The Wild in Silence

By Usue Ruiz Arana

Abstract

Tranquillity is a quality highly valued in the landscape and conducive to its protection. However, as a highly subjective experience, it is difficult to identify and manage. The current tranquillity map for England sought to incorporate the subjective in the mapping and laid the foundation for subsequent studies on tranquillity. Through sound walks along Northumberland National Park (NNP) this paper questions the purpose and validity of the mapping. The value of the map lies in raising an awareness of the importance of sound in the perception of natural landscapes. The map invites professionals engaged in the maintenance and management of the landscape, as well as visitors to NNP, to think and feel through their ears as positive aural factors are at the heart of the mapping. Shortcomings stem from turning the subjective experience into objective factors for the mapping, and from considering the non-human as ideal of tranquillity.

Keywords – tranquillity, nature, wildness, soundscape, phenomenology

Introduction: aims, objectives, and methodology

In January 2016 I found myself longing for silence; for an escape somewhere remote and quiet with space to think. This longing was ultimately precipitated by noise, a wish to evade an everyday urban environment suddenly perceived as extremely noisy. But underneath the noise, there was a personal and academic restlessness: an international move from Toronto back home to Newcastle, and a mid-point Ph.D. crisis that left me wondering what next.

In search for that quietness and remoteness, I turned to Northumberland National Park (NNP), an hour's drive from home. NNP is identified as one of the most tranquil areas in the current tranquillity map for England (CPRE, 2007). This map, as we will uncover later on in this paper, was developed according to a qualitative and quantitative methodology that identified and mapped positive and negative factors in the landscape perceived to contribute to tranquillity. In these factors, both visual and aural, the absence of an apparent human influence in the landscape scored highly (Jackson et al., 2008). This reveals a paradox in the understanding and mapping of tranquillity in that we define tranquillity through human experience, however, what we value in tranquil landscapes is the absence of the human.

Intrigued by this paradox in the mapping I engaged in a creative practice research project aimed at questioning human presence within those tranquil landscapes. The research project, titled Silent Landscapes, was carried out at Northumberland National Park in the autumn and winter of 2016-17, and concluded with a temporary installation at one tranquil site. The installation consisted of a structure that provided a visual and aural frame for the landscape. Through the interaction with the environment, for

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example singing in the wind or vibrating with the rain, the structure signified our presence in that landscape and tranquillity.

Figure 1
Silent Landscapes temporary structure. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2017)

The objectives of the research project emerged from two other aspects of the tranquillity mapping: the inclusion of positive sound factors in the assessment of the landscape and the turning of the subjective experience of tranquillity into a set of objectively weighted and mapped factors. The first aspect drew me to uncover the role of sound in the engagement with the landscape. Through the second aspect I questioned the validity of the mapping by uncovering whether those objectively mapped factors could lead to tranquillity.

In order to expose the role of sound in the engagement with tranquil landscapes, the project employed the methodology of the sound walk. Sound walks that followed Schafer's early definition as "explorations of the soundscape... using a score as a guide" (1994, p.598). These particular sound walks were self-guided and the scores, pre-mapped routes that followed Public Rights of Way, National Park pathways and open access land, and incorporated a variety of habitats identified through a review of existing mapping and National Park documentation. These were not rigid walks, and they allowed for improvisation and detours.

This paper presents the findings of the research project Silent Landscapes that lead to the temporary installation. The paper starts with an introduction to Northumberland National Park, tranquillity, and the mapping of it, to set the context for the research. Next, descriptive narratives developed from field notes taken during two of these sound walks are used to reflect on the engagement with the landscape through sound, and the instances of tranquillity encountered. The paper then reflects on what that engagement uncovered of humans presence in those tranquil landscapes, and the validity of the mapping.

National Parks

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National Parks in England are designated for the conservation and enhancement of their "natural beauty, wildlife, and cultural heritage" and for "promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of their special qualities by the public" (Environment Act 1995, s.61). Out of the fifteen National Parks in Britain, Northumberland National Park (NNP) is the least populated and visited, and draws visitors for its tranquillity and internationally recognised dark skies (National Parks, 2017).

The primary land use of NNP is upland hill farming, which coexists with other uses such as the military operations of the Otterburn Training Area, commercial forestry and tourism. These land uses are the result of the ownership and landscape of the park. The majority of the publicly owned land belongs to the Ministry of Defence (23%) and Forestry (19%), with the remaining land belonging to the National Trust and National Park Authority (Northumberland National Park Authority, 2016, p.9).

The landscape that we experience today in the park is the result of physical and human influences. Physical influences consist of the underlying geology laid out 400 million years ago and subsequently modified by the effects of glaciation and climate. Human influence started with the hunters and gatherers of the Mesolithic Age and has been continuous since, evolving to include settlements and infrastructure, vegetation clearance, cross-border fights and raids, land use management, and more recently conservation activity (Julie Martin Associates, Alison Farmer Associates, & Countryscape, 2007).

Those influences have resulted in a landscape that encompasses a wide variety of character types, with five of Natural England's National Character Areas included within the Park: the Cheviots to the north, an area of "smooth, rounded hills" (Natural England, 2013c, p.3); the Cheviot Fringe to the northeast, a "tranquil, undulating, lowland landscape, framed by the Cheviots (2013b, p.3); Border Moors and Forests to the centre, an "extensive, sparsely populated upland plateau, with long-distance views and a strong sense of remoteness and tranquillity (2013e, p.3); the Northumberland Sandstone Hills to the east, a "series of flat-topped ridges which provide panoramic views of the Cheviots and the coast" (2013a, p.3); and finally the Tyne Gap & Hadrian's Wall to the south, a "narrow, distinctive corridor centred on the River Tyne" that provides long distance views of "pastoral landscapes" to the east and urban landscapes to the west (2013d, p.3).

