

Woollying the Boundaries:
Perceptions of, and Interventions
into, Upland Sheep Farming in
Wales

Artistic and interdisciplinary methodological
approaches to rural research

PhD Thesis

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I feel most alive on the back of the quad bike,
grazed by the knife-edge of a North Easterly wind.
The rain pierces my skin with slivers of silver shards
as I cradle the lifeless body of a lamb,
whose glazed-over eyes tell me
what I am not.

DECLARATION

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed (candidate)

Date

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where ***correction services** have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s).

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references.
A bibliography is appended.

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Summary

This thesis uses an interdisciplinary methodological approach including art practice, ethnography and autoethnography as a way of examining the relationship between a farming family and their upland sheep farm in mid- Wales. It draws on the ethnographic methods of ‘participant observation’ and ‘fieldwork’ and the translative and transformative potential of artistic practice as means of exploring the working lives and culture of my research participants. My research enquires into the potential of interdisciplinary practice as a useful tool for investigating and giving time/space and voice to the lay discourses of my rural participants.

The research participants are also my immediate family members: there is therefore an autobiographical element to this project. To what extent does an ‘insider’ status allow for a more complex or distinct type of engagement with the lives of my research participants?

The thesis includes three practical experiments and three reflective chapters. It is important to note that each chapter and practical experiment has been guided by the fieldwork, and as a result, the chapters are distinct and different in approach and content from one another. The constant in each experiment is connection to the fieldwork. It might be useful to note that there is some overlap between Chapter 3/Experiment 3 and some of the other experiments and chapters of the thesis.

Chapter 1 and Experiment 1 focus on place and its importance within my research participants lives; drawing on the critical work of Tim Ingold (2000), Doreen Massey (1999, 2005) and Yi Fu Tuan (1974, 1977, 1996) amongst others.

Chapter 2 and Experiment 2 consider contemporary archaeology in relation to the farm; concentrating on the remains of agricultural labour and an acknowledgement that the past and the present intermingle on a daily basis. This chapter draws on the work of Tim Edensor (2005), Henry Lefebvre (2004) and scholars writing from the field of contemporary archaeology.

Chapter 3 looks specifically at the relationship between the research participants and their flock of Welsh Mountain sheep, paying particular attention to the curation of both human and animal bloodlines. This chapter draws on the work of Donna Haraway (2008), M.L Ryder (1964, 1983), Sarah Franklin (2007), and Rhoda Wilkie (2010).

The thesis includes two photographic books. One evidences the fieldwork and contains specifically chosen photographs from my documentation and their corresponding fieldwork notes. When referring in the body of the thesis to the fieldwork photo-book, it will be numbered as Book 1. The second photographic book contains documentation of the artistic practice including photographic images and 3 DVD’s. When referring to this book in the body of the thesis, it will be numbered as Book 2.

The thesis seeks to explore the lay discourses of my farming participants; drawing on their expertise and knowledge ‘in the field’; the ‘everydayness’, the ordinary and the mundane are all of importance here; it is through these, I contend, that we are able to understand who we are in relation to our place in the world.

Chronology of the research project.

From October 2009-March 2010, I undertook reading around my subject area, designed my project and wrote a literature review. Between March and June 2010, I conducted five consecutive days of fieldwork per month. The fieldwork was documented in photographs and a fieldwork notebook. I found that five consecutive days of fieldwork meant that I wasn't getting a clear overview of the working year, and therefore changed this to one day a week during my second year of study.

From June 2010-September 2010, I worked on the creation of my first artistic experiment.

26th of September 2010: public showing of Experiment 1 – *The Only Places We Ever Knew*. Between September 2010-January 2012, I wrote Chapter 1 and reflected on the practical experiment.

October 2010- October 2011: year in abeyance on maternity leave.

Between January 2012-January 2013, I conducted fieldwork on one day per week. I worked on Experiment 2 – *Ode to Perdurance*. Between May and July 2012, I wrote Chapter 2 and a reflection on practical Experiment 2.

In 2012, I also conducted fieldwork at the Welsh Mountain Sheep Society open day in September and at the autumnal ram sales in October as preparation for writing case studies on these events in Chapter 3.

Between January 2013-June 2013, I conducted one day of fieldwork per week. I attended a two-day sheep shearing course in June. Between June-September 2013, I worked on Experiment 3 – *Dear Mick Jagger...* Between September-January 2013, I wrote Chapter 3 and reflected on Experiment 3.

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This thesis is dedicated to my grandmother's Lilian Jones and Rose Wylde: their strength and perseverance never fails to inspire and motivate me.

Woollying the Boundaries: Perceptions of, and Interventions into, Upland Sheep Farming in Wales

Artistic and interdisciplinary methodological approaches to rural
research

Ffion Jones

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Introduction

1. Objective

This practice-led research enquiry aims to work with place-specific lay discourses of rurality, that is ‘people's everyday interpretations of rural places and ideas of the rural’ (Jones, 1995:35). The thesis concerns itself with the lay discourses of a specific group of people, those of a farming family; concentrating on the experiences and issues that surround farming in a time of uncertainty and change in rural environments.

The thesis explores the relationship between a farming family and their upland sheep farm in mid Wales. It has been my intention to investigate whether an artistic and interdisciplinary methodology has the potential to fill the void or bridge the gap between traditional models of academic research and the lay discourses of rurality within a farming context. The project relies on the accumulative possibilities of using ‘participant observation’ and ‘fieldwork’ (see pages 34-39 for definitions) as a way of collating and then reflecting and transforming the everyday experiences of the farm through artistic practices.

The term ‘lay’ within Owain Jones’s formulation is used to separate the specific conceptual underpinnings of rural spaces from others such as popular/cultural discourses (including art, literature, media etc) or professional discourses (such as those of governance) (ibid.). Within the context of this thesis ‘lay’ does not denote a lack of expertise, but instead alludes to an expertise gained through an informal apprenticeship (rather than through i.e. a professional qualification within a recognised institute). As Jones further suggests ‘Lay discourses are uniquely person, group and place based. Within these locations they take shifting pragmatic, contingent partial forms.’ (p.40). The lay discourses of the rural that I am exploring belong specifically to people working within a farming context; I argue that these

discourses are place and people specific and based on expert knowledges embodied in an ongoing relationship with the farm where they live and work.

1.1 Rurality/Countryside

The snow blew out to sea. I shivered as I read *Country Visions* (P. Cloke ed., 2003); the mug of tea by my side growing cold as the wind howled through the window. I heard the front door slam and Ioan's voice bellowed up the stairs for my assistance. He shouted at me to hurry up; his voice reverberated as it skimmed over the pine floor and I heard the end of his sentence, muffled by the shuffling of his nylon overalls. I ran down the stairs and he handed me a lamb. "The crows had him, and another one. I had to put the other one down."

"Go and wash its arsehole," he said crankily, as I cradled the weak lamb in my arms, blood dripping from the side of its mouth and from its bottom. Gently, I carried the lamb to the bathroom and placed an old towel down on top of the slate floor. Whilst filling the sink with water, I went to look for a cloth so that I could clean away any stubborn congealed blood. I held the lamb's body gently as I lowered his bottom and back legs into the water. The water turned pink, marbled with dark red. He made a sound, a weak, barely audible yet agonized bleat. I lifted him out and with the cloth, I dabbed gently at his wounds. I lifted up his tiny tail and saw that the damage was too much: his anus had been ripped out. The gaping hole, dark and red would be too much for this lamb to survive. With my right hand, I gently opened his mouth, his tongue had been torn out, and his tiny mouth was full of blood, mucous and pain. I wrapped his small, dying body up in the towel, held him to me so that my

body warmth would penetrate his cold flesh; I warmed him until I heard Ioan return, then handed the lamb to him so that he could break its neck.

I went back to my reading, distracted, angry and sad. Where was this version of rurality to be found in *Country Visions* (ibid.) and other academic literature? Where was such experience documented/revealed in the cultural representations of rurality?

In the wake of a number of British agri-business related health crises such as Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) – ‘First recognised and defined in the United Kingdom in November 1986’ (see DEFRA, 2011), the Foot and Mouth epidemic of 2001, and more recently the ‘horsemeat scandal’ (see BBC, 2013), there has been a renewed public interest in country life, food production and agricultural practices. With farming being subsidised from the public purse, it is understandable that the general public have a vested interest in how the countryside is run, and how their money is being used. With this renewed scrutiny, there has been a proliferation of media representations of farming, especially within British television programming such as *River Cottage* (Baring, 1999), *A farmer's life for me* (Burton, 2010), *Victorian Farm* (Elliot, 2009), *Jimmy's Farm* (IMDb, 2004), *Countryfile* (McTaggart, 2011) and *My Dream Farm* (Richardson, 2010). Some of these representations tend to be fairly inaccurate in their reflection of farm life, some even verging on the ridiculous. Many belittle, or make light of the real experiences of farming. Most of these programmes are aimed at people outside of the agricultural sector; satisfying an urban craving for the ‘good life’ (Bunce, 2003: 15). The popularised cultural constructions of farming and the proliferation of agri-tourism in recent years has turned the countryside into as much a space of consumption as a space of production; with visitors seeking leisure activities and a taste of the rural idyll (p.24). The voices of farmers within these popularised constructions of rurality are fairly uncommon, which furthers myths of an idyllic pastoralism within public consciousness.

1.2 The imposition of academic discourses.

In the early 1990s there was considerable discussion and criticism of the power relations between academic discourses of rurality and lay discourses or lay narratives of the rural (see Cloke, 2006; Cloke et. al., 1994; Hoggart, 1990; Jones, 1995; Murdoch and Pratt, 1993; Philo, 1992; Philo, 1993). The general contention was that academic discourses that looked specifically at rurality tended to impose themselves onto the lay discourse, that is, the everyday knowledge, practices and belief systems of rural actors. Owain Jones (1995) acknowledges the power relations between the two discourses, and suggests that academics should reflect on their own interpretations, categorisations and conceptualisation of the rural. Jones explains that because of the chaotic, inconsistent and ambivalent nature of lay discourses, it is very difficult for academics to use them in their unadulterated form (pp. 35-36) (This may be because lay discourses are so varied and numerous, and because there is no one single concept of what or where the rural is). Jones discusses how the cultural turn within the social sciences has been concerned with reasserting the ‘legitimacy of this “local knowledge” against that of the generalizing, universalizing, modernist constructions of academic knowledge’ (ibid.).

He highlights the ways in which the two discourses are different in nature, and is critical about the way that the one can sometimes impose itself on the other, noting that ‘such sweeping, almost patronising generalizations, lacking any hint of the agents’ own voices, illustrate the dangers of imposing blanket like academic discourses onto all the “otherness” of individual and local constructions and reconstructions of the rural’ (p.41). But Jones also states that academics may even have internalised lay discourses, which frame, or make their way into their academic work, and that ‘lay discourses are at once part of the object of study and the study approach. Academic perspectives must take account of the relationships between other discourses and their own embroilment with them’ (p.40). Jones draws our

attention to the nature of rurality and to the complexities that are involved in making any claims about what the rural is, and where the rural is. It is clear that care and sensitivity is needed when working with lay discourses at an academic level, and that 'definitions of the rural must incorporate bottom-up, descriptive, narrative approaches, which draw on lay discourses, as well as the top down, theoretical, explanatory approaches which have normally dominated' (p.47). Although I agree with Jones's sentiment here, I also feel that it would be more useful within the context of this practice as research project to consider such discourses to be in a parallel, rather than hierarchical relationship with one another (not only academic and lay, but also professional and popular). My hope is to be able to elide these parallel discourses, to work with the friction between them, and to bridge the gaps that ostensibly keep them apart. Paul Cloke reiterates Jones' sentiment when he suggests that a methodological approach which involves a two-way translation process, inter-connecting the 'voiced and otherwise represented experiences, attitudes and meanings of rural people with the processes of academic conceptualisation, as well as translating academic concepts into more widely understandable languages' (2006: 185).

Since the initial emergence of questions about such power relations, there have been considerable changes within the field of human geography, especially within the sub-discipline of rural studies. There has been a shift from research that looks at farming as the main rural activity: to consider marginal rural identities and practices, representations of rurality, the 'rural idyll', changes in rurality, the non-human, and the use of non-representational theories and methodologies such as Actor Network Theory (ANT). I will not review this literature here as Carol Morris and Nick Evans complete a thorough review in their article 'Agricultural turns, geographical turns: retrospect and prospect' (2004). What is important to note, however, is how the cultural turn within human geography has allowed for a diverse and creative opening-up of the discipline to different methodological approaches:

approaches that favour qualitative rather than quantitative research have implications for the field, as researchers are forced to recognise not only the voices of their subjects, but also how their own subjectivity is a part of, and not separate from their research enquiry (p.95).

Reflexive and self-reflexive modes of writing have proliferated within human geography and its sub-disciplines, which again recognises the power structures of any given research project and the implications of the self in such work. These research practices often utilise an anthropological, ethnographic or autoethnographic approach which relies on ‘participant observation’ and/or ‘fieldwork’ for gathering qualitative data (see Bye, 2009; Carolan, 2008; Cloke, 1994; Cloke et. al., 1994; Convery et. al., 2005; DeSilvey, 2012; Edensor, 2005; Edensor, (ed.) 2010; Fitzsimmons and Goodman, 1998; Gray, 1998; Gray, 1999; Gregson, 2005; Holloway, 2001; Holloway, 2002; Holloway, 2005; Holloway, 2007; Lorimer, 2006; Milbourne, 2003; Riley, 2009; Saugeres, 2002; Scotta et. al., 2004; Wylie, 2005; Yarwood and Evans, 1998).

Although the shift towards interdisciplinary approaches and a rethinking of the rural to consider other perspectives has addressed the criticisms of the early 1990's – that rural studies failed to look at marginal lay discourses of rurality, such as poverty, difference/ otherness, non humans – one could argue that this has marginalised cultural perspectives on farming itself. There is thus a degree of shortfall in the representations of the lay discourses of farming populations within academic disciplines, and this is something that my research aims to address. There are of course exemplary examples of academic research (mainly using empirical methodologies or a combination of both empirical and quantitative approaches), these tend to incorporate lay discourses into the body of the academic text (see Bailey and Biggs 2012; Convery et. al., 2005; Gray, 1998; Gray, 1999; Scotta et. al., 2004; Wilkie, 2005; Wilkie, 2010). But few write extensively about the daily, mundane, durational aspect of farming, and hardly anyone writes from a personal perspective and experience.

The ones that are the most successful, I suggest, are those that balance the voices of lay experts (farmers), governmental policy and academic discourses. There is also evidence within some of these research projects of immersive and medium/long durational encounters with the research participants/research field; and I would suggest that this is of considerable importance. If we take up Paul Cloke's recommendation that rural research should be conducted from the inside-out, and from the outside-in (2006: 21), and Owain Jones's assertion that 'definitions of the rural must incorporate bottom-up, descriptive, narrative approaches, which draw on lay discourses, as well as the top down, theoretical, explanatory approaches which have normally dominated' (1995: 47), then *artistic practice* in combination with ethnographic and self reflexive autoethnographic practices could present an appropriate methodological approach, because both enable an engagement with lay discourse and narratives, and both have the possibility of opening up unique spaces of dialogue; working in the gaps between parallel discourses. Artistic practice has considerable potential for co-authorship, and for distanciation and abstraction – for allowing breathing space between participants and their experiences, for translating complex experience into alternative, experiential forms of representation and dissemination.

1.3 Artistic practice and the 'anthropological turn'

It has been claimed that just as human geography has undergone a 'cultural turn', contemporary art has undergone an 'anthropological turn' (see Foster 1995; Desai 2002; Schneider and Wright (eds.) 2006a; Schneider 2008). Since the early 1970's, a number of artists have become interested in their biographies as sources for their work:

...artists like Christian Boltanski, Nikolaus Lang, and Anne and Patrick Poirier started to conceive of their work as a kind of private, non-academic research into their own lives and those of others, including non-western societies, past and present. One of the main devices they employ is the collection, rearrangement and fictive production of traces of human activities in the widest sense. Both the systematic way of (re)constructing traces and the mimicry of their scientific classification make the work of these artists fundamentally different from earlier experiments. (Schneider, 1993: 3)

Much of these artists' work challenges the way that anthropology treats its participating culture as 'other'; the 'othering' nature of the anthropological endeavour is problematic, and it is this that artists working with such narratives seek to critique. Some of the art works cited above critique the way that anthropological artefacts, when exhibited within Western museum spaces are stripped of their context, their modes of use, and use-value: they became aestheticised and reduced to 'art' (Schneider, 1993: 4). These artistic developments went largely unacknowledged by anthropology; and in terms of creative anthropological methodologies, these were 'relegated to a historical pantheon of established 'maverick' anthropologists (such as Michael Leris, Gregory Bateson, and Jean Rouch)' (Schneider and Wright, 2006b: 3). There was some effort during the 1980's to challenge the anthropological text, which led to it being 'subjected to a self-reflexive critique' (ibid.). And there was some development within the discipline with the emergence of the sub-discipline of visual anthropology and visual ethnography which should have been enough to encourage new creative anthropological approaches but, as Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright argue in *Contemporary Art And Anthropology*, visual anthropology has not particularly challenged the anthropologic monologue as it serves 'auxiliary functions to the ethnographic text' (2006: 23): visual anthropology/ethnography is rarely concerned with creativity or finding new ways of working with anthropological narratives. The use of the visual within such approaches is as a method of expanded fieldwork, where the qualitative data is gathered and disseminated through visual means rather than solely through the ethnographic text; it is not an aesthetic endeavour (ibid.). There has been suggestion that the preference for film is 'because it can

constrain the visual within temporal and narrative structures, in contrast with still images which allow ‘too many meanings’ (p.8). It seems therefore that visual anthropology/ethnography chooses to ignore its creative possibilities in favour of a parallel practice similar to that of traditional anthropology.

Schneider and Wright ‘argue for a consideration of anthropological theory and practice, and not just in “visual anthropology” or the “anthropology of art”, would benefit from a consideration of art practices and these in turn could learn much from further dialogues with anthropology. Both disciplines share certain questions, areas of investigation and, increasingly, methodologies, and there is growing recognition and acceptance that these areas overlap’ (p.3). They also suggest that the boundary between art and anthropology has never been particularly rigid, and refer to an envy between the disciplines that Hal Foster discusses in *The Artist as Ethnographer* (1995: 304). Schneider and Wright suggest that there has been a certain degree of ‘hostility on both sides, reflecting an anxiety of interdisciplinarity, which is perhaps also a product of the often blurred nature of the borders’ (2006: 3). I suggest that in cognate disciplines such as human geography and performance studies, there has already been an openness towards other methodological approaches, but this has not apparently happened within anthropology itself. The authors’ main argument is ‘that anthropology’s iconophobia and self-imposed restriction of visual expression to text-based models needs to be overcome by a critical engagement with a range of material and sensual practices in the contemporary arts’ (p.4). Although I agree that contemporary art has the potential to further anthropological practice and methodologies, I am concerned that inappropriate appropriations of anthropological methodologies by artists might serve to further hegemonic discourses, and ‘other’ their participating culture/people. Hal Foster is also critical of the nature of artists’ pseudo-ethnographic methodologies:

Site of artistic transformation is the site of political transformation, and, more, that this site is always located *elsewhere*, in the field of the other: in the productivist model, with the social other, the exploited proletariat; in the quasi-anthropological model, with the cultural other, the oppressed postcolonial subaltern, or subcultural. Second, there is the assumption that this other is always *outside*, and, more, that this alterity is the primary point of subversion of dominant culture. Third, there is the assumption that if the invoked artist is *not* perceived as socially and/or culturally other, he or she has but *limited* access to this transformative alterity, and, more, that if he or she *is* perceived as other, he or she has *automatic* access to it. Taken together, these three assumptions lead to another point of connection with the Benjamin account of the author as producer: the danger for the artist as ethnographer, of “ideological patronage”. (Foster 1995, pp. 302-303)

Foster feels strongly that pseudo-ethnographic arts practice does not do enough to subvert or challenge the anthropological or ethnographic paradigm, suggesting that ‘Often this realist assumption is compounded by a *primitivist fantasy* that the other has access to primal psychic and social processes from which the white petit bourgeois subject is blocked’ (p.303). Thus the artist-ethnographer, just like the conventional anthropologist could have a problematic and patronising relationship with the culture he or she studies/makes art work with or about. He also feels that although artists might have good intentions when utilising an ethnographic methodology, their artistic outputs may be ‘recoded by its sponsors as social outreach, economic development, public relations...or art’ (ibid.). The pseudo-ethnographer could also assume a role that could end up promoting a ‘presumption of ethnographic authority as much as a questioning of it, as evasion of institutional critique as often as an elaboration of it’ (p.306). Foster gives an imaginary example of an ethnological-artistic project where the artist spends very little time with the participating group/culture, has little or no engagement with participant observation, and ends up making work which is exhibited in a museum. He observes: ‘Almost naturally the focus wanders from collaborative investigation to “ethnographic self-fashioning”, in which the artist is not decentred so much as the other is fashioned in artistic guise’ (ibid.). Therefore, for artists to appropriate such methodologies, they ought to understand the inherent risks involved, and understand too, the differences

between good and bad practices and what such artistic outputs might be doing for the participating group; this does not necessarily mean that such methodological approaches cannot be used, but ought to be used parallel to a self-reflexive practice. Schneider and Wright further suggest that:

Anthropology has no monopoly on fieldwork and artists appropriate and make use of what are frequently assumed to be anthropological tools to produce a diverse range of works. Despite scepticism about threats to “artistic freedom”, these fieldworks by artists demonstrate that a consideration of anthropological issues can be productive. Both artists and anthropologists play with distance and intimacy – an intimacy that is the currency of the fieldwork – and both now overtly place themselves between their audiences and the world. (Schneider and Wright, 2006b: 16)

The authors refer to the work of Bill Viola and the way that Viola does not create solely aesthetic art-work, ‘but works which “think well”...Art is treated here as a form of knowledge not aesthetics, and the questions his work addresses are not always answerable through discursive explanation’ (ibid.). They also suggest that ‘Artists are “engaged”, as opposed to the “dis-engagement” of anthropologists who are concerned with maintaining the “objective” distance of scientists’ (p.24). If artistic labour has the potential to “think” and artists are engaged with the world they work within, then it seems fair to suggest that artists are capable of pursuing an anthropological enquiry or at the very least able to work sensitively with anthropological and ethnographic methodologies.

Schneider and Wright refer to artists working with ethnographies, such as Lothar Baumgarten, Gillian Wearing, Martha Rosler (see p.15). The edited collection *Contemporary Art And Anthropology* also refers to the works of Susan Hiller (who is a trained anthropologist but became disillusioned with the practice of anthropology in the 1960’s) (see Robinson, 2006); Abdel Hernández; a Cuban artist who works with the rural communities in Cuba (see Calzadilla and George E, 2006); Dave Lewis, a photographer who is interested in critiquing the depiction of race within anthropological collections (see Schneider and Wright,

2006b); Rainer Wittenborn; who has worked collaboratively with the Cree people of Northern Quebec in order to explore the ‘impact that a large-scale Canadian government hydro-electric scheme on the environment and the local Cree people’ (p.130); Rimer Cardillo; who’s work (which is concerned with the indigenous population of his native Uruguay) ‘shows a kind of ‘material empathy’ to the products of the other’ (p.140); Nikolaus Lang, who’s work with Australian aboriginal populations is of particular interest, because, for me at least, it both critiques disciplinary attitudes by drawing attention to how past anthropological research misunderstood the Aboriginal culture, but at the same time, sits uneasily with me as it attempts to claim-back the Aboriginal culture in a fashion that borders on condescension.

...*Your Eyes, My Eyes - Tindale’s Legacy (1988/91)*, which is based on plaster casts of a Pitjandjara man taken by anthropologist N.B. Tindale in 1933 at Ernabella mission station. The taking of such cast violates Pitjandjara beliefs that identity is extinguished at death. Lang consulted tribal representatives and the work is dedicated to the seven tribes of the Flinders Ranges. From the original bust Lang made seven negative moulds in which the eyes were “opened”, and from these negatives he made a further seven positives in which he inserted casts of his own eyes, questioning notions of looking through “others” eyes. (p.136)

I can appreciate what the artist was doing, but with the re-casting of such a bust (even with the permission of the tribe), is it not just a repetition of what the original anthropologist did? Even the insertion of his own eyes raises some questions about the lust for “otherness”, or, in Hal Foster’s words the ‘*Primitivist fantasy*’ (1995: 303). Even though Lang placed his own eyes within the cast in a gesture of empathy, it could be interpreted as “self-othering” (p.304), which could easily pass into ‘self-absorption, in which the project of “ethnographic self-fashioning” becomes the practice of philosophical narcissism’ (ibid.).

There are performance practitioners and fine-artists who engage with an anthropological methodology with varying degrees of application. For example some of the work of Mike Pearson (especially *Bubbling Tom*, 2000), Deidre Heddon, Roger Owen

(whose current fieldwork seeks to map the milk-stands of Ceredigion) and Eddie Ladd work directly with a place-specific autobiography and to some extent their work could be thought of as autoethnographic because of the way they engage not only with the self, but with a wider set of place-based discourses (see Heddon, 2008; Myers and Heddon, 2014; Owen, 2011; Pearson, 2006; Pearson, 2010; Pearson, 2011; Williams 2005). Although this work does not rely on anthropologic/ethnographic fieldwork as a source for its creation, there is an element of further research which manifests itself within the artistic representations of these particular places.

Anna Lucas is a film-maker who explicitly uses film as research and artistic method. ‘Her practice engages and develops from observations of social networks and individuals in response to specific geographical and architectural locations’ (Lucas, 2012). Her interest is in capturing people and their vernacular knowledge and practices in their particular locations. She is also interested in how the presence of the camera alters the reality of the situation being filmed (ibid.). In her film *Begail Foxwell Whip* (Lucas, 2008a), Lucas films three rural Welsh teenagers – a young shepherd, a hairdresser/falconer, and a ‘whip’ (the person who looks after foxhounds). Her film rests somewhere between portraiture and documentary, she gives space to the voices of these lay experts to tell the camera what they do, and how they do it. These young lives are intimately tied into particular rural knowledges and practices that suggests a maturity in each of the teenagers that is beyond their years (Lucas, 2008b). Her films often engage with particular rural people (not always farmers), as she seeks out the reality of their day-to-day lives.

Although I do not consider this thesis to be an example of ‘deep mapping’ – a term appropriated by Mike Pearson, Michael Shanks and Cliff McLucas from William Least Heat-Moon’s 1991 text *PrairyErth: A Deep Map* in the early 1990s. They reoriented that book’s exhaustive literary approach to place by explicitly blending this with methodological

concerns arising in archaeology and with site-specific approaches within performance’ (Bailey and Biggs, 2012: 319) – this type of methodological approach is particularly helpful to consider amongst other anthropological approaches. In some respects, I see deep-mapping as a parallel and more productive methodological approach to hybrid-network theory and Actor Network Theory (ANT) (Latour 1993; Latour 2007; Latour 1999; Law and Hassard (eds.) 1999; Massey 2005; Routledge 2008; Thrift 1996; Thrift and May 2007). Approaches such as ANT attempt to map the connections between actors in a network (either human, animal, or non-organic components of a network may be considered to be actors). But it is my contention that by its very particular way of avoiding representation, ANT ends up flattening and undermining the embodied, haptic, sensual and temporal experiences of ‘being-in-the-world’ (this is not to say that its use cannot have productive applications) . Writing about the collaborative deep-mapping project *Either Side of the Delphy Bridge* (a project which sought ‘to explore “older adults” conceptions of, and connectivity with, the physical, social and cultural landscapes in which they locate themselves’ (Bailey and Biggs, 2012: 318), Iain Biggs and Jane Bailey suggest that deep-mapping attends to:

the complex and contingent sphere of the multiple, coexisting space-time trajectories that make up landscape. Within this research deep mapping is practiced as a set of ongoing processes: a series of journeys and interactions. The traces, tracks and echoes of these repeated journeys and interactions – in the form of notes, memories, creative reflections, audio recordings, and images etc. – are brought together and interwoven into a mapping- always incomplete, but offered tentatively into the public domain. In this way we seek to articulate and simultaneously intervene in social imaginaries – that is, in the elusive set of taken-for-granted backdrops, symbols and horizons that give human groups a sense of shared life and connectivity. (p.320)

What deep-mapping offers is a non-hierarchical approach to studying landscape and place, and what I find particularly useful is its open-ended and incomplete nature, which avoids the problems of ‘authentic’ representation as it acknowledges itself as only a partial view; it also has a sensitivity that other methodologies seem to lack. This approach embraces creativity

and artistic practices as a way of exploring and disseminating deep-maps and it is open in terms of its methodological approach. Bailey and Biggs suggest that ‘Importantly, there is potential for such research to identify and work within gaps in the field. Consequently areas of concern that have been overlooked by disciplinary-focused approaches may be valued differently when encountered from a perspective relatively unbounded by the presuppositions of disciplinary approaches’ (ibid.). There have also been literary approaches to deep-mapping: worth noting here is the writing of Tim Robinson and the aforementioned William Least Half-Moon (1991). Robinson (2007; 2008; 2011) offers a deep-mapping of the area of Connemara in Ireland; his writing could be thought of as an alternative and permeable cartography which embraces narratives from various perspectives. His understanding that conventional cartography erases the phenomenological experience and lay knowledges/practices of a landscape, has led him to develop a way of mapping which traces the narratives of a landscape from various angles such as botanic, geographic, geological, scientific, experiential, linguistic, historical, environmental and ecological. His publications are overwhelmingly detailed, dense and textural. These deep-mapping projects are attempts at weaving a narrative of a place or a landscape from differing planes of temporal, emotional and experiential realities, and thus, as alternative approaches to rural studies and as different forms of anthropological enquiry they may offer valuable open-ended methodologies.

The ‘anthropological turn’ has also informed the work of rural community arts organizations, and these particular ways of working with rural cultures and inhabitants are of particular interest to my project. Some of this work could be seen as being akin to action research (but are more likely to be regarded as community arts projects), in that some of the projects attempt to explore particular facets of communities for the benefit of those communities; an approach which sometimes tries to find ways of sustaining a particular local culture through developing salable products, making art-work which disseminates and values

the experiences of the people living in those particular rural areas. One of the key rural arts organizations that offer this approach is myvillages.org which is made up of a collective of three artists – from the Netherlands, Germany/UK and Holland. They are interested in ‘the rural as a space for and of cultural production’ (Feenstra and Schiffers (eds.) 2011: 208). Their work is often contextualized by their own autobiographical experiences of being from rural areas; much of it directly involves the human community. They say that their common approach of participatory art practice ‘presents an utopian approach to community building’ (myvillages.org, n.d.). Their projects often utilize an approach that offers something in return, e.g. in *I Like Being a Farmer and I Would Like to Stay One* (Schiffers and Sperger, 2009), ‘Antje Schiffers and Thomas Sprenger do barter trades with farmers in Europe: an oil painting of their farm for a video in which they present their daily work. From these trades they get an archive of films about agriculture; the paintings stay with the farmers’ (myvillages.org, n.d.). With this system of exchange the farmers have control over their own representation, and the time and space to reflect on their everyday lives. myvillages.org also has ongoing projects, such as *The International Village Shop*; a pop-up shop at international rural locations – selling locally produced items. The shops also sell products from other rural areas across the world – these products have accompanying films to give buyers an insight into the particular geographical location where the items are made (myvillages.org, n.d.; Böhm n.d.).

In 2010, I attended a symposium in Münster, Germany organised by myvillages.org , entitled *Images of Farming*. The guest speakers were a mixture of artists, academics and representatives from rural arts organisations. During the symposium, Iris Andraschek and Hubert Lobnig gave a presentation about their project *Leben am Hoff* – about farming and farmers on the border areas of Austria and the Czech Republic after the fall of communism. The outcome of the work is a series of documentary films of nine farms each narrated by the

farmer; these farms ranged from decaying former collectives to modern, organic cooperatives. The other element of the project is a series of photographs of the nine farming families, who were asked by the artists to decide how and where they would like to be photographed, thus giving their participants choices in how they were represented (see also Andraschek and Lobnig, 2011). At the symposium, I also encountered the organization Grizedale Arts (from the English Lake District), whose main activity is the curation of art projects, the nurturing of artists through their artist in residency program, and their emphasis on community involvement (Sutherland, 2010). They also have a particular ‘philosophy that emphasises the use value of art, and promotes the functions of art and artists in practical and effective roles, as a central tenet of wider culture and society’ (Grizedale Arts, n.d.).

Similarly, the Swedish arts group Kultivator seeks to make work directly with lay practitioners in rural settings: organising projects that challenge notions of rurality and sustainability and actively engage in farm life (Vrijman, 2007). One of the more interesting speakers at the conference was Fernando Garcia-Dory (Spain). His work is primarily concerned with making sociological and sustainable interventions. The particular project he described was his ‘school for shepherds’. Having realized that the decrease in rural young people had led to a missing generation of shepherds from the Urrielles Mountains, northern Spain, Garcia-Dory invited applications for people to attend a six-month shepherd school. Successful applicants would live and work with the shepherds, learning to produce a speciality cheese. The hope was that these mountains and the lay practice of shepherding and cheese making would be regenerated, or at least invigorated by such a project (Garcia-Dory, 2010). Garcia-Dory's work is primarily action research, with an artistic sensibility. His artistic practices are often grounded in social-science practices in that they have some sort of non-aesthetic quality which give voice to his participants

lives whilst at the same time disseminating aspects of their culture to a wider audience (see also Garcia-Dory, 2011).

One thing these particular arts practices share is an acknowledgement of the changing nature of rural spaces and cultures. Their approaches seek to find creative and holistic means to engage with these changes; not in a way which attempts to counteract such trajectories nor in an nostalgic looking back at the past, but working with a view to create systems of sustainable practices which may have a direct impact on their participants' lives. Although I valued the symposium, and many of the practices I encountered had a productive ethnographic approach, I felt uncomfortable with how the artists and the academics were making claims about rurality and about farming on behalf of rural/farming people. There were no farmers attending: their voices remained largely absent from the symposium. Although the practice was thoughtful and sensitive to the lives of the rural participants, the actual discussion during the symposium at times felt somewhat patronising as artists and academics alike projected their own romantic concepts of the rural onto the work and its people. It seems to me that some artist who work with and in rural places perpetuate an idealistic, sometimes nostalgic vision of rurality, a vision which is unhelpful in tackling key rural issues, and can be misconstrued as reinforcing notions of the rural idyll.

- How do we counter this idealistic/romantic vision of or for rurality and farming?
- Or is the idealistic vision-of a strong sense of community, self-sufficiency etc. the way forward and something to aspire to?

1.4 Art and farming: an initial inspiration

Focus on Farmers. Art and Hill Farming (J.Hayes (ed.), 2007) was the initial inspiration for this research enquiry. This was an art/community project organised by Aune Head Arts (a rural arts organisation which was based at Dartington Hall, that has, as of 2013, closed) where they placed two artists on four farms for thirty days over a one-year period. They stayed on the farms, usually for about two or three days at a time, observing the working farm and taking part in the daily work routine. At the end of the project, the artists created work in response to their experiences. The result of the project was a touring art exhibition and a publication. This project exemplified the way that artistic practice that engaged with farmers over a long period of time could be a productive way of exploring rural people and their working lives. This project was not framed under the rubric of research, or even under an anthropological/ethnographic methodology (even though the artists conducted fieldwork); it was about co-operation between the artists and the farmers and also about supporting emerging artists.

Although the artists engaged enthusiastically with the project and their participants, they spent a large proportion of their time trying to understand the very basics of the day-to-day running of the farm, because they were not from agricultural backgrounds. In my opinion, the artwork reflected this, in that it lacked real emotional and critical depth. They didn't have, or were unable to acquire, the same depth of feeling that their participants had; neither were they able to fully engage with the political aspects of farming (i.e. policy etc.). Despite their superficiality, there was however the potential to adopt and further such a methodological approach.

- What would it mean for an insider, or someone who is already a lay practitioner or has some lay knowledge of farm life to undertake such a project?

- As an insider, am I better equipped to understand the depth of experience and emotion tied to agricultural practice?
- Is my insider status irrelevant to such an approach?
- What are the challenges of being too close to my subjects and context?

1.5 Homelessness: consequences of interdisciplinary research.

I am a homeless researcher, treading the water between various fields: between artistic practice and scholarly discourse, between academia and lay knowledge practices. This homelessness defines my research in some respects as I attempt to grasp the knowledges that might inform my methodological approach. As a farmer's daughter and a farmer's partner, I inhabit a liminal realm; I am both an insider and an outsider particularly because of my gender, partly because I work away from the farm, to a degree because of the way I look and more recently because my status as a mother has forced me to withdraw somewhat from the running of my farm. This liminality does, however, offer me a different and valuable perspective from my farming participants and wider agricultural community and from the perspectives of academic research. My liminality allows for an engagement from within and from without, as I move from positions of bias to more critical positions; at times it is like looking through a window at my life and the people in it, whilst at other times I am emotionally affected by my knowledge of the people and the place. This thesis does not have a neutral standpoint, and this is important; I bring with me my partialities and my life-long experience of farm life to this research project and I make no apology for this, for it is through my engagement and acknowledgement of my subjectivity that the most creative and critical engagement with my subject material comes about. The lay knowledges and narratives that I work with are read alongside academic and governmental discourses; they

often permeate one another, each having an ability to comment on the other. I strive not to apply an academic overview to my research participants lives; instead, I try to project the lay-discourses onto the academic in order to see where the connections/overlaps may occur, how they may inform one another and to work in the gaps between them. The experience and reflections on the fieldwork are brought into the body of the thesis wherever possible in order to clarify certain ideas and to evidence my thought processes or to comment on the academic writing in some way.

