

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE: dreadful phrase, great concept

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Abstract

The phrase 'cultural landscape' is discussed and defined (see also Appendix). The World Heritage categorisation provides the basis for a brief review of some issues raised by the concept of 'cultural landscape', with particular reference to the range of such landscapes in Britain. 'Relict' and 'continuing' landscapes are particularly noted. A short discussion raises some issues about the purpose and viability of 'cultural landscapes' in Europe and Britain, for local, national and global purposes.

Introduction

The English are not very comfortable with the word 'cultural'. On the one hand it smacks of expensive opera that is particularly good for you, as in 'cultural event', and on the other of failed, cheap centralist ideologies as in 'cultural policy'. We nevertheless now have a British Government Department with the word 'Culture' in its title, replacing that dreadful, played-out word 'heritage'. How English, however, - and the dead giveaway that the word is not being used in its anthropological sense, - that the word 'culture' is then added to, giving us the Department for Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) with a title which fails to recognise that the supplements are but part of 'culture'. Indeed, the added words imply exactly that 'culture' is indeed what educated people do rather than what all people create. Elsewhere in the world, the word 'cultural' is of course commonly used in an anthropological sense. There is no problem in talking of culture meaning the lifeway, including the artefacts, of a group of people. They have cultural centres; we have folk museums. My subject here is, in English, 'folk landscapes': perhaps that makes us feel less uncomfortable. In fact, it is not a bad alternative for the dreadful phrase 'cultural landscape' as a descriptive term because the essence of 'folk', as in 'folk-life', is not just people but the results of their interaction with their environment over a period of time. The vernacular cannot exist in a vacuum; tradition requires time; culture needs context: hence a landscape expressing those ideas, and its label, 'cultural landscape.'

Though but a minor part of its good works, it is DCMS and not that concerned with environment which has World Heritage in its remit. We have recently enjoyed the pleasure of seeing our own experts systematically reviewing the UK's tentative list of possible World Heritage nominations on our Secretary of State's initiative. Encouragingly, if somewhat tentatively, he has then flown the 'cultural landscape' kite to see if it flies and what its colours are. One upshot of his expert advice was a cautious, not completely

convinced acknowledgement of two areas, the Lake District and the New Forest, as potential cultural landscapes, though the Minister somewhat inconsistently refused to go down that route at the moment because 'further work' is necessary (Smith 1998, 17). 'Further work' is always going to be necessary and is never a good reason for inaction. In any case, five years ago –in this respect, apparently five wasted years - both those now-'tentative' nominations were anticipated in a paper about potential cultural landscapes in Britain (Fowler and Jacques 1995). But at least there is something to start from, if only to disagree.

Perhaps the official uncertainty is because the phrase 'cultural landscape' involves an awkward conjunction of words; at first glance, it is as unlikely as phrases such as, at random, 'Jesus Christ Superstar', which has stuck, and 'Oxford breakfast treacle', which wont. Further, although accustomed to the concept of 'natural landscapes', perhaps politicians, even possibly civil servants, find thoughts of culture all over the countryside, never mind the urbanscape, disturbing. Nevertheless, it is now forty five years since Hoskins' seminal *The Making of the English Landscape* (1955). In that time, the science-based approaches of historical ecology, geomorphology and landscape archaeology have brought us to a different understanding of what it is that lies about us in our infancy and what it is we are about as adults. Similar thoughts in a similar time perspective were expressed at the formative Scandinavian cultural landscape conference in 1988: '... during the last 40 years, pollen analysis, plant ecology and – not least – prehistoric archaeology have contributed to the recognition of the borderline, or rather the transition zone, between uncontaminated nature and what eventually became known as the cultural landscape' (Faegri 1988, 2).

For a start, and fairly fundamentally, as everyone is now agreed, give or take a mountain-top here or there, the whole of the European and British landscape is modified by humanity and is, to a greater or lesser extent, anthropogenic. All of it is, therefore, in one sense cultural landscape, using that adjective to be synonymous with 'man-made.' That seems to be the sense used for the word 'landscape' alone throughout the Draft European Landscape Convention – which is fine, but confusing if 'cultural landscape' does not have a distinctive meaning. I shall argue here that the word alone and the word qualified by 'cultural' are not synonymous, and that 'cultural landscape' can and should have its own special significance. Here I try to identify some facets of that potential significance, while flagging that the phrase of course already has its own specific significance in a World Heritage context. There, 'cultural landscapes' are neatly defined in concepts and words that, in the light of continual critical review, amazingly not only work in practice but do so globally to apparently general international satisfaction (von Droste *et al.* 1995, Gajós 2000). It is also gratifying that in 2000, 'cultural landscapes', which were almost unthought of in English minds even a decade ago, now justify a prestigious Oxford conference of their own, and there can be little doubt that it has been the influence

of World Heritage discourse on the matter which has largely brought that about. All the more reason, therefore, to stress that such landscapes, the phrase and the concept, are not confined solely to existence in a World Heritage context. 'Cultural landscape' is valid globally, including in Britain, whether or not particular landscapes acquire the accolade of World Heritage inscription.

