 453).

There is a need, then, to look also at literature that can provide a framework within which to understand both the immediate, direct, embodied experience as well as the “bodily memories” that contain past experience and belief... that takes into account ‘two collections of analytical objects that have conventionally

been kept apart – namely the “social” and the “biological” – and in so doing addresses real issues about our fundamental understandings of what constitutes the work of the world’ (Thrift 2009, p. 79). The imperative will be to account for the world not only at the level of neural circuits but also in terms of how prior beliefs, experience and understandings mediate sensation, and how the processes of affect reshape experience and belief as they emerge in emotion, in discourse and in narrative. In short, it will be important to recognise that ‘paying increased attention to the material actually requires a more expansive engagement with the immaterial’ (Latham and McCormack 2004, p. 701).

The literature on “affective practice” (Walkerdine 2009; Walkerdine 2010; Wetherell 2012) will be helpful in this regard. The notion of affective practice reflects an understanding that ‘awake human bodies’ are engaged in processing multiple streams of information (Reddy 2001, p. 110). Moving away from ‘linear models of cognition toward models involving multiple pathways, multiple levels of activation and types of activation’ (ibid., p. 31), it draws attention to “complexes of activities” (Brown et al. 2009) where context and function are essential to understanding action. Drawing on the philosophy of John Dewey (1896), Brown et al. (ibid.) argue that there is no clear distinction between subject and object, stimulus and response but rather an interdependency. We can only impute causes after effects as a reconstruction: ‘What comes first (the stimulus) is projected backwards from the sets of activities we are engaged in’ (p. 212). What becomes important is to capture the entire activity complex within which an embodied experience is embedded, to be concerned not so much with stimulus and response as with the whole unfolding pattern (Wetherell 2012).

This thinking, with activity complexes as the units of analysis, locates affect ‘in actual bodies and social actors, negotiating, making decisions, evaluating, communicating, inferring and relating’ (Wetherell 2012, p. 159). It allows for an “entanglement” of embodied action and discourse, looking for the ‘middle ranges of agency’ (Sedgwick 2003, p. 13) where there is space for creativity and incremental change, ‘paying more attention to the everyday muddle found between the two extremes typically set up in critical social theory – extreme capitulation to the domination of discursive formations and the neo-liberal

fantasy of individuated, entirely free, actor/agent' (Wetherell 2013, p. 358), identifying forms of order whilst recognising their "could-have-been-otherwise quality" (Edwards 1997).

### **2.3.6 Practices**

The notion of "affective practice" can be seen as lying within wider accounts of social practice as arrays of human activity, which are characterised by 'the belief that such phenomena as knowledge, meaning, human activity, science, power, language, social institutions, and historical transformation occur within, and are aspects or components of, the *field of practices*' (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina and von Savigny 2001). Practices are 'organized nexuses of activity' (Schatzki 2001, p. 48), sets of 'doings and sayings' organised by the mind through 'a pool of understandings' (ibid., p. 58). This routinized type of behaviour consists of several interconnected elements: 'forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge' (Reckwitz 2002, p. 249). According to Reckwitz, the inter-connectedness of these elements forms a "block" which cannot be reduced to any one of the single elements alone.

Such routinized behaviour, the 'rhythms, attitudes, or manners of embodiment ... which give definition to the subject,' (Harrison 2000, p. 505) enable us to act: 'It is only at the depths of habit [that] radical change is effected, where the unconscious strata of culture are built into social routines as bodily dispositions' (Taussig 1993, p. 25). For Deleuze and Guattari (1988) practices structure what they call the "body without organs" whereby each and every actual body has not only a limited set of traits, habits, practices, affects, but also a virtual dimension consisting of a vast reservoir of potential traits, connections, affects, movements, etc. Habit is also fundamental to Merleau-Ponty's (1962) conception of the corporeal schema, an incorporated bodily know-how and practical sense which manifests as competent and purposive action, and which 'attaches' to the world by way of the meaning it discerns therein. According to Husserl (1973), to acquire a habit is to grasp and incorporate, within one's bodily schema, a form of embodied and practical understanding or know-how essential to the co-ordination of the embodied agent with the world. This



habitual and practical know-how, a way of seeing and reacting to what is seen, leads the individual to react in particular ways to particular situations.

Practice theorists steer away from postulating rules as governing action. They draw on Wittgenstein's (1958) *Philosophical Investigations* in arguing that practical understanding cannot adequately be formulated in words, and words cannot, without established ways of applying them, determine action. Rather, the understandings that link the actions of which a practice is composed can be thought of as abilities that pertain to those actions, that is, knowing which actions constitute the practice in question (Schatzki 1996; 2001). It is a matter of practical intelligibility, 'a battery of bodily abilities that results from, and also makes possible, participation in practices' (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina et al. 2001), something of a "tacit nature" learned by its participants in order to perform it (Turner 2001).

According to Reckwitz (2002), a practice can be understood as the 'regular, skilful "performance" of (human) bodies', 'a routinized way in which bodies are moved, objects are handled, subjects are treated, things are described, and the world is understood' (p. 249). A social practice contains specific forms of knowledge, ways of understanding, wanting and feeling, 'a particular way of "understanding the world", which includes an understanding of objects (including abstract ones), of humans, of oneself' (ibid., p. 253). This form of knowledge is historically-culturally specific, a collective, shared knowledge: 'Wants and emotions thus do not belong to individuals but – in the form of knowledge – to practices' (ibid., p. 254).

This body of literature sees society as shaping individuals through the socializing effect of practices, whilst the structure of society itself depends on the actions of individuals (Swartz 2002). Practices or habits not only govern the ways we act, they also shape the ways in which we make sense of our environment, manifesting as expectations and interpretative methods (Crossley 2001): 'Habit enframes our contemplation ... habits set boundaries for forms of life and so ways of seeing and saying, delineating a field in which certain moves are sensible' (Harrison 2000, p. 513).

Schatzki talks of 'teleoaffective structure' (2001, p. 58), where "teleology" suggests orientation towards ends and "affectivity" pertains to how things matter. What makes sense to a person to do, then, depends on their intended ends, how they will act to achieve those ends, the extent to which things matter to them given their beliefs, expectations, emotions and moods, the 'patterns of reason for action' (Taylor 1993, p. 53). We need to consider what disposes people to enact the practices that they do, the aims, inherited knowledge and lived experience that lie behind their actions (B. Barnes 2001).

It therefore becomes necessary to consider from where our "pools of understanding" (Martinez 1992), the habits that underlie practice, derive. According to Bourdieu (1990, p. 54) an individual's "habitus" is a product of history. It:

ensures the active presence of past experiences, which, deposited in each organism in the form of schemes of perception, thought and action, tend to guarantee the "correctness" of practices and their constancy over time, more reliably than all formal rules and explicit norms.

Similarly, Husserl (1973) argues that past experience shapes current experience and that what I experience now is laid down in the form of habitus and will shape my future experiences (p. 122):

This lived experience itself, and the objective moment constituted in it, may become "forgotten"; but for all this, it in no way disappears without a trace; it has merely become latent. With regard to what has become constituted in it, it is a *possession in the form of a habitus*, ready at any time to be awakened anew by an active association (emphasis in original).

Although each individual's experience is different, and their habitus therefore unique, nonetheless know-how and disposition tend to be shared, since they generally arise out of social interactions and are therefore rooted in the habitus of the groups to which we belong (Crossley 2001). Some scholars view practices simply as clusters of individual habits. For example, Turner (1994), rather than looking for practical commonalities, takes a strongly contextual

position where each individual has the practical competences that pertain to their unique interactional history. B. Barnes (2001), on the other hand, stresses practice as collective action where the solo action still represents a practice learned from other people. Similarly, Burkitt (1991) stresses that 'to become an individual self with its own unique identity, we must first participate in a world of others that is formed by history and culture' (p. 1). Reckwitz (2002) sees social practices as being carried by agents, "body/minds" who "carry" and "carry out" social practices who understand the world and themselves, and use know-how and motivational knowledge, according to the particular practice. In this way, embodied understanding works at the both individual and group level: it exists not 'only in me as an individual agent; it also exists in me as the co-agent of common actions' (Taylor 1993, p. 53). Other scholars, such as Lizardo (2007), claim the existence of empirically verifiable neurocognitive mechanisms that do the job of transmitting practices, pointing to embodied simulation as a routine, which humans deploy unproblematically in their interaction with other agents and objects in the world.

Other bodies of literature make a useful link between practices and language. Goffman (1974), for example, places emphasis on everyday actions being undertaken with reference to how they will be recognised and described, stressing the significance of language as "language-in-use", and talk as performance, an inter-action with what is happening around us. He describes the concept of "situated activity systems" (1961) as a way of understanding the structure and function of particular, locally situated activities. As well as serving to focus mutual attention these events are characterised by an openness to, and a preference for, verbal communication. This interactive meshing of individual participants into common social projects which lies at the heart of the Goffman's situated activity system (Goodwin 2006) has parallels with Gumperz's (1972) "speech events" which provide a means of examining how culture and language operate as mutually constitutive, interconnected social practices (Roberts 2014).

The next section considers how the idea of affective practice, in the context of this study, might relate specifically to the embodied experience of place and how its materiality impinges on and shapes the "whole unfolding pattern" (Wetherell 2012) of the daily practices that constitute being in "place".

### 2.3.7 Practices and place

#### a) *“Thing power”*

Garfinkel (1967) argues that everyday practical actions can only be understood by reference to the properties of the particular settings where those actions are located and the way that they function to organise practices. As Thrift (1996) puts it, people’s everyday actions arise ‘out of the “local logics” connected with concrete social situations’ (p. 18). In these concrete settings, the material can be argued to be essential to practices just as much as bodily and mental activities (Reckwitz 2002): practices are ‘materially anchored’ (Reckwitz 2012, p. 248). This argues for recognising the agency of non-human bodies (Watts 2013), the fact that ‘the world kicks back’ (Barad 1998, p. 112). Things must not be ‘accused of being just “things” ... leaving in the dark the myriad of non-human actants, so essential to the very definition of humanity’ (Latour 2000, p. 117). Bennett (2010 a) writes of ‘an efficacy of objects in excess of the human meanings, designs, or purposes they express or serve’ (p. 20); they have “thing-power” (Bennett 2010 b). According to Latour (2000) “things” can object to their “social enrolments”: ‘they are much too real to be representations, and much too disputed, uncertain, collective, variegated, divisive to play the role of stable, obdurate, boring primary qualities, furnishing the universe once and for all’ (p. 119). According to this thinking, material objects are not static entities which passively receive their meaning from the cognitive processes of the brain or from abstract cultural concepts; rather, these more-than-human materialities, in their ‘unique concreteness and permanence’ (Csikszentmihalyi and Rochberg-Halton 1981, p. 14), represent a ‘performative and moving force’ that facilitates and brings to life everydayness (McCormack 2006, p. 332).

The material world’s capacity to affect us comes from its “in itselfness” (Bollas 2009), an initiatory movement that does not begin only in the human. According to Bollas, we live ‘in an evocative object world’ (p. 79) where objects present themselves to us by chance and play upon us, creating surprise. Bollas (1992) sees the material world stimulating us in multiple ways, not just sensorially through touch, sound, smell and so on, but also conceptually and structurally, according to the way we use it and the experience it creates; symbolically, in that objects have names and are part of the symbolic order; mnemonically, as objects may be endowed with and serve to signify experiences in our past; and

projectively, in the way that a self-state can be stored in an object that is part of our individual experience. Bollas (2009) sees the imprint that is left upon as a result of these multiple forms of stimulation as being 'partly the property of the thing itself and mostly the result of the meaning within our individual self' (p. 83).

Literature concerning the materiality of the city also suggests that the materiality of the cityscape impacts upon the individual through a combination of its affective properties and the cultural conventions that shape meaning for individuals. Cities are often seen as impacting upon the individual through all the senses (Sennett 1996), including smell, sound, touch and taste as well as sight (Adams and Guy 2007), even to the point that the city is sometimes claimed to represent a "sensorial overload" (Simmel 1995). A number of studies can be found that deal with particular sensorial aspects of the experience of the city, for example with smell (Classen, Howes and Synnott 1994) or with sound (Bull 2000). Yet, Edensor (2007) argues that, 'under contemporary urban conditions, sensual experience tends to be minimized by the regulatory procedures, planning, cultural conditions and values, and spatial values' of the 'carefully guarded city' (p. 230). It is only in the marginal sites of industrial ruin that, he says, the 'unruly effects of sensual stimuli are always liable to break through' (ibid.). Edensor quotes Stewart's observation that senses are 'shaped and modified by experience and the body bears a somatic memory of its encounters with what is outside it' (1999, p. 19) in support of a view that, whilst place is apprehended in response to the particular qualities of its materiality, at the same time, this apprehension is constrained by 'environmental conditions and performative conventions' (Edensor 2007, p. 230).

### ***b) Affordances***

An important body of literature with the potential to explain how the materiality of the landscape shapes "affective practice" is that concerning "affordances". According to this literature, as we take in our environment, we perceive not only the objects and individuals it contains but also what possibilities those objects and their setting offer us, their "affordances" (Marsh et al. 2009). These affordances can be seen as "affective possibilities", opportunities that certain places offer, or are perceived to offer, for new ways of feeling and being. They

consist in 'the connection between mobility, enactment and the potential transformation of the self' (Conradson and Latham 2007, p. 235). Walkerdine (2010) offers a powerful example of this in her description of the layout of terraced houses in a south Wales steel town, demonstrating how, with their back road and gardens that encouraged neighbourly inter-changes, the houses facilitated a "community of affect".

In this literature, the significance of the materiality of place derives not from defining it as an object with boundaries; rather, it emerges from the immaterial, the processual, the affordances that exist in the relationship between the individual and the environment, their fit to the world (Latham and McCormack 2004; Lopresti-Goodman et al. 2009). The affordance is relational, neither subjective nor objective but rather cutting across this dichotomy (Gibson 1986). According to Gibson, affordances operate at the level of interaction rather than the cognitive: they are apprehended directly in stimulus information with physical objects being perceived as value-rich ecological objects. They can, of course, be positive or negative. Being relative to the individual they are unique to the individual. Affordances point two ways, to the environment and to the actor, in that perception of the utility of the environment is accompanied by perception concerning the actor, for example their body, legs or hands. Exteroception is thus accompanied by proprioception: awareness of the world cannot be separated from awareness of one's complementary relations to the world.

In ecological theory affordances are key to our self-preservation and our ability to improve our situation in life (Johnson 2007). We should therefore expect to see people in different settings engage in different actions as they reorganise their relations to their environment, creating and changing it to fit better with their actions (Marsh et al 2009). This process of "niche construction" (Heft 2007) involves the individual in altering their environment and the affordances it offers in order to be able to function more effectively in it (Gibson 1986).

Studies have shown that perception, and the actions that follow from it, can be influenced by social psychological factors such as how the individual regards themselves or what they believe about the setting (Lopresti-Goodman et al. 2009). Changes in affective relationship, belief, mood or emotional state may

all have an effect on the individual's perception of the environment, influencing such practical issues as perception of distance (Balketis and Dunning 2007) or the degree of steepness of gradient (Stefanucci et al. 2008). Affordances concern not just the functional possibilities offered to the individual but also the social possibilities that emanate from the dynamic relationships between individuals in the setting, as well as the other features of and objects found within the setting that support their shared actions (Gibson 1986; Heft 2007).

In light of the literature on affordances, places can be seen as "life spaces" (Lewin 1945; Russell and Ward 1982) where the "stream of activity", the patterns of behaviour that occur there, result from the continuing interaction of factors within the person with external factors coming from the environment. This idea can also be found in the concept of "behaviour settings" (Barker and Schoggen 1983), which are concerned with the ecological environment of a person's behaviour, the 'bounded, geographical-physical-temporal locales and variegated but stable patterns in the behaviour of people en masse' (Schoggen 1989, p. 13). According to Barker and Schoggen (1983), the experiences of those who inhabit behaviour settings are formed by the interactions between the motivational and cognitive processes that inhabitants bring to the setting and the input that the setting provides for inhabitants. Individual behaviour is connected in complicated ways with both the person's inside parts (neurons, muscles, hormones) and with the outside context, the standing patterns of behaviour that are appropriate to and to be expected in the particular milieu or environment (Schoggen 1989).

The literature on affordances and behaviour settings is helpful to an understanding of affective practice in the way it seeks to explain not only how the individual's actions are shaped by the materiality of place but also the way that a place's affordances, and the actions that they allow, derive from social relationships between individuals and the setting. From this we see that many actions develop in relation to particular socially-constructed features of the environment, and that the environment's' constraints and possibilities emerge from the collective actions of its participants' (Heft 2007, p. 98).

### **c) Aesthetics**

A body of literature that can be seen as related to affordances to the extent that it is bound up with the 'materialities and practices of everyday life' (Hawkins and Straughan 2016, p. 28) and the ensemble of performances and intensities by which they are shaped, is that concerning aesthetics. The nature of aesthetics as an approach to the world is much debated (Dixon 2009) but it has usefully been described as 'a cognitively focused appraisal of the human body's sensory apprehension of the world and the emotive registers that both drive and are generated through this' (Dixon and Whitehead 2008, p. 605). Aesthetics are part of the 'generative, distributed expressiveness of the city' (Latham and McCormack 2009, pp. 260 - 261), encompassing the affective and more-than-representational dynamics that serve to shape how we make sense of the city (Highmore 2010). There is also a political dimension to aesthetics 'as a form of perceiving the world and a mode of relating to it' (Dikeç 2015, p. 35).

Aesthetic appreciation is understood here according to the three-fold description set out by Porteous (1996): sensory aesthetics, that is the sensations received from the environment: sounds, colours, textures and smells; formal aesthetics, more concerned with appreciation of the shapes, rhythms, complexities and sequences of the visual world; and symbolic aesthetics, involving an appreciation of the meanings of those environments that give people pleasure. It can be understood in relation to affordance. According to Appleton (1975), the basis of aesthetic appreciation is found in biology, in the form of a primitive, inbuilt survival instinct, which governs our behaviour in relation to our environment and is shaped and developed by our environmental experience. Appleton sets out a "habitat theory" whereby human beings experience pleasure in landscapes that are favourable to their biological needs, that is, which "seem to be" most favourable to survival (p. 69):

What matters is not the *actual* potential of the environment to furnish the necessities for survival, but its *apparent* potential as apprehended immediately rather than calculated rationally. In a sense, we see the objects which comprise our environment as symbols suggesting by association properties which are not necessarily inherent in the object themselves.



Aesthetic appreciation is, therefore, a reaction to landscape as habitat, a “live-in” rather than a “look-at” experience. Appleton argues that key to this ‘elementary relationship between man and his perceived environment is the extent to which he is able to exploit it in securing an advantage in his relations with his fellow humans’ (ibid., p. 69). He goes on to develop a more specific “prospect and refuge” theory drawing on hunting: the hunter needs to be able to view their prey whilst remaining hidden until the moment comes to strike. To do this the hunter must have wide vistas all round (prospect) together with the opportunity of a hiding place (refuge). The hunted, on the other hand, must have wide vistas all around (prospect), plus the chance of getting away to a hidden place (refuge). The most satisfying landscapes therefore are rich in prospects and refuges.

Several studies have confirmed the connection between preference and various predictors including prospect, refuge, whether the landscape is interesting to explore, and whether it provides a feeling of security (Hagerhall 2000). Adevi and Grahn (2012) argued that whilst people feel at home in the kind of landscape that they grew up in, a range of “innate reflexes” can also be identified, related to certain basic needs for safety and security, which function as predictors of the type of landscape that an individual is likely to seek out. Mealey and Theis (1995) showed that preference is also influenced by mood, with those individuals who reported a positive mood preferring landscapes rich in “prospect”, whilst those who experienced unease preferring landscapes rich in “refuge”. Although interesting for the purposes of this research, these studies tend to be subject to the criticism that, focussing on natural landscapes, for example Balling and Falk’s (1982) study demonstrating preference for savannah-type environments, they are difficult to apply to an urban setting. Appleton’s work in particular is subject to criticism concerning the selectiveness of the examples that he deploys to illustrate it (Morgan 1978).

Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) created an interesting model of environmental preference within which preference is an underlying expression of human needs and purposes, and where aesthetic reaction ‘is an indication of an environment where effective human functioning is more likely to occur’ (p. 10). In this model, perception and preference are closely related, with perception a key element in preference, and preference actively guiding learning and behaviour. People are

not necessarily aware of their needs or preferences: assessing the necessary variables to reach a preference judgement is both very fast and entirely unconscious. According to Kaplan and Kaplan, perception is also strongly influenced by past experience, with longstanding residents of an area showing both greater differentiation of the landscape features and different appreciation of the common aspects of the landscape compared to visitors. (However, they reported that it was difficult to say exactly how preference was affected by past experience.)

Preference in this model relates to the individual's ability to acquire information through the legibility of the landscape so as to make inferences about his or her whereabouts. Lynch (1960) writes in a similar vein of "imageability", 'that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer', due to its shape, colour or arrangement, 'vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment' (p. 9). According to Lynch, this image may be analysed into three components: identity, the distinction from other things creating recognition; structure, the spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other objects; and meaning, the emotional or practical meaning that the object has for the observer. Alexander (2002) similarly focusses on structure, looking for the repeated appearance in objects of particular geometric properties. He argues that those objects that display these properties possess "living structure", inducing deep feeling, including a feeling of connectedness, in those who are in their presence.

Whereas Kaplan and Kaplan's study concerned the "experience of nature", Smith (1977) treated aesthetics and value systems in a way more suited to urban environments, taking an approach via neuropsychology which argued that we have a physiological need for input into all three neurological processors - the limbic system and the neocortex with its two lateral hemispheres, arguing that 'the real value of urbanism lies in its capacity to excite all three units' (p. 191). This view stresses the centrality of tension or conflict in aesthetic experience, whereby conflicts are to be resolved and integrated by the subordination of 'competing visual attractions to an idea or plan of orderly arrangement' (ibid.).

The role of conflict is found also in Wohlwill's (1976) concept of "collative" properties, which draws on the work of Berlyne (1974) to set out a view of environmental aesthetics as a source of affect. He lists a set of interrelated attributes of stimuli including complexity, novelty, incongruity, ambiguity and surprisingness that all relate to the uncertainty inherent within a stimulus which in turn generates conflict in the individual in attempting to interpret it. He reports that 'a stimulus elicits investigatory or exploratory responses designed to reduce the uncertainty or conflict engendered by it, to the extent that it possesses such collative properties' (Wohlwill 1976, p. 40). His hypothesis is that individuals will engage in the active exploration of a stimulus in direct proportion to the amount of uncertainty and conflict it engenders, seeking to lower a high level of arousal through that exploration.

The literature suggests that when we experience place, we are deploying aesthetic interpretations of our surroundings that are created by both the immediate sensory encounter as well as by our past experiences in relation to the sensation of our surroundings (Foster 2009). Whilst aesthetic appreciation of environment may well have a survivalist, evolutionary base, cultural and social differences seem paramount when judgements are made about landscape beauty, suggesting that aesthetic appreciation also involves meaning and therefore learning (Porteous 1996): perception needs to be seen as permeated with the functional possibilities of places viewed alongside their social possibilities. Environmental aesthetics are therefore likely to be characterised not simply by the individual's response to stimuli but by the individual's response mediated by the presence of socially constructed knowledge that produces 'explanatory stories of the world that shape visions of what is relevant, causal and possible, proper or egregious' (Foster 2009, p. 97).

Responding to place, then, is not just about the physical setting; rather our world is a world of qualities where the flow of experience comes to us as a unified whole, a "situation", a complex of physical, biological, cultural and social conditions that constitute any given experience (Dewey 1896) and pervaded by an all-encompassing quality that makes the present situation what and how it is (Johnson 2007). As part of our embodied experience, we carry our knowledge, beliefs and attitudes with us and these participate in the process of experience and enable us to structure and interpret it. Aesthetic evaluation is, therefore,

not purely a personal experience but a social one since our knowledge, beliefs and opinions are social, cultural and historical and the cultural landscape becomes a repository over time of the values, meanings and traditions that the resident attaches to a specific place (Berleant 1997).

The literature reviewed thus far has suggested that the experience of place, characterised as affective practice, combines 'analysis of the interconnectedness of bodily routines of behaviour, mental routines of understanding and knowing and the use of objects' (Reckwitz 2002, p. 259), the pre-conscious intelligence of the body, the unqualified intensity of affect, the emotional and the discursive, past experience, belief and culture, desiring something and knowing how to do something, all in a material world, performative and moving, continually in process (McCormack 2006; Reddy 2001). The next section considers the implications of this understanding for how sense of place as affective practice might be apprehended. To do this it turns to literature that deals with the notion of "affective atmospheres" which seeks to move beyond conventional representations of place (Buser 2014) to describe the realisation in practice, habit and sensation of affect, the "strange attractor" lingering in place (Massumi 1992).

### **2.3.8 Affective atmospheres**

"Atmospheres" are seen in the literature as 'affective powers of feeling, spatial bearers of moods' (Böhme 1993, p. 113). According to Norberg-Schulz (1977), they represent 'the most comprehensive property of any place' (p. 5).

"Atmosphere" describes how the "expressed world" overflows the representational content of the material world as a 'certain quality which words cannot translate but which communicates itself in arousing a feeling' (Dufrenne 1973, p. 178). Yet, affective atmospheres are about more than mood: they are a part of practice and they concern action. Whilst they emanate from the material world, at the same time they need to be completed by the subjects that apprehend them, and they are therefore constantly emerging and transforming as they are reworked in lived experience (Anderson 2009). Duff (2010) argues that atmospheres represent a complex mix of 'social, material, and affective components, linked together in the sinews of practice, in the materiality of place and, finally, in the emergent "co-presencing" of bodies, place, and self' (p. 891).

Atmospheres have force: they 'affect the ways in which we inhabit these spaces' (Bissell 2010, p. 272). According to Bissell, they can be thought of as 'a *propensity*: a pull or a charge that might emerge in a particular space which might (or might not) generate particular events and actions, feelings and emotions' (p. 273 emphasis in original).

In this body of literature, place becomes meaningful through affective atmospheres: 'Affect links places together, providing a lived sense of belonging in place, while giving form to the meaning and purpose of one's neighbourhood or community' (Duff 2010, p. 892). It acts as a means of navigation, in that places present certain affective possibilities, serving 'as a kind of map or tool of navigation whereby individuals negotiate the city in search of those sites which later become *places* in and of the practices they support' (ibid. emphasis in original). Slaby, Mühlhoff and Wüschner (2019) use the related term "affective arrangement" to describe hyper-local spaces, such as a workplace, which form local spheres of "affective intensity", 'a material-discursive formation as part of which affect is patterned, channelled, and modulated in recurrent and repeatable ways' (p. 5). For them, the distinctive feature of these "local set-ups" is that they 'work by targeting and harnessing the domain of personal and affective relations between individuals' (ibid., p. 6).

Affective atmospheres are also seen to be relational, for example, the electric atmosphere in a sports stadium, which is a property neither of the stadium itself nor of any individual but of the relations between those present, a middle ground between both object and subject (Anderson 2009). Affective atmospheres 'occur *before and alongside* the formation of subjectivity, *across* human and non-human materialities, and *in-between* subject / object distinctions (ibid., p. 78 emphasis in original). Atmospheres are shared territory 'from which subjective states and their attendant feelings and emotions emerge' (ibid.), 'the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived' (Böhme 1993, p. 122). Bennett (2009) demonstrates this powerfully in showing how residents of Wheatley Hill, an ex-mining village, coped with the effects of pit closure and attempted, in the face of this, to create a new sense of collective identity and continuity through the nostalgic appropriation of symbols, such as the lodge banner, that linked residents to particular histories and practices important to creating a sense of community and belonging.

Affective atmospheres are said by some scholars to spread through 'imitative contagion' (Thrift 2008 a, p. 231), coalescing, touching and diffusing through bodies (Bissell 2010). Bissell illustrates this through the physical signs of stress commonly observed amongst train passengers when a delay becomes apparent: beads of sweat on the forehead, hands placed on the back of the neck, catching the eye of fellow passengers, the surge of adrenalin at the realisation of the connection that will be missed. Ahmed (2004 b) argues that affect arises from 'the circulation between objects and signs' (p. 245) whereby some signs increase in affective value the more they circulate. Affects are not a property of an individual or object; the "subject" is just one "nodal point" in the economy rather than its origin and destination. According to Ahmed, "affective economies" need to be 'seen as social and material, as well as psychic', shaping 'the surfaces of bodies and worlds' (Ahmed 2004 a, p. 121). According to this view, affect is a relation that constitutes both its subject and its object. For example, 'Fear does not come from within the subject, nor does it reside in its object ... Through the circulation of signs of fear, the black other "becomes" fearsome' (Ahmed 2004 a, p. 127). Ahmed argues that no one is inherently hateful or detestable; rather, it is my hate that constitutes someone or something as hateful. As affects circulate, creating particular kinds of surfaces, subjects and objects, individual and collective bodies, they sometimes "stick", for example to the figure of the "asylum-seeker", constituting a sign that then accrues more and more "value" over time, as a kind of accumulated affect. Such "stickiness" depends on past histories, making some objects seem more fearsome than others: 'It is the movement of fear between signs which allows the object of fear to be generated in the present' (ibid.).

A number of related concepts are evident in the literature that have potential to shed further light on how affective atmospheres might be apprehended and understood to function. The following sub-sections will consider these concepts in turn, focussing on emotions, structures of feeling and image structures.

### **a) *Emotions***

Affective atmospheres necessarily incorporate emotions as an inevitable part of our everyday experience. Although some scholars of affect, such as Massumi (2002), make a sharp distinction between affect, as preconscious bodily

intensity, and emotion, as feelings formed by cognitive and discursive practices, others, such as Martin (2013) recognise the importance of not losing sight of emotion when dealing with affect, arguing against a sharp divide whereby affect is seen as something that belongs exclusively to an inner life and is therefore incapable of “social articulation” (Lutz 2017; Wetherell 2012). Slaby and Röttger-Rössler (2018) stress the practical connection between affect and emotion seeing emotions as ‘recurring sequences of affective interaction that have come to be socially coded, that is, categorized, narrativized ... and subjected to normative regulation with regard to agreed-upon “feeling rules” ... in an “emotional community”’ (p. 5). They argue that emotions, once “consolidated” and “culturally codified”, play a significant role in how affect plays out for individuals and communities.

It is widely understood in the literature that the human world is constructed and lived through emotions and that social relations are mediated by feelings and sensibility (Anderson and Smith 2001): ‘Life is inherently spatial and inherently emotional’ (Jones 2005, p. 205). These embodied and mindful phenomena in part shape and are shaped by our personal inter-relationship with place (Davidson and Bondi 2004). Whilst there is no common agreement in the literature about what an emotion is (Reddy 2001), it is widely recognised that emotion is critical to our ability to evaluate situations and to assess the meaning of our experience. Feeling an emotion is the way that we make sense of changes in our body state, as our bodies respond to changes in their situation: ‘Emotions are key components of complex processes of bodily perception, assessment, internal monitoring, self-transformation, motivation and action’ (Johnson 2007, p. 66). This means that emotions ‘are amongst the most important ways in which ... humans, are connected with and disconnected from their world ... a vital ingredient in the very composition of the world’ (Smith et al. 2009, p. 2); ‘Emotional responses de-limit places as much as people’ (ibid., p. 3).

Emotions can also be seen as performative. Reddy (2001) defines emotions as ‘a range of loosely connected thought material, formulated in varying codes, that has goal-relevant valence and intensity’ (p. 94). Reddy sees emotions as being not radically different from reason or thought. Drawing on Austin’s (1962) speech act theory, Reddy formulates the concept of “emotives”, normally first-

person speech acts such as "I feel angry" that are both performative and constative. 'I feel angry' is constative in that it describes my subjective state, but also performative in that it can enact a change, representing a bringing to a head, a turning point whereby confused or fugitive feelings are crystallised and labelled, changing the feeling being described reflexively by reconstituting the experience as a particular category of feeling. In this way, emotives alter what they "refer" to, 'changing, building, hiding, intensifying emotions' (Reddy 2001, p. 105).

In the context of affective practice, understood as an 'entwinement of the most irreducible side of corporeality' with the 'sociocultural, symbolic places of subjects' (Giardini 1999, p. 150), emotions similarly need to be understood as multi-dimensional, not susceptible to being reduced to biology, relations, or discourse alone, but belonging to all these dimensions as they are constituted in ongoing relational practices (Burkitt 1997). Burkitt argues that emotion is not a 'cognitive interpretation of the situation, nor of some inner physiological stirrings, but is a bodily expression within a situation' (p. 43). As such, 'emotions cannot be understood as "things", but are complexes composed of different dimensions of embodied, interdependent human existence' (ibid., p. 42). Rather than being understood as "'things" internal to the individual and their biological constitution', they should be viewed as 'to do with the social relations and inter-dependencies between people' (ibid., p. 52). Their meaning is found in the context of relations to other bodies, both human and non-human, in the 'in-between of the "vague and unordered feelings or sense of context"; the skin, texture, and ethos of everyday life' (Harrison 2000, p. 502).

Emotions can be seen in the literature as constitutive of social life (Gergen 1994), as 'transient social roles' (p. 222) or 'modes of cultural performance' (ibid., p. 225). According to Burkitt (1997), culture provides a sort of "emotional habitus", a language and a set of practices that govern how emotions are spoken about and bodily feelings acted upon. Thus emotions are not based on the cognitive examination of inner sensation; rather, sensation and cognition occur simultaneously within particular contexts as a learned bodily response or "disposition" that individuals are trained in from childhood and through which they develop the "emotional dispositions" that are expressed throughout a person's life. Whilst emotions can have a familiar physiological pattern to them



which is recognisable to some extent across cultures, at the same time, 'in their full expression [they are] culturally constructed and thus particular' (p. 43).

### ***b) Structures of feeling***

Emotions are understood by some scholars to be experienced primarily through a "structure of feeling" (Williams 1977; Hetherington 1998) or "structure of experience" (Williams 1977). The concept of structure of feeling values experience for itself, forming a 'practical consciousness of a present kind' and attempting to grasp that which is actually being lived as opposed to what it is only thought is being lived. According to Williams (1977, p. 132) it is concerned with:

meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations ... we are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically, affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought.

Whilst "structure of feeling" has been subject to criticism, for example that it is unsatisfactory or unclear (O'Connor 1989) or elusive (Pickering 1997), it can be considered helpful in the context of a study that seeks to consider affect in relation to performance (Peschel 2012) in accounting for how the individual senses their relationship with wider society. As the structural properties of the social system are expressed in the form of everyday practices and, at the same time, those everyday practices reproduce the structural properties of the social system in question (Pred 1983), the individual experiences this as a 'felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities' combine 'into a way of thinking and living' (Williams 1965, p. 63). This is sensed rather than learned as witnessed by the fact that, according to Williams, each new generation will have its own structure of feeling, responding in its own way to the world it inhabits and making its own creative response into a new structure of feeling.

Structures of feeling give meaning to relational experience (Burkitt 2002). According to Burkitt, we are more likely to sense patterns of relationship through a common structure of feeling than through cognitive structures of ideas and

conceptions; we are aware of a structure of feeling before we can articulate the emotions of which it is composed. Structures of feeling are thus part of practical consciousness and involve the way we can act within our social world through a sense of what has to be done (Burkitt 1997). Ingold's (2000) concept of "Taskscape" functions similarly: people, as they go about their tasks, pay attention to one another, feeling each other's presence in the social environment, adjusting their movements in response to this ongoing perceptual monitoring. For Ingold, the foundations of sociality lie 'in the resonance of movement and feeling stemming from people's mutually attentive engagement, in shared contexts of practical activity' (ibid., p. 196).

According to Williams (1977), a structure of feeling, being emergent, in process or "in solution" sits at 'the very edge of semantic availability' (p. 134). Other scholars place more emphasis on the 'omnipotence of language' (Barthes 1990 p. 215) in apprehending feeling and emotion. Harré (1986), for example, sees emotion as belonging to discursive consciousness and describes the way that we articulate that consciousness through "emotion vocabularies". According to Gergen (1994), this emotional discourse gains its meaning 'not by virtue of its relationship to an inner world (of experience, disposition, or biology), but by the way it figures in patterns of relation' (p. 222). In this view, communities have conventional ways of relating which lead to actions, some forms of which are indicative of emotions. As Burkitt (1997) puts it, 'What are involved in the production of emotion are relationships and the practices and speech genres that can be found within them, rather than processes internal to the individual which are only later expressed' (p. 40). According to Burkitt (2002), emotions can be articulated through "speech genres" which give form to specific emotions that have a place in the emotional vocabulary of a particular culture. Individuals use these speech genres to 'orient themselves in their relationships and interactions' (Burkitt 1997, p. 41). Emotions are not, then, so much expressed in discourse as *completed* in discourse so that the discourses, narratives and emotional terms available within a culture take up an affect and 'turn it into a particular kind of thing ... an articulation, mentally organised, and publicly communicated in ways that engage with and reproduce power relations' (Wetherell 2012, p. 24).

### ***c) Image structures***

This final sub-section concerning how affective atmospheres might be understood to function turns to the visual and considers image structures. It can be argued that human existence is dependent on establishing a meaningful and coherent environmental image (Norberg-Schulz 1971), 'a relatively stable system of perceptual schemata, or "image" of the environment' (p. 17).

Norberg-Schulz suggests that it was by structuring the world into domains defined by natural directions, or by natural elements such as shorelines, or by the human activities carried out in a particular area that give it a distinctive character, that ancient man gained an "existential foothold". Wetherell (2012) argues that bodily movement, engagement with the material world and perceptual interactions all involve recurring patterns, or image-schematic structures, which form the meaning structures through which we understand the world and without which our experience would be chaotic and incomprehensible. Similarly, Jones (2005, p. 206) argues that, 'Each spatialized, felt, moment or sequence of the now-being-laid-down is, (more or less) mapped into our bodies and minds to become a vast store of past geographies which shape who we are and the ongoing process of life'.

Image-schematic structures cause our bodies to be disposed to certain feelings and actions. Brown and Stenner (2001) argue that it is through forming an image of some other thing that the body becomes disposed to act in a particular way. This idea can be traced back to Spinoza who says that, 'The images of things are the very affections of the human body, that is, the ways in which the human body is affected by external causes and disposed to this or that action' (Spinoza 1992, p. 123). Our dispositions are not automatic: each person has many different habits or dispositions and any number can be called out in a particular encounter so that it is impossible to predict with certainty how we will respond in any context (Johnson 1987).

According to Roland Barthes' (1990) concept of "image-repertoire", the thing that gives rise to the image does not actually need to be present. He describes how, when something about another human body appeals to us and stirs our amorous feelings, fragments of the body are assembled into an idealized picture that brings the other into focus as the object of our desire. The idealized

other is like an 'inert object, like a kind of stuffed doll, for me to shift my desire from this annulled object to my desire itself; it is my desire I desire, and the loved being is no more than its tool ... I sacrifice the image to the image-repertoire' (p. 31). To scrutinise the loved body to find the source of desire is as mistaken as 'those children who take a clock apart in order to find what time is' (ibid., p. 71) since the source of feeling is rather the relationship between the lover and the loved.

Images understood in this way are felt rather than consciously reflected upon (rather like the way we feel our way around a city); they have a figurative character, as 'structures of embodied imagination' (Johnson 1987, p. xx), that function to organize our mental representations at a level more general and abstract than that at which we form particular mental images. According to Johnson (1987), image-schema are not rich, concrete images or mental pictures; rather they are perceptible primarily as a bodily sense of being in the world through movement, touch, vision and all the other senses.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This review has considered a broad range of literature in a quest to engage critically with the question of how "sense of place" operates for individuals in their embodied encounter with place and to consider the potential of "sense of place" as an organising concept in understanding the factors that determine how people use public spaces in the heritage city of York. The bodies of literature reviewed, which were identified on the basis of illuminating both the "big stories" of place and the "small stories" expressive of knowledge gleaned through embodied and intersubjective experience (Cameron 2012), have spanned the role of the discursive, placing a focus on ideology and beliefs; sociological understandings of the person-place relationship, dealing with place identity, attachment and dependence; and the embodied experience of place, the affective, aesthetic and emotional mechanisms through which place and body interact.

All three strands of the literature reviewed appear to have the potential to contribute to a workable concept of sense of place whilst, at the same time, each has evident limitations. The first section of the review articulated the

significance of ideology, discourse and power, pointing to their role in the formation of a “knowledge-in-practice” (Shotter 1993) that comes from living in a particular place and that governs how people act within it. This sheds light on how the “big stories” will contribute to sense of place and influence how individuals act within particular spaces. This section also reviewed literature concerned with “small stories” of place, demonstrating their potential to be revealing of more than just the workings of discourse and power, giving more weight to the story as revealing of the affective dimensions of personal experience, to its performative capacity, and to its potential to engage with the materiality of an active landscape.

The following sections engaged further with those factors might contribute to creating the small stories of places beginning with the psychological dimensions of the person-place relationship. This highlighted the significance of concepts of place identity, attachment and dependence for an over-arching conception of sense of place whilst concluding that, on their own, these concepts are not capable of accounting effectively for the dynamic nature of the person-place relationship and the critical importance of one’s personal experience of place.

To address these deficiencies the review moved on to consider literature that deals with the embodied experience of place. This considered phenomenological approaches, non-representational theory, affect and practices. What emerges strongly from engagement with this literature is the need for approaches capable of engaging with the “whole unfolding pattern” (Wetherell 2012) of the person-place relationship, approaches that can account for both the immediate, direct, embodied experience of the materiality of place, as well as the social dimensions, contained in “bodily memories”, including past experience and beliefs as well as culturally determined understandings and practices.

A possible way forward in dealing with this complexity was suggested by the notion found in the literature of “affective practice” (Walkerdine 2009; 2010; Wetherell 2012; 2013). This suggests viewing those everyday, embodied practices of people using public spaces as “complexes of activity” (Brown et al. 2009), encompassing the routinized behaviour and the specific forms of knowledge and understanding that underpin them (Reckwitz 2000), the

physiological response to affects, emotions as structures of feeling that give meaning to experience (Burkitt 2002), the properties of the particular settings, including their aesthetic attributes and their affordances, the image-schematic structures that cause the body to be disposed to certain feelings and actions (Brown and Stenner 2001), and the discourses and narratives that are revealing of the ideologies and the circuits of power at work within place. It implies the use of multiple channels of information (Reddy 2001) in order to capture the whole activity complex within which an experience is embedded.

It appears from the literature that no studies have so far been undertaken that seek to conceptualise sense of place in a holistic way such as is suggested here, nor specifically to test how the big stories of place, representing the ideological and discursive, interact with the small stories of individual embodied experience to influence how sense of place is formed. Whilst the notion of affective practice offers a promising theoretical approach for the purposes of this study, there appears to be a marked lack of studies that seek to investigate the embodied experience of place in these terms, that is as complexes of activity and using multiple channels of information.

It is clear from the review of the literature that, in order to address the research questions posed, fieldwork will be required that combines the social, the material, and the affective. This will mean engaging with both the big stories of place, wherever and however they are to be found in the city, as well as with the small stories of individuals' embodied interaction with the city's public spaces, understanding where they go, what they do, what affects are at work, the practices that are evident. This points to a study involving direct engagement with York residents; it will not be sufficient to rely on the voices of the expert or outside observer but must inevitably mean experiencing the embodied encounter with the spaces of the city, in all its complexity, alongside its residents.

These issues will be explored further in the Methodology section that follows.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This chapter outlines the research strategy pursued in the study. The methodological stance taken is discussed together with the ontology and epistemology that informs it. The rationale for the research methods chosen is set out followed by an explanation of how the research was carried out. The data produced are described and the way in which the data was used and analysed in the research is discussed.

### **3.1 Research strategy**

#### **3.1.1 A qualitative approach**

The study's research aim concerns exploring, through the lens of "stories", how sense of place manifests itself for residents of York and how that sense of place impacts upon the way residents use (or do not use) its public spaces. I recognised that, in pursuing these questions, it would be essential to engage with residents in those very public spaces. Equally, it would be necessary to use methods suitable for exploring their relationship with those spaces, the feelings that they had about them, the stories that they told about them, and the beliefs and understandings that shaped those stories. This pointed to the use of qualitative methods. Conventional, positivist approaches such as sampling, surveys or questionnaires would not have been capable of providing the direct, inter-personal engagement with respondents that was required in order to explore the affective and emotional dimensions of the person-place relationship. Nor would they have been capable of probing the agency of the material world within the person-place encounter. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, offered the potential to elucidate these dimensions through their ability to enter into the everyday life of the social setting (Marshall and Rossman 1989; Denzin and Lincoln 1994), capturing and valuing informants' own perspectives and experiences (Holloway 1997). A qualitative approach would allow for the adoption of an insider's stance to the study (Bryman 1989), enabling me, as one York resident, to engage, face-to-face, with other York residents about issues that were of mutual interest and importance within the research setting.

The strategy for determining the particular qualitative approaches to be taken was guided by an understanding that choice of method should not be determined at a methods level, according to the attractions or technical merit of

a particular method, but rather at a 'foundational or *methodological level* where *ontological* concerns of being, meaning and identity are taken in concert with *epistemological* concerns of knowing' (Hollinshead 2004 b, p. 83 emphasis in original). The choice would depend 'on the adoption of lines of enquiry which have the richest sustained ontological and epistemological fit with the problem area being investigated' (Hollinshead 2004 a, p. 63).

The "problem area" in this study, that of the relationship between people and place, might conventionally be thought to fit within a constructivist-interpretivist paradigm whereby reality is inter-subjective and 'meanings are created, negotiated, sustained and modified within a specific context of human action' (Schwandt 1998, p. 224). The commitment to look at the research questions through the lens of stories would, furthermore, suggest taking a narrative approach, which, since the "narrative turn" in the social sciences, would be expected to focus on how human subjects construct meaning through those stories (Smith and Monforte 2020). Yet, at the same time as giving value to personal experience and expression, the study seeks to take seriously the agency of an active, material world, recognising it as a 'performative and moving force' (McCormack 2006) within the "small story" of everyday encounter with the world. Recognising the need to deal with both human meaning and the agency of the material led me to adopt a "new materialist" (Coole and Frost 2010) mind-set. This challenges the hegemonic status of "meaning" within qualitative research, suggesting that capturing human meaning is not its only goal; rather attention must be paid to the whole of the material world, comprising, as it does, both organic bodies and material objects (Smith and Monforte 2020).

### **3.1.2 Ontology**

The ontology underpinning the study, that is its understanding of the nature of the knowable or the nature of reality in terms of concerns about being, becoming or meaning (Guba 1990), may be considered "realist" in that it demonstrates 'a commitment to the mind-independent existence of reality' (DeLanda 2006, p. 1). At the same time, however, it is recognised that the focus of the study, "sense of place", as a social construct, exists only in so far as the human mind exists to conceive of it. The ontology may therefore be



described as a “social ontology” (DeLanda 2006) dealing with questions about the nature of the social world and the various entities in the world that arise from social interaction.

According to new materialism, the material world is both real and constituted in part by our activity, ever-changing under the gaze of our enquiry, evading any possibility of capture within a single representation (Rosiek and Snyder 2018). In this variability lies its agency: the material world does not passively wait for our social processes of representation but “comes to meet us half way” (Barad 2007) in our research. Research gives insight into real things but it can give equally real results that are quite different, incompatible even. Understood in this way research can be said to be ‘ontologically generative’ (Rosiek and Snyder 2018, p. 2) creating, not simply representing, reality. Importantly, according to a new materialist understanding, it is not the human mind alone that is creating this reality: ‘the things of this world contribute in a dynamic way to the reality that arises from our engagement with the world – including contributing to the constitution of our subjectivity and ways of being’ (ibid.).