2. Participating farm

Cwmrhaidr farm lies on the border between the county of Powys to the north, and Ceredigion to the south. It is situated in a sparsely populated area, five miles from the nearest town of Machynlleth, an historic market town with around 2,000 inhabitants. The valley where the farm is located is called Glaspwll (which means ‘Blue Pool’ in English). There are under fifty permanent inhabitants living in the valley, and most of these people live on tenanted farm holdings. Most of the land, and many of the dwellings in the valley are owned by two different estates: the Garthgwynion estate and the Cwmrhaidr estate. Both estates are in the hands of descendants of Owen Owen, a late Victorian businessman who developed his small draper’s business in Liverpool into one of the first British department stores. Owen Owen had outlets in London, Paris and in the United States. He was also influential in political circles (being close friends with Lloyd George) and a Welsh liberal activist.

Cwmrhaidr farm nestles in the valley (*cwm*) of the waterfall called Pistyll y Llyn (*rhaidr* being an anglicised spelling of the Welsh *rheadr*). This waterfall is the highest in Wales, and one of the highest in the United Kingdom, and its prospect dominates the landscape of the farm. The farm is rented by the Jones family under an inherited tenancy

agreement (Agricultural Holdings Act 1986), which states that the tenancy can be inherited twice. This means that the current tenant, Glynne, is considered to be the first (he inherited the tenancy from his father) and that one of Glynne's children could apply for a second tenancy once Glynne is preparing to retire. There are a number of 'tests' that will need to be fulfilled by Glynne's succession if he/she is to take on the tenancy. These include a relationship test where one must prove that they are a close family member (son/daughter, spouse, sibling) and a livelihood test (where the proposed tenant proves that they have been earning 50% of their income from the farm for the past seven years leading up to the current tenant's retirement notice) (see NFU Business Guide BG901).

The landlord of the Cwmrhaidr estate does not interfere in the running of the farm; most legal matters to do with the occupancy are fielded through a land agent. The rent had always been reasonable because of an understanding by both the landlord and the land agency about the difficult terrain of the farm. Recently, the land agency dealing with matters related to the tenancy was sold to another company and the agent dealing with Cwmrhaidr estate retired. Consequently, the replacement land agent more than doubled the rent. Glynne puts this down to the fact that the previous agent had visited the farm regularly and had a good understanding of the difficulties of upland farming, whereas the new agent was based on the Cheshire plains and had not visited Cwmrhaidr farm, and therefore had little measure of the type of land that the estate is comprised of.. The fact that this farm is a tenanted farm has some impact on how the farm is managed. There is a reluctance by the tenants to spend their subsidy on, for example, updating farm buildings, re-designing and re-building the sheep handling system or buying in fertilizer, spreading muck etc. I would suggest that there is a preference for investing in the sheep rather than improving the land; this is, in my opinion, directly related to the fact that the land is not owned by the Jones family.

The farm of around 865 acres or 350 hectares ranges from its lowest point of 700 feet above sea level to its highest point of just under 2,000 feet. It is described as a hill farm in an upland area because of its mountainous nature, and the poor quality of the grazing. The terrain is of a mixture of mountain, moorland, and steep sloping fields, with the occasional flatter and more productive pasture. The farm is classified as having land of a Severely Disadvantaged nature (SDA) within a Less Favoured Area (LFA). Around 80 per cent of Welsh farmland is classified as either SDA or LFA:

Less Favoured Area means land;

- Which is situated in and are included in the list of less favoured farming areas adopted by the Council for the Commission of the European Communities under Article 2 of Council Directive No. 75/268/EEC on mountain and hill farming in less favoured areas, and
- In the UK, LFAs are subdivided into Severely Disadvantaged Area (SDA) and Disadvantaged Area (DA) .

Severely Disadvantaged land means land;

- Which is, in the opinion of the appropriate Minister, inherently suitable for extensive livestock production but not for the production of crops in quantity materially greater than that necessary to feed such livestock as are capable of being maintained on such land, and
- Whose agricultural production is, in the opinion of the appropriate Minister, severely restricted in its range by, or by a combination of soil, relief, aspect or climate, or
- Land situated in the Isles of Scilly.

(DEFRA, 2010)

Some of the land at lower levels has been improved through ploughing, and was last turned in the late 1980's. The farm now has permanent pasture, meaning that it hasn't been

ploughed or re-seeded since the late 80's. The farm keeps around one sheep per acre, which is below the average stocking rates of lowland farms (around 4 per acre): this ratio is partly due to regulations about grazing on the mountain which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The farm stocks only sheep, although when the family moved here in 1964, they also kept a couple of Welsh Black cows for milking, and a small herd of around 20 Hereford x Welsh Blacks. These were kept as a beef-suckler herd. The herd was sold off because they were making a loss with them and also they had a number of cases of Redwater (a fatal tick borne disease, which is fairly common in places with a high tick populous). Ticks have also been the cause of another disease in the Welsh Mountain flock called Louping-ill. After repeated occurrences of this disease, the farm has been trialling vaccination, but this has not proved cost effective.

The flock is made up of 750 breeding ewes with between 180 and 200 ewe lambs being kept as replacement ewes each year. The farm keeps up to 20 ram lambs, around 20 yearling rams and roughly nine mature rams. Any lambs that are not retained for breeding purposes are sold as either store animals (animals sold on to a dealer or another farmer for fattening) or straight to slaughter. The flock is what is termed a 'closed flock' meaning that a couple of breeding rams are brought in annually to refresh the genetic bloodline, but breeding ewes are never bought in. The farm also breed their own rams, some of these are used on the farm, whilst the others are sold at the October ram sale (see Chapter 3 and Book 1, pp.110, 113). Welsh Mountain sheep are the preferred breed due to their natural hardiness, and their strong flocking and mothering instincts. The flock has been gradually improved since 1964: it is important to the culture of my participants that they are seen to be good stockmen and that their sheep are well respected within the Welsh Mountain sheep breeding community.

2.1 Research participants

Glynne was born in 1952 and raised at Glanmerin, a farm directly over the hill from Cwmrhaidr. Glanmerin was his father's (*Taid*/Grandfather) family farm, where he lived along with his wife (my *Nain*/Grandmother), their two children, his three brothers and their families, and his unmarried sister. Glynne left school at the age of fourteen. He often describes how his father could not wait for him to be old enough to leave school, because he was becoming tired of paying a wage to the farm hand. Glynne continued to work with his father until his death in 2001. Glynne left the farm during his thirties in order to study botany; he then spent a few years working as a head gardener at Portmeirion (North Wales) before returning to the farm. Glynne is married to Lorinda, a dairy farmer's daughter from Aberystwyth. After leaving school, she studied agriculture at the Welsh Agricultural College in Aberystwyth with the intention of becoming a dairy farmer, but later re-trained to be a nurse. She currently works as a senior nurse at Bronllais General Hospital, Aberystwyth.

Glynne and Lorinda have three children, Rachel, Ffion and Owen. Rachel lives and works in London, she has no real interest in farming. Owen who is 25, works part time at Cwmrhaidr, part time on another upland farm and seasonally as a sub-contractor planting trees for Natural Resources Wales. Owen will likely take over from Glynne in the next five years.

I am the middle child of the family. As well as undertaking postgraduate research, I am actively involved in farming practice, and a member of the local farming community. My partner Ioan and I own a 150-acre farm sixteen miles south of Cwmrhaidr where we keep 150 cross-bred ewes. We have diversified into horse livery, with stabling for twenty horses. We currently have around twenty-five horses living in a large herd on the property. I gained a joint honours degree in Performance Studies and Scenographic Studies from Aberystwyth University in 2007 and commenced an MA in Practising Performance shortly after

graduating. My previous body of artistic practice has frequently used performance, film, and installation as a way of exploring social issues within rural society. The realisation during my undergraduate studies that my farm upbringing had produced a particular body and a particular understanding of rurality at odds with romantic notions, inspired a series of works which looked autobiographically at the relationship between mental health and my farm upbringing. This particular theme came to a natural conclusion during my MA in a performance entitled *Fleece*. This particular work juxtaposed a narrative centred around illness with the notion of care in sheep farming. It was a site-specific event that took place inside a hay barn on a farm in Talybont. The audience sat on bales of straw; two halves of a silage feeder demarcated the performance area; small stone houses encircled this demarcated space. I sat in a shallow pool that slowly filled with water which made my attempts at making felt from the raw fleece of a sheep more challenging. Live performance here became a demonstration of skill and labour, the outcome of which was a small felted blanket, alluding to the reoccurring image of the blanket as a metaphor for self preservation and care in the images of the film.

My artistic practice is a continuation of childhood play: experimenting with materials and form, and moving materials around. Unable to draw – unlike my father and my sister – I worked in three dimensions throughout my youth. My artistic experimentation with found materials began during secondary school, where I created uncanny objects from woven willow, chicken-wire and broken glass, and cast hands in candle-wax. The experience of seeing a video of the work of Brith Gof for the first time at university, had a profound effect on my understanding of theatre, and I was particularly drawn to their performances where task-based-activity formed the backdrop to the work. Being encouraged by lecturers in scenographic studies to find a medium to fit my particular concepts or stage designs led to me working increasingly with film, something that I have continued to experiment with.

Influenced by artists who worked with body as site (Vito Acconci, Marina Abramovic, Ron Athey, Franko B, Alan Kaprow, Richard Long, Bruce Nauman, Dennis Oppenheim, Kira O'Reilley, Orlan, Gina Pane, Rachel Rosenthal, Stelarc) who I had discovered during my first degree, I became interested in experimenting with my own autobiography, and its inscription upon my body – this also led to a particular aesthetic where the body became part of the scenography rather than carrying the performance or narrative itself. My work is often resourceful, and finds ways of 'making' from the materials in my immediate geographical location. Physical labour is also an important element of my work; often the labour of the process is not evident in the artistic output, but is an important part of the making process nevertheless. The physical labour whether it be walking with heavy filming equipment, finding, treating and making something with raw materials, or creating usable materials from found objects (such as the broken glass aggregate I made from recycled bottles during my first degree; made by gathering glass bottles, breaking them, putting them in a concrete mixer with a small amount of sand to round the edges and give a matte effect, then washing the aggregate: the aggregate was used as a floor covering for a scenographic installation).

3. Methodology

...the only way to truly know things – that is, from the very inside of one's being – is through a process of self discovery. To know things, you have to grow into them, and let them grow in you, so that they become a part of who you are. (Ingold, 2013:1)

I am neither an ethnographer nor an anthropologist, but as I am using a methodological approach that relies on the application of methods from these fields, it is important to define some basic terminology. I undertook *fieldwork* for one day per week over the course of my project. This fieldwork consisted of participant observation and was documented through

photographic images and a fieldwork diary. I have chosen to evidence the fieldwork by creating a photographic book that combines photographs from particular days with their corresponding notation. This of course only gives a partial view of my fieldwork experience as I have roughly 15,000 photographs and 73,000 words of written fieldwork notes.

Tim Ingold explains the differences between anthropology and ethnography by suggesting that in anthropology you learn from doing: that is 'I take what I have learned and move *forward*, all the while of course reflecting on my earlier experience'. In ethnography 'I look *back* over the information I have collected, in order to account for trends and patterns. And thirdly, the impetus that drives project one is primarily *transformational*, whereas the imperatives of project two are essentially *documentary*' (p.3). I would suggest that my fieldwork as ethnography is compromised by my insider status, thus I am always in the process of being transformed by my immersive practice. Participant observation is generally described as 'looking, listening, experiencing and recording an observer's observations of daily life. It also usually requires spending considerable amounts of time in the company of the people or group being observed' (Robinson, 1998: 422). Contrary to this definition, Ingold suggests that participant observation is an approach from anthropology and not ethnography (Ingold, 2013: 4), and he is critical of the social science's adoption of participant observation as a methodological tool for data collection. He suggests that 'participant observation is *absolutely* not a technique of data collection. Quite the contrary, it is enshrined in an ontological commitment that renders the very idea of data collection unthinkable. This commitment, by no means confined to anthropology, lies in the recognition that we owe our very being to the world we seek to know. In a nutshell, participant observation is a way of knowing *from the inside*' (p.5). I suggest that my engagement with participant observation is more in line with Ingold's definition. I have not used the fieldwork and the participant observation that I undertook as a way of collecting qualitative data, nor have I used it for the

sole purpose of writing an ethnographic text; the participant observation is a way of attempting to grasp lay knowledge and practices. It is about furthering an understanding from the inside, about embodying, or in my case perhaps re-embodying, a set of specific place-based knowledges and practices with the intention of disseminating such ideas and perceptions, and incorporating them into a wider academic discourse. What's more, rather than writing a standard ethnographic text, the participant observation has instead been used to inform a series of artistic interventions that somehow attempt to translate or transform the insider experience of my fieldwork for people outside of the field of study.

Because my research participants are my immediate family members, there are of course ethical implications for this project. What is at stake is the continuing love, friendship and support of my family. But because my method is by design inclusive, transparent and does not rely on any covert approaches, the risk is hopefully minimal. Researchers using ethnographic methods have to 'find some role in the field being studied, and this will usually have to be done at least through implicit, and probably also through explicit negotiation with the people in that field. Access may need to be secured through gatekeepers, but it will also have to be negotiated and renegotiated with the people being studied; and this is true even where ethnographers are studying settings in which they are already participants' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 4). As I embarked on this project, I naively thought that because my participants were known to me, and I already had an inherent understanding of their everyday experiences and practices, that the gatekeeper – my father, Glynne – would be open and willing for me to explore all facets of their lives. It became clear early on in the project, that I needed to take tentative steps towards asking the more difficult and critical questions, and that I had an obligation to discuss any particularly ethically sensitive material with them. One of my techniques in doing this was to present a conference paper for them each year which was written from each thesis chapter. Through this process, they had the

opportunity to comment, to reflect, to disagree and to clarify any areas of my research that were problematic for them.

Lisa M. Tillmann-Healy suggests that one alternative ethnographic methodology might be the 'friendship as method' (Tillmann-Healy, 2006: 273). This methodology is at the extreme end of an immersive ethnographic method as it suggests that researchers become so involved in their participants lives that they become friends in real life; it relies on the 'ethics of friendship' (p. 278). Of course one danger of this approach is that the participants may not realise that you are still conducting research when you contact them or chat to them as a 'friend'. This calls for reflexivity, not only on the part of the researcher, but also by the participating group. Tillmann-Healy suggests that 'Researching with the practices of friendship means that although we employ traditional forms of data gathering (e.g., participant observation, systematic note taking, and informal and formal interviewing), our primary procedures are those we use to build and sustain friendship: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability' (p.278). I would suggest that because of my familial relationship with my participants, the procedures that I have used inevitably mirror those that Tillmann-Healy proposes for friendship as method; I have embraced the possibilities of this relationship and my privileged position of seeing from within and from without. This method seeks to change ethnographic research from 'studying "them"' to studying "*us*" (p.280). Tillmann-Healy also suggests that the outcome of the ethnographic fieldwork (this is usually an interpretive text) can be mutually beneficial to both researcher and participants as it may offer them the benefit of 'Self understanding and acceptance' (p.283). Although this research might not have had an immediate impact on my research participants lives, it certainly has given my participants the time and space to reflect on those things that they take for granted in their everyday experience.

There are some overlaps between this project and the processes/outcomes of visual ethnography. Visual ethnography is an approach that embraces the use of images as an addition to the fieldwork process. Very often, the approach uses these representations as part of the interpretative text (Pink, 2007:1-18). Visual ethnographers sometimes ask their research participants to take photographs or make a film that gives the researcher a better understanding of how their participants see their world (p.29). The photographs that I take are important documents and are utilised in both my artistic practice and my writing. They serve documentary and mnemonic purposes. Autoethnography is an inevitable side effect of my insider status, and thus is a methodological consideration; I am both researcher and researched. Autoethnography is a type of subjective study, where the researcher predominantly makes observations about his or her own life. It is essentially autobiographical as the writer's voice takes on the authorial role. In other words, the autoethnographer seeks to write from a personal perspective about the field of his or her research (see Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 204). I utilise an autoethnographic mode of writing in my thesis as I draw on the subjective experience in the field as part of the research. This is combined with academic perspectives and ethnographic observations, but I attempt to weave the subjective and the critical in order to create a balanced writing approach.

As I have already stated, rather than a singular interpretative text (ethnographic text), this thesis (fieldwork photographs, notes, artistic practice, academic writing) should be thought of as a whole, as an alternative ethnographic text. It is through the relationship between the individual elements and how they are read alongside one another that carries the interpretative text.

Chapter 1: Place

Experiment 1: The Only Places We Ever Knew



From a liveliness to a liveness-lost

I sit one damp morning cradling a cup of tea; my Dad is sat opposite me. I can smell the sheep on his clothes as he sighs at the pouring rain. Luckily he'd gathered the sheep the night before in the cool of the evening breeze, midges and horseflies feasting on his blood as the last sheep crossed the threshold of the shed. With a roof over their heads, their wool should be dry for shearing today.

A few months have gone by since I had started the fieldwork. The relics of those daily activities have been distilled into the words of my diary; framed and frozen in moments of my photographs; their liveness lost – they stare back at me as I stare down at them. From this moment, these documents are my record of a time spent; a moment gone; my simple relationship with them will change, will have to change, as I manipulate their static qualities into something ephemeral like the moments gone-by that they **fail to capture**.

I feel a sense of fear, not knowing how to approach the next phase of my research, I'm afraid that I will fail to offer an audience a glimpse of what we do, who we are

and why we do it; afraid that they won't understand us; afraid that I will fail to give my participants the space to find their own voices. What does one make from snapshots of time? Those fleeting moments pass too quickly to dwell on, and through their capturing, they become static objects for viewing and contemplation. But those moments are always more than this, they are lives lived, and things done: everyday lives of ordinary activity.

The documentation is a private record, making sense only to me – how will I be able to share these things; to distil the essence without it disintegrating and losing its resonance. I need to find ways of disseminating it – re-membering it, re-telling it, transposing it, transplanting it, moulding it, destroying it and piecing it together again. I need to involve the rest of the family, so that this journey is not the journey of one, but of a collective.

The tea grows cold as I look into the distance, my silent contemplation is finally disrupted by my father's voice "I'm going back out to carry on with the shearing". I can hear his footsteps as he walks up the lane, heavily treading the crumbling tarmac as the distant chorus of sheep is muted by the pounding of heavy rain.

1. Place

In recent years 'place', 'space' and 'landscape' have become contested issues within the fields of the humanities. Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that 'Place is security' (Tuan, 1977: 3) and 'Enclosed and humanised space' (p.4). Edward Relph sees it as being not just the location of something, but as 'the location plus everything that occupies that location seen as an integrated and meaningful phenomenon' (Relph, 2008: 3). Tim Cresswell sees place as a 'human construction' (Cresswell, 2004: 30) and as 'a way of seeing, knowing and

understanding the world' (p.11). Edward Casey suggests that 'places are *congealed scenes* for remembered contents' (Casey, 2000: 189). Tim Ingold, influenced by Heideggerian concepts suggests that places are the result of the human's need to dwell in his world (see Ingold, 2000: 175-188; also see Heidegger, 1993). This immersion and incorporation of human and his environment into locally manifested identities is in stark contrast to the theories of scholars such as Bruno Latour, who prioritises space over place – seeing the world as a network of hybridity, made and remade in an instant by human and non-human actors (see Latour, 1993, 1999, 2007). Similarly, Doreen Massey also prioritises space, seeing the postmodern world through the discourse of globalisation: space is churned up – places are infiltrated by other places and contents from far-flung corners of the world. The result of globalisation is that space is open, and unbounded, full of 'connections yet to be made' (Massey, 2005: 11). Massey also suggests that the postmodern era and the idea of globalisation has created a certain nostalgic anxiety about place, in that there is a romantic looking backwards at a world when place was once at the centre (p.123). Although I appreciate Massey's thoughts on spatiality, and her suggestion that space can be storied and meaningful in the same way as place, I get the sense in her book *For Space* that she is overly cynical of the notion of place and especially of the idea of rootedness, and the assumed nostalgia that comes with it (ibid.). The nostalgia for place could be a counter-reaction to a different kind of placial encounter, one that is more fleeting, where roots are put down for a shorter duration-a side-effect of globalisation perhaps, but it is naive to discount the feelings that people have for places; for home, for 'y filltir sgwar' (our square mile of childhood: see Pearson and Shanks, 2001: 38) for their 'cynefin' (locale) (see Jones, 1985; Pearson, 2010: 101-102). I can also appreciate how ANT (Latour, 2007) could be a useful way of conceptualising and understanding spatiality and how the local is tied into wider global power structures. But, for me and my participants place is still very important; at

Cwmrhaiadr, wider, global narratives are not something considered during daily work, instead they may be considered when taking into account subsidy, meat prices etc., but the considerations are specifically related to the local.

Through the process of conducting fieldwork, and my lifelong affiliation with the locale leads me to suggest that at Cwmrhaiadr, places are many and variable: each of us has places that are special; each of us has places of differing importance. But, we also have collective places: places of memory, of knowing, what we do there, and why we do it, places where our historical knowledge informs our attachment, places of hybridity, where place is made and maintained because of subtle interactions between human beings and animals or human beings and natural phenomena. Daily activity re-captures, re-informs, re-makes, remembers and re-evaluates those places. Some are forgotten, only to be re-awakened by a new interaction. Places are often subtle, unbounded and fleeting, but as a collective; they make up a strong attachment to the farm.

Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that ‘Many places, profoundly significant to particular individuals and groups, have little visual prominence. They are known viscerally, as it were, and through the discerning eye or mind’ (Tuan, 1974: 162) (see figure 1). Places at Cwmrhaiadr are known from a durational engagement with them. To a visitor they may not be discernible as they have no clear, definable boundaries, unmarked: only knowable through the ongoing habitation of my research participants, and the narratives



Figure 1: ‘26 Acres’ is not a visually prominent place. In this photograph, Glynne places hay in the hay rack in ‘26 Acres’ for the sheep to eat. From this field you can see Cae Ffynnon (the well field) above Cwmcemrhiw, and the small crater left by one of three WW2 bombs jettisoned during a bombing campaign. In the bottom left hand corner of the field is a large, angular and lonely boulder. Once when my sister and I were quite young, Mum took us to this boulder and we had a picnic on it-it has been known as ‘picnic rock’ ever since. In the spring of 2010 (the year the above photograph was taken) Glynne and I were left perplexed by the disappearing and re-appearing sheep in ‘26 Acres’. Either, they were escaping to another field-or, Glynne and I couldn’t count. The name ‘26 Acres’ is an incorrect measurement of the field-it is actually only 15 acres. It seems that someone from Cwmrhaiadr’s past couldn’t count either.

that are told about them. Another important aspect of making, knowing and experiencing place is memory. Edward S. Casey notes that ‘place serves to *situate* one’s memorial life, to give it “a name” and a local habitation’ (Casey, 2000: 187). Ephemeral experiences and past events are re-imagined in the present, re-enforcing a continuation of the importance of a place. Cwmrhaiadr is situated in a landscape pregnant with mnemonics; subtle ghosts of a past, present and a future habitation: each place forging a sense of a collective and independent identity, of a shared and storied landscape. Our encounters with these places tend to be ordinary, fleeting, partial and more often than not are tied into routine farm work, rather than an elaborate seeking out of places for nostalgic reasons.

1.1 Fieldwork in relation to the daily experiences of place.

The farm is experienced by my research participants through a routine of daily practices, engagements and movement. This movement is often a technological extension of the body through the use of the farm quad bike, an invaluable tool for getting from place to place. During lambing, this vehicle has the important task of carrying feed to the sheep, transporting sick animals back to the farm, and allowing Glynne and Owen to check on the animals twice daily. I suggest that the act of technological extension makes their *taskscape* (a term used by Ingold to describe an assortment of related activities undertaken by a human in his/her environment (2000: 195) or similarly, time-space routine (used by Seamon, to describe many *body-ballets* – habitual body movements which are used to accomplish a task (1980: 158) – an expansive bodily engagement with place that is a hybrid mix of man, machine and natural phenomena. Ingold defines the ‘task’ of his ‘taskscape’ as an activity ‘embedded in a social relation’ (Ingold, 2000: 324). Ingold develops his discussion of the taskscape by suggesting that ‘there are none that can be set aside as belonging to a separate category of ‘work’, nor is

there any separate status of being a 'worker'. For work is life and any distinctions one might make within the course of life would be not between work and non-work, but between different fields of activity' (ibid.). Ingold's concept could be applied to the farming life-world, and might be especially useful in trying to explain the view that farming is not a job per se, but rather as Ingold states above 'work is life' (ibid.). Ingold discusses the concept of '*task-orientation* in such societies, an orientation in which both work and time are intrinsic to the conduct of life itself, and cannot be separated or abstracted from it. If you want to say I something happened, you do so by relating to another regular activity that took place concurrently... And if you want to say *how long* it took for something to happen, you do so by comparing it with how long something else takes.' (ibid.). Again, this concept is a useful way of examining how time is valued differently in the farming world, something I discuss in more detail in Chapter 2.

Places that have an expanse of space between them are sometimes conjoined by the act of 'looking'. This act of conjoining is fleeting, happening only when Glynne either looks through his binoculars at another part of the farm, or actively looks at specific areas/places in the distance for particular signifiers. Glynne's deep knowledge of places within the landscape allows him to look from some distance with an imagination that allows him to perceive as though at close range; he knows when something is amiss – whether a white lump is a piece of quartz or a dead sheep. I would like to employ a term used by Mitchel Schwarzer *zoomscape* (also the title of his book) that 'explores the impact of mechanized transportation and camera reproduction on the perception of architecture' (Schwarzer, 2004: 12). In its simplest form, "zoomscape" is an optical mode of perception characterized by speed and surface' (ibid.). He continues by suggesting that 'we have become used to seeing architecture through abrupt shifts of viewpoint and via unexpected juxtapositions' (ibid.). This latter comment about the way we now view architecture could also be true about the way that

Glynne looks at places and areas within the landscape; by passing by and through them, by looking down at them, across at them (unexpected juxtapositions), by looking in a mediated way at them through binoculars and thus conjoining places or contracting spaces.

I would also like to suggest that the way one looks, especially at lambing time, is by scanning, finding, focusing, then zooming in. These technical terms are usually associated with photography, but here I am using them as a way to describe a particular experience of looking. As an example: When we are out checking the sheep, in my mind, I am thinking about what a sheep looks like when it is giving birth. Both Glynne and I know how this looks: we know the signs. As we travel around, we constantly scan the fields for white objects (sheep) in the distance. If we see something suspicious (a sheep hiding in a ditch or away from the flock, a sheep pawing the ground; sniffing it; turning around; sniffing



Figure 2-9: Glynne assists a difficult birth. (see text boxbelow).

1st of April 2010. (Weather - Sleet and snow, very cold). After supper, we both go to check Cwcmrhiw Fêch. We both notice a sheep in the hedge-line sitting still and acting strangely. Glynne catches her – she has a stuck lamb; he pulls the lamb, swings it, but it is dead. I ask him if he's sure; he says that it has a particular smell as though it died a few hours ago. He places the lamb next to the sheep, and ties her front legs together, so that she can't escape. We continue checking around the field... After checking the sheep, we head back down to collect the sheep and her dead lamb. As Glynne is tying up her back legs, he points out what he assumes to be the missing triplet (Glynne said earlier that a triplet that had disappeared overnight is probably dead). I had seen the white blob earlier but had thought it was a piece of quartz because of its stillness. After putting the sheep in the front basket of the quad-bike, Glynne goes to see it; it is alive. He walks back to the bike with it tucked into his coat. Earlier he had seemed disappointed that the big lamb he'd pulled was dead, but now that there was a mother for the lost triplet to be adopted to, his mood had lifted.

sniffing again; lying down; getting up; lying down, or a sheep lying down, with its neck stretched upwards and straining) then we stop and look harder: we focus, we try to determine what it is we are seeing, and whether it requires immediate attention. If we decide that it does require our attention, we will zoom in, i.e. drive to the sheep to assist her. There is also a question of scale here; the landscape is perceived not as a surface to be viewed as a whole, but as a series of differing scales: from looking at things on a larger scale, i.e. looking at a cloud on the horizon, looking at a whole flock of sheep on the mountain, to looking at things of smaller detail i.e. after-birth, animal footprints, plants, how much hay has been eaten. This way of looking is one of the ways in which we cope with, and make sense of our environment at Cwmrhaidr. Some sensory data is ignored, whilst others are paid attention to. This act of looking is the result of human/animal relationships (see Chapter 3): Glynne and Owen's motivation for moving in through and around Cwmrhaidr during their daily routines, therefore, is one of a *field of care* (Tuan, 1996: 451). The field of care frames our perception of our immediate landscape: it asks us to look at and for specific things.

During my early experience of fieldwork, it was difficult to know how to make the places in Glynne's life known and knowable for we were often on the move in determined and serious ways, and Glynne was not used to having constant company throughout his day (sometimes he works with Owen or Lorinda but he often works alone). After a period of accompanying him on his daily rounds, Glynne began to talk, to tell me about certain things: for example what happened in that spot under the tree at lambing last year, why he's counting all of the sheep in '26 Acres' this week etc. and I began to ask more questions.

Now and again our journey through Cwmrhaidr would be punctuated by an anecdote or a memory of Glynne's: these were often memories of things he'd been told by his father or grandfather, local knowledge or an interaction between him and a sheep or him and a person or a group of people. The movement through the landscape enabled Glynne to remember, and

to tell, therefore the places or things in the landscape that anchor his memories became partially and momentarily visible. Casey says that ‘Place is there to be re-entered, by memory if not by direct bodily movement’ (Casey, 2000: 186). During my experience accompanying Glynne, both memory and bodily movement not only re-entered place, but made place visible. Casey also states that ‘An alert and active memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favour and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place oriented or at least place-supported. Moreover, it is itself a place wherein the past can revive and survive’ (ibid.). Although most of the memories that Glynne talked about were situated at Cwmrhaidr, some were not, therefore, I would suggest that places do not necessarily need to have correspondingly placed memories attached to them; some places can stand in for others, or evoke other places that in turn aid in the keeping of memories.

During the fieldwork, I also witnessed scepticism towards visitors. Glynne’s feelings towards strangers visiting the farm are informed by instances of vandalism and trespassing (there have been many incidences of gates being left open and his sheep mixing with the neighbours; padlocks being cut from gates by 4x4 motor enthusiasts; motorists and cyclists and even one case of walkers cutting fences). To Glynne then, every visitor has this capacity for misdemeanour and when this trespassing or vandalism feels like an invasion of his privacy, it is perhaps understandable that he is so cynical. To the family, and especially to Glynne the fences and gates, the objects that are there to stop thoroughfare; the rules about using public footpaths work in a similar way to the walls, doors and windows in a house – they are permeable. We can open a window, or a door and come in, but there are certain rules about who can come in, who we want to let in, what is socially acceptable: a stranger walking into the house is not acceptable, and in the same way, a stranger walking over parts of the land without a designated public footpath is also an intrusion. Boundaries are important; they

create a sense of enclosure and allow certain types of farming to take place. (I am aware that the idea of the countryside being bounded may seem unfair to the general population who do not have complete

7th of April.

At lunch, Glynne complains about the 'town people' who didn't know how to behave in the countryside. He said they walked on private land and not the public footpath. I suggested that he educate them. Glynne was not amused by my suggestion.

and free access to the landscape, but our experience of a minority of the general public tells us that some people do not know how to engage appropriately with these spaces of life-work).

Performance methodology



2.1 Collaboration

Between the months of May and September 2010, I began to think about creative ways of using the material output of my fieldwork for creating an artistic manifestation in collaboration with my family. Although my research participants have attended some of my previous work in both performance and scenography, they have had limited exposure to performance and other contemporary artistic practices. I decided to show them artwork that drew attention to the objects and materials that are found in their everyday working environments as a way for them to see the types of work that we could make.

Andy Goldsworthy's project *Sheepfolds* (University of Cumbria, 2002), (Goldsworthy and Putnam, 2007) was a sculptural project that I felt would fulfil this role.

Goldsworthy's use of stone, sheepfolds, wool, the movement of sheep and sheep food meant that the materiality of the work would be familiar to them. Glynne enjoyed the craftsmanship behind the pieces, and being able to see the skills of stone-wallers being put to use. Lorinda was also positive about what she had seen, although she did question how it was related to 'performance'. Another publication that I asked them to look at was the *Focus on Farmers* book (Hayes, 2007) (see Introduction pp. 27-28). I used this as a way of showing them how a similar project worked, and the kinds of output that the project could possibly have.

I began the process of collaboration by arranging a meeting to explain my intentions. The meeting was also used as a starting point for sharing and discussing ideas for the project. Owen was dismissive and said that he did not understand what I was trying to do and that it was 'stupid'. Rather than force him to take part, I tried to encourage him, by suggesting that this might be an opportunity for him to think about his role, and his identity in relation to farming. Glynne, although not dismissive of my intentions, was unsure about what I was requiring of him (especially about how much time he would need to invest in the project), and did not have any ideas; Lorinda had a few ideas which I took note of.

Because the ideas were not forthcoming in this initial meeting, I asked them to think about it over the coming week, before entering discussion with them again. When we met a week later, again my participants did not have any suggestions. Realising that having an open discussion about the work we would make without my direction was a mistake, I attempted to approach it differently. In a subsequent interview post-performance with the family members, I gained an insight into why our initial meetings failed. Owen said that 'We haven't got time' (Jones and O. Jones, 2011) when asked whether he'd have preferred more space to work on ideas. Glynne felt that they did put forward ideas (Jones and G. Jones, 2011), although, I would argue that most of these were proposed after my decision to create a guided walk. Lorinda felt that they were unable to come up with initial ideas partly because they lived

here, and were unable to see anything unusual or interesting about their lives, and partly because she was unclear about the framing of the work through the word ‘performance’ (Jones and L. Jones, 2011). I was very much to blame for the failures of the meetings because I had not explained with clarity what I was expecting of them, nor had I taken into account the lack of context that they had for this kind of artistic practice. The term ‘performance’ was a hindrance rather than a help, as it had connotations of theatrical conventions and seemed limiting for my participants. In reality, I wanted to find a form that fitted them and the experiences that I had had during my fieldwork. Also I was confused about what my role would be as part of the collaboration, and whether I would be another participant or a director of some sort. I was also the only person with access to the fieldwork notes; therefore it was unlikely that they had any real idea about what I was noting down in this diary, and what was of interest to me.

2.1 Concept

Earlier in the year Rimini Protocol (Haug, Kaegi and Wetzel, 2011) had visited my own farm in Talybont in order to undertake some exploratory research for a production commissioned by National Theatre Wales. They wanted an insight into farming here in Wales. We gave them a guided tour of the farm, which made me realise that even such a simple form could be the basis for an interactive rural experience. This was of course reminiscent of the popular ‘Open Farm Sunday’ scheme, which takes place at farms across the United Kingdom every year, and sees members of the general public having access to private farms (LEAF, 2010).

In June 2010, I attended a National Theatre Wales production created by the theatre maker Marc Rees in the North Wales coastal town of Barmouth. This walking performance called *For Mountain, Sand and Sea* (National Theatre Wales, 2011) was fundamental in

influencing my creative approach to the project. *For Mountain Sand and Sea* was a performative walk created in collaboration with the community of the town of Barmouth. Rees conducted research into the history of the town by asking local residents to bring along stories and photographs of the community. As a result of his gathering of these historical and contemporary narratives, he created a walking performance that ‘followed in the footsteps of the Victorian excursionist that once visited the Welsh coast during the summer months’ (ibid.). Rees had dramatised characters and events from his research, which he then used to create moments of theatrical intervention around the town. Lucy Lippard writes that ‘the function of art is to “make special”; as such, it can raise the “special” qualities of place embedded in everyday life, restoring them to those who created them’ (1997: 34). Rees’s performance in Barmouth certainly gave an alternative view of the town; however, it favoured romanticised, historical narratives rather than the contemporary stories of the town’s occupants. It was an inclusive event that created an opportunity for an alternative engagement with the town: allowing audience members to walk through and visit places that they may have never encountered before and to also engage with elements of local history somewhat invisible to the tourist’s gaze. The fact that the performance was quite long and we were walking for a large part of it meant that Rees was also expecting his audience to invest both physical energy and time to experience the work.

Inspired by the structure of the work, I returned to my collection of documentation and sifted through my diary. I was looking for points of interest that would orientate the audience’s attention and imagination in this place; not only the things that had occurred during the time that I had spent conducting fieldwork, but also on remembered events, people, and scenes from the past. I realised that the audience members were likely to be a mixed group of people from different backgrounds, some may know a little about farming and the countryside, others may not. These chosen points of interest from my fieldwork

included anecdotes, memories, lay knowledge and practices and some of the daily events from my fieldwork experience. Most of the material that I had chosen could be located within specific places or areas of the farm.

By thinking back to my own experience of the fieldwork, I attempted to conceive of a way of recapitulating the essence of this experience for an audience. The experience of my fieldwork was one of movement through the landscape. These time-space routines (see Seamon 1980: 158) were the basis for movement through and around Cwmrhaidr which meant that my perception of my environment was constantly shifting between differing visual scales (see pp 44-47). These changes in perspective were often encouraged by Glynne pointing something out, or telling a story, or from myself actively searching for i.e. a lost lamb in the distance; I often felt as though I had the ability to zoom in (see pp. 45, 46); a strange and rather technological feeling amplified because of the different visual scales we were attending to. This movement also became a catalyst for remembering; Edward Casey asserts that ‘The lived body traces out the arena for remembered scenes that inhere so steadfastly in particular places: the body’s manoeuvres and movements, imagined as well as actual, make room for remembering placed scenes in all of their complex composition’ (Casey, 2000: 189). It was through the lived body that our memories were remembered; through movement that time became compressed and distorted.

- How do I create something which draws attention to different modes of perception and movement through the landscape?
 - Replace myself with a different audience member for a fortnight?
 - Film installation with my research participants talking about their experiences?
 - Audio tour?

- Guided walk?

The first two ideas were too simplistic, and the first was compromised by health and safety issues with the need for appropriate insurance. I decided that a walking piece would function well in capturing not only the essence of my fieldwork, but also the multi-faceted nature of farm life. The original idea of an audio tour was dismissed as being too impersonal; I felt that sharing our history would be one important element of the work, and as Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests, 'History known is a good thing, but history shared is far more satisfying and far reaching' (p.85). My participants' roles as guides within the work would be important, as certain things would otherwise be difficult to indicate in the landscape. My hope was that these things might become perceivable through being shown by a lay-expert.