Tranquillity and tranquillity mapping

Tranquillity in a landscape is considered a special quality that supports the designation and protection of that landscape. This is the case for National Parks where tranquillity is deemed to contribute to their natural beauty (Natural England, 2011). Tranquillity, as discussed in the introduction to NNP, is one of the main attractors for its visitors, and is also a term frequently used to describe its landscape character. However, as a highly subjective experience, tranquillity is extremely difficult to define, and testament to that is the fact that there is currently no agreed guidance on how to identify or manage it. The tranquillity map for England commissioned by the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) in 2006 provided a turning point in the research on tranquillity as when mapped it sought to develop a new methodology that accounted for the subjective

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in the experience of tranquillity and moved away from expert-led judgements of it. Up to that point, tranquillity had been mapped quantitatively, based on distance away from negative factors, such as roads or industry (MacFarlane, Haggett, & Fuller, 2005). The following section provides an overview of this new methodology for mapping, as for the majority of the country this is still the current tranquillity map. Subsequent in-depth studies of tranquillity in the landscape, such as the Broadly Engaging with Tranquillity project at the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, have also built on this methodology, uncovering similar results (Hewlett, 2018).

In 2004, the CPRE commissioned a pilot study at NNP and the West Durham Coalfield. The study used Participatory Appraisal (PA) consultation to gather people's feelings on tranquillity, thus acknowledging the subjective in assessments about it. Through PA consultation, positive and negative factors that contribute to tranquillity were identified and grouped into three themes: landscape, people and noise. Those factors were then weighted and linked to Geographic Information System (GIS) data to produce the maps of tranquillity. The subjective experience, therefore, was transformed into objective factors that could be mapped. This pilot study concluded that relative tranquil areas "are characterised by a low density of people, minimal levels of artificial noise and a landscape that is perceived as relatively natural, with few overt signs of human influence" (MacFarlane et al., 2005, p.49).

The pilot was rolled out to the rest of England in 2006, and the current tranquillity map and accompanying report were produced. Through public consultation that built on the findings of the pilot, visual and aural factors that enhance and detract from tranquillity were established. The factors identified, as per the pilot, were then weighted and linked to GIS data to produce the maps. What characterises these factors, and what is therefore valued about the landscape in judgments on tranquillity, is the apparent absence of the human, and the perception of these landscapes as natural or wild. For example, positive visual factors identified in the study included a natural landscape or wide-open spaces, and positive aural factors included birdsong and silence. Similarly, negative visual factors identified included lots of people or overhead light pollution; and negative aural factors included high altitude aircraft, and trains and railways. To produce the map, the study area, England, was divided into 500m squares, and each square was given a tranquillity score according to the presence of those factors identified. The score of each square was then compared with the rest of the squares to produce the maps. The resulting map is therefore of relative and not absolute tranquillity. The report that accompanied the map argued that even though the experience of tranquillity may seem highly subjective, there are places with specific factors (both visual and aural) where one is more likely to experience it (Jackson et al., 2008).

From this review of the mapping, tranquillity is understood as a calm and peaceful state of mind induced by the engagement with the landscape, a landscape perceived as natural, wild and quiet.

Nature, the wild and wilderness

As described above, tranquil landscapes are those perceived as natural, wild and quiet. Consequently, a search for tranquillity is also a search for those qualities in the landscape. The following section clarifies how those terms are employed within this

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research project.

Notions of nature, the wild, and wilderness are subject to many interpretations. With regards to nature, ideas range according to its relation to culture and can be broadly grouped in two. The first group comprises the classical notion of nature as the world devoid of human interaction or activity, and therefore, distinguishable and opposite to culture, whereas the second group proposes a new entity in the belief that nature and culture are no longer two but rather a hybrid or cyborg (Proctor, 2013). In the tranquillity mapping, the term nature or natural is understood according to the first notion.

Nature has also been classified into four types according to human activity, from nature "of the first kind" or original wilderness, which is the closest that we currently have to pristine ecosystems, to nature "of the fourth kind" or new wilderness, the result of spontaneous ecological succession in abandoned industrial sites (Kowarik, 2005, p.22). From this classification stems the concept of wilderness employed in this paper as a spontaneous and self-willed ecosystem. The term wild is employed to denote an untamed organism, and wildness to describe a "wild appearance" or uncontrolled growth (Henne, 2005, p.253). It is worth noting that the terms wild and natural are not interchangeable. As gathered from the understanding of new wilderness described above, although wild implies a growth or development outside of human control, it can nevertheless have a human origin.

This research project investigates the quiet as stillness in the landscape and as the absence of human sound, following the conception of natural quiet as defined by acoustic ecologists such as Gordon Hempton who describe it not as an absence but as "the presence of everything", as "a sound, many, many sounds" (2009, p.2), the sounds of nature free from human intrusions.

In the search for tranquillity, the natural, wild and quiet, the research began with exploring those areas mapped as the most tranquil. The following section is the reflective narratives of those journeys and experiences.

Walk 1 – Narrative

Sunday 11th September 2016
Weather conditions: sunny, 14°C

My first walk in the Cheviot Hills area takes me from Barrowburn in the Upper Coquetdale Valley to Hazely Law and back, a five-mile round walk. A sunny Sunday morning in September. The narrow and winding Coquet Valley opens upon arrival to the small car park at Wedder Leap, providing endless views of rounded hills. Today there is no firing programmed at the Ministry of Defence's Otterburn Ranges south of the Coquet River. The apparent calmness of the valley is interrupted by the roaring of a vehicle, and soon enough a farmer on his all-terrain vehicle appears behind Askew Hall, a former dance venue for the valley adjacent to the car park. The roaring continues for some time, sounding the valley, long after I lose track of the farmer.