Not least is that because a cultural landscape is a very personal thing (Appleton 1986, 1994). My own perception of what is involved, for example, is now deeply influenced in particular by looking at what other people consider to be their cultural landscapes. That recent experience has been along the way from Kakadu through Uluru-Kata Tjuta to Banawe in the Cordilleras, Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salzkammergut, Pyrenées-Mont Perdu, the Loire Valley and, most recently, the Val de Boi in the Spanish Pyrenées. In other words, I am privileged enough not merely to have helped evaluate places which are now among the world's first World Heritage cultural landscapes, but also to be involved in the evolution of the concept of 'cultural landscape' as an intellectually acceptable and pragmatically workable development of the 1972 Convention (*passim* in von Droste *et al.* (eds.) 1995; and von Droste *et al.* (eds.) 1998). This journey, physical, visual, intellectual and sociological, has clearly affected my perspective – and my sub-title. For convenience, I use the UNESCO categorisation as part of the framework of this paper, but avoid discussing as far as possible World Heritage cultural landscapes as such in deference to Dr. Rössler's paper. A recent British perspective is helpfully to hand (Macinnes 1999).

Definitions

I have collected together some of definitions in Appendix 1, so I refer to that rather than quote extensively in the text, and invite the reader to do likewise.

'Cultural landscape' is a concept which can be argued to be well within, not alien to, the long tradition of English rural writings. 'Large sweeping downs, and deep dells here and there, with villages amongst lofty trees' seems a pretty good sketch of a cultural landscape by a writer who was 'incapable of appreciating natural beauty in places where human conditions are poor'. William Cobbett there neatly subsumes the interactive trinity of Nature, land and Man. Nearly two centuries ago he, like us, found inseparable 'the morally acceptable and the aesthetically pleasing.' (Keith 1974, 74). He also 'saw a significance behind the obvious appearances of the landscape: he too traced causes and effects; and he ...was concerned with the fate of the common people.' (*op cit*, 82). Over a century later, but still 70 years ago, the writings of H.J. Massingham contain such statements as 'my theme is the relationship between man and nature in our own country, its fruitfulness and the disastrous consequences of disturbing it' and 'I do not really care for landscape which is without sign of any co-operation between Nature and Man' (Keith 1974, 238; Fowler 1997).

I have am able to touch lightly on the literary background because Aitchison (1995, 272-78) has relieved me, and everybody else, of reviewing the history of the concept in academic terms. Suffice to state that concept and actual phrase are long-familiar in academia and specifically in human geography (Jones 1966; Birks 1988; Ashmore and Knapp 1999, 3). Other definitions are provided throughout the only authoritative published study of the concept as World Heritage (von Droste *et al.* 1995; *see now also* Grajós 2000). Aitchison's (1995) quotations from Sauer (1925) and Wagner and Mikesell (1962) are particularly relevant today. The latter's especially contains significant phrases, embodying key concepts: 'product of the interplay', 'cultural preferences', 'natural evolution', and 'generations of human effort.' The idea that cultural landscapes are produced as a result of 'effort' is particularly apt: they do not just happen. Indeed, not only are they un-natural, but they are *only* caused by the expenditure of human energy. That expenditure was and is on and to the land, ultimately a natural phenomenon. Hence the distinguishing characteristic of 'cultural landscape': it is not the counterpart to 'natural landscape', as so many lazily seem to think, but something developing from natural landscape. Cultural landscape is conceptually greater than natural landscape for, while it cannot be created without the latter to start with, it embraces concepts of process, change and time in order to produce itself. That was and is exactly the sense in which the term was brought out of academia to be used pragmatically in the harsh glare of international politics.

I also particularly appreciate Phillips' (1995, 380) concept of landscape as a record not just of human activity - a scientific reservoir, - but of changing ethics too. His view, like that of many others who have grappled with the topic, includes recognition of the contributions cultural landscapes can make to people psychologically and in terms of learning and recreation. Though adumbrated specifically in a World Heritage context, Plachter and Rössler's definition (von Droste *et al.* 1995, 15) is succinct and more cognitive, one I am happy to work with both theoretically and on the ground. In both contexts, its last sentence enjoys a brevity beguiling its profundity. 'Cultural landscapes mirror the cultures which created them' takes us in one conceptual step from the contemplation of landscape as scenery to the heady uplands of interdisciplinary, anthropological landscape appreciation for all.