I mapped out the narratives I had collected in relation to the land. The first route I had traced was far too long and would have taken at least four hours to complete. The second route was almost half as long and although it bypassed a couple of the places that the first route had visited, it was possible to point to these places from some distance away. The second route took me two and a half hours to complete, I realised that this time would increase with others walking with me, and if we were stopping to listen to stories etc. I decided to save time, by using a tractor and trailer to transport the audience members as far as possible on the journey (probably around half way).

I filmed Glynne speaking the stories I had taken from the fieldwork notes, then transcribed his narration to produce a script that felt natural to him. The script was left with my participants, informing them that they could make alterations if they wished. I also wanted to use the photographic documentation from my fieldwork in the guided walk, as a way to add texture and to punctuate not only the narrative, but to also highlight the inhabited nature of the landscape. I hoped that the smaller visual scale of these photographs (A4 size, with each one captioned with contextual information from my fieldwork diary) coupled with

their unusual placement within the landscape could change or at least challenge my audience's fields of perception from an appreciation of the landscape picture to smaller more intimate views of farming life. Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that 'Conventional landscape photography tends to overwhelm place with image. It is usually presented in fragments rather than in grounded sequences. Once wrenched from its context, the image, no matter how well intentioned or well researched, floats off into artland.' (p.180). Challenging the erasing qualities of conventional landscape photography was of importance to me, and I was especially concerned to draw attention to the lived and worked nature of the landscape of Cwmrhaidr; to the human and animal habitation that made it and continue to make it look a certain way. Overall there were fifty-six of these: placed on hazel sticks, trees, gates and fence-posts along the performance's route and in and around the shed.



Figures 10,11: The documentary photographs taken during the fieldwork process-placed along the route.

During the fieldwork process, I had collected the paper-like bark of the Chinese Birch tree, grown by Glynne from imported Chinese seed (Glynne's other passion in life being botany). I cut letters from the bark and embedded them in clear resin to create two signs (see figures 12, 13 and Book 2 pp. 27-28). My intention when designing and making these signs was to create an alternative type of sign-writing, specifically for this place; made partly from materials that are from this place, and mentioning the people of this place. I wanted the signs

to draw attention to the fallacy of the romantic rural, and for them to draw attention to the landscape as a place of human occupation and activity. I also hoped that because of their novelty, visitors might take note of their suggestions and have an appropriate engagement with this place (see pp. 47-48). They are a light-hearted mediation between the tourist's gaze and the farm's inhabitants. An outreaching gesture, if you will, offering a softer approach to rule-enforcing, with the hopeful outcome being a degree of mutual respect.



Figure 12, 13: Resin signs

The final object that I made was again something that took the place of an anecdote from the fieldwork. It was a wool sheet or wool-sack (a large sack in which to pack wool so that it can be transported to the wool processing plant). The design on this sack (including all lettering and numbering) was made by needle-felting. Needle-felting is an alternative method to the wet-felting method; it relies on tangling the wool fibres in a similar way to wet-felting, but uses a barbed needle to push fibres



Figure 14: The wool sack

into each other. You can also push wool fibres through other materials, as I have done here. It felt important for me to utilise the resources that were available to me on the farm, so here I

used the wool from Cwmrhaidr. It was a laborious process to process the wool (washing it, brushing it and dyeing it) as well as the slow process of building up a picture by pushing the wool fibres through the fabric of the sack. As with many of the objects I create, I am interested in the labour of creation; the physical manipulation of materials is important to me. Even the labour of finding and cutting enough hazel sticks, transporting them to the mountain and placing them in the ground in preparation for the photographs to be attached was a lengthy undertaking, but for me it was appropriate as it emulated the labour of the farm's daily activity.



Figure 15-16: The wool sack maps the global network that Welsh wool is a part of.

The final element of the performance concept was to incorporate two moments where a narrative was illustrated by a short enactment. This aspect of the performance was suggested by Glynne and Lorinda and we all agreed to use it in the piece. These two moments would take place on the final part of our walk back to the farmyard. Some of my most vivid and enjoyable early memories are of the hustle and bustle in the shed on shearing day and of the cakes that Mum and Nain would make for afternoon tea. At the end of our walk I wanted to re-create this experience for the audience, complete with the sights and smells of the shed. This would also be an appropriate moment for Owen to demonstrate his skill in shearing and foot-trimming: giving the audience an opportunity to witness the labour that goes into caring for the sheep.

Once the walk had been designed, and the script written, I designated some tasks for each family member to undertake. Although I asked Glynne to memorise the script, I made it clear that I did not mind if he improvised as long as the contents of the script came across somehow. I asked Owen to find a safe and effective way to set a tree on fire – this was for one of the dramatised moments of the walk. I asked Lorinda to bake cakes and scones but as well as that, she became instrumental in organizing Owen and Glynne – making sure that they were preparing for the event. We arranged a date to rehearse the walk. It was important that Owen knew where to stop the tractor for Glynne so that he could rehearse speaking his narratives in situ. Having timed the walk with the spoken text, I knew that it would take roughly two and a half to three hours to complete the journey. I also realised that hearing Glynne was going to be a problem because it is usually windy on the mountain (where our route would take us). In order to try to rectify the problem, I decided to opt for using a loud-hailer which was the simplest form of portable amplification I could acquire.

3. Sunday the 26th of September 2010. *The Only Places We Ever Knew*

Location: Cwmrhaidr farm



Glynne Jones:	Lorinda Jones:	Owen Jones:	Rachel Jones:	Ioan Beechey:	Ffion Jones:
Dad: tour guide..	Mum: tea and cake maker, audience safety officer.	brother tractor driver, technician, arsonist. sheep shearing demonstrator	Sister, photographer, assistant tea maker.	my partner, technician, trailer safety officer, character actor.	myself, timekeeper, prompter. director

The publicity

This performance allows the audience a rare glimpse into the workings of a Welsh hill farm – bringing places to the surface that would inevitably remain hidden to the average walking visitor. The performance will hopefully allow the farming family the opportunity to not only share memories and histories attached to this place, but to give an audience the opportunity to have a further understanding of how the countryside is shaped by its farming inhabitants. The present at Cwmrhaidr Farm is always shaped by its past: the people and animals who have gone before and the stories they left behind.

We will be embarking on a long walk over rough terrain so please, please, please dress appropriately. I recommend bringing waterproofs and sensible shoes. At one point we will be walking over boggy ground, therefore wellies, or walking boots would be ideal. If you don't own a pair, wear old trainers and bring a second set of shoes to change into. You may like to bring a packed lunch with you as only tea and cake will be provided after the walk.

After welcoming our audience, and showing them to their seats on the trailer, I briefly introduced them to my research participants, asked Glynne to introduce himself and give a small amount of contextual information about the farm. As we journeyed up the New Road, Glynne showed initiative and began to point things out as we travelled. Although I welcomed this improvisation, it was quite difficult to hear him even with the loud-hailer, which could have been quite frustrating for the audience who could feel like important information was



Figure 17: Glynne introduces the farm



Figure 18: Glynne on the trailer talking through the loud-hailer



Figure 19: The audience on the trailer.



Figure 20: Glynne points to the bomb crater in Cae Ffynnon

being missed. The scripted text was specifically designed to be spoken when we'd come to a stop, unfortunately the tractor was having a few problems and it would be difficult to start it if the engine was turned off, therefore, at a few of the stopping points the engine had to be kept running. This in turn, had consequences for the way that Glynne delivered his text, meaning that he was competing with the sound of the tractor. Once we had all been transported to the top of the mountain, we continued our journey on foot.



Figure 21: The audience continuing their journey on the mountain on foot.

Owen and Ioan took the tractor back to the farm whilst Glynne, Lorinda and I walked with the audience. By the time we reached our first destination (Taid's commemorative stone) it had become clear that because of the loose structure of the piece and the multitude of different walking abilities within the audience, it would be difficult to encourage the audience to walk at my research participants' pace. Although I had thought about walking and safety with regards to this difficult terrain, I had not given a lot of thought to walking speed and how the variety of different abilities may slow the pace of the work down. For us as a family in Cwmrhaidr, and like the Welsh Mountain sheep that we farm, we have a specialised ability to move up and down Cwmrhaidr's awkward and steep terrain – this is a place-specific way of moving embodied through 'the gradual attunement of movement and perception.' (Ingold, 2000: 357) or 'a movement of incorporation' (p.193) or as Edward Casey suggests 'A body is shaped by the places it has come to know and that have come to it-come to take up residence in it, by a special kind of placial incorporation' (Casey, 2001: 414).

With repeated exposure to this particular terrain we have ‘feet for the place’ – an embodied understanding of the nature of the ground under-foot: slippery horizontal layers of shale; loose shale; mud; bog; deceptively deep and spongy sphagnum moss; woody, springy heather; undulating and pockmarked mountain-land; slippery pasture after heavy rain etc. Realising that people would variously see Cwmrhaiadr as picturesque and beautiful, or rugged, bleak and menacing, I did not wish to ignore these particular (and somewhat engrained) ways of looking, nor did I wish the audience to simply be enthralled and arrested by these perceptions of the landscape. Lucy Lippard (1997) proposes that ‘To read a landscape in the geographical sense is to read its history in land forms and built structures, behind which lie the stories of the people who made that history, which in most cases can only be guessed at.’ (p.287). It would seem, therefore, that the landscape at Cwmrhaiadr presented me with the problem of trying to make these ‘guessed at’ histories, stories etc. knowable and articulated by the people whose lives are entwined with them.

Mike Pearson’s *In Comes I* (2006) discusses some of his research projects and interests at a series of locations within the landscapes of North Lincolnshire. As the Lincolnshire landscape is mostly flat with very little in the way of notable features and picturesque scenes, Pearson was trying to address the problem of how to draw ‘attention to what is barely discernible’ (p. 9) and trying to urge ‘a shift from the *optic* to the *haptic*’ (p.11). Similarly, I was trying to draw attention away from an optic engagement with a landscape to some sort of haptic involvement. Although the places we passed through and the landscapes we looked at on our journey had visible and sometimes knowable features, these features/landmarks were not necessarily the most important thing about that place. Pearson describes *In Comes I* as ‘an exercise in chorography’ (p. 9). The term chorography implies a collection of things that represent a specific place or locale (ibid.), and could include a ‘description of a region’s natural features, its inhabitants, their histories, laws and traditions,

antiquities including church monuments, ecclesiastical and manorial customs, and property ownership, the etymology of names' (ibid.). *The Only Places We Ever Knew* then presents itself as a guided walk with elements of lay-chorography; a collection of historical and contemporary narratives bound to a place. The introduction included fragments of history about the estate and its previous landlord Owen Owen (see Introduction and Book 2 p.6) and information about the farming family, and how they came to be here. Later during our journey, we encounter places of significance to the family; the commemorative stone (see p.63 and Book 2 pp.13-14), for example, although readable it tells us nothing of the life it commemorates; its significance and relevance to its placement is only realised and known through Glynne's telling of its associated narrative. A small inconspicuous pile of stones becomes something else by Glynne's relating of the story about the man and his mule whose job was to guide Victorian excursionists up the mountain. The stones were once the walls of



Figure 22: Glynne asks the audience to pick up a stone from the stream to throw into the mine-shaft.

his hut where he rested, possibly even lived. Walking down the side of Pistyll y Llyn (referred to by the family as the ‘Falls’) Glynne told the tragic tale about the death of Owen Owen’s brother Thomas; again, there are no visual signifiers for this narrative. The 19th Century mine shaft at the bottom of the falls, its history and obvious archaeology is ignored and is instead shown as the place where the experiential possibility is more important than its history. In this case, Glynne asked the audience members to pick stones from the river (*Nant Y Gôg*) and to experience the childlike delight and horror of listening to the stone fall into the water at the bottom of the shaft.

One of the main ways that I attempted to change or disrupt the audiences’ way of looking was by using Glynne’s anecdotes as a way of directing the audience’s attention. I hoped that Glynne’s ‘showing-of-things’ would draw the audience’s gaze away from the landscape picture, instead focusing on the places within it or the activities that had taken place there. I wanted them to get the sense that if they had walked this route by themselves, they would have missed details of a different scale, of a different nature. For me, there are two key moments where I think this idea worked very successfully; the first is at the top of the mountain at my Taid’s stone (see also Book 2 pp 13,14). At this point, Glynne tells the audience about his father, and then he points at the landscape.



Figure 23: Glynne and the audience stand by Taid’s commemorative stone.



Figure 24: Glynne points out Taid’s place of birth to the audience.

We are asked to look at a whole, a picture if you will. Glynne then points out places within this whole; places we search for with our eyes, we may not be able to see them because they are too far away, but we might try to locate them in the landscape. It is this active way of looking rather than a withdrawn appreciation of the landscape picture that the simple gesture of showing inevitably encourages. The second moment is on the way up the mountain road, we stop and Glynne tells us about his Taid showing him how a skylark feigns injury; we look for the bird or any bird. At this stopping point he also tells us about the saying his Taid used to recite about a plant that gave the cattle good health: he looks for it, and we look with him.



Figure 25: The audience looking with Glynne as he points and tells the story about the skylark.

Through a guided act of looking, features of importance to the local inhabitants are foregrounded within their picturesque backdrop. By attempting to guide the audience's perception, subtle shifts in scale create a way of looking that enables my research participants to draw attention to the near and far; to the small and large; to the past and present and the things that represent the inhabitants collective identities. Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that a

photographic record needs to 'be more than a vignette or a series of vignettes. It must offer a sufficiently thorough and multilayered view to function as a visit or a re-visit to the place itself: In a series (whether in a book or not), one image can inform another and images and texts can inform one another extending the sense of presence beyond the individually framed view' (p.180). We could apply such a concept to the work of place-specific artistic practice; it too could form a multilayered view of a place. In *The Only Places We Ever Knew*, I attempted to create layers of experience, from the mundane to the extraordinary; the framing of everyday farm work through photographs which attempted to challenge the notion of a 'landscape picture'. Seeing farming skill first-hand, and witnessing strange moments of dramatisation... The hope being that audience members would have an experience that was complex in nature, opening other understandings and experiences of rural environments.

In both our communal and our personal experience of places there is often a close attachment, a familiarity that is part of knowing and being known **here**, in this particular place. It is this attachment that constitutes our roots in places; and the familiarity that this involves is not just a detailed knowledge, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place. (Relph 2008: 37)

This guided way of experiencing place allows an audience to perhaps appreciate the complexity of attachment to place to which Relph refers. Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that 'Narratives articulate relationships between teller and told, here and there, past and present' (p.50) thus revealing the intricacies and complexities of farm life; dispelling the myth of it being simply an occupation for economic gain. Farming here is deeply rooted in individual and collective pride, history, labour and the everyday connection between man and his environment (*being-in-the-world*); here the people and narratives of the past infiltrate the present in a myriad of ways-reassuring the inhabitants of their validity to be 'in place' (Casey, 2001: 413).



We walk, each one of us following our guide before us. Photographs mark our way through the heather; down steep climbs, over sphagnum moss clad lumps; their earthy, damp smells invading our nostrils. Islands of rushes are our stepping stones in the peaty pools that block our way, and we move around and through them as best as we can. After clambering along the mountain-top, we stop to breathe in the view as we rest our weary feet. Dad takes his cling-film clad sandwiches out of his pocket as we sit down to re-energise. We sit, on a slight gradient, some audience members perched in the heavens. My sister, Mum and I sit down near one another, whilst Dad sits amongst the audience. Some people ask questions, others chat with one another; it is tranquil and calm up here.

Heather, its springy wood our armchairs, reminds me of the time my sister and I rolled down the mountain-side for fun as our father knocked fence posts in along the mountain ridge: our clothes and hair impregnated with the distinctive smells of bracken and heather; twigs our crowns and the pink flush from the cold air, a bloom on our cheeks. In fact ‘bracken rolling’ became a favourite childhood past-time until the day Owen got a tick on his head; he cried and cried when our mother removed it. We do not rest for too long as time is passing and we are not yet even half way through our journey.



Figure 26-28: Glynne and the audience walking down the path down the side of the mountain near Pistyll y Llyn. This is the most challenging part of the walk.

One of Owen's roles during the walk was to set a tree on fire. This was one of two comic/dramatic moments of illustration. This particular intervention came at the point when Glynne talked about lightning striking a tree. Owen lit a fire in the branches of a small tree whilst we were out of view. As we approached, we saw a small amount of smoke coming from a nearby tree. When we'd decided to put this dramatisation into the work, I had imagined a slightly more substantial fire, with more of an immediate impact; but actually, Owen's fire that was very short lived, ended up being funnier because it was badly done. Lorinda, at one point had suggested that we used a metal sheet to make the sound of thunder; I had dismissed this idea, thinking it was naive. In retrospect, I actually think it would have added to the comedy. I also noticed that Glynne pointed in the direction of the actual tree that he'd seen hit by lightning rather than pretending that the one that was currently on fire was the actual tree he saw all those years ago. This was the result of my failure to give detailed direction, and for assuming that Glynne had an understanding of the theatrical convention of pretence.



Figure 29-30: Smoke from the fire that was used to illustrate the story about the tree hit by lightning.

The next moment of illustration/dramatisation came when Glynne told the story of Lewis Lewis; an old man who lived in Cwmrhaidr-Fêch. Even though he lived right next to the river, his face was the colour of soot. For this particular story, Ioan sat next to a tree by the river; he wore old-fashioned clothes, a grey wig, ‘flat cap’ and had covered his face in dirt and soot. Ioan remained still whilst the audience arrived, and then he moved subtly. At first the audience could not decide whether the figure was a mannequin, or a real person.



Figure 31: Lewis Lewis



Figure 31: The audience look across at Lewis Lewis

The walk culminated in the main agricultural shed on the farm, the place we call the Top Shed. Here, the audience were given the opportunity to rest after their walk whilst having afternoon tea.



Figure 33:The audience enjoy afternoon tea.



Figure 34-35: Owen shears whilst the audience watch.

Previously during the walk the audience had encountered the photographic and anecdotal evidence of our farming lives, but had not experienced the reality or live experience of this labour; this moment, therefore, was the ideal opportunity to show farm skill and work. In our

post-performance interview, Owen, when asked whether there is anything he thinks we should have done differently said that:

I'm sure we could have been doing more with the sheep. Like gathering the sheep from a field or off the mountain, working the dogs, oh, and then, bringing them into the sheep pen and doing something with them, sorting, could've done something like that. (Jones and O. Jones, 2011)

Owen felt that actual farming activity, although evidenced in the performance, there wasn't enough of it. I would agree that his shearing, at the end of the walk was a token gesture. There was scope during the time we spent in the farm-yard whilst having tea, for Owen and Glynne to 'carry on' with the work that they needed to do rather than to undertake some sort of demonstration of skill; this in turn might have allowed for an engagement that was less staged.



Figure 36: The audience leaves the farm.

4. Conclusion

I would argue that the ethnographic fieldwork was a fundamental aspect of the creative output, working on two levels. The first way it functioned was as a tool for building trust, and for opening up a space for dialogue with my participants. Although I was working with family members, it was important for them not to feel exposed or threatened by my work. Had I decided to work with them on the process of creating the event without having first engaged with their lives during the fieldwork, I think I would have come into that place with an already pre-conceived idea about what we would make. I also believe that without gaining their trust during the fieldwork process, they may have been a little sceptical about sharing their experiences with an unknown group of people. Owen, Lorinda and Glynne when asked about whether they would have felt differently, or found it more difficult to be honest with a researcher who was from outside the farming community, had varied responses: Owen suggested that the fact that I was his sister, helped, but also that with someone from outside of the farming community

It'd be a bit more awkward because you'd have to watch what you're doing.

They'd probably think it's cruel some of the things we do. (Jones and O. Jones, 2011)

Glynne's response was more pragmatic; he said that although he would probably need to explain things in more detail to someone from outside of the farming community, he would only have felt slightly less comfortable with them (Jones and G. Jones, 2011). Lorinda had similar views to both Glynne and Owen, but also said that once she'd got used to the camera and the fact that I was walking around with a note-book:

I sort of switched off from the fact that you were there doing something. (Jones and L. Jones, 2011)

Secondly, the fieldwork was a very valuable resource for collecting material for creating artistic work.

Giving Glynne the opportunity to be the guide meant that the lay expert has a degree of control over his representation; I wanted the audience to have to engage with a real person in his/her daily environment. I wanted there to be dialogue between the audience and the farming participants and this was encouraged by the informal nature of the event: audience members felt free to ask questions, which gave the participants even more of an opportunity to share their experiences of farm life.

Although the informal nature of the work was important, and allowed the family members to engage with an audience as themselves in their own environment, the lack of restrictions meant that the work lacked an obvious theatrical structure, which at times gave the audience perhaps too much freedom to intervene. The work might have had a clearer dramaturgy had I made the points at which Glynne tells a scripted part of the text more pronounced. I could have done more work with Glynne on the delivery of his texts through the loud hailer, as he sometimes moved his head whilst speaking which meant that we occasionally lost some of his text. In retrospect, I should have found a better form of portable amplification so that the audience could hear him, even if they were walking at a slower pace. Some of the things that Glynne spoke about were improvised, and he tended to say these things whilst on the move, which of course resulted in only the audience members that were nearest to him hearing what he said. Because this was an unforeseen part of the event, I had no way during the piece to make these improvised anecdotes/comments available for all audience members. As Glynne, recounted in a recent interview:

Glynne: When we were on the actual walk, I sort of started remembering things, didn't I, and I started saying various things, some things we'd discussed before, but uh.

Ffion: Lots of improvisation. That was good yeah.

Glynne: As it went on, yeah, it was improvised really as we went along really, a lot of it.

Ffion: I think the actual elements that were scripted remained in the work...

Glynne: They were there but, unless you studied that script, and remembered it off, off by heart sort of thing, it's difficult to remember.

Ffion: They were all, all those stories were in the work, but there were more, which was great.

Glynne: Yes we added more as we went round. You remember things don't you, as you go around. (Jones and G. Jones, 2011)

Significantly, the actual performance/walk became an aid to Glynne's memory.

Tim Ingold states that 'To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past' (Ingold, 2000: 189). In an unfamiliar landscape, we may feel the presence, or imagine the presence of a past, but we lack the knowledge to access it. On the other hand, in a landscape that is familiar to us, we are likely to perceive very differently, because we have access to some of the unseen layers that are a part of landscape: we may see not simply conventional figurations of beauty, but instead a palimpsest of experiences.

Suppose for a moment that the audience members went back to Taid's commemorative stone (Book 2 pp.13-14) and once again looked at the landscape. Now they might not just imagine the possibility of a past, nor even simply stand there and perceive the landscape; for surely they would now possibly call up the memory of Glynne standing next to the stone, shepherd crook in hand pointing in the directions of 'Cefnmaesmawr', 'Glanmerin', 'Bwlch' and 'Cwmcemrhiw'. They might remember that particular day and the people that were with them; they would hopefully remember some of the things that Glynne told them. By the act of showing or disclosing, the landscape reveals itself as made up of individual places; the unknowable becomes potentially knowable or at the very least, semi-permeable. Lay discourses have the potential to challenge the 'landscape picture'; to fragment its wholeness; to make visible the 'barely discernable' (Pearson, 2006: 9); to dispute conventional perceptions of landscape as 'picturesque'; and to challenge an engrained appreciation for what Yuriko Saito (2007) calls "'scenic" aesthetics' (p.62), even if the moment is fleeting. Yi Fu Tuan says of the visitor that 'Generally speaking, we may see that only the visitor (and particularly the tourist) has a viewpoint; his perception is often a matter of using his eyes to compose pictures. The native, by contrast has a complex attitude derived from his immersion in the totality of his environment' (Tuan, 1974: 63). In *The Only Places We Ever Knew*, I was attempting to create a work that found some common middle ground between these two perspectives.

In *Focus on Farmers*, Lucy Lippard writes 'Farmers and artists, in other words, operate on ground level, before culture gets its hands on their activities and their products. At best, artists and farmers also share local knowledge, and can illuminate the places where they work in unique ways' (Lippard, 2007 :38). I agree with Lippard's suggestion that artists and farmers can produce alternative and unexpected knowledges of place and furthermore, that

artists working with farmer's can incorporate both of their placial practices in order to create work that is both informative, expressive and sympathetic.

Although I have been discussing the expression of place found in the performance as a collective experience of place, one critique of my work could be that the performance centred too much on Glynne's experiences. Although to some extent this is true, these experiences have often become collective knowledge through their re-telling and dissemination to the rest of the family. Small family farms are still very much centred around patriarchy, and although I am acutely aware of how the masculine narrative of the 'farmer' proper (i.e being a man and not a woman, even if a female business partner does 50% of the work) is perpetuated by both men and women (see Saugeres, 2002), I am not intending to challenge this directly in my work. Many of the anecdotes were handed down from previous generations, and re-told by Glynne or his father: thus we collectively claimed ownership of them. Another, possible critique is that there was a lack of female visibility. This is mainly because Lorinda works away from the farm, and much of what she does on the farm is concerned with the domestic space and helping out at busy times. I would like to think that touches of femininity were an integral part of the performance; for example, the objects, carefully made, and reflecting my feminine interpretation of the anecdotes told by Glynne as well as the welcoming hospitality of the tea in the shed. Lorinda said in an interview with me that:

When you were saying that when we'll come back we'll have this tea and things, well, the natural thing for me as a farmer's wife is that I want to cook a meal for everybody, you know, make them, you know make a sort of a social gathering of like-minded people; it's usually farmers isn't it. So that's my sort of thing. (Jones and L. Jones, 2011)

Lorinda's assertion reaffirms how she sees herself within the farming enterprise; as caregiver, and a 'good' host. Her comment shows that the individual tasks that make up her taskscape are quite different to those of the men. Tim Ingold (2000) suggests that 'the particular kinds of tasks that a person performs are an index of his or her personal and social identity: the tasks you do depend on who you are, and in a sense the performance of certain tasks *makes* you the person who you are' (p.325). The roles of men and women on the farm are divided by gender; the tasks that Lorinda undertakes on the farm are an accepted part of the patriarchal structure of farm life. (Although I struggle with this traditional notion of what it means to be a woman or a man within this context, I don't feel that this is something that I am able to challenge or elaborate on within the constraints of this research project.)

I attempted to create a space for my research participants to contemplate their way of life and to have a sense of authorship of the work. Although that co-authorship was not as successful as I had hoped, there was a sense of collaboration within the work. Glynne expressed a sense of co-ownership of the work, saying:

I think, we came out with ideas sometimes as well. (Jones and G. Jones , 2011)

Owen, when asked about whether I had given him the opportunity to express his ideas and put his 'stamp on the work' replied:

Owen: I'm shy probably, so that doesn't help, so I couldn't say a lot.

Ffion: I know, but I said, I tried to find something that you could do,

Owen: Oh yes.

Ffion: And you were happy to do that. Why were you happy to do that?

Owen: Because I can do that.

Ffion: Right.

Owen: Um, well, it's shearing and the sheep have to be shorn...

Ffion: What about with an audience? How did that feel?

Owen: It was alright, people were taking pictures like they'd never seen it being done before. So yeah, it was quite funny to see the reaction. I have had people walking, walkers walking past and stopping, and taking pictures.

Ffion: That must be very strange, to be going about your daily life and for people to just...

Owen: Well it's just so that they can see what goes on, and how hard it is to shear (both laugh). (Jones and O. Jones 2011)

Owen then, felt that his shyness prevented him from being able to express himself through words, but that his ability and skill was appreciated and was of interest to the audience. He makes the connection between the explorations of identity seen in the performance and his actual experience of 'performing' for an uninvited audience on the farm. He feels that both of these moments of 'showing' are an important aspect of allowing visitors the opportunity to 'see what goes on'. Lorinda's experience of the performance was one of ownership and also one of pride:

Lorinda: Oh, I loved it...

Ffion: Were you proud?

Lorinda: Oh, I was! I wanted everybody to come up then, I wanted, to get on the tractor and to show everybody again, oh here we go...(she starts to cry) It's an emotional thing. But no, it was a lovely day, I'm so proud of my whole family, because we all had a little role to play...

Ffion: We did, it was really good...

Lorinda: And that was so nice, and it was so lovely that the people that came were so appreciative, and um, they made me then think, oh God, maybe we do live in a special place, yeah...sorry it makes me go all emotional. (Jones and L. Jones 2011)

Lorinda's experience of the performance is also one of realisation; a realisation that perhaps they do have something to share with others, and that their place is of interest and importance. Her emotional reaction is possibly to do with family values, but it might also be a non-verbal expression of her attachment to the place and a possible outcome of the artistic practice itself. By drawing attention to or incorporating what Yuriko Saito refers to as 'everyday aesthetics' that is the aesthetic experiences that make up our everyday lives (rather than the spectator-like aesthetic experiences of viewing art (2007: p.10), we open up a space for appreciating and seeing the multifaceted and highly aesthetic of our lives. The thesis of everyday aesthetics aims to take into consideration those very mundane experiences. Perhaps *The Only Places We Ever Knew* brought with it a moment of the extraordinary to the lives of my participants. When regarding moments of 'special experience' (p.45) in our everyday lives, Saito refers to them as being 'an *exception* to the everyday experience' (ibid.). These are moments that punctuate the mundane; for example, our eye might be drawn to the slow descent of a feather from a rafter in the shed, or we might happen to witness an incredible sunset whilst checking the sheep – these are what Saito is alluding to when she writes about

‘special experience’. They are what I think of as profound moments of aesthetic clarity; an aesthetic attunement that sits precariously on the line between mundane activity and some sort of outer body experience. For me, the aesthetic of my own moments of ‘special experience’ are played through my eyes like a film, with almost an ability to slow down time; for those fractional moments, I suddenly feel very alive. Perhaps then, by creating a space for an attunement; for showing others the wonder of where we live, for having the opportunity to experience the farm outside of the remit of work for a few short hours, may have produced moments of aesthetic clarity and ‘special experience’ for my participants.

One thing that really struck me, during the performance was how the placement of Taid’s commemorative stone (see Book 2 pp. 13,14) acts as a claim to the land that we could never own. We are tenant farmers (see Introduction) and once Glynne retires, Owen will likely take on the second (and final) inherited tenancy; he will be the third generation of the Jones family to farm here. This means that the family will have invested three lifetimes into a farm that does not belong to them. With this in mind, there is an unspoken understanding that we will one day no longer be here; an awareness of our mortality, and our invisibility within the landscape because of this tenant status, a sense that in order for our present to be preserved we must leave something for the future. Without land ownership, our claim here is temporary. Once the succession of inherited tenancies has ended, our story, or at least parts of it will likely be erased by whoever takes over the farm. Taid’s stone not only acts in commemoration, but also as a collective sign that ‘We were here’. The time capsule, buried beneath is an object buried with the hope that one day someone may come along and find it; a purposefully placed archaeological artefact for the future perhaps? Edward S. Casey asserts that:

Commemoration not only looks forward in looking back, thereby transmitting deferred effects of the past, it affirms the past’s selfsameness in the present by means of a consolidated re-enactment, thus assuring a continuation of remembering into the

future. Whether this re-enactment is by text or ritual, or whether it occurs within the psyche, it connects past with present in a genuinely perduring way. (Casey, 2000: 256)

This act of remembering the past, and actively drawing the past into the present is not simply an act of remembrance, but possibly also an act of metaphorically ‘becoming’ the land. When asked about the stone Glynne’s explanation was both pragmatic and poignant:

Ffion: I interpret Taid’s commemorative stone as being our sort of graffiti, if you like, on the land, saying that ‘We were here’ doing farming. And I don’t know if... do you think, maybe that is that possible that that’s part of what it is?

Glynne: Yes probably, because he was here, and um, **that’s all he did**, he didn’t have any hobbies or anything and uh, that was his life wasn’t it. That’s all that he was interested in was the farm and he put everything into it didn’t he really, the sheep especially. **And, I think he deserved to be up there really**, and it was looking out over the farm, and actually, you can almost see, where he was born, and where he moved from, Glanmerin, and Cefnmaesmawr, they were all in the distance there.

Interesting to note the importance of farm names in farming culture; farmers are nearly always known by their farm names i.e. Glynne would be Glynne Cwmrhaiadr or Cwmrhead rather than Jones. This could be because Welsh culture is particularly interested in where you are from and who you know as a starting point to forming social ties and connecting themselves with a wider community.

Ffion: I get the sense, I don’t know, it’s silly really, but that you had a future of this place in mind when you put that there, because you’ve got that time capsule. Is that about... do you imagine...

Glynne: I don't know...

Ffion: That in the future that someone will dig that up and say, oh, that's what this stone's about, this is who the man is.

Glynne: You never know, I mean, if that stays there for hundreds of years, I hope it will anyway, um **you never know, people might come along and wonder who he was**, and we probably ought to have put a bit more information on the stone...

Ffion: Maybe.

Glynne: But if the stone, I mean, is it going to last? Is another thing...?

Ffion: The sheep all rub against it...

Glynne: **The sheep rub against it, but the weather of course can affect it, you know the frost, well if it starts splitting, the frost gets in.**

Ffion: I guess you could have it done in a stronger stone, like granite or something.

Glynne: **Yes, but that would look out of place really wouldn't it, a piece of granite.** I didn't want something too ornamental...

Ffion: Yes I can tell that you wanted something that just came out of the ground.

Glynne: Well yes, really, and it came from here as well, that stone.

(Jones and G. Jones, 2011)

Glynne sees the stone as being ‘of-place’. He didn’t want to use an ornamental stone, simply because it would be ‘out-of-place’. This stone has the appearance as though it has just grown out of the ground, and indeed, it did come out of the ground at Cwmrhaidr. He also sees the placement of the stone as a privileged position at Cwmrhaidr, saying that Taid ‘deserved to be up there’ in a place that overlooks so much of the farm. Glynne also understands that although he would like the stone to last for a long period of time, the weather, and the erosion by natural phenomena, and by the sheep themselves who rub against it; shelter behind it, and grind their teeth on it may mean that either its life will be short lived, or it will become so eroded by these things, that it will become a part of the landscape once again. These bodies are firmly rooted in Cwmrhaidr, through their ongoing engagement, and incorporation with their environment they become their place; eroded, marked and changed along with the land that they farm.

Human beings do not, in their movements, inscribe their life histories upon the surface of nature as do writers upon the page; rather, these histories are woven along with the life-cycles of plants and animals, into the texture of the surface itself. (Ingold, 2000; 198)

The Only Places We Ever Knew was a simple performance, lacking theatrical and choreographic complexity, which is not to say that it was not organised or planned in any way. As director, I made some very particular design choices, preferring to keep things simple and to let the host place and people present themselves. Theatrical touches added the element of surprise, whilst objects attempted to blend or comment on their environment. There was no conventional acting here (although there was a script): just the inhabitants telling some stories and an attempt at illuminating their place within this landscape and environment. As a result, *The Only Places We Ever Knew* was more than a guided walk; it was an event that not only gave us as a farming family the opportunity to explain ourselves,

but also gave an audience a momentary insight into the lives of farmers here in a particular location in Wales. It endeavoured to challenge a certain romanticisation of rurality through its engagement with the history of the people and the land, shared everyday farming experiences, it drew attention to features in the landscape, made the audience 'look again', it used carefully placed and made objects that commented on, or explained aspects of farm life. The performance will have left its mark on Cwmrhaidr in quite subtle ways; through gained insights, re-remembered stories from the past, and through the re-walking of the performance route during everyday farming activities.

Yes, farming here, can be mundane; as Lorinda expressed it:

We're here all the time, we don't see anything unusual about our life, you know. (Jones and L. Jones, 2011)

But, on the other-hand, our lives are filled with profoundly marking experiences (see Pearson, 2006: 42) that lodge in the memories of those who experience, or are told them. Somehow this place gets in; Taid's stone, then, becomes our emblem, our mascot, or reminder that 'as people construct places, places construct people' (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001: 7): the stone, a reaching out to the future as well as a mnemonic for remembering the past is a gesture of belonging 'and becoming part of the landscape' (Lippard, 1997: 34).

Chapter 2: Temporalities

Experiment 2: Ode to Perdurance/Awdl Amser

In this chapter, I examine the process of creating a series of ten stop-animated films that draw attention to past daily work and its remains, or traces, in the contemporary farm landscape and environment. I suggest how our past and our present are entwined in our everyday, routine relationships with the place. Early in the second year of my fieldwork, my participants had asked me to try and locate a TV program/film made or aired in 1964 about shearing on Hyddgen (the mountain that belonged to Taid's family farm). Glynne had hoped that my placement within the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies would mean that I would be in a position to have a better chance at finding it compared to him. Glynne had given me a set of diaries to see if I could find any information from them relating to the film. Unfortunately, I didn't have any success with locating the documentary film; the animations are a response to my failure at finding it.

1. Methodology

In the morning's half-light, Glynne is standing by the side of the warm Rayburn stove, a crumbling blue bag clutched in his hands, bulging with small angular objects only partially visible through the frail, papery plastic. I peer within, assaulted by the unmistakable smell of the bat-infested attic – 'These are Taid's diaries, I thought you might like to have a look at them'. Contained within are nineteen diaries – they are the kind you receive free from the NFU, animal feed companies etc. You can easily spot the older ones by their dishevelled, moth-eaten edges. The diaries start in 1957 and are complete until 1966. After this complete

set of nine, the more recent ones have missing years. Glynne tells me that they caught Taid burning some on the fire one day, but they managed to stop him before he put the whole lot on. The ones from the 1980's to the early 1990's contain very little writing as Taid had retired by then; he also spent a great deal of time in hospital having various operations on his arthritic joints, which meant they were somewhat forgotten.

I read through the diaries. What struck me the most in the earlier ones was how mobile these young farm men were. Taid and his brothers seemed to always be at another farm doing odd jobs, or fetching machinery from someone else's farm. One of the diaries records the delivery of their new tractor (probably their first-ever tractor). It also struck me how little detail of the social and familial side of life they contained, apart from the odd note to say they were going to another farm for supper or if they were ill in bed. What was very much evident in these diaries was the labour of farm work; of all the jobs they fitted into the week, of the cycle of farm life and work being very similar from year to year; similar even to my current fieldwork diary. It was also striking that the labour was recorded simply, and there was no elaboration of the physicality and brutality of that labour.