I cross the road and the Coquet River over a narrow timber bridge, the clicking of the

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gate a reminder that I am now entering private land. To my left, one of the few tree groups of the valley, a line of towering conifers, sounds in the breeze and provides a visual referent in the landscape. I continue northwards, following a rough stonewall that bounds the base of the steep slopes of Shillhope Law. The sheep greet me on my way: "baa, baa." I arrive at a couple of buildings that belong to Barrowburn Farm: the former stone built school, now a camping barn; and the Deer Hut, the original schoolhouse, now a holiday cottage. As I exit the farm curtilage, over the bounding stile, I cross a few people: "Good morning, good morning." After crossing the stile, the ascent starts following a gravel track. Silence. No wind, little vegetation, no sheep, no people. Just me, my footsteps, my breathing, the brushing of my clothes, and an endless blue sky. The ascent turns into a descent, and the path opens up offering vantage views over a small valley. A sound of water trickling down the hill, hidden, slows me down. Hepden Burn in the distance, slicing the landscape on its way. I get closer and sit on the rocks that edge the burn for a while, listening to the slow running water. Here by the water, in the embrace of the valley, quietness gives way to many sounds. But soon enough a loud baa startles me, inviting me to carry on with my walk.

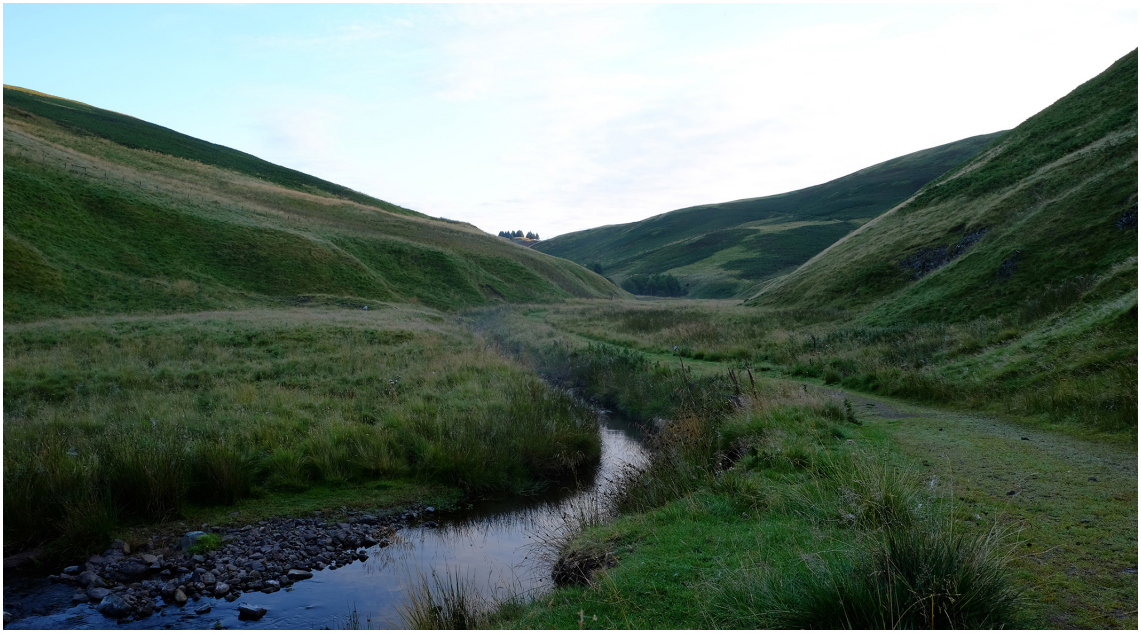

Figure 2
Hepden Burn. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2016)

I get up and follow the track uphill as it turns and narrows with the climb. My boots crunch the loose gravel, "crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch," setting the metronome for the hike. As my breathing gets heavier, I pause to look down the valley. The wind is picking up, slowly, rustling the tall grasses and ferns. The rustling starts and stops, starts and stops. I sit down, enclosed by the vegetation, listening to this quiet and intermittent song. With my hands, I feel the moisture of the soil, the brushing of the ferns; with my ears my breathing as it slows down, and a tingling in my earlobes.

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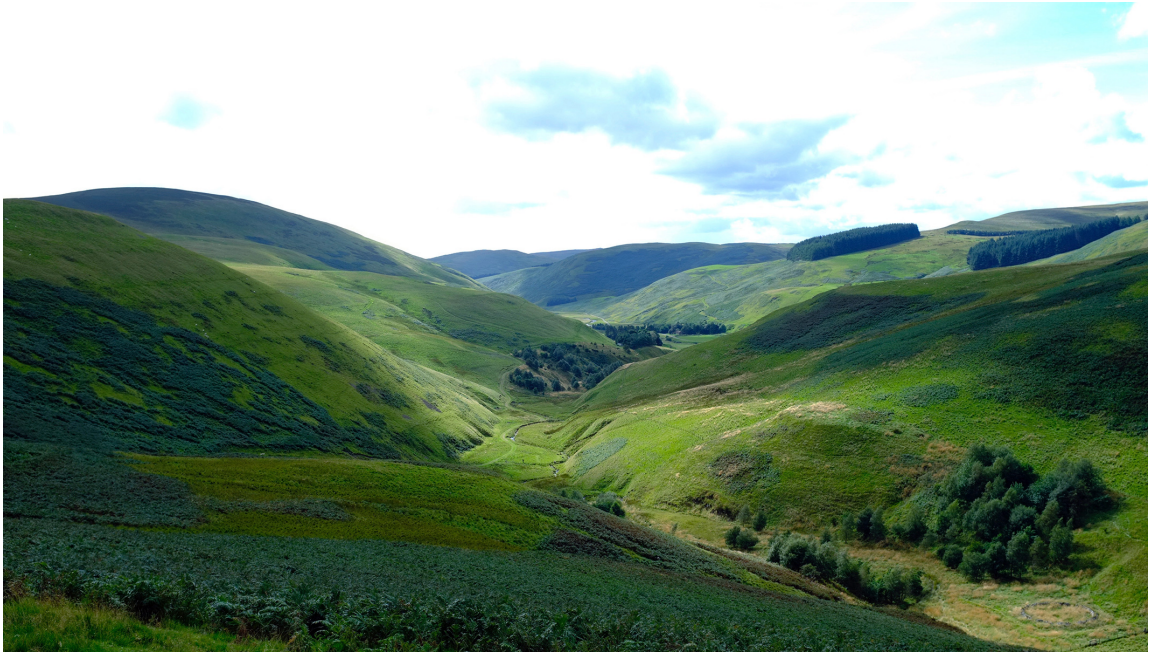