A new materialist ontology, then, takes fully seriously the materiality of the world without privileging its materiality over human meaning; rather the material and the discursive are given equal ontological status (Grosz 1994; Monforte 2020; Barad 2007). They are not to be thought of as distinct realms but rather as mutually articulated forces existing in a symbiotic relationship (Smith and Monforte 2020). As Law (2000, p. 2) puts it:

stories, effective stories, perform themselves into the material world—yes, in the form of social relations, but also in the form of machines, architectural arrangements, bodies, and all the rest. This means that one way of imagining the world is that it is a set of (pretty disorderly) stories that intersect and interfere with one another. It means also that these are, however, not simply narrations in the standard linguistic sense of the term.

Working within a new-materialist ontology means ascribing final causality to neither the material nor the discursive; rather it involves looking to assemblage as the primary focus for analysis such as is found in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) anti-essentialist ontology of assemblage. Deleuze and Guattari

recognise the power of discourse to affect material bodies but, equally, recognise that material bodies are important and affect discourse, collapsing the traditional divide between meaning and matter. They suggest that reality consists of a flat ontological plane populated by different semiotic entities and material bodies that are equally real and active, are mutually affecting, and have effects in the world (Feely 2016). Provoking a new way of thinking about the nature of material bodies, drawing on Spinoza, Deleuze and Guattari (1988) move away from questions concerning “what is a body” towards thinking about the virtual capacity of a body to affect or be affected, asking ‘What can a body do?’ (p. 299). An affect is seen as a “becoming” and the world, rather than being founded on stable structures or systems, is seen as continuously emergent from a series of productive events (Fox and Aldred 2015).

The relationality of the world, understood as assemblage, does not privilege human agency since the capacity to affect and to be affected belongs to all matter, human and non-human. In assemblage, there is no ‘subject’ and no ‘object’, and no one element possesses agency (Anderson 2006).

Assemblages operate as “machines” that produce something, with affective flows causing relations to develop in unpredictable ways, ‘in a kind of chaotic network of habitual and non-habitual connections, always in flux, always reassembling in different ways’ (Potts 2004, p. 19). The materiality that is produced is plural, open, complex, uneven and contingent (Coole and Frost 2010).

An important implication for the research process arising from this thinking is that the agency of the entities being enquired into arises in the research processes: ‘individual things with their own determinate set of properties’ (Barad 2007, p. 19) cannot be identified; rather, according to Barad, they are always already entangled with other things and act together in unpredictable and indeterminate ways. For Barad, rather than coming into the research fully formed and “interacting”, enquirer and object shape each other in “intra-action”, through their “entanglement” producing reality as an emergent property that ‘renders both the boundaries of the object of inquiry and the subjectivity of the inquirer contingent to that activity’ (Rosiek and Snyder 2018, p. 7). Human bodies, just like all other material entities, understood as relational, have no ontological status or integrity other than is produced through their relationship to

other similarly contingent bodies, entities, discourses and ideas (Fox and Aldred 2015). The thinking, speaking “I” is supplanted by an embodied subject always affected by its material environment as well as by its position in discourse (Braidotti 2011).

### **3.1.3 Epistemology**

My epistemology, that is what it means to know, ‘the nature of the relationship between the knower or the would-be knower and what can be known’ (Guba and Lincoln 1994, p. 108) or, more simply, ‘how we know what we know’ (Crotty 1998, p. 8), is shaped by an ontology that understands the world as ‘a dynamic and shifting entanglement of relations’ (Barad 2007, p. 35). If entities are understood as shaped through entanglement, that is they are context-specific rather than absolute, then there is no way to reveal a pure “essence” of reality (Barad 1996): knowing the world is an impossibility, ‘not indexed to the limits of perception or to the development of technology but rather intrinsic to the complexity of objects or processes themselves’ (Greco 2005, p. 24). An entangled world implies entangled knowledge, situated, provisional, always to be created anew (Fox and Alldred 2015).

If knowledge is entangled, then knowing is to be understood as not only a human practice since ‘knowing is a matter of part of the world making itself intelligible to another part’ (Barad 2007 p 185). In this way, reality comes to be understood as an ‘agential reality’ (Barad 1996, p. 177) constructed by ‘things in phenomena’ (ibid., p. 176), in other words, through ‘intra-actions’ (ibid., p.179). These intra-actions must inevitably include both object and observer as well as both ends of the meaning / material axis of the assemblage (Fox and Alldred 2019). This analysis leads to an “onto-epistemology” (Barad 2007) which effectively cuts across the conventional separation between the nature of reality and issues of knowing.

The research process cannot, according to this understanding, be seen in terms of the researcher making sense of the world through human cognitive processes, applying ‘reason, logic and scientific method’ to impose order upon “data” (Fox and Alldred 2015, p. 403); rather, research knowledge will be produced by understanding the researcher and data to be part of a “research-assemblage” (Coleman and Ringrose 2013; Masny 2013), with its own affective

flows or “affect economy” (Clough 2004), a “territorialisation” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988) that shapes the knowledge it produces according to the particular flows of affect produced by all elements of the methodology and methods, including the researcher, the events being researched and the research tools (Fox and Alldred 2015).

Within the research assemblage, the researcher comes to know the world not by standing back from it as a neutral observer, but from direct experience, observing from the inside, moving forward with it, coupling ‘the forward movement of one’s own perception and action with the movements of others’ (Ingold 2014, p. 389). The researcher’s task is to attend not to individual bodies or experiences but rather to uncover the relations and the “affective economy” operating within assemblages, human and non-human, material and abstract, looking at them not in terms of “what they are” but rather “what they do”, as flows rather than as structures. The aim must be to understand their capacities to affect as well as the processes of territorialisation and de-territorialisation at work (Fox and Alldred 2015). Rather than seeking to reproduce events “truthfully”, the researcher’s task involves ‘following the flow of matter’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 435), seeing the research product not as a faithful mirror on the world, but rather as a potentially useful assemblage for ongoing learning (Toohey 2019).

In following events as they unfold, the researcher must recognise that ‘assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 465). Always experienced in embodied knowledge-production, desire is a force that is distributed, circulating, and productive (Fox and Alldred 2015). It is not rational or coherent but rather an ‘ontological drive to become’ (Braidotti 2013, p. 134): ‘Vital matter is driven by the ontological desire for the expression of its innermost freedom’ (Braidotti 2018, p. 34). The researcher’s approach must incorporate experiential and corporeal sensing, valorising affective processes in order to map ‘particular practices and performances of affective corporeality’ (McCormack 2005, p. 125). Such an approach will take seriously multiplicity and complexity, empowering creative alternatives (Braidotti 2010). The result will be not a representing of the world but the generating of ‘difference, divergence, and creation’ (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000, p. 416).

### **3.2 Positionality**

In developing my research strategy I recognised that, like all researchers, I was embedded in contexts of time, history and culture and that these would have a profound influence on my understanding of the people and practices that I encountered in the public spaces of York (Rowan and Reason 1981; Jones, Nast and Roberts 1997): 'the social position of the observer determines what he is likely to see' (Vidich 1955, p. 354). Research is always political (Conquergood 1995), never neutral (Valentine 2002); it is an interactive process shaped by the personal history, biography, gender, social class, race, and ethnicity of both the researcher and the collaborators (Denzin and Lincoln 2011) and, to understand the way that knowledge would be produced in the study it was critical to attend to the social and political processes at work (Savin-Baden and Howell-Major 2013; Peake and Trotz 1999) and my own location within the research assemblage.

In reflecting upon my position in the research in order to clarify the potential influences on my interpretations and analysis (Sikes 2014), I recognised that scrutiny of myself as researcher and a deepening understanding of my own identity offered 'the best resources for gaining insights into the life of others' (Callaway 1992, p. 30) as well as the potential to provide 'insights and new hypotheses about the research questions' (England 1994, p. 244). I therefore undertook self-reflection throughout the study, recorded in field notes, which I set alongside those derived from interaction with my respondents, embracing my subjectivity and using it as data (Morrow 2005).

I sought to make my own "position" clear at the outset of the research encounter (Rowan and Reason 1981; de Wit 2013). As the senior council officer at City of York Council with responsibility for areas that, over time, have included community cohesion, social inclusion and the public realm, my position was far from neutral in the research. My starting point, for example, was the normative assumption that all residents should not only feel "at home" in their city and be able to access and enjoy its public spaces but should increasingly feel a sense of ownership of these spaces. Part of my professional role is to help the council make the shift from service provider to "place-maker". This shift is characterised by a move away from the traditional, paternalistic approach of

doing things for and to people and towards a concern with empowering residents and communities to shape their own lives and neighbourhoods, helping them where necessary to build community capacity rather than seeking to tackle issues directly. Public space is an important concern to most communities and one where this shift in the council's role is felt quite keenly. Whilst public open space often represents a focus for community action and a stimulus for the creation of new community structures and organisations, and much of my work has involved supporting this, nonetheless, I was aware that not all residents are necessarily ready to "share responsibility" for local action as envisaged in the "Big Society" paradigm (Coote 2011) and see the council's progressive withdrawal from the role of service provider as the cause of deterioration in their local environment. I anticipated that my research respondents might well express views critical of the council and potentially of my role within it and that I would need to reflect carefully on these differences of perspective.

I also recognised that my position as both researcher, located in one of the city's universities, and senior council officer, would create an inequality between myself as researcher and my research participants (Sultana 2007) and that this was likely to impact on how my respondents related to me. I anticipated that this might be compounded by the fact that my accent immediately reveals that I am not from York. I was conscious that my respondents, or at least those born and bred in York, might relate to me within a particular York dynamic whereby residents see their interests and wishes for the future of the city as being in tension with those of both an elite group composed of incomers and also, at times, those of the council (Furness 2014), and that this might lead them to respond to me in particular ways.

In light of these issues I sought firstly to recognise and accept the different identities of researcher and research participant, seeking to identify those 'facets of self' that connected me with my research respondents, as well as those 'other facets that emphasize[d] our difference' (Narayan 1993, p.680) and to give consideration to how the power relations inherent within these facets should be negotiated (Hopkins 2007). I took care to make my research respondents aware of both my research objectives and my professional role, aiming to acknowledge differences in order to facilitate more open

conversations (Valentine 2002) and to make participants feel comfortable enough to reveal how they positioned me in relating their experiences (Falconer Al Hindi and Kawabata 2002). At the same time, I sought to make a connection with my research collaborators, responding to them empathetically so that experiences of difference and similarity were respected without necessarily being made explicit (Bondi 2003). I sought to create this connection by conveying to participants my partisan perspective, that is my wish to see a city more accessible to and improved for the benefit of its residents. In this way, I endeavoured with my research participants to 'see together without claiming to be another' (Haraway 1991, p. 193). I also sought to address the power differential between myself as researcher and my respondents by not only making my respondents aware of the purpose of my research aims but seeking their ideas and input into the course the research should take, the methods that should be used and further research projects that might be undertaken in the future. My aim in this was to make the project as far as possible a collaboration with the research participants (Rowan and Reason 1981), a "cooperative inquiry" where respondents could effectively contribute to shaping it as self-directing, intelligent agents (Heron 1981).

### **3.3 Research approach**

The following section concerns my over-arching approach to the study. It is shaped by my understanding of my role in the study as one of "participant observer" making a case study of the city of York. The need for a multi-stranded approach to methodology in order to be able to account for the complexities of the person-place relationships encountered is discussed and the implications of this for how quality is to be understood in the research is considered.

#### **3.3.1 Participant observer**

I recognised that, to uncover the "small stories" of embodied encounter with the spaces of the city, I would need to engage directly and individually with research respondents in the field as they negotiated their relationships with the spaces and places in York that they used. I would need to place myself alongside them in these place encounters, as participant observer, not only to observe the encounter and to hear what they had to say about it, but also to

take part in it, to experience it for myself and to be affected by it. I would be not so much uncovering and describing realities as participating in enacting them: it would entail a performative approach (Law 2004).

Being “participant observer” I understood as a mode of being-in-the-world (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994), one that, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), allows ‘the inquirer to see the world as his subjects see it, to live in their time frames, to capture the phenomenon in and on its own terms, and to grasp the culture in its own natural, ongoing environment’ (p. 193). I aimed not to “other” my research participants but rather to engage with them and probe my relationship to them (Fine 1994). I wanted the “voice” of the study to be that of “passionate participant” (Lincoln, Lynham and Guba 2011, p. 99), enabling me to use myself as a data source, experiencing and observing both my own and others’ participation within the encounter. I sought to position myself as ‘self-conscious, critical, and participatory analyst, engaged with but still distinct from [my] informants’ (Fine 1992, p. 220) in order to be able to present both my own and others’ participation together ‘within a single narrative ethnography’ (Tedlock 1991, p. 69).

### **3.3.2 A case study**

I judged that a case study approach would be well suited to addressing the kind of complex “how” and “why” questions (Yin 2003) that a study of sense of place would inevitably throw up. As a study of a specific, bounded system (Hollinshead 2004 a) in its ‘particularity and complexity’ (Stake 1995, p. xi), the case study brings an intricacy, a commitment to meticulous detail (Gillham 2000 a), and an ability to look at phenomena from all angles. It offers the potential to create complex and holistic descriptions, to craft what Foucault (1981) described as a “polyhedron of intelligibility”. Its closeness to real-life situations facilitates a “real-world perspective” (Yin 2003), a nuanced view of reality (Flyvbjerg 2006) that generates ‘practical rationality and judgement’ (Flyvbjerg 2001, p. 135). In short, it offered the potential to enter into the everyday world of York residents.

An oft-cited limitation of the case study is that it does not provide a basis for generalization (Stake 2000); however, understanding my research task as being to expand the range of available interpretations (rather than to find the correct



interpretation) (Donmoyer 2000), I judged that the case study offered the potential to form a rich picture from which to gain powerful analytical insights (Thomas 2011), allowing me to enable the reader to access the person-place encounter within the city of York in a way they otherwise might not have been able to and to see things through my eyes as researcher that they might not otherwise have been able to see (Donmoyer 2000). The potential criticism that it may be difficult to separate out what is seen from the researcher's values (Stage and Manning 2016) is countered by the benefit that seeing events vicariously through the eyes of the researcher may bring, enabling readers to understand those events through expanding their "cognitive structures" (Donmoyer 2000).

### **3.3.3 Bricolage**

The complexities and subtleties involved in the person-place relationship as the subject of the study suggested that the research would need to be multi-stranded if it was to achieve a sophisticated understanding (Denzin and Lincoln 2011). This pointed to the use of "bricolage", an emergent construction, shifting and taking new shape as different, increasingly fine-tuned approaches, tools and methods of representation and interpretation are deployed (Denzin and Lincoln 2011; Hollinshead 2004 a). My aim in combining methodological practices in a single study was to add 'rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth to an enquiry' (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, p. 5). Such an approach can be likened to seeing an image in the different facets of a crystal (Ellingson 2011) as the same tale is told from different points of view. The aim was to produce data the richness of which would constitute the bottom line for assessing the quality of the study (Donmoyer 2000).

### **3.3.4 Quality**

My understanding at the outset was that quality would be the relevant criterion of judgement for the study rather than terms such as reliability or validity that are used in connection with positivist studies (Seale 1999). Quality would subsist firstly in the study's authenticity. This might be assessed against the criteria suggested by Morrow (2005): "fairness", "ontological authenticity" and "catalytic authenticity". Fairness, in this context, means different constructions being solicited and appropriately reflected in the study; ontological authenticity

refers to participants' individual constructions being 'improved, matured, expanded and elaborated' (p. 252); and catalytic authenticity concerns the extent to which the study stimulates action.

Secondly, I recognised that the study's trustworthiness and authenticity would depend upon how well I conceived, constructed and conducted the study (Hammersley 2005), the extent to which it met the criteria for assessing research conducted within the interpretivist paradigm suggested by Guba (1981), namely credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability. The study's dependability would derive from the extent to which my findings truly emerged from the data gathered and analysed whilst its credibility would depend on the extent to which I was able to align the findings and reality, as constructed by myself as researcher and my research participants (Merriam 1998). Confirmability would reside in the extent to which the findings of the research project could be confirmed by others in the field and that 'the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants' (Shenton 2004, p. 72). Finally, transferability would involve me providing enough context around the research project for the consumer of the research to be able to relate the findings to their own contexts (Lincoln and Guba 1985).

### **3.4 Research methods**

The research methods that I chose reflected my commitment to explore the relationship between sense of place and the way that individuals use (or do not use) the various types of public spaces that are available to them through the lens of "stories" and to examine the relative salience, in the formation of sense of place, of the "big stories" of place, revealed in ideologies, discourse and narrative, and the "small stories" of embodied encounter with public spaces.

To do this, the greater part of the research project would be spent embedded in those everyday places where people go about their everyday lives since 'interrogating the body-place relationship implies the importance of on-site research' (Rishbeth 2014, p. 101). I recognised that, in order to hear the "small stories" of York's public spaces it would be necessary to recruit as participants "ordinary" York residents. I wanted to avoid the "usual suspects", those who normally get to talk about York, either by virtue of their roles or their willingness and ability to contribute to public consultation exercises, and who are thereby

particularly influential in shaping the “big stories” of the city. This would mean finding people who were previously unknown to me, individuals who did not circulate in the realms of the city’s governance and who were not active in groups that are influential in, or campaign about the future planning of the city, such as the Civic Trust. I determined that I would, as far as possible, recruit those whose voices are normally least likely to be heard in public discourse, those who are “easier-to-ignore” (Lightbody 2017; Hardy and Chakraborti 2019), whether because of their status, level of educational attainment or other socio-economic factors. I also recognised that it would be necessary to recruit individuals from a variety of settings across the city including the city centre and the suburban and surrounding areas in order to experience embodied engagement with a variety of spaces, both the iconic heritage sites and the mundane, everyday spaces. More detail concerning the participants is provided below with respect to each of the research projects.

Before venturing out into the field in pursuit of the small stories generated by the specific experiences of York residents in particular locations, however, I needed to undertake a preliminary research exercise, seeking to identify the big stories of place circulating in the city. My purpose in doing this was to understand how the city is framed discursively, in order to provide a context for examining the small stories of everyday encounter and to consider how these big stories that individuals inevitably carry with them into their embodied encounters with the city’s spaces, the stories that constitute the knowledge-in-practice that comes from living in a particular place (Shotter 1993), help to shape those encounters.

#### **3.4.1 Engaging with the “big stories” of place**

I sought the big stories of place in two principal domains. Firstly, I was concerned to engage with stories told from “on high” in the sense of stories emanating from positions of power or authority, from “official” sources, notably the council, influential stakeholder bodies, such as the Civic Trust, or individuals who have the credentials and capability to have work published. This involved considering how York has been written about over time in histories of the city, in material concerning the architecture and heritage of the city, in local authority policy documents, and in travel guides. This material spanned a number of centuries dating back to some of the earliest examples of the writing of civic

history. Particular attention was given to the ways that the city and its future have been framed and contested over time. I then moved on to consider more contemporary materials, again including local authority strategies and policy documents, as well as marketing materials and guides produced to promote the city to visitors.

Secondly, I sought to capture stories from an “on high” perspective in the sense of stories told by ordinary citizens as they stand back and reflect upon their city, the ‘collecting together of stories’ (Massey 2005, p. 130) through which residents construct place discursively. To do this, I looked at contemporary projects and writing that generate a plurality of voices, drawing upon data from a major “city narrative” initiative that was being undertaken by the council during the period of the study with the aim of creating ‘a way of describing York’ and ‘identifying the values the city cherishes’ (City of York Council 2019 d, p. 37), and giving consideration to those social media sites through which residents and others exchange stories about the city.

#### **3.4.1.1 Research project A – the textual sources**

The first project entailed examination of textual sources. There is, of course, a very extensive range and volume of material concerning the heritage city of York. In selecting material, my approach, following that advocated by Tonkiss (2004), was to sample sources from a range of writing types that were of particular relevance to the research question. In examining individual sources my aim was not to examine every line but rather to draw on those sections that furnished the richest supply of analytic material.

The method I used to examine sources was one of thematic narrative analysis (Riessman 2008). As with any narrative approach this entailed keeping stories intact for the purposes of analysis, looking at them as a whole, rather than breaking them down into component parts. My interest was not in the form of the narrative but rather in its thematic meaning, the “point” it makes, what is said, rather than how it is said or for what purpose (ibid.). I sought to identify the ideological and discursive content of the story, that is the way in which it provided a language for representing, or talking about a particular kind of knowledge about a topic (Tonkiss 2004).

### **3.4.1.2 Research project B – social media**

This research project was concerned with social media. Whilst no simplistic connection can be made between social media and “public opinion” (Anstead and O’Loughlin 2015), social media is, nonetheless, recognised as an increasingly important platform for storytelling (Page 2012), one where a greater plurality of “ordinary” voices are collected together and given power in shaping the story of a place (Ketter and Avraham 2012). In light of this, I identified the sites that deal with York as a place, in order to examine the discursive framings that they evidenced. I focussed on the most popular of these, *York Past and Present*. Set up in 2013 with the aim of creating a “York History” group for everyone, where not only pictures can be posted but the history and stories behind them shared (York Past and Present 2020 a), this had over 32,000 members as of June 2020.

In focussing on *York Past and Present*, I followed the tenets of *Netnography* (Kozinets, Dolbec and Earley 2014) which directs researchers to go site-specific, examining a small number of postings in order to gain a deep cultural sense of what is going on in that particular social space before broadening and deepening their analysis. Whilst I also followed the principles of netnography in becoming an active participant in this on-line community, in order to experience what it is like to be a community member, the data that I collected was limited to two out of the three possible data types that netnography identifies, in that I collected archival data - the previous postings of other members that was not a product of my involvement, and field notes - notes that I made on postings for the purpose of recording, reflection and analysis. (I did not elicit data through my own postings – the third possible data type).

I followed netnography in using a mixture of coding and “higher order” categorizations in order to create a hermeneutic interpretation, seeking to understand something general about social reality through the particularity of the cases, the rules or self-generated structures that limit the autonomy of the subject and determine the possible realm of social action (Wernet 2014). I used qualitative content analysis as a means of systematically looking at every part of the data and describing its meaning (Schreier 2014; Banks 2014). This involved assigning successive parts of the material to categories within a coding

frame (see [Appendix 2](#)).

The postings included, in each case, a photograph together with a caption, as well as the various comments posted on it. I examined all three elements together in undertaking my coding. With regard to the subject matter of the photograph, my content analysis was relatively simplistic and broad brush; my focus was not so much on the detail of the scene as the material culture revealed, asking what meanings the community were attaching to a particular photograph, why was it produced or selected, what was being done with it, how and why and with what effects? (Hall 2009; Rose 2008; Hunt 2014).

To develop the frame I successively examined a series of posts developing categories and sub-categories to describe the data. I continued to test and modify the frame through the analysis of further postings until I was satisfied that it was capable of describing all elements of the data satisfactorily. I then undertook the main analysis by coding 72 posts representing all the postings made over two particular weekends (4 days) in January 2018.

The coding frame recorded:

- Categorisation of the photograph according to whether its primary subject matter was landscape, city-scape, housing or technologies (e.g. railways or items of street furniture); whether it contained people and whether its subject matter concerned an event; whether it was newly taken or old; whether its location was city centre or suburban
- How many “likes” the posting received and a breakdown of the emoticons clicked
- Total number of comments generated and a categorisation of the nature of the comments as to whether their primary focus was concerned with: sharing personal memories, expressing aesthetic appreciation, expressing emotion, seeking information / clarification, establishing location, generic comment
- My field notes

My concern was to understand what kind of postings generated most interest and the kind of reactions they elicited in the form of comments in order to shed

light on the stories being generated and how they constitute and are constituted by discourse.

### **3.4.2 Engaging with the “small stories” of everyday encounter with place**

As previously noted, the multi-faceted nature of the person-place relationship created a requirement for methods capable of capturing data of various types. Firstly, the methods needed to reflect a physical and spatial dimension, elucidating how research collaborators understood the layout of the city, the inter-relationship of its parts, how they navigated it and the areas that they did and did not use. Secondly, it was important to capture the practices of the research collaborators, how their activity unfolded in the spaces of the city. Recognising the importance of the discursive, it was also important to capture what my research collaborators said about their encounters with the city's spaces in order to reveal how they experienced and made sense of the world. Finally, the research strategy needed to reflect the fact that everyday life is affective, a shifting assemblage of 'things that happen' in an active, material world, where affect is felt in 'atmospheres, fleeting fragments and traces, gut feelings and embodied reactions' (Blackman 2015, p. 25). Methods were needed that “attuned” to the “affective circuitry” of what it feels like to live in a place (DeSilvey 2012), to the 'fractious, multiplicitous, and unpredictable' (Stewart 2007, p. 3), in a world always in process, changing and transforming (Coleman and Ringrose 2013).

Stewart explains “multiplicities” in terms of assemblage, a transient grouping of relations where the lines between things, described as “becomings”, are always in process, changing, shifting, having no beginning nor end, only a middle. Research methods were needed that entered this middle, the “in-between”, to study the multiplicity of a thing, its relationality, in order to extract what is immanent to that thing, its specificity or singularity (Deleuze and Parnet 2002). This pointed to research methods that grounded the research activity in concrete situations of individual encounter (Knudsen and Stage 2015) using “embodying fieldwork”, that is 'styles of research practice that capture the essences of encounters and engagement in moments of emergent meaning' (Waterton and Watson 2015, p. 97), paying attention to 'movement, difference, singularity, emergence, and the entanglements of matter and language'

(Maclure 2013, p. 171), seeking out ‘truths folded into the fabric of the world itself’ (Dewsbury 2003, p. 1908).

Waterton and Watson (2015) advocate attending to the “more-than-representational”, not abandoning the visual or representational, which constitute an important route into people’s imaginations, but seeking to ‘access sensual, emotional, and reflexive embodied performances ... [placing] greater emphasis upon the tactile, experiential, aural, emotional, and sonic’ (p. 116). Paying attention to the multisensory nature of the person-place relationship (Feld 2005) and those affective engagements with place that are realised as much through the “grammar” of the body (Shouse 2005 ¶2) as through language, I anticipated would lead to ‘the most profound type of knowledge [which] is not spoken of at all and thus inaccessible to ethnographic observation or interview’ (Bloch 1998, p. 46), to ‘the normally not spoken, the invisible and the unexpected – those things that people do not perhaps necessarily think it would be worth mentioning, or those things that tend to be felt or sensed rather than spoken about’ (Pink 2015, p. 53).

#### **3.4.2.1 Mapping**

My initial on-site research method, designed to seek the “more than representational”, would be to ask my research collaborators to draw maps. A wide range of visual research techniques such as photography or creative arts practices are available to researchers to enable them to capture the spatial, performative and affective dimensions referred to above; however, my choice of map-making as a research technique was a quite natural one in that maps have long been used not just to represent physical landscapes but also ‘social, personal, and psychological connections to place’ (Powell 2010, p. 539); they can function as much more than merely an orientation device. Their potential to capture social connections between people, places and ideas made map-making the strongest contender amongst possible techniques.

A further advantage of map-making was that it would be entirely practicable, requiring little equipment beyond a pen and paper and could be done quickly and easily out in the field. It would require no special skills on the part of the respondent. This would keep instructions to the absolute minimum and ensure that the process itself would be enjoyable for participants and inclusive of those



who might not normally feel sufficiently confident to take part in a research encounter. As with the creation of any arts-based visual images, I expected that drawing maps would be an effective way of capturing things that are hard to put into words, in a form that would help both myself and the research respondent to pay attention to things in new ways (Weber 2008).

Whilst the “official” map claims its authority from its supposed scientific accuracy and objectivity (Harley 1992), I anticipated that inviting individuals to draw maps telling the “small stories” of the city would harness the potential of an “alternative cartography” (Harley 1991) or “counter-mapping” (Peluso 1995) to foster what Pinder (1996) calls a “subversive attitude”, which approaches maps not as tracings of the city, but rather as ‘things that work, that perform, that affect the ways in which urban spaces are conceived and lived’ (p. 424). Maps are known for being able to fire up “thinking spaces” (Wood and Fels 2008) and my aim was that the map-making would facilitate an accompanying conversation, acting as a form of elicitation in the same way that photographs or other objects are widely used within elicitation techniques in qualitative research (Prosser and Loxley 2008). I anticipated that map-drawing would incorporate storytelling as a means of presenting the individual’s everyday experience (Marling 2012) and I hoped to create a dual narrative: the map itself, as a narrative concerning events and places (Wood and Fels 1986), and an accompanying narrative that I would capture concerning the map’s construction.

Whilst everyone has some notion of what a map is, generally seeing it, in the first instance, as a scale diagram representing an area of space, nonetheless, as a concept it is endlessly flexible. As Deleuze and Guattari put it (1988, p. 12):

The map is open and connectable in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived as a work of art, constructed as a political action or a mediation ... it always has multiple entryways.

This flexibility gave map drawing the advantage that research participants could use it in a myriad of different ways to express their embodied relationship with York. I provided no rules about how maps should be drawn, leaving it entirely

up to the participants to decide how to produce them. I intended that this would give a degree of control to the research participants who, through the drawing of the map, would take charge of how they wanted to express their relationship with York, the things that they saw as important and the agenda that they wanted to discuss. My expectation was that maps would go beyond and challenge received notions of, and knowledge about place, producing “everyday mappings” (Crampton and Krygier 2005) that would creatively illuminate the role of place in people’s lives, “experiential maps” (De Nardi 2014) that would be personal to the individual, capturing their distinct way of seeing and being in the world’ (Lydon 2003, p. 132), their interests, attitudes and perceptions (Hunter 2012) and their relationship with the wider world (Crouch 1996).

The map-making framed in this way would be essentially a performative, and thus embodied research activity (Crampton 2009; Atkinson and Coffey 2003; Blackman 2015), as the research respondents not so much drew their maps as “performed” them (Noxola 2018; Perkins 2009; Krygier 2006). Rather than simply tracing or representing their chosen part of York, the aim was that participants should make an embodied response to the question of what York means to them. This complex, affect-laden question would require them to think simultaneously about the concrete features of the city at the same time as examining their feelings about them, feelings that would inevitably be hard to pin down, uncertain, ambiguous, tentative and even contradictory. As such, the map-making would constitute a performance that was ‘entirely orientated toward an experimentation in contact with the real’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 12); it could be seen, in itself, as an act of place-making (Ingold 2007; Pink 2008 a), ‘building the world as much as measuring and describing it’ (Corner 1999, p. 213), depicting not only what *is*, but also ‘what is not yet’ (ibid., p. 214).

The whole process of the map-making was of interest, not just what was included in the map but also the omissions, the commentary that accompanied its production, and the way that it was put together, stylistically and physically (Cosgrove 2008). The participant’s emotional response to the exercise would also be an important factor since mapping is widely understood to have ‘affective intensity’ (Latham and McCormack 2009, p. 253; Perkins 2008; Kwan 2007), moving people in various ways. The significance of the map lay not just in what it might signify, therefore, but also in the way that its “affective

materiality” was experienced bodily within the research assemblage.

#### **3.4.2.2 Walking**

My second on-site research method sought to add a dimension to the study capable of examining how individuals use and move in the city’s places and spaces recognising that movement, as “urban intervention” (Careri 2002), “produces” or generates the nature or quality of the spaces within which they move. I aimed to capture evidence of this movement in order to consider its implications within the person-place relationship. Whilst there are a number of potential ways to engage with a ‘world on the move’ (Sheller and Urry 2006, p. 207) and ‘in the making’ (Crouch 2010, p. 6), for example driving or cycling, I considered that walking offered the greatest potential for this research to get “up close” to the embodied experience of the city (Helmreich 2013; Latham 2003; Elwood and Martin 2000; Lee and Ingold 2006). The practice of walking affords a particularly immersed, sensate and embodied sense of place through which place comes to be known relationally (Macpherson 2016; Hubbard and Lyon 2018) and from which data can emerge and ideas can be shaped through direct embodied experience (Myers 2011; Lorimer and Lund 2003). It both produces meaning and constructs understanding (Moles 2008). Davidson and Milligan (2004) go as far as to say that ‘place must be *felt* to make sense’ and that meaningful sense can emerge ‘only via movements *between* people and places’ (p. 524 emphasis in original). Walking with research respondents has been shown to have particular value in place research, encouraging a sense of connection with the environment (Ingold and Vergunst 2008) and producing a marked difference, compared to conventional interview approaches, in the quantity and place specificity of narratives generated (Evans and Jones 2011).

Walking is an activity that is conducive to enquiry: it is ‘an observer’s state, cool, withdrawn, with senses sharpened, a good state for anybody who needs to reflect’ (Solnit 2001, p. 186); it is one that can create ‘a reflexive awareness of the self, and particularly the body and the senses’ (Edensor 2000 b). The rhythms of walking, conditioned by the special and physical characteristics of place, create ‘successive moments of detachment and attachment, physical immersion and mental wandering’ (Edensor 2010, p. 70), generating thoughts, fleeting impressions, experiences and atmospheres (Edensor 2008).

Walking leads to “local ways of seeing” (Berger 1972). It can be used to defamiliarise the iconic, regulated, commodified places of the city (Edensor 2008), opening up the possibility of alternative readings to those found in the guidebooks and other “official” discourses, ones that reveal personal meanings and relationships. It can open up what Edensor (2008) describes as the “interstitial spaces”, those parts of the city that are less commonly accessed, ones of which the visitor guidebooks and picture postcards do not provide preformed readings.

Walking may be thought of as a practical function but also as a ‘symbolic form’ (Careri 2002, p. 20). It can be seen as a form of storytelling (Legat 2008; Lund 2008), producing stories that can tell of ‘epistemic shifts on personal and intimate terms’ (Lorimer 2003, p. 214). By virtue of this, walking with people has the potential to facilitate a deep engagement in their worldview (Moles 2008), to open up ‘a way of knowing’ (Ingold and Vergunst 2008, p. 5) and an embodied, relational space between walker and co-walker ‘where a “shared viewpoint” can facilitate “empathic witnessing” as well as “collaborative knowledge production”’ (O’Neill and Hubbard 2010, pp. 50-51).

The challenge, then, was to create a structured methodological approach that could be “controlled” (Gillham 2000 b) and replicated, capable of capturing both the sensate and embodied sense of place revealed through walking as well as the stories and meanings that it generated. To meet these needs I adopted an approach involving “talking whilst walking” (Anderson 2004), seeking to facilitate “conversations in place” through “go-along interviews” (Kusenbach 2003). The “go-along”, Kusenbach argues, is set apart from traditional ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interviewing, by its ‘potential to access some of the transcendent and reflexive aspects of lived experience *in situ*’ (p. 455 emphasis in original), exploring the constitutive role and the transcendent meaning of the physical environment or place. Carpiano (2009) argues that the go-along is uniquely well-placed to examine how ‘physical, social, and mental dimensions of place and space interact within and across time for individuals’ (p. 5) in a way that solitary observation, which does not access the environmental perception and experience of other people, simply cannot (Kusenbach 2003).

Kusenbach identifies a number of themes that the go-along is particularly suited to explore. First is environmental perception: the go-along can show up how people's perception of place is shaped and filtered by the things that are relevant to them, the things that relate to their particular interests, or dispositions, to their occupation, for example. Second is the texture of spatial practices: the go-along can uncover the individual's degree of immersion in and quality of engagement with the environment, the extent to which they are aware of the particular space they are moving through. It can also reveal the various connections between place and life history, the biographic experiences that underlie their current engagements with place and the ways in which these connections enable individuals to bring a depth of meaning to their mundane routines. The go-along is potentially also revealing of the network of connections between people and can be particularly revealing of those less significant or purely functional relationships that would be less likely to come out in a conventional interview.

The go-along's ability to allow the environment and the act of walking itself to direct the conversation in productive and sometimes unexpected directions (Jones et al. 2008) was also attractive for this research project: 'Talk comes easier when walking, and is much less troubled by pauses and the sometime awkwardness of question and answer. Crossing the road, walking uphill, turning a corner – these movements punctuate in ways which return the interview to(wards) ordinary conversation' (Hall, Lashua and Coffey 2006, p. 3). In this regard, it provides an advantage over conventional interviews in which informants may fail to talk about a particular topic, either because they choose not to, because they fail to bring it to mind in the context of the interview (Kusenbach 2003), or perhaps because the question, framed as a social scientist would frame it rather than in the way that the informant thinks, puts them on the spot (Latham 2003).

Furthermore, the go-along can help to mitigate the power dynamics that generally exist between the interviewer and interviewee (Carpiano 2009), facilitating a shared perception rather than a dialectical relationship between the interviewer and interviewee (Kusenbach 2003). The contextually sensitive nature of the go-along allows the researcher to tap into the experience of the interviewee to learn from him or her what 'the problem, the question, the

situation is' (Guba and Lincoln 1981, p. 157), to 'learn from the respondent not only in terms of the ideas and perspectives, but in terms of experiences as well' (Carpiano 2009, p. 13). The result is 'a more inclusive process where the respondent becomes more of a participant in the learning process than simply a subject that is being interviewed' (ibid., p. 14).

How the go-along interviews were executed is described under *Research Project D* below.

### 3.4.2.3 Research project C – Group mapping sessions

The first research activity, aimed at eliciting the “small stories” of encounter with York, was undertaken with groups of adult learners who were undertaking basic skills classes, English as a second language, and *Action Towards Inclusion* programmes with *York Learning*, the council’s adult learning service. I worked with six groups varying in size from the smallest, which had two learners, up to the largest group, which had six. I asked the group to draw for me a rough map of “their York”, illustrating what York means for them, and to mark on it the main features that came to mind when they think about York, how they feel about it, and where they like, or do not like, to go in the city. An example of the kind of map drawn in these sessions is shown at Figure 1 below:

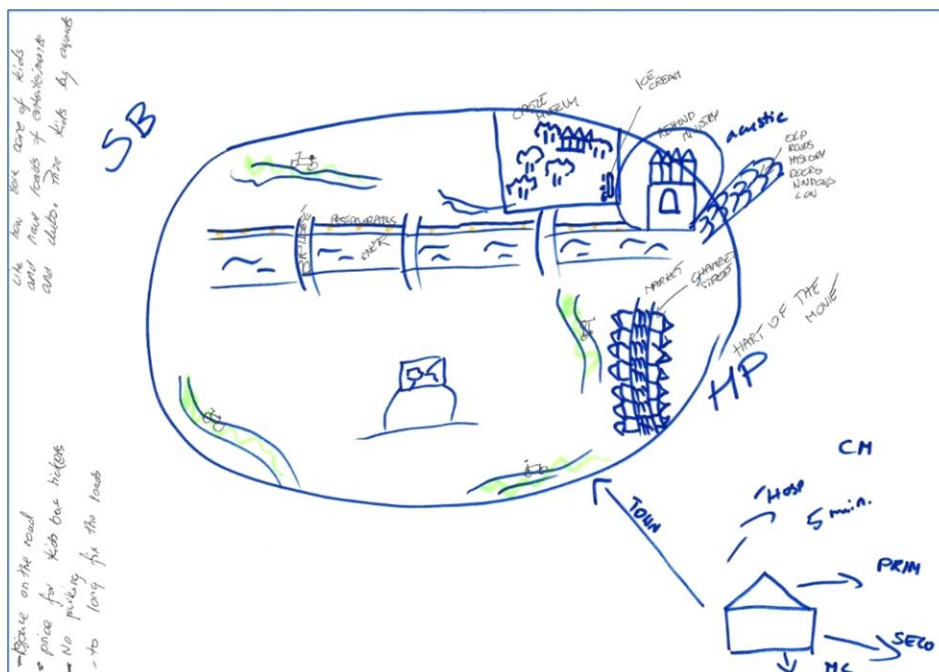


Figure 1 Example map - from a group mapping session in the west of the city

The initial stimulus to working with these groups was simply that I was invited to do so by the curriculum leader. She saw a synergy between my research topic and the service's theme for that term, which was "living in York", and, having a need to generate stimulating subject matter for the learners, felt that a presentation from me about my research and the opportunity to undertake a mapping exercise, would help prepare learners for the subsequent writing and presentation exercises that they would be required to undertake.

These classes represented a good site for my research because they were distributed around York, with one taking place in the city centre, and the remainder in suburban settings (three on the west side, one on the south east side and one on the north). The learners were generally drawn from residential areas close to the centre where the provision was run. This group of learners represented a good fit with the objectives of my research because they were all York residents drawn from a demographic that could be described as being amongst those least likely to have their voices heard in civic life. The majority had low levels of educational attainment (with the exception of a couple of professionally qualified individuals in the English as a Second Language group). There were a number who had arrived in York from a variety of other countries including Syria and Sudan and whose English was currently limited. There was a good mix of males and females and there was a representation of Black and Minority Ethnic individuals broadly in line with the city's demographic.

At the outset of each session, I explained my research project and the reasons for my interest in carrying out the mapping exercise. The course tutor explained the fit between the mapping exercise and the course objectives. It was explained to learners that the maps produced would be theirs to retain and to use subsequently for the purposes of their course. They were advised not to mark on their home or other information that would reveal their address or identity. They were offered the option, if they wished, to contribute to my research by making a short presentation to the class about their map and what they had included in it, and about which I would be able to make notes. They were also invited to give me a photocopy of their map for my research if they wished.

I undertook a pilot session with a class at the city's central library. The learning

from this session was then used to shape the subsequent sessions. The pilot session showed that the activity was enjoyable for the participants and that all were able to engage and to get something out of it for themselves. All the participants produced very different and very interesting maps and were enthusiastic to talk about them. The exercise stimulated lively conversation. One participant commented on the exercise that drawing maps brings out 'things and stories that either you've never really thought of or you haven't thought of for years' whilst another subsequently reported that it had led him to spend the following week thinking about stories that he could write arising from his map. (One participant also reported that she had made her husband draw a map for her when she got home and that it resulted in him telling her more about himself than he had done in the previous 20 years of marriage – all sorts of things she never knew about him!) In short, it was clear that the mapping exercise had significant potential as an elicitation technique.

The pilot session also showed up some practical issues. Firstly, it became apparent that some participants were inhibited from getting started by their belief that maps must be drawn to scale, objecting that they couldn't draw a map. I had to reassure these participants that it was fine to draw the map in any way that they saw fit. This reassurance seemed to work and all the participants quickly became engrossed in producing their maps. A second practical learning point was that the time allowed for the drawing should be kept quite brief, limited to ten to fifteen minutes; all the key points could generally be captured on the maps in that duration and it seemed that, if more time was allowed, participants became bored and/or spent the time elaborating the pictorial aspects of their map without adding to the information. (Albeit some individuals with limited English skills required longer to be able to get down what they wanted to write). This learning was taken into the subsequent sessions.

At the subsequent sessions, as in the pilot, all the students joined in and got evident enjoyment from the exercise and a great deal of discussion was provoked. Every single learner chose to give me a copy of his or her map. As well as making my respondents aware of the purpose of my research, I also sought ideas from the learners about how I might pursue my research activities. This shaped the mapping sessions in that it was the learners who suggested that they should be invited to present their maps to the rest of the class. I had



not anticipated that this would be something that individuals would be comfortable doing but, when the suggestion was adopted, the great majority of learners wanted to present their map and got evident enjoyment from doing so. The learners suggested, in a number of cases, continuing the discussion about what York means to them, effectively turning the session into a focus group. Other ideas that they had for my research, such as that I should undertake covert observation of individuals in public spaces, I did not take up, as I did not consider that this would be ethical or effective. The research activity also empowered the respondents in that it enabled them to decide what they would do next with their maps in the context of their learning. Some, for example, decided to use them as inspiration for creative writing.

Whilst these mapping sessions worked well, producing a great deal of data, some limitations associated with this research approach became evident. The first of these was that working with respondents in a group made it difficult to attend in detail to the processes going on with each individual's map drawing, particularly the performative aspects: the expression, the emotion displayed or the body language adopted. The stories that came out during the presentation of the maps were often very detailed and descriptive, containing far more content and nuance than could possibly have been recorded on the map itself. Whilst I made notes during the learners' presentations of their maps, it was quite difficult to capture the granularity of what was said. Furthermore, the significance of an individual item drawn on a map was not always obvious. In some cases, this was true even for the person who had drawn the particular item, so that it was only in response to interrogation that the individual could begin to reflect on why they might have been included it. For example, when the group asked one participant about a particular pub that he had included in his map, at first he did not know why he had drawn it. On reflection, he said he thought it was 'a little exciting' because, on a night out, it was the place you started off at and who turned up and who you met there determined how the evening would go. In the group setting, this level of detailed interrogation was not always possible, however, and some features of individual maps were never explained. Whilst I was left with sets of maps that were inherently data rich, frustratingly, some of the evidence concerning the meanings and understandings that the research respondents ascribed to their maps was lost.

Especially where the participant had not chosen to make a presentation, I was left to make my own interpretations of their map.

A second obvious drawback of the approach was that, whilst it took place in locations close to the participants' home areas, it was situated in a classroom. It therefore relied on the research respondents' imagination to recreate "their York"; they could not respond directly to the stimulus of the materiality of place. The exercise of drawing a map inevitably had limited ability to provide insight into how the participants moved in the places and spaces that they drew on their maps.

A further weakness with the approach was that, in the case of some of the groups, participants produced a somewhat homogenous response. Even though the question was always asked in the same way, with no additional prompting as to the kind of response that was expected, and although the map-drawing was generally conducted in near silence, initially at least, with little conferring between participants with regard to the maps they were drawing, nonetheless, it was noticeable that groups tended to respond to the exercise in a way that produced themes or concerns in common. For example, one group's maps showed a high degree of commonality in talking about concerns regarding the state of the city's infrastructure, such as potholed roads, poor bus services and expensive parking. Another group placed emphasis on issues concerning the distribution of and access to leisure and shopping facilities. By undertaking the exercise in a group it seemed that participants were led to think about issues that they thought were likely to be of interest or concern to other members of the group (the groups were already well-established before my encounter with them).