Jay Griffiths, in *Pip Pip: A Sideways Look at Time* (2000) discusses how 'clock time' is only one example of varied concepts of temporality.

In rural place, days roll over the horizon at you, round and gold as the sun or stars or rainstorms. In this more Kairological time, the future comes towards you (*l'avenir*, in French, expresses that, or 'Christmas is coming') and recedes behind you while you may well stay still, standing in the present-the only place which is ever really anyone's to stand in. This is why the countryside, and access to it, is so vital in over-urbanized societies; it offers a kinder time. (p.22)

These diaries then, represent both chronological and kairological time (both quantitative and qualitative). But I have to disagree with Griffith's assumption of countryside time being kinder. Although this kairological time has a seemingly slower tempo, it does not necessarily make it any kinder than chronological time: who is to say that the time it takes to put up a

fence by hand over the course of a few days is a kinder time to rushing about working in a city – a different rhythm perhaps, but not kinder. Her observation of 'kinder' time in relation to the rural reaffirms the romantic. Tim Ingold (2000) however understands how traditionally, the tasks that make up the taskscape were intrinsically linked to the rhythm of natural phenomena, thus the environment came with a set of affordances that allowed people, or inhibited people from accomplishing tasks (see pp: 325-326).

Glynne had looked through these diaries for portrayals of his own childhood and had been left disappointed, and I equally felt a sense of both sadness and loss for those stories and anecdotes that these diaries did **not** contain. There was something cold about them, mainly because they were the remains of a labouring body when the body had been returned to the earth, but also because of their matter-of-fact quality. But I wondered what had become of these objects that were laboured on; the fences, handmade gates, posts, ploughed fields, hedges, bridges etc. I looked through each diary picking out any activities that might have produced something which may still be locatable on the farm.

As the earlier diaries (1957-1963) were based at Glanmerin (the farm where Taid and his family lived up until 1964), I concentrated on the diaries post-1964, which was the year that they took on the tenancy at Cwmrhaiadr, and noted down any entries where the farm work might have produced a durable artefact. Most of the entries that drew me concerned either fence posts, hedges, gates or wdders (An wdder is a piece of fence across the river; the 'stock-proof netting' keeps sheep from venturing into the next field via the river, but allows water and small debris to move freely downstream). My subsequent method of searching for the objects from the diary was archaeological; looking at the description in the diary, deciding on a likely location, and making a decision about whether the object found was indeed the same as the one described in the diary. I recorded my observations in a further notebook and took a photograph of the artefact (see Book 2 pp 33-40).

The relics, the little pieces of the trail that Taid left behind, are deadened when I find them. Like taxidermy, their real-life lustre has been dulled; the shine has truly faded. What was once a brand new fence is a soggy quivering entanglement of rusted steel and ‘chewed up and spat out’ wood. In their rotting, a whole host of other life has taken them over. Coagulated and slimy, the algae become part of the sodden wooden mass, and in my touching I impart some warmth onto their dank existence. What does one make with and of the rotting remains of a life, a lifework? As they fade into the background or into the earth, the rotting remains take on a life of their own, they grow, change, quiver and crumble under the influence of other phenomena; other cycles; other kairological times. Algae and fungi perform their symbiosis in perfect harmony to produce their feathery, spongy, alien clusters, whilst moss slowly grows and clings to any possible foothold. Woodlice move in, and other crawling creatures lay their eggs deep within the sodden wood. There is something overwhelming about the textures of these artefacts, they've gone from hard and rigid objects, to almost possessing fluidity: their textures are oozing everywhere; they leave their marks on me as I leave mine on theirs. I touch each object; to feel for something other, other than I have words for – to embrace me, to come to me, to come at me. With the occasional post, creative possibilities are revealed, illuminating the way that I take the documenting photograph, but with most, I am numbed. The process feels calculated and cold; I had imagined adventure and excitement. Writing in his monograph *Industrial Ruins* (2005), Tim Edensor uses the term ‘gothic sensibility’ to describe the way that we encounter ruins. He suggests that to encounter the crumbling remains of the past is to be exposed to our own fear of our inevitable mortality (p.13). Although these fence posts and gates etc. are not standard architectural ruins, for me there is poignancy in their ruination, because they are the material remains of a known labouring body; I feel emotional vulnerability after my encounters with them.

1.1 Concept

When encountering these remains, scale – that of time and size – seemed to be a characteristic unique to each individual artefact. The molecular scale of the relationship between algae and fungi to form what we call lichen was interesting to me, as was the unique shape of small clumps of moss and rosettes of minute fungi of varying shades. The result of the relationships between the varying size and scale of the natural phenomena seen on or around the archaeological artefact, and the unique, and on closer inspection, sumptuous texture that they created as well as the obvious slow pace of their life-cycles led me to conceive of creating a time-lapse film of one or more of these remains over a six month period. Along with the time-lapse, I would make a felt version of some of the material growing on the fence-posts etc. and install them on microscopic slides. These slides would be arranged as some sort of wall hanging. As I was conceiving of this work being an installation, I had also thought that it might be interesting for the audience to interact with the material/plant and insect life of the fencepost through microscopic samples taken from each artefact.

I wasn't certain that enough would happen during the proposed time-lapse for it to be noticeable on the film, so I began to think of possible ways that I could draw attention to the passing of time: Sam Taylor-Wood's *Still Life* (2001) and *A Little Death* (2002) came to mind when I was considering this. In *A Little Death*, Taylor-Wood has placed a dead hare in a very particular pose (reminiscent of Dutch still-life painters symbolic placing of props) against a wall. To the right of the hare is a peach. In this time-lapse film, the hare decomposes before our eyes, and in its speeded-up decomposition we witness how this death is a part of a new lifecycle; as flies lay their eggs on the rotting flesh, which in turn hatch into maggots and then eventually pupae, and finally transform into thousands of flies (and the life-

cycle continues). The viewer is confronted with a sense of mortality, one that suggests that even in death, life is everywhere. The peach remains the same throughout the film, which heightens the sense of speed, and draws attention to the visceral textures of the dead hare, which before our eyes liquefies and is re-absorbed into other living things.

My intention was to draw attention to the passing of time, and to the different life-cycles of plants and other natural phenomena. I thought that if I installed an object that would decay or change quickly in comparison to the phenomena of the fencepost, then it may draw attention to how much time had lapsed. For example, in one of the more rotten fence posts I could plant a single tulip or daffodil bulb, which would emerge, grow, flower and die in the course of the film. Other things that I would install would be made from natural, found materials on the farm. For example, there is a huge amount of dry *Molinia* grass up on the mountain that I had experimented with plaiting together; I considered weaving something from this material, perhaps a version of a corn dolly. I would leave this object attached to a fence or post, and watch it decompose or be appropriated by birds as a nest building material.

My encounters with these objects had reacquainted me with my memories of the messy materiality of childhood play, and this in turn influenced my choice of using those materials that had been an important part of our play on the farm in my creative practice. Helen Tovey (2007) observes that ‘an outdoor environment for young children is a dynamic living place constantly changing as children and adults transform it. It is not a static predetermined layout to which children have to adapt, nor is it just a scenic backdrop for a series of “activities”, rather it is a domain that takes shape as children or children and adults inhabit it. Children interact with the environment almost like a play partner, shaping and transforming it, but in turn being shaped by the experiences and interactions it enables’ (Tovey, 2007: 54). We had a very long and habitual relationship with outdoor spaces and

natural materials as children, and in fact, this relationship has evolved into an artistic alternative type of play.

It is midsummer. We gather bits of old wood, a couple of nails and a hammer, and off we go. We are not the best builders; we never create elaborate dens which resemble houses; these are 'rough and ready' spaces to play. At the north edge of the garden stands a small group of conifers; it is dark in here, and there are always midges and armour-plated woodlice at home in its damp ambience. A couple of these trees have split into two or three trunks early on in their lives, leaving a nice clear space in the centre. It is cool in the shade of the trees: their crushed leaves impart the heady scent of the coniferous juice. We've brought with us a sheet of MDF – the kind left over from kitchen cupboards (in fact it may once have been a kitchen cupboard door) and proceed to our new-found tree. I am master *saer coed* (carpenter) and whilst delegating amongst ourselves about the best placement for our new table, we come to the conclusion that we will stick it in the central clearing of one of the trees. They help me carry the wood and lay it carefully down on the twisted centre trunk of the tree, whilst I then skilfully (well, in my mind I was) hammer in the nails. Spider's scatter, woodlice scamper, out of crevices and away from the danger of my podgy fingers and my newly acquired carpentry skill. It is certainly not the best looking, or for that matter level table, but for us, it is perfect.

Jobs are delegated; Owen is to fetch some small twigs and sticks for our (pretend) fire, whilst Rachel and I look around on the woodland floor for cooked chicken (white rotten wood). We return to where Owen has brought back some firewood, and make a small fire in the hollow of one of the trees. Tying a piece of orange bailer twine to the handle of the bucket, I loop it over a branch above the fire to create a cooking pot. Rachel cooks the chicken, stirring it carefully as Owen and I

look on, foxglove leaves our plates awaiting the juicy chicken; our mouths almost watering with anticipation.

Later on, we gather goods for our new village shop; cooked chicken, cabbage (whole foxglove plants), sweets (heather flowers), and some cans of fruit (raided from the kitchen cupboard). We take them to the garage next to the house, set up a table with our wares, and carefully write their prices onto the blackboard outside. We are shrewd sellers, selling to anyone who passes by (although, these are few and far between, so instead we take turns being different people). We are giddy with excitement, and reluctant to shut up shop come the evening, when the midges begin to mark our flesh.

I felt the draw of play, of marking these objects/artefacts in some way with that of the marks of childhood, the constant shifting and moving of materials from one place to the next, of making something out of the textural polyphony of natural materials to hand. Tovey suggests that children make meaning from ‘seemingly insignificant features of the environment’ (p. 8). What would it mean to attempt to draw attention to these objects from the diary through playful means, whilst at the same time, drawing attention to different scales and different types of time? These artefacts/sites are insignificant; they are well blended by time into the messy contours of the past and the present. Constantly evolving and always in the process of becoming. Looking back through the notes that I had made about my encounters with the objects from the diaries, I began to choose some of them that I was certain were of the period. My archaeological process left me with a group of ten artefacts/sites that I would work with.

I recommend that the reader watch *Ode to Perdurance* (Disk 1) at this point, before continuing with the remainder of this chapter.

The animations in the following text will be referred to in their numerical order.

1 - Moss on rails

2 - Spiky post

3 - Low wall

4 - Bridge

5 - Lichen on post

6 - String on manger

7 - Ysgubor doors

8 - Rotten post

9 - Wdder and wool

10 - Stones on post

1.2 Animations

The next stage of my process was to look at which materials were available at each site and to conceive of a way of using them to create a short film. Each site had very particular ecological properties, which influenced the type of materials used and the way that the material was used, on or with the site. To illustrate this, I will briefly discuss the methodological approach used in each film.

Animation 1 was made near the farmhouse. At the bottom of the dairy steps, just below the cowshed is a rotting fence post and a small section of wooden rails next to the gate. The area around the 'post and rails' is fairly damp, and moss seems to be slowly creeping up the steps and in the direction of the post. Having witnessed a natural phenomenon in action, I exploited the fact that animation was a perfect medium for speeding up time. In this instance, I gathered a large amount of moss from the surrounding area, and carefully stuck it to the

fence post and rails piece by piece, taking a photograph each time that I placed a new piece of moss onto the object. When played back as an animation, the moss seemed to grow on the post in a heightened and staccato version to what a real-time time-lapse film might reveal. This was one of two objects that really subverted the idea of time-lapse; doing what nature does over the course of years in a day (Animation 5 also uses the same approach).

In the farmyard, there is a very low wall, which (before I made Animation 3) was completely obscured by moss, ferns and creeping buttercup. For this film I did the opposite from the other two, and revealed the wall, bit by bit until it was clearly visible. I had contemplated reversing this film, so that the moss etc. appeared to grow on the wall, but decided that I liked the archaeological method of revealing because it was reminiscent of a particular childhood activity. There was once a mansion at Cwmrhaidr, owned by Owen Owen (see Introduction and Book 2 p.6). In its later life, the mansion had caught fire, and was demolished. The debris from the demolition was dumped at a couple of locations in the surrounding area. As children, we had found some shards of pottery and had been drawn to excavate the area. With sticks and sharp pieces of slate, we had dug and scraped away the dirt, revealing as we went, broken plates, glass, mug handles, clay pipes; all the usual detritus. Like magpies we were drawn to the shiny fragments – the blue and white pottery, blue or unusual coloured glass etc. There was a thrill in finding ‘stuff’, and there was a certain thrill in revealing this wall; a presencing of something that had remained hidden and ignored for some time.

Animation 2 uses a rotten ‘straining post’ (a ‘straining post’ takes the strain of the fence netting when you pull a fence tight) in the top right hand corner of the sheep pens. Growing near to the post are clumps of rushes. I utilised these as a material for this particular animation. Rushes played an important role in our play as children. We used to plait them, something that my maternal Grandfather had once shown us. I also remember Nain

(Grandmother) showing us how to peel the outer layer of the rush off to reveal a spongy, white, spaghetti-like centre. She had told us that she had used these as candle wicks when she was young. For this animation, I prepared the post, by drilling holes all over it; then I gathered bundles of rushes and placed a single rush in a hole; then took an image. I continued like this until the whole post was covered from top to bottom in spines. The finished animation appears quite organic, even though it is an artistic construct rather than exploiting any natural processes.

Animation 4 uses a rustic bridge over the river at the bottom of Cae Bungalow and Cae Galltybladur. For this particular animation, I used clay from the river-bank below. I found some bright orange clay, probably containing some sort of mineral deposit (iron-ore perhaps). I used this, along with the usual grey clay to smooth onto the bridge. I also used lichen in a stripe formation along the bridge. This object was adjacent to a part of the river where we would spend most of the summer holidays; making objects out of the river-clay and stones.

Animation 9 uses an 'wdder' which crosses the river at the bottom of Pistyll y Llyn. This was the only animation that I made where I used a material that was not found in abundance at the location. For this animation, I used sheep wool, wrapping it gradually around individual squares of fence; then felting it in place with friction, soap and water. Sheep often rub on fences; you sometimes see lines of weather-felted wool on fences. I was also aware of how natural debris often gets stuck on wdders and sometimes has to be cleared away by Glynne or Owen to prevent the river from ripping the whole fence away from its posts. Recently, we've had a great deal of rain (2012), and this wdder was torn down by the natural debris becoming tangled in the fence (the wool design I had left there exacerbated the problem). Glynne and Owen have re-installed the woolly-wire since, and some of the wool is still attached. The nature of this animation, draws attention to texture and shape, the soft

texture of the wool with the hard geometric squares of the fence netting, whilst alluding to how animal bodies leave their own marks on the landscape.

In the Top Shed, there is a single concrete manger running the length of the shed. It has steel bars that run upwards from it. For Animation 6, I used materials that were already in the shed in a playful way. The long pieces of 'bailer twine' were wrapped around the manger bars and around a shovel that happened to be leaning there. I also cut out a small image of a sheep and a cow that I found on some discarded feed packets. I hung these images on the baler twine as I wrapped it around and around until it became trapped against the steel bar by the twine. Along with these images a small piece of white card, ripped from a medicine bottle's packaging also travelled up the twine. Using red 'pitch' (a waxy paint used to stamp sheep with identifiable letters) I wrote the word 'Moo' on the card. During the animation, the 'Moo' disintegrates into nothing as it moves up the twine. This film is very much influenced by the possibility of play and found materials on site. Everyday agricultural materials and objects (such as the shovel) are enrolled into an unusually playful activity, and highlights how with such application they might create humour. It also draws attention to the lack of cattle on the farm, and how the building was once home to the suckler beef herd (see Introduction).

The Ysgubor is the shed where we keep some of the dogs. Animation 7 uses the double doors of the shed as a blackboard. Having written all of the names of the dogs that I had ever known on the farm onto the doors (some of the names are doubled up because two dogs have been given the same names at some point during my lifetime), I wipe the door with a cloth along a horizontal line, erasing the names of the dogs and the outline of Owen. During the animation, two dogs walk across the door as I take my photo, drawing attention to the passing and often fleeting lives of these non-human beings whose role on the farm 'fall somewhere between livestock and coworkers for the human shepherds' (Haraway, 2008: 55).

They are animals that serve functional purposes and have specialist roles within the management of the farm; this in turn expands the farm's workforce when gathering sheep. They have names (unlike the sheep) and distinctive personalities and behavioural traits which means that attachments and detachments to these animals can be based on how well they do their job and how intelligent they are, though usually it is a combination of their herding abilities and their personalities that produces a 'special' dog. For Glynne they are often his only companions during the day when Lorinda is away at work and Owen is working elsewhere. Working dogs live in kennels in the farm yard rather than in the family home; the 'pet' status is never quite fully realised, because they are not associated with human domestic space. The relationship between the dog and the farmer is nearly always mediated through an association with the bodies of sheep. Sheep give the dogs a purpose within this setting and thus their status as pets might only manifest itself as the dog ages and is retired from gathering. Usually the farm keeps between two and three working dogs at any one time. Towards the later years of a sheepdog's life, a young dog will be brought in, ready to take the place of an older dog when it dies. Their lives are always overlapping. We may appreciate them as individual animals, and remember each and every one of them, but we have also learnt to be able to move on when they die, they have fleeting lives, and this is something that we accept.

During my fieldwork, I asked Glynne whether he has had a favourite dog over the years; I had already hypothesised an answer to this because I distinctly remember his terrible sadness when Floss died. What set Floss out from the other dogs was an unmatched loyalty towards Glynne – a very thoughtful herder, and an incredibly kind natured and loving dog. During fieldwork, I noted that Glynne spoke fondly, almost like a proud parent when discussing Jess (one of his current dogs). He often commented on the intellectual ability of Jess. He suggested that she remembered routes, and where any weak spots were on our

gathering paths where the flock tended to break out. He also spoke of an intuition that meant that he only ever needed to give her very basic commands and direction, and that she liked to ‘think for herself’. As she is a Welsh sheepdog, she doesn't have a ‘fixed eye’; something you can witness in Border Collies (low crouched stance with their eyes firmly fixed on the sheep). With Welsh sheepdogs, they are nonchalant with the sheep: sometimes they don't even look as though they're concentrating on the sheep in front of them. They weave backwards and forwards behind the sheep, rather than creeping behind them in the typical low stance of the Border Collie. Welsh sheepdogs also tend to be vocal in order to move the sheep and Jess frequently uses this trait to her advantage, especially when the sheep are being stubborn. Welsh sheepdogs have expressive tails, which tend to be held in the upright position when working; this is in contrast to the tails of Border Collies which tend to hold their tails downwards, sometimes even between their legs.

One of the things I have noticed during undertaking fieldwork at Cwmrhaidr is the seemingly inherited way of calling to a sheepdog. These utterances often seem non-sensical to me, being neither English nor Welsh. They are better explained as a shorthand language that attempts to translate meaningful words into useful sounds. For example Glynne will shout “cerall” at a dog, which is a shortened version of ‘cer yn nol’ (go back), “tima” which is short for ‘tyrd ti yma’ (you come here), and “gorlan” which means (lie down) but doesn't really translate as a shortened version of this. These words and phrases are at their most obscure (in terms of meaning) when Glynne is shouting angrily at the dog to do something from a distance, or when correcting a dog which has taken it upon itself to do something entirely different from what was requested. They are often angry, gibberish utterances that attempt to appeal to the sheepdog's sense of hearing and understanding of tones of voice. There are of course a series of codified whistles and calls such as: Away; Come by; Come behind or the Welsh version – Tyrd tu ol i fi; and a series of whistles – long, short, low, high.

In a study of the different calls of a group of shepherds to their dogs, McConnell and Baylis (1985, cited in Rushen, Passile, Munksgaard, & Tanida, 2001) found that the whistles used to give the dogs a directional command were random and varied greatly between shepherds, whereas there 'were marked similarities in the calls that different shepherds used to make the dog stop or to move. To make the dogs move, all shepherds tended to use rapidly repeated calls of short duration and of rising frequency, while to inhibit the dog's motion, all shepherds used single, prolonged notes of a descending frequency.' (p.357). There seems to be an understanding by shepherds about the kinds of sounds that are most effective at directing dogs to do certain things. Some shepherds might come to this understanding through individual trial and error, others, through the 'handing down' of vernacular knowledge and practices. I have witnessed first-hand how the strange gibberish language that Glynne uses with his dogs has, in recent years, been imitated by Owen, and how, if I think back to when Taid was alive, he also used these calls. This suggests to me that 'ways of doing' and 'ways of saying' are often first learnt through imitation. Tim Ingold (2000) argues that if 'skilled practice cannot be reduced to a formula, then it cannot be through the transmission of formulae that skills are passed from generation to generation.' (p. 353). He suggests that although novices might initially get a sense of what is involved in a skill from observation and then imitation, the learning of such a skill from a previous generation occurs 'not by handing on a corpus of representations, or information in the strict sense, but rather by introducing novices into contexts which afford selected opportunities for perception and action'(ibid.). Thus, these vernacular knowledges and practices such as Owen beginning to emulate Glynne's way of calling his dogs occurs because opportunities arise where he can practice such skills (during gathering for example).

The direction of sunlight changes during the course of the sequence, allowing the viewer a sense of elapsed time. The use of the material (chalk that I found in the Top Shed

nearby) and the way that they are used to write on the door (a practice used by Glynne to write the numbers of sheep in different fields or areas of the farm on the doors of the Top Shed), draws attention to everyday practices of inscription as an aid to memory.

Here we remember some of the fleeting Jones family members. In my inscription of their names, I find myself revisiting my encounters with them: remembering that the first and only time that I ever saw Glynne cry when I was a child was when Floss, his beloved sheepdog was put down after a long fight with cancer; how there is still a hand drawn picture (drawn by Rachel when she was young) of Queen (Number One) on the interior of Nain's pantry door; how Countess, the fox-hound puppy (the huntsman would give puppies for farms to raise over the course of a year before they were returned to the pack) would only ever go downhill on her belly; how Soldier the gentle giant of a fox-hound (who was later killed by the alpha-male in the pack of hounds he was returned to) was once found asleep on the living room floor after my parents returned from an evening out, my maternal grandmother having taken pity on his sad eyes had let him into the warmth (I think this was also the night that she had taken pity on the SAS soldiers who'd knocked on the door and had given them some tea and some food!); how Rex, my Taid's dog always chased his tail when he was in his kennel; how Jerry (Number One) when he was a young dog had barked and barked every night to be let out to chase a fox, and how Glynne had decided to help him catch it and had gone out with his gun, only to discover that they were both playing with each other like puppies (he still shot the fox); how Fan had been bought by Taid and a farm hand at the Bala sheepdog trials for quite a lot of money and that she was the most terrified sheepdog I had ever known for a while (we suspect a previous owner had treated her somewhat cruelly; she was also cross eyed); how Floss had given birth to a litter of eight pups, but only two had survived, Ben and Queen (Number Two) – Queen died a couple of years ago and Ben recently died at the very old age of fifteen. Dogs play a valuable part in the day-to-day

activity on the farm; they are often the only source of help available to Glynne when gathering, and more than often, they are his only companions during his daily routine.

For Animation 8 I had a pre-conceived idea about how I wanted to work with the material and the site; I required a well-rotted post for this sequence. I ended up choosing a post in Cwmrhaiadr Fêch. In this animation I had intended to break off parts of the fence post, piece by piece until there was nothing left. The process of breaking the fence-post down was problematic, as although the outside was soft and rotten, the core of the wood, or the heartwood, was still very hard. I had to abandon the camera and tripod whilst making the animation in order to return to the farm to pick up a 'chisel', a 'hammer', and a 'saw'. This animation took a great deal of brute force to break bits off the post. As I broke bits off nearer the base of the post, the 'staples' holding the post to the fence came out and I could not continue; these objects have limits of their own, limits that I am not always aware of until the animating process is under way. I work with these limits as much as I can, even when the objects decide to give-up on me.

Animation 10 was made with another fence post at the bottom of the hayfield. I had to prepare in advance for this one, as I needed to drill small holes through smooth stones from the river. I chose this particular post from the others in the fence because it was slightly thicker and had a more uniform and less knobbly shape. The idea to use stones in this way was simply an artistic re-creation of a caddis fly larvae that we often see stuck to the underside of rocks and stones in the river. These larvae are entirely clad with small pieces of stone and grit, and they are so well glued that it is very difficult to prise them off. Using wire wrapped around the fence post as my frame, I carefully hung stones onto the wire so that the stones overlapped like armour plating. When playing the sequence back, the passage of time is quite obvious, due to the fast movement of sheep in the background and the change in light due to the movement of clouds across the sky.

When I had finished each sequence, I uploaded them to some simple video software on my computer so that I could get a rough idea of what they looked like. In retrospect, I wish I had borrowed a better camera, as my domestic camera took fairly grainy photographs. I experimented a little with the duration of each image to see what length of time looked similar to a time-lapse film. I used the timing of 0.07 seconds per frame/image in order to achieve this. After I had made the first five films, I had taken them with me to show fellow postgraduate students and staff at our annual departmental conference. I had the opportunity to show Animations 1 and 2. In the break afterwards, fellow students asked how long it had taken me to make them (they were assuming that these films were real-time time-lapse and not creative animations). I found this interesting, as it highlighted the need to think about how much I would tell viewers.

The next stage in this project was to work with sound as an accompaniment to the film. I decided to make a field recording of Owen and Glynne repairing the sheep pens. They were replacing some old rotten posts and some badly rusted sheets of corrugated iron. It struck me that Owen and Glynne were incorporating themselves into the physical materiality of the sheep pens, in the same way that Taid had with the objects in the film (they were also removing some of the artefacts noted in Taid's diaries). Later in the day, I listened to the recording that I had made, it struck me how whilst I was battling my way through brambles, or standing in the river for five hours, or sticking bits of moss over fences, Owen and Glynne had been adding to the plethora of objects; building fences; fixing things, or working with the sheep. A few days later, I purposefully wrote a song for the film. This song was edited together with some of the ambient voices and sounds from my field recording to provide a percussive through-line to the song.

I had thought a great deal about how much information I should give to an audience about the process and background of making the film. After much deliberation, I decided that

I would be quite open about the process and the basic reasoning behind the films, so that an audience might have at least some way of framing the work. Without any guidance, the film might be too abstract, and wouldn't necessarily evoke some of the ideas that I believe are evoked if you have a degree of background information. In retrospect, I think the introduction is too long, and I should have found a more succinct way of doing this. I have also grown to dislike the song; it seems overly sentimental.

2. Working with and on the past and the present; thoughts on the process and the meaning of the work.

At first glance, *Ode to Perdurance* looks like a simple short film, but in actuality, there are a number of more complex ideas that run throughout the work. These complexities have developed through a long engagement with the objects of the film, as well as the continuing fieldwork process.

2.1a labour:

Labour and the labouring body remain invisible in the film, but the effort and the traces of the body's interactions with these objects is often palpable, sometimes even visible with the movement of mud below a post or the misplacement of a piece of moss. I had at one point early on in my process, contemplated filming myself making the film in order to show the labour involved in their conception. I experimented a little by putting myself into the frame in a few of the photographs, and adding this to the sequence. But this was unsuccessful because I had a very particular idea about what it was that I wanted to show, and what I wanted to remain hidden. By removing the body from the film, I was in effect drawing attention to it. By removing the labour (like the diaries), I was heightening the need to consider the body

and its labour in relation to these sites. There is a sense of a body haunting these objects, not just mine, but also that of the original workers. Writing in *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (2005), Tim Edensor, suggests that ‘Ruins are already allegories of memory, but in addition, the involuntary memories which ruins provoke and the ways in which they are haunted by numerous ghosts foreground experiences of memory which are contingent, frequently inarticulate, sensual and immune from attempts to codify and record them’ (p.18). Although Edensor is writing about the ‘leftovers’ of industrial occupation, many of the ways in which he describes the interactions between ourselves and ruins could equally be applied to the objects/artefacts/sites in the landscape which make up my sequence of animations. Like Edensor's ruins, they too ‘contain a still and seemingly quiescent present, and they also suggest forebodings, pointing to future erasure and subsequently, the reproduction of space, thus conveying a sense of the transience of all spaces’ (p.125). The lack of the body and the ‘becoming’ or the transformation of the object/artefact/site also draws attention to the messy mortality of both living and material things; the interconnectedness, the way that ‘As things decay, they lose their assigned status as separate objects. Deteriorating material separates into parts due to gravity or the tendency of weakening joints to stretch away from each other. Things give up their solidity, their form, yielding to processes which reveal them as aggregations of matter, erasing their objective boundaries, those edges which could be felt and looked at and suggested that the object was inviolable as a discrete entity’ (pp.114-15); even the human body eventually succumbs to the same phenomena that change the ruin from its rigid structural form. When looking at the films with a knowledge of the process, we may wonder about the lack of body; but we understand that its absence and the organic growth and blossoming of the dead and dying material of the objects into something else is just an illusion. In this seemingly uncanny version, perhaps even parody of natural decay and related phenomena, we hold on to the knowledge that bodies have, at one point or another left their

mark on the landscape in numerous and sometimes subtle ways. Man-made objects are colonised when our backs are turned; a riot of life takes over, and when we look again, their form is often irrevocably transformed.

We bear witness as the sound of Owen and Glynne working on the soundtrack draws our attention to the negotiation involved in the knowledge transfer of farm skill and work as Glynne advises Owen on the best way of undertaking such jobs and is given the opportunity to practice his accumulating skills. There is also a sense that the posts and their metamorphosis are happening in the background, whilst they work; a sense of decay, of change, of time, of scale; of all kinds of labour: of bodies and of natural processes. In ‘Notes on a Record of Fear: On the Threshold of the Audible’ in *Contemporary Archaeologies: Excavating Now* (2009) Louise Wilson describes her creation of an audio work using the contemporary archaeology of a Cold War military site in England. In this audio-work, particular historic, site-specific sounds are reinstalled on site, creating an audio haunting of that place. Through this haunting audio installation, the material remains of the building are not simply re-invigorated and re-awakened, but are drawn attention to. Similarly the juxtaposition of the post, and the ambient sound of Glynne and Owen working, draws attention to the labour that created the object in the first place; it also suggests a future haunting of this landscape by the ongoing nature of farm work.

2.1b Time and rhythm

During the creation the time-lapse films, I became more aware of the different temporalities of the place. There were complex interactions and interrelations between measured (chronological) time and the more relational, qualitative (kairological) time. For example, the objects themselves belong to chronological time by nature of their being recorded in a

diary, but they are now marked by a different, messier time, of natural phenomena, decay, insect habitation, weather, plant life and so on. The fieldwork that I undertake encounters interesting interactions between kairological and chronological time. For example, the chronological time of the tea and lunch break is not just based on the kairological time of the body's need for sustenance, but it is also loosely based on whether there is a half decent programme on the television. The working day is often built around the daylight hours (kairological) as well as the idea that we have to do a certain task until it gets done. The yearly farming calendar is based around kairological time, of the ovulation of sheep, the conception of lambs, their birth, the growth of grass, of thistles, of growing lambs. The nature of following the pattern of natural phenomena means that you can only go at the pace that natural phenomena makes available to you; these are spaces of a different rhythm. Rhythm, as Henri Lefebvre states in his monograph *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life* (2004) is an awkward word, illusive in its definition (p.5). Rhythm, according to Lefebvre is not to be confused with, speed, movement or objects, it is reliant on repetition, but not exact repetition as Lefebvre suggests that there can be no repetition without difference (pp. 6-7), and that repetition can occur even though something has changed slightly. There is an agricultural show in Aberhosan each year (a repetition), but each year it is slightly different because it has different judges, different competitions and different competitors, but it is still a variation on a repetition.

Cyclical repetition and the linear repetitive separate out under analysis, but in reality interfere with one another constantly. The cyclical originates in the cosmic, in nature: days, nights, seasons, the waves and tides of the sea, monthly cycles, etc. The linear would come rather from social practice, therefore from human activity: the monotony of actions and of movements, imposed structures. Great cyclical rhythms last for a period and restart: dawn, always new, often superb, inaugurates the return of the everyday. The antagonistic unity of relations between the cyclical and the linear sometimes give rise to compromises, sometimes disturbances. The circular course of the hands on (traditional) clock-faces and watches is accompanied by the linear tick-

tock. And it is their relation that enables or rather constitutes the measure of time (which is to say, of rhythms). (p.8)

Rhythm then, according to Lefebvre's definition, is the result of an interaction between linear repetition (chronological time) and cyclical repetition (kairological time). It is their constant interruptions in each other's repetitive acts that produces what he calls rhythm (ibid.). Rhythm can be defined as fast or slow only by its comparison with other rhythms (p.10); as an example, Lefebvre uses the act of walking or breathing or the beat of the heart (ibid.). Lefebvre sees everything as possessing rhythm, even objects which seem immobile. Rocks are 'not inert' (p.20); they too possess rhythm, albeit a slower one when compared to the rhythms of our bodies (ibid.). Rhythm then, along with time, is a useful tool to think about the objects from the diaries. These objects possess rhythms that are much slower than those of the body. The decay of wood; the growth of algae, moss, lichen, fungi; the habitation and growth and endless lifecycles of insects; the germination of seeds and flowering of plants – this is what Lefebvre describes as *eurhythmia* (p.20) (a medical term used to describe organs that work in harmony with one another). The eventual removal or total disintegration of the object and then the reinstatement of the work of the object (to keep sheep in a field for example) and the steady rhythm of the body's labour as it hits the 'mallet' onto the top of the new, 'replacement post', driving it further and further into the ground; this could be described as *polyrhythmia* (many rhythms at the same time) as well as *arrhythmia* (rhythms which do not work together, these produce disturbances) as the harmony of the rotten, decaying post is disturbed by the man replacing it with a new one. There are also the rhythms that I have already discussed in terms of kairological time, such as the biological cyclical rhythm of sheep breeding; a rhythm exploited by the need of the farmer for income (another cyclical rhythm perhaps); the linear rhythm of farm work centred around the best daytime TV programmes, interrupted by the cyclical rhythm of the need for food; the linear rhythm of

sorting through a large number of sheep, interrupted by the cyclical rhythm of the hours of daylight and the knowledge that each day the repetition of this rhythm will not be exactly the same as the winter daylight hours slowly elongate into those of spring.

The film as a whole and each individual sequence of animation has its own rhythm. But what is surprising about the film is the contrast between presence and the present. The rhythm of the actual making of the film (the presence) and the rhythm of the end product (the film or the present) are in stark opposition to one another. In the presence, the film-maker has carefully placed a single piece of material onto the object then taken a photograph. This has continued until the object has been completely covered. It has taken a whole day and has a slow but methodical rhythm; it is linear, as it has a starting point and an end point and does not continue cyclically over and over. The end product, the linking together of the photographs, fails to capture the rhythm of the presence, but instead alludes to a rhythm of a cyclical process that of natural decay of natural phenomena reclaiming an object. But this illusionary cyclical rhythm also draws our attention to its falsity; the intensely speeded up version of the cyclical rhythm can't help but give away the game of its construction – in the end we know its rhythm is one of a linear and illusionary nature. The use of the camera causes *arrhythmia*: it causes rhythmic disturbances; it is merely a palpitation. The film also brings to mind a series of other rhythms, those of the past; the work that took place to install those objects there, the future decay, the continuing renewal of the man-made objects, and the eventual mortality of the body. Lefebvre's question about historical rhythm is of interest here. He asks 'Are there not alternatives to memory and forgetting: periods where the past returns- and periods where the past effaces itself? Perhaps such an alternative would be the rhythm of history...' (p.51). He highlights the *polyrhythmia* of the objects; drawing attention to the past, the present and the future form of the object and the people who installed it in this place.

Although *nostalgia* is often critiqued, especially with regard to heritage industries (see Lippard, 1997; Massey, 2005; Relph, 2008: 83), I would suggest that it plays an important role as a way of making sense of, or justifying our right/need to be in a place. For us at Cwmrhaidr, nostalgia plays a very important part of our lives; we often have to look back in order, not only to move forward, but also to reaffirm our connections in this place. Nostalgia serves an important purpose, to support our being in this place, to pass on knowledge and information and to allow us to keep our collective history alive here. If we are looking back nostalgically, there is very often a clear understanding that we do not want to go back to that time; this nostalgia is not a wistfulness for an idealised past. For example, Glynne often recounts how as a teenager, he had to push an ‘Allen scythe’ up the steep slopes of the farm in order to cut the bracken; he sounds nostalgic when he speaks about this, but what is also clear is how pleased he is that things have moved forwards (in terms of technology). He does not have a nostalgic pre-occupation for returning to this era; he just enjoys the act of remembering it. Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that ‘Nostalgia is a way of denying the present as well as keeping some people and places in the past where we can visit them when we feel like taking a leave of absence from modernity’ (p.85). Doreen Massey (2005) discusses ‘the prominence within the postmodern of feelings and expressions of *nostalgia*, including nostalgias for place and home’ (p.123). She goes on to describe her own personal experience of returning home, and the fact that what she loves about her return is ‘the richer set of connections here, precisely its familiarity’ (ibid.). But Massey also discusses negative aspects of nostalgia: she conjectures that because ‘nostalgia articulates space and time in such a way that it robs others of their histories (their stories), then indeed we need to rework nostalgia.’ (p.124). In both of Lippard’s and Massey’s consideration of nostalgia, there is a strong sense that it involves an attempt at travelling back through time. In Massey’s personal account of going home she returns with an expectation that everything will be the same, ‘But places

change; they go on without you' (ibid.). This is where the differences lie, I suggest, between our experience at Cwmrhaidr, and Lippard and Massey's experiences/concepts. We accept at Cwmrhaidr that things do change and I feel that nostalgia within the context of my research is not about denying the present, but rather about reaffirming connections to a collective history; seeing our path from the past into the present, and showing us a possible future. The past is one of the central points of our understanding of our present, not a denial of it. Lippard suggests that a reason why we ought to know our own history is so that 'we are not defined by others, so that we can resist other people's images of our pasts, and consequently our futures' (ibid.). The notion of nostalgia that my animations emerge from is one of reclamation; a teasing-out of the past from a jumble of rotting posts and rusting wires; reclaiming our past from the romantic idyll it might be perceived to be – a pragmatic visioning of the remains of my Taid's working life.