Figure 3
Barrow Burn valley. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2016)

I continue the climb, unable to see what is waiting for me above the steep slope. Could I hear a motorway? As I climb some more, I realise that the motorway is, in fact, the edge of the closely planted conifer forest, sounding in the wind. I cross another stile and enter this forest at Middle Hill. As I enter, the quietness and darkness engulf me, it is eerie. The dense canopies mute the songs of the birds above. I become acutely aware of all my bodily sounds, and my slightest movements, echoing back at me. The forest is sensing me, but I cannot sense it back. I walk as fast as I can, following the shortest track up Middle Hill and back down to exit the forest at its northern edge.

Figure 4
Middle Hill Forest. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2016)

After the forest, I welcome the vast openness of a barren hill. I start the climb following

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a narrow grass path on the steep slope to the east. The wind is getting stronger, and at times, I struggle to keep my balance. In the quiet of the hill, I wonder what humans have silenced. Human action might not be overt, but it is latent in the vegetation cover or lack of it, in the use of the land. But human activity has also been silenced, as the population in these valleys has significantly decreased since medieval times.

As I continue the climb my view expands, and with it, my ears. Tired of the rise I make my way back following the military road that leads to Barrow Law, an extremely exposed hill where the strong wind whooshing in my ears makes for an uncomfortable, and what seems like an excessively long, descent back to Barrowburn Farm and the car park.

Walk 1 - Reflections

This walk gave rise to a number of thoughts regarding the engagement with sound in search for the natural, quiet and wild, in the pursue of tranquillity.

The natural and wild

With regards to the natural, the walk took me through a complex landscape where many signs (both visual and aural) implied how human action and nature have been entangled for centuries. This was apparent in the quiet and barren hills, for example, that are a result of centuries of grazing; in the abandoned buildings or those that have changed use and are a testament to a greater past population; or in the uses of the land that coexist today such as the commercial forestry, farming and military training. The natural and the human were therefore extremely difficult to separate here. However, despite this entanglement, the physical isolation of this landscape did facilitate an abstraction from the sensory overload of the city. This abstraction, in turn, triggered an attunement to the environment; an environment that although entangled, provided a contrast to my everyday, and a sense of wildness. As well as physical, the isolation here was also technological, with no phone reception of any kind, forcing me to be in the moment, without distraction, disturbing my sense of time.

The quiet

With regards to the quiet, in this landscape that is both natural and human, it was difficult to think of the quiet as only natural. For example, reflecting on Hempton's definition of natural quiet, he considers “all form of domestic animals noise when recording Earth's living music” (2009, p.106). Hempton would find the sounds sheep and, to a lesser extent, cows, a form of manmade noise.

During this walk the non-human sounds induced a sense of tranquillity, in particular, the sound of running water. This corresponds with the findings of the current tranquillity map, where natural sounds feature heavily in the positive aural factors that people associate with tranquillity. A possible explanation to why we enjoy certain natural sounds can be found in the biophilia hypothesis developed by Wilson in the 90s that proposes we have an innate affinity with nature and other living organisms since our hunter-gatherer times. Benfield argues that the sounds of running water would have indicated a biodiverse and fertile environment, additionally that the water would have been free of the contaminants usually found in stagnant water; while birdsong would

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have indicated a space free of predators. (Benfield as cited in Nayar, 2017).

In the quietest instances of this walk a surprising amount of sounds were revealed. For example, sitting by the burn listening to the running water, or later on enclosed by the ground cover of the valley, what was initially perceived as one sound, the sound of water or moving vegetation, over time, became multiple distinguishable sounds. These were not only exterior, but interior sounds as well, such as that of my breathing or footsteps. This concurs with what Voegelin describes as the "beginning of listening" precipitated by silence where the interior and exterior soundscapes mingle, as one is "listening and sound making" (2010, p.83). And it is interesting that even in this quietness, in this "beginning of listening," the human and the non-human become entangled.

The quiet however was not always synonymous with tranquillity, as highlighted by the experience at Middle Hill forest. Here, in the enclosure of the grown conifer forest, the amplification of my presence highlighted the absence of other living organisms, making this silence less tranquil and eerier.

Waterfalls

Over the next few months, I walked through many mapped tranquil areas of the Park. I was particularly drawn to the hills and the valleys in the Cheviot Hills and the Simonside Hills, and became fascinated with the waterfalls in the park: Linhope Spout, Hareshaw Linn, and Davidson Linn. Standing in front of the waterfalls, letting the roar of the water get hold of me and wash away all my thoughts, all my worries.