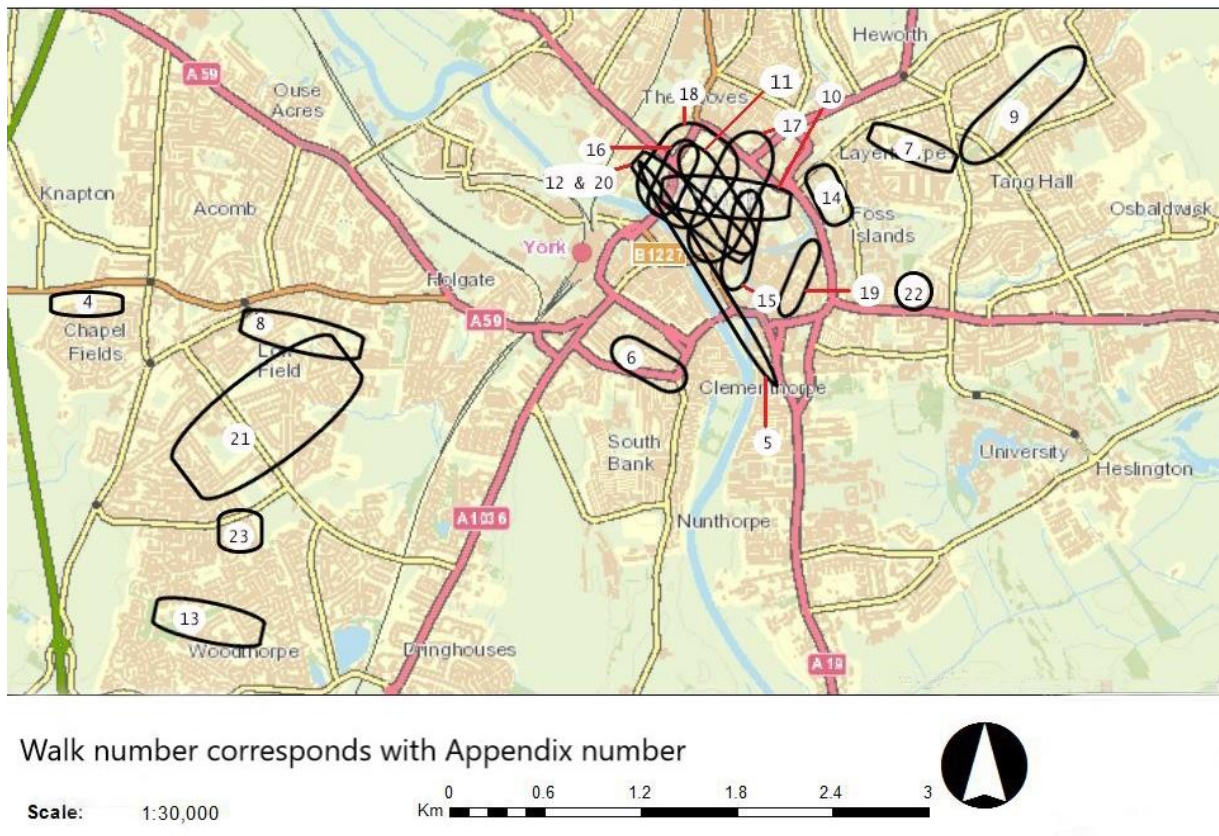
I aimed to address some of the limitations associated with the group mapping exercise through the go-along interviews, which would take place on a one-to-one basis, out in the public spaces of York, in places of the research respondents' choosing.

#### **3.4.2.4 Research project D – Go-along interviews**

For the go-along interviews, I had hoped to be able to recruit my research respondents from amongst the adult learners who participated in the mapping

sessions. I found, however, that I could not recruit sufficient individuals from this source: only one agreed to undertake a go-along interview. It seemed that, as a cohort, they did not feel sufficiently confident about participating in a one-to-one research encounter. A number said that they did not know enough to be able to participate; my attempts to reassure them that no knowledge was required were to no avail. Others agreed to participate but did not, in the event, show up. To recruit a cohort of respondents I therefore adopted an alternative strategy, visiting community settings such as community centres, residents' associations, community drop-in sessions and adult learning settings to chat to people informally about York and to seek to interest them in the research project. Participants recruited by this method can be characterised as "ordinary" York residents in the sense that they held no positions of influence in the governance of the city or in any of the special interest or campaigning groups that are influential in the city. None had any special qualification other than their own willingness to participate. They were people who, in conversation, had shown an interest in the research question and felt able to give their opinion. This willingness to participate was perhaps associated with a certain degree of self-confidence (commensurate in some cases with them having roles within the community organisations where I met them) combined with the ability to imagine what the research activity would entail and to feel that it would be enjoyable and worthwhile for them. From my perspective, they were individuals who were willing to talk, enabling me to include in my research narratives generated through embodied encounters with the city.

I sought to recruit individuals from a range of age groups and for the ethnic make-up of my cohort to be broadly consistent with that of the city overall. To ensure good coverage of the city I recruited people from a variety of settings: the city centre; the suburban areas - principally areas of relative deprivation in Tang Hall, Chapelfields, and Acomb; and surrounding villages. An overview of where the go-alongs took place is shown in Figure 2.



*Figure 2 Overview of the go-along locations*

I undertook twenty go-alongs, continuing to recruit participants until I reached the point where I believed I had a picture of what was going on and could generate an appropriate explanation for it (Mason 1996).

One go-along was undertaken with a married couple (who asserted that they only ever did things together and that it would be inconceivable for either to undertake a walk in the city without the other). This meant that there were twenty-one participants in the twenty go-alongs conducted. Participants were not asked to provide personal information (as the process of divulging this information to me would have disrupted the “naturalness” of the encounter with place); however, from my observation of them and/or from what they said about themselves some broad description is possible. This is shown in Table 1 below. To preserve the anonymity of the respondents their names have been changed. (The pseudonyms chosen reflect names popular in the individual’s year of birth as well as their ethnicity.)

<b>Name</b>	<b>M / F</b>	<b>Age <sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Residence in York <sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Ethnicity <sup>3</sup></b>	<b>Home location</b>	<b>Walk location</b>
Debra	F	70s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Patricia	F	60s	Newcomer	White English	Suburban	City centre
Karen	F	60s	Long	White English	Village	City centre
Julia	F	50s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Brian	M	60s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Susan	F	60s	Long	White English	City centre	City centre
David	M	50s	Long	White English	City centre	Home area
Laya	F	20s	Long	Other ethnic group	Suburban	City centre
Michael	M	60s	Long	White English	Suburban	City centre
Tony	M	60s	Long	White English	Suburban	City centre
Michelle	F	40s	Long	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Village	City centre
Louise	F	40s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Bob	M	70s	Long	White English	Suburban	Suburban
Barbara	F	50s	Long	White English	Suburban	City centre
Keith & Rebecca	M & F	60s	Newcomer	White English	Village	City centre
Philip	M	60s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Jason	M	30s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Suzy	F	30s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area
Hiba	F	30s	Long	Other ethnic group	Suburban	Suburban
Sally	F	70s	Long	White English	Suburban	Home area

Table 1: Description of the go-along participants

<sup>1</sup> My estimate

<sup>2</sup> Reflecting how the participants described themselves during the go-along interview

<sup>3</sup> My assessment using the categories employed in the 2011 UK census

I sought to conduct the go-alongs according to Kusenbach's (2003) instruction that they should be "natural", that is they should follow informants into their familiar environments on expeditions that they would have made in the normal course of their everyday lives, sticking as closely as possible to day, time of day and routes. With this in mind, I explained to participants, in inviting them to participate, that the purpose of the research was to talk about "their York" and I asked them to suggest a place to meet up to suit them, somewhere that is a normal, everyday sort of place for them, preferably somewhere they would be going anyway as part of their normal routine. In some cases, respondents invited me to accompany them in an activity that they had planned already, such as taking a child to the local park, or participating in a community clean-up day. In other cases, participants chose to design a walk more explicitly for the purpose of showing me what was important to them, for example in the city centre or, in one case, an area where they had once lived.

The go-alongs consisted of two elements: participants were first asked to draw me a map and then to go for a walk with me, within the area covered by the map, whilst continuing to talk. Both elements were recorded using a digital recorder. The microphone was pinned to my clothing so that, although participants were aware of the recording, having given permission for it to take place, the technology would obtrude as little as possible into the encounter (Corsaro 1982). The map drawing required somewhere to sit at a table and I therefore invited the research participants to choose somewhere suitably equipped to meet me. In a number of cases, the research participant chose a café that they liked to be the starting point for the walk and the venue for the map-drawing. In other cases, research participants asked me to meet them at their home or at the community venue where we had first met.

I first asked participants to draw for me a rough map of what York means for you, "your York", and to mark on the main features that come to mind when you think of "your York". As with the group map-drawing, a number of participants were hesitant about putting pen to paper and had to be reassured that the aesthetic and representational qualities of the map were not important. All respondents found it easy to respond to the question and to begin talking. The drawing of the map tended, in this research activity, to follow a narrative that the research respondent had already embarked upon before putting pen to paper,

acting as a kind of inscription or record of what they were talking about. The map drawing generally took around fifteen to twenty minutes.

Once respondents had broadly completed their map and had had the opportunity to “cover” the main aspects of their relationship with the city, I suggested that we continue the conversation whilst walking as much of the area shown on their map as they would like to. Once we had begun the walk, my aim was to give participants no instructions at all and not to ask any questions. This was consistent with De Leon and Cohen’s (2005) view that, ‘the most valuable probing techniques are those that stimulate or encourage an informant to provide data on specific topics with minimal influence from the interviewer’ (p. 200). The go-along provided an excellent opportunity to employ various ‘technologies of listening’ (Blackman 2012 b, p. 178); it required me, in most cases, to say very little. My aim was to speak only where it was natural and necessary for reasons of politeness to express interest or perhaps to seek further information about something the respondent was saying. Whilst some research respondents were happy to talk for the whole walk, others found it natural to ask me some questions as part of making conversation. In some cases, the walks were marked by extended periods of silence. Generally, these silences felt like a natural response to our walk, occasions when talk was unnecessary, and it was comfortable to maintain them. On just a couple of occasions, however, the silence felt awkward, perhaps the product of the respondent’s uncertainty about what they were “meant” to say. In these cases, it felt appropriate for me to ask a question in order to break the silence. In such cases I would ask how the respondent felt about the place we were passing through.

Whilst undertaking the walk I aimed to pay attention to the nature of the landscape and my response to it as well the respondent’s bodily and affective response. Of course, it would have been highly desirable to be able to record such detailed phenomena, as they occurred, in a notebook; however, I judged that to do this would have been perceived by my research respondents as somewhat unnatural behaviour; at best, it would have labelled me firmly as “researcher”. In any event, it would have formed a significant distraction, precluding any prospect of having a natural and shared experience through our walking together.

Walks lasted on average around 25 minutes. The shortest was a walk of just one street (though the conversation lasted around 35 minutes, mostly stood in one spot). The longest walk was 54 minutes. One “walk” took place on bicycles because this was how the research respondent concerned habitually moved about his area. It was clear that he considered the idea of walking the streets shown on his map as unnatural and contrived. Although this represented an infringement of my methodology, I agreed to his proposal because I considered it more important to benefit from the experience of his particular embodied relationship with the landscape than to keep strictly to the rules I had set out.

The strength of this methodology was that it produced rich data. The format gave the respondents free rein to set the agenda for the walk and to talk. In all cases, they took this up with enthusiasm and evident enjoyment. A drawback with the methodology was that the data produced were diverse in nature rather than being consistent and therefore immediately comparable. One reason for this was that research respondents interpreted the rubric of the exercise in rather different ways. For some, it was quite straightforwardly an invitation to talk about themselves: their stories were largely autobiographical. Others interpreted it as an invitation to talk more specifically about features of York.

The go-alongs provided a lively encounter with landscape in a setting of the respondent’s choosing. As such, it was as natural a research activity as I had hoped for. At the same time, it has to be conceded that the activity was specifically contrived for the purposes of a research project. Respondents were, of course, fully aware of this and in some cases planned the walk in some detail in order to provide me with the kind of information that they imagined my research would require. The encounter with place could not therefore be considered entirely natural in the way it came about, albeit once we were out on the street, it undoubtedly felt like a walk much like any other.

#### **3.4.2.5. Recording the data**

Once the go-along had been completed, I immediately retraced the steps of the walk that we had taken, on my own, aiming to recall the conversation and to make a mental note of how the flow of conversation fitted onto the points of the walk. During this re-traversing of the route, I paid attention to recalling those



passages of conversation that struck me as having particular affective intensity. In this, I was guided by Knudsen and Stage's (2015) five strategies for tracing the presence of affective forces, which involve focussing on (p. 19):

1. Formal or stylistic characteristics of communication in affect (e.g. outburst, broken language, hyperbole, redundancy)
2. The intense building of assemblages (consisting of, for example, texts, actions, images, bodies and technologies)
3. Non-verbal language and gestures of affected bodies
4. Communicative content about experienced or attributed affect (made by, for example, informants, the researcher him-/herself or in existing texts)
5. The rhythmic intensification, entrainment (through a common pulse) or destabilization of affective energy in relation to specific spaces and (online) sites.

I also paid attention to my own affective response, the things that felt significant to me because they induced in me a gut feeling, an altered mood, a heightened sensibility. I sought to be both "emplaced" and "embodied", a researcher learning and knowing 'through her or his whole experiencing body' (Pink 2015, p. 26) and the "corporeal transformations" (Latham and Wagner 2020) produced in me by the practice of walking in the particular material environment.

At these points of heightened intensity on the walk, I took a photograph. I made no attempt to frame the photograph; I simply pointed the lens broadly at what I and my research respondent had been able to see when the particular passage of conversation had taken place. The purpose of the photograph was to provide a visual reminder, as I came to analyse the walk, using the power of the photograph to jog the memory and to elicit an emotional response (Weber 2008), to facilitate 'imaginative contact' (Crang 2010, p. 220). The photographs were intended to sit alongside my field notes and the interview transcription, stimulating thoughts and reflections on aspects of the research collaborator's engagement with place (Pink 2008 b).

I transcribed the recordings of the go-alongs, including the map-drawing component, immediately after the event, taking the opportunity to immerse myself further in the data and to pay attention to my response to it and my feelings about it. My objective was to try to capture the affective dimensions and experiences of the go-along and to transpose these into a textual form that could then be subjected to analysis. To try to meet the challenge inherent in this, I followed the strategy advocated by Bøhling (2015) of creating field notes as an assemblage of 'variously formed matters' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 3), placing a focus on 'bodies, sensations, and transformations', 'emotions and feelings', and 'seeking to describe the agencies and interactions of humans, nonhumans, spaces, processes, and atmospheres' (Bøhling 2015, p. 173).

My strategy reflected an understanding that 'writing emotions into research accounts' can lead to important insights into the work undertaken (Widdowfield 2000, p. 205), connecting the reader to the events described through accessing 'forms of knowing that exceed rational, conscious experience' (Blackman 2012 a, p. 24). As well as paying attention to the feelings displayed by the research respondents, I recognised that it is important to engage with one's own "emotional labour" (Hochschild 1983), or emotional response to the respondents' experiences, in order to help interpret the data (Wilkins 1993; Punch 2012; Hubbard, Backett-Milburn and Kemmer 2001) and that 'it is usually as a storyteller that the note maker achieves greatest impact' (Sanger 1996, p. 69). I therefore 'implicated' myself as researcher within the research process (Blackman 2015, p. 26), using my own subjectivity as an important tool in creating the research data. Through reflecting on how my own experiences intersected with the 'persons, places and things encountered during [the research] process' (Pink 2013, p. 35) I was able to go beyond the 'face value' account and interpret the emerging narratives (Walkerdine, Lucy and Melody 2001, p. 106). This meant recording events, actions and other positive manifestations of potential data but also being attuned to things that were missing, to a feeling that there was something more to say (Blackman 2015) or something left unsaid, to silences, contradictions and things that did not make sense (Trivelli 2015), to intuitive insights into the meanings of my research collaborators' actions and behaviours.

I recorded my field notes alongside the transcript. The notes were multi-

layered: at the initial level, they recorded simple reference points about the route of the walk whilst, at the next level, they noted down indications of affective intensity. I focussed on the research collaborator, using the five strategies suggested by Knudsen and Stage's (2015) set out above. I also paid close attention to my own response to the go-along, the feelings and intensities that the research collaborator's encounter with place gave rise to in me. (An extract from an example annotated transcription is shown at [Appendix 3](#) (redacted to preserve anonymity.)) My approach reflected an understanding that, just as assemblages are 'temporally unstable' (Bøhling 2015, p. 169), so fieldnotes as assemblages must inevitably develop over time. Accordingly, I repeatedly reworked my fieldnotes, taking account of factors that I felt were significant, but which may have preceded, been drawn from outside of, or were subsequent to the events recorded in the go-along itself.

I created a visual representation of each walk by placing the respondent's map in the centre of a flip chart sheet and pasting around it the photographs that I had taken. I annotated the flip chart with brief extracts from my fieldnotes that seemed to me, in light of reflection, to have particular significance. This gave rise to an iterative process. The visual representation of the walk often evoked a feeling, a thought or an insight that led me to return to my fieldnotes and work over them again producing new reflections and suggesting new interpretations, sometimes superseding or scrubbing out an earlier note. The flipcharts were too big to photocopy and I have therefore instead recreated them here digitally. These recreations, which can be found at [Appendices 3 to 22](#), are as faithful to the original flipcharts as possible; however, to protect anonymity I have changed names and, where necessary, I have used Adobe Photoshop to redact personal information from respondents' maps.

## **3.5 Data analysis**

### **3.5.1 The maps**

In analysing the maps, I followed the advice that visual images require a specific and consistent approach to examining and discussing their nature and characteristics (Warburton 1998). As "mediated images", I expected them to point to both cognitive and affective aspects of self-expression (Edgar 2004), conveying multiple messages and posing questions (Weber 2008).

Understanding that the maps' meaning would reside in the ways that participants interpreted them rather than in some inherent property of the images themselves (Stankzak 2007), I required an approach that went beyond interpreting the visual content to examine how those who produced them gave meanings to their content and form (Pink 2013).

I followed Collier's (2001) basic model for analysis of visual images adapting it to create the following four stages of activity:

1. Examining the maps as a whole: looking for presences and, by so doing, manifesting absences; considering patterns; noting impressions and questions suggested; responding to the images as "cultural drama".
2. Examining individual maps in detail: making a log of each map around categories that appeared relevant to "sense of place".
3. Going through the evidence with questions; comparing.
4. Searching for meaning by returning to the maps as a whole: placing details from the structured analysis into a context in order to define their significance.

My aim was not so much to translate this visual knowledge into verbal knowledge but rather to explore its relationship to the other forms of knowledge gained through the fieldwork (Pink 2013). In this way I used the maps as a "kind of talk" (Wood 2002), visual stories that could become the building blocks of an argument (Stankzak 2007).

### **3.5.2 Bringing the data together**

I now had three principal data sets: the "big stories" of York drawn from examination of texts and social media concerning York; the maps produced in the group sessions; and the product of the go-along interviews, including the flip chart assemblages of map, notes and photographs, the interview transcripts, and my field notes and reflections. I set these data sets next to each other, undertaking data analysis through a continuing process of immersion in, and iterative reflection upon, the data. Rather than seeing them as discrete data sets to be analysed separately I saw them as a continuum, with the maps prompting the start of a dialogue that continued with the go-along interview

transcripts, the visual representations and the “big stories” of place that I had identified.

The aim of my engagement with the data was to look for the “live surface” (Stewart 2007) of the everyday in the shifting assemblage of things that happen and the relations, or “in-between”, in these assemblages or multiplicities (Deleuze and Parnet 2002). At the same time it was important to cut through the “dazzle” of this multiplicity. The route to doing this was, using Law’s (2004) terminology, by rendering some things “present”, other things correspondingly “manifest” by their absence, and a third category “other”, that is pushed from view as being without significance. It concerned coming to know the everyday by ‘making the familiar strange’ (Renold and Mellor 2013, p. 36), ‘selectively attending to, amplifying, and so manifesting, possible patterns’ (Law 2004, p. 110), those salient matters that appeared to disrupt existing understandings and knowledge and to make a difference (Lury and Wakeford 2012).

This activity could be characterised as coding; however, it took a form that, mindful of MacLure’s (2013) critique of conventional coding, sought not to take me away from or above the data, to claim some kind of distant, objective, “interpretive mastery” of it (ibid.), but rather to facilitate a deeper immersion in its granularity, complexity and singularity, recognising the essentially subjective nature of the way the data was produced in the study through a shared encounter between myself as researcher and my research collaborators. Where conventional coding sacrifices the detail of the data to a “ruling idea” (ibid.) ignoring or suppressing notions of difference, chance and movement, change and emergence, I sought to adopt an ethnographic practice of *unforgetting* (Stewart 1996) which involved looking at ‘the anecdotal, the accidental, the contingent, and the fragmentary (p. 11), those inconvenient elements that do not deliver clear meanings but which do, using Taussig’s (1993) term, ‘provide moments of productive *disconcertion*’ (MacLure 2013, p. 172 emphasis in original).

Rather than seeking to render everything explicable, my approach sought to recognise that, as in all “present moment”, qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln 1998), my data came from messiness, incompleteness and uncertainty, meaning that analysis would be ‘partial, open-ended and capable of yielding

“findings” tentatively held, and never “results” firmly concluded’ (Hollinshead 2004 a, p. 73). My expectation was of a “baroque vision” (MacLure 2006), which accepts the inevitability of a faulty, compromised access to truth, a blurred vision ‘with things dimly glimpsed or half-heard, knowing them always to be tinged with the theatricality of performance and tainted by the guilty pleasures of the spectator’ (p. 15).

My aim in bringing together the strands, themes, and individual elements emerging from the data was to follow MacLure’s (2013) idea of the *wunderkammer*, the cabinet of curiosities built by wealthy individuals in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to hold objects sourced from exploration in the new world, strange objects of all types, technological, artistic, organic, exotic. The significance of the cabinet of curiosities is that it sits at the dawn of the age of reason being informed by both scientific rationality as well as by the world of magic, superstition and relics and that their collections are a form of inquiry, ‘an open-ended experimentation with, and receptivity to, bodies of knowledge whose contours and sub-divisions were constantly shifting and expanding, and therefore always eluding the collectors’ encyclopaedic ambitions’ (p. 180). Displaying both order and disorder, ‘the cabinets were attuned *both* to classification and to wonder, system and secret’ (ibid. emphasis in original).

My coding then, in the spirit of the *wunderkammer*, reflected the logic of assemblage in that it was concerned with making unexpected associations, ‘provisional and partial taxonomies’ (ibid., p. 181), subject to shifts and changes as new connections were made. This was coding ‘not as a static representation or translation of a world laid out before us on the operating table of analysis, but as an open-ended and ongoing process of *making sense*’ (ibid. emphasis in original).

### **3.5.3 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the research strategy pursued in the study. The research methods and the data produced have been described together with the way in which the data was used and analysed in the research. The chapters that follow discuss the findings from the data analysis activities described here.

## Chapter 4: The “Big Stories” of York

This chapter presents the findings from my first research projects, which, as described in the previous chapter, were designed to reveal how York is framed discursively through the “big stories” of place, those stories that are told from an “on high” perspective. I begin here to address the first research objective of engaging critically with the question of how “sense of place” operates for individuals in the heritage city of York and exploring the relative salience, in the formation of sense of place, of those discourses and ideologies that are found in the “big stories”.

I turn first to considering how York has been written about over time in histories of the city.

### 4.1 Writings about York

York was the subject of an early urban chronicle written by Christopher Hildyard in 1664 and entitled *A List, or Catalogue of all the Mayors, and Bayliffs ... Together with many and sundry Remarkable Passages*. This took the classic form of the time of a list of office holders together with notes on historical events (Sweet 1997). At around the same time, a more comprehensive history of York was produced by Sir Thomas Widdrington, MP and Recorder of York. This work, dedicated to the Corporation and citizens of York, ‘represents the first known attempt to preserve the memory of the historic events of the Northern Capital’ (Caine 1897, p. viii) and seeks to ‘recount things, privileges and persons, which conduce to the honour of this ancient city’ (ibid., p. 5). It focusses on “testimonials and elegies”, founding myths, the heritage sites of the city, and names of “persons of fame for learning, greatness or otherwise” which fit with the idea of York as England’s second city. The testimonials quote the fourteenth century chronicle *Polychronicon* in claiming that the city of York was, prior to its destruction by William the Conqueror, as “faire” as the city of Rome and include a further claim that York is older than Rome.

This discursive framing of York as an ancient and noble city did not sit well with the Corporation who were all too aware of the impoverished state in which the city found itself in the aftermath of the English Civil War and they rejected the dedication in no uncertain terms (ibid., p. x):

Sir – you have told us by the former discourse what the city was, and what our predecessors have been. We know not what this may have of honour in it; sure we are it hath little of comfort. The shoes of our predecessors are too big for our feet, and the ornaments which they had will not serve now to cover our nakedness, nor will their wealth feed us, who are not able to tell you what we are, unless it be this, that we are poor and miserable.

They concluded by informing Widdrington that (ibid., p. 11):

a good purse is more useful to us than a long story, which might enable us: - (1) To make our river more navigable; (2) To re-edify the decayed parts of the city; (3) To raise a stock to set up some manufacture in the city; (4) To relieve our poor.

We will see this apparent tension between York the heritage city and York the living city, seeking to grow and prosper, recur throughout its subsequent history; however, as the city began to flourish as a tourist destination from the 1730s onwards, York's framing as a noble, heritage city sat more comfortably. Works about York from this period onwards, starting with Drake's *Eboracum* (Drake 1788), were concerned with presenting an image of the city attractive to the tastes of polite society (Sweet 2003), by focussing on the city's heritage and the lives of its eminent citizens. Notable works in this tradition include Hargrove's *History and description of the ancient City of York* (Hargrove 1818), which concentrated on Roman antiquities, the Minster and other marketable heritage commodities (Hallett and Rendall 2003); *York* (Benson 1866); Davies' *Walks through the city of York* (Davies 1880); *Historic Towns: York* (Raine 1893); *A history of the city of York* (Knight 1944); *The Victoria County History of York* (Tillott 1961); the various inventories published by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments; and the output of the city's various specialist societies, including the Yorkshire Philosophical Society, the Georgian Society, the York Archaeological Trust and the York Civic Trust.

As well as writing that focusses on individual sites of heritage interest in the city, there also exists a body of writing that seeks to look at the city as a whole and to define what makes it special. Such writing often focusses on describing



York's particular aesthetic which is often identified with its unique townscape: 'The visual wealth of York is in the secular city itself, one of the richest and most complex townscapes in the world' (Lichfield and Proudlove 1976, p. 6). Pace (1962) argues that, whilst York has few individual buildings of worth, it is the juxtaposition of a multiplicity of structures, bounded by the bar walls, that produce an aesthetic "greater than the sum of the parts". He draws out three elements which, he argues, contribute to York's unique townscape: "propinquity", "contrast", and "drama". Patrick Nuttgens (1976) too aims to discover the city as a whole. As an architect, he was fascinated by appearances and aimed to engage with every street, river, pub and café and to describe both their appearance and their historic context. 'Wandering about, feeling and hearing and smelling the place' (p. 17), he argues that York's appeal lies in the city as a whole as 'an experience of profound human interest and intervals of beauty ... York offered not major monuments, vistas and grand symmetrical exercises, but an idiosyncratic mixture of things on a small and human scale' (ibid., p. 108). He draws attention to a conflict between history and development, criticising what he sees as the poor quality of modern buildings. Finally, a contemporary writer, Sir Ron Cooke (1996) similarly points to characteristics that he believes make up a "York aesthetic" and which, he argues, it is essential to maintain (p. 5),

It is the unique combination and juxtaposition of buildings, streets and streetscapes from different times that makes the inner city [of York] so special. This unique combination creates a distinctive ambience that depends essentially on the combination of scale, mass and height – modest, small and low, respectively, features that are often a consequence of restricted medieval burghal plots.

What we see from the literature reviewed thus far, is a tradition, dating back over three hundred years, of framing York as a distinguished heritage city, possessed of a particular aesthetic and boasting traditions commensurate with its claim to be England's second city or "the capital of the north". We have seen how these characteristics have been exploited, for the purposes of encouraging tourism, from the eighteenth century through to the present day when the *Visit York* website (Visit York 2020), under the strapline *Let the adventure begin*, invites the reader to 'Imagine a city with Roman roots and a Viking past, where

ancient walls surround contemporary independent shops and vibrant eateries and there's a festival for every month of the year'.

The next section considers how these heritage framings have, over time, collided with ideas about how York should develop as a contemporary, living city.

## **4.2 Heritage versus development**

We saw in the introductory chapter how, as early as 1800, the corporation encountered fierce opposition to its proposals to demolish the city walls, which it considered to be hindering the city's expansion (History of York 2016 a). In the modern era, the debate about how York should develop has centred around a series of significant plans that wrestle with how a heritage city can appropriately grow as a successful economic entity. In the first of these, *The City of Our Dreams* (Morrell 1945), J.B. Morrell, a highly influential business leader and Lord Mayor of York, with a passion for both conservation and building for the future, set out to encourage debate about post war rebuilding and urban renewal. Morrell's key ideas strongly influenced the subsequent 1948 *Plan for the City of York* which sought to 'provide for all members of the community, conditions of living, working and recreation that are healthy, convenient and pleasant' (Adshead, Minter and Needham 1948, p. 12). The central proposal of this plan, which was to lay out a dual carriageway inner ring road, circling the walls at an average distance of 250 yards, proved highly controversial. Increasingly concerted opposition finally led to the proposal being dropped in 1975. Other proposals in the plan simply faded away in the post-war circumstances of having to "make do" (Fawcett 2013).

In 1966 the government named York as one of five cities to gain special planning assistance because of their 'character, beauty and historic interest' (Esher 1969) and asked Lord Esher, president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, to report on the city's future. Completed in 1967, his report called for the city centre to be improved and repopulated, historic buildings to be enhanced, and only buildings of the highest standards to be built within the walled city. Esher recognised the dangers that cars and lorries posed to the city's historic fabric and recommended restriction of traffic through the bars and the building of four multi-storey car parks outside the walls. In essence, the

report was about removing decay, noise and congestion to make the city centre an attractive place to live and to allow it to compete on favourable terms with other cities (Willis 1972). The council had a difficult relationship with the outsider Lord Esher (Chrystal 2015) but, despite the council's only grudging acceptance of the report's findings, most of the recommendations were implemented, albeit it was only in the eighties that the city's main shopping streets were finally pedestrianised (History of York 2016 b).

More recent plans, such as *A new vision for York* (Falk and King 2003) and *York: New City Beautiful* (City of York Council 2010) have followed in the footsteps of the Esher report, in seeking to reinvent York as a "modern historic city", identifying key areas of intervention required to improve the amenity and attraction of the city for the purposes of facilitating business investment and growth, and turning its walls, streets and spaces into 'playgrounds for innovation, investment and success' (City of York Council 2010, p. 13). In the modern era, however, with its persistent squeeze on public expenditure, there has been limited scope to turn the vision of such plans into reality.

The *York Economic Strategy 2016-20* (City of York Council 2016) also follows in the footsteps of earlier plans in setting out contrasting possible futures for the city. It argues that York can either remain as it is now - a top-class visitor destination and place to live but one which misses out on growth and wealth - or it can be transformed to become the 'intellectual hub of the Northern Powerhouse' (p. 6). So, like the 1948 *City Plan*, *The York Economic Strategy* sets out to address the physical constraints of the historic city, for example by tackling traffic congestion, opening up new business districts with new grade A office accommodation and transforming the city centre in order to facilitate a shift to higher paid jobs. It also, however, highlights limitations that it associates with the very qualities of place that it recognises residents and visitors value, contrasting York's identification as a "nice" or "pretty" place with alternative possible characteristics, namely "exciting", "inventive", "ahead of the curve" (ibid., p. 18) that, it argues, would have the potential to drive a vibrant economy. It enjoins the city to make 'a fresh loud statement of cultural and visual identity' (ibid., p. 9) that will make people 'sit up and take notice' (ibid., p. 10).

During the period in which this research has been undertaken, a particular focus of political disputation has concerned efforts to put in place a local plan for York. No new local plan has been formally adopted since 1956 and, at the heart of the city's protracted difficulty in arriving at a new plan, has lain the question of where the balance should lie between the two elements that the council identifies as intrinsic to the economic and future success of York: 'maintaining the city's internationally recognised, unique built and natural environment and meeting the housing and social needs of its residents' (City of York Council 2014, p. 2). These housing needs arise from projected growth in the city's population associated with its future economic growth. At its heart, then, this is a debate about the balance that should be adopted between growth and maintaining the city as it is now. Amongst those voices that thought the council did not have the balance right was that of the city's Environment Forum who commented during the process that, 'We find the projections for economic growth and the housing numbers ... to be unrealistic and over-ambitious and we are deeply concerned about the impact such policies will have on the future development of York' (York Environment Forum 2013). So contentious have the issues been that, despite seven years of work having been undertaken up to 2012 to create a local development framework, and a further two years of consultation having been held up to 2014, the draft plan was not lodged until 2018.

If, over time, York's need to prosper economically has been in tension with its framing as a heritage city, if there has been an apparent dichotomy between 'the "new stuff" and the "old stuff", [between] those who want to make their mark on the city and those who want to protect its heritage' (Pickering 2015 a, p. 11), in the draft local plan, which has now been submitted, the new and the old are explicitly brought together. The plan positions York's unique historic and aesthetic characteristics as the very grounds from which economic growth will spring, identifying them 'as being of strategic importance to the significance of York and ... key considerations for the enhancement and growth of the city' (City of York 2018, p. 12). It sets out characteristics that, it argues, define the city and set it apart from other similar English cities, highlighting, amongst other things, the city's strong urban form and townscape; its rich diversity of age and

construction; its architectural character and archaeological complexity; and its landmark monuments, in particular the City Walls and the Minster.

Time will tell whether York's draft local plan is approved by the Planning Inspectorate and adopted. Political disagreements remain about various aspects of it; however, in the way that it juxtaposes York's unique characteristics with its future growth potential, the plan does appear to reflect a broad consensus. It reflects the view, held by writers such as Cooke (1996), that York's heritage, 'far from being an impediment, is its major asset ... its heritage is the bedrock on which the modern city is flourishing' (pp. 31-32). It seems that York's framing as a heritage city is no longer seen as an impediment to a successful future for the city; on the contrary, it is seen as essential to its economic success, not only in the way that it can be commodified for tourism purposes but also in the educational and cultural benefits that its heritage brings in making the city a good place to live and work (Graham 2015 a).

### **4.3 Subaltern Voices?**

If an accommodation has been reached between York's discursive framing as a heritage city and its framing as a modern, economically flourishing city, the question remains as to whether any other challenge can be identified to this framing. It might be argued that the "authorised heritage discourse" (Smith 2006) about York is produced largely by incomers to the city, educated individuals like Nuttgens and Cooke, members of expert bodies such as the Civic Trust. What of ordinary residents who might be expected to express 'many different versions and perceptions of York' (Pickering 2015 b, p. 45)? Smith (2006) suggests looking to those community groups who, she argues, have tended to challenge the "authorised heritage discourse", reclaiming it from expert practitioners, policy makers and institutions through the community participation that they engender, groups such as *York's Alternative History*. This group argues that 'York's history should be written by the people who live here ... in lots of different voices and in lots of different ways' (York's Alternative History 2016). This can be seen as a reaction to the trend in British heritage to make history 'safe, sterile, and shorn of danger, subversion and seduction' (Urry 1996, p. 52), and to "heritigisation", which, in York's terms, might be seen to

lead to an 'exclusive and boring monoculture in the city ... the kind of heritage which makes York famous only for "old buildings", tea rooms and people dressed up as Vikings' (Graham 2015 a, p. 3). *York's Alternative History* sees the 'question of what constitutes York's character [as] far from settled' (Graham 2015 b, p. 41). For this group, history is designed to be "political" and "useful", to be used in activism in order to create change. To this end, it focusses on stories 'of people who tried to make the world we live in a better place' (Furness 2014, p. 5), drawing on York's history as a city of social activism.

The *My Future York* project is another that has activist aims, seeking to get more people involved in local decision-making through developing 'richer understandings of the city's pasts', 'opening up new perspectives', 'deepening and extending understanding of the crucial issues that determine the city's future' and 'combining different ways of knowing in order to develop resonant stories about the city and what the city might become' (My Future York 2016). By uncovering histories rarely heard, the project aims to "create space" for agenda such as the living wage and affordable housing, and to point up the possibilities of the people of York in creating change themselves (Graham 2013).

Despite these activist aims, a closer look at the output of these groups suggests that it is not materially different from the heritage writing about York that has gone before. The principal publication of *York Alternative History Group*, for example, is a book of history walks. Although the stories it contains may be more eclectic than those of similar books from the past, for example, stories of York's sex workers or tales of the day The Clash came to town, nonetheless, the work follows the traditional pattern of combining discussion of the well-known landmarks of the city with extracts from the lives of eminent people. As with earlier works, the stories are designed to suit the tastes of that kind of person who is interested in going on a history walk. With its strap line *Tales of riot, rebellion and revolution*, this remains essentially history as entertainment, bringing up-to-date a well-worked formula to suit the taste of modern, if no longer so polite, society. Importantly, it maintains the practice of seeing York as a city shaped by its heritage, a city whose stories emerge from engagement with its fine streets and buildings.

It is also worth noting that people do not engage with the activist approach of *York's Alternative History* in great numbers. As at February 2020, more than two and a half years had elapsed since the most recent posting had been made on either its main site or its Facebook page. In no sense, then, can this approach be seen to represent a populist alternative to the way that York is framed in mainstream or official sources as a heritage city. To consider how the big story of York is shaped by the voice of its residents at large it would be necessary to seek the voice of the wider population, and it is to this that I turn in the next section.

#### **4.4 The view of the wider population**

In this section, I consider the interrelationship between the big stories of York and the expressed views and thoughts of its residents at large, drawing on two main sources: the initiative to create a “city narrative” undertaken by the council during the period of this research project, and my Research Project B which focussed on social media.

The “city narrative” project was launched in 2019 through an engagement exercise, led by external consultants in partnership with City of York Council, as a precursor to the creation of a narrative that would define ‘a set of values and behaviours that inspire and influence strategy, policy and decision-making’ (City of York Council 2019 d, p. 55). The starting point was ‘a hypothesis that the 2019 perception of York and what it offers is out of kilter with the day to day experience of living, working, studying or visiting the city, and to the future detriment of the city - affecting investment, talent attraction and employment, business growth and reputation’ (ibid., p. 56). In particular, it was felt that ‘the reality of York is overwhelmed by its heritage tourism image’ (ibid.). The research sought to find out how people perceive York, what people value in and want of the city, and what they would like it to be known for in the future.

The research involved 5,700 individual engagements with both individual citizens and stakeholder groups, across all demographics and across all sectors, inside and outside of the city, and using a wide variety of methods. In the initial stages of the research an online survey was used to find out what is in people’s minds when they think about York, how knowledgeable they are about

the city and how their perceptions affect how they rate the city for a number of different factors. The overarching finding was that (ibid., p. 61):

It doesn't matter how we drill into this dataset, the dominant associations of York remain pretty much the same regardless of the profile of the respondent, their familiarity with or their relationship with York. Whichever way the dataset is cut the overriding message is that York is seen by most respondents as a beautiful place for heritage tourism.

Respondents were asked to make word associations. Amongst the 7,914 associations made there were only 645 different ones of which just three occurred more than a hundred times. There were fewer than thirty "strong" associations with a further 600 plus words largely adding nuance, richness and detail. The top three word associations amongst residents were: "Historic", "Beautiful" and "Tourism", whilst for non-residents the top three were: "Historic", "Minster" and "Beautiful". A further exercise asked respondents to select, from a series of twelve images, the ones they considered most representative of York. 53% selected an image of the bar walls and 46% an image of Vikings. Those images that depicted business or cutting-edge culture were rarely selected.

Respondents showed a positive attitude towards York: 'the majority of verbatim comments start[ed] with something warm, fond, sensory and often romanticised about York' (ibid., p. 68). At the same time, there was evidence of a desire for change amongst residents 'particularly covering the need to be seen to be more dynamic, play to the knowledge economy, create a more sustainable, equal and fair city' (ibid.). Similarly, amongst professionals, academics and business people, the view was expressed that whilst history and its preservation matters, there is an imperative to turn "lovely" into something more dynamic; York's heritage should be 'a compelling and unique backdrop to city-life rather than the primary focus of it' (ibid., p. 70). Attributes that stakeholders wanted to see coming through included "boldness", "vision", "audacity", "leadership", "innovation", "fairness" and "independence" (ibid., p. 72).



The city narrative was subsequently developed under three themes: *Making History Every Day*, *Prioritising Human Experience*, and *Pioneering with Purpose*. The strap line, 'History isn't what describes York, history is what makes York the place it is today' (ibid., p. 46) seeks to acknowledge York's heritage framing whilst making space for other discursive framings. The explanatory text also acknowledges the weight of the big story of York whilst asserting that the individual story is just as important:

The people of York built and continue to shape their place; a beautiful compact city where every person can have a voice, make an impact and lay the foundations for a prosperous future. York is a place where people and their stories matter, where an individual's everyday experiences are just as important as the city's world-class achievements.

The emerging narrative was tested through a series of workshops. Although the subsequent report to the council's Executive claims that 'the narrative values [were] well received as being reflective of York and aspirational' (ibid., p. 79), some subaltern voices can be detected. The workshops held with young people, for example, elicited a particular view of the city. Many of the young people involved were living in challenging circumstances and so, perhaps not surprisingly, had a less than positive outlook on the city. Their perceptions of York tended to be quite distant; in most cases, they showed little pride in the city. As the sessions progressed, it became clear that concepts such as "pioneering" and "innovation" did not resonate with these groups: they were more likely to raise issues around drug dealers, the police and unkindness that they frequently encountered, issues which speak more to their daily experience of the city. This disengagement from the city was summed up in the quote, 'We don't have a voice in this city; it's not ours' (York Mediale 2019, p. 6). These less enthusiastic voices were simply not sufficiently loud or numerous to make any impact on the process, however, and the narrative was approved by the council as drafted.

The city narrative initiative demonstrates that York is widely understood by its residents to be a beautiful, heritage city whilst suggesting that the overwhelming nature of this image may be problematic. This problem is understood firstly in

terms of a concern that York's heritage image will represent an impediment to the future development of the city, holding back inward investment and leading to a failure to attract the kind of people that will help to move the city forward as a diverse and progressive place. Secondly, the problem is understood in terms of a degree of dissonance that may exist between the big story of York and the individual resident's day-to-day experience of the city. The implication is that the individual's voice may be drowned out by the big story, denying the agency of the individual and potentially leading to a city that fails to meet the needs of its residents. It argues for the importance of the individual, their experience and their story as much as for the city's renowned heritage.

The city narrative project thus set up a juxtaposition between the big story of York and the individual story of experience of the city suggesting a potential tension between the two. To examine this juxtaposition further, I turned to social media, looking at one particular site concerning York as a historic city, *York Past and Present*. My aim was to consider how, in the postings of community members, the big story of the heritage city of York and the individual stories of experience of the city interrelate.

#### **4.5 Social media**

Set up in 2013 with the aim of creating a 'York history group for everyone' (York Past & Present 2020 a), *York Past & Present* Facebook group describes itself as (York Past & Present 2020 b),

An Historical Community sharing York's historical past. From its beautiful cathedrals to its railway stations and fortified walls York Past and Present aims to take and show you not only the popular sites but also the long forgotten (and sometimes vanished) buildings that make York the ancient City it is.

With nearly 32,000 members as at June 2020, it is preeminent amongst a number of Facebook group that concern themselves with the city of York. Analysis of the postings, following the methodology described in the previous chapter, suggests that there are two broad types. The first type of posting reinforces the big story of York as a beautiful, heritage city. Typically, these postings, of which there are a large number each day, present a photograph of

a well-known York site, taken by that individual community member earlier in the day. Certain well-known sites, such as York Minster or St Mary's Abbey appear over and over again. Little attempt is made to get a new angle on these sites; it seems that the community never tires of seeing the same images and they receive plenty of "likes".

Similarly, photographs are frequently posted of beautiful scenes of the city's parks and gardens or of the river. Again, these receive many likes. Sometimes the photographs, being inexpertly executed, fail to capture the beauty of the scene so that, to the impartial observer, it might appear quite mundane. Such photographs, however, receive no fewer "likes" whilst the comments posted show that the community understands the photograph to be depicting a beautiful scene even if it might not appear so to the uninitiated. A type of photograph commonly posted shows a sunset over some part of the city, this despite the fact that the site rules emphasise that *York Past and Present* is not a photography site and specifically state that photos of sunsets are not welcome. It seems that, for many members, sharing their current experience of the city is as important as sharing information about its history.

This Facebook community appears to have a strong normative affect reinforcing the big story of York as a beautiful, heritage city. No dissent is heard to this view: there are no postings of ugly scenes nor of scenes or subjects that attempt to generate debate about how York might be viewed. (This may in part be due to moderation of the site by the administrators reflecting site rules that encourage "polite and friendly" posts and ban "political rants" (York Past and Present 2020 b). There is an assumption, sometimes explicitly stated, that we residents are fortunate to live in York (it is evident that a proportion of the community's members are former residents who have moved away and use the site no doubt to maintain a connection with the city).

Whilst photographs of beautiful scenes receive many "likes", they tend not to generate a great deal of engagement in terms of comments posted. The second broad type of posting identified, on the other hand, generates significant engagement from other community members. These postings will typically feature an old photograph showing a scene of everyday life from the city's past. These photographs may be of the city centre, for example showing heritage

sites or long lost pubs or cinemas, but they are equally likely to show suburban settings, for example, corner shops, streets of housing or industrial scenes.

These postings invite participation in the form of personal reminiscence about an individual's engagement in the particular scene. For example, a photograph of a shop will elicit stories about using that shop, who the shopkeepers were over the years and what they sold. These stories will often be told in granular detail, recalling the smell and ambience of visiting a sweet shop, for example, the excitement and the feelings to which it gave rise. Pictures of public houses tend to generate the most comments of this sort giving rise to vivid reminiscence of good nights out. Postings that feature groups of people invite the community to identify individuals in the photograph whilst pictures of events draw the community into trying to identify the exact occasion.

The postings that generate the most engagement of all are those that concern the topology of the city, the way past and present landscapes interrelate. Any posting that invites the community to identify an unknown building or other site will receive large numbers of comments. Once the site has been identified, comments will typically focus on placing it in relation to other everyday landmarks, with community members describing their history of using and engaging with the site and how it fitted into the wider pattern of their engagement with the city. It seems that these postings provide the opportunity for community members to orientate themselves and their past lives within the materiality of the city, to recover fragments in danger of being lost, to re-establish bearings in a world in danger of changing beyond recognition.

What we see in *York Past & Present* is a homogenous and normative view of York as a beautiful, heritage city. For members of the *York Past & Present* community, this view provides the backdrop to life in the city; it is what makes York recognisable, what gives it its identity. It is pride in this identity, and in belonging to it, that is evidenced and referred to in the postings of iconic heritage sites and beautiful scenes. Community members identify with York through the allocation of their "likes" to these postings. Yet what animates their engagement in the *York Past & Present* community, I would argue, is not so much a concern with the iconic heritage sites of the city per se, as a motivation to explore their particular, specific, locatable life experiences and to place them,

alongside those of other community members, within a shared experience of the city's material landscape. The postings of community members suggest that their interest lies primarily in a personal history of a life lived in that place; they interpret the site's stated purpose of 'sharing York's historical past' as commensurate with sharing a personal history of engagement with the city. It might be said that, although I have looked at the site, guided by the way that it describes itself, expecting to find the "big stories" of York, I have arguably encountered in equal measure the small stories of everyday individual engagement with the city.

#### **4.6 Concluding thoughts**

This examination of the big stories of York has shown the enduring strength of the city's identification as a beautiful, heritage city. The city's policy makers stress York's unique heritage characteristics as key to its aspirations to move forward as an economically successful city, whilst its citizens appear to see the city's heritage and its particular aesthetic as a norm, something to be accepted almost without question, something of which they are proud and stand ready to protect should it come under threat. York's big stories appear to give rise to a very strong and distinctive sense of place.