2.1c Archaeology of the contemporary past.

I have already mentioned that there is a sense of an archaeological process in this work. Traditionally, archaeology has sought to discover and interpret the material culture of a distant historical past, but since the 1960's the discipline of archaeology has slowly changed, and it now has opened up the field to a more recent past (Buchli and Lucas, 2006: 3). In fact, newer archaeologies almost completely collapse the gap between the past and the present, as the present can be the object of study. Gavin Lucas and Viktor Buchli suggest that by studying the **now**, or as they put it 'us', the archaeologist makes 'familiar categorisations of spatial perceptions unfamiliar – a translation from an everyday perceptual language into an archaeological one' (p.9). In conventional archaeology, the archaeological method attempts to resolve temporal distance. It is unlikely that an archaeologist looking at a distant past has

any attachment to the objects of his/her study. But when studying objects of the ‘now’ (yesterday's crisp packet blowing down the street, or a piece of graffiti), the archaeologists’ attachment to these very familiar objects, is challenged by the distance that the archaeological method creates (ibid.). The archaeology of the contemporary past uses to its advantage the distancing effect that the method of archaeology produces in order to look at our present lives in contemporary society. It often bears a knock-on effect for the society being looked at, and can have positive or negative consequences which means that it can be a highly politically charged endeavour (See Cox, 2006; Doretto and Fondebrider, 2006; Hart and Winter, 2006; Legendre, 2006). An archaeology of the contemporary past can therefore have far reaching effects akin to those of action research.

Lucas and Buchli suggest that the approaches of an archaeology of the contemporary past produce an uncanny effect, which ‘seems to be the result of repetition, a “doubling” through a simultaneous process of presencing and distancing’ (p.12). When I began to look for the objects from the diary (which you could almost describe as being archaeological in nature) I felt a sense of numbness on finding them, which could be attributed to the fact that they were familiar, everyday and yet forgotten objects. Through seeking out these objects for a particular project, I was defamiliarising them. Their familiarity slowly disintegrated the more time I spent with them. They went from being something that we lived with and passed by without even a second glance, to something that I looked at and thought about. Through the making of each individual sequence of animation, I felt both a huge void between myself and the object; but at the same time I felt that the object had been somehow renewed, refreshed and presenced. One possible experience of the film may be the sense of the familiar made unfamiliar, this is definitely akin to the ‘doubling up’ that Lucas and Buchli refer to above. And this feeling of making unfamiliar the familiar is also one which we experience when we encounter ruins; Tim Edensor’s ‘gothic sensibility’ (Edensor, 2005: 13). Lucas and

Buchli suggest that ‘Archaeologies of the contemporary past expose just such realms of the abject and the uncanny; because of their approach focussing on the material, the non-discursive, they frequently engage with the unconstituted. This is not simply the unsaid, but the unsayable – it lies outside the said, outside discourse. This does not mean it is not visible, not experienced, but all too often the experience is crowded out by other, hegemonic discourses. The feelings of abjection and the uncanny arise precisely because we are faced with no words to articulate the experience’ (Buchli and Lucas, 2006: 12). The film is an archaeological act, concentrating on the material culture of a place and its people; it defamiliarises its object of study, and as Lucas and Buchli suggest ‘the analytical distance that defamiliarises curiously enough establishes truthfulness about who we are’ (p.13) – now, in this present time and place. In some ways the process of my fieldwork also produces a similar feeling of making the familiar unfamiliar; taking photographs and making notes changes my familiar everyday encounter with the place into a reflexive and thoughtful one, rather than one of habit and intuition. It is only through dislocation and dissociation, which is enabled by the fieldwork, that I am able to form a new and open understanding of our lives. Had an outsider undertaken this project, they would likely need to make the unfamiliar, familiar, and then possibly, through interpretation, unfamiliar again, as an insider I am beginning from a familiar perspective working towards one of unfamiliarity then back again to a new-found familiarity. What I am not suggesting is that an outsider's perspective is any less important or relevant than that of an insider's; but I am recommending that the same project could offer very different outcomes and experiences depending on the status of the researcher.

An archaeology of the contemporary past can also open up a different kind of engagement; it can allow for an interdisciplinary and creative involvement between the object of study and the method of archaeology. For example, in *Contemporary Archaeologies*

(Holtorf and Piccini (eds.) 2009) as already mentioned, the artist Louise Wilson discusses her sound project at an abandoned cold war military site in Orford Ness on the Suffolk coast (see pp. 113-128). In this installation, Wilson takes advantage of the rich acoustics of the site, evoking both its past use in important military campaigns, and its current emptiness; devoid of the acoustic paraphernalia that was once associated with its past. Wilson reinstalled some of the distinctive sounds that were once a part of its day-to-day ambience. In a sense, the archaeology is re-storied by the presence of the sounds of the past. In *Guttersnipe: a micro road movie*, archaeologist Angela Piccini (2009) uses film as a way of capturing the material culture of the kerbside on a road in Bristol. She uses her footage as a backdrop to a performative textual account of the contemporary archaeology of this specific place. Her interdisciplinary practice seeks to discover ‘What might the juxtaposition of video and live spoken word specifically contribute to archaeological practice that is qualitatively different from a textual account of place? How is this practice performative of place?’ (p.185). The practice of contemporary archaeology seems to lend itself quite readily to alternative forms of dissemination and exploration.

Those familiar things that surround us eventually fade away very, very slowly; they are rarely brought back into the light; in fact we let them dissolve away into nothingness. Who is to say that the chocolate biscuit wrapper (see Animation 3 at 3.36-3.40 minutes) that appears from the shadow of the moss covered wall in one of my animated sequences is of no consequence? Does it not tell us something of the contemporary culture of this forgotten object? Doesn't the change in light during the films suggest both a past and a sense of renewal, of reprise and recapitulation? *Ode to Perdurance/Awdl Amser* does not seek to bring the past to light for the purpose of preservation, but instead, it seeks to weave the rhythm of the **now** into our collective consciousness: through the film, the past, present and probable future are woven together into a configuration that seeks to say something about ourselves

and time. Eventually, all traces of the film will disintegrate, will be covered, and claimed by the natural phenomena that they themselves reveal.

Caitlin DeSilvey has been working closely with a National Trust property in Cornwall over the past few years. The National Trust, whose motto is 'For everyone, Forever', owns Mullion Harbour on the Lizard peninsula. Over time, climate change is beginning to have an effect on the coastline, and as a result the harbour is under threat from a phenomenon that is much too extensive for the National Trust to ameliorate. Rather than continue to restore the harbour's 'breakwater' wall to its original condition, the Trust has come to an agreement to repair only where it can, and to accept the fact that once the harbour walls become too unstable and unsafe, it will demolish the property. Mullion Harbour then, is not 'For everyone, Forever'; it is just for now. DeSilvey's work seeks to find alternative ways of writing the history of the harbour, of narrating the story of this landscape in a dynamic rather than a static way (2012: 34); it seeks to make 'connections between past dynamism and future process' (p.31). In her journal article 'Making sense of transience: an anticipatory history' (2012), DeSilvey writes a narrative history of Mullion Harbour, which encompasses its many layers of historical information into narrative ebbs and flows. It provides an antidote to the traditional linear historical narrative, and instead, seeks to give a sense of movement; looking at the future through the past, or the past through its possible future and how all these filter into the now. Like Mullion Harbour, the objects at Cwmrhaidr, will eventually decay, erasing little pieces of us as they disintegrate; the difference is that these objects never had the option to be saved; they are of no interest to the heritage industries, unlike Mullion harbour, whose very presence is testament to the preservation powers of The National Trust. But in their disappearance (both the Harbour and the objects at Cwmrhaidr), the histories and stories of these material things will not be effaced by a changing future because they've taken on a new life: the Harbour – in both the new types of property management offered by

the Trust and in DeSilvey's writing, and the objects on the farm – in my film, and in my writing.

DeSilvey's use of Walter Benjamin's phrase to 'brush history against the grain' (Benjamin, 1999: 248 cited in DeSilvey, 2012: 37) has resonance for me here. To see history as a line in the sand is to ignore its porosity; to disregard its very presence in our day-to-day lives, to dislodge our sense of belonging and becoming a part of something more than ourselves. To 'brush against the grain' is to create ripples and waves in the now, to see the past and the future as part of our present; a kaleidoscope of rhythms, times and colours. We contribute to this place, and it reciprocates its touch in a myriad of ways. This is a tapestry of a people and their place, like velvet when you push against the fibres; you feel something different, a different texture, unfamiliar even. In this place, we do not actively seek out these slowly decaying objects, and yet we are always in their presence, we add to them, we take away from them, but we do not very often think through or remember with them. Kathleen Stewart says that 'Objects that have decayed into fragments and traces draw together a transient past with the very desire to *remember*' (1996: 92). It is the reworking of these objects and their juxtaposition with the soundtrack that might allow us as inhabitants at Cwmrhaidr a moment to remember the labour that created such objects; or to at the very least give us a moment of pause, to think about Taid's hard work..

2.2 Conclusion

Although this work didn't rely heavily on the autoethnographic fieldwork (in comparison with the Experiment 1), the fieldwork still played an important part of the project as it allowed for my participants to think about their own lives. My participants had asked me to

try and locate a film made by either the BBC or ITV during 1964 about shearing on the mountain; having had no success with this, Glynne had located the diaries in order to see whether there was any information in them that might help in locating the documentary film. The animations are a response to my failure at finding the documentary film. The animated films I create do not stand-in for the original documentary; instead they are an accidental outcome of the search for that film footage, but unrelated in any other way. Conducting autoethnographic fieldwork allows for a different type of engagement with the place that I am familiar with. Through this ongoing immersion in my participants' farming lives I reclaim the fragments that would, in the usual situation of day-to-day farming activity just pass by. Yuriko Saito (2007) suggests that 'our relative neglect of workday environments in favour of remote, dramatic, scenic environments does have dire consequences, because people's attitude and societal policies regarding protection of landscape are significantly affected, sometimes determined, by such aesthetic considerations.' (p.52). In *Ode to Perdurance* the objects and sites lie outside of the usual conceptions of beauty; outside of the usual things that can be 'saved' as cultural heritage; outside of the usual objects that serve as mnemonics in this place, but they too reveal the material culture of the farm. There is a visceral tangibility to these objects which remind us of the bodies that installed them: It is not just the optic that is important to us here, but all that other 'stuff'; the haptic, which coagulates our sense of being in this place.

Doreen Massey's (2005) reading of the postmodern world through the discourse of globalisation and her equalising of the importance of space and place (p.11) does not fit easily with our everyday experiences here. She suggests that the longing for 'such coherence is none the less a sign of the geographic fragmentation, the spatial disruption, of our times' (Massey, 1999: 1). She goes on to suggest that the search for places and locality is 'in part, a response to desire for fixity and for security of identity in the middle of all the movement and

change' (p.7). She also suggests that place 'has come to have totemic resonance. Its symbolic value is endlessly mobilised in political argument' (Massey, 2005: 5); it serves as an escape from the alienation of the postmodern world (ibid.). Other authors share similar views: Edward Casey calls postmodernist space thinned place (2001: 407); Yi-Fu Tuan suggests that whenever a person feels threatened by a world that is changing too fast, he/she seeks out 'an idealised and stable past' (1977: 188); Tim Cresswell says that 'mobility and mass culture lead to irrational and shallow landscapes' (2004: 45); Edward Relph sees mobility as the downfall of rootedness, but that this is not necessarily a bad thing (2008: 4); Lucy Lippard suggests that 'The lure of the local is the pull of place that operates on each of us, exposing our politics and our spiritual legacies. It is the geographical need to belong somewhere, one antidote to a prevailing alienation' (1997: 7). If these are the contemporary operative discourses that surround the idea of 'place', then what does this mean for us at Cwmrhaidr? Are our experiences reactionary? Are we seeking solace from the alienation that the globalised world supposedly produces? To answer simply – No. I would suggest that increased mobility, global networks and the global economy has very little impact on our affiliation and attachment to *this* place. I will not deny that globalisation has changed certain aspects of our farming lives, but the rootedness of each one of us in this place, I would suggest, has remained the same over generations. And maybe this is because we have worked at keeping ourselves placed through the stories we tell and are told, or through the erection of permanent fixtures on the farm, but I would argue that because life and work, land and home are not separate entities, place remains a far more complex and enduring manifestation; outweighing effects of the global world.

The film does not seek to recover a sense of place lost through the alienation of a globalised world, instead it attempts to draw attention to our own place in this complex working organism which is our farm; it allows us to see the importance of a storied, haptic

and phenomenological landscape; of traces of labour, of past, present and future work and the ongoing cyclical, repetitive rhythm of the phenomena beyond our control. This film has a 'place ethic' (Lippard, 1997: 275); it disregards the optical splendour of the landscape picture for a more hidden, more visceral experience of place.

Chapter 3: Woollying the boundaries.

Exploring farming's relationships with non-humans.

Experiment 3: *Dear Mick Jagger...*

'To be one is always to *become with many*'. (Haraway, 2008: 4)

1. Discourses about animals/man

The idea that animals 'are good to think' (Levi Strauss, 1962: 162) is much cited in academic discourses, to the point where it risks losing something of its original meaning. But it has been taken out of context. In its original form, it reads 'We can understand, too, that natural species are chosen not because they are "good to eat" but because they are "good to think"' (ibid.). Levi Strauss is speaking of particular relationships with animals that are to be found in non-western societies; more specifically, societies that use totems from the natural world as a conceptual way of ordering their culture. To what extent then can we apply this phrase to our contemporary relationships with animals? What does it mean to think with animals? Is this even possible? Is it not just another way of making animals subservient to human ideologies? Can we think through animals? I believe so, but can they truly think with us? Our relationship with animals is complex, often ambiguous, and in some instances a dishonest one. Some of us are likely to have pets, dogs or cats; others may work with animals on a day-to-day basis – farmers, animal experiment researchers, horse-loggers etc. We may eat animals, visit zoos and view them in their unnatural habitats, go on safari, swim with dolphins, and buy make-up tested on them. Animals are all around; they may be 'good to think' about (ibid.), but not necessarily 'good to think' *with* because we try to do most of

their thinking for them. What does it mean to attempt to grasp what it means to be an animal? How can we truly understand animal agency? Is any of this even possible?

We tend to view being human as being separate from animals. Yet in *Animal Spaces, Beastly Places: new geographies of human-animal relations* (Philo and Wilbert 2000: 2), the authors draw our attention to the historically enmeshed relations between humans and animals; the way that the ‘animals, are undoubtedly constitutive of human societies in all sorts of ways’ (ibid.); and that ‘Humans are ecologically dependant on animals, principally as sources of food, clothing and many other materials which sustain “our” human existence, which means that animals, especially dead ones, enter centrally into what humans can themselves be and do in the world’ (ibid.). They suggest that due to domestication, and the fact that humans exist alongside non-human beings, it becomes difficult to consider the world as being ‘a pure “human” society’ (p.17). Humans act upon animals, and are in turn acted upon by these other beings. We create spatial orderings in which to live that are transgressed and sometimes re-ordered by our non-human counterparts (p.19). They suggest that human geographers need to take account for the non-human in our everyday human existence.

In our cultural history of animals, there is a great deal missing: a *natural* history of animals; animals when we are not seeing them, not petting them, not dressing them up and making them jump through the proverbial hoops. In other circumstances, happier circumstances for them, animals have greater self determination and a more natural existence, but we are interested in animals mainly in terms of what they can do for us – how they can please, or amuse, or satiate us – and their own freedom and integrity are diametrically opposed to our ability to do with them what we will. (Malamud, 2012: 4)

According to Randy Malamud, animals are impoverished because of their associations with *homo sapiens*. Denying them their own agency and free will, humans use and abuse animals – because they can. He suggests that ‘Despite our extensive history of interaction with other animals, it seems rare for people to look at these creatures directly and honestly. Malamud

likens the way we look at animals to the male gaze on the female form; the subordinating gaze that objectifies women (p.78). This may be true in some cases, we may appreciate their aesthetic qualities, objectify them to a certain degree, but this gaze can often be broken when we come face-to-face, eye-to-eye with an animal being; when we form relationships with them that go beyond that of commodity or object fetishes. Donna Haraway sees our relationships with animals differently from Malamud: ‘We make each other up, in the flesh. Significantly other to each other, in specific difference, we signify in the flesh a nasty developmental infection called love. This love is a historical aberration and a naturalcultural legacy’ (Haraway, 2008: 16). For Haraway, humans and animals are co-species, made and re-made in tangled relations (ibid.). Speaking about the work of bio-anthropologist Barbara Smut, she discusses the way that Smut was told by her mentors to try to be invisible to her subjects. What she found was that baboons were curious about her, so rather than blending into the foliage or landscape, Smuts made herself visible to the baboons. In order to be responsive to their social interaction she changed the way she walked and the way she used her body language. Speaking of Smut, Haraway writes ‘If she really wanted to study something other than how human beings are in the way, if she was really interested in these baboons, Smuts had to enter into, not shun, a responsive relationship’ (p.25). Co-speciesism (as Haraway suggests) is not about becoming an animal other, it is about becoming something else *with* an animal. Smuts did not *become* a baboon by trying to interpret their movements, their body language and by trying to communicate back to them – she became their co-species by entering a two-way, reciprocal relationship. ‘The relationships are the smallest possible patterns for analysis; the partners and actors are their still-ongoing products. It is all extremely prosaic, relentlessly mundane, and exactly how worlds come into being’ (p.26). Haraway asserts that we shouldn't think of the human species as being exceptional in regard to others (p.165) and that we must learn to ‘...kill responsibly. And to be killed

responsibly, yearning for the capacity to respond and to recognize response, always with reasons, but knowing there will never be sufficient reason' (p.81).

What becomes clear through Haraway's writing is her understanding of the animals that make and remake *her* in everyday life. She explains her idea of co-presence and co-speciesism through her becoming with her dog Cyan on the agility course. Cyan and Haraway share a love for agility, and in these moments on the course when they seem to be working in perfect harmony she suggests that they are 'infoldings of the flesh' (p.249), suggesting 'the dance of world-making encounters' (p.49).

Haraway asserts that 'The question between animals and humans here is, who are you? and so, who are we?' (p.208), suggesting that co-speciesism is a way of thinking honestly about who we are, and who we become in our everyday entanglements with non-human animals. The boundaries are blurred and complex between humans and non-humans; Malamud's opinion that we cannot honestly see an animal if it is alongside man, and that animals 'are *free-floating elements* in culture whose "function", as people envision it, is to satisfy our various lusts for protein or companionship or competitive advantage or fur or other fetishes, cravings, and peccadillos' (Malamud, 2012: 13) is too simplistic. I do not doubt that there is truth in both of these arguments, and I do not doubt that as a farmer's daughter and farmer's partner and business partner, I have a certain degree of critique of the way contemporary human society treats animals. But, what is clear then, is the complexity and ambiguity of these 'infoldings of the flesh' (Haraway, 2008: 249): of the love we may feel for a pet; of the dissociation we may feel from the animal on our plate; of the awe and astonishment of coming face-to-face with non-native species in zoos, and the pain we may encounter when we realise, it is us that caged them in the first place. This relationship is encultured, it is socially produced, not a natural given (see Peggs, 2012: 29), and as you will see from my writing on the relationship between my research participants, and their flock of

Welsh Mountain sheep; it is often very difficult to step outside of these ‘fleshy knottings’ (Haraway, 2008: 88), to see the complexity, the ethically sensitive and the hypocritical nature of these relationships.

1.2 Sheep: Historical context/domestication/breed trends.

‘The problem with following sheep around is that they get everywhere.’ (Franklin, 2007: 9)

The relationship between humans and sheep began over 10,000 years ago when they were bred by early Neolithic peoples. It is thought that they were one of the first animals to be domesticated, along with goats. Although there is no tangible evidence about how domestication occurred, most have attributed it to the ‘imprinting’ (see Franklin, 2007; Ryder, 1983) of a lamb by human beings. Imprinting ‘refers to the way that an animal who is raised by people ‘can develop an attraction towards people’ (Rushen et al., 2001). Imprinting refers to a unique window of opportunity in a young animal’s life where it learns about its own identity. Certain behaviour characteristics and information are instilled in the young animal by imprinting itself onto its mother. With regards to domestication, it has been suggested that the imprinting by humans on another species, such as a sheep, would produce an animal who was unafraid of humans, and that this animal in turn would imprint this behavioural characteristic on her young (nature/nurture). Stephen Budiansky (1999) has suggested that imprinting may not be the only explanation of domestication. Budiansky proposes that rather than humans forcing animals into subservient roles, some animals may have actively sought out humans for their own survival. He suggests that animals that are primarily scavengers or un-fussy grazers would have been more opportunistic than other

animals, and as these animals tend to already live in social groups, they may have been more open to communicating with human animals (p.15) (this is certainly an interesting point if we think about the small minority of animals that have been successfully domesticated). Thus, Budiansky views domestication through the lens of symbiosis; a relationship where both parties gain something from the relationship (although there are other types of symbiotic relationships between other species where one party gains something whilst the other neither benefits nor is troubled by the other, and there is also a parasitic form of symbiosis, where one member gains to the detriment of another) and suggests that other species apart from man engage in domestication practices (pp.15-16). In the case of sheep and man during their first encounters, this would mean food and safety from predators for sheep, and clothing and food for man. Budiansky's idea does seem at first a little unconventional, but when we compare other species and their symbiotic relationships (e.g. sharks and remora; lichen; ruminants and the bacteria that live in their gut; the Hawaiian bobtail squid and the luminescence bacteria that makes it glow in the dark; the Clownfish and the sea anemone; nitrogen fixing bacteria in the root nodules of legumes; bacteria in the human gut; the Goby fish and shrimp; the Egyptian Plover and the crocodile; flower and honey bee etc.), his idea begins to seem reasonable. More than anything, he seems to be attempting to challenge the anthropocentric conceptualisation of animals and domestication. Although I do believe that some animals may well have been domesticated in such a way (*canidae* and *bovidae* species could certainly have been inquisitive of human animals), I am not entirely convinced that sheep would have brought themselves into the human world so willingly. Sheep are naturally flight animals that see human animals as predators, regardless of whether they are domesticated or not. Although having said that, there are exceptions to the rule, for example sheep who have had a great deal of human contact, or have been reared by humans since birth are likely to lose their

flight instinct when it comes to humans. (See box below for an interesting case of natural fearlessness in a ewe at Cwmrhaiadr).

Fearless sheep: nature or nurture.

I notice one day when we had gathered in Glynne's best sheep, that one of the ewes seemed unnaturally placid and fearless of humans. Glynne tells me that he had also noticed this, and had said that her father was also fairly at ease in human company. Funnily enough, Glynne happened to keep her offspring (a ram lamb) this year, and sell him at the autumnal ram sale; he was also remarkably friendly in comparison with the rest of the flock. It is a nature/nurture conundrum, although the animals in question were never given any extra attention in comparison with their flock-mates, there could well have been an ancestor that was and thus, the offspring produced were taught the same fearlessness-who knows?

Domestication changed the appearance of sheep; horn size became reduced, the tail became lengthened and their coats changed 'from a coloured, hairy, moulting coat to a white, woolly fleece that grows continuously' (Ryder, 1983: 3) (note that there are primitive sheep breeds in Britain that have similar genetic traits to their original ancestors, such as Soay, Boreray, Shetland sheep, Manx Loaghtan, and Hebridean sheep). Sheep are cloven-footed animals belonging to the 'Order Artiodactyla, along with the

pigs and camels. But unlike these animals the sheep chews the cud, or ruminates, and so belongs to the sub-order Pecora. There are three families of ruminants, the giraffes, the deer, and the Bovidae, or cattle family, to which sheep belong together with goats, cattle and antelopes' (p. 4). Sheep are a highly adaptable species; this is almost certainly due to the insulative qualities of their wool, which 'has helped sheep to adapt to climates ranging from hot deserts to the freezing arctic' (ibid.).

Although modern British breeds come in a variety of colours and shapes, fashion plays an important role in the development of breeds. When a breed is deemed fashionable, other breeds can become at risk of extinction. The trends in sheep breeds appear – to me at least – to change fairly frequently. Current trends in modern British-kept breeds seem to favour the Beltex, the Texel and the Charolais, and these are certainly popular because of their highly prized meat carcass and their ability to grow and fatten more quickly than some other breeds. There have been a few crossing experiments at Cwmrhaiadr: Bleu-Du-Main x

Welsh, Suffolk x Welsh, and this year an AberTex (a type of Texel specially bred by Aberystwyth breeding company Innovis) x Welsh. The earlier crossbreeding experiments varied in their success, with the Bleu-Du-Main being unsuccessful due to unhardiness, and the Suffolk not really making much of a difference in terms of carcass size.

Sheep breed dispersal tends to be regional too. In a journal article by Richard Yarwood and Nick Evans entitled 'New places for "old spots": the changing geographies of domestic livestock animals' (1998), they trace the way that the geographies of livestock animals tend to be culturally related. They suggest that the 'cultural turn' in the humanities has highlighted the 'importance of cultural rather than ecological factors in the determination of animals' places within the world' (Yarwood and Evans, 1998: 137). The historical geography of livestock is directly related to the migration of people and to the invading of land by non-native populations (p.141). For example, the Romans brought White Park cattle and white fleeced sheep to Britain (ibid.). Over the course of history, selective breeding has enabled humans to modify livestock animals in order to change their appearance or productive capacity. Selective breeding through the use of new breeding technologies became a way in which man could assert his power over nature. For example, Victorian landed gentry bred increasingly larger animals as a way to reflect their social status (see p.143). In the post-war period, known as the productivist phase in agriculture, there was an emphasis on breeding animals 'to produce more food at less cost' (ibid.). It was during this era that animals like the Holstein-Friesian cows and Texel sheep were popularised within British agricultural systems (ibid.). The emphasis on selective breeding, and the changing nature of farming from subsistence models to one of productivity meant that many less-productive breeds of livestock (usually native breeds) became extinct. Between 1900 and 1973, 'Twenty six breeds of farm animals became extinct in the British Isles alone' (Alderson, 1990, cited in Yarwood and Evans: 143). The Rare Breed Survival Trust (RBST) was formed in order to try

to conserve British livestock breeds that had fallen out of fashion, or are on the verge of extinction (see <https://www.rbst.org.uk/>). RBST monitors livestock animals in the UK, and each year produces a ‘watchlist’ of breeds that are classified as either “critically endangered”, “endangered”, “vulnerable”, “at risk” or “minority” breeds (see <https://www.rbst.org.uk/watchlist.pdf>). It is a registered charity that actively encourages people to breed rare breed livestock animals in order to aid their conservation (see table below for currently endangered

<p>Sheep Watchlist 2013 (https://www.rbst.org.uk/watchlist.pdf)</p> <p>1. critical (less than 300)</p> <p>Boreray</p> <p>2. endangered (300 to 500)</p> <p>Leicester Longwool North Ronaldsay</p> <p>3. vulnerable (500 to 900)</p> <p>Castlemilk Moorit Devon and Cornwall Longwool Hill Radnor Teeswater Whitefaced Woodland</p> <p>4. at risk (900 to 1500)</p> <p>Balwen Cotswold Lincoln Longwool Manx Loaghtan Norfolk Horn Oxford Down Portland Soay Wensleydale Whiteface Dartmoor</p> <p>5. minority (1500 to 3000)</p> <p>Dorset Down Dorset Horn Greyface Dartmoor Shropshire'</p>	<p>sheep breeds). Yarwood and Evans suggest that ‘only limited consideration has been given to the role of livestock in social constructions of rurality’ (1998: 151). They use data collected through questionnaires sent out by the RBST as a way of collecting information regarding the geographies of rare breed animals.</p> <p>Only 11 % of farmers who kept rare breeds believed that their produce had any economic value, according to the RBST survey. A majority (67%) thought that being part of national heritage justified preserving a breed. Farmers (94%) who operated on-farm tourist activities kept rare breeds as part of their venture because they were local breeds relevant to the area and part of the region's agricultural history and heritage. (p.153)</p> <p>Thus, livestock animals (especially those that are classified as being rare breeds) are often chosen on the basis of their ‘native’ status within the culture of a given place, and not solely on aesthetics, productivity and grazing habits. There is also an ethically challenging form of favouritism within farm diversification into tourism (farm parks etc.) for breeding livestock purely for their crowd-pleasing/drawing appearance. This of course, means that some animals will be more easily preserved from extinction than others</p>
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(p.155). This is a problem paralleled within other ecological discourses, as is the case with endangered wild animals. For example, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) takes advantage of the most aesthetically pleasing or most impressive animals on the endangered species list, in order to attract charitable donations. WWF's current home page on the internet uses images of tigers and the headline 'Adopt a Tiger' in order to attract potential donations (see <https://support.wwf.org.uk/>). Of course this marketing strategy must work, but perhaps at the expense of other, more unattractive, species (this includes plants, animals, invertebrates, fungi etc). Randy Malamud suggests that 'Visual culture spotlights the animals we prefer to think about saving, which is not all of them. Perhaps this helps explain why most people, today, tend not to get too bothered by mass extinctions of species. We have not been clearly given the message that it is incumbent upon people to try to save *everything*. Yes, God says to do so, but visual culture edits: the artists pick and choose' (Malamud, 2012: 18). When we make the claim that something needs saving, or we chose to ignore its plight; there are ethically challenging questions that we need to consider, especially in the discourses of sustainability, ecology and climate change.

Yarwood and Evans conclude that 'Animals, to some people, are anthropomorphic creatures who have been constructed by the rural heritage industry. To others, however, animals represent an important aspect of local, rural identity. Either way, farm livestock animals are a great deal more than units of production' (Yarwood and Evans, 1998: 159). Livestock animals are ambiguous; they are animals that the general public associate with the 'authentic' rural experience. For farming populations, livestock animals are a source of income as well as an important extension of their own place within rural society. Yarwood and Evans suggest that 'Farmers in the United Kingdom are increasingly becoming landscape curators. Perhaps their role should be expanded to preserve the animals who live on these landscapes, especially those animals whom people have domesticated and bred. Farmers

could be paid incentives to keep less profitable animals in the same way that they are paid to set aside land for environmental, scientific, and historic purposes' (p.160). This suggestion from the authors is somewhat idealistic. From my own experience of how my research participants see themselves, they strongly associate their work with the production of food not landscape curation. Glynne has frequently been annoyed with such terms, and would rather he was thought of as a food producer, and yet, he is highly aware of what his grazing sheep do to the landscape with the current conflicting governmental emphasis on sustainability and increased food production, we have yet to see how this can be done with little risk to local ecologies, let alone with risk to native species of livestock.

1.3 Sheep at Cwmrhaidr and the yearly kairological cycle.

Glynne sorts through his sheep prior to tuppung (breeding) in October in order to undertake a genetic assessment. He tries to match sheep carefully to rams. For example, if he has a particularly red-legged ram or one with a large amount of red kemp (red hairy fibers), he will match this ram with particularly white ewes, and vice versa. Glynne also handpicks a group of very special ewes to be 'put to' his best ram. These special ewes which he calls his 'best sheep' are slightly bigger than his others, and seem to have a more uniform look: big strong bones; a tight, closed fleece; nice markings (Glynne's aesthetic choice is for sheep with uniform red kemp on the legs (not too much either), red markings on the face; and a good head (strong Roman nose)). He also knows which ewes produced good lambs in the previous season; or if she is a particularly notable animal, in many seasons previously. This also greatly affects his choices. Lambing takes place in late March, and continues until the end of April. May is the month for 'seeing what you've got'; for marking individual lambs that are pleasing on the hand and the eye. Glynne speculates on which ones he will keep as

Dos, glustnodydd, dos yn brysur,
A llefara'n bur ar bapur,
Gael i'r praidd fynd i'w pherchennog,
Y cryf a'r gwan a phob hen famog.

[Hasten to collect your earmarks,
Note them safely in your records,
That the flock be sent to its owner,
The weak, the strong and each old
matron.]

(Hugh Ellis (ed) , Clustnodydd, neu logell
lyfry bugail (Y Bala, n.d) cited in Roberts,
1981-1982, p,91.)

replacement ewes or rams, and marks them with a blue spot of 'pitch'; he also cuts the farm's ear-mark (*clustnod*) into their ears (see Book 1, pp.19-24, 63, 97, 100). The 'ear-mark' is a traditional and useful tool for hill farmers as it allows you to clearly identify a sheep that has strayed onto your land, or vice versa. Although ear-tagging (a compulsory

measure along with movement licences which came into legislation in 2003 as a direct result of the Foot and Mouth outbreak. See DEFRA, 2012 under the heading 'Legislation') has taken the place of this activity on some farms, many of the local hill farmers in our area (especially those who breed Welsh Mountain sheep) tend to continue with this form of sheep identification, as it is much easier to look up an ear-mark than a tag number. I also think that to some extent there may be a degree of tradition and nostalgia involved when continuing to mark sheep by ear-marks, although this is of lesser importance than the practical reason for doing so. The 'ear-mark' belongs to the farm, rather than the farmer; it 'cannot be sold, but must be transferred with the land if it is sold' (Roberts, 1981: 3). There are special reference books dedicated to the sheep ear-marks of each Welsh county; for example the one which contains the Cwmrhaiadr marks *Clustnodau Meirion a'i gororau* is published by the North Wales Police (North Wales Police, 2004). Ear-marks are also a lot more difficult to get rid of, unlike tags; therefore, they can act as a deterrent to thieves.

At this point in the year, the lambs are also given an 'oral drench'; this is an anthelmintic medicine which kills a broad spectrum of worms. June, July and August are the months for shearing, weaning, selling sheep and lambs and attending local agricultural shows. September to October are the months to cull old and unproductive or aesthetically unpleasing sheep as well as attending livestock sales to buy new rams for the coming

breeding season. October is the month where sheep are chosen to be mated with specific rams so that the cycle can begin all over again.

1.4 Cultural perceptions of sheep: Stupidity/intelligence/behaviour.

Sheep are naturally flocking animals, and some sheep, like the Welsh Mountain for example, have a very strong flocking instinct. To be a part of a flock, is not only to belong to something bigger than your own individual self, but to be a part of something that has a collective mentality; something that protects the individual from an outside threat by being one in a whole of many faces. In Western culture sheep are generally viewed as stupid, meek and weak animals, partly because of their natural flocking instinct, and partly because, as Sarah Franklin suggests of their ‘particularly “stupid” ways of dying, often by falling head first into places or positions from which they could not extract themselves’ (Franklin, 2007: 200). Sheep also weave their way into many jokes; these tend to be rude, crude and tell us more about the perception of farming communities by non-farming communities than the sheep themselves. But other cultures are respectful of sheep. For example, Franklin talks about a Chinese anthropologist who interpreted ‘the stupid view of sheep as an artefact of the Western tendency to equate individualism with intelligence’ (ibid.). The anthropologist told Franklin that in China ‘where conformity is a competitive social skill and the point is precisely not to stand out, the sheep is considered a highly intelligent animal’ (ibid.). Sheep are much more intelligent than we give them credit for. They have excellent facial recognition: sheep are able to visually recognise other individuals in their flock.

Studies by Kendrick and Baldwin (1987) and Kendrick (1991) measured the response of nerve cells of the temporal cortex of the brain of conscious sheep to photographs of other sheep and potential predators (human and dog). One group of sheep responded to the presence and size of horn that are indicators of social dominance. Other cells

responded differently to familiar compared with unfamiliar sheep. Frontal views of sheep were much more effective in eliciting nerve cell responses than other profiles. (Fisher & Mathews 2001: 218)

Sheep are able to distinguish between different breeds of their own species, and may even recognise differences in human faces (p.359). Sheep also have very good spatial memories. For example, if we are gathering sheep at Cwmrhaidr, they can remember the route that you are taking them on and are usually easily gathered into the yard. After finishing working with the sheep that are from the Cwmcemrhiw fields, Glynne sometimes lets the sheep out of the pen and onto the road, where they will walk themselves back in the direction of their field. They also understand the layout of the sorting pens, and most of the time, will walk through the 'footbath' (the footbath is a shallow trough filled with a chemical used to treat Foot-Rot, a common cause of lameness in sheep) in the correct direction without much prompting. Sheep then are predictable animals; you can usually keep up with their synapses and make a judgement about what they are going to do next. We tend to watch for any sheep that may break away from the flock, because they are inevitably followed by the rest. Of course, there are times when they surprise you, and these tend to be the times when we may call them 'stupid', although it is our own lack of intelligence and lack of concentration that has allowed them to stray too far from their usual behaviour patterns in the first place.

2. Case Studies

Lambing problems

Hypothermia: In cold, wet weather, lambs are susceptible, and if not properly licked by their mothers, or suckled in the first few hours of birth, they may become hypothermic, and will die if the farmer does not intervene in time.

Crows: Crows often peck out the eyes and at the anus of sheep that are lambing, or are having trouble giving birth. They will also peck out the anus, eyes and tongues of new-born lambs; the damage is usually irreparable, and the animals have to be put down.

Foxes: Foxes will take lambs when they are young, or have strayed away from their mother. More often than not, the lamb will just disappear, although occasionally, you do find the remains of a dead lamb that has clearly been killed by a fox. I remember an awful case when I was young, where a fox had attacked an older lamb who must have been a few months old. The fox had ripped the lamb's back end very badly; it had no tail, and a gaping hole going down into its intestines. It was still alive, and I was asked to look after it whilst Glynne looked for the fox. It was put down in the end.

Toxaemia (Twin-lamb-disease)

This is a metabolic disorder which usually occurs in the last two months of pregnancy. It is caused when not enough energy is being consumed by the ewe to support her growing lambs and her own energy needs. Sheep appear blind, will eventually 'go down' due to weakness. It can be treated with liquid glucose.