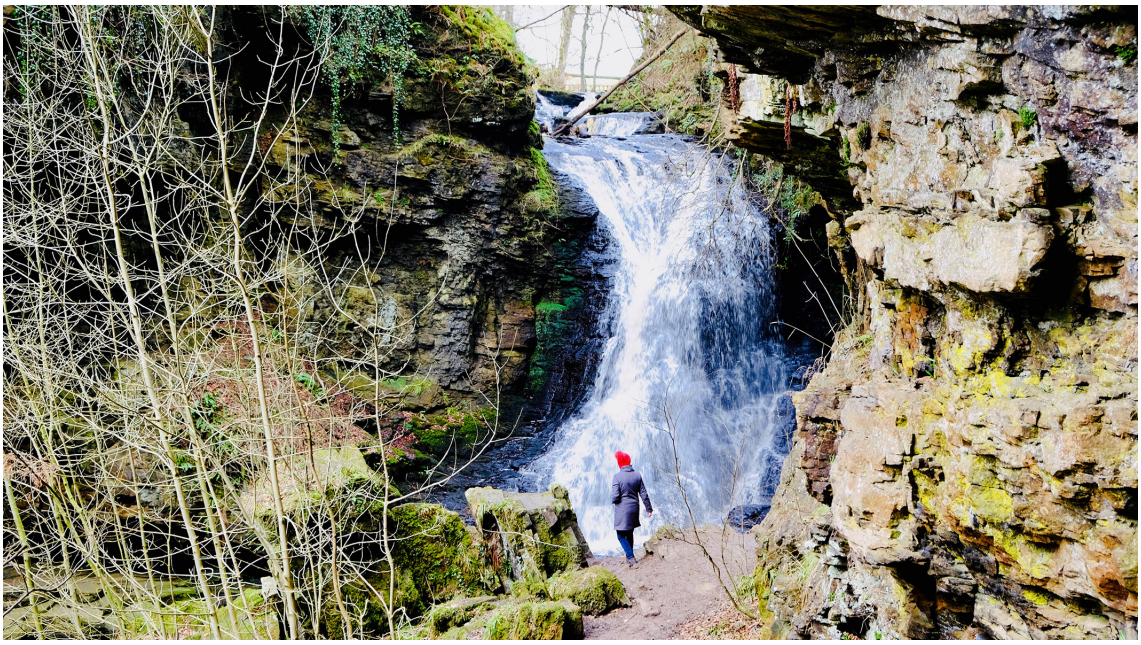

Figure 5
Hareshaw Linn. (Image by Alan Connor, 2017)

The romantic poet Coleridge also developed a fascination for waterfalls during one of the darkest years of his life: 1802-3. Coleridge, together with his friend Wordsworth and their companions, is credited with introducing a love for solitary walking in the

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landscape to achieve a communion with it (Shoard, 1997; Solnit, 2014; Wylie, 2013). In that particular year, depressed and lovesick, Coleridge went on many erratic walks through the Lake District (Macfarlane, 2009). Each walk would last for days, and through these walks, through the energy of the waterfalls and walking in the wild, his suffering began to lift, and he was restored. Reviewing Coleridge's letters, poems and journey entries of the time, Macfarlane suggests, "the self-willed forms of wild nature can call out fresh correspondences of spirit in a person" (2009, p.209). Through the wild waterfalls then, Coleridge's wild nature was revealed and energised.

Similarly, on my part, the experience of the waterfalls was invigorating, with the force of the water somehow seeping through my body and getting hold of it. And I recall these instances, paradoxically as instances of silence. This experience concurs with Voegelin's proposition that thunderous sounds are not "the dialectical opposite of quiet sounds and silence. Rather they achieve a similar sense of quiet by deafening you to anything but themselves" (2010, p.49n8). Voegelin supports her argument with Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of perception where the body is both sensible and sentient, with reversibility between those two halves, that in touch and sight is a circular movement. Merleau-Ponty explains this reversibility with an example of touch: if I touch my right hand with my left hand, I can feel my left-hand touching, and my right hand been touched, but not at the same time (Merleau-Ponty, 2012, p.95). In noise and listening, however, one is simultaneously sensible and sentient (Voegelin, 2010). This is the case in the waterfalls where the energy and vibrations of the water run through my own body in a similar way to how Coleridge must have sensed. The difference between noise and quiet then is that in noise I cannot hear myself, as in the case of the waterfalls that with their roar mute my sounds; whereas in silence, as previously discussed, I "hear myself listen" (Voegelin, 2010, p.79).

Stepping away from the waterfalls, my ears opened; there was acuteness to listening, to sensing, precipitated by the contrast with the noise, and the wildness that was now flowing through me. The intensity of this experience lured me to come back to the waterfalls again and again. The purpose of the next walk is to describe in depth the wildness found through this experience.

Walk 2 - Narrative

Friday 16th December 2016
Weather conditions: fog, drizzle, 3°C

The second walk takes me from Lordenshaw car park to Selby's Cove in the Simonside Hills and back. A cold Friday, mid-December. The fog hasn't cleared when we arrive at the car park. There are two of us today. We join St Oswald's Way and start the ascent towards the Simonside Hills. The path is partially paved making the rise easier. The fog is clouding my eyes and cleansing my ears; I can barely see, but I can hear near and far the faintest calls of the birds flying by, and the walls of conifers sounding in the wind in the distance. There are tales of dwarfs in this landscape, the Duergar that would lure people to their deaths in the hills, and with clouded eyes, I understand how this could happen.

As we climb, the wind picks up, joining all the little sounds together, and keeping us

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close to the ground. The shushing of the wind is interrupted intermittently by aircraft sounds that perforate the fog, extremely noticeable and irritating. Once we reach the ancient cairn at the Beacon, we head west on a levelled path, tired of climbing in the strong wind. Interestingly, as we walk, I no longer notice the aircraft sounds, perhaps there aren't any, or maybe I've gotten used to them. We enter Joe's Wood, covered in young conifers and tree trunks, and follow the path that hugs the bottom of Simonside. The distinctive ridge of the hills is barely visible, a dense mass cut in the fog.