Because the landscape we tread and look at has been 'made' in an Hoskinsonian sense, it therefore contains, is indeed made up of, anthropogenic components with the potential to convey historic, environmental, aesthetic and ethical messages to those who learn to read them. And those who can so read pick up more messages the longer their contemplation. If you cannot read them, if the 'genius of the place' does not speak to you, then the place itself remains ordinary, not extraordinary, an argument supporting my preference for the view that 'spirit of place' is extrinsic, not intrinsic. Equally, it means that none of us should be didactic about such places: we can invite someone else to look at

what we regard as a cultural landscape but none of us can tell anyone else to see, let alone enjoy, it any more than we can order someone to write Beethoven's 9th.

Essentially, with this sort of concept of cultural landscape, we could be dealing with something new and exciting, not possible to earlier generations because they did not possess (in the widest sense of the phrase) our scientific knowledge, our growing understanding of how we ourselves function, or our ability to create and use such concepts as 'process', 'relationships' and 'holistic'. We have in our grasp, not as a result of some phoney idea such as the 'rediscovery' of 'lost knowledge' but on a rational basis, something which offers us not just a new way of looking at scenery and not even a new way of looking at Nature; but a vision which could enable us to perceive ourselves as part of a process creating and constantly changing the environment of which we are an integral part. Cultural landscapes, properly handled as intellectual property and not reduced to mindless items of bureaucratic convenience, could be the nodes of memory for humankind in thinking about that process.

A more specific, deeper sense for the phrase 'cultural landscape' comes wrapped in a global concept. For our hard-won late-twentieth, scientific understanding of the British landscape is a product similar to that intellectually-generated in many other parts of the world. Together, bottom-upwards as it were, these many local perceptions merge with the global perception of the strategists who perceive in their perspective the humanising of the whole world's environment. The basic point, fundamental in getting to grips with 'cultural landscape', is that there is now nothing truly natural left on earth, for even equatorial jungles and icy, Polar landscapes are Man-effected in some respect. No longer is Nature defined, as so many have believed, by that which is separate from humanity. One of the main reasons why I am so keen on cultural landscape is that it can be, I believe, a significant medium in converting what can so easily be the negativism of such facts into a productive process whereby we find new relationships between human societies and Nature as their matrix.

A stretch of countryside – though almost everything I say can apply to a cityscape too, - can embody and represent such relationships; but we have to be able to perceive that evidence and appreciate its significance. We need to sense that conjunction of physical remains and intangible associations in those special places, and be able to recognise that a cultural landscape had been created where previously there was just geography. That line of argument clearly leads to the conclusion that a cultural landscape resides in the human mind, not on the ground. Hallstatt, for example, has existed for over three thousand years as a very significant place but it was only in 1996, when we were ready to receive the idea, that the place transformed itself, not physically but in our minds, into a cultural landscape. The process was even more striking in the case of Orford Ness, with

the National Trust's futuristic perception of significance in a twentieth century landscape of ugliness and deadly high-tech, lurid beauty and iconographic redundancy.

Cultural landscape, World Heritage and Europe

'World Heritage', as something different from national, local or personal heritage, has inched its way into the world's consciousness over the last twenty years (Pressouyre 1993, 1996). This is important for cultural landscapes since it has given that concept both status and a practical definition; my own believe is that 'cultural landscape' can reciprocally enhance the concept of World Heritage. That concept is indeed a noble thing; in practice its application, as experience has shown, can be fraught with issues which, superficially, appear to be tangential and even irrelevant. But 'heritage' is itself an extremely emotive and powerful matter, and that will carry through to considerations of 'cultural landscape' quite as much as it has to individual archaeological sites and cultural property (see, for example, Stone and Molyneaux 1994 *passim*). Indeed, 'landscape' is a highly-charged subject in any case, involving matters across a range from life-style through property rights to aesthetics and cognitive perception (e.g. Appleton 1986; Shoard 1987); so it is conceivable that in espousing the sub-set of 'cultural landscape', 'World Heritage' is about to enter a very interesting phase of its development (von Droste *et al.* 1995; Gajós 2000).

World Heritage identifies three main categories of cultural landscape:

- 1. 'landscapes designed and created intentionally by man'
- 2. 'the organically evolved landscape', a category which sub-divides into two:
 - i. a relict or fossil landscape
 - ii. a continuing landscape
- 3. 'the associative cultural landscape'

A recent, independent attempt to categorize cultural landscapes also proposes a tripartite division: 'constructed' (category 1. *above*, plus some of 2.), 'conceptualized' (close to 3.) and 'ideational' ('landscapes of the mind' = 3. also) (Ashmore and Knapp 1999, 8-13). Category 2.ii of the World Heritage *schema* seems not to have been grasped, yet it is likely that that will be the category to prove most popular with the world's people. Britain contains outstanding examples of all three main types of cultural landscape as defined by the World Heritage Committee (Fowler and Jacques 1995).