Hypocalcaemia (Milk fever)

Usually seen in the last six weeks of pregnancy. It occurs because of a lack of calcium in the ewe's bloodstream. Symptoms are very similar to toxaemia, so ewes are usually treated for both. Treatment is an injection of calcium and ewes recover fairly quickly.

(continued on the following page)

In the next section, I will present three events from my fieldwork diary as case studies for looking at the relationship between my research participants and their sheep. Firstly, I will discuss lambing at Cwmrhaiadr. I will then go on to describe The Welsh Mountain Sheep Society open day that was held on the farm in 2012 and that saw over two hundred other farmers visiting the farm. Finally, I will consider the fieldwork I undertook at the autumn ram sales, and the implications it has for understanding the relationship between farmer and livestock animal.

2.1 Case study 1: Lambing

I have a special empathy with Welsh Mountain sheep; a deep love for them, that represents my place within a wider Welsh society. Welsh Mountain sheep and sheep farming in general are, for me at least, tied into, or maybe even a replacement for a lack of a cohesive Welsh national identity. I was born at the end of March in

Mastitis

Mastitis is a bacterial infection of the mammary gland. It causes swelling and in severe cases can destroy the udder. If caught early, ewe's can be treated successfully with an antibiotic, but these ewes may need to be culled at a later date because of scar tissue reducing their capacity to produce milk. In severe cases, blood supply to the udder is compromised, and the udder may turn blue and no longer function.

Abandoned lamb

Sheep occasionally abandon their lambs completely. In these cases, the farmer will either catch both the ewe and her lambs and keep them together in a small space to encourage bonding, or adopt the lamb to a ewe who has a stillbirth or who's lamb has died from hypothermia or other disease.

Tick borne diseases:

Ticks can cause a range of diseases in sheep. At lambing, they are often the cause of lameness in older lambs. A tick bite can easily turn into a nasty joint infection called 'joint-ill'. This can be treated with antibiotics.

Prolapse

Sometimes a ewe will push her womb or vagina outside of her body pre- or post- parturition. This is more common in overfed flocks, but last year it seemed that locally. Many farmers were having problems with prolapses (Glynne was told by another farmer that it had something to do with overly wet weather). Ewes are treated on farm with a special contraption that holds the womb or vagina, inside the body once the farmer has pushed it back in. Sometimes the ewe needs to have her vagina stitched shut in order to keep things in place. In emergency cases this might be done by the farmer, or by the vet (the harness method is preferable, with stitching being used as a last resort).

For further information see Henderson, 1990

1985. My birthday coincides with the most obvious sign that spring has arrived – lambing. The cycle of birth renews the genetic material of the farm, carrying forward specific traits; it also re-invigorates the passion that my participants have for their occupation. Lambing is a time where humans and sheep are closely intertwined; where the family each plays a role as caregiver; where new life is brought into the world; in ditches, behind trees, in far corners of the fields. It is also a time of death; of lambs that didn't quite make it; of sheep that became ill and died, or suffered some sort of birth trauma. Sheep will leave the flock in order to give birth, just like humans; they require privacy and peace at this time. There are several things that can go wrong with the birth of a lamb. Glynne, Owen and sometimes Lorinda 'go around' the sheep twice a day. Knowing what a sheep looks like when she is giving birth, or about to give birth is a skill that is built upon during each lambing season. For example, Glynne's ability to spot a sheep giving birth is more developed than that of Owen. Thus the skill needed for being able to appropriately interpret sheep behaviour is something developed through an ongoing interaction with these other beings.

Sheep are fairly predictable animals; they tend to have favourite places to give birth or to die. Glynne has

over the years, collected a large amount of seemingly insignificant places in his repertoire of areas to check during lambing, and no doubt, Owen is also beginning to draw on his previous experiences of lambing and the places where sheep gave birth. This is a time of year where human and animal stories are intertwined; where human lives are lived parallel to those of the sheep and lambs. Mealtimes still provide the structure to the day, but the working day is longer, and more closely associated with the bodies and timescales of the flock. When a sheep is having difficulties, all thoughts of food or drying off one's wet clothes are cast aside, as the human works his/her hardest to assist in bringing life into the world, or taking it out of the world. The relationship between the Jones's and their sheep tends to shift between concepts of economic and monetary value or losses, aesthetic value and obstetric care, with the latter being of the most importance.

The obstetric care of the pregnant ewe commences during the winter, when Glynne and Owen feed the sheep hay and Rumevite blocks (these are concentrated high-energy feed blocks containing molasses, vitamins, minerals and cereals). There are other activities that are especially important during gestation, such as the careful management of Foot-Rot or other causes of lameness, as these can hinder the ewe's ability to feed adequately for her needs. When the sheep are gathered in during the later stages of pregnancy (usually in order for them to be injected with a clostridial vaccine that passively immunises in-utero lambs from many bacterial infections frequently encountered after their birth), Glynne, Owen and Lorinda are careful to gather them slowly from their fields, making sure that they are not rushed into running during their journey to the farmyard. Once they are in the yard's penning system, they are not packed too tightly into the race, and are handled sympathetically when injecting or trimming their feet. This level of care is carried on throughout the lambing season. Intervention in the labour process is sometimes a daily occurrence, but the majority of care is done at a distance from the careful consideration of ewe behaviour.

Lambing is an event where human and animal each performs clear functions in the sustaining of farming lives. Watching sheep is a hugely important but often mundane part of this time. We watch for signs of imminent labour: sheep stealing lambs in the day or hours before labour starts (the release of hormones prior to labour can make the mothering instinct very strong. Some sheep will attempt to steal another ewe's lambs); sheep staying away from the flock; sheep nesting, that is, using their hooves to scratch the ground; sheep straining; sheep bleating; lambs bleating; flat sheep or flat lambs (flat referring to a posture that unwell or dead sheep and lambs will exhibit from a distance. These characteristics are often seen through a zoomscape; see pp.44-46). All of these behaviours alert us to possible problems, or at the very least alert us to the fact that something is happening over there, right now. Where intervention is required, 'fleshy knottings' (Haraway, 2008: 88) of a literal kind are encountered as human hand and sheep bodies physically connect in a most intimate way during the pulling of a lamb. When a lamb is 'pulled', sheep and human form a unique and momentary symbiosis as Glynne or Owen work with the contractions of the ewe in the assisting of a birth, or the sheep requires a human hand to place a 'stuck' lamb back into her womb in order to turn it. These daily moments of what Donna Haraway calls 'inventive isopraxis' (p.242) conjoin human and animal on an intimate level and make 'someone out of them both who was not there before' (p. 229). Let us not get carried away with Haraway's emotive language here, for these moments are not moments of great tenderness, nor life changing consequences, but are everyday entwinements of an ordinary kind. I do not doubt that there is probably always going to be something quite special about pulling a lamb, and having it born alive and well, but in these instants of flesh, blood, skin on skin; the fragility and precariousness of life hangs on your skill and knowledge as a farmer. There is no time to pause and marvel at new life; your primary concern is to do the correct thing, and to do it well. When you intervene like this, there is also the possibility that your flesh and that of the

ewe will not work symbiotically: her cervix may squeeze your hand so much that it causes you pain and swollen digits; she may not stay still; she may prolapse (push her womb out); she may stop contracting, stop assisting you and helping herself. Thus, these moments are sometimes moments of failed isopraxis; the failure to connect, to work together. There also needs to be careful consideration of the fact that a ewe cannot resist, cannot tell the farmer not to do those things. She cannot control the way her body labours, she cannot tell us that it hurts. We must then make careful consideration on behalf of the ewe; we must have empathy and know when we should stop; we must decide if she is in so much pain that we are being cruel. These are considerations that as farmers you must make if you are to be a good stockperson. At times, you have to make decisions about life, or death on behalf of an animal; this is often something difficult for even the most experienced farmer. These moments of euthanasia are often determined by something other than just care – that of capital.

Writing about the complexly intertwined scientific and cultural origins of Dolly the sheep (the first cloned animal), Sarah Franklin discusses how Dolly is the embodiment of capital, not as herself a commodity, but as ‘a kind of capital primordium or source’ (Franklin, 2007: 47). Thus Dolly's body is both object (a patent for, or a source of new breeding technologies) and as an ovine subject; a living being with a face. Franklin makes the link between Dolly and her legacy in stem cell research, and the original meaning of the word stock as being a trunk or a stem, and how Dolly belongs to both the old and the new versions of the term (p.53). Domesticated sheep are also human enhanced subjects, selectively bred since their domestication by early Neolithic peoples. It is easy to forget the human hand in their design. It is a misunderstanding to think of them as natural and wild animals. They were bred by us, and are managed by us, for human rather than animal reasons (although, this does not mean that they are not agents in their own right). Franklin suggests that they are a perfect embodiment of Haraway's cyborgian ontology; a complex mix of human, animal and

machine, shaped by nature and culture in the same ways as we have been (pp. 55-56); at once commodity, living being and reproductive technology. Franklin quotes Karl Marx: ‘As Marx noted of sheep in *The German Ideology*, they are “*malagreux*, products of an historical process” (1965). This historical process, as he notes in *Das Kapital*, manifests itself “gradually” through “particular lines of production”, as, for example, in sixteenth-century England during “the rise of industry” through the sheep and wool trade’ (Marx, 1965 quoted in Franklin, 2007: 54). Thus sheep are historically produced bodies that have played active roles in the British accumulation of capital. Franklin suggests that it has been our economic dependence on sheep that has built much of Britain; drovers roads were paved over, towns were built around convenient streams to wash the wool, etc. (p.115) (see box). Even in contemporary society, the bodies of sheep are much used especially within scientific research on reproduction, IVF etc. In this way then, ‘sheep substitute for humans in a subordinate and sacrificial role that is as biblical as it is contemporary, and as quotidian as it is revolutionary’ (ibid.). They are bound to us, encultured into our modes of being-in-the-world. And of course, it is the fact that these are capitally accumulating bodies that adds to the complexity of the relationship between farmer and ewe/ram/lamb during times where euthanasia may, or may not be an option. As cruel as it may sound, in some instances the losses of capital that would be incurred if the unwell animal was given veterinary treatment means that sometimes, the other option is taken, and that is, to

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Owen shears and Glynne wraps the wool. Glynne comments on a sheep that he says has pan wool or *gwlan Panawg* (this is where the fleece has grown into a heavily felted thick sheet because of stress, illness, or possibly the weather). Glynne tells me that the Welsh place name ‘Pandy’ comes from this vernacular term. ‘Pandy’ being a fulling mill (emulating natural *gwlan panawg* through friction and the application of preasure). We wonder which came first the word for the naturally occurring fullled wool, or fulling as an industry.

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As Lorinda wraps a fleece, she points to its pink colouring and tells me that apparently there was a storm recently which deposited this Saharan sand onto the sheep; this in turn has given the fleece a pinkish colour. Lorinda said that she wouldn't have believed Glynne's suggestion about the pink wool, had she not heard that some cars in Aberystwyth had been similarly covered in a light dusting of pink sand. I shake a fleece in order to see the sand for myself.

ethanise. This is done as humanely as possible, with a high-powered rifle. In cattle breeding systems, the likelihood of euthanasia may be lessened due to the fact that cattle are worth more, thus the farmer may be willing to spend money on emergency veterinary care. The choices made about life or death in sheep farming systems are thus governed to some extent on capitalist notions and are driven by the market economy. There is also another side to this. Rhoda Wilkie (2010) suggests that ‘Breeding animals, by contrast, have an indeterminate floating value, which may be influenced by a variety of factors, such as their breeding history, age, looks, and reputation of the selling farm. Thus, their price is more variable, and the selling of these animals takes more time’ (p.79). If we understand that it is often the bloodline of a flock that accumulates capital and cultural value (see Franklin 2007: 78) through selective breeding, then the choices about whether to terminate life can also depend on *who* the animal in question is. For example, one of Glynne's best sheep would be more likely to receive expensive emergency veterinary treatment, because *she* is a reproductive vessel whose future lambs may bring economic gains to the farm, whereas, a meat animal will have a specific price dependent on the market and its fluctuations. But the idea of the ewe being a vessel for reproduction, is also multifaceted because her body carries a lineage of genetic material, that has an ambiguous value of being outside and inside capital accumulation – it is both a commodity and a semiotic body of personal human-animal stories tied intimately with our cultural heritage. A ‘bloodline’ in this situation is as much human as it is animal.

In the following concluding section on lambing, I wish to discuss something that has been brought to my attention since undertaking fieldwork: that is, the strongly masculine gender roles becoming more feminine during lambing time. Wilkie suggests ‘That there are two ideal types of masculinity in agriculturally related contexts: monologic and dialogic’ (Wilkie, 2010: 60-61). Monologic masculinity is centred around defined roles for men and

women, whereas a dialogic masculinity is less rigid in that there is an openness to emotion and an expression of the self. Wilkie goes on to suggest that most farmers would fall in-between these categories. I would usually describe Glynne and Owen as fitting into the monologic masculinity category, or in vernacular language ‘hardy farmer’, but during lambing, their masculine presence is compromised by something altogether more feminine – that of tenderness and maternal care. In the countless fieldwork photos I possess, it is during lambing that a uniquely tender relationship between Glynne or Owen, and the well-being of the flock comes to dominate. It is the careful, gentle handling of new-born lambs, or lambs that need to be fed with a bottle that suggest that in an occupation where roles are still very much divided along the binary gender model, male identities can become feminised where animal reproduction is concerned. I am not suggesting that the gender role divide is diminished – it is not – but that the duty of care that Glynne and Owen exhibit towards ewes and lambs is of a softer more maternal nature. There are times of course where Glynne or Owen would fling a dead lamb into the front of the bike, I doubt that you would call this maternal; but, when handling bottle fed lambs, or lambs and ewe's that need care, Glynne and Owen would softly talk to them and feed them with such a gentle touch, that it struck me how different these moments of human/animal relationships are from other ways of touch encountered during other times of the year.

Touch ramifies and shapes accountability. Accountability, caring for, being affected, and entering into responsibility are not ethical abstractions; these mundane, prosaic things are the result of having truck with each other. Touch does not make one small; it peppers its partners with attachment sites for world making. Touch, regard, looking back, becoming with-all these make us responsible in unpredictable ways for which worlds take shape. In touch, and regard, partners willy-nilly are in the miscegenous mud that infuses our bodies with all that brought that contact into being. (Haraway, 2008: 36)

Touch between species draws the human and the non-human into a mutually responsive relationship. Thus at lambing, Glynne and Owen often become both obstetrician, midwife and mother to a constant circulation of livestock animals that both make and remake them on a daily basis.

2.2 Case study 2: Welsh Mountain Sheep Society open day.

(See Book 1, pp. 114-115)

On the 29 September 2012, the Welsh Mountain Sheep Society held its annual open day on the farm. Each year a host county is decided on from the old county names of Meirionnydd (which also includes Ceredigion and Clwyd), Denbighshire and Gwynedd. Last year, Meirionnydd was the host county, and in early 2012, Glynne was asked and agreed that he would be happy to host the event. It is a great privilege to be invited to hold the event, as it means that you have been recognised as being a good sheep breeder. This is the second time that the event has been held on the farm, the last open day was held in 1981. The aim is to allow other breeders the chance to see a farm's best animals. It is partly a way for the host farm to present their particular design on the Welsh Mountain sheep, as well as being a way of marketing the breed and a social occasion for one of our favourite past-times – *busnesa* (noseying). Comparing livestock is something that is built into the farming psyche. It is a skill learned over many years: observing your own flock, and those of others at shows. We often drive along county roads, looking over the hedges at other people's sheep and comparing them to our own. This way of looking means that our admiration is often rooted in other animal bodies rather than that of the picturesque country scenery we may encounter on our daily routes. Quoting a transcribed conversation with one of her research participants, Rhoda Wilkie (2010) notes that 'The cattle grazing in the fields are there for all-especially

fellow farmers and stockmen-to see. He [Rhoda Wilkie's informant] explained, "A lot of pride goes into your work, 'cause you know that other people are looking at it." This might occur informally when farmers "take stock" of and gaze at their neighbours' cattle while driving, at times too slowly, through the countryside' (p.41). Livestock could be seen then as an extension of the farming self – a repository of the farmer's practical ability and husbandry skill, or lack of it in some cases.

Preparation for the open day began earlier in the year. The main jobs that were undertaken were the clearing of rhododendron bushes from behind the Top Shed, fencing the main paddock, repairing the sheep pens (see Book 1, pp. 64-65), completing maintenance jobs on the exterior of the Top Shed (see Book 1, pp.72-73) and making pens inside the Top Shed (see Book 1, p.60). These moments of preparation occurred as early as April, and continued right up until the day of the event. Lorinda expressed a heightened awareness during this time of how messy the farm was, and how she didn't want people seeing it in this state. It is therefore very clear that the farming family wanted to make a good impression on their visitors, not just through their sheep, but through the careful maintenance of the yard. Another preparation that occurred closer to the event was the organising of the tea. To Lorinda, the tea was as important as the sheep themselves, especially as some Welsh Mountain Sheep Society members were travelling from as far as Conwy (some two hours north of the farm). The tea was an important gesture of hospitality, and is something that always plays an important part in farming's social gatherings. The preparations also included choosing which sheep would be present on the day. Glynne wanted to chose his best sheep, rams and lambs for viewing. These were brought closer to the farm during the week or two before the event, and gathered into the yard on the morning of the event. The morning of the open day was fairly hectic, with Owen and Glynne and a cousin of Glynne's gathering sheep into the paddock and sorting through them, whilst Lorinda and a few other farmer's wives and

volunteers prepared vast quantities of sandwiches and cakes. The event was scheduled to begin at 1.30pm, but some farmers had arrived by noon and one had even arrived by 11am.

Owen and Glynne's main task during the event was to talk with the guests, answer any questions that they had, and to encourage the sheep to move around (shuffling them like cards), so that the visitors could see them clearly. In the Top Shed, they had penned the rams and ram lambs together. Some farmers would go into the pen and catch a ram, just like they might at an agricultural show, or at the mart. This enables them to feel the animal, to check its teeth (an essential part of assessing the quality of a sheep), and to look more closely at the body conformation. During the event, there seemed to be a large amount of standing around and looking at sheep, with the occasional quiet discussion between the farmers, or the occasional handling of an animal.

In *Livestock/Deadstock: working with farm animals from birth to slaughter* (2010), Rhoda Wilkie talks about sheep as a feminized animal in the locale of her ethnographic fieldwork (Scotland), suggesting that 'The feminization of sheep – their smaller size, docility, and apparent lack of malice – also contributes to their being considered, by men and women alike, safer and easier to handle and thus more suitable for women to look after' (p.53). Sheep are the dominant livestock animal within my research participants' local farming community, or at least half sheep and half beef. Because of their dominance within local farming systems, they are seen as a masculinised animal, kept and cared for by men (although one might argue that this may be because there are few female farmers in our area). There seems to be a long-standing loyalty to these hardy mountain sheep by farmers within the Society; as I have previously mentioned when discussing rare breed livestock animals (see this Chapter pp.118-121), the types of animals kept on a farm can be dependent on a number of things – location and land (rough grazing or low lying fields); what was kept by previous generations can also have a great influence as can fashions in the local area. If we understand that 'Traditionally,

sons and daughters on family farms have acquired their husbandry skills by serving a long and informal apprenticeship following in their parents' footsteps' (Wilkie, 2010; 36), then Glynne's loyalty stems from his early initiation into farming and an encultured bias towards Welsh Mountain sheep; he is proud to farm the breed. If we think about the investment of the farming self in the bloodlines of the animals they breed and care for, it becomes apparent that the Cwmrhaidr flock of Welsh Mountain sheep are not just animals, but are the messily designed bodies of capitalist agriculture, history, culture, nature and subjective choice. Thus, at times it seems that the genealogy of the human farmers and those of the sheep are so tightly intertwined that it is very difficult to separate them. Nowhere was this more palpable than during the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak of 2001. FMD changed how farming practice was governed; it also drew attention to a hidden emotional connection between livestock and their human farmer counterparts. Wilkie says that the stories of FMD 'were depicted as both emotionally powerful and deeply tragic. The threat of the loaded weapon pointed not at sheep but by the farmer at himself, or a member of the ministry, is repeatedly invoked, indexing an intimate interdependence that can only be comprehended as a matter of life and death' (p.182) (see also Convery et. al., 2005; Gregson 2005; Nerlich and Döring 2005; Scotta et. al., 2004). FMD brought to the fore the emotional investment that livestock breeders have in their animals – not simply as objects of/for capital accumulation, but as living beings with shared histories, a combined fleshiness that is neither human nor animal. These sheep then, are not just Welsh Mountain sheep, but they are Cwmrhaidr Welsh Mountain sheep: a combined place/human/nature/culture phenomenon that is irreplaceable. They are irreplaceable because they are one of a kind; they cannot be bred true to type; they cannot be replicated quickly, but require a lifetime of work. A lifetime of selective breeding, a combined genealogy of human years, and breeding seasons means that they are almost cut from the same cloth.

2.3 Case study 3: Autumnal ram sales.

(See Book 1, pp. 110-113)

Location: Farmer's mart, Dolgellau, Gwynedd 26 October 2012

Weather: Cold (4 degrees Celsius), bright sunshine, bitterly cold in the shade.

During October, Glynne and Owen spend some of their time attending ram sales in the capacity of buyers and sellers. I had the opportunity to accompany them to two livestock auctions where they sold their yearling (1 year old) rams. The following section of writing recounts my experience of the ram sale and the implications it has for understanding the human/non-human relationships within agriculture.

We arrive. The bustling and slightly organised chaos of the mart prickles our senses into lively synaptic conversation. After unloading the store lambs (lambs sold to dealers or farmers for fattening), Glynne drives the four-wheel drive vehicle to the unloading ramp in front of the main mart sheds. Owen runs into the shed to check where their rams' pen is located. He exchanges 'Helo, ffor mae?' (vernacular phrase for 'Hi, how are you?') with the familiar faces he passes. When he returns, Glynne opens up the door/ramp of the trailer. Owen enters the top floor of the trailer, crouching in order to fit into its cramped interior; a scramble, the flailing of animal and human limbs and the noise of horn against aluminium, hoof and boot. With Owen's encouraging noises behind them, the rams explode down the ramp and into the mart's gangway. For a moment, they seem lost, unsure how they should act or react, woolly, warm bodies caught in the moment, confused about their new-found situation in an unfamiliar place. Hustling them in, I follow Owen as he lurches forwards with them, bent over in an unflattering and uncomfortable pose as he pushes them onwards, occasionally stooping down further to manually move a ram.

In the far left hand corner of this shed is a pen. A laminated A4 piece of paper with the name 'Cwmrheadr' (a Welsh spelling of the place name) shows which pen we have been allocated. Once the rams are inside, Owen closes the gate; its brown and rusted steel bearing the traces of thousands of other non-humans who have been left to stand or sit in its confines. I stand for a minute in the cool, concrete atmosphere of the shed, all hard lines and dilapidated steel work; it bears the marks of the moments of hybridity that govern our lives. The floors are concrete, lightly speckled with last week's faeces; traces of urine, possibly blood, spatter its surface. There are four rows of pens: two that run down each outer length of the shed, and two that run centrally. In between these rows of pens are concrete paths and running parallel to these paths are drainage channels on either side: a place for catching liquid and viscous fluids – shit, piss and sputum. It smells of a heady, yet overly familiar scent of cow muck, sawdust and sheep droppings. The smell is comforting in its familiarity; I breathe it in.

Other than the rams that Owen is now tending to, and a few cows that can be heard mooing and pooping in the ring at the bottom end of the shed, the space remains empty. The rams look incongruous in the confines of the shed, strangely out of place. Devoid of any non-human counterparts, they look soft, warm and alive in this space of cool concrete and hard lines. Owen is vigorously brushing the rams; they look on, unfazed and unafraid, as though all of the contact time that has been had on previous occasions has accustomed them to the touch of their human co-author. After every few brushes, Owen cards a small fistful of wool from the carding brush, and throws it to the ground outside a pen: it wafts down, supported in the rising air.

It is at moments like this, that the true nature of the human and non-human relationship comes into sharp focus. One remembers these rams a year ago; remembers how Glynne picked them out from the other hundreds of male lambs, and marked them with a spot

of blue 'pitch' as well as marking their ears with the ear-mark (*clustnod*) of the farm. These rams became marked and individualised very early on in their lives; the aestheticised way of looking at these non-human bodies becomes apparent when we realise that they have been chosen for specific traits as well as genetics: for strong, thick legs; for a 'good head' and a strong Roman nose; for a tail of the correct length; for wool of a particular crimp and thickness; for ears of a certain size; for horns that grow a certain way; for feet that are well formed; for a strong, muscular body; for a colour that is an ideal representation of the markings currently in fashion. Their individualised status suggests that they have been singled out for preferential treatment, and that they may have something that the majority of the flock do not have. Lewis Holloway (2005) suggests that 'Explorations of aesthetic and genetic assessments of livestock animals present valuable opportunities for understanding society – nature relationships and knowledge practices structured around bodies constituted and sustained in specific contexts' (p.884). In the context of the farm, the way sheep bodies are viewed and made sense of is through appearance and touch. Indeed, in my own observations of the act of looking at sheep, this suggestion would see quite apt. There are indeed ways of looking that objectify sheep that take stock of the aesthetics of them in line with current breed fashions and conformity. By their very singling out at a few months old, they become enrolled into the farming system as quasi-objects. Living, breathing beings caught up in semiotic, object-like statuses. Other lambs in the same pen as them will have been sent to slaughter before the year is out, suggesting that 'The productive career path of livestock (i.e., breeding or slaughter) seems to be an important factor in shaping the extent to which agricultural workers actively engage with or disengage from their animals' (Wilkie, 2010: 129). These yearling rams now present themselves to me as accumulating and encultured bodies, individualised, knowable, both sentient and objectified non-human beings with hooves firmly rooted in both the non-human and human world.

And so, for these rams, their journey here, to this place began before they were born. When Glynne and Owen, the October before their births chose a specific group of sheep to be mated with a specific ram. For sheep that were too white, they were put with a ram with strong colouring. For his best sheep, a ram with a special pedigree and a high price tag; for fine boned sheep, a thick boned ram. We talk of sheep and rams as ‘throwing’ particular genetic traits ‘Ma' fe'n lluchio lliw da’ – he throws a good colour. The choices that Glynne makes are very specific; he wants a particular trait to be ‘thrown’ in the animal's progeny, although, ultimately it is somewhat a game of chance. These rams are a product of specific human choices, a semi-controlled selection of genes in order to increase the chances of rams ‘good enough’ for the summer agricultural shows and for selling at the autumn mart. Holloway suggests that ‘Animals gain in symbolic status, and economic value, by being associated with documents attesting to their “purity” and ancestral connection to highly regarded animals’ (2005: 885). Thus at Cwmrhaidr, Glynne will try and buy rams from stockmen with noteworthy sheep; the rams brought are forever-after known by the farm where they were bred. For example, Glynne would say something like this to Owen ‘Can you catch out the Caerynwch ram’. When we're looking at ram lambs he may say ‘That's the son/daughter of Ysgyboriau’. When Glynne is buying at ram sales, he may look for a ram that is related to a ram that had a ‘top price’ in the previous year, suggesting that the genealogical lineage of the ram is quite important; and that just as farmers tend to be known by the names of their farms rather than their family names (i.e. Glynne Cwmrhead) so too do the rams (see Book 1, p.4). The human/animal contact time is greatly increased by the marking of these individuals when they are lambs.

Rhoda Wilkie states that ‘Animals regarded as good at their jobs are also singled out for preferential treatment’ (2010: 132) which, in the context of Cwmrhaidr means that they are paid a closer attention to and are nurtured until it is time to sell them on. Glynne and

Owen take them small amounts of concentrates (hard, pelleted food also known as nuts or cake) every day, which means that they become used to seeing humans in favourable circumstances (see Book 1, pp.46-47). This also means that problems with illness are detected and treated as soon as possible. Their feet are checked fairly often, and during the first year they may turn the horns of some of the rams by heating them with a heat-gun in order to stop horns from growing too close to, or sometimes into their head (see Book 1, pp. 28-30, 53). They probably have more contact time with Glynne and Owen than any other member of the flock, and this is simply in order to prepare for *one* day, where they will hopefully sell them for a good price. Glynne and Owen invest a great deal of time and considerable money on trying to get these animals in peak physical condition. Marking an animal at an early stage in their life not only gives it a quasi-object status but in a rather contradictory way, individualises the animal to the point that the animal's personality can become known. There is a sense of knowing these animals as both sentient individuals and as part of a long lineage of sentient individuals, complicating the relationship between the farmer and his stock. Glynne can tell you who the father of a specific ram was; sometimes he is even able to recall the ram's grandfather and grandmother. He is likely to know the mother of a particular ram and to know which area of the farm that the ram came from. He will not only know the animal's family history, but will also sometimes be able to recall specific genetic traits that were desirable or undesirable in his parents and grandparents. Owen is able to tell you about some of their differing temperaments, how some are more friendly than others, how a few are very wild, how a couple have made close social bonds with other rams in their field-group.

There are also the rams that didn't quite make it to this point; rams that didn't fit the aesthetic criteria, rams with a 'siwffin', rams with fine bones, rams with lifted horns, rams with weak shoulders or body, rams with imperfect feet, rams with too much colour, rams with too little colour, rams with long tails, rams with bad teeth or a bad under-bite or overbite, rams with long ears and rams that didn't grow enough (see box right). These do not fit the standard set by the others and are therefore culled. The culling of these animals does not cause distress to Owen or Glynne, but may cause disappointment. I occasionally suggest that Glynne ought to cull a particular ram, but he tends to want to give it another chance and says 'It might change later on. It's still growing remember'. I do not doubt that his choice to keep some of the ones that I would cull is down to the ongoing and everyday relationship he has with his rams, and the fact that unlike me, he has his stockman's eye finely tuned to things that I sometimes do not see.

In the moment of the sale, the relationship between Glynne and Owen and the yearling rams changes, as the rams are 'recommodified' (Kopytof, 1986 quoted in Wilkie, 2010:122) into the capitalist agricultural system. The dynamics of their relationships changes from being one of a duty of care, to that of a seller. This is a place to make money and to 'show off' the farm's genetic potential to other breeders. As the day of the sale unfolds, farmers come over to the pen to look at the rams. Farmers who are interested in any of the

Glossary

Siwffin: An excess of wool on the top of the head. It looks a little bit like the ewe or ram has a hairstyle.

Lifted horns: Horns which grow up and out from the head in an undesirable fashion.

Weak shoulders: Shoulders should be strong and nicely in proportion with the rest of the body.

Imperfect feet: Feet which are deformed and or lame are undesirable.

Excessive red colouring: Rams with too much red kemp (a red coloured wool found on Welsh mountain sheep) is undesirable, although some red is desirable in specific patterns on the body. The colouring of Welsh Mountain sheep is often determined by fashions.

Long tail: Tails should be of moderate length-not too short and not dragging on the floor.

Bad Teeth: Teeth are looked at to check the age of an animal; they are also a way of checking for good health. Damaged teeth or deformed mouths are undesirable as they may contribute to a 'bad' body shape because it may cause the animal difficulty to eat properly.

animals will enter the pen, where they will catch the animal(s) they like, check their teeth, feel the width of their shoulders and back, look at the legs and look at the colouring (markings) of the wool. Owen or Glynne (depending on who is in the pen brushing the rams at the time) have a certain sale 'patter', where they show the prospective buyers any major flaws, or any desirable attributes. They will also discuss the ram in question's paternal breeding lineage. Prospective buyers often spend a great deal of time in the pen, checking the rams from every angle. They are also very likely to return to the same pen at a later time in order to have one last look and feel of the animal (see Book 1, p.110). Lewis Holloway states that 'The visual mode of evaluation prioritises a subjective appraisal of the body, and is associated with particular forms of aesthetic judgment undertaken in specific places and social settings. Agricultural shows exemplify this mode, as sites and events where visual evaluation takes on a particular intensity, although it also occurs in other more mundane time-spaces of looking, in fields and farmyards' (2005: 886-887). Although the farmers will make a judgement about the ram on the basis of its aesthetic traits, they are also keen to feel the animal's body. 'Here, touch is combined with visual knowledge to produce a complex knowing about assumed relationships between bodily insides and outsides' (p. 887). Thus the touch between human and ram at this point in time is governed by the farmer's intention of being able to feel the muscle, fat and bone structure beneath the ram's outer appearance. Considerations are made about how a ram's insides, its bodily composition or what we call *confirmation*, will enhance the flock when used for breeding purposes.

Each ram has a lot-number drawn onto its horn with a marker pen; if the buyer thinks he/she'd like to bid on the animal, they mark the number down on the sale catalogue. There is a meandering choreography in this space, a great deal of standing around individual pens of rams by men – some entering, checking, then leaving in an elaborate performance of *communitas*. Small groups of men, stand in the drainage channels at the edges of the shed,

chatting about the impending sale, about the quality of the stock about so and so's mother's brother's wife's sister. I am drawn to familiar faces, Glynne's cousins, a great uncle, and of course Glynne, Owen and the rams.

Amidst the chatter and movement in and out of the pens, groups of rams are brought into the shed; the farmer following behind them attempts to get them into their allocated pen. The dynamics of the shed change, as groups of farmers try to situate themselves in the least obstructive way by standing against the rails of the pens, whilst others are too late noticing the animals impending promenade in their direction and stand in the way for a moment. Gates are opened then closed, in a constant stream of percussion; things move, amoeba-like, then return to the equilibrium. Rhoda Wilkie's ethnographic research (2010) was conducted at livestock marts in Scotland, and as a farming partial-insider (she was born into a farming family, but moved to the city when very young), and a vegetarian, it took some time for Wilkie to adjust to her place of research, and for the people at the mart to adjust to her. She says that 'I think that actually, the mart would be a very difficult place for a non-farming person to conduct research without finding some narrow mindedness etc., as although it is public, it is socially closed and demarcated space for livestock and their owners to sell and buy animals and socialise, it is not a place for the average member of the public to come into and watch the goings on' (p. 14). To anyone unfamiliar with this place, the choreography is complex, a constant negotiation and re-negotiation of personal space. As I am very short, and a woman, I am often overlooked, stepped on, nudged with an elbow at head height. I have learnt to make myself look bigger, to wear layers of clothing, to walk in a slightly masculine way in order to 'fit in' to this place, where everybody knows, or should know what they're doing. I have been to marts before, usually as a buyer, so I am well rehearsed in the particular way of 'looking' that is practiced here.

I spend some of my time looking at rams from certain farms. I am particularly interested in those that I have heard Glynne talking about, or have seen before in local shows. Those farms that I have a particular interest in, have in recent years become almost like brand-names. The rams coming from these farms can cost thousands of pounds: the blood is branded, for now at least. As I am too shy and worried that I'll make an idiot of myself if I go in with the rams, I engage in an aesthetic evaluation of individual animals from outside of the pens. It becomes clear during my observations, just how ingrained my way of looking is. How I, just like Owen, Glynne and Lorinda, have over the course of our lifetimes, embodied a specific way of looking at sheep. This is a very specific skill that comes with a haptic and temporal engagement with these animals, and also with the culture of sheep breeding. It is, what Lewis Holloway terms:

connoisseurship acquired during extended experience of being and working with such bodies. They require sensual encounter with bodies in specific places, in particular the show ring but also more widely in farm buildings and fields, and, at least in the show ring, on highly ritualised processes of judging. Here, visual assessment aims to judge what is inside from the outside. Yet the exterior of the body remains important, both as a set of culturally significant markers which, in the case of colour, etc, act to certify an animal's membership of a breed, and in supposed relationships to the interior. Exterior appearance is associated with particular potentialities and interior bodily qualities. (2005: 889)

The particular sheep aesthetic is to some degree dependent on the current breeding trends within breed societies, agricultural shows and what is favoured at livestock auctions (see Holloway 2005; Yarwood and Evans 1998). However, I would argue that there are strong regional aesthetic criteria and many farms will have particular traits that they may favour over others. Here, in this moment, aesthetics and genetics are brought together in an intricate web of semiotic exchanges that add value to a given animal.

When the sale begins, some farmers take their seats, whilst others (those who are not planning on bidding, or whose lot-numbers are later on in the sale) continue to talk in small

groups near the pens. Gates to pens are opened as the farms sell their animals. The next group of rams is brought into the holding pen behind the ring, whilst individual lot numbers are put into the ring and are encouraged to move around. The seller stands with his animal in the ring, encouraging movement by tapping a piece of stick on the ground, or making ‘whooshing’ noises. Imperceptible bids come from the voyeurs; a scratch of the nose, a tilt of the head, a raising of an eyebrow or a finger. The auctioneer asks the farmer whether the price is okay to sell at. The farmer may shake his head in disappointment and frustration, then sell reluctantly, or he may not sell at all. The exit door is opened, and the ram is guided out of the ring. When Glynne comes to sell his rams, his top price is 200 guineas; the rest sell for 100 guineas or below. Glynne is very disappointed; all that fuss and extra work for next to nothing. Glynne needs to sell the rams in order to free up fields and to keep feed costs down. I notice how after the sale, Glynne is to be found with his rams, taking one last look and feel of them, trying to ascertain where it all went wrong perhaps or just silently venting his disappointment at them. There is not really a sense of sentimentality between Glynne and Owen and the rams. Earlier, I had asked Owen about a couple of rams who were known to be close companions. He pointed them out to me and I wondered whether they would or could feel sadness and loss in their separation. But this was my thinking, and not theirs.