In the next chapters, I turn to examine the data concerning the "small stories" of residents' day-to-day embodied experience of the materiality of the city's public spaces in order to consider how sense of place emerges from these everyday encounters. On the face of it, the findings of this chapter suggest that the big story of York will prove highly salient in forming residents' sense of place and that most residents will carry an understanding of York as a beautiful, heritage city with them into their day-to-day interactions with the city's public spaces. At the same time, this chapter has also given some indications that a more complicated picture may emerge. Firstly, it has pointed to some dissonance between the big story of York and the individual resident's day-to-day experience of the city, especially amongst those "easier-to-ignore" groups who may feel that their voice is drowned out by the big story. Secondly, it has suggested that, beneath the individual's identification of him or herself with the heritage city of York, lies a deeper concern with the particular, specific and

locatable life experiences that animates his or her experience of the city's material landscape.

Having considered the small stories of everyday encounter with public spaces I will turn in Chapter 10 to examine how these small stories intersect with the big stories of the heritage city considered here to influence how individuals use the city's public spaces.

## **Chapter 5: The “Small Stories” of Embodied Encounter with York’s Public Spaces**

This second chapter dealing with the research findings continues to engage with the project’s first objective concerning how sense of place manifests itself for residents of York. It seeks to engage critically with how “sense of place” operates, exploring the relative salience, in the formation of sense of place, of the “small” stories of embodied encounter with public spaces.

As explained in Chapter 3, the data drawn on here is the product of twenty go-along interviews and seven group map-drawing sessions. I have used all this data to shape my thinking and to inform my findings; however, for the purposes of presenting my findings here I will focus on a limited number of the go-alongs. Looking in depth at the selected go-alongs will enable me to draw out and illustrate the key findings effectively without becoming overwhelmed by the data or becoming unduly repetitious. I believe this will serve my purpose well as it is from the detail and the granularity of data found in each specific case that the story emerges. I will also draw on the remaining data where it helps to reinforce or further illustrate a point. The visual representations of all the go-alongs are, however, presented in the appendices. (As previously explained, these are assemblages consisting of the respondents’ map, juxtaposed with my photographs of the walks and key field notes that I created for the purposes of aiding my analysis).

In this chapter, I will argue that the “small stories” of everyday encounter with York’s public spaces which emerge from the data can helpfully be understood and described in terms of assemblage and specifically assemblage as promulgated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988). This reflects an understanding that, as I will show, emerged empirically as I immersed myself in the data. My approach here will be to assemble the evidence by juxtaposing extracts from the transcripts of the walks with the respondents’ maps and my observations and photographs, in order to build a picture. My objective in this might be likened to adding successive petals to a flower until the whole is complete.

I begin by describing one person-space encounter in some detail, aiming to create a full enough picture to be able to offer some insights into the essential

characteristics of the encounter and to identify themes and characteristics for subsequent exploration. Describing it in terms of assemblage, I will characterise the experience of space as “intensive” rather than “extensive”. I will highlight too the significance of the “virtual” in the encounter with space, recognising the significance of the individual’s awareness of the potential of space which lies at the heart of their apprehension of it. I will conclude this section by beginning to think about how the encounter with public space, understood as assemblage, might contribute to a conceptualisation of sense of place. In the following chapters, I will expand the thinking about sense of place as assemblage, arguing that it has three specific dimensions: the affective / sensorial, the temporal / mnemonic, and the political, and I will describe each facet in turn.

## 5.1 An everyday encounter with public space

### *The go-along with Debra*

The first everyday encounter that I will describe involves Debra. The route of our walk is marked in blue in Figure 3.



*Figure 3 The go-along with Debra*

We meet at the “community hub” in Chapelfields, a suburb on the west side of the city, where Debra is a member of the residents’ association. I invite her to talk to me about “her York”. I ask her to draw me a rough map of what York means for her and to mark on the map the main features that come to mind when she thinks of “her York”. Debra’s map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 4](#)) is quickly drawn and simple. She marks the sweep of the two roads that enclose this 1950s estate, indicating the estate itself merely with



the words "lots of streets". She marks her house and those of her two daughters, which lie close by, together with the community hub and the shops. She indicates the "green belt area" and the school that lie outside this enclosure, together with the road by which the estate is accessed.

Only when I comment that the estate looks all alone does Debra mark the roundabouts at each end of this access road with their connections to the wider world. Debra's is a tightly enclosed world. She tells me that she does not often leave the estate. As we set out to walk some of the route of the map, Debra's daughter Ruth, unbidden, walks quietly and unobtrusively in front of us. As we leave the community hub the local councillor, who today is leading a community clean-up event with the residents' association, hands us an aerosol and instructs us to spray any dog-dirt we encounter. I ask Debra whether this is indicative of her always being "on duty":

Well, people stop me and we have a chat ... and, you see, some people who see you, you're t' only person who some of them have talked to, you know, so sometimes, especially in summer, it takes me a time to get down here, because people stop you ...

Sure enough, we immediately begin to encounter local residents coming down the street. Lively conversation ensues as Debra stops to chat. Donald Trump's latest foibles provoke incredulous laughter, whilst stories of a shared history on the estate generate evident warmth and enthusiasm: the hot summer of '75 that dried out clay foundations causing houses to subside, and the time, back when the houses were new, that one poor resident's chimney just would not draw and the council workmen, breaking into the chimney breast, found a wheelbarrow bricked up inside!

Debra seems fully at home in this landscape, as one might expect: she has, after all, lived here for 41 years. Not that it was plain sailing to begin with:

At first, when it was somebody strange, I used to get, "you're Ted's wife aren't you?" So, I'd say "yes"; so, for a few years I was "Ted's wife", so, well, it's quite a clannish place ... it's unique that there is, umm, quite a few generations of families that live on the estate

you know from, like, grandparents, parents, lots of generations, really. So, it can't be that bad living here.

As I walk along-side Debra, I become aware that the affective experience of the walk is very different for the two of us: I am quite apprehensive, feeling that I am in someone else's territory expecting, perhaps, to be challenged as to what I am doing here. In between our occasional encounters with the locals, the street seems rather deserted, grey and uniform, uninspiring, brooding even. The regular tapping of the stick with which Debra walks, stands out, melancholic in the midday quiet. Our gaze is on the pavement, occasionally encountering dog dirt, which Debra sprays. The loud spraying feels jarring, the incongruous act suggesting some meaning, but one that remains just beyond my grasp. We pass a garden that is all overgrown. I feel that its parlous state signifies something, but Debra does not comment or even look at it. We pass some litter and I wonder whether to pick it up, but self-consciousness prevents me. Again, Debra does not comment.

Seemingly oblivious to the things on which my eye alights, Debra broaches instead the topic of not needing to go into town much because on-line shopping is so convenient. This leads on to thoughts about the new smart meters:

You get your cards; they have, like, paid, like pre-payment meters, but when like, money was a bit tight, like when the kids were little, then we like, you know, we knew we could only, we knew how much, like, electric to put on ... better than getting the big bill. And we stuck with it so they came and put new meters in and they also put in this smart meter and you get your cards and you don't have to go to the shop to get your cards, you can do it online, and I think that's good for people who are house bound.

Debra goes on to comment that the estate is much like a village. She talks of the importance of the community hub to her and how she first got involved, initially helping at the pensioners' party and then joining the committee more than 20 years ago, subsequently serving as secretary, vice-chair and chair:

I mean, I'm proud of the hub. Well, I mean, it was my daughter Trudi's idea.

There is real pride in Debra's voice as she tells me,

18 years ago, we decided there was a problem with young people and drugs and all that so we formed a group and we called it "Crossroads" and we bartered with the Council, 'cos most of the shops were empty, and they let us have a shop for a peppercorn rent ... and, er, we wrote to paint places. Anyway, Crown donated us some paint to paint it, so we got the kids to paint it with us, ranging from about 8 upwards and, erm, they took ownership of the building; they didn't graffiti on it, because they'd painted it, and it was over a year we did that, ... we had lots of kids in ... But all we had in it, was an old CD player and a table with a roll of wallpaper on [laughs]. But that's all there was. But they used to call it theirs. And it were good. We had like - there was even 70-year-olds coming and helping with these kids; but we got respect from them, and ... yeah, it was fun like.

Debra goes on to explain why she feels she wants to be involved (where so few in the community do nowadays):

I lived in a village and my mum was sort of like an active person in the village and that: she helped with old aged pensioners. She was a member of the church and they did things there. And, erm, I suppose I have been brought up with, you know, helping people. And then, I was telling you about the Hub: and so, Sheila said, "Shall we start it, like, a fortnight on Thursday?" So, I thought, "Oh, I don't know". So, she says, "Yeah, we'll start it a fortnight on Thursday" which was the end of June and so, that gave us the help to feel confident enough to do it, and we've never looked back really.

We pass Debra's daughter's new flat and meet an elderly couple heading to the community hub. Ruth peels off with the couple to go and admire the flat.

As the walk concludes Debra tells me about all the plans for the community hub,

And now we got funding - we're starting crafts next week - we've got funding for that - and we've got - we're putting in for some more money for sort of like doing, erm, a meal for people, you know, not necessarily all elderly, you know, and if we could have that going on that would be nice to have.

We return to the community hub passing the new Costcutter which Debra comments is a very positive development, helping people to keep their independence.

### **5.1.1 Some initial observations**

This first go-along provides the opportunity to take an initial look at the encounter with place through the lens of assemblage and to use it to draw out themes and features for further exploration. My aim will be to develop a vocabulary and a set of concepts with which to assist in elaborating an overarching concept of sense of place.

What leaps out from this go-along, as it will from all that follow, is its inherent jumpiness, its disconnectedness, its internal heterogeneity, incoherence even. The question that launches the encounter invites Debra to think about what York means to her. Any expectation that this might elicit a response shaped by a holistic or conceptual view of the city is quickly confounded by the embodied experience of walking and talking that follows. This place encounter is characterised not by an “on-high” perspective of York but rather by a diversity of interactions with a series of elements or singularities that present themselves in the particular spaces in which we walk. It is composed of elements such as the spraying of the dog dirt and all that is wrapped up in that act: the community status of she who does the spraying and her feelings about those whose lack of community spirit the bright blue paint shames. It turns on the encounters with fellow residents, the problems that they hint at and the shared memories they relate. It is shaped by the material surfaces of the streets, and the challenge of negotiating the potholes, especially when one’s mobility is restricted. It is characterised by the surfacing of pressing current concerns, such as the need to raise funding for the hub, as well as a history of involvement over many years in the estate’s community facilities. It concerns personal and family needs,

desires and ambitions, and equally a concern for community and for how others experience that place and negotiate it successfully in the course of their lives.

I am struck by the discontinuous nature of Debra's embodied apprehension of the landscape. She seems consciously to engage with her surroundings at points and then to withdraw into her thoughts as if, in her mind's eye, she inhabits some parallel landscape. These points of engagement are unpredictable; the junctures at which she "surfaces" to engage with the physicality of her surroundings is frequently surprising, defying any immediate explanation. My sense of this fragmentary and multiplicitous picture is that no one element or encounter is more important than another: the whole picture in all its detail is what matters. There is no irrelevant material to be discarded in order to expose Debra's intended meaning. The task of understanding what constitutes her sense of place, will, I believe, entail attending to the whole 'swarm of vitalities at play' (Bennett 2010 a, p. 32), examining the contours of the swarm and the relations between its elements.

Walking in this landscape, the connections that are made with particular singularities are frequently unexpected, strange even. Debra's expressed thoughts are diffuse, without obvious theme or direction; they are, to use Stewart's term (2007) "obtuse". Rarely do they expound any overarching theme; they are more likely to relate some quotidian concern or entertaining anecdote. I am often left wondering why a particular topic has been broached, such as when Debra talks, unprompted, about the benefit of the new smart meters. Complex and odd as these connections may seem, my sense is that they are the product of very real and specific interactions with the singularities of space, whether that be its material surfaces or its virtual attributes, the potentialities that it contains within it to make one's life easy or difficult. The task will be to understand this "constellation" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988) of elements in all its granularity.

My interpretation of this walk is that Debra is not "in charge" of the encounter with space, so much as interacting with the things that she encounters along the way. It is these encounters that determine, for example, her recollection of particular events that have shaped her experience of that space. What we see is the power of things to influence what transpires, the "distributive agency"

(Bennett 2010 a, p. 21) of the elements that constitute the assemblage that is the place encounter. So, in Debra's story about the youth club, the various elements that constitute it: the young people, the Council and the empty shops, the paint they obtained to put on the walls, the old CD player and the table covered in a roll of wallpaper, the other residents who came down to help, all seem to have equal agency in shaping what transpired. Debra does not come across as the star of the story, the pre-existent subject negotiating a path through other fixed entities, determining the course of events and ascribing meaning to them. Rather, what shines through Debra's encounter with the spaces of Chapelfields are the particular configurations of materiality, effects or circumstance within those spaces, the interactions, transformations and emergences to which they give rise, and the way that these act to constitute her individual subjectivity (Patton 2000).

Debra's encounter with space is consistent with a characterisation of assemblage as emergence rather than formation (Anderson and McFarlane 2011). It can be apprehended '*only by a longitude and a latitude*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 304 emphasis in original), by the 'lines and dimensions it encompasses in "intention"' (ibid., p. 286), that is, by her relations of movement within the estate, the problems and the people with whom she interacts, and the intensive affects to which they give rise: 'Nothing but affects and local movements, differential speeds' (ibid., p. 304). The walk reveals the agency of both the material elements of the space as well as the meanings that Debra attributes to those elements. This is consistent with Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) explication of assemblages as composing both content and expression: they are both assemblages of bodies and matter and assemblages of enunciation or utterance (Patton 2000): 'In assemblages you find states of things, bodies, various combinations of bodies, hodgepodes; but you also find utterances, modes of expression, and whole regimes of signs' (Deleuze 2007, p. 177).

Both physical and symbolic processes (Lorraine 2005) are present in the assemblage of the walk. The material is seen in the dog dirt on the pavement or in the young people on their motor scooters who need a place to go. From the encounter with these concrete elements flow actions such as the spraying of the dog dirt or the setting up of the youth club. This is the assemblage as

'*pragmatic* system, actions and passions' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 586 emphasis in original). At the same time, the assemblage that is Debra's place encounter includes elements of expression, conceptual signifiers that are equally powerful in the way that they produce 'incorporeal transformations' (ibid.). Thus, Debra attributes to herself characteristics inherited from her mother as pillar of the village church community, characteristics that shape how Debra acts in her current circumstances. Similarly, her characterisation of the estate as being like a village, shapes her expectations as to how community should function and the residents behave. The walk, then, reveals the place encounter to be both an assemblage of material things, of flows and spatial connections within the street, as well as of representational narratives (Dovey 2010) that ascribe meanings to place.

The walk with Debra confirms that the encounter with place will always be peculiar to the individual. What emerges depends upon the complex of relationships that a body forms with those other singularities with which it is in assemblage at any moment. It depends upon the individual's particular 'angle of vision' (Li 2007, p. 265). Consequently, although I walk the same streets as Debra, and our walk is designed expressly to be a shared experience, I am, nonetheless, always conscious of experiencing place differently to her. I sense that my emotions differ from hers at various points; things that prick my interest, such as the litter or an overgrown garden, pass her by unnoticed, and she responds to place in ways that, initially at least, I cannot account for. As I review my photographs of the walk, those scenes that for me provoked the most intensity, piqued my interest the most, or struck me as most significant within the narrative of the walk, I now see to be either of little significance to Debra or perhaps significant in different ways. I cannot simply share Debra's place encounter: all I can do is observe it (and subsequently compare notes with my own encounter).

## **5.2 Place as "intensive" rather than "extensive"**

What this walk shows us about Debra's embodied response to the question of what York means for her, is that it is only interaction with the particular that has salience. Debra pays little attention to the wider context of the city as a whole. In drawing her map, she homes in on just handful of buildings that have

everyday meaning for her and her family. What lies beyond is barely referred to: the words “green belt” suffice for Debra to describe the wider world. As we walk the streets shown on her map, it is those everyday encounters of the street that shape how Debra talks about what York means to her: the assemblage that is her place encounter is very much immanent to her everyday life (Dovey 2010), where ‘each component enfolds within its essence the totality of its relations with each and every other’ (Ingold 2011, p. 191). As such, her sense of place is intensive rather than extensive, that is, she experiences place not as space extending within defined bounds, but rather as intensive spaces, zones of ‘intensive continuity’ (Deleuze 2007, p. 179). The processes at work in these intensive spaces produce place in the form of the various extensive spaces that she experiences (DeLanda 2005).

Whilst Debra’s sense of place can be seen in terms of ‘the familiar domain of dwelling’ (Ingold 2011, p. 191), this does not imply that it has a stable identity or meaning over time (Tucker 2012); rather, as places exist in the form of ongoing processes or assemblages that are constantly open to new lines of flight (Anderson and McFarlane 2011), they can be seen as ‘places of becoming’ (Dovey 2010, p. 13). Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition* (2014) places differentiation at the heart of assemblage: as elements are assembled and brought into relation, new things happen. This repetition of familiar processes in place, leading to differentiation, entails experimentation and discovery (Jones 2017). This can be seen in the walk with Debra who describes how relations change and new relations emerge, for example in the journey that she goes on in her relationship with the estate from being characterised initially as “Ted’s wife”, to becoming a significant community actor in her own right. Different becomings can also be seen in the case of Debra’s concern for the estate’s young people, which she returns to at various points throughout the go-along. When the issue of young people and drugs is first identified, she describes the positive becomings associated with working with them in opening the “Crossroads” project. Later, after the community building that housed that project has been demolished, the young people are different: they have become ‘this other generation that we didn’t really know’. Now it no longer feels safe to tackle the issue and other residents are reluctant to get involved. The issue of



young people is now associated with negative becomings as they bomb round the estate on their motor scooters.

The characterisation of the go-along with Debra as concerning an intensive experience of space, rather than an extensive apprehension of place, is typical of the go-alongs generally. Whilst Debra's horizons are limited by her circumstances, the embodied response to space of those respondents whose engagement with the city is more wide-ranging is equally characterised by intensity. This is evident in the maps drawn, very few of which could be characterised as spatial in their design; in most cases, they are illustrative of particular intensities. I will illustrate this through brief extracts from three further go-alongs: with Michelle, with Louise and with Brian.

### ***The go-along with Michelle***



*Figure 4 The go-along with Michelle*

Michelle came to York in 1997, as a mature student, to study history at the University of York where she went on to complete her masters. We meet up in a city centre café. In the course of our walk, Michelle comments that she came to York because of her prior understanding of the depth the city's history and the concentration of its heritage, a motivation bolstered by the recommendations of her tutors at the time. Yet, despite this overarching appreciation of York as a city and what it has to offer her, the map that she draws for me (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 5](#)) does not attempt to depict York as a heritage city, but rather as the location for a small number of quite particular intensities. It depicts the walks that she took in former times as a student, from lodgings to city centre lectures, and to what she

describes as the “unique” experience of the quaint and cosy City Screen cinema in Museum Gardens. As we retrace some of that route, the things that she chooses to talk about are, similarly, the very particular:

What was fascinating was things like the Blue Bridge. And then as we got to the King's Arms – so, when I later found out just how famous that pub is and how many people come to drink there even when it's flooded I thought, “my gosh, I'm walking here day in day out and enjoying these scenes”. And I just found the walk along the river very calming ... but also entertaining as there was the ducks and the geese and people of all sorts. And there was a seller selling hamburgers from a mobile van.

Although a strategic appreciation of York's history underlay Michelle's motivation for coming to York, her embodied engagement with the city is characterised by the kind of particular intensities demonstrated in this extract: Blue Bridge 'as a place to dream', a famous pub, the river, calming except when it overflowed its banks and was encountered unexpectedly in places it should not have been. The way she talks about York's history is typified by pointing out to me a blue plaque, marking the spot where the Brontë sisters once stayed, which she first saw when she 'did one of the walks with the University history department'; it is clear that it is the memory of the walk, and the particular relations to which it gives rise, which is salient rather than any history that the plaque conveys.

### ***The go-along with Louise***

The salience of intensities within the embodied encounter with place is further highlighted in my walk with Louise. Louise lives just outside the city walls in the Bishopthorpe Road area, recently voted one of the UK's coolest neighbourhoods (Delahay 2018). We meet in one of its typical cafés.



*Figure 5 The go-along with Louise*

Having moved to York from Essex, eight years earlier, Louise works at a local community centre. The map that she draws for me is more spatial in character than that of most respondents (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 6](#)), showing the network of streets that link her home to her workplace and to the city centre; however, as we walk that network of streets, her talk is all about the intensive experiences of her early encounters with those spaces. Thus, she recalls that, when she first moved to York, with her husband, in 2010, walking up from Skeldergate Bridge into Bishophill:

There was a sense that the city noise died away and it was quiet; and then we walked up and there was an old guy sitting on the corner near where the flats were and I think we just had that feeling it doesn't matter what the flat's like we want to live in this area.

She also recalls feelings from that time such as their first flat which was 'the coldest place I've ever been', the community garden where she met two people who 'changed the course of my life', the community pub where she began to get involved in the community 'and it was good to be members', and their first house with its brown front door: 'I liked that house'.

I will draw on one further walk to illustrate the intensive nature of the embodied encounter with place, that which took place with Brian.

### ***The go-along with Brian***



*Figure 6 The go-along with Brian*

Brian is a working-class man who, although born on the east side of York, moved to the west side in his teens and spent all his working life there. Recently retired, he now spends most of his time involved in various community projects. His “map” (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 7](#)) has no lines or contours on it at all; it seems that the very idea of illustrating his York extensively is something Brian just cannot bring himself to do. Instead, he lists those places that have had the strongest intensive salience for him, places where he has lived, worked and socialised.

The walk with Brian is revealing of intensities whose relations with the place where we are walking was not always obvious. It begins conventionally enough with Brian showing me the former school playing fields, opposite the community centre where he volunteers, and outlining his ideas for how the area could be improved: with benches, a dog walking area, a strip round the perimeter for social running and recycling facilities. However, as the walk continues, along residential streets of which Brian seems barely conscious, his talk about the significance of dog walking as a social activity and his love of animals leads him in unexpected directions:

The first picture you can ever see of me as a kid, was dressed as a cowboy and I love cowboy music and westerns, and then I started to take an interest, as I got older, in the native American

Indian culture ... because I don't want to be a shaman but I'd like to learn and teach the philosophy of the thing.

He explains this culture's respect for animals and the environment contrasting this with the way 'we are totally destroying everything'. Brian talks rapidly and intently, moving seamlessly across a diverse range of topics: a recent event for foster children that heightened his awareness of the 'abject poverty' that some children in York face; his memories of Sundays growing up, his feeling that the quality of Sundays has been degraded and his sense that we should have 'one day a month where everything apart from essential services was closed – [a] family day'; his belief in equalities sitting alongside his sense of the distinctive issues that men face:

And I think it's just hard, sometimes for men, especially to say, "I do struggle to cope". I mean, a lot of men of my age they struggle to assimilate ... they go to maybe, men's sheds ... on't allotments, but I think it's far easier for women to sort of join in groups than men because men can ... feel, well, "I can't admit I can't cope". And my age group especially - to admit that you need help - I found it hard; I mean, I'm quite an emotional sort of person but when my Dad died, it's just a few days before, I'd never said, "I love you Dad", because, as a man, you didn't do that.

As Brian tells me these things, my first feeling is one of anxiety that he is straying off the subject of what he is "supposed" to be talking about, that is "his York". Despite my methodological approach of not speaking unless strictly necessary during the walks, I am constantly tempted to interrupt Brian with a question in order to bring him back to our immediate surroundings. When I yield to this temptation, asking him where his former workplace was situated, his answer is polite but brief and lacking in enthusiasm. He quickly returns to topics that he wants to talk about. On reflection, this contrasting level of enthusiasm helps to point up those intensive sites and processes that are significant for Brian in negotiating life in his community. They are processes characterised by Brian's circumstances as a single person, without family, seeking to be active and engaged in a community that increasingly lacks the social structures of former times. They concern his persona as a working-class

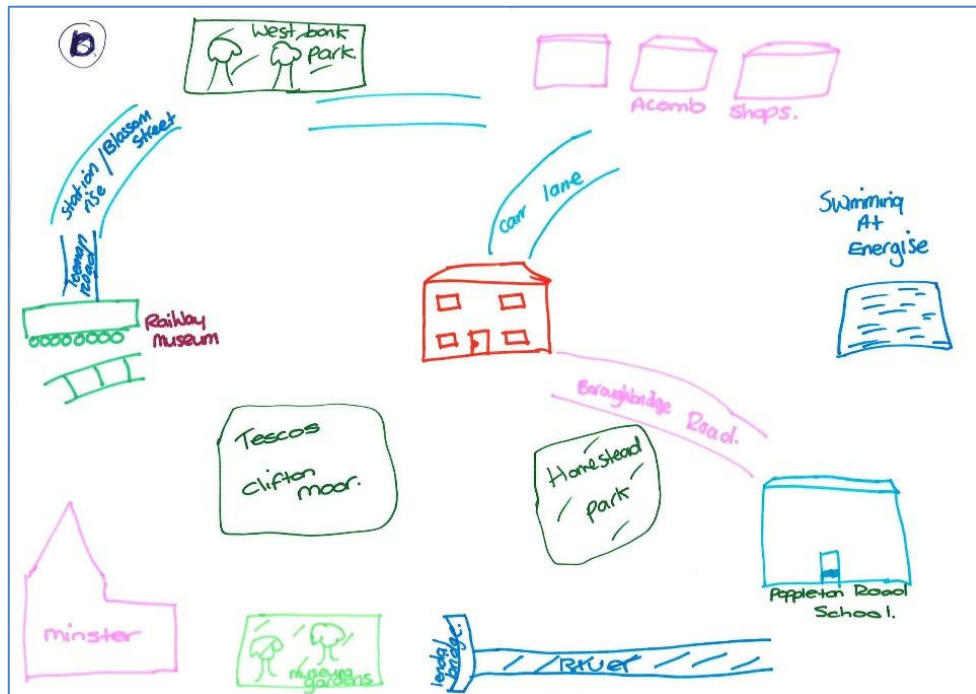


man with strongly held principles and political beliefs, working these out in practical terms at a time when the need to act has never been greater but the ways to proceed seem unclear, when even how to be a man can feel uncertain.

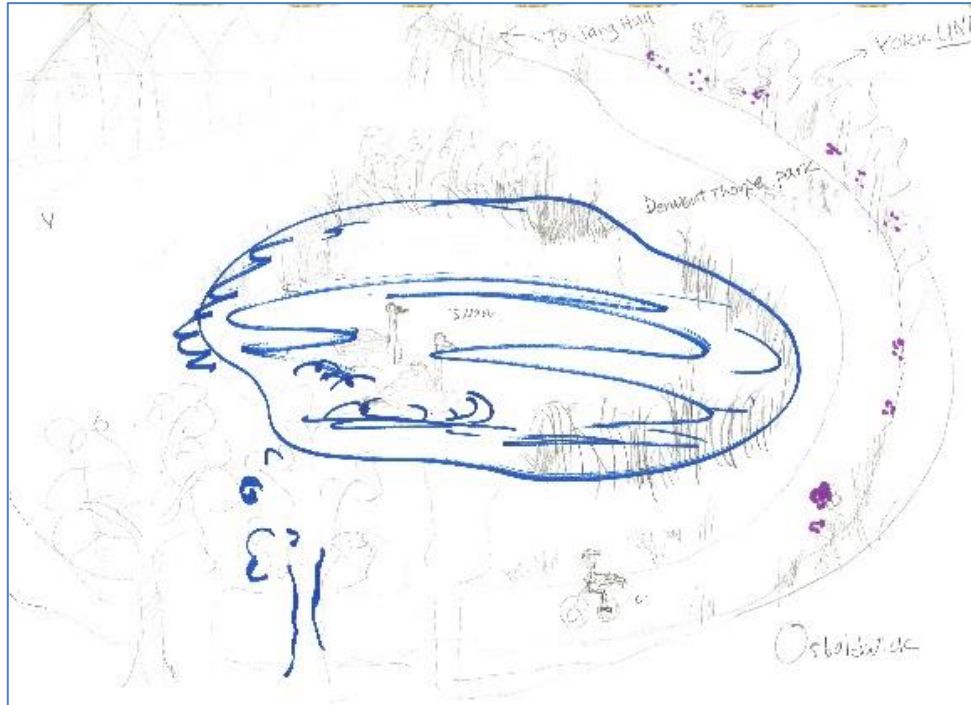
### ***The wider data***

What we see from the four go-alongs considered thus far is that the individual's embodied encounter with the city's public spaces might be characterised in terms of an experience of sites of intensity. The sense of place they point to is "intensive" rather than "extensive". Looking at the body of maps that were drawn for me, both in the group mapping sessions and in the go-alongs, what stands out is their sheer diversity. Firstly, they are drawn in a myriad of different formats and at widely different scales, ranging from the whole city through to one that focussed on just a local pond. (See Figure 7).

*Figure 7 Maps at differing scales*



- a) Map drawn in a group mapping session in the north of the city showing features of the city across a wide range



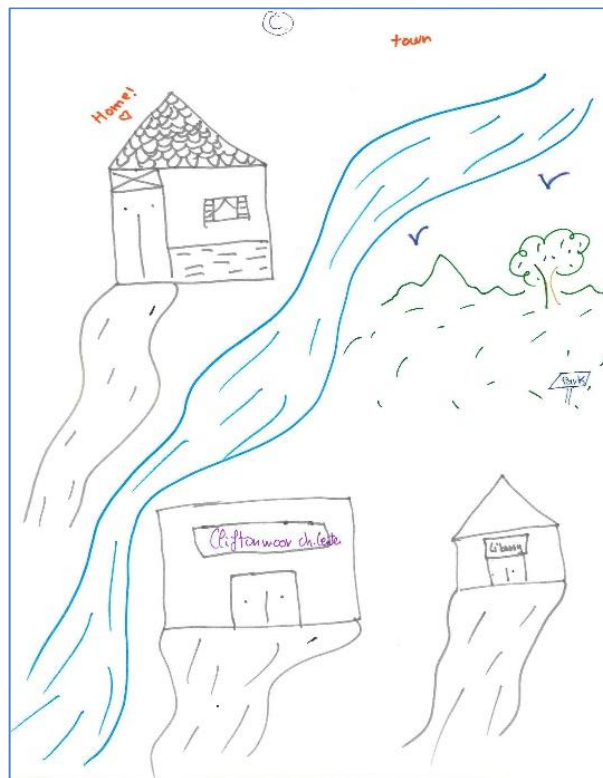
b) Map drawn in a group mapping session in the west of the city focused on a village pond

Whilst some maps show areas and buildings, others depict events or relationships (see Figure 8).



Figure 8 A map revealing of events / relationships – drawn in a group mapping session in the south east of the city

Within this diversity, however, it is possible to observe that few of the maps are truly spatial in nature; in most, any overarching sense of the city's topology is at best sketchy or generalistic, whilst in many it is missing altogether. Only a small minority of the items marked on the maps could be categorised as significant sites or symbols of the city per se. Where such items are included, they were often drawn on first by the respondent as a means of basic orientation; for example, respondents might start by drawing a circle for the city walls or a wavy line to represent the river running through the middle of the city. (See example in Figure 9).



*Figure 9 A map with orientation feature – drawn in a group mapping session in the south east of the city*

The items drawn on the maps can more readily be understood as revealing of sites of intensity, spaces of ongoing process or assemblage that have salience for the individual in their daily lives. Where respondents drew lines on their maps, these could most often be interpreted not as boundaries or delineations, revealing an “extensive” sense of place, but rather as routes and connections, the signification of relations between intensities. This can be seen in the example map at Figure 10 which shows routes and connections between places



significant for the respondent, for example the houses of friends and family.  
(Names have been redacted).



*Figure 10 A map of connections – drawn in a group mapping session in the south east of the city*

The maps can thus be viewed as charting experience, experience that is of the intensities that arise as the individual and the materiality of the spaces that they engage with are drawn together in assemblage. A number of individuals described what lay beyond the area shown in their maps as “unknown”; one respondent even going as far as to label it as “nothingness” (see Figure 11).

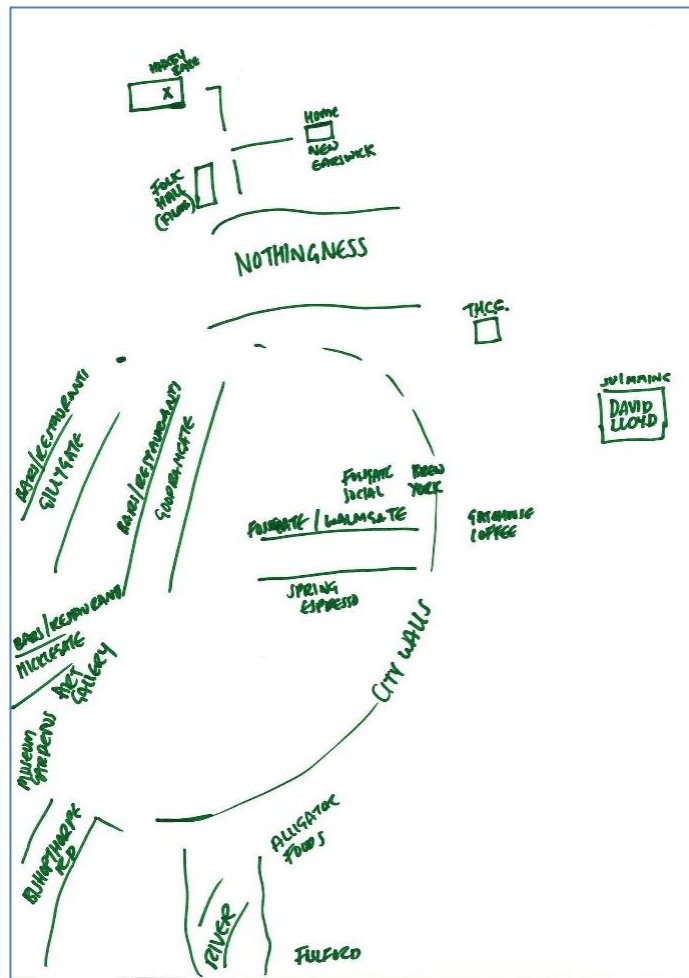


Figure 11 A map showing “nothingness” – drawn in the go-along with Laya

In part, this might be seen as a humorous echoing of the “here be dragons” tradition of ancient maps. At the same time, respondents were undoubtedly signalling the lack of salience for them of any part of the city that they did not have cause to use. It is as though any place that is not used is not truly real. In the same way, Louise, introduced above, commented with wonder about a York landmark that she had seen as a child from the train window, whilst on a holiday journey that took her through the city, ‘Bits that seemed for years and years and years, you know, from the train - they’re just places - and now ... now knowing what they all are’. As they have become intensive sites for this respondent, so they have become real: they have meaning for her. Similarly, another respondent mentioned never having noticed a particular heritage building, even though it was immediately opposite his office window, until he became involved with the community group working to restore it.

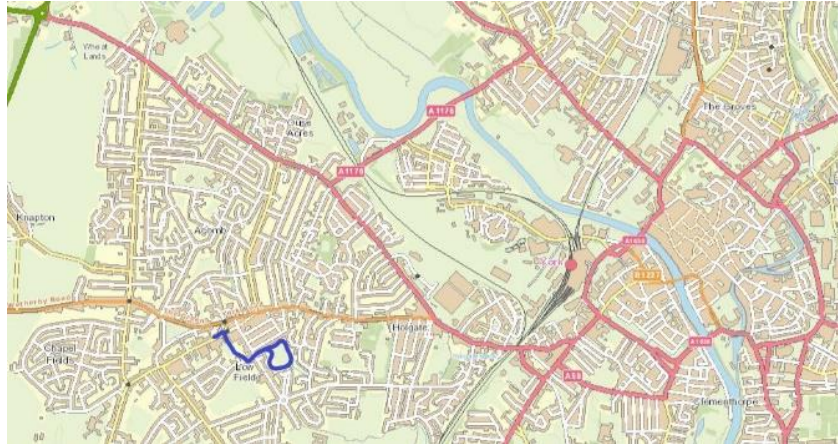
### **5.3 The virtual place**

If the place encounter is characterised by intensive processes involving the particular and the immediate, it is also characterised by an awareness of, and an interest in seeking out, the potential of place. Returning to the walk with Debra, I am struck that the overarching theme of this walk concerns the potential that Debra sees in the estate, and of her life within it, to create positive community outcomes. Each topic that Debra talks about reveals the potential for alternative outcomes. We undertake the walk during a community clean-up day and, in undertaking this, Debra sees the potential for more community involvement by estate residents and a reduction in people allowing their dogs to foul the pavement. She alludes to the financial hardship that some local residents face and envisages how smart meters can help them to budget more effectively. She thinks about the new local Costcutter as well as on-line shopping and how they can help to maintain people's independence. Finally, she reflects extensively on the estate's young people, their needs and how these might be met. Implicit in these thoughts are alternative outcomes: ones where the community comes together to make the estate a better place to live.

This empirical demonstration of the significance of the potential of place is consistent with Deleuzian theory in which space, whilst always real, a domain of singularities, relations, movement, and events, is also a realm of virtualities (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005). New becomings are produced in the encounter with place as bodies affect other bodies in specific ways; however, bodies are significant for more than what they do because bodies also have the potential to act differently in different circumstances (Lorraine 2005). When particular relations actualise in the place encounter they give rise to specific effects and outcomes, at the same time ruling out the actualisation of other effects; however, the virtual relations not actualised are still present in what actualises with a potential force that could yet be brought to bear should circumstances change. This virtual sense of place which might be equated to a sense of potential, Deleuze stresses is not to be thought of as less "real" albeit it is not "actual", (Deleuze 1988 b).

I will further illustrate this conception of the virtual place and the important role that it plays in an over-arching concept of sense of place through the go-along with Philip.

### ***The go-along with Philip***



*Figure 12 The go-along with Philip*

I meet Philip at his home in Acomb, a suburb on the west side of the city. As usual, I invite Philip to talk to me about "his York" whilst drawing me a rough map of what York means to him. Philip's map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 8](#)) is simple, consisting of just a circle for York with a single line joining Gillygate and Fossgate, the two spots where he occasionally likes to walk, and then another circle for Acomb. Philip quickly focuses in on Acomb and talks with enthusiasm about his history in that place. He places emphasis on the importance for him of community and he is upbeat about how various stakeholder groups are currently developing Acomb's community capital and infrastructure. Having enumerated the principal community institutions in Acomb, he homes in on the allotments as his 'favourite place at the moment'.

As we set off to walk to the allotments, all Philip's talk is about the allotments, how he first came to get an allotment himself and subsequently became a trustee of the allotments association, and how his skills as an allotment holder are progressing:

I'm still learning really about ... still making mistakes in terms of growing vegetables because I have no idea and very little idea

about what they're called, so it's just learning a bit year on year - we seem to have improved.

As we traverse residential streets and cut through a supermarket car park, Philip seems oblivious to his immediate surroundings: all his focus is on the allotment site to which we are headed. He is telling me about the allotment association's plans for the site and all the improvements that are in the pipeline. He is animated about the progress they have made so far in turning what was a moribund site into one that now has a waiting list and he is excited about their future plans. At this point in our walk, before we have yet reached it, the allotment is a virtual place, a place held in mind, an image, envisaged and mentally constructed. What is evident as Philip talks about the allotment site is the potential that he sees in it to contribute to Acomb's community life as well as to his personal learning and growth.

As we arrive at the allotments, I can see that it is, by any standards, a beautiful place, an oasis of calm and tranquillity in the midst of a busy suburban area. As we stand and admire the recently created informal meadow area, currently in bloom, we are transfixed by the song of a thrush that is so loud, so cogent and so close at hand that we can do nothing other than give it full our attention. Words seem superfluous and we lapse into silence. We move on to look at Philip's own delightful allotment with its hothouse vines and cleverly contrived watering devices. The allotment site has outstanding aesthetic qualities, yet what strikes me even more strongly about Philip's encounter with this space is the virtual potentiality that he sees in it. He tells me that he took the allotment on in the first place because, 'I needed to lose some weight and, er, and needed some exercise following retirement so I thought digging was quite a healthy thing to do'. More than just a healthy place, however, it has become a place of learning, both as a gardener:

The guy on that allotment there has been such a terrific help to me; he's been here years, a really knowledgeable guy; lots of people round here, especially the old guys have got - like last year somebody saw me planting my potatoes and said, er, you're planting those too deep in the ground. I just had this memory of

my dad doing it and putting them in a deep trench but, so, I've learned this year so hopefully I'll get a better crop.

... and as a trustee:

The five trustees, we get on really well, and, er, we've had a whole number of challenges in the last six months since we took it on but, yes, it's working out really well, I think.

The allotment site is also a place of invention, a place where you can 'just build and be creative':

I went to a car boot sale at Murton and I bought that water feeder there: it's an animal water feeder and it's got a little stopcock, like a toilet, underneath that flap, so the rain water fills this barrel, comes down there and that keeps constantly topped up with water ... I just saw it for four quid and I thought, I don't know what I'm going to do with this, but I never have to - so I can go on holiday and the tomatoes will feed themselves. That's the sort of thing I love doing: the inventive creation.

Above all, for Philip it is a place of community:

So, we now have a base and one of the guys here found a ... he finds all sorts of quirky things; he got a wood burner, so we've installed that in there ... So, er, we can still have a place together in the winter to keep warm. We have regular test mornings there, all get together and do some work. So, it's a nice place to be but there is a sense of community here that's important.

For Philip the allotment involves discovering the unexpected. He shows me an extraordinary plot, enclosed within a high wall and accessible only through a locked, ivy-covered door. The owner of this secret garden had apparently recently died. The garden contains a number of eccentric structures and features including carved heads on poles, a recreation of a ruined stretch of the city wall in what looks like original stone, and a sealed stone cairn, the purpose of which can only be guessed at:

Now this was completely over-grown and you couldn't get in to it because it was over-grown so a couple of us squeezed in and some guy had had it many years ago that I didn't know; must have been quite an eccentric sort of person and, er, dunno what sort of work he did but he built all sorts of follies in there and it was totally un-lettable because you just couldn't get rid of the stuff in there, so, we've tried to - it's like a secret garden - we've made an opening - and there were two doors there originally; we've made it stable and this has all started to grow back over again and we're trying to retain its quirkiness and the Association use it for social events four or five times a year we come down here in the evening, have a fire - and in the Autumn there will be lights up and bunting and stuff - and have a really jolly time.

Whilst the meaning of this strange enclosure is impossible to divine, standing there surveying it with Philip I find it extraordinarily affecting. I have a powerful sense that here there is the potential for multiplicitous yet unfathomable becomings. This comes to me not so much through cognitive reflection but more as heightened bodily awareness and sensation, including the hairs beginning to stand up on the back of my neck. As I reflect subsequently on this scene, I am struck by the “wonder” in the data (Maclure 2013 b). The wonder in this encounter is relational; it is not clear from where exactly it originates or where it resides, but it is unquestionably felt. It circulates in the assemblage that is Philip, myself and the materiality of this particular landscape; it is the effect of “intra-action” (Barad 2007) or entanglement within all the different bodies (human and other) that are connected in this particular space and in this particular moment and which, by being connected, acquire agency (Gheradi et al. 2018).

Philip's body language suggests that he shares this sense of wonder, that he is subject to the same “affective resonance” (Gheradi et al.) that I sense, although his response to the assemblage is pragmatic in nature: he tells me that he and his colleagues have turned it into a community place for social activities and summer parties, one that epitomizes the potential of the allotment site: ‘So, yeah, we're quite proud of this little place’.

Much of the walk with Philip concerns demonstrating the potential of the site that they have realised:

Couple of autumns ago we put in three or four hundred daffodils; they've gone now, of course, so it's quite a show of daffodils. And we keep the paths cut ourselves and, er, it's just a little haven; it's beautiful isn't it; don't you think?

This achievement of the site's potential leads to a real sense of satisfaction:

So, after a hard day's work on the allotment digging, I just sit and have a bottle of beer on the meadow and just take it all in for a bit - listen to the bird song.

More than this, what is really significant for Philip is the site as virtual place and its potential for further learning, creativity and community:

And this plot here ... when we get some money ... it could be developed into something like raised beds with paving round it for disabled people ... So, er, that's a project for the future so we're just trying to keep the weeds down for the time being. So, I'm quite excited about that!

There's a band of about ... five hardcore workers here and another five who come down and help when they can, erm, and making all those kinds of changes; it's really good. So, I don't know if that gives you a feel of why I like being here?

#### **5.4 Sense of place as assemblage**

The go-alongs and the maps examined thus far suggest that our embodied experience of the encounter with public space is consistent with how Deleuze sees life itself, in that, rather than being homogenous in nature, it is a whole of singularities, or "blocks of becoming" (Colebrook 2002). The assemblages of which it is constituted represent the emergent properties of 'machinic' processes (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 586), the working out of the causal processes that are immanent in a space seen as an open system of intensities acted upon by a force that is external to it (Marcus and Saka 2006).



The intensities that respondents focus on in their maps and in the go-alongs might be characterised as “events” in Deleuzian terms, that is they represent those junctures that allow matters to take off on a new path (Colebrook 2002), that create new relations. Every event is unique since the specific relations involved will never come together again in exactly the same way (Tucker 2012): new encounters will initiate new relations (Colebrook 2005). These events, although at first glance often seeming to be somewhat random or incidental, in fact should be thought of as profoundly meaningful: ‘The event is not what occurs (an accident), it is rather inside what occurs, the purely expressed. It signals and awaits us ... it is what must be understood, willed and represented in that which occurs’ (Deleuze 1990, p. 154).

We see too that, whilst the embodied experience of a particular space is always real, it is not always actual; place can also be viewed as a “realm of virtualities” (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005) where our sense of place is about what may happen as much as it is about what has happened already. This awareness of the virtual may be concerned with the desire to achieve some specific outcome or bring about some particular state of affairs, such as we see in the way that Philip envisages the future allotment site as a place of community and inclusion. At the same time, it incorporates an awareness of the potential for connections and proliferations that cannot necessarily be envisaged, that are not immediately visible or accessible, that cannot readily be apprehended and thought through (Colebrook 2002). In Deleuzian terms this might be characterised as an awareness of the “folding of the line outside” (Deleuze 1995, pp. 112 – 113), one of the four folds that Deleuze identifies in the work of Foucault that together constitute the production of bodies in space. It occurs when the body connects with the creative potential of that which lies outside of knowledge and thought, to a pure flow of productive desire, leading to unpredictable becomings and taking the body in new directions, to new ways of thinking and being (Malins 2004). We see this awareness in Philip’s response to the allotment site, to the strange and hard to categorise potentialities of some of its arcane features: its birdsong, its hidden garden, or its improvised watering devices.

In associating “sense of place” with the intensive processes in play in the “small stories” of everyday encounter with public spaces, the “events” that flip things

onto a new path and the virtualities that open up awareness of new becomings, it becomes clear that sense of place concerns not the “meaning” of that space but rather what it can do. As Massumi says about affect, ‘The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think?’ (Massumi 1988, p. xiv); the same might be said of “sense of place”.

The data in this study shows that the small stories of embodied encounter with space are consistent with Stewart’s view of everyday life whereby ‘*Something* throws itself together’ (Stewart 2007, p. 1 emphasis in original). But to understand sense of place as assemblage or intensive multiplicity implies the need to focus not on the nature of the singularities that constitute the assemblage, the things thrown together, but rather on the causal relations that are imminent to it and on its emergent properties, since ‘a multiplicity is defined not by the elements that compose it in extension, nor by the characteristics that compose it in comprehension, but by the lines and dimensions it encompasses in “intention”’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 286). The next section looks more closely at the characteristics of the lines and dimensions that impart consistency to the assemblage that is sense of place, through a focus on the ‘modes of attention, attachment and agency’ (Stewart 2007, p. 1) operating in the embodied encounter with place.