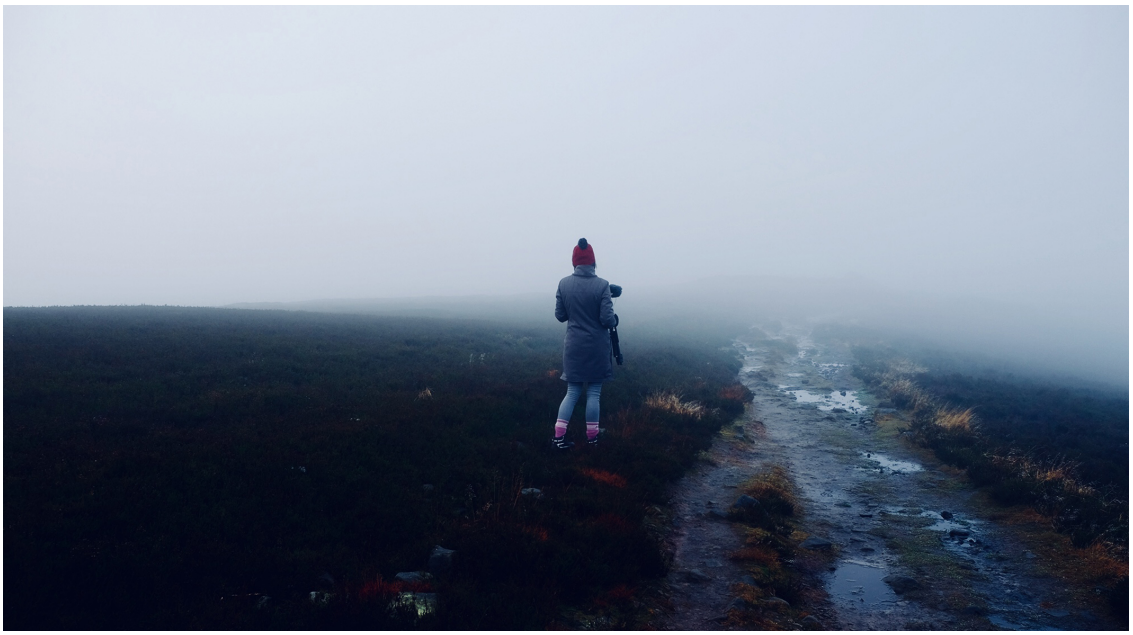

Figure 6
The Beacon. (Image by Alan Connor, 2016)

We arrive at another conifer forest that seems to have been cleared recently. All is quiet here, ghostly, with tree stumps and tree trunks scattered all around in shades of brown and orange. And we get lost. "Let's go back the way we came," he says, "before it starts getting dark." Lost in the cold, harsh forest, I do not feel one with nature at all, rather quite the opposite, detached from it. But it is in the intense focus of the task ahead, in the extreme sensing of the landscape to find our way out that every other thought in my mind is suppressed.

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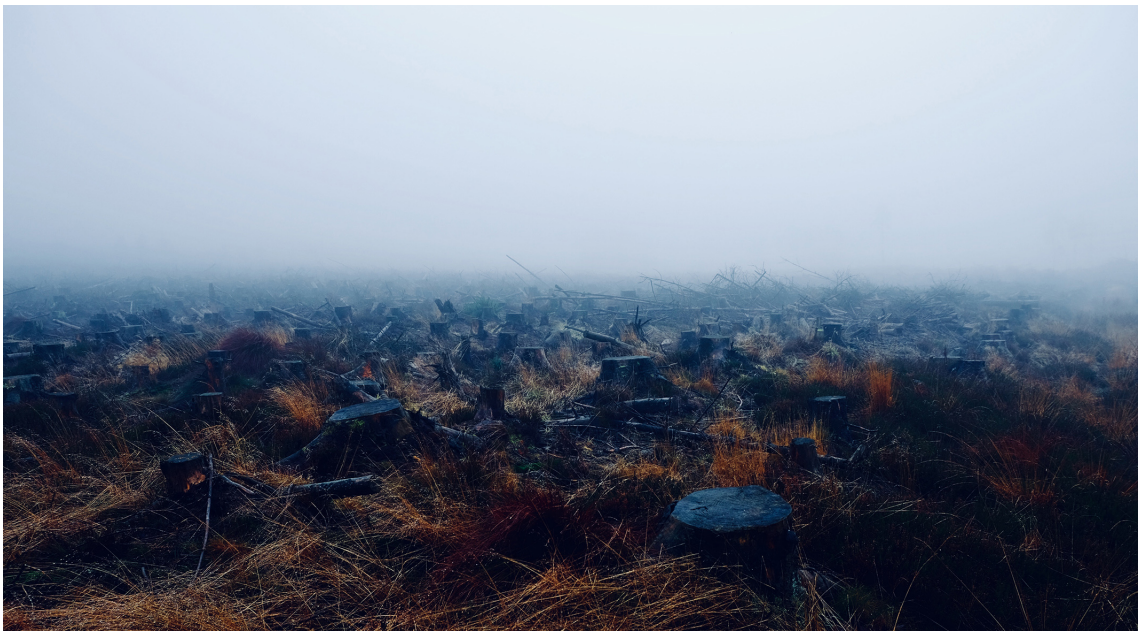

Figure 7
Simonside Forest. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2016)

We cross the forest towards the hills. Walking is extremely hard amongst the trunks and stumps, and my legs are soaked, cold and tired. Eventually, we find one of the low posts that mark the narrow path that should lead us to Selby's Cove. The posts are infrequent, disappearing with the trail amongst the overgrown vegetation, making walking arduous. The experience emphasises the remoteness of this landscape, and for the first time, I wonder whether I might be looking for tranquillity in the wrong place, too far from home.