For Glynne and Owen, the sale is a way of making enough money (hopefully) to cover the cost of buying in new rams. This particular year, they have had poor results, but in other years, they have done very well. But there are other aspects of the sale, that of earning or seeking the accolade of being regarded as a good stockman – as Wilkie notes (through quoting a research participant) ‘a good stockman was someone “who sees an animal that's slightly off colour the day before it becomes ill”...a common thread running through these accounts is that good stockmen are perceived to inherit their practical skills and knowledge from their forefathers, and this cannot be short circuited’ (2010: 37). It seems then that ‘good’

sheep and ‘good’ stockmen share some common ground. Neither can be plucked from thin air, but must, instead be bred from previous ‘good’ genetic lineage. Although Wilkie’s participants were Scottish, I have also heard my research participants speaking in such terms, saying things such as ‘Farming is in our blood’ – this is a phrase often used in their understandings of themselves. During my pregnancy two years ago, Lorinda told me that I would be fine because I was just like a Welsh Mountain ewe (a notoriously good mother). There also seems to be a collective consciousness about how we may be able to run downhill like our Welsh Mountain sheep. From an outsider’s perspective, these notions that attest to some embodiment of the idea of sheep and human beings sharing some mythological genetic heritage, may seem overtly romantic, it seems that our conceptual understanding of ourselves is intimately linked to our ongoing relationships with our land and even more so, with our flock of Welsh Mountain sheep; a kind of reversed anthropomorphism perhaps. Although it may be easy to brush this suggestion aside as being purely romantic, I think it is important to at least give them a degree of consideration, because these ideas do have a bearing on how my research participants view themselves as part of a wider farming culture.

Sociability is produced during the sale because of the non-human animals.

Relationships between strongly masculine or what one might term ‘the hardy farmer’ are performed through, on and because of a milieu of non-human bodies. The coming together of sheep, humans, capital, technology and care, reaffirms the farmer’s connection to a wider farming population and culture. It is a place to reconnect unravelling ties to other farms, to create new networks and to catch up with the past year of farming from other perspectives and over the woolly bodies of other beings. It is also a place of ‘showing off’: ‘Through such vernacular-aesthetic knowledges, breeders negotiate between understandings of commercial considerations and aesthetic evaluations in ways which reproduce specific notions of what is a “good” animal’ (Holloway, 2005: 890). Thus the animals that are deemed ‘good’ often take

‘top’ prices, in turn allowing their human breeder to claim the accolade of a good stockman. The rams are the ‘raw material through which stockmen can visually display their practical skills, build up or undermine their professional reputations, and create their sense of self’ (Wilkie, 2010: 42). These yearling rams are more than just animal bodies, and we must learn to see how our species are tangled in a myriad of more complex ways. Yes, they are bred for their meat, and yes, we kill and eat them, but they are not just conceptualised as meat running around in their field (p. 3). For those lucky few who have been singled out as breeding animals, most are likely to remain on the farm until the day they die. ‘Exploring how different groups of agricultural workers think, feel, and relate to food animals also provides an additional perspective on people's dealings with domesticated animals. For example, domesticated animals are usually categorized as either livestock or pets. However, this clear-cut dichotomy is messier in practice because many of my contacts perceived some of the livestock they worked with as pets, friends, or even work colleagues’ (ibid.). Some of these animals will have strong, identifiable personalities, drawing their human counterpart into a somewhat reciprocal relationship. Other animals (not just those used for breeding) will have fleeting relationships with the farmers who care for them, as they become ill, or need to be assisted during birth or some other event in their animal lives. But because these relationships come about during an economic occupation, their relationship is always in the process of being re-configured; a ‘dance of world-making encounters’ that ultimately allow us to do our job, and to do it well.

Animals are everywhere full partners in worlding, in becoming with. Human and non human animals are companion species, messmates at table, eating together, whether we know how to eat well or not. (Haraway, 2008: 301)

3. Experiment 3: Dear Mick Jagger...

At this point, it is recommended that the reader watch the film *Dear Mick Jagger...* (Disk 2), the documentary footage of the performative event (Disk 3) and view the documentary photographs in Book 2, pp. 41-56.

Dear Mick Jagger... was an enhanced screening of a film which explores the relationship between the Jones family and their livestock animals. It was conceived to be viewed in relation to a particular space on my research participants' farm. The film was presented alongside everyday work done with the sheep, and a task-based performative action. The film itself uses a mixture of creative styles and techniques, and includes documentary and artistic imagery. The concept for the film and its images came from my engagement with the fieldwork surrounding my three case studies and was furthered by my reading for the first half of this chapter. The film was produced after having written the first half of this chapter and is a reflection and an extension of these ideas.

Although not conceived as a cumulative experiment, there are certainly overlaps between this work and earlier artistic experiments. For example, I use the method of stop-animation in a similar way to that of Experiment 2 (see Chapter 2, Book 2, pp.33-40 and Disk 1) and the use of documentary film and the conscious decision to have people within every filmed landscape sequence was influenced by the photo placards of Experiment 1 (see Chapter 1 and Book 2, pp.3-32). There is also a sense with this final experiment, of the continual development of the research, and how the duration of the fieldwork has informed and developed the practical work and my thinking. This final experiment seeks to create a rupture in both our own understanding of our relationships with our animals, and perhaps the hegemonic discourses about rural life. In the introduction to *Livestock/Deadstock*, Rhoda

Wilkie suggests that her work is not about the ethical consideration of meat eating and rearing animals for slaughter, and that ethical debates that exist tend to be abstracted from the very real and daily experience of caring for, breeding and slaughtering animals (2010: 2). In a way I felt the work was a reaction against these particular abstracted and overly simplistic thoughts about what it means to produce meat for human consumption.

In the following text I will discuss the film and the enhanced screening separately.

3.1 Film

3.1a Concept

The film attempts to consolidate the autoethnographic and the ethnographic, the inside/lay perceptions with outside/academic knowledges. It seeks to make clear that it is the voices of Cwmrhaidr's skilled practitioners that are favoured here, with academic/outside knowledge used in a subtle and sympathetic manner to punctuate and to be the impetus for reflection.

The film tries to be sensitive, whilst negotiating the feelings and understandings of my research participants in a direct manner. There is a strength of feeling that I have witnessed over the course of the fieldwork and felt over my lifetime that is difficult to translate for people from outside the farming community. This feeling is also not always easy to identify, as some of these feelings masquerade as other emotions; a misleading evocation where love and anger are all part of the same thing, where care is an ethical obligation; but also done for monetary gains, where death is, to quote Lorinda 'a natural progression really'. This project is about the liminality of emotional attachments to livestock animals; our feeling towards

them tend to be in the middle ground, all those things that are in-between, all those things that are not easily represented or sometimes misrepresented as cruelty, ambivalence or love.

- How can we consolidate the autoethnographic, the ethnographic and academic discourses through the use of artistic practice?
- How do sheep contribute to our human status in this place?
- How might we negotiate feelings of attachment and detachment when it comes to animals?
- How might an artistic practitioner work with the fieldwork documentation and in a working environment where home and work are the same thing?

From the outset, I knew that it would be difficult to install anything highly designed or overly complicated into the space of the Top Shed, because, as the main agricultural building on the farm, it is in constant use. I realised that time in the space to rehearse, and to work with Lorinda, Glynne and Owen would be minimal as they have busy working lives. Because of this, I made the choice to create a film with an underlying narrative soundtrack, and this would be the main organising dramaturgical strategy.

Much of the reading I had done for this chapter had centred around ideas of attachment, detachment, subservience, cruelty and symbiosis. Rhoda Wilkie's *Livestock/Deadstock* was of particular importance to this chapter as it dealt specifically with animals reared for meat. And her sensitive treatment of the contradictory nature of attachments between farmers and their stock was of notable influence. Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet* was also of help in this chapter, but as her approach was from a human/pet perspectives, from a non-human perspective at times, it was often problematic to impose her discourse onto such a different set of animal/human relationships. Haraway

makes no attempt at discussing or defining the relationships that farmers have with their livestock, other than a brief interlude about the status of working sheep-dogs within a farming enterprise (see Haraway, 2008: 55-56) and in a way, I am pleased that she does not as I would worry she might apply a particular emphasis that just isn't there. Sarah Franklin's *Dolly Mixtures* is where I began with the reading, and this is where I began to see sheep in a different way (it is important to note that the case studies were undertaken and written about prior to the reading for and writing of this chapter. i.e. the case-studies informed my reading and further writing). Franklin traces the history of sheep alongside humans. She discusses how sheep have played significant roles in local and global economies and cultures throughout history. What I particularly valued about Franklin's text was her ability to weave the sheep in and out of human history, so that the history of humanity was in fact, built on the relationship between sheep and man. I hoped to do something similar with the narrative text for the film's soundtrack; to weave sheep in and out of the ethnographic, the auto-ethnographic and the academic discourses – to make sense of our place and our farm through talking about sheep.

3.1b Process

i. Narrative

Most of the narrative components are autobiographical reflections on some aspects of our relationship with other animals; reflections on the fieldwork or reflections on some of the academic texts that I had encountered when reading for the first part of this chapter. The overarching narrative thread of the film is centred around the question of who we are in relation to the animals we care for; I was particularly interested in how my research participants' feelings towards their livestock and other animals is conditioned from an early

age. I thought about my own early encounters with animals and the way that they may have produced a particular way of feeling; a haptic learning that taught me how to be with, and feel about these other beings that was far removed from the relationships people may have with their pets. These thoughts had never really occurred to me before undertaking the fieldwork, as I had just accepted them as ‘how it was’.

To begin the experimentation process, I wrote a series of autobiographical texts, each one centring on experiences that I had had with animals, especially sheep. Initially, I wrote about the very first animal I remember (a chicken named Lucy). I was hoping to include my research participants’ earliest memories of animals in the text; instead, their memories are recorded on film during one-on-one interviews/conversation. Many of these stories have some sort of moral/ethical element to them, and I have attempted to use these as a pathway to assessing how we negotiate our relationships with animals as adults on the farm. Most of these autobiographical narratives are collective experiences (i.e. my research participants share them with me), but are written from my own perspective.

Between these narratives about farm animals, I attempted to weave facts about sheep genetics, human genealogy, symbiotic relationships and more philosophical meanderings about animals and about human beings in their place. Having read a DEFRA publication about *zoonoses* (diseases that animals can share with humans: see Zoonoses Report Working Group, 2012: 28) and finding a section about an outbreak of anthrax in heroin users, and another section about TB (p.30) (see also DEFRA for national statistics, 2013), I began to think about the similarities between different species. This led me to look for a map of the sheep genome that I discovered has only recently been sequenced (see Archibald et. al., 2010). What was of particular interest is the fact that the sheep genomic sequence retains a ‘conserved synteny with extensive regions of the human genome’ (Broad, Hayes and Long, 1997: 278) and that there exists ‘103 evolutionary breakpoints between humans and

ruminants. Surprisingly, we could observe that a large proportion of these breakpoints (65) shared a homologous [similar position in the series] location' (Schibler, Vaiman, Oustry, Giraud-Delville 1998: 907). As points of genetic reference, The Sheep Genome Project utilises the genetic sequences of the dog, cow and human in order to map the sheep genomic sequence. In doing so, researchers found areas where the genes of the sheep and the human (and dog and cow) have synteny. What this reveals is that some of the chromosomes match in location from one species to another. I began thinking about animals and humans being born one and the same (more or less), and that it is only as we develop, that our species specific characteristics really begin to mark clear differences between human and animal.

'Where do **I** begin?

Where do **we** begin

I have 46 and you have 54 chromosomes. I am a virtual scaffold for your DNA, along with Bovine and Canidae species. Your genomic sequence was mapped against mine. In places, our chromosomes match, they 'retain conserved synteny with extensive regions of the human genome' (Broad, Hayes and Long, 1997: 278).

Bits of you can be overlaid onto bits of me; we are mapped over by sheepish genes; paved over by woolly DNA.

I am both sheep and human. An agri-body. A sheepish body.'

I went on to attempt to connect human and animal bodies through the example of tuberculosis. The narrative in question begins with preamble about the history of my Grandmother and her adolescent experience of TB. The narrative connects my Grandmother's

illness with her current experience as a dairy farmer in a part of Wales where numbers of cattle reacting to the tuberculin skin test, and thus sent to slaughter are the second highest in Great Britain (Hawkins, 2012: 8). The pilot badger-cull which is now coming to a close in Gloucestershire, and the Welsh government's change of TB eradication strategy from culling to badger vaccination (see Welsh Assembly Government, 2013) has caused great controversy as Bovine TB continues to be an emotive issue. The complexity of the BTB concern is far too multifaceted for me to comment on in any capacity within the narrative of *Dear Mick Jagger...* but by placing these two experiences together, by making those connections between bodies, I hoped to create a space where we can reflect on the interconnectedness of the species without taking a personal or political stance on the issue of TB eradication.

There are further types of narrative that could be described as philosophical/ethical interludes between the autobiographical texts. These are written out of the personal narratives, as a reflection on the matters or morals in question. They are also attempting to grasp something of the contradictory nature of our relationship with sheep. For example, the elephants' mourning comes after I describe how I do not feel sad when animals die, how I am hardened and numb to it and yet I understand the complicity I have in death. Describing how elephants mourning alludes to a sentience that I know animals possess; it acknowledges my guilt for breeding animals for meat, but at the same time; it shows that we do care, that we have the capacity for empathy towards our animals.

ii. Film: Documentary sequences

Having written the narrative, I began filming the daily farm work for a couple of weeks. At the time of filming this material, my research participants were in the middle of shearing,

therefore most of the everyday footage is of this work. It might also be worth noting at this point that I learnt to shear during the summer of undertaking the filming for this project. I attended a three-day course run by the British Wool Marketing board, with the hope of embodying a skill that I have never learnt, but spent countless hours watching. I had initially hoped that I might incorporate the choreography into the work, but due to time constraints this did not happen. The decision to use other types of documentary/ethnographic film footage was taken much later on in the process after having recorded my soundtrack and finished all of the filming. The decision was based on three facts:

- Having the singular voice speaking the narrative, although intimate, was not dynamic.
- Although the autobiographical texts were often collectively owned stories about farm life, the lack of other voices was not demonstrating this collective identity and the nature of my fieldwork.
- Having recorded the text, and finished filming all of the film sequences, I began to see moments where I could include the voices of my research participants within the work without disrupting the flow of the narrative.

I used informal filmed interviews with my research participants as a way of recording their responses to a series of questions:

1. What is your first memory of an animal?
2. What is your first memory of animal death?
3. Do you think we have a different relationship to death on the farm?
4. What is the future of the uplands in Wales?

For Glynne, I also included a couple of questions specifically aimed at him about his relationship to the flock of Welsh Mountain sheep.

1. Sometimes I think that you are more attached to the sheep than the land. Is this the case?
2. What do Welsh Mountain sheep mean to you?

Using the same questions for each participant was a helpful starting point for discussion, and led to interesting and variable responses from the participants. Lorinda was especially philosophical about farm life, and Glynne's responses to the questions aimed specifically at him were touching and at times humorous; Owen had difficulty answering some of the questions, so his voice is not included as much as Lorinda and Glynne. The material that was derived from the interviews became, in my opinion central to the workings of the film, as their voices and their knowledge draw us back into the lay practices and expert knowledges of my research participants as well as allowing us to witness the complexity of feeling with regard to the animals in question. The placement of the interview sections within the overall structure of the film was done with careful consideration. I attempted to place the interviews next to narrative or images that were directly related to the film. For example, Glynne, Lorinda and Owen reflect on their first memories of animal encounters directly after the narrative about Lucy. The same method of placement is used almost throughout the film.

Having had success with incorporating the interviews into the film, I decided to further this approach by including sections of footage from a documentary film made by a local amateur documentary maker Hywel Evans in the late 1970s. The footage, which I have had since I began the research project is of shearing on Hyddgen. Hyddgen is a mountain that belongs within the Cambrian Mountain range. Hyddgen was, at the time a part of my Taid's family farm (it has since been sold). Hyddgen also holds a historical significance as the place

where the battle between Owain Glyndwr and a force of Flemish and English men is said to have taken place. The footage is a mixture of interviews and documentary footage. I inserted small sequences from this film in a similar manner to the way that I had inserted the interviews with my research participants. I make no attempt to date the historical footage, as the placement of the historical documentary attempts to draw attention to the similarities between the past and the contemporary way of life on the farm and like Chapter 2 *Ode to Perdurance* it seeks to show how the past and the present have shifting temporalities that blur the boundaries between the now and then. The documentary footage is included not as a sentimental or nostalgic look at our past, but as a document that has some relevance to our current lives. The tonal changes between my voice and the voices in the documentary footage, might bring one away from the intimate ‘whisper-in-your-ear’ type of intimacy that my narrative voice offers to a wider, here and now type of vernacular tonality.

3.1c Film imagery

i. Consumption: a recapitulating theme

The performative sections of film grew out of the text as I tried to find appropriate images. In all cases I worked conceptually, thinking through ideas that might work with the text, play with the text, juxtapose the text or add another layer to the text. Consumption became a recurring theme, which eventually led to a slight change in the final moments of text in the sound recording studio. Consumption is conveyed in the film through a number of close-up and middle distance shots of eating. Consuming as a way of coming to terms with the flesh I eat? Cannibalising the meat of my friendship with other beings, thinking for the first time about who and what I have eaten? Consuming or being consumed by place?

The first image of consumption occurs near the beginning of the film. This image is a close-up shot of my mouth eating a large quantity of blackberries. This sequence was one of the last pieces I did for the project, as initially I had filmed the shearing bench, but had not decided on what other images I might place with this particular text about slaughter. I chose this image because I had already included a similar group of images for two other sections, and wanted to continue the theme. I also felt that I ought to work with what the text gave me (blood, offal and so forth) without using imagery that is already invoked in the writing (i.e. not filming in a butcher's or slaughterhouse). I used a similar image in a film I made as part of my MA final solo presentation, but used bilberries being squeezed by my hand in that sequence.

The second version of this image of consumption comes in the moment where the text explores the idea of the taste of meat and animal products and the relation they have to the live smell of the animals (eating grass sequence). During the editing process I increased the volume of the sound so that it audibly is later referred to in the sound of ripping when I am skinning the lamb. In these images, I attempt to not become animal as such, but to put myself in the place of animal; an act of empathetic mimicry perhaps. It also alludes to failure, the failure of becoming – I am very human in my action, I cannot become sheep or cow. I can only attempt to enact their action when they graze, and even this is a failure as my mouth is not the same as theirs. The narrative gives meaning to the image as it attempts to make connections that are not always comfortable to make between meat, life and death.

Milk/meat/live animal bodies/dead

The cow extends her head over the wall in my direction. I grab and pull a fist-full of long, green grass from beside my feet and hold my hand out in anticipation. The cow's rough, long tongue reaches out to my hand, curling powerfully around the clump of grass; a twisted muscular contraction. She takes the grass, her eager big

brown eyes watching me. Her breath is a milky mixture of acetone and grass – pure sweetness. I've tasted her breath in glasses of creamy milk ever since: milky, acetone, grassy juice, creamy, cow-y, pure sweetness. I taste pasture, and cow shit and cow, and beef, and breath and grass. I cannot separate milk from cows nor cows from milk.

I cannot separate the taste of lamb from the smell of the sheep I tend.

I cannot separate the taste of pork, especially the smell of cooking bacon from the live bodies of pigs.

I cannot separate the taste of beef from the live cows I know.

To separate, to pull those two things apart – meat/live animals, a leap of faith, a leap of unknowing the knowing.

The consumption image reoccurs for the third time during the narrative about lambing 2013. The text, although short, was important because it was directly written from the fieldwork notes. As I only had documentary photographs from lambing 2013, I had to find a way of creating an image which would invoke the feeling of that time during the height of summer. For this film sequence, I thought about what might convey the strong feelings that my research participants had during that terrible, cold, snowy spring. What was it that would make things right again? The thistle is usually experienced on the farm as an annoying weed that during the summer months is cut by the farmer with a machine called a 'topper' (this is a machine pulled behind the tractor and it cuts off the top of taller weeds such as thistle, dock and nettle). But, during my experience of lambing 2013, the thistle became a symbol for hunger and for the irrepressible nature of the elements. It became a plant that I photographed on numerous occasions eaten right back into the ground: fleshy, white and spiny sustenance

(see Book 1, p.93). The eating of the thistle is simply an enacted form of empathy. Initially I had thought the thistle sequence might be made in the same manner as some of my other stop-motion sequences (see *Ode to Perdurance*, Chapter 2, Disk 1 and Book 2, pp. 33-40); I would cut bits off the thistle frame-by-frame until I reached the ground. I re-configured this by placing the human back into the frame because I wanted to enact my empathy, to feel something somehow.

The thistle I ate was purposefully chosen for the landscape backdrop of the waterfall. The waterfall always tends to be in view and the mountain plays an important role in the yearly farm cycle; providing summer grazing for the sheep whilst the majority of the pasture on lower ground is rested. It is the place where my Taid's ashes were spread (see Chapter 1) and it is one of the few places where we still have to gather the sheep on foot. The backdrop is impressive, beautiful even, but the human aspect in the frame is attempting to draw the gaze away from the landscape, attempts to show a more oppressive side to farm-life, attempts to rupture a vision of rural idyll.

I had made the decision fairly early on in my filming process that images of landscape could only be included if there was a human element within them (no empty landscapes). My research participants never see the landscape as being empty, as our eyes are constantly drawn to the places in it that we know, or the sheep we are looking for.

- Can showing a landscape with obvious human activity challenge the dominant idea of landscape as empty, open, 'natural' space?

Here on the farm, we rarely experience landscape as we are often too busy 'doing' to stop and look. And even when we do look, our eyes are drawn to the condition of the animals we can see, or to birds on the wing, or to the weather about to encroach on us. Landscape here is not an important concept to us. My chosen location worked particularly well because there are sheep grazing nonchalantly in the background; they continue with their daily grazing routine

as I stand there for forty-five minutes eating my way down to the ground, huffing and puffing in the heat of the day as my lips tingle with the sting from the thistle spines.

ii. Performative images

In contrast with the documentary, interview and historical film footage are the sequences of performative images (some of these have already been discussed above). Many of these images again grew out of aspects of the text. They are mostly task-oriented:

- eat blackberries
- syringe a poppy-seed-head
- eat grass
- eat a thistle
- drag then carry an anchor
- skin a lamb
- get my research participants to dance
- sit in a bath

The image of the poppy and the milk I syringe out of it is a reference/stand in for heroin and sustenance. The milk is referred back to in the closing moments of the film where I talk about animals and human's requiring their 'mother's milk as sustenance'.

The anchor is another thematic element that drew from the narrative about the shipwrecked family member. In the accompanying sequence, I try to drag and carry it away from the farm, feeling the weight of the iron pulling my body down; I feel the weight of

place. The skinning of the lamb was filmed during the spring, well in advance of any work on the experiment. I do not explain this action i.e. I do not show the audience why I am skinning the lamb, and the fact that the act of skinning is an act of care, as the skin will be worn by an orphaned lamb that is to be adopted by the mother of the dead lamb being skinned. It is for the viewer to ask questions about what this action is. The image fits with the final sentiment of the narrative 'From knowing how and where one can touch, or one cannot without imparting harm'.

The dancing during the last section of the film was influenced by an exhibition of a film collective I saw in Aberystwyth Arts Centre. One of the films was of non-dancers dancing in their places of work. Using this idea, I asked Glynne to dance on numerous occasions whilst he was working with the sheep. The footage was to co-inside with the narrative about Mick Jagger the orphaned lamb. The dancing was both to lighten the atmosphere of the film with a play on words/images, and to contrast with the outcome of my relationship with Mick, and the complicity that I had in his death. It was also a moment that questions the authenticity of the ethnographic project by showing a different side to my research participants: who are these people?

The final sequence of the film is of the bath. This bath featured early on in my fieldwork notes (see box). It is one of the only pieces of architectural paraphernalia left over from the times of Owen Owen; the only thing left of the lives of Cwmrhaiadr's landed gentry. Now, it is simply a place that I keep coming back to, an object I have been asked to fill with water many times during the

26/4/2010

Weather: Mild with cloud-cover in the morning, sunny afternoon.

After tea, Glynne cleans algae off an old enamel bath that he uses as a container for the ram's water in Cae Bungalow. He's using a wad of moss as his scrubbing brush. After most of the algae has been rubbed off, Glynne rinses the bath with water, and then fills it with fresh water for the yearling rams. Glynne tells me that the bath came from the old Cwmrhaiadr mansion when it was demolished; he says that there are at least two others that came from there somewhere on the farm.

duration of my fieldwork; a place that now sustains a different sort of bloodline. This sequence attempts to recapitulate the theme of the shipwreck, a reminder of the anchor, of belonging and of genealogy.

- What might the performative images do in the film?

I knew early on that I wanted the film to contain these performative images. The images tend to punctuate the images of daily farm life with a more reflexive and abstracted engagement with place. These images can suggest a sense of feeling that some of the other images fail to show. Weaving the creative with the ordinary opens a space for new encounters, new ways of seeing a place.

3.2 The performative event

i. Concept

The performative event itself was an enhanced viewing or staging of the film, which took place in the main agricultural shed on Cwmrhaidr farm. The reason for a site-specific screening was the fact that I wished to include my research participants in the work in some capacity. Film may fail to represent a place: it might flatten it, change it in some way. By inviting the audience to the farm, there was a hope that they would at least have an opportunity to engage with the place of my research and my research participants in some way. The viewing attempted to give audience members an experiential encounter with the subject material of the film in real-time, as the daily farm activity played out on film is played out in front of them. Whilst watching the film in such a space, the viewer may become aware of their own bodies in the space of the film, for example they may notice the trough at one

end of the shed in the film footage, and see it first-hand in the space. In *Everyday Aesthetics* (2007), Yuriko Saito suggests that the aesthetics of everyday life are an underexplored aspect of modern philosophy. She hopes that ‘By liberating the aesthetic experience and illuminating how deeply entrenched and prevalent aesthetic considerations are in our mundane everyday existence’ (p.12) it would ‘restore aesthetics to its proper place in our everyday life and to reclaim its status in shaping us and the world’ (ibid.). She considers them to be a highly important part of our everyday lives, and are a taken-for-granted aspect of the aesthetic consideration. She suggests that the aesthetic experience of viewing art is one of spectatorship, and of looking for some sort of profound visual experience, whereas the aesthetic experiences of everyday life usually incite action such as cleaning when we see dirt (p.4). For the enhanced screening, the aesthetics of the everyday were an important aspect of both the staging and the film itself. The treatment of the everyday came about through an intuitive reflection on how to incorporate and communicate the sensual experience of the fieldwork process to an outside audience. By rejecting the aesthetic hygiene of theatrical design convention, and accepting the messy visual reality of a working farm, complete with sheep and non-performers (farmers), one relinquishes control over visual reception, and other sensual experiences. If we are to agree with Saito’s assertion that ‘an art object presents itself to us more or less with a determined boundary.’ (p.18), then the inclusion of the everyday within the parameters of artistic practices without obvious suggestions on how one might read such an object or action ‘renders a non-art object “frameless”, making us a creator of it as aesthetic object.’(p.19). To an extent I agree with Saito’s assertion here, but for me the framing *is* important, but has to be done in a less controlled way. For watching the everyday action in *Dear Mick Jagger...* the audience have the film as a point of reference and a framing device. Objects, animals and humans in the film, are doubled up within the confines of the Top Shed. One has to read the film in parallel to the live-action; but the viewer remains

free in her choice of what and how to watch. Presenting only the work done with the sheep without the inclusion of the film or the task based wool spinning, would in my opinion, render such everyday work frameless and abstracted to the point where it would provide little insight into the life of the farm.

ii. Process

The placement of the audience was the first decision I had made, even prior to writing the text or filming. Running down one wall of the shed is a cattle feed bin or manger. Since there haven't been cattle on the farm since I was born, the feed bin has become a general dumping ground, but more importantly it has become a space to watch from: a voyeur's platform. During the Welsh Mountain Sheep Society Open Day in 2012 (see this Chapter: 133-136 and Book 1, pp. 114-115), the feed bin became packed with farm men and women as they propped themselves on the railings to get a better look at the sheep. The feed bin, thus naturally lends itself as a place to watch from, it is a space with particular ways of being appropriated; already scratched and stained with the offerings of daily rigmarole, of other watchings. The rusty bars remind me of why the cows are no longer here – the losing battle with Redwater Disease, the lack of economic gains from small-time dairying/beef farming – an era of change. To place an audience in there was not entirely without precedent. I therefore staged the work with very little re-configuration of the space, as, for me at least, this is already a space for performance and watching, especially as much of my fieldwork has been conducted from the margins of these spaces. I would suggest that my status as being both inside and outside of the field of research allowed me to have a particular relationship with the everyday aesthetics of the place, and this in turn enabled me to fully inhabit the space, and draw attention to an everydayness that might not usually be appreciated for its aesthetic

qualities. Yuriko Saito (2007) discusses the Japanese concept of a *wabi* sensibility which is 'promoted by the tea ceremony, which celebrates those objects which, and phenomena that are past their prime, such as falling cherry blossoms and chipped tea bowls. Its proponents claim that such a taste is contrary to something that comes naturally; it has to be cultivated' (p.174). I often felt that because I had my camera with me during the fieldwork, I incidentally cultivated a particular way of seeing that space; already and always framed by the photograph; suggesting ways of seeing into that space from the peripheries, aware of the possibilities of framing such action as something else, and appreciating and finding beauty in the messiness of life. The bars/rails of the feed bin also give a sense of being contained and safe from contamination, but at the same time penned-in in an animalistic way perhaps. As the audience members look at the ewe lambs, and the ewe lambs look back at the audience members, we are reflected in one another – all penned-in, all watching or waiting for something to happen.

My role within the performative event was task-based as I spun wool with a drop spindle, then wrapped that wool around the skull and ribs from the skeleton of a ram. The drop spindle was a choice I had made based on the archaeological find of a stone spindle whorl (the round disk at the bottom of the spindle) dug up on the farm during ploughing in the 1970s. The drop spindle is a simple form of spinning technology that can be used to make yarn from various fibres. In the initial stages of designing my task for the viewing, I had decided that I would re-assemble the skeleton of a sheep in a manner akin to that of someone re-assembling the mouse bones from owl pellets. I had some difficulty finding a complete skeleton (mostly due to the fact that legislation means that all dead farm animals are sent away with the knacker-man, a post Foot and Mouth rule (see DEFRA, 2009).

Glynne reminded me that one of the home-bred rams we had in the previous year (a ram with thick legs, a good head but an unfortunate colouring of patchwork red kemp) had died on the mountain and that his skull (at least) was still there.

Glynne fetched the ram's bones for me, and although he wasn't complete, there was a large proportion of his skeleton available. I began to feel uncomfortable with the idea of assembling his skeleton in such a clinical way. These bones were not an unknown

22/4/2013.

Weather, dry but cloudy. It rains after lunch. Very wet.

We joke about the numerous brown lambs that are up here; residual traces of the patchwork ram that was home bred, but keeled over and died on the mountain after tupping.

collection of bones to me, they were the remains of a being that I had known and seen grow over the past year or two. I began to think about a different kind of assembling, a task that was about showing a duty of care, something gentle, something that would put protein on his mineralised bones. Wool is a remarkably durable protein that takes longer to decompose than other tissue in the body; it is a fibre that I have experimented with over the years with varying degrees of success (see Introduction)

- What would it mean to re-protein: to wrap the bones in wool, to shroud them in their own matter?

My reading of M.L Ryder's *Sheep and Man* (1983) had led me in some way to the simple aesthetics of the task. As I had read the chapters on regional differences in sheep farming implements, including the shepherds crook and shearing bench and their minimalist aesthetics; I wanted to pare back to the simplest action of care I could devise without any overly emotional gestures of sentimentality between myself and these bones. The action is a hybrid comment on care, reflecting on Donna Haraway's *When Species Meet* (2008), where she suggests, 'I am sure our genomes are more alike than they should be. Some molecular record of our touch in the codes of living will surely leave traces in the world' (p.16). Much

of Haraway's writing focuses on the reciprocal nature of our relationships with other beings. Even though I think this idea is difficult to apply to most sheep, there is something that gets rubbed off the sheep and onto us.

During rehearsals, I had also tried movements that were not a part of the task, such as emerging from the water trough in the shed at the very beginning; bench pressing the anchor on the shearing bench; and standing on the shearing bench doing a very slow version of shearing. Although I liked all of these elements, within the context of the event, they were too theatrical and seemed to detract somewhat from the other things that were going on in the space.

The conclusion of the event is of great importance as Glynne climbs over the gate from his sheep pen into mine and cuts the farm's ear-mark into my prosthetic sheep ears and tags me with the same tags he'd been using on the ewe lambs during the course of the event (see Disk 3 at 18-19 minutes). The prosthetic ears were made by making a negative mould of my ears from dental alginate, then casting a positive model in plaster. Working with the positive model, I built up my ears with clay to form sheep shaped ears. Having created the shape of the ears, I then made prosthetic versions of them by painting on around seven layers of liquid latex, then finally covering the ears in wool. For me the action of cutting the ear-mark and tagging the ears says as much I need it to say about belonging, about rootedness and about the passion we have for Welsh Mountain sheep; it is an image that encapsulates Haraway's notion of 'infoldings of the flesh' (Haraway, 2008: 249). In the final moments of the work, I did feel emotional, as the task asked of my Father claims me as belonging to this place. 'My ears belong, I belong'.

The research participants each had a role to play in the event, with Owen and Glynne working with the ewe lambs and Lorinda at one point bringing out tea and cake on a tray (a frequent occurrence in the shed when the men are at their busiest). Their roles were kept

simple because of my understanding of how this place works. It is not a place where farming can stop; they do not have the time to rehearse complex narratives or roles. So I worked with what they already had to give; I worked with them as skilled practitioners in their own right, in their own place. As the site I had chosen to place the work is a hybrid space of human and animal bodies; it was important that during the live event there were animal/human encounters of some kind. The film, although it does portray the work that Glynne and Owen do with the sheep, it isn't quite the same as seeing and smelling those animals in the flesh. On the morning of the event, Glynne was nowhere to be seen as he and Owen were already working in the Top Shed, and this continued from that point right until the end of the event. Once the audience had left the farm, Owen got the ewe lambs back in to finish tagging them, took them back to their field, then got in another batch as I dismantled my things in the shed. There was no break from farming; the film screening had caused little disturbance to the practice of this place. And this was something that pleased me.

3.3 The fieldwork in relation to the practical experiment

The fieldwork has always been the place for collecting the everyday, the mundane, the daily commonplace, the comings and goings, the living, the dying and the dead. Certain things had struck me during the fieldwork of 2012-2013 that were at the centre of *Dear Mick Jagger...*, the first being the self-censorship of my participants in relation to issues of animal euthanasia. In February 2012, I take a picture of Glynne shooting a sheep (see box).

2/4/2012

When I arrive, Glynne and Owen are in the yard. Owen is going to pick up a sheep from Cae Bungalow: it has a prolapse. This is when the vaginal wall and/or sometimes the uterus comes out i.e. inside out. It seems to be a particularly bad year for this. They have already had cases of this during this year's lambing (Glynne also tells me that other farmers' are having a similar problem and have put it down to the wet weather). Whilst Owen is doing this, Glynne moves a sheep and lamb from the grassy paddock in the yard, to one of the sheep pens: the lamb has been adopted. Owen returns with the sheep. Her prolapse has torn, so Glynne sends Owen to the house to phone a vet and find out whether they can stitch it, or whether they should just put it down. Whilst Owen's gone, Glynne washes the prolapse with a mixture of water and iodine. Owen returns with his rifle; the vets can't stitch it. Glynne takes the rifle from Owen and drives to the bottom of the road where the knacker man picks up the dead animals. Glynne shoots the sheep in the head at point blank range. I take a photograph.

This is the first time I felt at liberty to take such an image. It is not that I was squeamish about this in 2010's fieldwork, but instead I had never managed to negotiate the feelings that Glynne had about allowing me to photograph such an occurrence.

Glynne questioned why I wanted to take such a photograph, although it was something that is a part of farm life. He had felt the need to censor this aspect of farming, as in his mind it was not conducive to an understanding relationship between farmers and non-farmers. I take another photograph of him shooting a lamb on the 22 April 2013 (see Book 1 p. 96). This time, Glynne does not remark about the purpose of such a photograph. There is no cruelty or malice in this action, just a duty of care; just a calm and purposeful knowledge of what is best for the animal. There were also times when Lorinda was unhappy with the decision to shoot an animal. This had been the case with the lamb mentioned above, which Lorinda had been hand-rearing for over a week. These experiences of death, and of euthanasia are important, because they are experiences of mixed emotions, of ambivalence, of anger, of sadness and of failure. They are censored so as to not cause offence, and yet, they are ethically important. We can't do those ethically challenging things without first having some coping mechanism, and these mechanisms, I would argue can be learned over time. But where farming is a longstanding family occupation, these emotional systems of attachment or detachment are almost bred into us (see Wilkie, 2010; see also this Chapter pp.146-147) as we encounter death, or experience something of it from a very early age. We learn somewhere along the line to dissociate from the truth of our livelihood. When I worked on the narrative, and on the imagery of the film, it was important that I was creating something that dealt with the ethical complexity of our feelings towards our sheep.

In 2012, my research participants received their last ever ‘Tir Mynydd’ payment. This was a Welsh government subsidy for upland hill farmers farming in areas of land known as SDA's (Severely Disadvantaged Areas) or LFA's (Less Favoured Areas) and DA's (Disadvantaged Areas) (see p. 30 and for statutory definitions see Natural England, 13/6/2013). With increasing feed prices in the past few years coupled with the fact that Cwmrhaidr has very little land that has been improved or can be improved, 2013 was anticipated to be a difficult year. The weather from January to April 2013 has also had an impact on both my experience of this year's fieldwork and a wider impact on the economics of the farm. The weather of that period was cold, at times snowy and extremely dry. At the beginning of April it snowed very heavily, just as lambing was at his busiest (see box). There were many losses of both lambs and ewes, and the weather continued to prove challenging even after the snow had melted, being cold and dry – weather that stunted the growth of the grass and turned everything to a brown, fragile, dried material (see Met Office, 2013). It was during this bout of snowy, then

1/4/2013

Lorinda is in the yard when I arrive. I ask her where Glynne is, but she doesn't know. She says she saw him briefly in the yard, but he went back out to check the sheep. I hang around in the yard for a little while, and eventually he turns up. In the front basket of the bike are 5 dead lambs. I can see that Glynne is struggling to feel anything but anger and sadness at this time. He tells me that the sheep have barely any milk, and there seems to be a lot of twins being born.