Designed and Associative Landscapes (Categories 1 and 3 above)

Category 1 is self-evident, for great designed gardens and parklands are common to many cultures through time; but there is chink in the certainty. Many whole functional landscapes, like the Banawe rice terraces, which originated at least 2000 years ago, and the agrarian arrangements on 2nd millennium BC Dartmoor, are quite as much

`designed and created intentionally by man` as are the great parks and gardens of Stowe, Stourhead and Versailles. And they are rather bigger in scale too. The definition of this first, `obvious` type of cultural landscape should perhaps have dealt more with recreation and aesthetics rather than emphasising deliberateness.

Whether most **associative** cultural landscapes in Britain are actually of significance at global level is doubtful; perhaps few would actually meet World Heritage criteria. One that certainly does – and I emphasise that it is as an associative cultural landscape, and not primarily as either a relict or continuing one, – is the Lake District. What makes it different "and of universal significance, is not in what we see on it but the very way in which we look at it. For it was here ... that the revolutionary concept of the aesthetic of landscape appreciation was conceived and developed. It could indeed be argued that the fact of UNESCO's support for landscapes as World Heritage Sites goes back to what was theorised in the Lake District between one and two hundred years ago" (Fowler and Jacques 1995, 358). That claim is based not so much on the Lake District itself, scenically grand though it is by English standards, but in the overlay of perception which it now carries. It is not so much that we cannot look at a fell-side above Grasmere without thinking of Wordsworth but that, however unconsciously, Western-educated eyes cannot look at landscape at all except through Lake-District-tinted spectacles. We know, of course, that it is neither the only way to look at landscape, nor is it 'better' than other ways; but it has certainly been globally influential, underpinning many a decision in economic, artistic and conservation counsels, and adding not a little to peoples' enjoyment as tourists. Indeed, we discuss cultural landscapes here today in the benign afterglow of a two-hundred-year-old poetic vision.

'Brontë country' around Haworth, North Yorkshire, exemplifies more typically the issue in Britain. It comprises a fine but in many ways typical area of Pennine moorland, not of itself immediately suggestive of world class but certainly a cultural landscape. There is no doubt about the direct physical and creative association between landscape and writers, so any suggestion that the area is a potential World Heritage 'cultural landscape' would depend upon assessment of the literary significance of the Brontë family. Fine writers indeed (though not equally), but are they of sufficient significance globally - in the history of the novel, for example, - to carry their home landscape into World Heritage status almost entirely by association? - a nice judgement indeed.

One of the points in the idea of 'associative cultural landscapes' – and this applies whether in World Heritage considerations or not, - is, in contrast to that last example, to allow for the recognition of what I call 'oral landscapes'. By that is meant, not just landscape with lots of stories told about or inspired by them, as on the moors around Haworth, but of landscapes which are themselves full of stories told and told again by societies without the written word. We in the West had such stories too, and therefore

such landscapes; but we have denigrated folk-lore in our scientific rationalism and have consequently lost our associated landscapes. Perhaps our sympathy for other peoples', be it on the moist, green wetland of May-time Kakadu or on the Painted Desert of Arizona, paradoxically stems from a sense of that loss (cf. Layton 1989).

My own believe is that that loss in the Western world in part also explains our own social insensitivity, generally-speaking, to landscape needs and values. Hence my enthusiasm for such designatory mechanisms as World Heritage and European Landscape Convention, if they lead to increased popular awareness of such things on the back of conservation management. In Britain over three-quarters of the population are now suburban or urban in our residential location; less than one in twenty of us earn our bread directly from the land. Could a demographic divorce from rural landscape be more sudden or real? No wonder most of us now have to acquire by structured learning, formal education, those senses of seeing and valuing countryside which for so many used to come, as we wrongly said, 'naturally' from living in the country, when of course the process of our becoming versed in the countryside was actually the result of acculturation. Now, in contrast, while we may be able to explain in great detail the life-cycle and habitat sensitivities of, say, a wood anemone to a group of career-driven suburban students on a countryside management course, it is very difficult to put over, or absorb, in an educational course module what until two generations ago many people simply learnt as they grew up. In this, as in so much else, life-long learning is now an essential, not an option.

Organically Evolved Landscapes

'Relict landscape' is a familiar concept. Indeed, so common are excellent examples of 'dead' landscapes in Britain (as recently illustrated, for example, in Fowler and Sharp 1990 and Glasscock 1992) that we may have become rather blasé about them. Of course, there is no way in which it is possible or desirable to protect them all as of outstanding or universal World Heritage significance; yet, from a world point of view, I would suggest that we in the British Isles have in our patrimony a major resource, something of a rarity on a global scale. I would certainly expect to see it contributing significantly to any rational European system of landscape recognition.