Specifically, the data in this study suggest that sense of place as assemblage has three particular characteristics. These three characteristics are consistent with the three interconnected features of assemblage that Hamilakis (2017) argues hold special importance within assemblage generally, namely, the affective / sensorial, the mnemonic / temporal, and the political. I will examine each in turn in the sections that follow.

## **Chapter 6: Sense of Place - The Affective / Sensorial**

I have argued in the previous section that the encounter with place, when looked at through a Deleuzian lens of assemblage, can be characterised as an experience of being folded into intensities, and that involvement in the processes at work within these intensities has the potential to lead to new becomings. The productive force at work that drives these new becomings, Deleuze and Guattari call desire: 'Assemblages are passionate, they are compositions of desire' (1988, p. 465). Desire brings together the individual elements in assemblage, forging connections and intensive states within and between bodies and leading to new emergences (Hamilakis 2017). In this sense, 'desire produces reality' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, p. 30). Desire is revealed in affects, the power that a body has to touch and impact upon another body. According to Deleuze, bodies are characterised by their affects: 'In the same way that we avoided defining a body by its organs and functions, we will avoid defining it by Species or Genus characteristics; instead we will seek to count its affects' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 299). Affects, as engagements with the power of other bodies, are processes of becoming (ibid., p. 300):

We know nothing of a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body.

In the assemblage that is an individual's encounter with one of the city's public spaces, the affective connection between the materiality of that space and the human body, I will argue, is made possible by the sensorial. The sensorial in this context refers not so much to the biological processes of sensing as to the facility to make affective connections, the embodiment of affective action (Hamilakis 2013; Hamilakis and Jones 2017). I will explore the role of the sensorial in the person-space encounter through three of the go-alongs, beginning with the walk with Laya.

## 6.1 Three go-alongs

### *The go-along with Laya*



*Figure 13 The go-along with Laya*

Laya chose to meet at a café on the edge of the city centre. Laya now works in a community centre, having been, until recently, a postgraduate student at the University of York. Noteworthy about her map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 11](#)) is the fact that, although it delineates the city centre - by a circle representing the city walls - with the exception of the City Art Gallery and Museum Gardens it does not include any of the landmarks that would normally be associated with the city centre. Rather, it marks those streets leading into the city centre that, until recently rather run down, might now be thought somewhat trendy. She marks a number of cafés and restaurants that she uses for socializing as well as some specialist food shops that she frequents.

In drawing her map, Laya comments that 'Everywhere is just a tiny little thing that I visit in different areas - there is no whole area'. She marks on her home on the north side of the city, designating the gap between there and the city centre as "nothingness". She marks her place of work and the gym she goes to.

As we set off from the café, heading towards the city centre, Laya talks about the various coffee shops and bars that she frequents. She comments on some of the shops we pass and we pause to look in the windows of those she likes. I am struck, as I review the walk afterwards, that I had previously been completely unaware of almost all the establishments that Laya points out on our

walk; hers is a completely different awareness of the city to mine. I am also struck, as I review my photographs of the walk, by the spectacle of colour and vibrancy that they portray. They are mostly of the interesting shop windows at which Laya paused. Laya remarks that whilst she likes looking at window displays, she does not buy anything in these shops, either because she shops online or because the quality of the goods is not that good, or simply because she is trying, in her life, to divest herself of possessions: 'I'm obsessed with this shop as well - I never go in it. But, erm, it always has the best window display ever. I might go in one day.'

The walk seems to be from one cluster of interesting establishments to the next. Walking through the streets, I am conscious that in between interesting shop windows Laya is not very engaged with her surroundings, appearing to pay little attention to them. She confirms my thought when she volunteers, 'Just walking through, like with the map as well, how many areas I just don't stop in: I just use them to get to another one'. As we come to a street with a number of interesting shops, she comments:

I think a lot of my enjoyment of this street is the windows, yes, because I like strolling up and down. I like this place here: terrible soup. But nice place. Yeah, it was made of scraps. And this is another shop I like as well actually. But I'm not going to buy any of these objects ... Yeah, it's all about the window displays. I wouldn't buy any cake either. I just look at cake. That's a looking cake, not an eating cake.

For Laya, her experience of the city and her embodied response to the question of what it means to her seems to be all about the immediate affective, sensorial experience. As well as the visual spectacle of the streets, she responds strongly to the affective impact of taste, commenting extensively about food and the many eating and drinking places that she uses. She talks about the importance to her of good bread, she singles out the food court in the city's market, and she talks about where the best falafel in York is to be had. She directs the walk to parts of the city where the affective / sensorial is clustered: 'So, I like this place, *The Habit*, 'cos of the live music and the Jamaican food

[they did] for a bit, which was exciting, as is this place, *Gogi*. So, it's just like a little concentrated spot.'

We finish the walk looking in the window of a shop selling crystals, which has particular affective resonance for Laya:

Just after my grandma died people were saying really weird things to me, like handing me brochures to see a medium, which, like, at the time, it was really strange. And I felt very odd in here and I was in here with my sister for like an hour while she listened to crystals so, it's pretty mad in there.

Laya seems to have little sense of place beyond the immediately affective / sensorial: 'For me, I don't think a place is really that important; erm ... it's who I'm around and what I'm doing [that's important]. Obviously, where you are shapes what you are doing to some extent, but I could happily live, like, on the road.' She attaches little importance to the city's history: 'I do think with all the historical stuff, like, once you've seen it, you've seen it; there's not much more to it.' Her reference to the city's heritage is limited to the affective memory of the occasion when, as a student, she got stuck in the basement of King's Manor with a dead mobile phone and no one to let her out.

Because Laya's sense of place is shaped so strongly by the immediate and the sensorial, when the spectacle begins to lose its appeal the place has little other meaning for her:

When I first moved to York, I really thought I would stay here, erm, but now I absolutely, definitely know I won't ... because I get bored with places. I think I'm kind of at my limit ... Maybe, like, why I'm sort of bored of it, because, to me, there's not much more than coffee shops and bars.

In the walk with Laya, it is the visual – the spectacle of shop windows – and taste – that of the food on offer in the city's eateries – that predominate within her affective / sensorial response. In other walks, other senses predominate. My walk with Karen is a case in point and it is to this walk that I will turn next.

### ***The go-along with Karen***



*Figure 14 The go-along with Karen*

Karen is an adult learner who has lived and worked in and around York all her life and has now retired to a village south of the city. She chooses to meet in the city centre, at the Theatre Royal café. In drawing her map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 12](#)) she focuses mainly on affective / sensorial elements, beginning with the rivers whilst talking about the floods of 1968 and the unsettling and disorientating feelings invoked by the water encroaching right up to her school common room. Music features significantly in Karen's map. She marks King's Manor where 'they had dances in the basement'. She comments on the low ceilings, describing the experience as, 'groovy!' She also marks St John's College, where she saw Status Quo, and Museum Gardens where Mott the Hoople played. She recalls the Assembly Rooms where occasional dances or discotheques were held. She describes the place as seeming almost derelict, 'but it was fine because, being largely dark, you couldn't really see the building'.

As we walk the streets of Karen's map, the same themes predominate concerning music and the feelings and sensations evoked in the spaces where it was performed. Karen talks about when the Moody Blues came to town and points out former music venues describing to me what they were like inside. She talks about the Latin and ballroom dancing that is more her thing these days. As we pass All Saints Pavement Church, Karen mentions an occasion, some years previously, when she was still working and had called in one lunchtime at this church, and someone was practising Widor's toccata and

fugue on the organ: 'And I thought, "wow!" What a wonderful thing! So I stayed a bit longer!'

Karen also talks about atmospheres. She mentions a guided walk that she had taken, nearly 50 years ago, recalling the atmosphere of the churches with the light shining through their stained glass. She mentions too the Minster, 'a benchmark for cathedrals', citing its age and its beauty, its light and airy feel. In the Museum Gardens she tells me, 'I like looking at the trees and the way the sun comes through them'. As we pass through Exhibition Square, she recalls the 'dreadful accident', years ago, when a number of workmen repairing a stretch of city wall were killed when it collapsed.

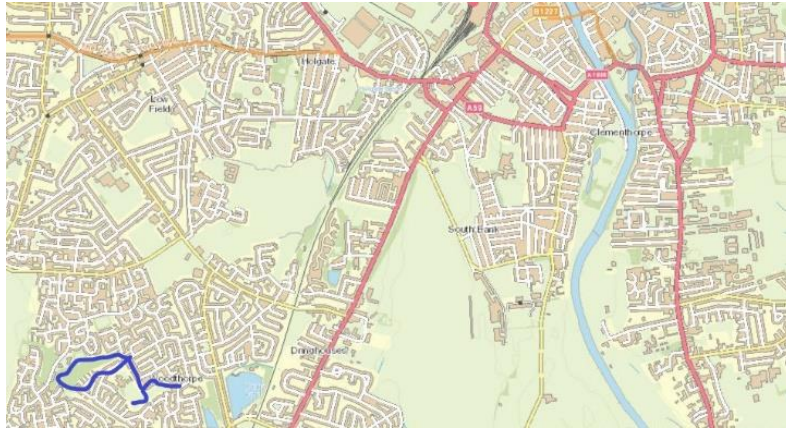
Finally, Karen also talks a good deal about food and specifically about lunchtimes. In drawing her map, she comments that, 'Lunchtimes were very important', and she marks various gardens where she would go to eat lunch. As we walk, she points out more former lunch spots, chosen because they were convenient, but also because they had certain affective sensorial qualities:

The bit behind the library in the St Leonard's hospice area ... erm, that was always a good lunch spot as well, because there were benches there, and again not many people knew about it so you could have a nice quiet sit down and there was the odd Roman coffin to look at.

The sensorial in this go-along, as in the previous one, is experienced principally in atmospheres, in the visual spectacle, in sound and in taste. The next go-along has more to say about the haptic dimensions of the person-place encounter.



### ***The go-along with Suzy and Lily***



*Figure 15 The go-along with Suzy and Lily*

The walk with Suzy and Lily illustrates further dimensions of the affective / sensorial. The map that Suzy draws (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 13](#)), sitting in a café in Dringhouses, a largely 1960s suburb on the south side of York, has, at its heart, a loop, representing a circular walk through Acomb Wood, a small wood left untouched when the housing estates were built. It is round this loop that we walk.

This walk is particularly characterised by the tactile nature of the material landscape we encounter and the physicality of the way in which we perform the walk. The first manifestation of this becomes evident to me as I play back the recording of the walk and am struck by the dominant sound of three-year-old Lily's bike stabilisers on the surface of the pavement or path as we proceed around the loop. As the walk carries on through the wood, the sound of feet scrunching through pinecones and other woodland debris is added to the soundtrack. It is a noisy walk and the noise bears witness to our physical collision with the materiality of the landscape.

I am conscious, throughout the walk, of the affective qualities of our surroundings; the walk raises my spirits; it is invigorating, though I could not say why exactly. I am conscious too that I am not alone in this since the soundtrack is punctuated by Lily's bubbling laughter and occasional shrieks of glee. As I listen back to the recording of the walk, particular moments of affective / sensorial intensity crystallise: Lily hides under a tree: 'I'm in my shelter!', and we have to rummage in the greenery, enveloped by the scent of pine, lifting

branches to reveal her; we turn over the undergrowth searching for painted rocks that the local residents apparently hide there; we walk along fallen tree trunks, trying to keep our balance (Lily falls off but is unfazed) and we jump from strategically placed tree stump to tree stump; we engage with the markings painted on the tarmac delineating bikes and pedestrians as Lily exhorts us, 'Go on the "person one"; this is the "bike one"!'. Finally, as we arrive at the playground, which Suzy has recently been involved in fund-raising for, we try out the various new bits of kit, or, in my case, those that I can fit on.

There are other things that can be drawn from this walk, such as Suzy's concern to stimulate community action; however, as we take the paths shown on the map, it is the affective / sensorial that predominates and, as I review my photos, that I would suggest characterise it.

## **6.2 Concluding thoughts**

In these three go-alongs, we see once again that the person-space encounter can be characterised as an experience of intensities. Further, these walks show how affect circulates through the processes of these intensities, via a range of sensorial channels: through the visual, in the spectacle of city centre shop windows; through sound, of music remembered and of a child's squeals of delight at balancing on a log; through touch and smell, the tactile enjoyment of poking around in the woods and the smells evoked; through atmospheres, harder to pin down but no less vividly felt and described.

I am struck in these walks by just how powerful these affective / sensorial forces are, even in encounters with the humblest suburban spaces or the less glamorous parts of the city centre, and even for a rather "cool" and cynical respondent like Laya who, if what she said was to be believed, found York a rather boring place. In all these cases, the person-space encounter was vivid and loaded with potential.

As I suggested in considering the go-along with Philip, affective arousal of the kind described here might appropriately be described as "wonder". This term is useful, in the way that Maclure (2013 b) employs it, to describe something that sits on the very line between the known and the unknown, something that can be felt and described but whose "meaning" is just out of reach. Similarly, Lugli

(1986) describes wonder as a “form of learning”, a ‘state akin to a sort of suspension of the mind between ignorance and enlightenment that marks the end of unknowing and the beginning of knowing’ (p. 123). This points to the role of the affective / sensorial as a powerful receptor, one that leads to greater “knowing”, albeit one that sits aside from the cognitive processes of the mind.

Wonder leads not only to greater knowing but also to action. Parsons (1969) observes that wonder is commonly encountered as a compound of surprise - ‘a breach in the membrane of awareness, a sudden opening in a man’s [sic] system of established and expected meanings’ (p. 85) - and ‘inquisitive interest’ (ibid., p. 94). Whilst surprise entails being subjected to a new experience that is beyond one’s conscious control, he argues that with it comes the disposition to act and to shape one’s own experience. We see this disposition to act in the three go-alongs presented here: Suzy’s community activism, her desire to improve the local playground, to enhance the wood and to paint stones for others to find are all bound up with the wonder that arises from the affective / sensorial processes of the assemblage that is her encounter with these spaces. Similarly, with Karen, her walk demonstrates new paths taken, literally and metaphorically, as a result of the wonder that she experienced or anticipated. Even in the case of Laya, who was more blasé about her experience of York, the wonder that arose from the spectacle of the city centre was closely connected to her thoughts about the paths her life might take in the future and the life choices that needed to be made.

In the next section, I consider the second characteristic of sense of place as assemblage that emerges from the data, namely the Temporal / Mnemonic.

## Chapter 7: Sense of Place - The Temporal / Mnemonic

In this section, I turn to consider the second characteristic of sense of place as assemblage that emerges from the data. This concerns the part played by time and memory in the embodied encounter with place. In so doing, I will continue to look for explanatory power in the work of Deleuze and especially his view of time as set out in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 2014) and *Bergsonism* (Deleuze 1988 b). I argued above that the elements drawn together in the assemblage of the person-space encounter acquire agency by being connected 'in this particular space and in this particular moment' (Gheradi et al 2018). It will be important to recognise here the complexity of the idea of the "particular moment", according to a Deleuzian understanding of time, since for Deleuze time is multiple, made by a network of processes of synthesis (Williams 2012) that connect together or contract repeated things. Deleuze distinguishes different types of passive (or unconscious) syntheses of time that must be viewed both in relation to each another as well as to active (or conscious) syntheses (Pisters 2016), and which serve to contract past, present and future, thus making them dimensions each of the other. Time is fractured with different syntheses interacting in a complex manner 'allowing for dislocations and changes in perspective' (Williams 2011, p. 51). Furthermore, since processes make times and processes themselves are determined by singularities (as opposed to general laws), singular events determine their own times. As a result, we should appropriately 'speak of many presents with their own way of taking the past and the future as dimensions' (Williams 2012, p. 5).

I will seek to demonstrate that the data from the go-alongs is consistent with this understanding of time in the way that it shows the human body bringing to the person-space assemblage, in the present moment, an openness to moments past and moments anticipated. As a result, the diversity of singularities, things, bodies, affects and utterances that is brought into assemblage in the embodied encounter with place involves equally the comingling of diverse temporal moments, 'a multiplicity of times, of various pasts and various presents' (Hamilakis 2017, p. 173). I will argue that the walks I will describe evidence simultaneously a "journey in memory" (Dillon 2006), a sojourn in the "living present" (Deleuze 1988 b), and an anticipation and enunciation of potential future becomings.

To begin, I will return to the go-along with Debra.

## 7.1 The “living present”

Looking first at the present moment, it is of course natural to view the walks as taking place in the present or, as Deleuze describes his first synthesis of time in *Difference and Repetition* (2014), the “living present”. I will exemplify this through the walk with Debra that was described in Chapter 4 (see visual representation at [Appendix 4](#)). The immediacy of the present moment is evident throughout this walk. Its course, although to some extent planned in advance during our discussion over Debra’s map, immediately takes unanticipated turns. No sooner have we set out than we encounter the local councillor who places a spray can in Debra’s hand and we are instructed to spray any dog dirt that we come across. This peculiar task, an agendum generated by that day’s community clean-up initiative, will have a significant impact on the path our walk will take, the way we will walk (head down), and how we will direct our gaze. It will also influence the affective quality of the walk, introducing various feelings and emotions concerning anger over other people’s behaviour, disgust and, for me at least, a sense of incongruity. Then, as the walk progresses, we meet people on the street who, as we stop to chat, also redirect our thoughts and our gaze and the trajectory of our conversation. We also encounter things in the streetscape which spontaneously stimulate new lines of thought and conversation. On one level, the walk can be seen as a series of responses to things that happen in the here and now as we proceed along the street, buffeting us and sending us this way and that. The novelty of these assemblages, in streets that I have never walked before, keeps my thoughts largely in the present moment. I am conscious of the repeated tapping of Debra’s stick on the pavement, the grey sky above us and the rather oppressive streetscape that it frames. I am aware of my embodied sensations, notably a slight sense of anxiety provoked perhaps by feeling out of place in this landscape.

Viewing the walk in terms of an assemblage of immediate singularities taking place in the present moment serves to place a focus on how much of the human response within this assemblage can be characterised as pre-reflective or habitual. So much about this walk is not consciously thought out in advance

but happens due to the force of habit, both in the case of those elements that Debra initiates, the way we walk and the things that come to mind, as well as the way she responds to what occurs on the walk and the people we meet. At the simplest level, this is manifested in the sensory-motor function, the muscle memory that facilitates putting one foot in front of the other to walk along the street. As we pick our way slowly along the pavement, with Debra using her stick, it is evident to me that our path unfolds before us according to Debra's sensing of each step, each pothole and each potential hazard along the way, a sense inculcated across all the years that she has walked this way. Her very choice of this route reflects an understanding of the space and an ability to navigate it shaped by familiarity with the particular routes that she habitually takes to get to the places and facilities that she has cause to use. This is evidenced too in the very simplicity of her map, which focusses on just the one road that links home to the four other locations that constitute her daily round.

For Debra, who has lived on this estate for 41 years, the "living present" of her embodied encounter with place is strongly correlated with habit. According to Deleuze (2014), the living present is experienced through the "contractile power" of the mind, which connects together 'cases, elements, agitations or homogenous instants and grounds these in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight' (p. 94). Although this synthesis is constitutive of the living present, 'it is not, for all that, active. It is not carried out by the mind, but occurs *in* the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and reflection' (ibid. emphasis in the original). Thus, it is not concerned with the active operation of memory or understanding, but rather, the 'passive synthesis of habit' (ibid., p. 105). Both past and future belong to the living present and exist only in so far as they are dimensions of it and are contracted within it, the past in so far as past events are retained together in the contraction that is the lived present, the future, in so far as its expectation is anticipated in this same contraction.

As Debra steps out on this particular morning, the living present connects and synthesises all of her past life on this estate, her history as a community leader, her past relationships with the people that today she bumps into, as well as her anticipation of the future. The way that Debra responds to what we see on the walk, the things that occur and the people that we encounter is shaped by this

living present, operating at a pre-reflective level. The easy conversations that she falls into with the people we meet reflect an instinctive mutual understanding of each other's history, standpoint and perspective as well as a shared history of past interaction. The topics that seem to emerge spontaneously in these encounters reflect this shared experience, whether it be about current affairs, laughing together about Donald Trump's latest foibles, or some aspect of the history of the estate, such as the rat runs that have existed since before the houses were built. The assemblages that the encounter with the streetscape gives rise to are characterised by lines of flight that, whilst not at first sight easy to follow, can be understood as the product of the synthesis of the living present. So, as we pass her daughter's new flat, Debra broaches the topic of smart meters and how much more effective they are in assisting budgeting than were the tools available when her children were small. At the time, I am puzzled as to why Debra embarks on this line of conversation. On reflection, I think that seeing her daughter's flat perhaps evokes feelings concerning her daughter starting out on her independent life that fire circuits linking into Debra's own history of starting out, bringing up her children, and struggling to make ends meet. Of course, this is speculative; suffice to say, however, that this topic of conversation emerges spontaneously from our encounter with this particular singularity in the streetscape; there is no indication that it was something that Debra planned to talk to me about.

We see from these extracts from the walk with Debra that habit is not just evidenced by the sensory-motor functions, but by all the affective circuits of which the individual is made up: 'These thousands of habits of which we are composed – these contractions, contemplations, pretensions, presumptions, satisfactions, fatigues; these variable presents – thus form the basic domain of passive syntheses' (Deleuze 2014, p. 103). Habit serves to modulate affects (Blackman 2013) as part of a process whereby, in Deleuze's view, the individual responds to the cyclical nature of time inherent in the first synthesis, by contracting habits of living. The walk with Debra bears witness to the cyclical or seasonal nature of time understood as the lived present. So, she talks explicitly about the cycles, routines and habits of living on the estate, for example the way that people stop and chat to her on her regular walk from home to the community hub. She also talks about the routines of coping with life on the

estate, how to budget for electricity and how to shop for affordable food. She talks too about the successive generations of young people who grow up on the estate, how each differs from its predecessors, and how the community responds to their needs.

Habit may be a passive synthesis but it should be stressed that this does not make it inert or ossifying; on the contrary, Deleuze conceptualises habit as the essence of being and becoming (Pedwell 2017), a creative form of generative repetition from which difference emerges, central to the way that the individual engages with and is transformed by the real (Grosz 2013): it is 'a dynamic force that opens up the universe, both its living and non-living forces, to contraction, to contemplation, and thus, by way of deflection, to free action, to radical change' (p. 233). In the walk with Debra this sense of free action, radical change and becoming shines through the habits and modes of living that she has adopted in the context of the estate. The routines and cycles of community involvement over many years and through various life stages constitute a personal journey as community activist. Known initially simply as "Ted's wife", Debra became involved in the community by joining the committee of what was one of the city's first residents associations. She describes having to give it up when her children were small and her husband worked away, then being asked to help at the pensioners' party and, as a result, returning to the committee, and subsequently becoming secretary, vice chair and finally chair.

The routines of coping with life on the estate referred to in the earlier section also demonstrate this sense of change and becoming. In the case of shopping, Debra talks about the way the routines involved have changed for the better and the opportunities offered by online shopping. At the same time, she points out the new Costcutter that has recently opened on the estate and comments on how positive this is in terms of helping people keep their independence. She talks about the difficulties of budgeting for electricity over the years, especially when the children were small and money was tight, how the advent of pre-payment cards helped them to budget for their electricity, and how advantageous are the new smart meters that replaced them, allowing one to pay online.



The routines of dealing with successive generations of sometimes problematic young people who grow up on the estate also bring change and new becomings, not always positive. Whilst the first experiences of setting up a new youth club were very positive, after that building had to close things no longer felt possible because 'there was this other generation that we didn't really know. So, we didn't think it was very safe'. Dealing with the latest generation feels more difficult still with few community members willing to volunteer in the context of a large group of 'older ones that have all got motor scooters that bomb round the estate'. The cycles connected with the community hub, on the other hand, have had a more positive trajectory. From the point of being cajoled into setting it up, as described above, it has gone from strength to strength with funding secured for new activities and new sessions.

In revisiting the walk with Debra I have attempted to isolate here those aspects of the person-space assemblage that are revealing of a pre-reflective response and of habitual behaviour, those, that is, that are characteristic of the "living present". As noted above, Deleuze saw time as manifold, with the different syntheses of time interacting, and I will now move on to look at the way that past, through memory, operates simultaneously with the living present within the person-space assemblage.

## **7.2 Memory**

To think about memory in Deleuzian terms means turning to how Deleuze understands temporality in the Bergsonian sense of durational time (Bergson 1988) as explicated by Deleuze in *Bergsonism* (Deleuze 1988 b). This is time as co-presence of past and present, which are both 'modalities or dimensions of duration' (Grosz 2004, p. 176). It will involve consideration of Deleuze's second synthesis of time, another passive synthesis, one where the past appears in the present unannounced and forcefully (Pisters 2016).

I will illustrate the role of memory through the go-along undertaken with Bob.

### ***The go-along with Bob***



*Figure 16 The go-along with Bob*

Bob is chair of a community group that has recently taken over management of a heritage building that forms part of the city walls. The group has turned it into a community facility that seeks to meet the needs of the relatively deprived community that surrounds it. He chooses this as our meeting place. In drawing his map (see visual representation at [Appendix 14](#)), Bob tells me that, to him, York means two things: 'where I was born, brought up and worked most of my working life; and the other part is the historic part of York that I'm immensely proud of'. His map has two main circles, corresponding to these two components, with the building where we sit marked centrally, and a circle representing his current home, added last and placed on the periphery.

Bob's approach to the question of what York means to him is essentially biographical, centring on his memories. He tells me that he was born in 1944 in Tang Hall, an estate of local authority housing, built to house working class families, the majority of whose men had been away at the Second World War as his father had. His family had arrived in York as a result of an accident his grandfather had suffered in the sawmill where he worked in West Hartlepool in which he had lost most of the fingers of one hand. The boss was a friend of Freddy Shepherd, founder of a York building dynasty, who at that time was building the Tang Hall estate and got Bob's grandfather a job and a house there.

Bob has a way of connecting his history at each point in his narrative with that of York itself. He tells me that the street was made up of working-class families:

'You could look out at seven and everyone would be climbing on their bikes to go to Rowntree's, Terry's, the Carriage Works or wherever'. He tells me that his first job was at a butcher's in Layerthorpe and that, prior to the slum clearances, this butcher supplied meat to all the local, gas-lit streets of low-grade housing.

His story emerges as one of personal growth and progress. Due to poor eyesight he had attended an open-air school for children with infirmities where there was little academic input. Consequently, when he transferred to secondary school, he was placed in the bottom stream. One of his tutors, however, recognised he had 'a bit more savvy' and tutored him after school as a result of which he 'climbed the ladder from D to C to B'. Similarly, his employment history is characterised by progressively gaining technical knowledge, skills and qualifications until he was 'my own boss with my own Portakabin, determined my own work schedules – able to address things directly'.

Throughout his narrative, in connecting his narrative to that of the city itself, Bob homes in on the way that York has developed:

I've seen progress and innovation and change, things that happened in my lifetime that have been quite dramatic really ... in every way, in technology-wise; you know, I can remember we were one of about the first houses in the street that had a television set, and it was a little nine inch thing like this; you only got something like two hours a day of television programs on it. And then you look at the technology that we've got today: instant satellite communication from one side of the world to another.

What is striking about Bob's encounter with the city is the way that it shifts continuously between different time frames, past and present. As we step outside Bob is very much in the present, expressing his concern for the local residents who live in the flats around the community facility. This is a community still feeling the effects of the devastating York floods of Boxing Day 2015:

From our point of view, we were developing this at a bad time because, when the floods came, and after the floods, these people didn't want to know about [the community facility] and how it was being developed, even if it was being developed for their benefit, er, because of the nature of who they are, you know - they're an eclectic mix really of - of ground floor being elderly and disabled and vulnerable, and the upper floors being, er, ex-offenders and substance abusers and things like that - they all keep themselves very much to themselves. And they're not very outgoing. Trying to attract them to come in here and to use this - we try to convince them that this is their building not ours; we're only administering it for them ...

As we begin the walk, we are entering the circle that Bob drew to represent the area where he was brought up and spent most of his working life. Surveying the former industrial landscape ahead of us, Bob's thoughts are about past events that have shaped his experience of the area as well as his current concerns:

So, now we're looking at Foss Islands Road. Now, flooding and Foss Islands Road has existed ever since I was born in the 1940s. I vaguely remember the big floods of 1947 even though I was only three I can remember them. 47, 62, 83 ... but you could guarantee that if the, erm - if there was any significant rainfall that the river Foss would flood because the Tang Hall Beck goes into it - everything would flood, and you'd have something like about eight to twelve inches of water along here virtually every other year.

He continues by relating some of his history of engagement with the area:

Now, looking at Foss Islands Road here, this road here, I can remember back to the time when the railway operated here, right? And there used to be coal depots. And the coal men used to come, and they used to load the horses and carts up from here. And also, when I worked at the DoE, there was a link in t'

main line from here; although it was Light Derwent Valley there was a link to the main line and if ever we were shipping out a consignment of vehicles to go to Belize or wherever we used to drive down here and drive them onto the back of railway trucks, here.

The temporal connections that Bob makes in the landscape go beyond his own biographical connections drawing also on his understanding of York's civic history:

And of course, the power station would have been here because, back in 1856 the Victorians decided to fill all the King's Fishpond in. They filled all this land in, the Victorians, and bearing in mind ... the landfill that would have been needed to fill this in ... it was a mammoth task. So, that's what I remember about these Victorians: there was no barrier; they had a problem, they needed it doing, they'd find a way of doing it.

Bob's reference to what he "remembers" about the Victorians is, no doubt, a slip of the tongue, and yet the vividness and the enthusiasm with which he goes on to talk about the Victorians' contribution to the city-scape shows how real and significant is the connection that he makes with that past era as he responds to the present city-scape.

As we continue to walk through this former industrial landscape Bob's thoughts abruptly jump back to his youth in Tang Hall:

The other thing about Tang Hall was, where the community centre is ... that was built on ... the community playing field - the school playing field was the other side of the road - it was a playing field for us, local kids and we used to go on there, we used to play 20 a-side football matches Saturday and Sunday, and cricket ... But I think the advent of Playstations and things like that have brought that to an end ... what we did as kids; but time doesn't stand still, I suppose; it responds to need and it's probably getting more use now as a community centre than what it was eventually used for as far as recreation was concerned.

As Tang Hall Community Centre lies a mile or so to the east it is not immediately apparent what, in the landscape that we are walking through, has provoked this sudden change of direction in the conversation.

As we turn into Layerthorpe, the cityscape is characterised by light industrial and commercial premises. It is a mix of low-quality buildings seemingly thrown together at random. It is, by any standards, an unattractive landscape and it is made even more unappealing by the level of traffic noise, which is oppressive. Yet here Bob becomes quite animated. I have the strong impression that he sees not the low quality surrounding that I see but rather the landscape of an earlier era:

This was all housing ... you had the little shops along the street but you had side streets that went off ... that's where Jockey Giles lived and he was an old, worn out jockey ... and the corner was Dai Prosser's fish and chip shop - Dai Prosser used to be an old rugby player and then there was a paper shop; ... now then, there was a pub there, was that the John Bull? No, John Bull was up there I think; I forget what that one was ... And then, in here was Ozzy's car spares - the number of hours I have spent in there, rescuing things like mini sub-frames ... So, everything's changed.

Bob is animated by what he sees as the progress evident in this landscape, describing it as 'absolutely brilliant!' For example, he is delighted by the new junction and link road recently created: 'You see all this? When I worked at BRS ... this link road, right ... it would have been an absolute prize for me: it used to take me hours to get home'. As we turn back towards Foss Islands, his thoughts turn to more recent events in that took place in that landscape and the flooding of Boxing Day 2015:

When the barrier failed ... the first place it hit was the gypsy caravan site: they got swamped out and all the housing around this area got swamped out. And they've got to have a plan, the council ... have they got a plan for whatever? They didn't in 2015 ... the first responders were ourselves and all the volunteers that arrived: masses of Muslims came from all over the country;

absolutely brilliant was that ... there was loads of them came from Birmingham; they brought a big lorry load of stuff and utensils and food and cash; you know, they didn't know us from Adam but they stepped up to the plate and they provided the aid that we needed. But for the people around the Navigation Road estate, their biggest problem was trying to get some enthusiasm out of the local authority to want to support them, to want to help them ...

As we conclude the walk, Bob's memories continue to be concerned with community:

I grew up in an era when you know it's the old cliché about being able to leave your door open and things like that, well, I grew up in that era, when neighbours were neighbours and, you know, you weren't frightened of each other knowing what each other's business and things like that whereas today, the estates and houses have become insular ... they don't want anybody to know what they're like; they don't want anybody to know anything about them or anything like that ... but that's how I grew up.

What we see from the walk with Bob is that the intensive multiplicities to which his embodied encounter with the landscape gives rise are strongly characterised by temporal instances drawn from past eras as well as from current concerns. I am struck, as we walk through what seems to me to be at best a bland and dreary industrial and commercial landscape, by how animated Bob is by the version of the landscape that he apparently sees in his mind's eye. It feels, throughout this walk, that Bob is inhabiting a different landscape, temporally, to the one that I see, one that draws on a variety of pasts that are not available to me.

This go-along, taken together with Debra's discussed above, suggests that the assemblage of sense of place should be viewed as temporal as much as spatial (cf. Jones 2011; Massey and Thrift 2003), comingling multiple pasts and presents with diverse materialities and affects. Rather than past and present being points on a line of time, the past is more appropriately understood as contemporaneous with the present that it was such that 'all the past coexists

with the new present in relation to which it is now past' (Deleuze 1988 b, pp. 81-82). In this sense, the past is not something that once existed but is no more; rather it is something that insists and is a part of the present that is now (Dewsbury 2002).

Deleuze develops his idea of the pure past from a reading of Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (Bergson 1988) and this deduction of the pure past forms the basis of his second synthesis of time in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 2014). In *Bergsonism* (Deleuze 1988 b), Deleuze employs Bergson's cone of memory to illustrate the relationship between past, present and future, showing them as inter-penetrating and commingling planes (Hamilakis 2017) and where the apex, which represents the present, condenses all pasts and co-exists with them. Every present thus carries with it all pasts: 'Each present is only the entire past in its most contracted state' (Deleuze 1988 b, p. 82). Bergson characterises perception as always a little deferred or delayed with respect to itself, in effect a memory of the immediate past (Al-Saji 2004): perception, however instantaneous, consists ... 'in an incalculable multitude of remembered elements; in truth, every perception is already memory. Practically we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future' (Bergson 1988, p. 150).

The present, then, is to be viewed not as something that *is*, but rather as something that acts, as "pure becoming" (Deleuze 1988 b); time is made by contraction (Williams 2011), through a process of synthesis that 'contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living, present' (Deleuze 2014, p. 94). This contraction draws on many levels and combinations of these levels summing them not in a neat, layered way but rather all melded together (Dodgshon 2008). The process of contraction leads to sensation which in turn generates actions; however, between sensation and action there is a hiatus into which memories from the cone can come to be interposed, actualized and contracted, and can thus influence, shape or indeed change the resulting action (Al-Saji 2004). This idea of the "memory of the present" involves a process whereby particular memory-images come to be favoured, actualized and interposed into the present. Since not all past memories can be selected to be made conscious and since 'the choice is not made at random' (Bergson 1988, p. 102), it is necessary to consider what



“active” or “useful” element (ibid.) it is that is at work drawing in particular memory-images whilst over-looking others (Al-Saji 2004). Bergson (1988) postulates the “virtual image” as a link between immediate perception and the rest of the possible past, having the power to suggest memories, and facilitating concrete perception by contracting into it not only the immediate past but also those memories that resonate with this immediate past (Al-Saji 2004). It is virtual since, whilst all pasts co-exist virtually with the present, only certain pasts are actualized at any given juncture (Hamilakis 2017).

### **7.2.1 Memory selection**

The question then arises as to how the sense of place assemblage functions to determine which memories are evoked in the embodied encounter with a particular space, which “voices” come to be heard and why from out of the polyphony (Hamilakis 2017; Al-Saji 2004). The argument advanced above that sense of place is as much about what may happen as it is about what has happened already, where place is seen as a “realm of virtualities” (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005) is important here. Deleuze describes past and present as two jets emanating at the same time from a single source: ‘the “present” that endures divides at each “instant” in two directions, one orientated and dilated towards the past, the other contracted, contracting towards the future’ (Deleuze 1988 b, p. 46). Those memories that are invoked in response to place in the go-alongs seem to fit with the process illustrated by the latter jet, the jet of actualization that is launched toward the future, guided by action and the “attention to life” (Deleuze 1988 b). These are the memories that are strongly associated with new becomings, reflecting the generative potential of the assemblage to make ‘new things happen as elements are assembled and brought into relation’ (Jones 2017) through its ‘abstract line of creative or specific causality, its *line of flight or of deterritorialization*’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 330 emphasis in original).

This generative potential is evident in the sense of place that emerges from the assemblage that is Bob’s embodied interaction with place. As he interweaves stories of his own personal growth and development with that of the city and the local community, the temporal instances that come to the fore are those that marked the opening up of new beginnings and new possibilities, whether that

be for him a new job or a redundancy, events that impacted on the community, such as flooding, or developments that opened new possibilities for the city as a whole, such as the slum clearances.

Bob's response to place jumps around temporally through many pasts, some remembered and some, like Victorian York, imagined, some distant and some more recent. At various points, the connection between time and place is not immediately obvious to me, such as when Bob abruptly turns his attention to the history of Tang Hall Community Centre whilst walking in a quite separate landscape. On deeper reflection, however, two related themes become evident to me with regard to the memories evoked by Bob during this walk. The first concerns his profound concern for community and how, in his view, it should function, especially for those vulnerable communities that live in this area. It is this preoccupation that evokes, for example, his memories of the building of Tang Hall Community Centre and the dynamics of community life in its environs as we walk a mile or so distant from it. This also underlies his memories concerning the flooding and how the community was left to cope in its aftermath. The second, related theme concerns his personal agency, his salience in the community, and ultimately his ability to deliver his vision of a more positive future for local residents. This underlies his memories of progressing from 'D to C to B' at school, to gaining skills at work and qualifications outside of work. Towards the end of the walk he expresses this thought quite explicitly:

The work that I did for the bread company meant that I kept the wheels rolling so that the bread vans could go out and deliver the food stuffs to the local community; you know what I mean? There's a chain to everything; I've not just been ... a person that's sat at a machine at Rowntree's packing Smarties or something, which, although it provided employment, it didn't really serve a communal purpose.

Bob evokes memories in his encounter with place that are reflective of significant becomings, events that shifted the relations between existing patterns or modes of stability. These memories are also of a piece with his beliefs about and aspirations for the future, his sense of the potentialities that

insist in the spaces that we walk through and what they should become in the future. The passive synthesis of Bob's imagination contracts past events into the present moment to constitute a lived present. In so doing, he is opening up the possibilities of a future yet to be determined. Just as we saw in the case of Debra, so too Bob's imagination is constantly synthesising habit and novelty, what is received from the past with what might be in the future or, more importantly, what he feels *should be* in the future and what he feels responsible for bringing about in the future. To this degree, Bob's memories can be seen as future oriented, prefiguring a future that he would want to see come to pass.

Bob's narrative can, I think, also be viewed in the light of Deleuze's concept of repetition. It points to repeated cycles, in this case of development of the city as well as of personal development. Each cycle brings change, since 'difference inhabits repetition' (Deleuze 2014, p. 100) and, as Bob sees it, improvement. It feels that Bob's narrative sits in the midst of an ongoing story of change. Bob's present is always in motion, with a cycle of events repeating but repeating in order to generate change. As the determinateness of the past and open-endedness of the future are brought together in the pulsing duration of Bob's life I have a strong sense of being in the middle of an ongoing story.

### **7.3 A wider world consciousness**

In the next section, which deals with the political dimensions of the sense of place assemblage, I will consider the more active or conscious acts of memory selection that, I will suggest, are evident in the person-space encounter, the way in which the individual chooses dynamically to deploy the past (Glass 2016). Before moving to do this, however, I return here to the affective / sensorial to consider the role of affect as a determinant of memory selection within processes of passive synthesis. I will argue that affect plays an important part in selecting those memories that are evoked in the person-space encounter as, at particular moments and in particular places, the virtual image exercises a 'singular affective tonality, a particular rhythm of becoming' (Al-Saji 2004, p. 216) and, as a result, certain past temporal occasions acquire sufficient '*sensorial intensity and affective weight*' (Hamilakis 2017, p. 174 emphasis in original) such that, from all the possible virtual pasts that co-exist with the present, it is they that are actualised. We saw this, for example, in the case of

Louise who, at a particular corner, evokes the memory of the “old guy” sitting there or Michelle with her evocation of Blue Bridge as “a place to dream”.

Affect plays this role through the way that the virtual image opens onto the universe affectively and renders it intensively and mnemonically (Al-Saji 2004). Deleuze describes duration as psychological experience (Deleuze 1988 b). As such, it is not just lived experience, but experience enlarged upon or even gone beyond, the product of memory, consciousness and freedom. This imparts to the virtual image more expansive traits, opening it onto other memories and lives, “different in kind”, a wider world consciousness or what Deleuze calls elsewhere “world-memory”, the present universe or world made memory (Deleuze 2005). Opening onto a rich materiality of the present beyond what is merely seen, this implies more than conscious perception, taking in the unconscious and implicit image, the whole interpenetrating nexus of material images that constitute the universe (Al-Saji 2004).

This wider world consciousness is demonstrated time and again in the walk-alongs in the way that the temporal instances evoked are much wider-ranging than mere personal memories. We see this with Bob in the way that he evinces an affective experience of the contribution of the Victorians to the city. We see it too in the way that a number of respondents talked about an affective consciousness of the city’s history, for example, Karen: ‘I like to think of all the history that's gone on as I walk round York, erm ... my own history as well ... you know, Henry VIII coming here, ... and I just like looking at the bricks and the stones. That sort of thing means a lot; I don't know why’. The case of Michael illustrates this wider world consciousness very effectively and it is to this that I will turn next.

### ***The go-along with Michael***



*Figure 17 The go-along with Michael*

Recently retired after a lifetime working in railway maintenance in the York area, Michael now likes to spend time in the city centre pursuing his photography hobby. We meet in a city-centre café. As he draws his map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 15](#)), he comments, ‘The thing about York is, wherever you go there’s history. And as I say, I like to read them gravestones and the plaques in the church just to remember people, you know?’ Michael, like other respondents, senses the virtual presence of the past in a “pluritemporal” landscape (Crang and Travlou 2001), wherein the city’s spaces feel “haunted” by the resonances of those who have gone before’ (Bull and Leyshon 2010, p. 130). He also evidences this “wider world consciousness” in the way that his sense of place assemblage includes memories and temporal instances drawn from places beyond York, indeed from around the world, a sense of place that is consistent with Massey’s (1997) “extrovert” and “global” sense of place, where the uniqueness of a place is not internally fixed but is defined in part by its ‘positive interrelations with elsewhere’ (p. 169). Thus, although Michael is York born and bred and has been spent all his working life around York, and York’s historic core remains the focus of his interest, nonetheless, the temporal instances that he draws on are frequently global in nature. As he shows me the timbers that support the covered snickleways between York’s medieval buildings, running his hands over the splice joints and explaining that they were taken from broken up trading ships, his thoughts are drawn to where those ships sailed, to the South Seas where they acquired the shipworms that led to their early demise. He tells me that,

just as he is drawn to see what lies along each street and snickleway in York, so equally with the wider world, 'you know, you've got to go to these places'. He tells me a story of a visit to Egypt:

I went down to the Nile and er, there was 3 or 4 boat people in the Arab dress sitting round this little fire making tea. So, you know, I just went a little bit away from them and erm, you know I was taking photos of the sunrise and the sun was behind me and there was this dhow coming down the river and it was, er, tacking and it was taking ages and I thought "come on!", anyway it got in front of me and the sun came up; so the boatman stood at the back on the tiller all dressed in black and you could see the boat and the sail was like a pink colour with the sunrise and it was really, really good; I think it was one of my best photos.

This may be a memory of Egypt, but it is evoked by an embodied encounter with York's historic materiality. I am struck by the vividness of the story; it feels as intensely "real" as the street in which we stand. Similarly, as we venture into a secluded yard and stand in front of a grand medieval house, what strikes Michael most strongly about it are the technologies employed in its construction: 'It's amazing isn't it? It looks as if it's just laid on that plinth. You can see it morticed in there ... it's all pegged.' This in turn leads him to thoughts of Japanese temples he has seen on television and how they are able to withstand powerful earthquakes because of the way they are built with six free-standing pillars, resting on a plinth, and topped by a solid, tile roof. His sense of medieval York is animated both by his professional interest in technology but also by the temporal connections he makes with far distant times and places.

The connections that Michael makes are not dissimilar to those we saw Brian making in the go-along covered in Chapter 5 (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 7](#)). As we walk the rather drab, suburban streets of his neighbourhood, and Brian ruminates on what he sees as the threats to a sense of community in that place, he turns to thinking about indigenous North American culture:

I started to read about shamanic values and principles about they believed that we come from the earth and will go back to the earth; we are all integral; the animals are all part of our culture ... And we, sort of the Europeans went there, blasted everything ... Once you destroy the environment for the sake of money and all sorts you're destroying it for ever ... the basic philosophy of what they preached was respecting everything around you: the animals, the environment, and I think we're seeing now by not doing that how we are totally destroying everything.

These imagined temporal instances struck me, at the time the walk took place, as puzzling or even troubling; they did not conform with what I felt respondents "ought" to be talking to me about. On reflection, however, I believe they too can be seen as examples of a "wider world consciousness" at work.

#### **7.4 Some concluding thoughts**

This section has sought to demonstrate how the temporal / mnemonic works in the sense of place assemblage through the way that the human body's passive imagination constantly synthesises habit and novelty, what is received from the past with what might be in the future. This raises a question about what sense of place might be for those who lack a history with a particular space where there is neither habit nor memory at work for that individual in respect of that space. The great majority of the go-alongs took place with longstanding residents of the city but there were two with respondents who identified themselves as recent arrivals. These two walks showed some differences from the rest of the walks. Firstly, the content was less personal and biographical: it tended to focus more directly on the sites that we encountered. Secondly, whilst these go-alongs still evidenced a sense of place redolent of the potential of place and the possibilities for new connections and new becomings, unsurprisingly, they did not show the same intensive rhythms and repetitions as were evident in the walks with established residents. The narratives of these walks struck me as relatively superficial, focussing on points of interest in the cityscape rather than deeper meanings or understandings.

These walks also suggested that those who lack a history of engagement with the city feel the need to create points of engagement in order to orientate

themselves and to create the routines, habits and memories that enable them to feel at home in the city's spaces. The relative newcomers with whom I walked were adult learners undertaking local history classes. Their motivation for taking the classes seemed to be to create the points of temporal engagement that they currently lacked. The things that they pointed out on the walks struck me as vicarious, interesting nuggets that they had been told about the city and which they had appropriated in order to give themselves a sense of experience of the city. What they sought was not a systematic knowledge of the city but rather affective intensities. So, Keith and Rebecca (see visual representation of their walk at [Appendix 20](#)) took me to St Helen's Square to point out to me the former Terry's shop:

We learned all about that building, didn't we? It's the old Rowntree's, and they had a ballroom – on the first floor was their ballroom apparently ... and then the shop downstairs. Or was it Terry's? Oh, it was Terry's look: it says Terry's.