In the grand scheme of things, he has been lucky not to have had the snow that they had in North Wales and in parts of England, but at the same time, there are still lots of problems here. He puts Jess in her kennel and we go in for tea. Glynne is grumpy, I really don't blame him. I don't like being here. I feel tearful, but dare not cry. Glynne feels like one-man against the world. We have tea, Glynne is quiet. As we're about to go out, he asks Lorinda to feed a lamb that is in the shed. The lamb is a newborn and had been abandoned by its mother.

It is quite surprising that the snow is still hanging around, even after a week of sunshine. The grass everywhere is brown, dry and almost dead. He feeds the rams. As he's doing so, he hears a lamb bleat and asks where it was coming from. The lamb is in the field opposite to us, and is away from its mother, he watches it carefully for a minute, but can instinctively tell that the sheep grazing above it is its mother. We leave the field, and head up the road, through the gate to the Esgair, and past the hay-racks to the mountain gate. Glynne looks at the sheep above and below the road, looking for any signs of problems. He turns the bike around when we reach the gate, and we drive back down the road a little, before stopping. Glynne tells me I'll have to walk from here, and he stoops down behind his bike to warm his gloves on the exhaust.

I walk up the steep slope, and am shocked to see that the sheep have been eating the thistle rosettes (the evergreen thistle leaves that grow close to the ground). Sheep would normally avoid eating these unless they had no other choice; it seems they have very little choice. I walk up in between two rocky hillocks whilst Glynne drives up along the ridge. We meet one another at the top, and I climb back onto the bike. I am silently crying on the back of the bike; I can see there is no grass, I can see that Glynne is worried, and I feel completely powerless.

extremely dry weather that the precarious nature of our existence (both the sheep and the human farmers) was brought to the foreground.

Below is the narrative from the film that was written directly from this fieldwork note.

Lambing 2013

I stifle tears with the back of my hand, turn away from him, so that I don't feel his anger and sadness. I soak it in, I can't help but feel it, absorb it.

Empathy can be a painful thing.

Later, I walk through the parched grass on the Esgair, wrapped up in layers of clothing, the north-easterly wind choking me; I lean into it, let it take my weight before I fall, knees first onto the hardened peaty earth. Let me suffer too, because I can't bear it any more, let **me** dry out, let **me** feel the hunger so that you don't have to.

I look down, there, fleshy, green, rosettes of overwintering thistles, gnawed to the ground by ovine teeth. They are starving; this is a sure sign. I meet him at the ridge of rock, barely covered in a layer of browned grass. I clamber onto the back of the bike, my throat constricts, I whimper slightly (he doesn't notice) as I see the damage that the weather has wreaked on the land and tears fall silently stifled by the bitter wind as they make their way down to the ground, the only moisture this land has seen in weeks. I bat them away with my ski glove. It will not be ok.

I was pained by that feeling of powerlessness, a feeling I had not had since the Foot and Mouth outbreak of 2001 (see Christie and Midmore, 2004; Convery et. al., Franklin, 2001, Franklin, 2001, Maggie and Josephine, 2005, Scotta et.al. 2004) . The journal article 'Death in the wrong place? Emotional geographies of the UK 2001 foot and mouth disease

epidemic' (Convery et.al., 2005) discusses how the FMD outbreak of 2001 exemplified the complex nature of the relationships between farmers and their stock as it 'created deep fissures in the *lifescapes*' of the countryside (p.107). In those months of bad weather, the bloodline was in jeopardy, the *lifescape* was exhibiting cracks; and it did not feel like it was just the animals that were at risk. The continuation of the breeding of our sheep is not just for meat or aesthetic purposes, it is also of purposes of legacy, of leaving something behind; a feeling that is never spoken of, but can only be viewed through watching the practices of generations of farming folk. Even now, where the profit margin for upland farmers is very small, and we are having to rely on government subsidy as a means to live, something keeps us from leaving the land and our sheep behind. I do not know that we'll ever be able to exactly pin-point what it is that keeps us here, but certainly tradition, pride and some sense of intertwined bloodlines plays its part. As the public become increasingly aware of where their food comes from, and even more aware of how the agricultural sector is publicly financed, I have no doubt that our concepts of ourselves within this place will have to change if there is to be any permanence to our way of life.

Conclusion

'What is the future of the uplands in Wales?

The future of the uplands, or the future of the farmer in the uplands? Those are two separate things I think?

A farmer knows how many sheep to put on the mountain. If you keep too many up there, the sheep will suffer.'

There is a subtle political dimension to the work, and these ideas are carried throughout by Glynne and Lorinda during their interviews. The new Glastir agri-environmental subsidy scheme (see Welsh Assembly Government, 2013b), has been implemented as a replacement to agri-environmental schemes such as Tir Mynydd, Tir Gofal, Tir Cynnal, Organic Farming Scheme and Better Woodlands Wales with the main focus being on:

- combating climate change
- improving water management
- maintaining and enhancing biodiversity. (ibid.)

As part of the Glastir scheme, farmers are paid for delivery of environmental services thus ensuring appropriate use of the taxpayers' money. Glastir received mixed responses from farmers, with many choosing not to enrol in the scheme (see Shipton, 2012). With Glastir under review for the third time since its implementation, there is still scepticism surrounding it. Cwmrhaidr has had to enrol in Glastir because the withdrawal of their Tir Mynydd and Tir Cynnal payments has left them in a difficult financial position. Glynne's scepticism towards it was partly due to its complexity (its point-scoring system has meant that he needed to score 11,895 points in order to qualify for the scheme); there is also a sense, especially for Glynne that the scheme was favouring particular types of farm enterprises, such as lowland arable or mixed farming systems. In order to make up the points in his original application, he was going to have to plough and plant three acres of wild bird-seed, and also five acres of turnip. One could argue that such an approach would benefit some species, but may damage or at least upset the balance of the ecosystems already flourishing; one would also need to consider the lack of suitable terrain for such an endeavour. Enrolling in such a scheme also means that the farmer will have to do extra work (Glynne would have to keep various diaries, noting where the sheep are grazing, when he moves them etc.), and I think it is this that has

been putting a proportion of farmers off, because they already have busy working lives. I have a different opinion to agri-environmental schemes from Glynne (probably because I do not have to fill in the paperwork), and see them as a progressive and sensible measure, although, I do find their rigidity, i.e., the leeway for tailor-made activities that suit the farm and its land a little backwards.

Dear Mick Jagger... attempts to explore the gaps between ideas and imagery of rurality and the actual experiences of those places from the inside. As I have already suggested in the introduction to this thesis, artistic practices that engage with rurality can sometimes perpetuate a certain romantic attitude towards farming. My intention with the film and its enhanced screening was to bring an awareness of a way of life that is often misconceived and misrepresented.

Glynne's assertion – ‘The future of the farmer, or the future of the uplands? Those are two separate things I think’ – was a particularly poignant section of the interview for me. The feeling that nobody wants to protect the farmer in his place of work, and increased interest from outside bodies has left Glynne feeling as though he is being spoken for. Little credit is given to farmers who care about the land they farm and farm it responsibly. There is a feeling with regards to policy making in agriculture, especially with upland farming policy, that they wish to preserve only the landscape itself. If they are to truly do this, then they **must** consider the human aspect of these places, for without Glynne, Lorinda and Owen and my Taid before them, the landscape would be very different from what it is today.

Sheep are a most important part of my research participants' lives, especially Glynne's life. They define him as a person. They define him as someone who knows about sheep, and this in turn gives him access to particular networks within our community, networks that, to the non-farmer are firmly closed. And as a family in general, farming defines us as human beings, and I argue throughout my film, that we become those human beings alongside our

animals, the sheep transfer something of themselves onto us as *homo sapiens*. The ethical aspects of our relationships with other animals are ingrained; they are difficult to define, difficult to pinpoint how we learnt to step away from the pain and the emotion so that we could earn a living. The work attempts to open a space for dialogue, not just for the research participants but for members of the audience. It seeks to explore and understand who we are in this place, alongside the animals we care for. It questions the overused and misused idea of ‘becoming animal and seeks to redefine what this becoming might be. The narrative text is full of deliberate contradictions, of mixed emotions and this is an important point to make, as our feelings towards our sheep shifts and changes along with their comings and goings.

Creating a space for such a piece of work within the farm’s agricultural calendar, in the main agricultural shed, and incorporating everyday activity into such a screening was an important decision. This particular project had a DIY ethos. It accepted the space as it was, used materials that were to hand and asked of the participants to be a part of the work; not in a contrived, acted, staged manner, but instead continuing to undertake the work they would have planned to do on that day anyway. In a sense, it created a moment out-of-the-ordinary from ordinary and mundane farm life-experiences. I hope that it was the rupture, the imperfection, the earthy conversation between farmers and a public audience that I wished it might be.

Conclusion: Futures

1.0 Thoughts on conducting interdisciplinary research as an ‘insider’

An insider should...

have heart, empathy, understanding; ask questions, feel, oscillate between modes of knowledge and practice, bring with them all that they are, and come to know and understand how those things, those situations, those people, those places, those lay knowledges however implicit made them who they are.

An insider ought to...

strive for collaboration in order to see where that path leads, even if it leads to failure, or to a solo work; there ought to be dialogue between the participants and the researcher. They ought to listen...really listen, even if they know what the answer will be. They ought to accept repetition, as it is in the repetition of particular narratives and discourses that gives one an insight into how that culture exists and endures in that particular place. They ought to accept that participants might not be wholeheartedly invested in the research; they ought not be fearful of their own subjectivity – of shedding tears, or laughing, or writing themselves in, but at the same time they ought to avoid narcissism; they ought to take a step back and think of the collective. They ought to be surprised by everything; they ought to see the ordinary in a new light. They ought to embrace the possibilities of their insider status; but, with self-reflection. They ought to have sensitivity towards their participants, especially when dealing with problematic or ethically challenging situations. They ought not be overly ambitious, nor

should they lack ambition, but meet somewhere in those gaps, those ruptures between self and others.

1.1 Collaboration and insider status

Having embraced personal narratives through a collective sensibility, my insider status encouraged a reciprocity that I am not sure would have existed had I been working with another group of people in an unfamiliar place. Minor difficulties did arise, these were partly due to the challenges of working with a group of people who do not have time for such collaborations. Other difficulties were due to an inner confusion about what I felt was expected of me (in the first year I felt pulled in many directions, and I felt uneasy about my status as academic within this context. I assumed that a participant-authored collaborative approach would offer an ethnographic authority. I failed to see the whole range of possibilities of my liminal status as being both an insider, an artist and an academic). Having attempted a co-authored collaboration in my first year, the result being *The Only Places We Ever Knew*, I had found that this activity was much more difficult in practice. I began to think about a more overarching approach which favoured looking at what my participants constraints were in terms of working with me on artistic projects. This led to consideration during the next stages of my research to find ways of interacting with them that were not time consuming, or non-invasive. By the second and third years of my research project, I had come to understand my own place within the work, and felt much more comfortable with my positioning as someone inhabiting the space both inside and outside of my participants world. I also felt confident in what I was attempting to do, and was now able to defend or ignore the undercurrent of uneasiness that I'd felt from members of the academic community (these

were a general uneasiness by some about my close-relationship with my research field). This in turn gave me freedom with regards to how I negotiated collaboration with my participants, and my definition of ‘collaboration’ became much more fluid as I realised that I may be able to see my participants’ world from different perspectives to them. I was struck by the interest they all had with *Ode To Perdurance*, and they requested copies of it after the first viewing. The fence-posts said nothing about fence-posts, but instead were implicit reminders of who they are and the work they do in this place. It was also a project that worked with that lacking in Taid’s diaries. Glynne had been quite disappointed that there was no mention of him or his sister within them; they were emotionally mute. *Ode To Perdurance* allowed us to face the prosaic reality of Taid’s life.

With *Dear Mick Jagger*...their involvement in the conception of the piece was minor, and their roles within the work were those of their everyday practices; this led to an overall feeling of security with what I was asking of them. Careful reflexive consideration of the narratives of my work allowed for an autoethnographic body of work to emerge that engaged with particular facets of the everyday that are often taken for granted. There also has to be an acknowledgement on my part that the artistic experiments have been made with particular ideas about the types of audience they might encounter. In the initial stages of the project, I did want to make some sort of impact in my research participants lives. But as I worked with them, it became clear that it might be more useful to address a non-farming audience, so that they might disseminate particular aspects of their lives that remain hidden or misrepresented within public consciousness. The first and the last experiment have certainly been made for an outside audience, whereas the second experiment was made for my participants.

If we understand Hal Foster’s assertion that the pseudo-ethnographic methodological approach adopted by artists is problematic because it ‘can promote a presumption of ethnographic authority as much as questioning of it, as evasion of institutional critique as

often as an elaboration of it' (Foster, 1995: 306), what might the implications be of embracing your own subjectivity as a researcher? Does an insider status allow for a re-configuration of ethnographic authority? Is it problematic or as problematic? Although I would like to be able to say that my insider status does not problematise the ethnographic endeavour, I think it would be true to say that the same problems arise when working in any context where academic knowledge and lay practices and knowledges come face-to-face. I remember at times during the early part of my research, I tried to be overly analytical during fieldwork; I tried to use scholarly perceptions to read situations against my already embodied knowing and expertise. It did take some effort in the first year on my part to be self-reflexive and to resign myself to experiencing the fieldwork without an academic commentary. When writing and reading, I was acutely aware that I was formulating a representation of a particular group of people in a particular place through both my practical engagement and writing; I often worried about what I was telling through this work – who the work was serving, to what extent I might be misrepresenting my participants. One way of combating concerns about representation and ethnographic 'truths' was by presenting each chapter of my thesis to my participants as a twenty-minute paper. This was a very helpful exercise as it allowed for them to feedback any concerns, to comment, or to add to the work. One particular aspect that became evident through the dissemination of the chapters of my thesis was the importance of my fieldwork photographs to my research participants. Glynne and Lorinda would often interrupt me during giving my presentation, in order for them to be able to take a closer look at particular photographs, or to go back a few slides. This interest in the photographic documentation has continued, as Glynne often requests the photographs I take of his sheep. I might suggest here that the interest in the photographs stems from particular notions about looking at sheep as aestheticised beings (see Chapter 3), but also, there is an interest in seeing their everyday lives from the other-side; from an outside perspective.

One important and helpful aspect of my insider status as a researcher, is the lifetime of accumulated farming knowledge and practice that I bring to the place of my fieldwork. As this project deals with a set of place-specific knowledges and practices, to already have a good understanding of this particular upland farm and its way of life has been beneficial. Rather than trying to come to terms with the basics of farming or having no understanding of the particular historical narratives of the place, my status as participant/researcher has made for an engagement which resonates with a sensitivity and rootedness which I can only put down to the fact that I know this place from the inside.

1.2 Fieldwork

The methodological approach relied on a durational engagement with the farm and its participants through weekly fieldwork. I must stress the importance of this ongoing fieldwork, not simply as an approach for gathering material, but as an opportunity to engage with the everyday practices and discourses, and to share events, emotions and experiences with my participating group; to just ‘be’ in that particular place was extremely important. Using a camera to document daily life allowed for a particular type of framing which enabled a slight pause or fracture in my insider status; the camera created distance between my subjects and myself, and this distance enabled reflexive clarity.

This weekly fieldwork also enabled ongoing dialogues between us. There was notable repetition in some of the narratives that Glynne shared with me, which I had initially put down to his age, but later re-considered these as narratives of importance. There is also the possibility that ‘the informants discourse, in which he strives to give himself the appearances of symbolic mastery of his practice, tends to draw attention to the most remarkable “moves”. i.e. those most esteemed or reprehended’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 19). Therefore, part of my

challenge as an insider was to draw out some of the more mundane narratives of that place; this is something I feel that I have achieved to good effect through the practical works.

The repetitive nature of the fieldwork meant that with each new repetition, I had the opportunity to engage in-the-moment in a slightly differently way. The durational approach of the fieldwork also allowed for the research participants to become accustomed to having an extra person on the farm, and as time went on I was asked to help out more and more; to become a part of their activity that was relieved of the participant/observer duality. Some might ask how as an insider this dualism even existed in the first place, but as someone who has not lived in that place since the age of seventeen, it became inevitable that I had to reconnect with the choreography of the place and its people. I especially feel that the fieldwork was important for my third chapter, as I was able to draw on the three years of fieldwork that enabled me to consider the nature of our relationship with animals, and to try to come to terms with this complexity has been rewarding. In some respects the fieldwork acted as a structuring device, allowing for a routine of engagement and then reflection to develop on a weekly basis. This meant that any academic reading I was doing was read parallel to the practices of fieldwork.

1.3 Thoughts on an interdisciplinary methodology in relation to artistic practice

Artists using an anthropological or ethnographical approach to make artistic work about farming families/communities ought to...

Make work that comes from the process, not from pre-conceived concepts. They ought to engage with the place and its participants over time; there ought to be a durational approach, this ought to be the essence of their work, but does not necessarily need to be explicit in the art-form. They ought to get to know the various discourses that are important

to their research participants, just like an ethnographer would – in my case, a willingness to engage with agricultural policy. They ought to be self-reflexive: who is the art-work serving?; what is its purpose?; how might this representation translate for the research participants?

Hal Foster (1995) is critical of interdisciplinary methodologies incorporating ethnography/anthropology and artistic practices, whereas Arnd Schneider and Christopher Wright see such approaches as beneficial to the ethnographic or anthropological concern (Schneider and Wright 2006a). I would agree with both of these assertions and suggest that artists using such methodological approaches, ought to do so with an understanding of what they might offer, and what some of the problems with such approaches might be. Certainly, these kinds of artistic endeavours can be done inappropriately – with no consideration of research participants, little reflection on what their artistic representations might be doing or saying and little durational engagement with their participating group or place. I certainly feel that if one is to use such methods in the creation of artistic works, then one must really connect with the methodology. This would mean that an artist who is not familiar with anthropology or ethnography ought to have a basic knowledge of such disciplines and methodologies. It ought to be noted that I believe the approach is likely to be most successful with a long-duration engagement with the field of the artistic project. Even though I have been conducting fieldwork for the past three years, and that I am also bringing to that fieldwork my whole life of embodied experience and practice of upland farming, I still feel that the fieldwork could be extended further. In ethnography, it is not uncommon for ethnographic fieldwork to last up to ten years, and if this is the standard set by ethnography, then, perhaps there ought to be some resolve amongst artists undertaking such methodological approaches to do so in a way that is open to extending the time they spend with their research participants if they feel it will be beneficial. Understandably this may be difficult to put into practice as artistic projects may inevitably have time-constraints and

monetary restrictions, but might there be scope to consider a series of art-works based on a project that engages with participants over lengthy time periods.

Allowing for a lengthy temporal engagement with a place would hopefully encourage respect and understanding of any participants and their ways of life. It would also allow for understandings and ideas to mature and develop over time, parallel to the lives being explored. One would aspire to make work that has a level of depth, rigour and responsibility; an ethos of care and compassion would be an important characteristic of such work, and of such a methodological approach.

2. Interdisciplinary practice as a transferable methodology

The efficacy of this methodological approach is dependent on the extent to which the researcher/artist applies it; very simply, to what extent is the methodology utilised throughout the project. There is little point using this methodological approach if one does not have the patience or stamina to use it throughout. Nor should such an approach attempt to be used in small sporadic periods of time (i.e. one week of fieldwork before making a piece of work). Initially the fieldwork I undertook was for five consecutive days per month, but having changed this to one day a week, I felt it gave a much fuller overview of the temporality of the place and allowed space for reflection. The methodology also allows for a panoptical mode of experience and dissemination as it reflects the multi-faceted nature of the upland farming lifestyle and culture. As an approach to research, it offers modes of dissemination that go beyond narrative descriptions and flattened representations of a particular place and people. It also might allow for an engagement with the participating group and the general public that goes beyond the scope of academic rural-research. The outputs of the methodology seem to work in the gaps between conventional academic rural research and artistic practice, offering an abstracted or a partial version of the farm and its inhabitants. The work seems self-

reflexive; reflecting on who these people might be, what they might do in this place and how they view themselves. The methodology gives the participating group an opportunity to share their lives, and to have their voices heard, not through written quotations in lengthy ethnographic writings, but through mixed-modes of dissemination.

There are possibilities for such a methodology to be utilised in other areas of academic research, especially as a form of dissemination and public engagement. I would also view it as a suitable approach for trans-disciplinary research projects; perhaps working with agricultural policy makers, human geographers, anthropologists, agricultural scientist and artistic practitioners. But, I would make a strong case for any artist joining such an interdisciplinary team to be a part of the whole research process (this would include fieldwork etc.), and not just as an after-thought for disseminating disciplinary stances or project outcomes. This methodology might be particularly useful for agricultural policy makers; it might allow them to work with farmers to review policy, or create and implement new subsidy schemes. The repetition of how my research participants see themselves as firstly being food producers is something that needs further consideration here. As greening measures are being implemented by the Welsh Assembly Government's Glastir scheme and current Common Agricultural Policy reform is also focused around environmental goods and services, I wonder whether we could somehow re-configure agricultural policy and put the 'culture' back in. What if we thought of agri/culture/environmental schemes instead? Some way of acknowledging the human in all of this? What if we thought of farming as a way of life? As a culture with its own sub-cultures? There also needs to be a change or a compromise with the farmers themselves. What if they embraced their responsibilities to the environment? What would that mean for them? What if, in return for the environmental services of farmers, the government could safeguard the markets for their produce? What if the consumer made informed choices about the food they eat? What if we ate less?

2.1 Practical outputs: Place-specificity.

Lucy Lippard (1997) writes of a place specificity, and a place ethic with regards to art-works created for, or defined by a specific locale. She proposes that ‘Place-specific art would have an organic connection to its locale and cannot be looked at primarily as an object outside of the viewer/inhabitants life...It should become at least temporarily part of, or a criticism of, the built and/or daily environment, making places mean more to those who live or spend time there.’ (p. 263). Lucy Lippard places a use value on such art forms; one that sits outside of the realms of aesthetics. Instead such place-specific works become a part of the ‘grain’ of the place, incorporated into that locale’s history in some form or another.

Lippard goes on to suggest that ‘a place-specific art offers tantalising glimpses of new ways to enter everyday life’ (ibid. 288). These artistic practices then, might contribute to new ways of seeing the world that surrounds us; offer us alternative pathways for exploring our sense of place in the world. I would suggest that the practices that I developed as part of this practice-led research project have a place ethic; each one is dependent on the location it was conceived for and in. The practical outputs (certainly Experiment 1 and 3) of this research project, attempt to find appropriate ways of communicating aspects of our upland farming lifeworld to an outside or a public audience. The discourses I have been working with throughout this project and within each of the three practical experiments are very different and distinct in nature from those found within certain academic and popular cultural constructions of rural life. My work within this context seeks to draw out the things that are lost between the lines, the moments of friction, of complexity, of mundane happenings that cannot, and should not be reduced solely to textual record. The practical experiments attempt to act as mediation and intervention into a very specific place and between different people; traversing, or bridging the gaps between lay knowledge, discourse and practice, and a general public’s understandings of what it means to be an upland farmer. The Experiments have, in

my opinion, a clear trajectory. This trajectory is parallel to that of the fieldwork. The practical outputs are reliant on a particular temporality; one of routine engagement, and long duration. This is a type of temporality where connections are slowly made between things seen, done and said in one year, and other things seen, done and said in another year. This idea of the temporal relationship between the practical output and the fieldwork itself is evident to me in the emotional depth and complexly woven ideas that I attempted to incorporate into *Dear Mick Jagger...* (Experiment 3). Comparing this experiment to the exploratory concepts of *The Only Places We Ever Knew* (Experiment 1) shows how an engagement with my participants and their farm over a longer duration allowed me to identify and work with a more complex set of place related discourses. Although I could argue that the superficiality of the first experiment was partly down to a confusion about who I am in relation to my field of research, it was also due to the fact that I had only been undertaking fieldwork for a year. The fieldwork had a cumulative effect that allowed for a reflexive and critical depth to develop over time; a depth which led to the creation of very different pieces of work. I have already argued that for artists using such approaches, an investment in time is needed when attempting to cross those gaps between insider lay knowledges and discourses, and public perceptions and understandings of a culture; I hope that this was evident in my final practice output.

Experiment 2 was a very different practical output and was made for us (the Joneses); it was much more abstract and was a personal exploration and celebration of the hard physical labour of farm life. This work was about populating the landscape with the hidden labour; the constant shifting of materials, of absorbing the past into the present, and remembering the bodies created and eroded by this place. This experiment was very much influenced by the fieldwork, specifically, what was happening to the old, rotting fence-posts during that year (being replaced in preparation for the Welsh Mountain Sheep Society Open

Day; see pp.143-146), and the request from Glynne to look through my grandfather's diaries for clues about a film of his family shearing on Hyddgen in 1959, with the hope that such information might enable me to locate the film itself. The very different nature of this second project was in part due to the fact that Experiment 1 had enabled me to understand the limits of the place and the people I was working with. Secondly, the busyness in preparation for the Welsh Mountain Sheep Society Open day was a constant reminder of temporal negotiation in this place; one of non linearity and shifting between the past present and the future. Thirdly, I was more comfortable with my role as participant/researcher.

Dear Mick Jagger... was, in my opinion, a more fully resonant piece of work. It felt connected to me as an artist, academic and a participant within the context of the overall project. By the point of Experiment 3, I had undertaken three years of fieldwork, and was able to remember some of the key moments and ideas that I wanted to draw attention to in the final practical Experiment. I had also become aware over the previous three years of fieldwork, that concepts related to livestock animals were of considerable importance within the lay discourses of my participants lives, and that using sheep as a starting point would allow me to consider other related concepts and discourses such as landscape, past, present, future and mortality by drawing them out from central thematic material into sometimes unexpected relationships with the visual..

Dear Mick Jagger... was, I believe, my work at its most honest, sensitive and thoughtful. Lucy Lippard (1997) suggests that 'Artists can be very good at exploring the layers of emotional and aesthetic resonance in our relationship to place' (p.286). I would argue that it is these resonances that can give such work a future life in those places, or in the people whose lives are being explored. There was also another convention at work here that tried to weave the insights I had gained from academic reading into the body of the narrative, and so the film and the enhanced screening attempted to oscillate between dissonant, yet

partially connected, voices. For me, *Dear Mick Jagger...* did what I wanted it to. I think it reflected inwards, that is, it did something for my participants (myself included), created a space for self-reflexivity perhaps, allowed us to come to terms with something, or changed something even. It also reflected outwards, that is, it attempted to offer a series of provocations to a non-farming population; it was the bridge that I required it to be. My approach during this final experiment fully embraced my status as inhabiting a liminal space within the farming world; of being both an insider and an outsider, homeless, porous and open to making connections between things that might seem unrelated. I also embraced the emotional and the sensual, allowing experiences of the materiality of the place; the textures of my fieldwork incorporated into the film and the space of the shed. Yuriko Saito (2007) argues that ‘by making the ordinary extraordinary and rendering the familiar strange, while we gain aesthetic experiences thus made possible, we also pay the price by compromising the very everydayness of the everyday.’ (p.50). I disagree with Saito’s opinion here – the everyday when framed sensitively can be both ordinary and extraordinary. My work might appropriate momentarily the everyday; draw it into unusual positionings that are always fleeting, always being reconfigured and re-absorbed into the fabric of the place: it is the positioning that is fleeting, the everyday(ness) just continues as it always intended to. This way of working creatively with everyday materiality has always been a part of my approach. In some ways, my upbringing forged that engagement as we were shown the wonders in the environment that surround us: the smell of fox crossing our path on a crisp winter morning still gives a feeling of the extraordinary, as does the moment in the zoomscape (see p.44-46) where we hear the bleat of a lost lamb above the sound of the quad bike – these I would argue forge an attunement with everyday aesthetics that renders the world of mundane existence full of creative possibility and of extraordinary experience.

The methodological approach of this practice as research project has changed the way that I work; from someone who worked in a conceptual way to someone who is more relaxed about allowing slow-maturing processes and organic approaches to flourish. Although trying to translate my world (that is the world of upland sheep farming) into visibly, or emotionally understandable and recognisable practical outputs has not been easy: first, finding a balance between the personal, the autobiographical – that is, making work complex enough to satisfy my own needs as an insider/artist/researcher, and making work accessible enough to create a space for the general public to firstly engage with farming lives; and secondly for there to be some critical/political or emotional depth that allows the audience to engage with complexity rather than the superficial appearances of our lives. Finally for there to be moments of pause, fracture; spaces for self reflection where they might question what they think they know about farming lives, or what they have taken as culturally given. We can apply the concept of the ‘zoomscape’ (see pp. 44-46) to the role of the fieldwork. By looking at the discourses, practices and knowledges of a place by passing through them, looking across at them, (in unexpected juxtapositions), by looking through a mediated way at them (through taking a documentary photograph), we can then use artistic practices as a way of zooming in- ignoring some discourses, whilst focusing in on others; framing the experience of the fieldwork and of that place for other people and for ourselves, whilst always acknowledging that by zooming-in we can only offer a partial view.

3. Future

Finally, this research project appears timely as the interest surrounding food production and farming in general has further increased since I began this undertaking. It has been refreshing

in the last few years of my research project to see media representations of farming move on from the rather outdated ‘good life’ representations referenced in my introduction, to others that try to reflect farming reality, rather than a romanticised caricature of it. The popularity of programmes such as *Lambing Live* (Gibbs, 2011), *Hill Farm* (BBC 2, 2014a) and *Wild Shepherdess with Kate Humble* (BBC 2, 2014b), proves that the general public is willing and able to engage with the actuality of farming livelihoods. It has also become apparent in recent years that farmers themselves are finding ways of communicating with the non-farming population through social media such as Twitter (see *Farmers Weekly Online*, 2013). Twitter has also proved a place for farmers’ to not only disseminate aspects of their lives, but to form new social ties with wider farming networks, networks which will no doubt sustain their sense of belonging to a community of likeminded individuals in the future. Whilst writing my conclusion, it has been drawn to my attention that a forthcoming production by National Theatre Wales, called *The Gathering/Helfa* (National Theatre Wales, 2014) will explore the everyday lives of farmers in Snowdonia. My hope is that future works such as the aforementioned are mature and understanding in their conception and dissemination of the lives they seek to know, and that they too consider the ethical obligations they have towards their participating group.

4. Final interview with participants: Looking to the future

21/04/2014

I would like Glynne, Lorinda, Owen and myself to have the final word in my thesis: it is after all a project about us, and much of the thesis incorporates the everyday vernacular knowledges, seen and heard around the kitchen table, on the mountain and in the Top shed.. To give a little context to this interview, let me admit that it turned into something of a farce.

Firstly, due to the time of year and the fact that lambing is well under way, it was very difficult to arrange a time to meet with us all in attendance. Secondly, there was a lot of cross chatter during the interview, as we got distracted by talking about other things. Glynne also tended to take over the conversation so it became rather one-sided, especially as he has very unyielding views about farming. I had hoped that we would be able to give an optimistic final outlook, but in fact, as Glynne feels a certain tiredness at the end of his working life; he can't help but vent his frustrations. And, as a good daughter/participant/researcher, I must let him have his say. And finally, towards the end of our discussion, the phone rang – it was Glynne's cousin who had managed to locate a missing sheep that was wintering down near the coast some 25 miles away (in the winter, Glynne sends his best ewe lambs away to rented fields near the coast so that they continue to grow during the winter months). As the ewe had been placed within the confines of a shed on the rented land, it was decided that one of us would need to pick it up... But there was one small problem. The four-wheeled-drive vehicle was at the garage being serviced so after much discussion and cross-chatter, it was decided that Owen would pick the ewe up and place it in the boot of his car! This is what I enjoy about the research: there are always surprises, always things to be done – farming stops for no one, especially not for someone holding a microphone or a camera.

Ffion: I wonder whether there are things that you can think about that are possible futures for this place? Or whether the notion of upland farming needs re-configuring for the future?

Glynne: Ooh that's a big question...Well, I don't think that this is the answer, this Glastir nonsense! Because the single farm payment is going down isn't it? They're reducing that, and they want to green, there's going to be more money

going into greening. But, you know, what do they want? The whole point of farming is to produce food isn't it?

All: Yes

Lorinda: They want food cheap you know, and the costs of production are rising.

Glynne: But if they're taking mountains out of production, like Pumlumon and the rest of them, eventually there's going to be a food shortage. We're already importing all sorts of things like milk. The thing is, this is a very different type of farming to, for example, the Cheshire plains. Here, it's a way of life isn't it really? You just do it. You're not doing it to make a fortune out of it (laughs).

Lorinda: I think a lot of these young men now, they try; they're trying to make money aren't they?

Glynne: Diversify is the thing, which is very difficult here. First of all, we're tenants. It would be nice if we could put up a windmill but, that's, first of all it costs a hell of a lot of money, and who is going to benefit in the long run – the landlord. And he'll want his cut probably and they're not going to put any money in anyway.

Ffion: There seems to be a move towards sustainability with regards to agriculture and policy, Glastir for example.

Glynne: Glastir hasn't been thought-out properly, still.

Ffion: What do you mean by that?

Glynne: Well, when it started off, it was a complete hotchpotch wasn't it, which was why I refused to sign. Growing three acres of birdseed in a place with so much unfarmed habitat is crazy! Isn't it? And you had to plough a field that had been improved; it's no use ploughing a field that was very bad.

Ffion: (Laughing) Well you haven't got any fields that have been improved!

Glynne: Originally improved they mean.

Lorinda: And you'd end up with it causing more erosion then.

Glynne: And then if you grew five acres of swede every year, which you'd have to have done, most of the fields are sloping, and you know what torrential rain can do – all the seeds and the soil will be down at the bottom. Well it's happened here hasn't it? That's nonsense. Well the second time around [the revised Glastir] they've helped, they've done various things; made it easier to get points and things like that.

Ffion: Do you think that we'd be better off subsidising country by country?
[Rather than the CAP]

Glynne: I think it would be much better subsidising country by country. Then you can create your own rules, and the farmers need to have more say. We didn't have any say in Glastir, did we; some silly people behind a desk thought up these ideas.

Ffion: Describe an ideal future for upland farming.

Glynne: (Laughs for a few seconds, then pauses) Well, when we first came here, the wool cheque paid the rent. Now we have to sell so many lambs to pay for the rent, it's ridiculous! And if we didn't get Glastir this year, we would be in the red this year.

Ffion: If these people don't know what they're doing, what would you do?

Glynne: I think the emphasis should be on meat production. There's no need to green an area like this, look at all the wilderness we've got here and the wildlife and everything. It's crazy! I mean if it's flat land, like the land by the Dyfi, well yes, then they could put land aside couldn't they.

Ffion: Would it be better if there were to be three different schemes then? One for upland farmers, one for lowland arable/livestock, and one for somewhere in between.

Glynne: Yes, well I think they should have kept the old Tir Mynydd scheme shouldn't they, then they wouldn't have needed all of this Glastir thing then. Why is no one else speaking?

Lorinda: I don't have a clue.

(Owen is half asleep, he has been planting trees for Natural Resources Wales since 5am)

Ffion: What's the ideal vision for the future?

Glynne: Go back to the old days!! (laughs)

Lorinda: I feel that we've got all our eggs in one basket here. And I think we ought to have other enterprises going on here besides sheep...

Glynne: Self-catering.

Lorinda: ...Christmas trees, perhaps beef, or contract work.

Ffion: Maybe Owen's got the answer in all this?

Glynne: He's making more money planting trees; what does that tell you?

Ffion: Does being a tenant make a difference?

Owen: Obviously.

Glynne: If it was your own farm, things would probably be different, you'd plan much further ahead.

Lorinda: A big chunk of your income is going on the rent; it's a big chunk. And that's creeping up, because farmers are paying silly prices for land, because they've got their own farm as an asset and are able to get low interest loans from the banks.

(The phone rings, no one is listening to me anymore. I leave it at that. Later Glynne asks me what that final question was again; I say 'What would the ideal future be?')

Glynne: One where I am not working here day in day out. One where I don't have to fill in this paperwork. I would like a field and a few sheep so that I can do the things that I've always enjoyed: improving the flock; breeding good sheep.

Epilogue

In loving memory of Owen Rhys Jones

1988- 2014

The week before my initial viva date, my brother died in a tragic accident. Nothing can prepare you for the kind of grief that such an unexpected and tragic loss can cause. As we take small steps forwards along our shattered life-paths, one can't help but reflect on some of the things I have discussed in my thesis. With his death, Owen has changed our future in this place. The past, present and future I write about, no longer intertwine in the way they were meant to; our lifeworld has been truly compromised. Owen undertook years of informal apprenticeship; he was being carefully nurtured by my parents in preparation to take on the tenancy. He was a highly skilled individual and an incredibly hard worker; often coming home from planting trees in the forestry since 5am, and lending a hand with the sheep. His daily activity was a part of the comings and goings on the farm, he was a permanent fixture if you will, and an incredibly important part of our family and our farming lives.

It is not certain anymore what the future of the farm will be, and as we all try to come to terms with our loss, we also have to come to terms with the possible loss of the farm. Whether I take over from my father is a question I cannot answer at this present moment; the thought of stepping into my brother's shoes (or wellies to be more precise) is far too painful for me to consider at this time.

Inevitably this thesis has taken on a new and even more personal resonance for me. I feel incredibly blessed to have had the opportunity to spend the past four years surrounded by my family at work on the farm, and to get to know my brother as an adult, rather than the child that he was when I left home. I feel lucky to have those 15,000 photographs of my Dad, Mum, Owen and I going about our daily activity, the two films that I made as part of this research project and all the happy memories of working together whilst undertaking *The Only Places We Ever Knew* and *Dear Mick Jagger...*

Gathering our sheep will never feel the same again, nor will shearing nor showing sheep at the summer agricultural shows. Owen was a part of all of these things, he was tied to the farm's kairological cycle; to the seasons, to the sights and the sounds of our farm and will be forever missed.

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