Relict landscapes are those produced by an evolutionary process which has come to an end at some time in the past. Classic examples of this type exist visibly on the surface of the ground over quite large areas of upland Britain. A common factor in many prehistoric examples is that the 'evolutionary process' of the second millennium BC i.e. the agricultural systems which produced the organised landscapes of field, farm, pasture and lane, came to an end around the 12th/11th century BC. The developed landscapes of later second millennium BC Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor are truly remarkable, both in what they visibly were and in their state of preservation which, properly studied, enables us to perceive authentic ancient entities (Fleming 1988; Johnson and Rose 1994). Seeing

such landscapes, however, is only one dimension of perception, for the human mind also wants to 'see' how it worked i.e. understand. What in fact are we looking at?

But we have to be very careful in answering that question, for a visual, monument-led appraisal could well lead to a mis-reading of the real nature of a landscape in historical, processual terms. Fyfield and Overton Downs, Wiltshire, illustrate the point. They comprise a landscape with an apparently 'relict archaeology' in the form of extensive physical remains no longer in use for their original purpose. Detailed examination (Fowler 2000b; Fowler and Blackwell 1998) shows, however, that such relatively dramatic remains of cultivation and settlement belonged to mere episodes in the long-term history of the place which always has been, and still is, primarily concerned with pasturing livestock, mainly sheep. At a deeper level of understanding of processes in rural ways of life, as distinct from the mapping and dating of ancient remains, these deeply agrarian Downs are not relics, though they contain many relict features. Intellectually, they are not a 'relict landscape' but belong to the other category of 'organic landscape' in World Heritage terms, the 'continuing landscape'. Such 'retain an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress.' That fits those Wiltshire Downs exactly.

This raises several fairly basic questions. One is 'How much land do we have to include to designate "a system" i.e. enough to understand how the system worked, rather than only enough to contain the visible archaeology or the habitat of one plant or the immediate economic environment of a working community? The question currently arises, for example, in the National Trust's proposal to recreate a wet-land in a nature reserve of 14 square miles around the existing 800 acre Wicken Fen Reserve. There, species depletion continues despite sensitive management because 'it suffers as an island in a sea of hostile farmland and is too small to protect wildlife effectively' (Adrian Colston, Reserve manager, as quoted in *The Guardian*, 2 May, 2000, 9). As the proposal develops it will doubtless address questions of size by identifying very clearly its primary objectives, for example habitat, species or archaeological sustainability. In the case of those Wiltshire Downs, impressive and extensive though the archaeological evidence is of highly-organised field systems in long-term farming land-use, the working system of which they were an integral part can only be properly glimpsed if they are viewed in a much broader topographical perspective, certainly much bigger than the current World Heritage Site which partly embraces them.

The 'continuing landscape' category is both obvious and more subtle. The definition is quite clear: 'it retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress.' The idea is a little more sensitive in Britain as indeed it is elsewhere (Layton 1989). After all, it involves people, and the British, especially the English, are somewhat uncomfortable with

a concept which they tend to see as akin to people being turned into exhibits in a 'living museum'. The Banawe rice terraces illustrate exactly that (Villalon 1995). The danger there, however, is that the 'evolutionary process still in progress', that is the dramatic effects of Western materialism, are about to destroy the social fabric. Were that to happen, instead of the gigantic terrace systems staying in use and therefore being conserved, they would become just another awe-inspiring ancient monument, spectacular but inert. But, to prevent that happening, have we the right, as Cobbett would have demanded, to ask the people, indeed to expect the very young who cannot yet answer, to go on living in material poverty for the sake of preserving a landscape and a lifeway?

Exactly the same issues underlie some areas likely to be assessed as cultural landscapes in Europe and Britain. Some of those concerned are well-aware of the connection between landscape, the associated lifeway and contemporary economics, though the all too characteristic assumption that tourism is the sure-fire way of achieving economic viability is questionable (ICOMOS 1993). Tourism is locally as fragile as a Spring adonis, and less reliable; it can soar like an eagle and crash like a meteorite; it can also insinuate and bite like a viper. As Mrs. Beeton would have said, 'First choose your sort of tourism, and then make it clear who is doing the cooking round here', a precept illustrated in practice (Boniface and Fowler 1993, 91-93) in a landscape we discuss *below*.

In Britain, and long before serious tourism, many formerly important traditions of agrarian societies, like transhumance, died, but most 'continuing' landscapes there are nevertheless to do with farming in one way or another. Possible examples for consideration might include 'shepherding landscapes' ('sheepscapes'?) such as the Cheviot Hills on the English/Scottish border (Mercer and Tipping 1994 report on recent research but no good comprehensive modern study of Cheviot exists, *cf* Newton 1972, Wright 1989). Another example might just conceivably be Exmoor for its supposedly traditional stag-hunting, but the only reference to it in Somerset's authoritative landscape history is hardly supportive ('Incidentally, wild deer still inhabit Exmoor ...', Havinden 1981, 173).