"We don't have time, let's go back," he says. The sound of water coming from a small stream locates me back on the map. We carry on and arrive at Selby's Cove. As if by magic, the fog starts to lift, revealing an endless dry valley tinted in red. The wind has teamed up with the mist and is rising, dancing with the ground cover on the way. I sit down, our struggle to get here soon forgotten. As the ferns enclose my legs, I can no longer distinguish between the wetness of the ground and that of my own body, between the rhythm of my breathing and the whispers of those ferns. Enfolded by inside and outside soothing sounds and silences, a sense of peacefulness overcomes me. In the process, a part of me is silenced, my individual, cultural self, and I find a common essence with the wildness that I am sensing.

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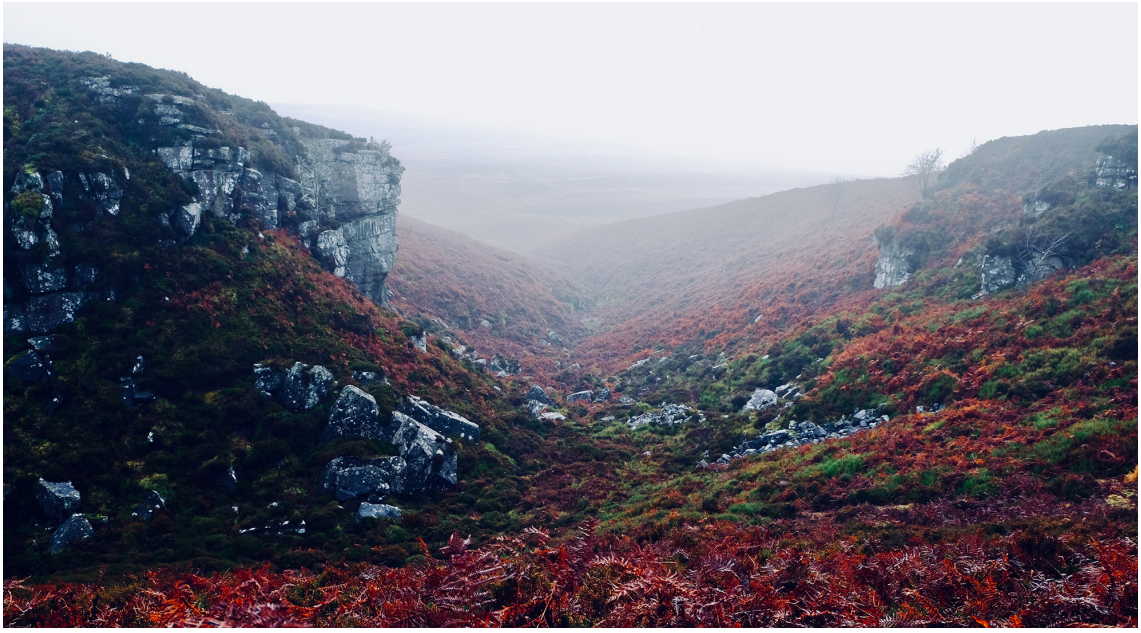

Figure 8

Selby's Cove. (Image by Usue Ruiz Arana, 2016)

Walk 2 - Reflections

This walk concluded with a reflection on the tranquillity found at Selby's Cove alongside other remembered moments. In these instances, a connection with the environment, precipitated by a dialogue with it, silenced a side of me, making these experiences challenging to describe. This inner silence was the conclusion of a deep entanglement with the landscape. In this last walk, for example, getting lost heightened our senses in trying to find a way through the forest. This heightened sensoriality culminated in a release of our struggle once we reached Selby's Cove and a sense of anonymity that corresponds with what Merleau-Ponty describes as the anonymous, pre-reflective life. He describes this natural life as:

> "At the very moment when I live in the world and am directed towards my projects, my occupations, my friends, or my memories, I can close my eyes, lie down, listen to my blood pulsing in my ears, lose myself in some pleasure or pain, and lock myself up in this anonymous life that underpins my personal life." (2012, p.167)

In the moments of tranquillity experienced through this project, the deep entanglement with the environment leads to a sense of anonymity as described above, a removal from the everyday concerns of life and a closer connection to nature and the senses.

In the introduction to this paper and the context of the mapping, nature was understood as separate to culture. As discussed through the walks, in the landscape of NNP it is no longer possible to distinguish the human from the natural. However, in these remote and quiet landscapes, one still finds a sense of wildness, a wild appearance experienced as an untamed and energising otherness to the everyday. This wildness is perceived externally in the environment, in the force of the waterfalls, the density of the fog or the

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soothing wind, and internally in the anonymity found in correspondence with the environment. The title of this paper, the wild in silence, stems from this last interior wildness found in the silencing of my individual and cultural side.

Discussion

The following discussion brings together the reflections of the sound walks, with the original aim and objectives of this project.

Sound in the pursue of tranquillity

The first objective of the project was to find out if the soundscape of a natural environment could create a sense of tranquillity. As the search for tranquillity was also a search for the natural, wild and quiet, the following section will explore how these were experienced on the first walk.

In the landscape of the first walk, where the natural and human were deeply entangled, I felt an abstraction from my every day, brought about by the remoteness and physical and technological isolation. In this abstraction, I experienced quiet instances that enabled a dialogue of inside sounds (my own) and outside sounds (the environment). Those sounds that I engaged with were mainly non-human and perceived as wild, such as the sound of running water, and that engagement precipitated a connection with the environment that induced tranquillity within me.

There were two stages to this engagement through sound:

1. The experience of a quiet landscape where both inside and outside sounds were audible, and I was simultaneously "listening and sound making" (Voegelin, 2010, p.83); listening to external sounds and those of my own making.
2. An entanglement with the environment precipitated by that internal and external dialogue of sounds

Therefore, in inducing tranquillity, sound plays a crucial role due to its capacity to trigger an engagement with the environment. That engagement, as discussed above, unfolds gradually through time.