The exact facts of the matter did not matter too much to Keith and Rebecca: their learning about this building reflected an affective intensity that had given them a "toehold" on the city, a point of orientation for their experience.



## Chapter 8: Sense of Place - The Political

This chapter attends to the third distinctive characteristic of the sense of place assemblage that, I argue, is found in the data, that is the political. It can be argued that the political is immanent to the very concept of assemblage (Hamilakis 2017). As Phillips (2006) reminds us, Deleuze and Guattari, in the original French, use the term *agencement*, derived from the verb *agencer*, which speaks of a process of matching or fitting together (DeLanda 2016), of arranging and organising (Dewsbury 2011). Assemblage therefore signifies agency, the “hard work” involved in drawing heterogeneous elements together and creating and sustaining connections between them (Li 2007). It assumes that the social agent has certain power, prerogative and choice in the work of assemblage and that the exercise of this choice will have particular political effects (Hamilakis 2017) in terms of that individual social agent’s relationship to the *polis*, the community, its way of life, and its ordering (Miller 1980).

In order to draw out these political characteristics of the sense of place assemblage I will use two go-alongs, first introducing the go-along with Julia.

### 8.1 Two go-alongs

#### *The go-along with Julia*



*Figure 18 The go-along with Julia*

I meet Julia at the local community centre in Tang Hall, an area of relative deprivation on the east side of the city. She tells me that she moved there in 2012 as a consequence of being made redundant. Her map (see visual

representation at [Appendix 9](#)) centres on her former home by the Ouse in a particularly desirable area of York, and also shows, at the bottom, her current home near to Tang Hall Beck. At the start of the walk, she describes the impact of an unexpected and, on the face of it, undesirable move:

So, it was ... erm ... fairly traumatic - but, once you get over the actual whatever it is, and come to terms with it, then it's just making the most of what you're dealt and then saying how can I bring my skill sets to this situation... And I thought it was going to be like, you know, Dante's version of Hell but it was actually ... [alright] because you can't pretend here: there's nothing about house prices or the value of your car, or social climbing or anything like that.

The streets we walk through are green and pleasant, yet this is clearly not where Julia envisaged herself ending up: 'I don't feel that I'm like people here ... because I think my people are much more arty-farty ... But I have the right to be here if I want to be'. In the exercise of this right she emphasises the importance of the choices that she now sees open to her: 'If you choose to find a sense of space you can find it quite quickly, which, if you're on your own, and you haven't got a family, you need that to be an active choice, otherwise you just fester.' For Julia 'you make of it what you will' and she actively chooses to make the most of her circumstances:

People here obsess a lot about the past and the future but they don't make the most of the present, erm ... so ... if I hadn't have been here I wouldn't have got a grant to train to become a mindfulness teacher which is what I'm doing, so I can now use my skill set within this place ... All the stuff that I'd wanted to do about the community leadership, that wouldn't have happened unless I'd made the best of where I was.

As she tells me about losing her house and moving into social housing, Julia speaks of the need to reach an active accommodation with the place: 'It's like doing a reconnaissance isn't it? So, you just go, what's the lay of the land? What can I do? What do I want? And you just sort of do what you do.' This

place is somewhere that allows her to use her particular skills: 'being able to do the things I can do; so, I seem to be quite good at networking and just making the connections and letting them get on with it, and strategy'. It is evident that this accommodation with place is an important aspect of her sense of herself:

I feel more at home here in the sense that it's a reflection of who [I am] ... the best part of me that I'd like to explore. So, say for example, [a northern town], where I was brought up - you didn't have much choice of where you were or what you did, so everybody leaves [laughs] ... and then London was very much, I need to be professionally successful, you know? So, that's just you work really, really hard ... but what I really wanted was this sort of lifestyle that I have now; it's just that I'd imagined that I'd, er ... have a high-powered job and a house of my own, if you see what I mean, but where I am now is still a reflection of who I am and that's okay.

Julia stresses her conviction that it is important to be open with other people:

It's about being honest and open and transparent, and people then see the truth of who you are, and then, if I'm okay with it, it's up to them if they're okay with it. So, I am probably a lot more honest than I was in my twenties and thirties ... Cos, I could have hidden all the difficult stuff, couldn't I?

She characterises this need for openness in terms of the honesty of the story that we choose to tell others about ourselves: 'I think the story that we tell each other is the thing about the stories and then the reality, so what is your narrative and how close is it to actuality?' As well as involving being open *with* other people, for Julia, her sense of self also concerns being open *to* other people:

I can't help connecting - it's like my mum: we were brought up in a poor community in [a northern town] and she's got like nine children and a tough life with my Dad - and he'd had a tough life as well and they'd been through the war - but they were still contributing to the community. So, I only realised that recently: it's like I've been taught how to do this since I was that high ... I just

knew, because she knew how to do it: all the ... church stuff, all the school stuff, you know, girl guides ...

Julia suggests here that her participation in community life is something learned from her parents and she makes an explicit connection between her autobiography and the choices that she makes in the present day with regard to her bodily engagement with the materiality of the landscape, particularly her propensity to walk and to cycle and the fact she has been an allotment holder:

I certainly think I carried my Mum's story - she only died about three years ago - erm ... and there's a physicality of that and I think that the way that they walked around [a northern town] and what they did walking to Church every Sunday, walking into town, the allotments. I suspect I both hated but also learned from that because I think as an adult you choose then to take what you think is helpful ... so, the sense of [a northern town] is really important to me ... [its] physicality ... is powerfully important to me.

Other choices, Julia attributes to her sense of who she wants to be now:

The young culture ... I think that's a brilliant thing though ... so I think they've helped to give York a sense of place that I really admire, like vegan stuff, like vegetarian stuff, street food ... the stuff that's been coming into York, that's my stuff, so in a way, I feel like a way finder, you know ... I don't reject any of that stuff ... And I think it's a lovely way of living, about being flexible and transparent and open.

As we walk through a wooded area along the beck, Julia expresses how important it is to her to be able to walk in the woods and how much she loves trees and the energy that they give her. This leads her to think further about the importance of the stories that we choose to tell, this time in relation to our sense of place:

I think the way we judge ourselves affects our sense of place as well, so if we decide, even before we have explored, that where we live is shit, we won't give ourselves a chance. And the reality

of this is, like, it's beautiful, you know ... we're in the middle of a deprived area, but you just look round here, it's lovely; so that's a reality; but someone might go, "I never go up there it's bloody awful" ... But that's a thought that's not necessarily true, so, erm ... I think the more we can share our stories ... [the better].

As the walk nears its end, Julia expresses the view that the stories we choose to tell in and about place have a purpose:

It's like going on walks like this when you can articulate with the family - my family spend a lot of time talking through the stories of our youth and I think quite a lot of that is not true but what we want it to be. Some of it is, some of it isn't, but we seem to need to talk about it a lot: "Do you remember that time when? When we went for that walk; we did this or we did that?"

What we see in this walk with Julia is how significant is the encounter with place in her construction of her sense of self. In Deleuze's thought, the individual is not an essence, a stable entity over time, but rather the product of processes of individuation. These ongoing processes, constantly subject to variation, are defined by their relations to others rather than by any internal property (Tucker 2012). Subjectification is a process of folding through which the outside (knowledge, discourse and materiality) becomes folded or doubled with the individual's inside such that the outside is always part of the inside and the inside is always part of the outside. It is this folding in of the outside that produces a self, in the sense of a way of being in the world, and which simultaneously folds back upon the outside (Malins 2004). Deleuze asks, 'What can I be, with what folds can I surround myself ... [and] how can I produce myself as a subject?' (Deleuze 1988 c, p. 114). For Deleuze, this is not a personal question but a political and ethical one since, although each body-space assemblage has its own specific movements and potentialities, it is also connected in diverse ways to other bodies and spaces. Each assemblage therefore has implications for how other material singularities move and relate in the socio-spatial world, and the connections that they form with other bodies. It is in this potential to effect movements, connections and transformations that is found each assemblage's political implications (Malins 2004). Julia can be seen

to echo Deleuze's question throughout our walk, in the way that she asks herself what aspects of life in Tang Hall will she fold into herself, what connections will she make to other bodies in that community, and how will these choices help her to realise the person that she wants to be?

These processes of individuation that Julia describes in her life in Tang Hall take place in the context of the community; they are worked out in public spaces. Butler (2015), drawing on Hannah Arendt, throws light on the political character of public space, characterising it as the "space of appearance". As bodies come together in a space, through their speech and their action they reconfigure or reproduce the materiality and public character of that space whilst, at the same time, the materiality of the space has agency in the way that it facilitates the action. In the space of appearance, we are bodily made available "for" another whose perspective we can neither fully know nor control. Julia demonstrates an awareness of this constituting perspective of others (Cavarero 2000) in the sense that emerges throughout the go-along that her move to Tang Hall, her presence in a space that is in some ways alien to her and inconsistent with her previous aspirations, has the potential to constitute her as a failure. This is hinted at in the comment that she makes regarding her landlord who, 'thinks it's really weird that I don't have some high-powered job'. It emerges too from the emphasis that she places on the choices that face her if she is to make the best of what could be seen to be a difficult situation living in Tang Hall.

Cavarero (2005) explicates Hannah Arendt's view that, in this materially shared space, the "political" arises in the way that those present share with one another, through words and deeds, their uniqueness and their potential to begin new things. It is not the content of speech that is political; rather the political consists in the expression and communication of oneself, through words and actions, which allow each individual to distinguish him- or herself actively, and therefore politically, from every other. For Julia this can be seen in her expressed desire to connect, to talk to anyone and everyone, as well as in the choices that she makes, especially to engage in the community: 'all the stuff that I'd wanted to do about the community leadership'. It is political because of the very fact she is talking to others who share this space of reciprocal exposure. As Julia says, 'It's about being honest and open and transparent,

and people then see the truth of who you are, and then, if I'm okay with it, it's up to them if they're okay with it'.

This expression of one's uniqueness happens habitually and spontaneously through the telling of one's autobiographical story: 'Every human being, without even wanting to know it, is aware of being a narratable self – immersed in the spontaneous auto-narration of memory' (Cavarero 2000, p. 33). The identity of the self, of one's uniqueness, presented in the story, is wholly constituted by one's relations to others because, even in autobiography, the story told is 'always a story which both discovers and creates the relation of self with the world in which it can appear to others, knowing itself only in that appearance or display' (Heilbrun 1988, p. 36). This is a political process also by virtue of the way that it involves the reviving of past events that are selected not simply to validate the present but also to critique it and to transform it: 'Politics is nothing but the attempt to reactivate that potential, or virtual, of the past so that a divergence or differentiation from the present is possible' (Grosz 2004, p. 178). Julia describes this process of constructing autobiography in the way she talks about the stories that her family tell each other about their experiences of place and how they use them to explain and to reconstitute the present. She uses this description of her family's story-telling not only to explain something about herself and the choices that she makes, but also to critique the current reality of life in Tang Hall. So, drawing on memories of playing out as a child with her siblings, which, she says, was 'so important ... when times was tough ... as a way of coping ... with what's going on at home', she contrasts this with present day children in Tang Hall: 'They've got front gardens, but they don't have a sense of play; they don't know how to play with nothing'.

These political characteristics of the sense of place assemblage that emerge from the go-along with Julia, notably the desire to tell one's story, to express one's uniqueness and to open up new things, can be seen time and again in the go-alongs. We saw it in the case of Bob, who cast his narrative in the light of York as a developing community, placing himself in that narrative as someone who has worked throughout his life to produce positive effects within that community. Similarly, we heard from John a history of being embedded in family and community, and a response to place strongly influenced by values

concerning equality and inclusion, concern for the environment and a desire for a less individualistic lifestyle.

I will draw on one further go-along to illustrate these points.

### ***The go-along with Barbara***



*Figure 19 The go-along with Barbara*

The go-along with Barbara takes place in the city centre. Barbara is an adult learner pursuing a local history course. We meet at the library. She explains that her choice of the city centre for the walk (see visual representation at [Appendix 10](#)) reflects the fact that her sense of York comes from two distinct, but over-lapping factors: firstly, she was brought up near York and York was one of the places her family would come for a nice day out, so there are things that she remembers from that time; secondly, over-laying those memories, are the things that have proved important to her since she moved here following her retirement.

There is an over-arching sense, throughout the walk, that Barbara sees York in terms of its potential to facilitate “new things” for her. There are hints that Barbara has sought, in various aspects of her life, to push beyond the social expectations of the places that she grew up in, and subsequently lived, and that York was a place that facilitated this:

There was a bit of an alternative scene in York when I was in my 20s: alternative book shops, that kind of thing ... It was one of the



things that made York special ... York has got enough in it to sustain all sorts of perspectives’.

York was more conducive to Barbara’s emerging sense of self than the small East Yorkshire town where she lived, a place where the constituting perspective of others was more consistent with the sort of person that she wanted to become:

I think, you know, York kind of had the feel of somewhere that was more progressive, growing up, you know, in a much smaller, more conservative, with a small and a big “C”, sort of place ... At the time in Goole, there wasn't even a book shop, never mind an alternative one ... It kind of points up the fact that, you know, York has got enough in it to sustain all sorts of perspectives.

There are indications in the go-along that Barbara’s pushing of the boundaries had to be negotiated with others, notably with parents, who she sometimes left behind:

There was a bookshop down, er, Micklegate, as I now realise it must have been ... I used to ... when I came here with my parents, kind of abandon them - they were probably looking round Marks and Spencer’s - trotted off down there, erm, because it was a feminist book shop, and ... it had everything that was alternative ... Bookshops really were kind of centres for picking up leaflets and flyers and just generally feeling that there were other people out there that did have a different world view.

At other times, the parents were drawn into this broaching of new things, such as the Italian Restaurant we walk past in the Shambles, Ristorante Bari, the first Italian restaurant that Barbara persuaded her parents to set foot in and which they enjoyed, despite their previous reluctance to try Italian food.

As we walk through the historic streets with which Barbara has reacquainted herself since her return to York, she hints at the city’s capacity to accommodate the person that she has become in the 35 years since she visited the city in her formative years. The things that she seeks to draw into assemblage in her

embodied engagement with the city are those that are conducive to her sense of self. As we stroll past the Minster, she comments on it in terms of its “inclusivity”, welcoming people of all ages, types and nationalities. As we enter Goodramgate, she speaks approvingly of York’s independent and quirky shops, especially the variety of food shops and independent bakers. She contrasts York in this respect with the southern town she retired from, with its uniform, chain stores. She also talks of seeing herself very much as a cyclist and tells me that it is important to her that York is so bike friendly.

## **8.2 The life of the body in public space**

The last two issues referred to by Barbara: access to good quality food and the ability to cycle, which she highlights as having salience for her sense of identity, reflect a broader concern that can be heard in many of the go-alongs, about the life of the body in public space. Butler (2015) highlights the political significance of this life of the body suggesting that, since the capacity to act depends on others - it is only in the context of community, of public space, that the individual has agency - and since living and acting are so intricately bound together, the conditions that make it possible for the body to live, for example the need for food, for housing, for protection from harm, become a central concern of political reflection and action. Butler sums this up as: ‘The body on the streets ... seeks to find the conditions of its own preservation’ (ibid., p. 95). In other go-alongs similar concerns were heard, for example from Debra reflecting on the ways in which smart meters, online shopping and the advent of a local Costcutter have made life more practicable for local residents in her community. Many of the maps drawn for me included a local shop, one that met basic needs. In a similar vein, access to food was frequently referred to in the go-alongs, for example by Michael, as we walked through the marketplace, drawing on memories of his childhood: ‘I mean, the working-class family ... you had what your mother could get’. Several people talked about the quality of bread they could buy in York: it seems that for many their sense of place is markedly influenced by this most basic commodity.

In short, most respondents showed a fundamental concern in their go-alongs with issues concerning their and their fellow citizens’ most basic needs, and with negotiating the embodied challenges of daily life, especially the effects of

poverty and exclusion. Housing was frequently mentioned in the go-alongs, with the availability and quality of housing a matter of concern for several respondents. Julia, for example, stresses the significance of housing in her life: 'Where I am - I couldn't have got it without Yorhome, and I said, "That saved me", you know, gave me a roof over my head"'. Housing was generally talked about in a context of the desire to feel safe, secure and warm. Broader issues of safety and feeling secure were also frequently raised. Many respondents talked about the significance of feeling safe in their movements around the city whether on foot, cycling, or travelling by car.

The ability to move freely in space was referred to by most respondents in one way or another. Issues commonly referred to include the ability to walk safely on foot, the availability of cycle paths, and the amenity of the river as a route to walk along. Issues of traffic and congestion were often brought up and the availability or otherwise of public transport. More than one respondent placed emphasis on the significance for them of York having a major railway station. Physical accessibility of space was raised, for example by Philip with his concern to create an allotment space for wheelchair users. Issues concerning the condition of space were often mentioned, notably the presence or otherwise of litter. A number of respondents were active in various ways to improve the quality of public space, for example Suzy, leading a group of volunteers in upgrading the local play facilities.

Finally, and unsurprisingly in York, flooding was mentioned by almost all respondents. The physical, lapping, threatening presence of the rising water was described in numerous graphic descriptions, the sudden and unexpected appearance of the river where it should not be. For respondents, flooding represents a physical barrier that obstructs the body and requires it to find a new path. It also represents a threat to life and limb as well as to home and property. It is a pressing political issue that affects most adversely those who live in social housing or on the traveller site. We have seen that for Bob its aftermath raises urgent questions about its causes, its future prevention, and how agencies should act to support the communities affected.

In the following chapter, I will draw together the various characteristics of the sense of place assemblage that, I have argued, can be seen in the data. I will

seek to elaborate from these an overarching concept of sense of place, in Deleuzian terms, that can help to describe the embodied encounter with the public spaces of York, and which can help to account for the small stories of place that they generate.

## **Chapter 9: Drawing Together the Strands**

In this chapter, I will draw together the various strands of sense of place as they have emerged from the small stories of everyday encounter with public spaces, arguing that, as Deleuze conceptualises sense as an opening up of oneself to the world, sense of place can be seen pre-eminently as an opening up of oneself to the potentiality of the encounter with space. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, 'One opens the circle a crack ... One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it' (1988, pp. 362-363).

### **9.1 Sense of place as disrupting concept**

I have argued above that the small story of encounter with public space, viewed as assemblage, is characterised by lines, connections and relations that are distinctively affective – the sensorial facility of one's body to make affective connections – temporal – involving the comingling of diverse temporal moments, past, present and future – and political – the way that one shares with others, through words and deeds, one's uniqueness and one's potential to begin new things. To have a sense of place implies being in the midst of these connections. It suggests an openness to being drawn into the heterogeneous assemblage of the embodied encounter with place, to affect other bodies and to be affected by them. Those respondents who, I sensed, had the keenest sense of place, those whose accounts and expressions of their interaction felt the most vivid and compelling, were those whose power to affect and to be affected by other bodies had become the most developed and differentiated, those who were most engaged in processes of becoming-other than what they were before (Patton 2000), individuals like Bob, who interweaved his life story of personal growth and development with that of the development of York as a city.

This conceptualisation of sense of place does not imply that place is created by sense; rather, sense of place should be seen in the light of Deleuze's conceptualisation of space, not as a social construction, a form imposed on the world, but as an 'opening of sense, as the potential to create new problems' (Colebrook 2005, p. 196). As such, it concerns not so much the specific singularities found within the embodied encounter with a particular space, or even the system of relations realised between them, but rather the potential to

produce new relations in that space and the individual's capacity to engage that potential (Colebrook 2005). It implies seeing place in terms of multiple series of "open potentialities" (Tucker 2012).

Sense of place thus conceptualised is consistent with how Deleuze describes sense generally, as 'an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity, at the surface of things' (Deleuze 1990, p. 19). As such, according to Deleuze, it "inheres" or "subsists" rather than "exists". Sense is the 'attribute of the state of affairs' and as such it 'does not merge at all with the physical state of affairs, nor with a quality of relation of this state'. It is '*both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition*' (ibid., p. 21 emphasis in original). Deleuze likens the attribute of the thing to the verb, which is capable of releasing from the assemblage, from the world of effected relations, the potential for other relations, other worlds (Colebrook 2005). Deleuze argues that all bodies are causes in relation to each other and for each other, that is, they produce effects: 'These *effects* are not bodies but, properly speaking, "incorporeal" entities. They are not physical qualities and properties, but rather logical or dialectical attributes. They are not things or facts, but events' (Deleuze 1990, p. 5 emphasis in original).

Sense of place can, then, be associated with the effects emanating from the encounter with space as assemblage expressed as "events", that is, in Deleuzian terms, the unique happenings that create new relations between apparently stable material or discursive formations (or "series") (Tucker 2012) whilst, at the same time, pointing to what is to be 'understood, willed and represented' (Deleuze 1990, p. 154) within those happenings. The over-riding sense from the data in this study is that, far from being a 'despotic Great Signifier' (Deleuze & Guattari 1983, p. 310) that serves to stabilize meaning, sense of place is a disrupting concept (Colebrook 2002) constantly pointing to new becomings. Thus Bob attempts, throughout his go-along, not to distil an essence of what York means to him but rather to think about its constantly evolving nature, and to consider the implications of this for his particular ideal of community life, its fragile nature and its shifting dynamics. Brian, similarly, is drawn to reflect upon a story of change in community and family life and to relate his plans to try to influence those dynamics for the better in his particular community. All the walks had the essential characteristic of being future

oriented; their effect was not to bottle the past or to analyse the present so much as to explore the potential of the place, in the light of the individual's experience, to enable them to realise their aspirations for the future.

I have argued that sense of place as assemblage includes both material and discursive elements. According to Deleuze, it is not that language endows materiality with meaning; rather, language and materiality operate together, with language operating not just as a signifier but very much as a vital constituent of life (Tucker 2012). As an event, sense of place is 'coextensive with becoming, and becoming is itself coextensive with language ... Everything happens at the boundary between things and propositions' (Deleuze 1990, p. 9). Thus, sense of place can be said to be at the boundary between language and materiality. Deleuze argues (*ibid.*, p. 170), that:

It is this new world of incorporeal effects or surface effects which makes language possible. For, as we shall see, it is this world which draws the sounds from their simple state of corporeal actions and passions ... Pure events ground language because they wait for it as much as they wait for us, and have a pure, singular, impersonal and pre-individual existence only inside the language which expresses them ... The most general operation of sense is this: it brings that which expresses it into existence; and from that point on, as pure inheritance, it brings itself to exist within that which expresses it.

Language, then, is one constituent of sense of place, one which enables us to place a thing in virtual connections with other things and which, operating alongside the material, constitutes events and becomings (Colebrook 2002; Tucker 2012). Sense allows certain powers of becoming to be given being (Colebrook 2002); for example, if a place falls into the category of "deprived" it has implications for the way that state actors then intervene in that place, whilst, if it is designated as being "historic" or "of heritage interest", it is deemed worthy of conservation as well as being opened up for tourism.

Just as sense of place subsists at the boundary between language and materiality, so too it sits at the boundary between the actual and the virtual; it is

felt as a kind of potentialized force on experience, working alongside the visible, actualized state of affairs, to open up a consciousness of the unactualized side of events (Tucker 2012). As Philip sees the allotment site primarily in terms of how it could be and what it might become in the future, so Julia sees “her York” in terms of her life in Tang Hall and the potential it has to enable her to be the person she wants to be. Working through the interleaved processes of language and materiality, sense brings novelty, pointing up the way that life is produced as difference, constantly varying, and producing not just the progression of history but disruptions, breaks, new beginnings and “monstrous births” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988).

Sense of place plays out in space as “intensive spatium” Deleuze (2014), where new powers of becoming are constantly being produced, (the only thing that returns in Deleuze’s version of the “eternal return” is the power to produce the new, over and over again with no origin and no end (Colebrook 2002)), and it belongs to that reading of time that Deleuze calls “Aion”, time considered as infinite and unlimited intensities (Deleuze 1990) within which coexist all the nested sets of virtual multiplicities which describe the potential destinies of actual systems ready to be actualised within the intensive processes through which actual systems maintain themselves and evolve (Groves 2010).

This chapter has drawn together the various strands of sense of place as they have emerged from the small stories of everyday encounter with public spaces. In so doing, it has elaborated a concept of sense of place very different from that emerging from the big story of York the heritage city. In the next chapter, I continue to focus on sense of place but move to consider the second research question concerning how sense of place impacts upon the way residents use the city and engage with its public spaces. In doing this I will examine how the “big stories” of York, discussed in Chapter 4, interact with the sense of place as assemblage discussed here.



## **Chapter 10: Sense of Place and the Use of York's Public Spaces**

In this final chapter concerning the findings of the research project, I turn to the second research question, which seeks an understanding of how sense of place influences how an individual uses the city, their propensity to use or not to use particular spaces within it, and the nature of their embodied encounter with those spaces. In so doing, I will deploy the concept of sense of place, as elaborated in the previous chapter, as an opening up of oneself to the world, to the potentiality of the encounter with space as “intensive spatium” Deleuze (2014), where new powers of becoming are constantly being produced.

I will also seek, in this chapter, to bring together the idea of the “big stories” of York, discussed in Chapter 4, and the “small stories” of day-to-day encounter discussed in the subsequent chapters. In this regard, I will address the challenge posed by the seeming dichotomy between these two ideas, the fact that, on the one hand, York's citizens, as they stand back to view their city, appear to hold very homogenous, stable and normative ideas about York as the beautiful, heritage city whilst, on the other hand, the individual's experience of embodied encounter with the city's public spaces is marked by its heterogeneity, and the sense of place that emerges from it is disrupting in its effects, subverting a stable view of the city and constantly opening up new perspectives and new becomings. I will consider here how the big stories of place play out when exposed to the deterritorialising effects of these small stories of everyday encounter.

### **10.1 An over-arching impression**

As I thought about the nature of the embodied encounter with public spaces, as revealed in the go-alongs and the map-drawing sessions as a whole, there was one common feature that impressed itself upon me above all others and that caused me some initial puzzlement, namely the sheer positive energy that pulsed through all these research encounters. After each one I had been struck by how life-affirming, uplifting, energising and affecting it had been for me. It was evident too how much each participant had enjoyed the session and how, in many cases, they would have been pleased to extend it. As I thought about the reasons for this, I reflected that perhaps it was the case that only people of

a certain type of personality would have volunteered to participate in the research, people who would expect it to be enjoyable to walk and talk with a researcher; or perhaps the positive energy was a function of the walks being undertaken in places and along routes chosen by the respondents, ones that were significant for them and about which they had warm feelings. Yet most of the respondents spoke, at least on occasion during the go-alongs, about difficult things in their lives, just as, at times, they expressed some negative sentiments about the spaces we encountered: it was not that their outlook on the world could be described as inherently “rose-tinted”. On further reflection, I think the explanation for my experience of the research encounters is that, for the participants, they took place in what might be described in Deleuzian terms as “spaces of becoming”, spaces defined not by type or structure but rather according to the potential for transformations to occur there (Malins 2004). I believe it was the intensities associated with these processes of becoming that I, together with my research respondents, was experiencing.

To elucidate the vibrancy that is evident in these processes of becoming and to explain how they relate to the encounter with space I will look once again for explanatory power to Deleuze and Guattari, particularly to their ideas, as found in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988), concerning deterritorialisation, reterritorialisation, lines of flight, sedentary and nomad (or striated and smooth) space, and the nomadic existence. It is particularly this last concept that, I will argue, has the greatest potential to help explain the processes that are at work in individuals’ day-to-day encounters with the public spaces of the heritage city of York. Deleuze and Guattari suggest the possibility of nomadic existences whereby one engages in ‘another way of travelling and moving; proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing’ (p. 27). They suggest that it is this middle that needs to be understood: this is the critical zone ‘where things pick up speed’ (ibid.), where we move in-between, where we follow lines of flight, where we become other.

To understand this idea of the nomadic existence, the proceeding from “the middle”, it will first be necessary to consider the underlying concept of nomadic subjectivity and I will turn to this in the section that follows.

## 10.2 Nomadic subjectivity

Following Deleuze and Guattari, nomadic subjectivity acknowledges the bodily roots of subjectivity whilst, at the same time, rejecting essentialism (Tamboukou and Ball 2002). The self is seen not as a stable or transcendent unity but rather as 'a threshold, a door, a becoming between multiplicities, an effect of a dance between power and desire' (Tamboukou 2008, p. 361), a process that involves constant negotiation between different levels of power and desire, entrapment and empowerment (Braidotti 2014). According to Braidotti, to be an individual is to be a centre of action, 'stringing the reactive (*potestas*) and the active instances of power (*potentia*) together under the fictional unity of a grammatical "I" (p. 168). At the same time, 'to be an individual is always to be composed of *other* bodies' (Williams 2012, p. 17 emphasis in original), interacting in a variety of ways with a network of other individuals, including through participation in a realm of virtual possibilities, what Massumi (2002) calls an "incorporeal materialism".

Nomadic subjectivity is not, then, a state of being but rather a creative process of becoming: 'a performative metaphor that allows for otherwise unlikely encounters and unsuspected sources of interaction, of experience and of knowledge' (Braidotti 1994, p. 6). According to Braidotti, 'what sustains the entire process of becoming-subject is the will to know, the desire to say, the desire to speak; it is a founding, primary, vital, necessary, and therefore original desire to become (*conatus*)' (ibid., p. 169). It involves processes of expression and composition as well as of choosing and incorporating forces that have the potential for positive transformation of the subject (Gatens and Lloyd 1999).

Braidotti (2014) argues, after Deleuze, that the deterritorialising processes of becoming 'gather force from some energetic core, or vibrating hub of activity which is the creative pole of power as *potentia*' (p. 171). It is this potential or "joyful affirmation", as Braidotti describes it, that has the power to generate qualitative shifts in the processes of becoming. I believe it is this potential that shines through my research encounters and that stimulates my response to them and analysis of them. As I encountered the spaces of the city in the company of my research respondents, we were in the *conatus* that Braidotti refers to, after Spinoza (1996), as the field of possible experience, a force field

through which affects have to pass, experiencing it as an abundant and positive energy that pulsates through bodies (Williams 2012).

This idea of nomadic subjectivity can, I suggest, usefully be extended in order to envisage the *urban nomad* as a helpful way of thinking about what is going on in the individual's encounter with public space. Deleuze and Guattari, in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1988), outline various facets of the nomad that will assist with this. Firstly, the 'nomad has a territory; he follows customary paths; he goes from one point to another; he is not ignorant of points' (p.443). However, whilst these points determine paths, Deleuze and Guattari say that they are strictly subordinate to the paths that they determine. The points are just relays: it is the in-between that takes on consistency and enjoys an autonomy and a direction of its own. It is in "the intermezzo" between these points that the nomad enjoys the autonomy of a self-directed life. The points can only be 'conceived in terms of the trajectory that is forever mobilizing them' (ibid.).

I will apply this idea of the *urban nomad* to the encounter with York's public spaces by returning to the go-along with Karen discussed in Chapter 6.

### ***The go-along with Karen revisited***

As I review my photographs of this particular walk in the city centre (see visual representation at [Appendix 12](#)) I can see clearly what was not evident to me whilst the walk was in progress, namely that it is a walk that proceeds not to or between any readily identifiable points or places; rather, it is distinguished by the character of the spaces that we travel through, spaces that, in this particular case, might be characterised as hidden or arcane. Every photo shows high walls and narrow passageways, hidden and largely deserted spots with very few people in the picture. It is noteworthy that there is not a single view of any of York's usual landmark attractions.

On reviewing the transcript, I am reminded that, from the outset, Karen shows limited regard for the normal conventions of navigating the city. Emerging from our meeting place at the Theatre, she attempts to lead us straight across the road, through the traffic, ignoring the nearby pedestrian crossing. Dashing back to avoid getting run over she laughingly tells me that she normally just races across the road, commenting that she does not generally follow the rules. Next,

she takes us down the passage at the side of the medieval King's Manor in order to find a back entrance to Museum Gardens and from there we go up a narrow path attempting to get round the side of the library, only to be thwarted by a locked gate. Karen takes evident delight in these hidden places. She tells me that this was 'always a good lunch spot, because there were benches there, and not many people knew about it so you could have a nice quiet sit down'. Here we see a theme that is to recur throughout the walk, of being able to find places that are not known to other people, places where it is quiet, where it is possible to enjoy a nice lunch break, places that afford a respite from the world and an opportunity to reflect.

As we continue to walk Karen comments on her fascination with snickets: 'When my Mum used to bring me into town, she would always dive down snickets and I still love coming out at the other end ... Walking along ... you disappear from the street - if anyone happens to be watching you, suddenly you've gone!' As she tells me this, she comments admiringly on Netherhornpot Lane, the narrowest of alleys and one which I generally steer clear of, fearing it to be unsavoury, but which Karen clearly sees as the perfect exemplification of her theme. Throughout the walk she takes delight in introducing me to these liminal kind of spaces, spaces where I have never previously set foot, either because I have never noticed them before or because I have seen them but thought they looked too deserted, forbidding or even private, to broach. Hard to categorise, the attraction of these spaces for Karen seems to lie in their in-between character, their capacity to effect one's disappearance and reappearance.

Karen appears to seek out spaces of transformation, that is ones associated with particular intensities and with processes of becoming in her life that have led to new beginnings, new awarenesses, "firsts" associated with growing up, getting married, becoming older, retiring and so on. Her relationship with the city's spaces was shaped primarily by these assemblages rather than by meanings associated with any fixed points in the city-scape. As we carry on the walk, Karen continues to reflect on particular intensities: the novelty, as an 18 year-old, of being stopped in the street and asked her opinion by a market researcher; the "groovy" experience of dances in the low-ceilinged basement at King's Manor in the early seventies; the excitement of seeing Mott the Hoople

perform in Museum Gardens; the feel of the dark and dingy Assembly Rooms where she went to occasional dances; the discotheque in Lady Peckett's yard where the Moody Blues played and knowing that her father would be waiting in the car for her on Fossgate at turning out time; a distant memory of doing a tour of city centre churches and the sun shining through the stained glass; an occasion in the unspecified past when she had stopped at All Saints Pavement one lunchtime and someone was practising Widor's toccata and fugue on the organ, 'And I thought, "Wow, what a wonderful thing!" so I stayed a bit longer!' She talks about her feelings associated with working in different jobs in the city and especially lunchtimes and her desire to find a secluded spot to eat her lunch. It is evident that Karen sees these intensities as being formative of the person that she is.

The various elements of the city-scape that Karen chooses to point out to me during our walk are very disparate and the reasons for her choice not immediately obvious. It becomes easier to interpret this go-along, however, if it is understood that the particular points on the paths along which Karen leads us are not the determining factors in shaping the experience of the walk; rather, they are subordinate to the patterns and relations operating in Karen's person-place encounter and that determine the paths we take. These patterns and relations are entirely personal to her, assemblages that simply do not operate for me; their particular affects can only be described by Karen; I cannot in any real way experience them as she does. The walk is enjoyable and fascinating for me because Karen's enthusiasm is infectious, I am happy that the walk is evidently producing rich data for my research, and my person-place encounter throws up affects that are immanent to my own relations with that place; but this enjoyment runs entirely parallel to Karen's; it cannot be said that I am truly sharing Karen's person-place encounter. In addressing the question with Karen about what York means to her, I can only observe the effects of the particular relations that she reveals.

The walk with Karen was typical of the go-alongs in being characterised by the "in-between" of the processes of becoming. The go-alongs were very disparate in terms of the places that the respondents chose to walk. Even amongst the nine walks that took place in the city centre there was little commonality with regard to the routes taken or the sites visited. In particular, there was no

evidence in any of the walks of any special interest in or leaning towards York's distinctive heritage sights or, indeed, any other feature of the cityscape. Rather, what stands out from the data is the very oddness of the places that respondents' attention alighted on. The map of the walk with Laya (see visual representation at [Appendix 11](#)), which was described in Chapter 6, is of interest here for the way that, despite the walk taking place in the city centre, the map shows only the peripheral, radial streets of York, ones that are off the beaten track. As I review the transcript of this walk and the photos that I took, I am struck again by how the great majority of the sites that Laya drew my attention to (many of them shops or cafés) were ones that I had never before even noticed; to me they had not previously stood out from the streetscape and, even after Laya pointed them out to me, they held little inherent interest for me.

As I have argued, the inherent oddness of the things that respondents chose to point out can generally be explained in terms of the significance that these singularities had for them within assemblages that gave rise to particular events, transformations or becomings in their lives. That is not to say that the significance was always immediately obvious, however; witness one respondent who led me some distance to look at the (not particularly easy to discern) mottled bricks on a somewhat anonymous building. Suffice it to say, perhaps, that the nomadic subject, being open to unconventional spatial orientations, 'can make new connections in keeping with the movement of life as it unfolds' (Lorraine 2005, p. 160); sometimes these connections may be easily discerned; in other cases they may defy ready explanation.

### **10.3 Smooth and striated space**

I argue, then, that the respondents in this study, as urban nomads, are moving in spaces of becoming, spaces that are "in-between" the points of the city's topology. These nomadic spaces are also identified by Deleuze and Guattari as being "smooth" spaces: 'All becoming occurs in smooth space' (1988, p. 565). Whereas, according to Deleuze and Guattari, 'nomad space is smooth, marked only by "traits" that are effaced and displaced with the trajectory' (ibid., p. 444), 'sedentary space is striated, by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures' (ibid., pp. 443-444). In setting out this distinction between smooth (or nomad) and striated (or sedentary) space, Deleuze and Guattari note the

complexity of the differences between the two and the fact that they only exist together in mixture. They draw attention to ‘passages from one to the other; the principles of the mixture, which are not at all symmetrical, sometimes causing a passage from the smooth to the striated, sometimes from the striated to the smooth, according to entirely different movements’ (ibid., p. 552). As a result, we move iteratively between deterritorialisation - freeing ourselves from the strictures of controlled, striated spaces - and reterritorialisation—repositioning ourselves within new regimes of striated spaces (Tamboukou 2008): ‘You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 9).

This mixing of smooth and striated space has powerful explanatory potential for understanding the individual’s encounter with the public spaces of the city. The “big stories” of York, I argue, function to striate space. It is the big stories that determine what constitute the significant points on the urban path, which places, buildings or sites are of merit, which are important to civic life, which are worthy of being visited. It is the big stories that ascribe shared meanings to these points. In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, the big stories of sedentary space, ‘instituted by the State apparatus’ (1988, p. 552), ‘parcel out a closed space to people, assigning each person a share and regulating the communication between shares’ (ibid., p. 443). I will argue that, in their encounter with urban spaces, the individual acts as “urban nomad”, challenging and undermining the parcelling out of spaces effected by the big stories of the civic authorities. Sensing that ‘voyaging smoothly is a becoming’ (ibid., p. 561), the urban nomad deterritorialises the assemblages of the big stories, not allowing them to determine the paths that they will take. As we saw in the walk with Karen, she was by no means ignorant of the points on the path associated with the big stories of York, but for her they were subordinate to the paths of her particular becomings, her unconventional spatial orientations disrupting the territorialisations of the conventional big stories of the city.

In the following sections I will consider the various ways that the individual, thought of as urban nomad, engages with public spaces.



## 10.4 The urban nomad

The urban nomad 'distributes himself in a smooth space; occupies, inhabits, holds that space' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 444). From this, we understand that the experience of the nomad is not one of travelling between points but rather of dwelling. Deleuze and Guattari assert that the nomadic subject experiences smooth space in terms of haecceities: smooth space is 'filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. It is a space of affects, more than one of properties. It is *haptic* rather than optical perception' (1988, p. 557 emphasis in original), involving "close-range" rather than "long-distance" vision (1984, p. 572). Deleuze and Guattari describe haecceities as a 'mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance', consisting 'entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect or be affected' (ibid., p. 304). A haecceity, then, is formed of a specific configuration of relations and is defined not by a particular location in space-time, but rather by the relations themselves; it actualises in "any space whatever" (Deleuze 1986), meaning that the nomad experiences space 'not in terms of a totality to which it is connected ... but rather, pure relations of speed and slowness ... that evoke powers to affect and be affected, both actual and potential' (Lorraine 2005, p. 166).

I will seek to illustrate the role of haecceity within smooth space and how it influences the way that the individual uses space through the go-along that took place with Jason.

### ***The go-along with Jason***



*Figure 20 The go-along with Jason*

Jason lives in Acomb, a suburb on the west side of the city where he was born and brought up. In his thirties, he has two primary school aged children. Jason chose to meet me at his home and to show me his local area because, he said, 'When I think about what I do in York, a lot of it is not in the city centre, so I think about where I live in Acomb, the different things I do there.' He chose to undertake the go-along on bikes as that typifies the embodied way in which he most commonly engages with this area. (See visual representation at [Appendix 21](#))

We begin by riding past a couple of local sports facilities that Jason uses, after which he brings me to the local park. As we stand with our bikes just inside the entrance, Jason tells me about it:

When I was younger ... we used to come down here quite a lot to West Bank Park ... because my nanna used to live on Hamilton Drive, so ... there's quite a lot of pictures of me when I was little in the park, playing football usually. So, I've always sort of felt a connection to the park because it was like where my grandparents used to take me ... So then, as I got a bit older, we'd spend some time there playing football. And then, obviously, I take my kids there now. But I always like to go there. I don't think - it's not sort of changed too much since I used to go there. More often than not, we're on the bikes when we come here ... and we usually put our bikes in this little bike rack here. So, there's quite a lot of different things I suppose going on in here. But, erm, normally that's where we start off with the girls [indicating the play area]. ... So, they, you know, they'll play in there for quite a while if you let them ... but ... there's a little pond just up the left-hand side here, so sometimes they wanna go have a little look in the pond ... But they both learned to ride their bikes here actually, on the path over there, erm; it's fairly quiet so we brought them both here to learn how to ride their bikes. Erm, but, yeah, it's always nice when you come here and it's ... I suppose it's fairly quiet but you've also ... got the noise, obviously, from kids playing and stuff ... You used to be able ... on that bit over there, just put your jumpers down and play and they've got the little goals there now ... And then they

have the fair here every year, so we always come to that - that's usually very, very busy; you can't believe, when that's on. So, quite a lot of stuff going on I suppose and you see lots of different people here, you know, people doing the sports, people playing in there, like these people walking their dogs and you know sometimes like when it's really nice weather you just see people sat over on the grass on there just reading or whatever.

In the way that Jason responds to the question of what York means to him, it is noteworthy how strongly haecceities feature. As he says, and repeats, in this extract, 'there's quite a lot of different things ... going on in here'. On the surface, he may simply be referring to all the different uses made of the park, but it is also evident that this remark is indicative of the myriad of things brought into assemblage in his personal encounter with this space through its affective capacity, the memories it triggers, and its consonance with his values. Jason's vision could hardly be more "close-range" with its emphasis on the affective impact of very small-scale assemblages, such as putting 'our bikes in this little bike rack here' or having 'a little look in the pond'. Just as Deleuze and Guattari say that 'In Charlotte Brontë, everything is in terms of *wind*, things, people, faces, loves, words' (1984, p. 304, emphasis in original), so, in Jason's response to York, what is salient is jumpers for goal posts, walking of dogs, fine weather and all the different sorts of people that you see in the park, friends and strangers. The picture he paints is one of "pure relations of speed and slowness" (ibid.). The haecceities he evokes are also notably haptic: there is the visual sense of spectacle in the scene, but also present is the sense of touch in the feeling of sitting on the grass, of kicking the football and of being warmed by the sun. Sound plays a role too with the juxtaposition of the underlying quiet punctuated by the sounds of children at play. Each element that Jason mentions is significant not because of the form that determines it, nor any function that it fulfils, nor even its particular location in space-time, but rather due to 'the sum total of the intensive affects it is capable of' (ibid.).

Towards the end of the go-along, standing on the verge outside the local community centre, Jason draws an explicit distinction between the haecceities that characterise his experience of York and the experience of the visitor to York who does not experience the same particular relations:

I suppose, when I think about York, these are all the things that I think about, you know; it's a lot of like open space things, community facilities, things I have grown up with and connections to them ... rather than – if people are not from York, obviously they will think about York – and loads of people say to me, you know, it's beautiful in York ... When we were on holiday last week we met some people and they were saying, "Oh, you know, we went to York last year and it was really nice", but they're talking about the city centre, so they've obviously come by train to York - and walking round the city - and it is nice; and you know, we do think it's nice when we go in the city and we do all that, erm, but we don't do that as much as probably we use all these community facilities.

For Jason, the quality of his life in York rests not on any inherent property of the city per se nor on his own subjectivity, but rather the multiplicities or assemblages that he becomes involved in and his relationship with the immediacy of the world that surrounds him. This is life as pure event or immanence whereby life 'unfolds by affects and intensities that are not someone's or something's but free-flowing' (Posman 2014, p. 314). Those people who walk around the city centre and think that that is the significant part of York are those that, in Jason's view, lack what he identifies for himself as meaningful connections. The particular blocks of space-time that are made apparent in the go-along with Jason territorialise around rhythms associated with home, as well as with particular becomings concerned with growing up in that place, becoming adult, becoming husband and father. They evidence a continuity in his relationship with this place; however, this does not imply sameness: each successive event creates change and leads to new singularities.

What I have argued above is that the individual's embodied encounter with space is characterised not by engagement with particular points on a route that are significant for that individual due to any inherent characteristics, but rather by the "in-between" of the individual's movements in those spaces, virtual relations that defy a conventional conception of space (Lorraine 2005). Here I argue that this in-between is experienced as haecceities. In the next section, I

turn to look at what the research encounters reveal about how individuals use public space and how the experience of space understood in terms of haecceity can shed light on the individual's preference for using particular spaces in the city.

### **10.5 Use of space**

The maps drawn by the research respondents and the routes taken on the go-alongs defy any simplistic attempt at categorisation with regard to the propensity of individuals to use particular types of spaces. The maps, which are remarkably heterogeneous in form, show a great variety of different urban features. As for the walks, although nine took place in what could broadly be described as the city centre (which for seven of the individuals meant they had travelled into the centre from where they lived), this cannot be taken to suggest any preference for the city centre amongst respondents. After all, it is not surprising that, in being asked to address the question of "what York means to them", a number of respondents would think it appropriate to meet in and talk about the centre of the city. Furthermore, as has been noted, the walks that took place in the city centre were quite diverse in nature, often taking in peripheral streets and spaces off the beaten track: there was no common experience of the city centre nor any tendency to favour the iconic heritage sites. The routes shown on the maps and taken on the go-alongs can be understood simply as representing the individual respondent's everyday experience of the city. To consider what they might reveal about any preference for, or propensity to use, particular types of space, a deeper level of analysis will be required. I will attempt that in the sections that follow.

### **10.6 Routine**

The starting point for considering how individuals use space must inevitably be to look at the influence of routine since many of the maps, as representations of everyday life, are strongly shaped by the territorialisations of domestic routine with their cycles of repetition and recurrence (Tamboukou and Ball 2002). The individual, understood as nomadic subject, to sustain their identity, needs to be able to walk a line between maintaining the territorialisations associated with the comforting rhythms of familiar places, with home and the roles and responsibilities of their everyday life, whilst at the same time, remaining

connected to life beyond these horizons and being able to confront the new (Lorraine 2005), to “open the crack” (Deleuze and Guattari 1988).

To illustrate these effects, I will draw on a map drawn during a group mapping exercise that took place on the north side of the city with a group of women adult learners who were undertaking a basic skills class as part of a “family learning” programme (see Figure 21).