Britain has many other cultural landscapes in various forms and of different ages, often hovering uncertainly between 'relict' and 'continuing'. One type is recent industrial landscape. The outstanding World Heritage industrial Site, Ironbridge Gorge (UNESCO 1999, no. 90) on the River Severn west of Birmingham, comes immediately to mind; it is actually a multi-period landscape, and speaks for itself (Trinder 1982). But in a sense, by concentrating on early industrial sites, Britain was losing the opportunity to preserve some of the great industrial landscapes of the 19th and 20th centuries. The problem has now been recognised in our latest World Heritage tentative list (DCMS 1999, 12-14), and meanwhile Blaenavon is being nominated. Pity, all the same, about the loss of the

historically-significant Morris Cowley works on the east of Oxford and Smiths shipyard at Sunderland, broken up and its parts sold off. Early-mid 20th century gas, electricity and nuclear installations are quickly becoming redundant, and vibrant, prosperous coal-mining landscapes of but 20 years ago are fast disappearing, with villages as well as pits and pit-heaps already far-gone in physical and social decrepitude. I plead not for their preservation; rather do they remind us that some things are beyond the scope of conventional landscape conservation.

Two specific issues

The first derives directly from my recent ICOMOS experiences on World Heritage missions, with IUCN in the case of 'cultural landscapes'; the second is a genuine conundrum, arising in France but of, I fear, general application.

The European Landscape Convention will presumably be in operation by the time that this is published, but nevertheless one particular facet of it is worth commenting on in this context of cultural landscape. Article 12 of the 1998 Draft concerned a proposed List of Landscapes of European significance; the idea disappeared from the 2000 version, but lurked less compulsorily in its Article 11, f. In practice, such a List had been put on hold for political reasons. This is a pity, for as Phillips (IUCN 2000, 24) explained, some register or simply recognition of landscapes of European significance would fit neatly in the middle of a three-tier hierarchy between landscapes of national importance and World Heritage cultural landscapes 'of outstanding universal' value. I say this not, however, for bureaucratic convenience but because it will be quite impossible to do justice to Europe's landscapes in terms of World Heritage designation. Some mechanism for recognising landscapes which are part of the European inheritance, representing its landscape diversity, for example, would therefore be useful in enabling appreciation of them to be better shared among Europe's peoples.

I have recently been faced with four European cultural landscape claimants on World Heritage status, all rural though all with industrial attachments, all scenically beautiful, and all agrarian. They brought home to me what is blindingly obvious: that Europe is full of stunning landscapes, overwhelmingly of countryside given its rural demeanour by three common factors. They are:

- i. an ensemble of natural factors in a combination particular to that place;
- ii. the human use of that place, particularly in a labour-intensive, non-intensive agrarian economy;
- iii. and the results of the interaction of the first two factors.

What struck me in particular, given the huge areas of Europe still farmed, is how quickly farming technology has changed yet how 'traditional' so much of the landscape still is. The crying need is for some European-wide attempt to identify types of traditional

European *agrarian* landscape and then scientifically isolate the outstanding and typical examples – perhaps three? - of each type. If all European landscape is ‘cultural’, what is so special in European terms, never mind global ones, about ‘cultural landscapes’? Where was my European frame of reference for judging these cases continentally as a filter to a World Heritage judgement? How many montane limestone landscapes with abandoned field systems do we need, for example, to illustrate a great European tradition of extensive, low-input but much ‘sweat and grief’ marginal farming? Where does the Val de Boí stand in its European rankings? Was the Mont Perdu assessment of the transhumant validity across two trans-frontier National Parks factually as well as intuitively correct? In practice an internal European process of assessment of such agrarian landscapes would be so helpful – indeed, it is an urgent priority in my view, if only for European purposes alone. Addressing the challenging but nevertheless easier tasks of identifying more specialist, almost self-defining, landscape types such as horticultural, vinicultural, silvicultural and rural industrial could come later. Europe was, and still is to a remarkable extent, a continent of farming, a continent not just of pretty views but of farmed landscape: we need to face that fact out.

For my second issue, a question: how do you explain this? In a part of the world – it happens to be deeply rural France, - where ox-ploughing continued until fifty years ago, most of the local population still lives on as well as off the land, in this case by shepherding. Le Causse Méjean, Languedoc, is a classic case of one of those ‘montane limestone sweat-and-grief marginal farming landscapes’. Many of you will have in mind your own analogues, perhaps in upland Britain but it could be in the Pyrénées, the Alps or the Balkans. All of this French area, about the size of the Isle of Wight, is in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and also in a Natural Regional Park; much of the area is part of a National Park; and it is actively on France’s list of potential World Heritage Sites as a cultural landscape. The whole is of great natural diversity: in one day recently, while about my archaeological fieldwork, I just happened to see, *inter alia*, a host of yellow *Adonis vernalis*, now absolutely rare in Europe, a Golden Eagle, a meteorite and a 2-foot long viper. I have come to know this remote and economically impoverished landscape very well over this last decade, and now, instead of remarking on events, can identify seven trends which have been happening during the 1990s. They are, ranked in order of deleteriousness:

- i. enclosure, that is the fencing in, characteristically with electric wire, of the unenclosed sheep pastures, fundamentally changing the outstanding characteristics of this landscape, its visual openness, its sense of space and its physical accessibility on foot
- ii. the erection of large, prefabricated, modern sheds, usually for sheep shelter, sheep-milking and manure management, characteristically insensitively sited and cumulatively now a major visual, late 20th century element of the landscape

- iii. the piecemeal ploughing up of old pasture, driven by EU grant payments to produce temporary cereal Europe does not need, here botanically and archaeologically disastrous, visually detrimental and pedologically dangerous in an area of tremendous rain-storms, shallow soil and fast run-off
- iv. road-improvements, ostensibly to make it easier for the milk-tankers to visit farms each day and also making it possible for large tourist buses to drive through landscape and villages they could not previously reach and to which they contribute nothing except visual intrusion
- v. new houses (in an area with hundreds of empty and semi-ruinous vernacular buildings), built with non-local materials and characteristically sited insensitively (usually for those inside to gain a good view) outside existing villages
- vi. the introduction of alien animals, notably Przewalski horses, now promoted as a tourist attraction, and, in 2000, Black-faced sheep apparently running freely with the local unimproved *brébis*
- vii. the continual erection of new signage, not so much the formal, directional road signs but the proliferation of additional signs marking recently invented tourist routes and territorial imperialism of recently-invented official organisations

All seven processes have one thing in common: without exception, and this is apparent over a decade, they are all contributing to the overall demeaning of this particular landscape. Individually and collectively they are detrimental; yet this is a landscape massively researched in terms of its scientific and socio-economic characteristics, it is designated up to the eyeballs, and it has a local population directly working the land. How can landscape quality be going so wrong in these circumstances? – my question, though a real one in other contexts, here is rhetorical, for my purpose is primarily to stimulate thought by using the Causse Méjean as a real-life metaphor. My guess is that most areas with ‘special’ or protected landscapes are experiencing two or more of these trends in any one of several combinations. An explanation in the caussenard case might have something to do with the paradox that the ‘culture’ in which that particular cultural landscape exists is expressing itself in that drawn-out process of landscape degradation. Now, there is something for theorists as well as practitioners to ponder.

One sort of result of such process we can readily see now in most of Britain’s highly-managed landscape. These traditional life-ways have virtually disappeared as living elements among the majority of rural society. Whether their time will come again remains to be seen but meanwhile climatic change has arrived. It alone could render nugatory much of what we do and propose. Has anyone yet paused to think through at European level the implications of global warming for our landscapes, not in agricultural, botanical or economic terms, but in cultural terms? We have some idea what will happen around our coasts but what about the changes in prospect for those montane landscapes, so rich

in their humanity, land at 500m aOD and above, when the mean annual temperature is 2° higher than now?

Conclusion

'Cultural landscape' incorporates an adjective which, in England, is commonly perceived as having a narrow, elitist meaning. Unfortunately – as was perfectly clear during this conference, - that particular sense has besmirched the concept of 'cultural landscape' when the phrase, not least in its application in World Heritage terms, means exactly the opposite. Apart from that special World Heritage class of parks and gardens, a cultural landscape must by definition be somewhere created by the long anonymous endeavours of ordinary people. By recognising 'cultural landscapes', we have, almost for the first time, given ourselves the opportunity to recognise places which may well look ordinary but can fill out in our appreciation to become extraordinary; and an ability of some places to do that creates monuments to the faceless ones, the people who lived and died unrecorded except unconsciously and collectively by the landscape modified by their labours. A cultural landscape is a memorial to the unknown labourer.

The concept of cultural landscape links not just thought but action about these curious places, places to be curious about and places which affect us in curious ways. They are places where we can be aware of relationships between humanity and time, and between humanity and nature; yet a cultural landscape should speak to us not just of pasts and has-beens but also of futures and possibilities. By definition, a cultural landscape has to have a past; to be of any value, it has to have a future, most importantly for our successors to contemplate tomorrow. So a cultural landscape is not just an idea; it should also be something of practical use. We as a species need communal reference points, to check where we are going to as well as coming from; as individuals, we similarly need our own little bits of heritage to give us personal identity and act as our lodestone.

'Cultural landscape' is indeed a dreadful phrase: since its perception is not intrinsic but very much, as I have tried to argue, of the human mind, then maybe a better phrase, borrowing from the Jellicoes (1975, 374), would be 'humanistic landscape'. They warn of 'the blindness that follows sheer lack of appreciation and the consequent destruction of those values in history that together are symbolic of a single great idea.' (*op. cit.*). Perhaps such a humanistic interpretation of landscape, melded with all that we now know about landscape scientifically, offers a way forward, developing in our own mode of thinking an intellectual grandeur which grows out of a concept of humbling eco-history rather than retreating to the simplistic opposites of romantic natural history or machismo cultural history. The phrase itself matters not a lot. Dreadful or otherwise, the words should speak to us of experiences, of places remembered, of ideas such as scientific reservoir, memory-bank and desirable destination; and of one fairly basic great concept to

take us forward in our understanding of ourselves among the fauna on a floral, fragile planet.