The validity of the tranquillity mapping

As described in the introduction, the subjective experience of the landscape is turned into a set of objective factors for the mapping. The second objective of the project was to question the validity of this mapping and its purpose.

The experience of these mapped tranquil places varied in time and did not always lead to tranquillity, highlighting the complexity of its mapping. These varied experiences were due to external factors including weather conditions, seasonal changes and human activity that affected the soundscape, as well as individual responses to it. As an example of external factors, on my return to Barrow Burn on an extremely windy day, the subtle sounds of the ground cover were no longer there, and previous instances of tranquillity were lost. Further along at Middle Hill, the core of the forest had been felled, and the experience was no longer eerie. With regards to individual responses to the landscape, the maps took me places with little sensorial engagement and therefore not tranquil, such as extremely bare hills and vast conifer forests perceived as artificial

environments.

The subjectivity of the experience was reinforced by the fact that I was drawn to certain places and not others. No two places with the same landscape components were experienced identically. I was attracted to the waterfalls, but not to all of them equally, with the journey there and back playing an essential role in the experience. Therefore, although we might be able to map those components that induce tranquillity, as the methodology for mapping claims (Jackson et al., 2008), the subjectivity and sensorial layers of the experience are lost in the mapping.

An alternative form of mapping that allows for individual and cultural understandings of these tranquil places might be more appropriate to retain the subjectivity of tranquillity and supplement the objectively produced maps. This sensorial mapping could take the form of the "story map": a map that tells "stories about places" and "admits fear, love, memory, and amazement into its projections" (Macfarlane, 2009, p.140). Such a map would collect stories of subjective experiences of tranquillity for readers to relive and relate to, to find their tranquillity.

Where the tranquillity maps to play an important role is in placing sound at the heart of landscape designation, and therefore protection and management. As described in the introduction, tranquillity is a term frequently used in landscape designations, such as National Parks. In the mapping of that tranquillity, aural factors are given the same importance as visual factors, raising awareness of the importance of sound in the perception of natural landscapes. Consequently, these maps invite those agencies and professionals involved in the protection, management, design, and maintenance of these landscapes to begin to listen to their environment, think through their ears, and consider the impact of their actions on the soundscape.

Human presence in the tranquil landscapes

The project aimed to question whether we have a place in so-called tranquil landscapes. Our place in them stems from the potential to reconnect us to a sense of wildness that in turn make us reconsider the entanglement that we have had with nature for centuries.

As uncovered through the walks, in the landscape of NNP it can be challenging to separate the non-human from the human. This involvement is experienced at different scales: from the human scale, sounding in the environment whilst listening, like any other animal in the landscape; to the large-scale, experiencing, for example, the barren hills, grazed for centuries.

Being in the landscape enables us to find a sense of wildness in us, as uncovered in the waterfalls and last walk. This wildness is the third and final stage of my engagement with the landscape. In this stage, a deep entanglement with the environment reveals a sense of anonymity and an untamed otherness to our everyday. This rediscovered wildness connects us to the landscape and reminds us of “the world we did not make… and can teach profound feelings of humility and respect as we confront fellow beings and the earth itself” (Cronon, 1996, p.23).

Conclusion

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Tranquillity is a quality valued in the landscape, and conducive to the protection of that landscape. However, it is a subjective experience, difficult to define, which in turn makes it difficult to map and manage. In the current tranquillity maps for England (CPRE, 2007), tranquillity was defined from human experience as a calm state of mind induced by the engagement with a landscape perceived as natural, wild and quiet.

The importance of this mapping relies on inviting us to think through our ears, as positive aural factors are at the heart of the mapping. Thinking through our ears is particularly relevant for professionals and agencies engaged in the management and maintenance of these landscapes, and for the enjoyment and appreciation of them by the public.

For professionals, the maps highlight the need to explore the aural of the landscape through attentive listening methods, thus allowing them to understand the consequences or impact on tranquillity if changes are to be made to the landscape. This, in turn can encourage those professionals to listen attentively to other landscapes for their design and management.

This research found that sound can trigger a deep engagement with the landscape. This engagement unfolds gradually in three consecutive stages. Firstly, in a quiet environment, faint external and internal sounds are audible. Secondly, a connection with the wildness of that environment is established through a dialogue of interior and exterior sounds and silences (Voegelin, 2010). Thirdly, the connection with that wildness around us leads to a sense of anonymity; a condition akin to meditation where the removal from everyday concerns of life reveals a wildness in us. By reminding us of the world outside our control, this, in turn, makes us value and care for those landscapes. Care and value that we can then apply to our everyday landscapes.

The shortcomings of the current map stem from the loss of the sensorial layers of the experience of tranquillity in the mapping, and from promoting the absence of the human in the landscape. The first results in highly variable experiences of those so-called tranquil places. Sensorial maps, such as the “story map” (Macfarlane, 2009, p.140) introduced in this paper, could supplement the current mapping and showcase the subjectivity and sensoriality of that experience. The latter could prevent us from uncovering the wildness discussed. We experience this wildness by being a part of those tranquil landscapes, which ultimately defends our place in them. Holding these remote and isolated non-human landscapes as ideals of tranquillity might also prevent us from experiencing that tranquillity closer to home.

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Biography

Usue Ruiz Arana is a PhD candidate at Newcastle University and a practicing landscape architect. Her research, carried out through creative practice, seeks to expand the design tools of landscape architects beyond the visual. Through walking and installation work, she explores how the senses facilitate an engagement and attachment to the environment, key for welcoming a wilder landscape aesthetic within the public realm. Her work has been exhibited at conferences, and in solo and group shows, both locally and internationally. Her current research project, Silent Landscapes, was funded by the Newcastle Institute for Creative Arts Practice.

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