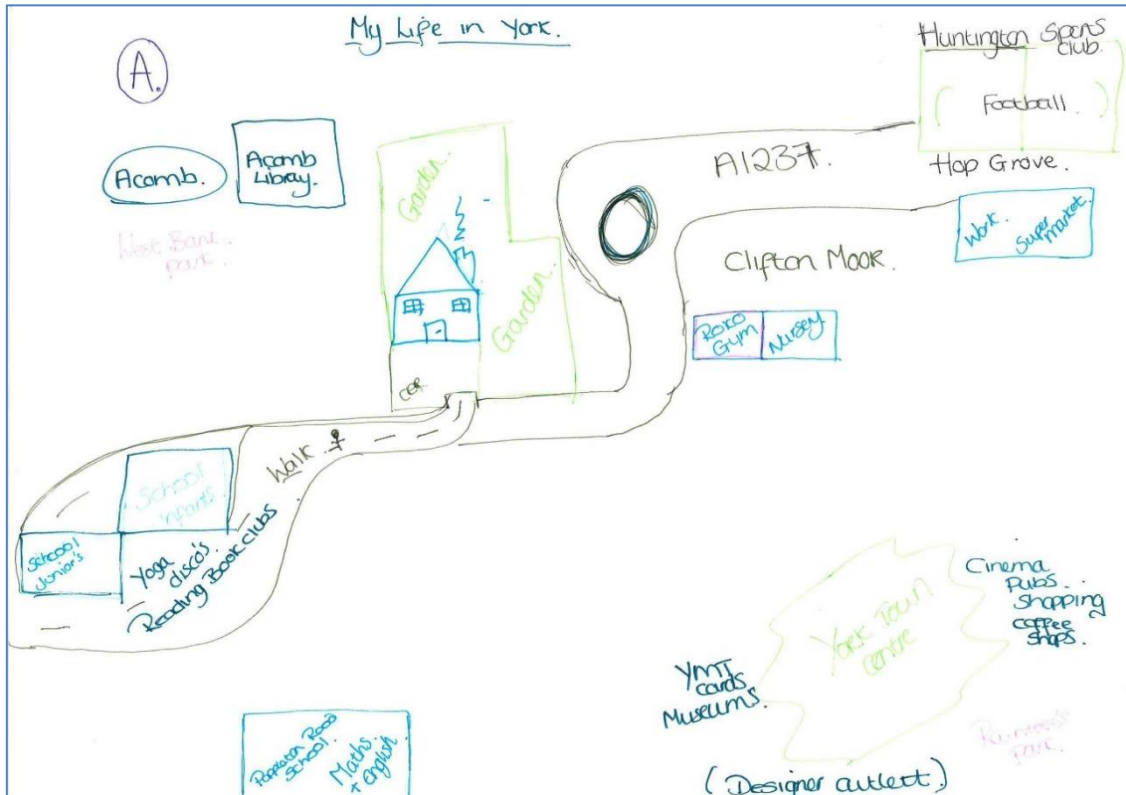


Figure 21 Map from a group mapping session in the north of the city

The class took place in a community room within a primary school in Holgate, a northern suburb of the city. The map, which is entitled “My life in York”, does not feature things that might be thought of as significant about the city itself but only things that are personally useful to the respondent. It centres on the York ring road, the A1237, which, for this woman, leads to the gym and to the nursery, and then on to the supermarket and to her children’s sports club. The other way it leads to home. Marked in boxes are Acomb and the library, West Bank Park, infant and junior schools, yoga, discos, reading book clubs, the school where the current session is taking place. In the corner is another box for York town centre, annotated with: YMT cards [which allow entry to the city’s

museums], Rowntree's Park, cinema / pubs / shopping / coffee shops. The out-of-town shopping centre is also marked, in brackets.

In speaking to the group about her map, this woman said, 'I live the rock 'n' roll lifestyle in York! I spend my life sitting in the car so that's how I get to see York. Don't get jealous! I discovered just now that my life revolves around children. I walk between the two schools. Then up to Huntington. That's all I see Monday to Friday. When I can I get into the city.' She commented that she had drawn her garden big because her children play there. She also commented on: Clifton Moor, because it is where her children go and it is very sociable; York Museums Trust cards, because they allow her free entry to the city's museums with her 9 year-old; enjoying visiting the city centre because she is 'a Tudors fan'; and the limited time that they have as a family and the fact that they spend so much of it on the road in bad traffic.

The body-space assemblages that predominate for this woman, unsurprisingly, concern family; it is her role as mother, 'the material elements, given relations and intensive affects' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 304) that give rise to being mother that most distinctively shape her person-place encounter. The map can be interpreted in terms that are consistent with the way that Deleuze and Guattari characterise striated spaces, whereby 'all movement is subordinated to points or positionings, beginnings and ends, states of being. This is the space of the state apparatus; the space of subjects; the space of money, work, housing; the space of stratification' (Malins 2004, p. 486). This map depicts a life lived in space and time that is structured according to family roles. The space is 'hierarchical, rule-intensive, strictly bounded and confining' (Tamboukou 2008, p. 360). The road at the centre of the map connects a line of points representing duty, obligation and structure. This striates not just space but also time, the map showing the passage of the day, and how the individual's time is corralled, constrained and used up in attending to tasks along the route.

At the same time, however, the map also hints at lines of flight, deterritorialising the striated space of routine and reterritorialising around assemblages where, according to Deleuze and Guattari, 'the points are subordinated to the trajectory' (1988, p. 556), spaces that are open and dynamic and allow for transformation to occur, spaces that create release from the daily routine and

from the physical constraints and barriers that accompany it. Thus, it marks those elements that represent escape from constraint: parks, the city centre, the museums, the library, the space where the class was currently being held, showing them as free-standing elements. They are not joined to the core by lines because they themselves can be thought of as lines, that is representations of lines of flight, not so much as specific points as deterritorialisations of the striated space of daily routine.

## **10.7 Reterritorialisation**

I suggest that all of us, as individuals, experience space-time territorialised around particular rhythms associated with our personal circumstances, routines and roles. These rhythms are essential to the maintenance of our identities. At the same time, however, as “urban nomads”, we are characterised by a propensity to be receptive to and converge with deterritorialising forces arising from other bodies or from the urban environment that set new patterns in motion, ‘patterns immanent to the individual in its specific milieu’ (Lorraine 2005, p. 171). Our sense of place is attuned to an awareness of the potential of place, to its powers to set in motion new becomings. I will argue that this propensity plays out in a number of distinctive ways with regard to how individuals choose to use public spaces.

### **10.7.1 Expressing one’s uniqueness**

The data from the go-alongs suggest that individuals will be drawn to spaces where the intensities that arise from the embodied encounter have particular resonance for the individual in expressing their sense of identity. This came through strongly in the go-along with Barbara, presented in Chapter 8 (see visual representation at [Appendix 10](#)), where she explicitly linked her use of the city with her developing sense of identity through her experimentation with York’s “alterative scene”, feminist bookshops and foreign restaurants. She also defined herself as a cyclist and talked about how York’s cyclability influences how she uses and navigates the city. Other respondents similarly linked the way that they viewed the city and the way that they used its spaces to the particular ways in which they defined their own identity. For example, Michael, who presented himself as both photographer and former engineer, engaged



with the city in ways that complemented his fascination with technologies and enabled him to develop his skills with the camera.

A number of respondents, such as Karen and Michael, showed a particular interest in the hidden or less well-known spaces of the city. In part, this might be indicative of a desire on the part of the respondent to make new connections (to be discussed below) but may also be understood as a concern to “own” the spaces that others do not know about and thereby to differentiate themselves from other people in order to express their own uniqueness. In so doing, the respondent appears to dissociate him or herself from the big stories of York, casting as “other” those who adhere to them, for example Jason, who explicitly identifies himself as being different from the visitors who walk around the city centre and think that it nice but who lack the particular meanings and connections to the city that he has.

### **10.7.2 Agency**

Linked to identity is the sense of agency. The research data suggests that individuals are drawn to use spaces that facilitate a sense of personal agency. The go-along with Bob, discussed in the previous chapter, illustrates this particularly clearly. We saw that Bob’s map (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 14](#)) essentially consists of two circles: one ‘where I was born, brought up and worked most of my working life; and the other ... the historic part of York that I’m immensely proud of’. The part that he chose to talk about and where the walk took place was the former. This is not the area where he now lives but it is where he chooses to spend his discretionary time, serving as chair of a local community organisation. It is an area of the city that he associates with his career as he worked his way up through various employments and many learning and training experiences. For Bob, his use of space is guided by being able to make a difference. This is typified in the way he describes one of his past jobs: ‘the work that I did for the bread company meant I kept the wheels rolling so that the bread vans could go out and deliver the food stuffs to the local community’. He talks of his various employments as serving ‘a communal purpose’ and, as he climbs the ladder, of wanting to be able to determine his own work schedules and priorities in order to ‘address things directly’. His work with the community association is guided by an

understanding of community shaped in his youth when 'neighbours were neighbours and you weren't frightened of knowing each other's business'. He expresses a strong mission to build community, to attract the locals 'to come in here and use this ... [and] to convince them that this is their building'.

The go-along with Julia, also discussed in the previous chapter, (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 9](#)) equally shows the paramount importance of personal agency. The relatively deprived community in which she lives which, when she first arrived, she expected to be like 'Dante's version of Hell', turns out to have an unanticipated virtue in that, 'you can't pretend here; there's no reason to pretend - there's nothing about house prices or the value of your car, or social climbing or anything like that ... It's about being honest and open and transparent, and people then see the truth of who you are'. She sees a freedom in this place from the striations of social expectation that allow her to both be herself and, at the same time, to be part of the community and do 'all the stuff that I'd wanted to do about community leadership'. For Julia, being part of community means helping others and being willing to ask for help yourself. She contrasts the active choice to be part of community with the striated space of loneliness and social isolation, characterised by a 'poverty of thinking', a closing down both mentally and physically that leads in turn to fear. It drives the way that she uses spaces, both in engaging with others in community spaces as well as accessing the natural resources of green space and trees and 'the energy that they give you'.

The data from these and other go-alongs suggest that individuals will be drawn to spaces where they have personal agency. These may be thought of in Deleuzian terms as spaces where the collective refrain or rhythms of the particular assemblages that constitute them resonate with the urban nomad's own, distinctive improvisations.

### **10.7.3 Making new connections**

The go-along with Julia was characterised by a drive to make new connections, to start new things. This capacity to start new things is a characteristic of nomad space, of 'the smooth, which has no background, plane, or contour, but rather changes in direction and local linkages between parts' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 576). This same drive was evident in the way that other

research respondents used spaces. Suzy, for example, described her sense of York in terms of the way that she is working with others in the area to 'develop community' especially by improving the local play facilities. For her, nomad space is characterised by the way her family uses local space informally, 'bumping into people they know - a community thing', organising Woodthorpe Rocks (where everybody paints rocks and hides them for others to find), as well as family fun days with music, drink, food and stalls. These spaces fire the imagination, lead to new discoveries, give freedom to roam, to play and to learn, to be active and develop new skills; they facilitate encounters with old acquaintances and with people you have not met before; they enable you to become who you have the potential to be. In order to reterritorialize space in this way, Suzy is motivated to tackle the broken down and vandalised play equipment that cannot be used, litter that spoils the local walks and creates dangers, striated space where intimidating groups of youths hang about, where people do not know each other and are reluctant to speak to strangers, space that closes down possibilities, relationships, lines of flight or new becomings.

#### **10.7.4 Getting a new angle**

This desire to make new connections also links to a desire that comes through the majority of the go-alongs to "get a new angle" on the city, to visit new places or to see familiar places in a new light. This came through strongly in the go-along with Michael (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 15](#)) who, like other respondents, is anxious to see every part of the city, particularly snickets and courts that are off the beaten track, showing particular frustration when any gates bar the way. The same was true of Tony (see visual representation at [Appendix 16](#)) who explicitly stated his desire to get a new angle on the city's spaces and talked with enthusiasm about the opportunities afforded by the annual Residents' Festival to see into places normally closed from view. In many of the go-alongs, respondents wanted to show me a particular arcane or quirky feature of the city that they had discovered and that fired their imagination. The walk with Susan (see visual representation at [Appendix 18](#)) was typical of this, in her case, taking me to see a tombstone in a city centre church that bore an intriguing inscription. It seems that the urban nomad seeks to deterritorialise the conventional conceptions of the city's space with diverse lines of flight that operate 'directly upon the territoriality of the

assemblage and open it onto a land that is eccentric, immemorial, or yet to come' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 576).

I have suggested that the urban nomad seeks to deterritorialise conventional notions of space and time in favour of territories that resonate with relations immanent to themselves (Lorraine 2005). The practical working out of this is that individuals choose places that seem to defy a conventional logic of utility. We saw this with Karen and the way that she traversed the city primarily through its snickleways and other secluded spaces rather than along the straight and wide paths of its main streets. We saw it too with Philip and his enthusiasm for the allotment site's hidden garden, finding perhaps more potential in that arcane space, despite it no longer being cultivable, than in the site's regular, workable plots.

## **10.8 The big stories of place**

In this concluding section, I will return to the big stories of place in order to consider how they contribute to a sense of place as assemblage that influences how individuals use public spaces. There is something of a contrast between the strength and homogeneity of residents' shared understanding of York as a beautiful heritage city that is evident in written sources concerning the city, and the rather diffuse effects of these stories that are evident in individual embodied encounters with the city's spaces. In the research encounters in the city's spaces, the big stories of the city did not always seem to feature large. Many respondents did not, for example, reference the big stories of the city directly, with the walks rarely taking us to any of the city's iconic heritage sites. This does not, however, imply that the research respondents were unaware of, or indifferent to, the big stories of the city. What I will argue is that they chose to deploy them in particular ways in their embodied encounter with the city's spaces.

A typical tactic adopted by respondents with regard to the big stories of the city can be seen in Bob's map (see visual representation at [Appendix 14](#)), whereby the heritage story is put in a discrete circle to one side of the map. Bob did this quite explicitly, mentioning how proud he was of the historic city centre but suggesting that the important experiences of his life, the ones that he went on to talk to me about, took place elsewhere. As the go-along progressed, he barely

made further mention of the historic city. Others similarly organised their maps with the core representing their day-to-day lives but arranging York's heritage assets around the outside of the map as amenities that they might access from time to time. Some respondents included in their maps representations of the big stories of York, such as features of its heritage, to function as wayfinders. The woman who drew the map shown in Figure 22, during a group mapping session in the south east of York, commented about Clifford's Tower that she did not know why she had drawn it on her map other than that it was on her route to work.



*Figure 22 Map from a group mapping session in the south east of the city*

Similarly, the Minster appeared on a number of maps, often drawn on as one of the first elements in order to orient subsequent elements.

It seems that, in their embodied encounters with York, individuals are fully aware of the big stories of York, using them to position themselves, to know where they are. These stories also function as a resource. Individuals carry them with them in their back pocket so to speak; they are there to be drawn on when required, facilitating a line of flight, a deterritorialisation of the assemblage of every-day routine and obligation. Jason was one such respondent who talked about the historic city centre as a resource, a place that was available to “walk round”, that might be called upon from time to time. A number of other respondents also referred to the pleasure of having a walk in the city centre especially early in the day when it was quiet, leaving by mid-morning when the streets started to fill with visitors.

It seems that the big stories of York enter into the assemblage that is sense of place to the extent that they have affective capacity. When respondents refer to them, it is invariably out of regard for their affective qualities rather than their veracity. The following extracts from the go-along with Michelle, introduced in Chapter 5, are illustrative of this (see visual representation of the walk at [Appendix 5](#)). Michelle came to York to study history at the university staying on to complete an MA. She above all, then, might be expected to pay regard to the big stories of York, the heritage city, and indeed she comments that it was York’s evident heritage that drew her here: ‘coming for interview, and just walking out of the train station, I thought, “my word, this is the place to study history” - I immediately thought, if I got an offer I certainly would come here’. As we walk back into the centre along the riverbank and past the King's Arms pub she comments:

So, when I later found out just how famous that pub is and how many people used to come just to drink there even when it's flooded I thought "my gosh I'm walking through here day in day out and enjoying these scenes". And I just found the walk along the river very calming as I was going to lectures. But also entertaining as there was the ducks and the geese and the people of all sorts. And there was a seller selling hamburgers from a mobile van ... The other part was walking along the river with my friends to go to the then City Screen in Museum Gardens. And

that was a huge bit of history as well. City Screen was attached to the Yorkshire Museum. It was so lovely and cosy.

This extract typifies Michelle's response to the city. Although history is her interest, the intensities that stick in her mind are as much about a pub that is often featured on the television news during floods, the river, a hamburger van and the cinema. She reterritorializes the big stories in ways that fit with her sense of York, which might be characterised in her words as "a place to dream". Her knowledge of the facts concerning the big heritage stories is also surprisingly shaky. There is much uncertainty in her mind, for example, when she suggests where a particular Roman gate might have been. As we pass a blue plaque marking where the Brontës once spent the night, Michelle comments, 'Read it; it's magnificent! It's incredible what you pass!' In telling me that she was aware of the plaque because it had been pointed out on a walk with the University history department it suggests again that its significance for Michelle, the intensity that it represents, is concerned with her memory of being a student and the experience of the history walk rather than any inherent quality of the story itself.

This same lack of regard for the detail or accuracy of the big stories of the city was shown by other respondents. Michael admired various technologies of building evidenced in city centre heritage buildings without having any clear idea or interest in the various periods that they dated from. In any event, what mattered more to him than the technical or historical detail was the wider connections that they made: through the timbers to ships that had sailed in the southern seas, through parallel construction techniques, to temples in Japan, and through the sense of eternity experienced in a churchyard to the desert sands of Egypt. Michael's experience of the city centre was of a rich source of stories that he could reterritorialise in ways that sustained his identity as urban nomad.

The respondent who paid most attention to the big stories of York was perhaps Tony. Having worked as a guide on the tour buses and continuing to volunteer in the city's visitor centre Tony expressed an explicit interest in collecting stories that he could re-tell about the city. As we walked together (see visual representation at [Appendix 16](#)), he gave me examples of what makes a good



story, such as why the shops in the ancient Shambles were built with overhangs giving the street its characteristic narrowness (because it was the ground floor spaces that, at the time, were assessed for taxation), or why holly was found amongst the moss in the Viking toilet located in the basement of the current Barclays Bank (a Viking practical joke), or the goings on at the de Grey Rooms when they functioned as the officers mess for the Yorkshire Hussars. However, even in Tony's case, where he took care over collecting big stories of York's heritage, he nonetheless effectively reterritorialised them to suit his own purposes. As he put it, he wanted stories that could be told in such a way that they 'related to each other but could also stand alone and ... fit into the moments when the bus stopped at the lights or not'. The stories were deterritorialised from any assemblage that might constitute a formal history of the city and repurposed as something that, on the face of it, might be seen as entertainment, fitting with Tony's self-identity as tour guide. They sat alongside a raft of other stories concerning how he came to York, his stay in the house of Mr Vickers, a well-known campaigner against York's proposed inner ring road, and the amusing things that happened there when the "lady telephonists" came round to visit a fellow lodger.

The data from the go-alongs suggests, then, that the urban nomad is aware of the big stories of York and deploys them in a variety of ways. They may use them as an occasional resource, for example as an escape from domestic routine, or more regularly and routinely where these stories resonate with the individual's sense of identity. They may be enthusiastic about them, as in the cases of Michael and Tony, or they may be more dismissive, as in the case of Laya who says bluntly, 'I do think with all the historical stuff, like, once you've seen it, you've seen it; there's not much more to it'. Or again, they may take a subversive approach, such as we saw with Karen, who moves in the city's historic spaces in such a way as, in effect, to reinterpret them, seeing them always from unusual angles, giving them new meanings, interpreting their significance and purpose in quite different ways to how any guide book might.

It seems that the nomadic subject is not bound by the established structures represented by the big stories of the city but rather uses them as a resource in the working out of individual subjectivities. This "nomadic consciousness" (Braidotti 1994) can be seen as a form of resistance to the striated space



represented by the big stories of York. According to this view, the urban nomad will recognise and own the discourses and practices inherent in the big stories but they will, at the same time, critique them, reterritorialising them according to patterns and rhythms that are imminent to themselves, not allowing them to set the conditions of their existence in this world. The preeminent factor in the individual's use of public space is always a sense of place that demands an opening up of oneself to the world and the potentiality of the encounter with space, a desire to "voyage smoothly" (Deleuze and Guattari 1988) in space where new connections and made and new powers of becoming constantly being produced in keeping with the movement of life as it unfolds (Lorraine 2005).

## **Chapter 11: Conclusion**

This final chapter returns to the research questions to provide a summary of the study's findings and to set out the significance as well as the limitations of the research. The contribution to knowledge is also discussed. The chapter concludes by considering the implications of the study for my practice as a local government officer in developing the council's engagement with its citizens, in particular with regard to their local public spaces.

### **11.1 The research questions**

The study has sought to explore the relationship between sense of place and the way that individuals use (or do not use) the various types of public spaces that are available to them across the city of York. It has focused on embodied engagement with space, how people interact with the city's public spaces, seeking to understand how their day to day use of space is influenced by their relationship with place, their affective response to it, the understandings, beliefs, feelings and emotions that they have about it, and what is said about it, the big stories of place that both shape and reflect those understandings, beliefs and feelings.

The study set out to address the following research questions.

#### **Research Question 1: *How does sense of place manifest itself for residents of York?***

To address objective 1a) associated with the research question, that of exploring the relative salience, in the formation of sense of place, of the "big stories" of place and the "small stories" of embodied encounter with public spaces, I sought first the "big" stories of York in two principal domains: stories from "on high", as told by influential stakeholder bodies, city policy documents, influential writers and so on, and the stories told by ordinary citizens as they stand back and reflect upon their city, for example through their postings on social media. This examination of the big stories of York revealed a sense of place dominated by the enduring strength of the city's identification as a beautiful, heritage city. This identification has at times led to contestation with forces seeking to modernise the city in pursuit of growth and economic prosperity although conservation and economic development objectives are

seen increasingly as walking hand in hand. York's residents identify with and retell this big story of York as a beautiful heritage tourism city. It appears to have a normative function, stifling any other potential understanding of the city, with those minority voices that suggest a different experience of the city being drowned out. At the same time, examination of the postings on the *York Past and Present* Facebook page hinted that, mingled with the individual's identification with the big story of the heritage city of York, lies a concern with his or her particular, specific, locatable life experiences and that this is a salient factor in animating his or her engagement with the city's material landscape.

To collect "small" stories of everyday embodied encounter with the city's public spaces I undertook a series of group mapping exercises and individual "go-alongs". From the resulting small stories, there emerged a very different kind of sense of place characterised not by an "on-high" perspective of York but rather by a diversity of interactions with the singularities that presented themselves in the particular spaces in which the walks took place. They were characterised too by sites of intensities, suggesting an experience of space that is intensive rather than extensive. Described in the language of assemblage, they were virtual as much as actual, a "realm of virtualities" (Dewsbury and Thrift 2005) where sense of place is about what may happen as much as about what has happened already.

Objective 1b) was to engage critically with the question of how "sense of place" operates for individuals within York's public spaces, both the "ordinary" as well as the "iconic". The sense of place that emerges from the encounter with public space, viewed as assemblage, is characterised by lines, connections and relations that have three distinct facets: affective - the sensorial facility of one's body to make affective connections; temporal - involving the comingling of diverse temporal moments, past, present and future; and political - concerning the way that one shares with others, through words and deeds, one's uniqueness and one's potential to begin new things.

Sense of place understood in this way implies being in the midst of these connections, having an openness to be drawn into the heterogeneous assemblage that is the embodied encounter with place, and in so doing, to affect other bodies and to be affected by them. As such, it concerns the

potential for the individual to produce new relations in that space, seeing place as a series of “open potentialities” (Tucker 2012). Seen in this way, sense of place is consistent with how Deleuze understands sense as ‘an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity, at the surface of things’ (Deleuze 1990, p. 19). It links the “events” that take place in space, that is the unique happenings that serve to create new relations between material or discursive entities, with what is to be ‘understood, willed and represented’ (ibid., p. 154) within those happenings. Sense of place thus becomes a destabilising construct constantly pointing to new becomings. It is pre-eminently an opening up of oneself to the potentiality of the encounter with space, exemplifying Deleuze and Guattari’s observation that, ‘One opens the circle a crack ... One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the World, or meld with it’ (1988, pp. 362-363).

**Research Question 2: *How does sense of place impact upon the way residents use the city and engage with its public spaces?***

Continuing an understanding of sense of place as an opening up of oneself to the potentiality of the encounter with space, I argued that the way residents use the city’s spaces can be understood through the concept of the “urban nomad”. The study suggests that, in line with Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of nomadic existences whereby one engages in ‘another way of travelling and moving; proceeding from the middle, through the middle, coming and going rather than starting and finishing’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988, p. 27), the individual, in their use of space, walks a line between sustaining the comforting rhythms of familiar places and remaining connected to life beyond these horizons in order to be able to confront the new (Lorraine 2005). The urban nomad’s sense of place is attuned to an awareness of the potential of place, to its powers to set in motion new becomings.

Objective 2a) associated with this question concerned how sense of place influences propensity to use or not to use particular spaces. I argued that a sense of place attuned to an awareness of the potential of place plays out in a number of distinctive ways with regard to how individuals choose to use public spaces, leading them to seek out spaces where the intensities that arise from the embodied encounter have particular resonance for them in expressing their sense of identity, spaces that facilitate a sense of personal agency, smooth

spaces that release the capacity to start new things, to get a new angle on the city.

Objective 2b) concerned how sense of place influences individuals' engagement with the city's public spaces and their embodied practices in those spaces. In this regard, the study addressed the apparent dichotomy between the homogenous, stable and normative big story of York as the beautiful, heritage city, and the heterogeneous and destabilising sense of place that emerged from the small story of individual embodied encounter with the city's public spaces. It suggested that the urban nomad is fully aware of the big story of York but that, in carrying it into the everyday encounter with space, the individual uses it in a variety of ways as a resource in the working out of their own subjectivity through their encounter with the materiality of the city's public spaces. This may be seen as a form of resistance to the big stories of York whereby the individual critiques them, reterritorialising them according to patterns and rhythms that are imminent to themselves, not allowing them to set the conditions of their existence in this world.

## **11.2 Limitations of the research**

A number of limitations in the research need to be acknowledged. As a case study, the strength of this research lies in the depth and granularity of its focus on the particular setting, in this case the city of York. It cannot be assumed that sense of place will emerge in exactly the same way in other cities, even apparently similar heritage cities. It has been argued above that York people are characterised by a particular attitude to their city (Nuttgens 1976); it is entirely possible that the embodied encounters of residents in other places, especially ones that are not characterised by their beauty or heritage, produce rather different affective flows. Whilst the study's results cannot be assumed to be generalizable, however, the study offers approaches, focussed on lived experience, that might usefully be tested, through research in other cities, to determine their potential to contribute to efforts to build theoretical accounts that "speak" across different types and scales of city, that can 'travel widely, tracking the diverse circulations that shape cities' (Robinson 2006, p. 169). Such research would respond to 'the escalating interest in urban research that

attends more effectively to a world of diverse cities' (McFarlane and Robinson 2012, p. 767) including those in the "global south" (Schindler 2017).

There is some limitation in the study's methodology with regard to the areas of the city that the go-along interviews covered. Whilst there was a good spread over city centre and suburban locations there were no rural or village walks. Whilst the sense of place pursued was distinctively that of the city, it needs to be acknowledged that the administrative boundaries of the city of York include a significant rural area and it would be important in further research to hear the voice of residents living in those areas in order to take them into account in thinking about the future development of the city.

The study set out to capture the experience of those who are normally least likely to contribute to consultation or research exercises. In this, it was only partly successful in that, whilst the group mapping sessions were made up of individuals from "easier-to-ignore" groups, it proved possible to persuade only one individual from these groups to undertake a go-along interview. Finding out why people chose not to be involved in the go-alongs would be of value as part of designing ways to engage more people. It may be, for example, that, if the go-along could successfully be adapted for use with groups, more individuals would feel able to participate.

Finally, it must be acknowledged that the research methodology inevitably produced very broad results. Allowing individual respondents to choose where to walk as well as to choose entirely what they might talk about in response to the very open question of what York means for you: "Your York", resulted in the generation of very diverse data. Whilst this data was extremely rich it meant that the question of how people use public spaces could only be addressed at the level of over-arching principles; it is not possible to drill down to particular spaces or even types of space. This is discussed further below.

### **11.3 The contribution of the research**

In this section, I will consider the significance of the study in terms of its contribution to theory, to methods and to my practice as a local government officer.

### 11.3.1 Theory

The literature reviewed identified the potential of the concept of “affective practice” (Walkerdine 2009; 2010; Wetherell 2012; 2013) as a route to conceptualising sense of place in a way that would have explanatory power for how individuals use the city’s public spaces. The study sought to uncover the “whole unfolding pattern” (Wetherell 2012) of the person-place relationship, viewing those everyday, embodied practices of people using public places as “complexes of activity” (Brown et al. 2009) and using multiple channels of information (Reddy 2001) in order to capture the activity complex within which an experience is embedded. In so doing, the study has elaborated a concept of sense of place capable of accounting for both the immediate, direct, embodied experience of the materiality of place, as well as the social dimensions, the culturally determined understandings and practices including the discourses and the “big stories” that are both constitutive of and constituted by place. Through empirical observation it has shown sense of place at work as “affective practice” and has drawn out the specific components that appear to constitute sense of place in terms of its affective/sensorial, temporal/mnemonic and political dimensions.

The study has connected the concepts of practice and assemblage, leading to an understanding of sense of place as ‘a practice [as] an assemblage for now which draws on past assemblages and influences the shape of future activity’ (Wetherell 2015, p. 148). It has taken seriously the materiality of place within the assemblage, giving due weight to the affective capacity of the cityscape itself. At the same time, it has recognised that residents as embodied actors, engaged in affective practice, are also ‘sentient, bathed in cultural practice like fish in water, usually reflexive, engaged with others in negotiating their worlds, and constantly talking and making sense’ (ibid., p. 152).

The study findings reflect an understanding that everyday life is affective, a shifting assemblage of ‘things that happen’, where affect is felt in the ‘fractious, multiplicitous, and unpredictable’ (Stewart 2007, p. 3). The study has not, however, been content with seeing the affective power of place simply as “unpredictable” but has described and opened up to detailed inspection the “affective circuitry” (DeSilvey 2012) of what it feels like to live in the heritage city

of York. In so doing it has gone beyond the vague descriptions of “affective atmospheres” sometimes found in the literature to demonstrate the way in which atmospheres, understood as assemblage, represent, as Duff (2010) argued, a complex mix of ‘social, material, and affective components, linked together in the sinews of practice, in the materiality of place and finally in the emergent “co-presencing” of bodies, place, and self’ (p. 891).

The study has demonstrated that affect functions in place not so much as a “strange attractor” (Massumi 1992) or a built-in set of programs but rather, as a dynamic process, ‘emergent from a polyphony of intersections and feedbacks, working across body states, registrations and categorizations’ (Wetherell 2015, p. 139), from the interactions and encounters between bodies, human and non-human, where affect is not independent of these bodies but depends on the capability that the bodies possess for allowing themselves to be affected by other bodies. As bodies are defined by their capability to affect or to be affected, so we can see that affects define and constantly constitute and reconstitute bodies (Seyfert 2012). The study has shown that “Affective atmospheres” can now be understood in terms of a description of how sense of place is apprehended in affective practice, how affect is ‘patterned, channelled, and modulated in recurrent and repeatable ways’ (Slaby, Mühlhoff and Wüschner 2019, p. 5).

The unique insight of the study lies in the characteristics of sense of place that emerge as an opening up of oneself to the world, to the potentiality of the encounter with space. Seeing sense of place in terms of “events”, that is, in Deleuzian terms, the unique happenings that both create new relations as well as what is to be understood within those happenings, it casts sense of place as a disrupting concept (Colebrook 2002) constantly pointing to new becomings. It is a concept that can be used to elucidate how and why individuals are drawn to use particular spaces.

### **11.3.2 Methods**

The individual methods used in the study to elicit the small stories of embodied encounter with public space, principally map drawing and go-along interviews, making of field notes and a photographic record were all well-established techniques in the field of place research. Their use together in this study,



however, has created a distinct and powerful set of tools with which to examine the complexities and subtleties involved in person-place relationships where respondents are not able to provide complete explanations of their actions and intentions and it is therefore necessary to gather fragmentary data through a variety of means and from multiple perspectives in order to piece together the small stories of everyday encounter.

The methods used in the study offer the advantage that the research takes place in those everyday places where people go about their everyday lives. In this way, they allow a good deal of control over the research sphere to remain with the respondent rather than requiring them to respond to questions posed by the researcher. As a result, the data is generated primarily through the interaction between the respondent and place, focussing on the respondent's day-to-day activity in, and their affective response to, the places that they choose to visit. The methods are capable of generating and capturing information across multiple channels in order to describe the activity complex surrounding an experience, including both the immediate, embodied experience of place and the affective flows that it produces, as well as the culturally determined understandings and practices. They produce rich data.

Asking the respondents to draw a rough map of what the city means for them: "Your [city]", is a simple but effective way of initiating the embodied encounter with public space. It enables the respondent to do most of the talking, requiring few follow up prompts or questions from the researcher. The map drawing and the walks naturally lead the respondents to talk about themselves and their lives in relation to place; the question is generally taken as an invitation to talk about themselves and their experience of place. In this way, respondents quite naturally bring all kinds of things into assemblage.

This is also a research method that has been shown to be conducive to hearing the voice of ordinary residents, including people who would not ordinarily participate in research. Participants find it fun and enjoy doing it; no technical expertise is required. The group map-drawing sessions are particularly suitable for respondents who do not have sufficient confidence to undertake an individual research encounter.

### **11.3.3 Practice**

My motivation for undertaking this research lay in my role as a council chief officer whose brief over time has included public realm as well as policy areas relating to community engagement and democratic participation. In seeking to understand how sense of place manifests itself in the city, I expected to gain insights into how residents use the city's spaces on an everyday basis as well as wider insights into how sense of place is contested and how residents participate in civic life. In this regard, the study raises some interesting issues. It is perhaps the case that these wider insights are of the most value.

In a narrow sense, it might be considered that the study is of limited practical use with regard to specific answers about how York's residents use the city's public spaces. It does not, for example, offer any predictive tools with regard to the specific sites that residents want to use. It does not suggest that sense of place is stronger or better in any way in any particular kind of location. For example, it does not suggest that the city centre is privileged by residents over suburban or other locations. It does not even suggest that the city's heritage sites are any more or less important to the individual's sense of place than any other urban site. It does not suggest that if public spaces were improved in such and such a way particular benefits would accrue. In deriving sense of place from the unique assemblages of each individual embodied encounter with the city it is only possible to say that individuals use those spaces that offer the greatest potential to them in their own, unique, creative becomings. Individual sites are significant only in the way that they are drawn into assemblage with the individual. It is the assemblage itself that is significant: no inherent or fixed meaning resides in the site itself; the same site will create quite different effects in assemblage with different individuals. It has to be recognised that sense of place derived in this way becomes so singular and so shifting as to be useless for the purpose of making predictions across a population about how a particular type of space will be used.

The practical benefits of the study lie at a slightly deeper level. I turn back to the question posed in the thesis title "Different cities, different stories?" (Furness 2014). The original question, posed in the title of this book of "alternative histories" of York, was perhaps intended to be rhetorical but, to the extent that it

hints at there being two Yorks, the heritage one commodified for consumption and the everyday one found in the hurly burly of its streets, this study answers it with a firm “no”: we do not see a case of “the city and the city” (Miéville 2010) where one manifestation of the city is superimposed on the other. Rather, we see that York’s residents strongly identify with York as a beautiful, heritage city; they own this identity and are overwhelmingly positive about it. Looking back to the anxiety expressed in the city narrative project that ‘the 2019 perception of York and what it offers is out of kilter with the day to day experience of living [in] ... the city’ and that ‘the reality of York is overwhelmed by its heritage tourism image’ (City of York Council 2019 d, p. 55), the study goes some way to allaying these fears: there is no sense in the data that individuals were in any way “overwhelmed” by York’s heritage.

If there is no dissonance in residents’ minds between the city’s heritage and the experience of their daily lives there are, nonetheless, potential implications arising from the study for how the council might engage residents in conversations about the future development of the city’s spaces. These arise from the insight that, whilst there are no parts of the city that residents apparently do not like or do not want to use (which is of itself clearly good news for the city), as they engage positively with its spaces they do so on terms that do not necessarily accord with the “official”, “intended” meaning or purpose of those spaces particularly as accorded by their heritage status. The study shows that whilst residents identify with the city’s heritage they are not particularly reverential about it; they do not put it on a pedestal. The city’s heritage is important to them to the extent that they are able to draw it into assemblage with the particular, specific, locatable life experiences that are core to the development of their individual subjectivity.

The implication of the foregoing is that particular sites have peculiar and unpredictable significance for individuals. It cannot be assumed that the meaning of a site for residents can be derived from its heritage status, from the terms of its inscription in the National Heritage List for England, for example. By the same token, residents may ascribe something akin to heritage status to sites that do not have that official designation, sites that are important to them because of the longevity and continuity of their cultural significance, even though they do not feature in the “authorised heritage discourse” (Smith 2006).

This finding resonated for me with an incident that occurred during the study whereby, in my council role, I removed a redundant 1980s fountain from the city centre without undertaking any prior consultation. The loud voices of protest that were raised (letters to the paper, etc.) took me by surprise; after all, it had long been broken, was ugly and obviously obstructing the street. It became clear, however, from the comments section of the local press website that, for many residents, it was very much part of their cultural heritage and that its significance for them was not in its function as a fountain but as a city centre rendezvous point for meeting up with friends and family.

A further related implication that arises for the city council is the need to move beyond a mind-set that might be considered somewhat city-centric. Whilst the big stories of York are essentially stories of the historic core of the city, primarily set within the city walls, the study suggests that, in their everyday embodied experience of the city, residents do not privilege the city centre over, for example, their home areas. There is a popular perception, again often expressed in the letters pages of the local press, that much of the council's investment in the city, particularly in the public realm, is made in the city centre. For residents, this is unlikely to fit with investing in those things that will make most difference to the quality of their experience of the city. Again, this insight from the study resonates with and helps to explain a particular incident that occurred whilst the study was in progress whereby the council, in repaving one of the city's historic squares, ran into significant criticism, with a petition mounted against it. Although the work was carried out to the highest standard, residents apparently preferred the old worn paving to the shiny new replacement. The smartening up was characterised by one resident commentator as 'removing memories and connections with the past (our roots)' (York Stories 2013) and by many as a waste of money, even a "vanity project" (York Mix 2015).

The study's conceptualisation of a sense of place as assemblage with affective, temporal and political dimensions suggests that the "ingredients" that constitute it are multiple and the relationship between those ingredients complex. Above all, it suggests that material and human considerations are brought into relation and that both categories are equally important to sense of place. This points to a rather more holistic way of thinking about issues concerning the future

development of the city where affective, temporal/mnemonic and political dimensions are consciously held together. That is very different to how councils typically engage with their residents. Firstly, the human and material dimensions tend to be held separately: in simple organisational terms, they are the responsibility of different directorates. The directorate responsible for “place” will lead on consultations about the fabric of the city. Typically, these will concern the utility of a proposed development, the particular elements that residents would like to see built and the functions that they should provide. Other directorates lead on person centred issues concerning, for example, residents’ health and wellbeing, financial inclusion, or community cohesion. The task of creating public spaces that work well for a broad range of citizens is notoriously uncertain (Koch and Latham 2013). This study suggests that one way forward for the local authority to address this uncertainty will be to talk to residents more holistically about their experience of the city and the factors that would determine its future ability to improve the quality of their lives.

The study also points up the value of embodied methods in engaging residents in discussion about the city. It has shown that residents behave differently as “sedentary subjects”, standing back to view the city (or, more likely, sitting down to answer consultation questions) than they do as “nomadic subjects” engaging directly with the city’s spaces. As the former, they are more likely to enter into assemblage with the big story of York as the beautiful, heritage city, an assemblage that tends to be narrow in view, focussing only on the fabric of the city, and conservative in nature, resisting change and reinforcing continuity. As the latter, the assemblages that emerge are diverse and holistic, combining the material and the human, productive of new beginnings, more likely perhaps to generate fresh insights, new ideas and ways forward. In particular, the study has demonstrated the potential of mapping and walking techniques to hear the voices of those whose voices would not normally be heard, those who would not normally participate in council consultation exercises.

York has already gone some way towards developing more holistic and more embodied engagement methods through the development of the My Castle Gateway approach (My Castle Gateway 2020) (with equivalents for other development sites). These aim to engage residents in a sustained conversation over time, in a particular space, aiming to build a “public sphere” through

collaborative inquiry. They are widely recognised to have had success in generating sophisticated public debate about complex issues through a shared sense of exploration involving many different perspectives. This study suggests the need to go further and to have conversations more routinely with residents, not just around new development sites but at the hyper-local level. Currently, at ward level, debate is focussed on the typical “doorstep” issues of potholes, anti-social behaviour and the like. The study suggests a route to holding open conversations with residents about their areas in dimensions that are more likely to reveal salient issues.

Just as there is an argument for having more holistic conversations with residents about the city, so the study points to the desirability of having a more joined up approach to policy development. Policy concerning the big story of York, that is concerning heritage, tends to be contained within a conservation context, for example in principles contained in the Local Plan which include ‘conserv[ing] and enhance[ing] the existing historic character of York City Centre’ (City of York Council 2018, p. 33). The study suggests that the benefits to residents of the city’s heritage lie in more than merely its preservation. It could be argued that the big story of York needs to be taken off its pedestal, to be treated not as an end in itself, but as one means of furthering quality of life in the city. Perhaps the city today needs to respond to the heritage story of York in the way that the corporation did to Sir Thomas Widdrington in the 1660s, pushing it back in order to focus on more immediately pressing concerns. A heritage strategy that focusses more on residents, interacting with, learning about and caring for the city’s heritage might be called for. Although such a heritage strategy was talked about in the council as long ago as 2008 it has never been delivered.

#### **11.4 Concluding remarks**

To conclude, I return to the opening question, “different cities, different stories?” to argue that a successful city, that is one that people enjoy living in, will be characterised not by a disconnect between its big and its small stories but rather by the ease with which its residents are able to meld the two. For the resident, the big stories of place facilitate the territorialisation of milieus and comforting rhythms that create a home (Lorraine 2005) whilst, at the same time,

constituting a resource that can be reterritorialised in small stories of new becomings, improvisations, launchings forth. Such reterritorialisations depend on spaces where new and unexpected connections can be made with old memories, spaces where many elements can freely come together, spaces in which to dream.

Whereas the local authority has, arguably, traditionally understood its place-shaping role primarily in terms of curating the big stories of place or, in York's terms, shaping a city narrative, in order to enshrine and protect the city's identity, its focus should perhaps turn to facilitating its citizens in creating their own, individual, small stories. This might entail a greater focus on the needs of individual residents in all their diversity. It suggests placing less emphasis on defining and conserving what is deemed significant in heritage terms and being more preoccupied with issues such as enabling access to the city, making it more affordable and more physically accessible, enabling easy movement between its various areas and quarters, and facilitating a freedom to roam. Above all, it will mean a more granular focus on individual spaces and the particular meanings that residents attach to them. This will mean understanding their "affective atmospheres", how affect flows within them through the sensorial, temporal and political elements that are brought into assemblage.

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## Appendices

To return to Chapter 1: [click here](#)

## Appendix 1: Background to the City of York

### BRIEFING FOR KRISTIANSAND GUESTS

#### Background to the City of York



#### History

- York is a historic walled city and the county town of Yorkshire in the north east of England
- Founded by the Romans in 71 AD, there is evidence of settlements earlier than 7,000 BC and the city has seen Saxons, Vikings, kings and emperors rule over its lands
- For the Romans, York was the capital of northern England, as it was for Vikings, Normans and throughout the medieval period. The former importance of the city as a centre for administration and power continues through the presence of the Archbishop of York
- York grew as a major wool trading centre in the Middle Ages, before transitioning to an important hub on the national railway network
- It was also a major confectionary manufacturing centre
- Figures from history colour our heritage, including:
  - Guy Fawkes was born in York and planned the Gunpowder Plot
  - Infamous highwayman Dick Turpin, who was executed in York in 1739
  - George Hudson, the 'Railway King', and modern day figures such as;
  - actress Dame Judi Dench was born in York

#### Population, employment and the economy

- As of 2017 the population of York was 208,163, with 137,593 citizens of working age (age 16-64), equivalent to 66.1% of the population



• 15.7% are aged 0-15.

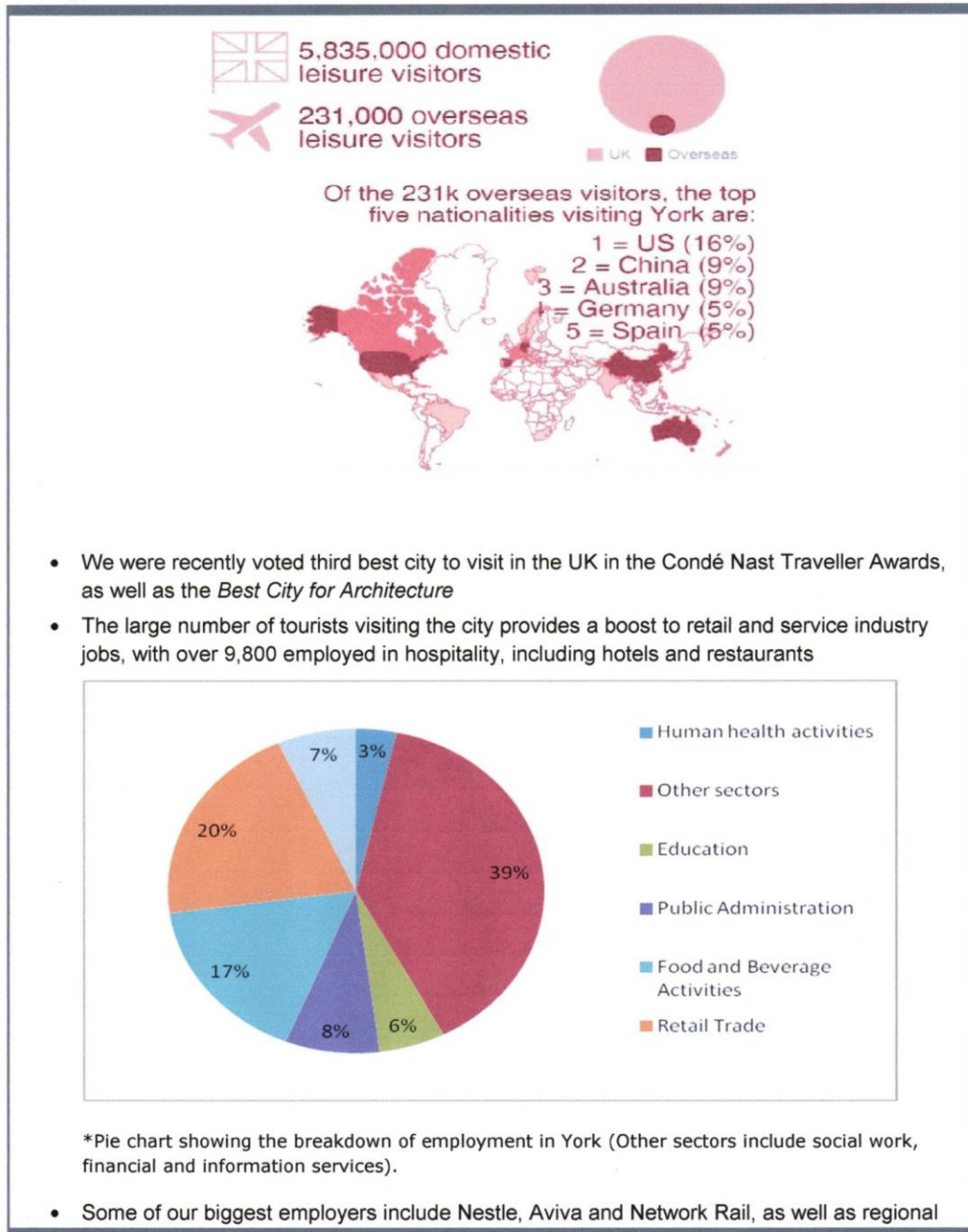


66.1% are aged 16-64.