Appendix

SOME DEFINITIONS OF CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

(arranged chronologically)

'The cultural landscape is fashioned from a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area the medium, the cultural landscape the result.' *Sauer 1926, as quoted in Aitchison 1995, 275*

'Cultural landscapes will always remain elusive expressions of "a persistent desire to make the earth over in the image of some heaven."' *Jackson 1952, as quoted in Aitchison 1995, 272*

'Cultural Landscape – a concrete and characteristic product of the interplay between a given human community, embodying certain cultural preferences and potentials, and a particular set of natural circumstances. It is a heritage of many eras of natural evolution and of many generations of human effort.' *Wagner and Mikesell 1962 as quoted in Aitchison 1995, 272*

'... The cultural landscape is a tangible manifestation of human actions and beliefs set against and within the natural landscape.' *Melnick 1984, 2*

'The individuality of the British and Irish cultural landscape is attributed to climatic, historical and edaphic factors, and can be traced to the Celtic attitude to woods and woodmanship.' *Rackam 1988, 77*

'Cultural landscape is a transformed part of free nature resulting from man's intervention to shape it according to particular concepts of culture.' *Svobodova 1990, 24*

[Cultural landscapes] 'are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment, and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal. They should be selected ([for World Heritage status] on the basis both of their outstanding universal value and of their representativity in terms of a clearly defined geographical region, and also for their capacity to illustrate the essential and distinct cultural elements of such regions.' *Cleere 2000, quoting the initial Le Petite Pierre definition of 1992 presented to the World Heritage Committee in December of that year, and accepted*

"Cultural landscapes reflect the interactions between people and their natural environment over space and time. Nature, in this context, is the counterpart to human society; both are dynamic forces, shaping the landscapes' ... A cultural landscape is a complex phenomenon with a tangible and intangible identity. The intangible

component arises from ideas and interactions which have an impact on the perceptions and shaping of a landscape, such as sacred beliefs closely linked to the landscape and the way it has been perceived over time. Cultural landscapes mirror the cultures which created them.' *Plachter and Rössler in von Droste et al. 1995, 15*

'Cultural landscapes are to be found in every part of the populated world. They represent a rich and almost infinitely varied part of the human heritage' [and] 'often reflect living models of sustainable use of land and natural resources.' *Phillips in von Droste et al. 1995, 381*

'... anything cultural involves development and process and both those require time. A cultural landscape has to have been, by definition therefore, dynamic, ... linking not just thought but action about these curious things, the relationships between humanity and time and between humanity and nature ... essentially the term embodies this relational, processual concept, and its meaning is always going to be an exercise in interpretations, in significances, in values. Landscape interpretation and cultural landscape go together, for both are about ideas and meanings, concepts and interpretations, dynamics and dialogues ... ' *Fowler 1995*

'The American geographer Carl Sauer first formulated the concept of "cultural" landscape as fashioned from the "natural" landscape. Human geographers now seek meaning in the landscape as a "repository of human striving", and post-modernist perspectives visualize the landscape as a "cultural image" whose verbal or written representations provide images, or "texts" of its meaning, or "reading".' (Ashmore and Knapp 1999, 3)

'There are two opposing views with regard to cultural landscapes:

- (1) Landscapes qualify for the term "cultural landscapes" if they express the influence of humankind on the environment at the landscape level, either visually or with regard to structure. In view of the universality of human impact on nature and natural resources, basically all landscapes would have to be considered "cultural landscapes"...
- (2) Cultural landscapes do not exist as such, or at least, they are not worthy of being protected because the influence of humankind on nature is intrinsically degrading. Thus more than anything, "cultural landscapes" reflect the wanton destruction of nature ...' *Plachter in Gajós 2000, 95*

'with the concept of cultural landscape, we could be dealing with ... something which offers us not just a new way of looking at scenery and not even a new way of looking at Nature; but a vision which could enable us to perceive ourselves as part of a process creating and constantly changing the environment of which we are an

integral part. Cultural landscapes ... could be the nodes of memory for humankind in thinking about that process ...' *This paper*

'... a cultural landscape is a very personal thing.' *This paper*

'A cultural landscape is a memorial to the unknown labourer.' *This paper*

'... a cultural landscape has to have a past; to be of any value, it has to have a future, most importantly for our successors to contemplate tomorrow. So a cultural landscape is not just an idea; it should also be something of practical use.' *This paper*

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