18.2% are aged 65+.

- The York economy had an output of £4.8 billion in 2016, having grown £134 million on the previous year
- Tourism provides a huge boost to the York economy, with the city welcoming 6.9million visitors per annum who spend £564 million per year, and supports 19,000 jobs in the city
- The city welcomes over 231,000 overseas leisure visitors each year





businesses such as Betty's and Taylors of Harrogate

- Over 1,100 people are employed in cultural activities such as libraries, museums and other tourist attractions including theatres
- More than 23% of people are employed in hospitals, council sectors, and the universities

### **Education**

The quality of our education provision is something of which we are immensely proud, and is reflected by the fact that York is the place of choice for study for students from across the globe.

- York has two Universities: the highly regarded University of York, a Russell Group establishment, rated as 'world leading', with 18,000+ students; and York St. John which is over 175 years old, has a student population of more than 6,500 and is growing in popularity each year
- There are 70 local council schools with over 24,000 pupils in the Council's area, and our college academic attainment levels consistently rival the best in the country
- Askham Bryan College specialises in agriculture and land-based education and is constantly investing in the latest technology in order to offer their students the best learning experience. They have recently announced a £670,000 investment in a digital learning hub, including a robotic milking machine and new digital classroom
- Our population is well qualified, with 16.6% qualified up to A Level, which is the highest in the region and 13<sup>th</sup> nationally. 32.4% of the population held qualifications at Level 4
- Our education sector alone provides employment for nearly 7,000 people in York, with over 4,500 of these being employed by the universities

### **Arts and Culture**

- York is renowned for its heritage, and arts and culture, as reflected in our UNESCO World Heritage status, but we also an increasing presence in the digital and technology industries. We offer something for everyone
- There are numerous museums, theatres and attractions, as well as a thriving live music scene and an Art Gallery showing internationally prestigious exhibits
- Over the Summer we have hosted the hugely popular Shakespeare's Rose Theatre, a faithful reconstruction of the original, with three of the Bard's major works for the public to see
- We attract visitors from across the world to the York Mystery Plays, hold annual festivals such as the Jorvik Viking Festival and the York Food and Drink Festival, and for a few days each year, we are home to some of the country's best comedians at the Great Yorkshire Fringe
- We are proud to have the country's longest serving pantomime dame!

## **Appendix 2: *York Past and Present* coding grid**

### **The post**

Date:

Caption (as given by the poster):

### **The photograph**

Historic or recently taken: Old / New

Whether contains people: No / Yes / Formally posed

Whether of a specific event: Yes / No

Subject: Landscape / Streetscape / Housing or home /  
Technologies

Location: City Centre / Suburban

### **Number of emojis assigned by community members**

- Likes:
- Loves:
- Sad / ha-ha / angry:
- Wows:
- Total:

### **Categorisation of comments by community members - whether:**

- Generic
- Seeking clarification
- Aesthetic commentary
- Emotive response
- Contributing personal memory
- Providing geographical information
- Total comments

### **My field note reflections on the posting and comments:**



To return to Chapter 3: [click here](#)

### Appendix 3: Sample annotated transcript

██████████ 29 November, 2017

██████████ lives in ██████████. She is retired and was coming in to York for her Adult Education class in the afternoon. She moved away from York for 2 short periods, the second time when she went to ██████████. She is York born and bred.  
The day was bright and cheery although there was a flurry of snow as we set off.

#### Map drawing:

██████████ started with the rivers commenting that the '68 flood was very bad. She was at ██████████ School at the time. Now there are flood barriers. She remembers seeing the cattle pens on the city wall and cattle being driven down Hull Road. She remembers the arches being built on the front of the Theatre Royal. Her Dad was knocked off his bike outside there and had to draw a map to illustrate the accident. The flood came right up to the 6<sup>th</sup> form common room.

At Kings Manor they had dances in the basement. There were low ceilings. This was 71-73. It was groovy! She saw Status Quo ██████████.

She was Finance Officer ██████████. She used to use the swimming pool there.

Commented that she didn't mark any shops. "There are too many shops".

Stuff to the left she commented, "I don't know what's beyond there".

She worked for ██████████ – Mrs ██████████.

Lunchtimes were very important. You could walk into the gardens of Treasurer's House, or Holy Trinity Goodramgate, or Museum Gardens.

She has always been interested in history. She went on a free guided walk in '69 or '71 and it took in churches. She remembers the atmosphere of the churches, the stained glass.

There were a lot of pop concerts. Mott the Hoople played in Museum Gardens.

She remembers the Assembly Rooms. They seemed almost derelict, but they had occasional dances. It was fine because it was largely dark so you couldn't really see the building.

It's hard to keep up with changes.

She had a series of strokes (as had her mother). It's hard to get into York if you're not fit. They need to allow some traffic back in.

Snickets: she can navigate Goodramgate one way but not the other because of the way it has changed. She doesn't like Gillygate when it's busy because of the fumes.

The Minster is important because it's so old and beautiful. For ██████████ it's a benchmark for cathedrals. It's light and airy. She only realised her feelings for the Minster in her 30s when she heard about the fire. She was really upset. (She was living in ██████████ at the time).

**Transcript:**

[redacted] laughs at the sight of the swirling snow]

Oh, that was badly timed wasn't it?

I like to walk that way through Museum Gardens ... because I also remember, they were doing something over here - these were still Council offices ... and ... erm ... I don't know what was there - oh, I think they were doing something to the walls ... the old city walls - and they - there was a dreadful accident and some men, some workmen got killed ... they were buried under the walls; so, if we go across there ... I normally just race across - I don't follow! [laughs]. So, I think about them every time I walk over there.

Charlie: What era was that?

Late sixties.

Fitting through there, erm, 'cause there's also the bit behind the library in the St Leonard's hospice area ... erm, that was always a good lunch spot as well, because there were benches there, and again not many people knew about it so you could have a nice quiet sit down and there was the odd Roman coffin to look at ... erm ... it's pretty much as it was. I like this [unintelligible] ... yes, this one here. Erm ... I like to think of all the history that's gone on as I walk round York, erm ... My own history as well ... you know, Henry VIII coming here, and ... and I just like looking at the bricks and the stones, erm ... that sort of thing means a lot, I don't know why.

Shall we nip through there; I haven't been that way in a while ...

Charlie: Would you say you are observant about places and buildings?

Well, I like to look at them but when I'm doing things you don't really notice, you know. Like I said about - I've still got old York, York as it was in my head, rather than as it is now. It's hard to - it's the same with Clifton Moor: in my childhood I used to play there, my friend and I used to cycle out to feed the horses on the old airfield. And it's taken years for

Palpable sense of excitement and animation setting off - [redacted] is keen to get going, walking with marked energy. I feel anxious about the cold and the threat of the weather. Also the struggle to keep up with [redacted] pace.

We look across to Exhibition Square. [redacted] starts to run into the road and hurriedly returns to avoid getting run over as there is no possibility of making it! Seems like she wants to dominate the environment.

We cross and go down the side of King's Manor. Possible theme of not many people knowing about something?

Pointing here - at the scene of the accident.

Theme of York's history and her history inter-twining.

Talks about specific bricks (heard that before!).

Going through the Multangular Tower. Quick, darting movements. Feels like a tactical kind of manoeuvre to navigate the narrowness of the path. Energised body language.

Specifically acknowledging that the picture before her is not what I'm seeing but a construct in her mind.

<p>me to get to grips with it's not like that anymore.</p> <p>Oh, we can't get that way anymore - sorry about this!</p> <p>[puzzling over padlocked gate]</p> <p>Charlie: Tell me a bit more about the landscape being shaped by what you did there, isn't it?</p> <p>Yes, very much so ... erm ... yes ... err ... And sort of because I'm familiar with it, erm, it's not until it sort of brought [unintelligible] into me that it registers that it's changed. You know, like with Cox's: I won't forget now: they've closed. I mean, a lot of the time you're dodging tourists ... although it hasn't been as bad this year: I think it's been a poor year for tourists. And it's only really - I love the walks back after [redacted] class cos at the moment it's dusk, the lights are coming up - the Hospitium used to flood - you know in '68 it came up there - and it's just beautiful isn't it - St Mary's abbey ... I love it.</p> <p>Charlie: This was one of your lunch spots was it?</p> <p>Yes, that was another one. [laughs] erm ... And the Observatory there, that was derelict or over-grown, as I zoomed through to school and back, erm ... and of course it's now functioning again which is nice, erm ...</p> <p>Charlie: Look at the M being used for an E in the sign!</p> <p>On my route through to school - as I got older I would walk to the bus stop in Merchantgate - erm ... the area that's now the car park behind St Olave's church hall then was still full of terraced houses - erm ... and there was the sweetshop on the corner which was well patronised by a lot of our pupils, but not by me, [unintelligible], erm ... and er ... I always the bit through the Museum Gardens. That's what I enjoy leaving [redacted] class because I normally [unintelligible] and I like looking at the trees and the way the sun comes through them and, err ... it's a pleasant area. And then I come along here, and I think about, erm ... the leather shop that is no more - I'm living in the past, aren't I?! [laughs] Oh dear! erm ... Used to be there, there was a err, coffee shop: I think it was called the Acropolis, erm ... I</p>	<p>Trying to get down the side of the Library. Evident frustration – disbelief even at not being able to get through.</p> <p>Walking back.</p> <p>At the junction in the path by the Yorkshire Museum.</p> <p>It's been quite a good year in fact. Check myself from correcting her. Wonder what she bases her judgement on.</p> <p>Evident emotional intensity here.</p> <p>Returns to flooding. Part of intertwining of history. Also, negotiating the city.</p> <p>Takes a real effort to get [redacted] to see this. Seems like she doesn't really see the gardens in the present. She seems to be in a world of her own at this point - seeing the gardens in a past era.</p> <p>Some element of regret in this anecdote but it is hard to interpret it.</p> <p>Evident emotional intensity.</p> <p>Uncertainty in the voice – broken speech - seems like she can't necessarily account for her thoughts</p>
--	---

<p>porcine fountain had gone]</p> <p>Charlie: There's one.</p> <p>Oh, well done! You know this Oscars used to be a, some kind of non-conformist hall, wasn't it? And all the bricks of course have got the initials on of the benefactors.</p> <p>[Thanks].</p>	<p>A pig.</p>
---	---------------

As I retrace the route of the go-along I'm struck that it a tour of snickleways – I hadn't

This was a really enjoyable walk for me. It was affecting and ██████ enthusiasm was infectious. At the same time it was puzzling at times: I couldn't always exactly grasp why ██████ mentioned particular things or really understand the significance for her of the things she mentioned. My pleasure in it was my own, distinct from her experience which I couldn't really share.

Sheer sense of pleasure at the physical engagement with the city. Running in the road!

The places on the map are all sites of events. Or sites with significant affective capacity.

The affective capacity of the city, e.g. site where the workmen were killed. There's a lot about feelings. There are some really vivid images summoned up, especially the feel of the dance halls, the darkness, the low ceilings, the music and how "groovy" it all was. The sound of the music, especially the Widor.

The atmosphere of the city, especially the evocation of the stained glass windows in the churches and the Minster.

A lot about food and lunch in particular.

The thing about the bricks again. What bricks?

Links history of York – that sort of thing means a lot; I don't know why - and "my history" that she likes to think of as she walks around.

Wanting to nip through gaps:

We don't really go to any distinct places on this walk. I am taken to spots or spaces that are all ways of getting around – they're all on the way. But not really on the way to anywhere! It's in these spaces that all the interesting things come up.

The interesting things are all about significant events in her life, not the city per se.

The photos shows high walls and narrow passageways, hidden and largely deserted spots with very few people in the picture. There is not a single view of any of York's usual landmark attractions.

She likes to navigate the city in unconventional ways – she doesn't want to be constrained by the normal conventions of moving around or using the city.

Picture in her head of York as it was.

Places to have lunch.

So, even this walk, which is designed to show me things, is not really looking at things in the present - material entities. Rather, they are showing me the "in-between" of significant happenings.

brings into assemblage:

- The agency of the city as it floods. And as it physically changes and develops – both in the longer-term and in the immediate: seasonally and daily.
- The places on the map are all sites of events. Or sites with significant affective capacity
- The thing about the bricks again. What bricks?
- Her dad being knocked off his bike and having to draw a map to illustrate the accident

The presence of smooth spaces:

- The snickleways - Mum would always dive down them - a suddenly you disappear from the street.
- Gaps that you can nip through.
- Places that not many people know about where you could have a nice quiet sit down

The presence of striated spaces:

- Changes to the layout of the city making it hard to navigate.
- Changes by the council restricting what used to happen.
- A series of strokes – makes it hard to get into York.
- Being blocked by places being locked-up.

**The affective:**

Sheer sense of pleasure at the physical engagement with the city. Running in the road!

The affective capacity of the site where the workmen were killed.

Places to have lunch.

Dances in the King's Manor basement with its low ceilings.

Pop concerts.

The sun in the trees in Museum Gardens after the class.

Her feelings about the Minster (on hearing about the fire)

**The Mnemonic:**

Picture in her head of York as it was.

Links history of York – that sort of thing means a lot; I don't know why - and "my history" that she likes to think of as she walks around.

Points out a mixture of things she remembers and earlier things, e.g. Rowntree's shop.

A history walk she took in 69 or 71.

The workmen who were killed.

The sweetshop.

**Events:**

Being confronted with the reality of change, e.g. a shop no longer being there.

Being stopped by the researcher.

**Territorialising:**

York as it was.

The Acropolis which had an exotic tinge to it because York was a very white town.

## **Appendices 4 to 23: Visual representations of the go-alongs**

To return to Chapter 3: [click here](#)



# APPENDIX 4: DEBRA

To return to Chapter 5: [click here](#), to Chapter 7: [click here](#)

Intergenerational

warm, friendly ↓

The Hub "What's stopping you opening it?" Masie

"Ruth's idea"



BT workman/  
lorries/noise

Excitement of  
new flat

"3 miles from York isn't it?"

Youth Club "not safe"  
Broken promises

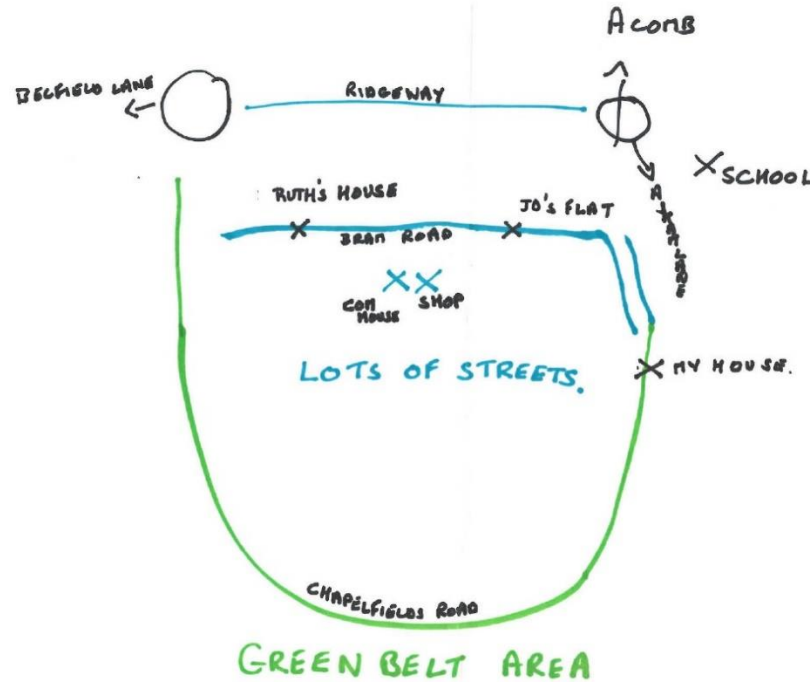
Clean up day  
involvement

↑ 20 years on the committee

The new shop - independence  
Chair for "God knows how many years"



Looking down  
Tapping stick  
Spraying dog dirt  
Passing litter



Empty windows  
Pre-payment meters  
Money tight  
Independence

Few activists



Quiet streets - fortunate  
"Quite a nice area"  
Like a village



Passing a house with an overgrown garden  
but not noticing |  
Looking the other way

Walking slowly, meeting people -  
stopping, chatting: only person some will  
have spoken to

"Clannish"  
"Bit of a village"

Several generations:  
"Can't be that bad  
living here"

No longer "Ted's wife"

Subsidence  
Rat-run  
Wheelbarrows in chimney

Debra 9/11/17



# APPENDIX 5: MICHELLE

To return to Chapter 5: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



City Screen: An amusing experience followed by the pleasure of emerging into Museum Gardens



Immersed in history



The "famous King's Arms". Place of social life

Ducks & geese; "people of all sorts". Site of burger van



"Calming" river. PLace to read

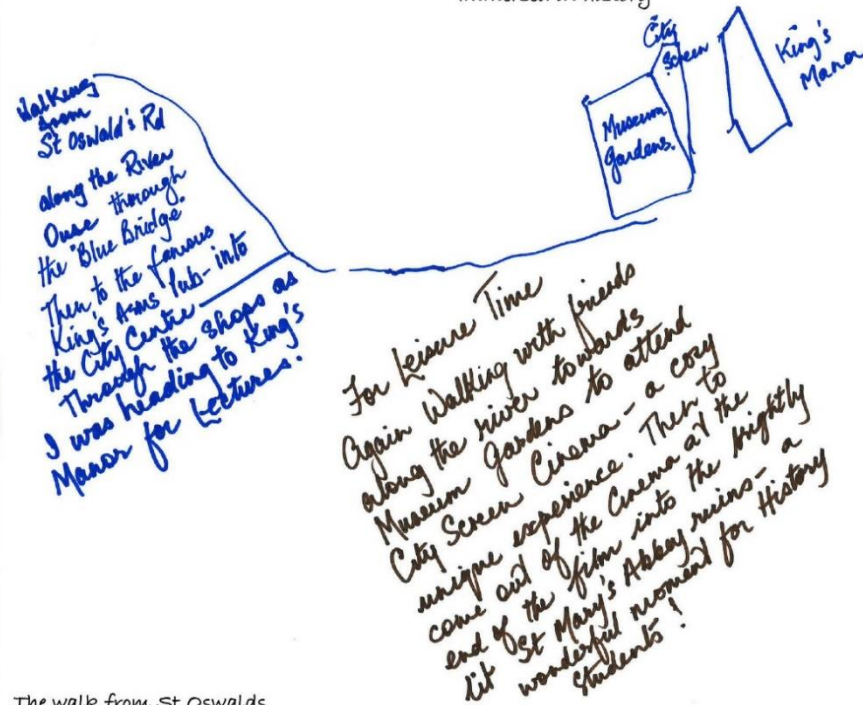


Flooding was an ever present risk but, at the same time unexpected

Fascination; A central point to "look out and dream!"



The plaques - spotted on a uni history walk. The content didn't seem the main attraction



The walk from St Oswalds



# APPENDIX 6: LOUISE

To return to Chapter 5: [click here](#)



A member of the co-op. part of "putting down roots"



Inside/outside the walls: "wallies", the enclave, shield from noise.

Where the noise dies away



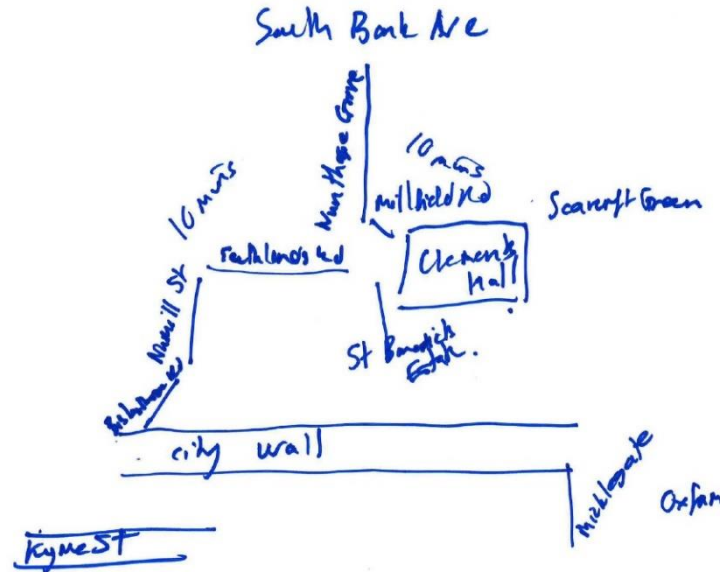
An area that "matters very much to me"



The brown front door. A nice ouse to live but not for sale. A safe place but subject to the tourist gaze



The world outside the walls



A place of meeting: life changing



The mixed area - still working - industrial - a particular attraction

Golden Ball Pub

Birmingham car park

city centre



The old guy on the corner

Louise 29/3/18



# APPENDIX 7: BRIAN

To return to Chapter 5: [click here](#), to Chapter 7: [click here](#)



The former school playing field. Site of dog walking, exercise, sociability

The real substance of Brian's York: solid, tangible

He sees past, present and future in this one scene



A working class landscape where middle class people don't really fit; don't get it right



↑  
This landscape practically invisible  
we're away talking about N. American natives  
↓

SEVENTH AVE X  
BUS TO  
STONEHAWK  
  
USED TO LIVE IN  
WESTFIELD PLACE  
ALOMB  
  
ADAMS HYDRAULICS  
  
FISH & CHIPS

The final photo should have been of the community centre set in its green space



Brian talks of family and equalities. There's a struggle evident between past and present realities

Talk is of interactivity though the landscape belies this



Coping - with loss, etc

Brian 18/12/17



# APPENDIX 8: PHILIP

To return to Chapter 5: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



The ingenious polytunnel with its hoops and its watering system. v hot in there

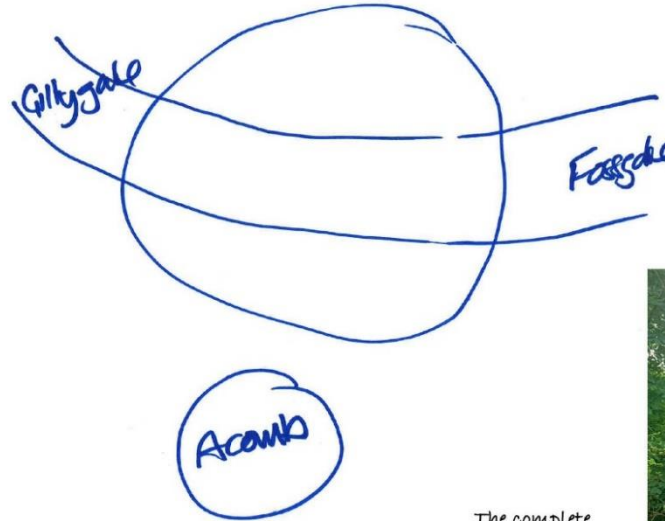
The neighbouring plots with all the knowledge of the "old guys" who work them. The mysteries of the plots



The "second" plot. All the Mare's Tail at the back. The membrane underneath



The Meadows - "really proud of it." Beautiful, peace, quiet, loud bird song



The secret garden. Quirkiness - social events - a fire, lights



Trees bought to commemorate someone. Tree to a "special lady"



The complete leisure amenity: You can build and be creative.

Proud of the place



We'd like to think it might be a time capsule



Fairly wild but "It looks nice doesn't it?" We look at the plots but we look more at the wilderness. Place to have a bottle of beer at the end of a hard day's digging and take it all in for a bit



The amazing plot of an "amazing person"



Dave

Philip 31/5/18



# APPENDIX 9: JULIA

To return to Chapter 8: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



"Aesthetically it is yuck" Didn't feel at all like that as we walked along. A deprived area being in it is safe in some way



"The ability to cycle" Issues of safety

"Like Dante's version of Hell?" In fact a sense of freedom



A landscape deliberately and actively "reconnoitered". Not to be scared in, to expand the thinking



Landscape in "your toolbox" Similar to landscapes of childhood, resonating with childhood games



Exploring the landscape as an exploration of self: of being honest, open and transparent



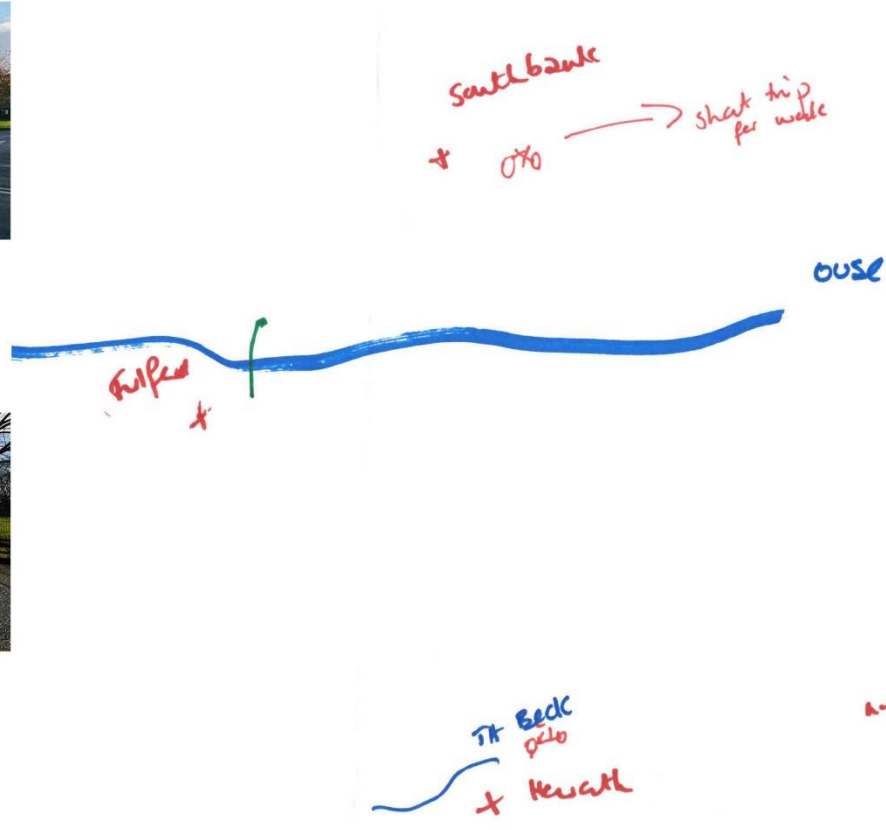
The end of the walk. emerging into a different landscape: bungalow land - drab, claustrophobic



A landscape so much cleaner and nicer than expected. Connected: age & people type & internationally



The recognition that people react differently to the same landscape feature based on their biographical experience



# APPENDIX 10: BARBARA

To return to Chapter 8: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



"Embeddedness". Looming large; dominates our vision throughout. Friendly, encompassing but also "other"



Eclectic gathering but has its ways and its regulars wh guard them

An easy walk, slow, relaxed. Not looking at anything in particular. Good humour, sunshine



An entry way. Simple: a point to cycle though



The typically excellent independent shop



Explore: comfortable, easy-going, "home" territory



Peace & quiet. The former need for the "alternative" is no more

Barbara 16/4/18



# APPENDIX 11: LAYA

To return to Chapter 6: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



More objects strictly for show: close up, vibrant, but real?



A space to cross. Little engagement with the fabric of the Minster. We pass it by.



A city of shop fronts. Hard to say what is actually being sold. In the end the fabric of the city is not that important



The Art Gallery - distant and remote



Facing "nothingness"



Food again. First time we pause to really look at the surroundings



The city as experiences or shop windows

Just a place to get from one interesting place to another



The end point and one of reflection and summing up



Our starting point. I'm struck by the fact I have never noticed this place or those around it. It's nice enough - the design on the Cappuccino is impressive, the customers trendy but in the end it's quite anonymous

Places I have never noticed



Do people really queue up here as Laya alleges?

Laya 23/1/18



APPENDIX 12: KAREN

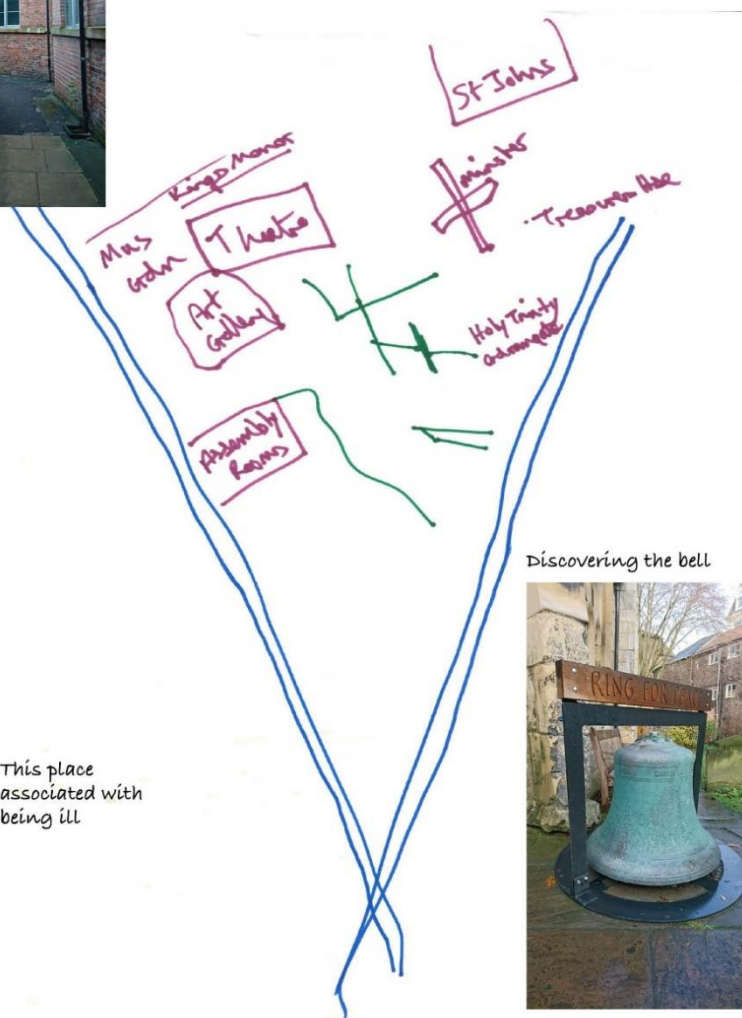
To return to Chapter 6: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



Seeing the past, not what's here now



This place associated with being ill



Discovering the bell



The story of the crushed workman



The walk was from snicket to snicket  
The snickleways feel private, forbidding,  
even threatening - but for Karen quite  
different: this place is "groovy!"



### APPENDIX 13: SUZY

To return to Chapter 6: [click here](#)

The playground. About creating community. Also driving improvement and order



A nice "quiet area." Easy to get to and fro to school without having to cross roads



Returning with the wood on our left



"Some kind of stone"



What might seem seem a dull, flat landscape is transformed by the loud sound of the stabilizers into an exciting place of adventure



The wood is a place to perform, with endless possibilities

Better that it's been tamed with its neat paths, etc. Still has risks



APPENDIX 14: BOB

To return to Chapter 7: [click here](#), to Chapter 10.7.2: [click here](#), to Chapter 10.8: [click here](#)



Site of former office - vivid memories of colleagues and the satisfaction of work that was self-directed



Where the water of the floods lapped up to. Themes of caring, the role of the council. Uncomfortable



Where once there were shops: community - Dai Prosser's fish & chips etc

The working class heartland  
Place of employment

Shared memories of a good work place

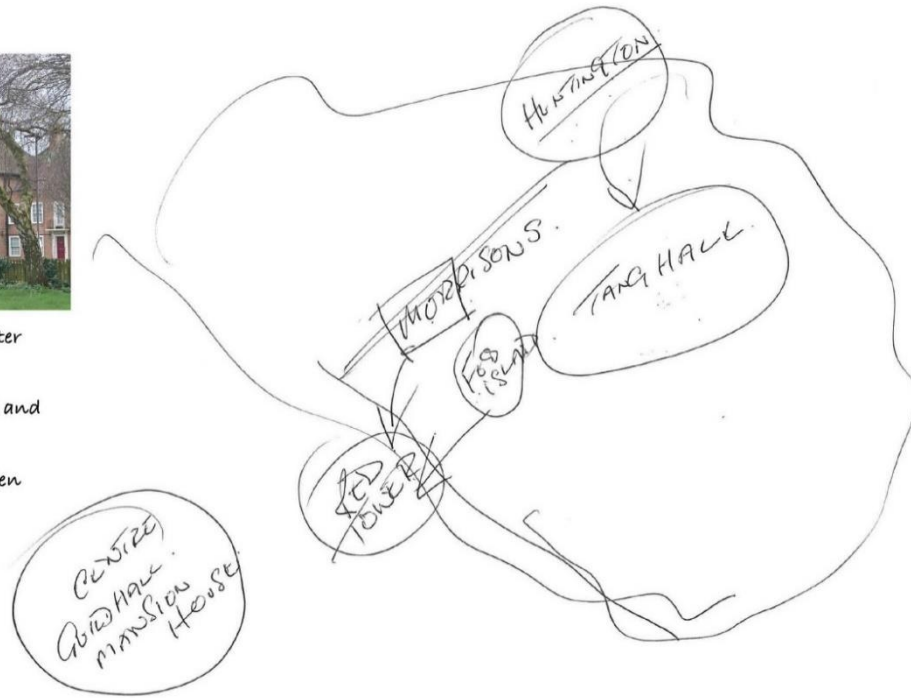
Huntington added for completeness at the last moment



The Red Tower - an important but later circle

A link to the historic core: civic pride and agency

Wanting it to be for the locals - hidden behind austere windows



How the landscape has changed; progress, convenience and agency



Site of former work



APPENDIX 15: MICHAEL

To return to Chapter 7: [click here](#), to Chapter 10: [click here](#)



←  
Recreating a (much better) photo that illustrates the importance of looking up!



Victorian pillars? Admiration but uncertainty



A good place to go with a camera - really?

Tombs. Age - time - continuity



A barred way - shouldn't be allowed



The uncovered building with its technological marvels



The technologies of repair fascinate here

The low entrance to Coffee Yard. Scene of an anecdote and more technological interest



Recreating a favourite photo; A hidden space. Is of use/purpose. The two smokers are absent. Technologies important here (beam)



The technology of this building was its fascination. Also, its hidden nature



A hidden space to be uncovered

Michael 9/3/18

APPENDIX 16: TONY

To return Chapter 10.7.4: [click here](#), to Chapter 10.8: [click here](#)



The scene of the "Lady telephonists"



Where the guides gathered - and co-existed with the homeless - the "customer" facing work place

• Pappleton Rd. Memorial Hall.  
Drama group (now defunct)  
Trustee. 1981 →

1971-2  
• Gillygate no 8  
bed sit.

1980 →  
• Windmill Rise

Part time work.  
• Barbican steward.  
• CYC Cycle Fed. trainer.  
Open top bus guide

1968-71  
• East Mount Road. Digs

Riding Light Theatre.  
John Cooper Theatre  
YTR (Studio)  
J.R. Theatre Crew 2017 →

National Railway Museum  
Info. Point Volunteer.

Holgate Windmill.

Cycling. Campaigning.  
- Cycling UK  
- York Cycle Campaign.



The story of the proposed underground toilets



The moat between the walls - the tourist guide mode



A prime corner for the open-top bus. And where former colleagues played their joke



The bit of Roman wall exposed by the Victorians: another tourist guide bit



Home to the Yorkshire Hussars - and past drama performances



APPENDIX 17: PATRICIA

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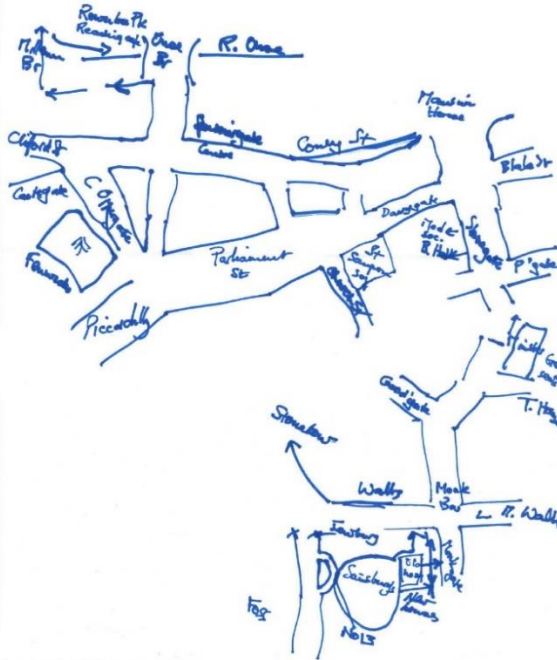
Utility again. Rubbish collection in the morning

The streets are "nice"

Important for tourists



Amazing enthusiasm for this sign - a connection to the past - her granny



These seem to be such drab streets. I don't understand why Patricia has chosen them



Funny old place? Hard to see why



Sainsbury's is a useful place: super-market & entrance to the city

Trying to interpret the landscape: make sense of it according to some set of rules?

A nice "quiet space"

We are pausing at this vista. Why?! Apparently it fits in well. hard to share her enthusiasm



We move quickly through this space. I struggle to connect with it



Patricia has a sense of the significance of this landscape but it is just out of reach



Ambulances

Patricia 10/11/17



APPENDIX 18: SUSAN

To return to Chapter 10: [click here](#)

Interesting things inside



Colour of the stone



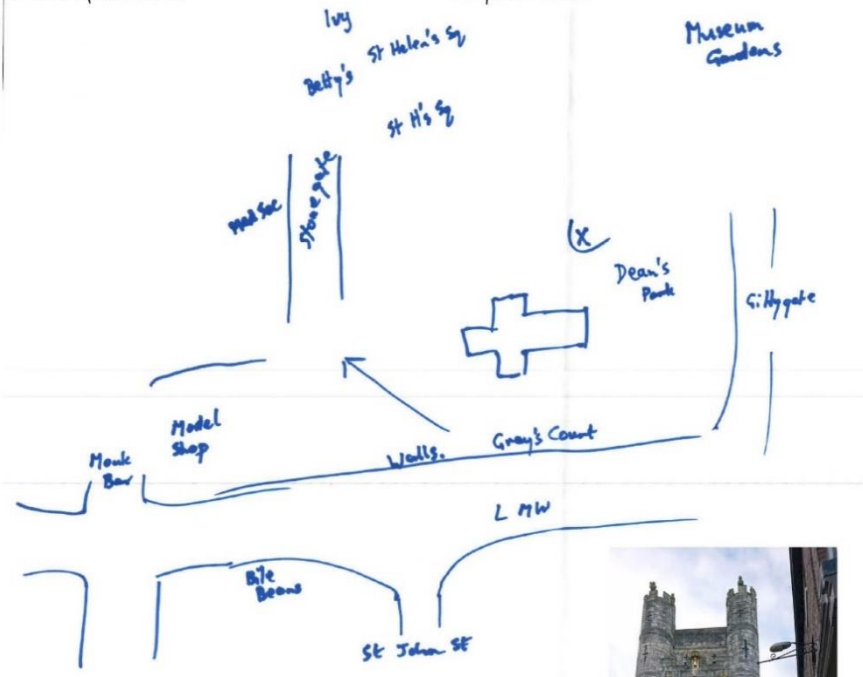
Proposal bench



Novelty of the tinsel



The corner where her niece was killed



Wedding reception/  
work links/  
TV story



Susan 5/1/18

### APPENDIX 19: DAVID

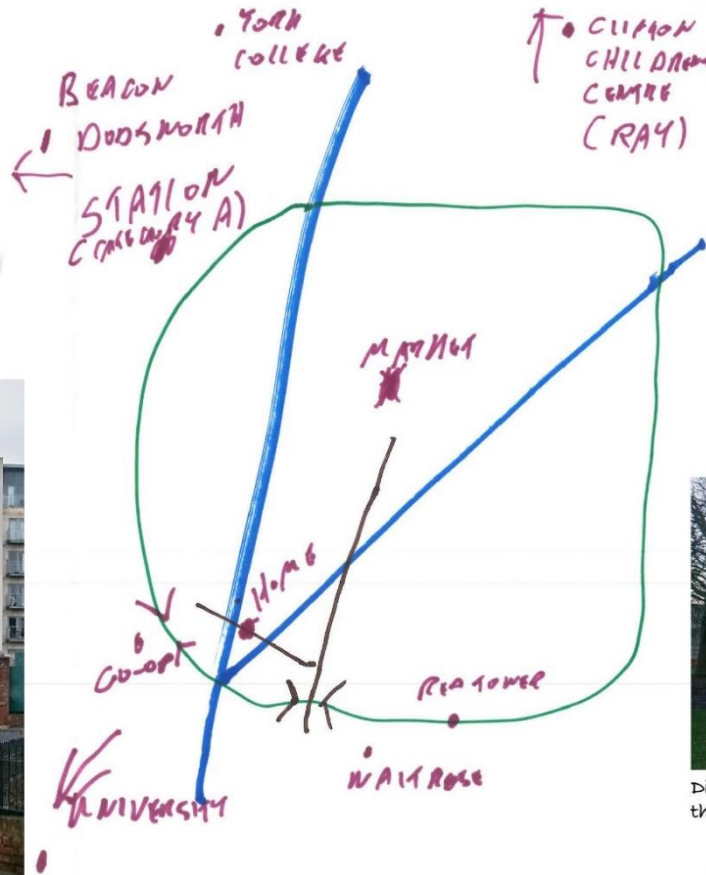
To return to the Table of Contents: [click here](#)



Social housing: a model in many ways



Peace for concerts



The new bridge and looking onto Hiscock's where the CIC has its board meetings



Distribution point for aterials during the Boxing Day floods



APPENDIX 20: KEITH & REBECCA

To return to Chapter 7: [click here](#)



Holiday atmosphere. Groups of French tourists. Feeling that we should join them. The city as an "escape", a tour, a play park, Westworld



A source of repeated delight and wonder. Anticipation of coming back for a whole day to see the latest exhibition. "Friends of". Not just about participating and getting a good deal but "supporting"



The "usual" route to the shops

REAL STATION  
RAILWAY (MST  
CINEMA)

Public  
R/ from  
H/ stands

Not  
Barbican



A shop where the goods don't live up to expectation/stand comparison even though they look good

UNI  
←

RESTAURANTS  
PARLIAMENT ST  
(CELESTINE'S)  
CONEY ST  
CINEMA

YORKS MUSEUM  
MUSEUM GARDENS

LIBRARY



Knowledge acquisition (albeit hazy) doesn't matter as it's learning for pleasure

WALLS MONSTER

THEATRE

ART GALLERY



The fountain: a meeting point. Shame to be taken out (but subject to abuse)



The first time we are actually looking at (& feeling) our surroundings



A moment to draw breath & enjoy but also brings to mind the two anxieties about living in York

Keith and Rebecca 11/5/18



# APPENDIX 21: JASON

To return to Chapter 10: [click here](#)

Swimming lessons/  
roller blading party  
Weekend family  
activity  
A comfortable,  
known place  
School



A route  
through  
A known  
route but  
now fenced  
off



Connections  
of family  
and family  
activities  
& specific  
activities in  
the park



A place to put jumpers down



A multi-sport location



Community facilities/childhood memory

*Sikh of horse*  
*York University playing fields*  
*Hornstead park*  
*City centre*  
*Rawtrees park*  
*Ruffale*  
*York R1 badminton*  
*West Bank park*  
*Energise*  
*York R1 football*



"Lot of stuff going on I suppose" and you see a lot of people doing all sorts of things



The trees and the beck that were the childhood shortcut. Standing on the touchline



Running, cycle paths, half marathon. Sport



Where granddad died. A key route from Foxwood

Childhood home streets



The place for family parties

Jason 3/6/18

# APPENDIX 22: HIBA

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A safe place/sanctuary/community



Former council-owned industrial site. In the flood plain

Connected by flooding to other countries

Connected by immigration



The irrationally narrow road

### Good things about York

- Most people are kind
- Good shopping centres
- Schools performance ok.
- Welcoming refugees
- Most people are ok to live with other ethnic minority
- Libraries
- 

### things we could improve

- Buses and their timetable
- More Housing
- Road are bad /traffic
- NHS/problems
- No good cycles roads
- Very expensive to have dogs out
- Teach children to be kind to each other
- Sewage water smells (Kawehite)
- Public services need improvement
- Roundabouts.
- Parking at city centre
- Recycling during winter (m green bins)



A landscape to be yourself in



# APPENDIX 23: SALLY

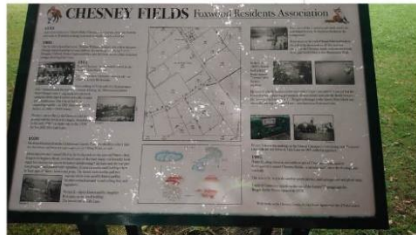
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Where the water stands. Trees as a solution. Trees as community action



The trees! Will they thrive? The unknown people who break them



Pinning it down. Still not 100% accurate but still a breakthrough  
It looks nice!



Chesney's Field. Multi-layered past. Place of questions, slips, uncertain connections.



The bushes that get back when the housing association is contacted to cut them back. They're "not too bad"



The garden. It looks very good but to Sally is only "tidy"



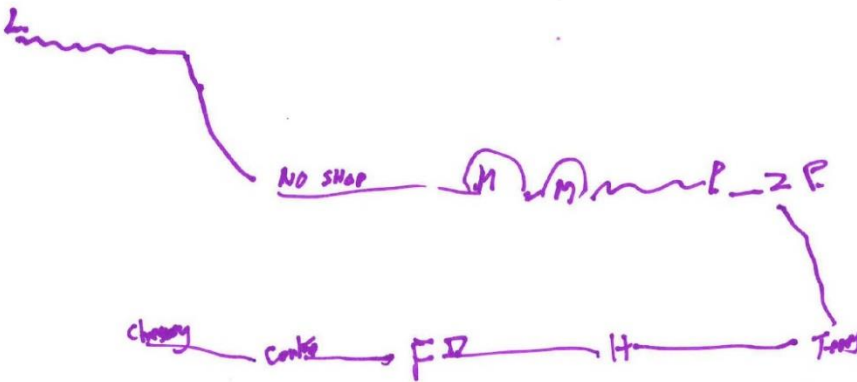
Making it nice for other people



Relationship with the school and with the police



Where "Good Gym" come



"It's not a bad place to live"



Colour: People keeping their gardens nice; wanting to be nice



"It's not a bad area to live; I mean, they are nice houses"

Sally 15/8/18