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For Rochdale:  
Reading, Mapping, and  
Writing Place in the Era  
of the Northern  
Powerhouse

Jennie Ruth Bailey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements of the  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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# Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the way in which popular perceptions Rochdale, a town and borough in Greater Manchester, can be challenged and reconfigured through a range of critical and creative practices. Using the Northern Powerhouse project – an initiative introduced by George Osborne, the former Chancellor of the Exchequer – as a starting point, this thesis argues that the language of the Northern Powerhouse is invidiously insubstantial: it is a vague rhetoric of regeneration which is inextricably indexed to top-down place-making practices.

The research has a multifaceted approach and utilises methodologies from the fields of literary and creative geographies to critically, and creatively, explore how a place is made through literary texts, maps and new writing. The thesis is organised in a tripartite structure: Reading Place, Mapping Place and Writing Place. Chapter One presents theories of place which underpin the analysis of the literary texts. In Chapter Two a literary survey of poetry, prose, folk tales, and plays is used to pull out some of the key themes and tropes in extant writing about Rochdale. The second part introduces critical cartography. Chapter Three starts from J. Brian Harley's premise that maps are a form of text that reveal and conceal what Michel de Certeau calls spatial stories. Following a discussion of 'official' maps of Rochdale, new maps are made, and explored, in Chapter Four. The final part features a discussion on practice-as-research and exegeses of the creative work. Crucially, creative literary and artistic responses are scattered throughout the thesis, interrupting the expected narrative of traditional critical research. This experimental, hybrid approach demonstrates the complexities of Rochdale.

This research contributes to nascent geohumanities scholarship and practice that explores the intertwining and blurred boundaries within (and without) the

normally siloed fields of the arts, humanities, and sciences. Rochdale is not a cultural lacuna, and the imaginative approach offered by my thesis challenges the “business as usual” narratives posed by regeneration organisations and the language of the Northern Powerhouse.

## Keywords:

Rochdale, place, maps, literary geographies, geohumanities, creative-critical writing



# Acknowledgements

A PhD project has the reputation of being a task taken individually, however, this PhD thesis was not completed in isolation. The generous Interdisciplinary Studies studentship award from Manchester Metropolitan University, support from colleagues, friends, and people from Rochdale have allowed me to complete this thesis. There are a host of people and organisations that I would like to thank. And possibly the cats who all sat upon previous drafts of the project.

## **Rochdale**

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As the orchestral music to move me off the stage begins to build to a crescendo, this leads me to finally say that this work is dedicated to the borough of Rochdale, its people, wildlife and its edgelands. Everywhere has stories, and any errors in the writing and retelling of these are my own.

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## Preamble: Tram Lines

‘I paid my fare / But where, I thought, do I arrive?’ The Liverpool Scene, ‘Tramcar to Frankenstein’.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Piccadilly – submerged on a sunless platform, the grey and yellow tram pulls up, the colours of muted optimism. The closing doors play a warning tone moving from B to A, a sharp *TOOOP!* at a cyclist risking the signal on a fixie, crossing the tracks. This horn is the dominant key, the tram is tuned to D major. Now rooted in place in the ‘low maintenance’ moulded shell of a seat. Fifteen pound coins, scrambled, now scrambled are metal stones in a pocket.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Piccadilly Gardens – a misnomer, a lack of green. The scene is chewing gum and rain, shine on the ‘Japanese Pavilion’ wall and on the darker pockmarks of concrete. The foot shuffle dance of people on and off. A woman’s voice is ‘posh but Northern’. *You can change here for services to Altrincham and Eccles and Saint Peter’s Square*, the poster in the tram reassures us, is *changing*. An orange crane and the continued demolition of the mills, the construction of apartment blocks shaped like the mills clustered together as Lego blocks by the Ashton Canal. It’s all a bit homogenous, a city in fear of green or open space or odour. On the platform, waiting to head towards Trafford, a man in a tartan scarf, warm in late January. The backdrop dance music of drilling, building, road. On this doubletram to *Rochdale via Oldham* – now moving doubletime to

Market Street - the rattle, the back tram is tethered without a driver. Brown boots and high heels clack on as the door *pingpingpingping*. Too busy for a Tuesday morning, vaporiser in one hand is a silver gun with a plouf of vanilla cream smoke, in the other hand an iPhone: 'Too Primark though'. Sharp, neck slicing maroon fingernails. Poster in a widow 'Live knowing you've made solid financial decisions', next to Betfred. Black bollards with golden bees (dipteran not hymenopteran).

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Shudehill –Should ill, shoed hill. *Where you can change to services to The Arndale, the Meat Market or low-cost Sparklers. Shudehill bus station, its boomerang roof. Delay. Remember when a Travelcard was a MetroMax? No explanation, not sure how long we've been waiting. Could be minutes. Could be hours. Then soft forward, stop, a gentle bounce off the tram in front. If we were to be uncoupled we'd come to an undramatic halt. Transformation is Coming, Keeping Victoria Posh purple poster, the silver lettering is just grey with little lustre, like trying without succeeding. Near the Coop, two gammy legged pigeons, ivy and buddleia grow out of the building opposite Federation.*

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Victoria – *was my Queen*. No stop here while they paste the bubble roof on. A go slow through the station, past men in orange hi viz. Victoria is bare, shaved of meaning. Out to the north, glass flats, past Manchester Victoria East Station, past the spray-painted tags. Speed up, leave the city behind. *Though I am poor, I am free*. The 3Towers apartments, brash pink cladding in weak light: Emmeline, Sylvia, Christabel imagined by Urban Splash as Suffragette motel signs. *My Suffragette city*.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Monsall – near the Irk. The stop is ramps, steps, freshly trimmed dogwood. Gorse and tree planters.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Central Park – Greater Manchester Police HQ, Tetris blocks. CCTV and more concrete. Bright yellow poster *Manchester North Regeneration*.

*...the next stop*

Newton Heath and Moston – doubleplace. Northern Rail train sidings, corporate logo is a downturned mouth. A tatty Union Jack. Bundles of *Bryophyta* for moss town, Moston. Within the tram: *For your own Safety*, a map of the line, *Hands Off*, stickers with peeling corners. Listen to the collective breathing at different paces, try not to snort, loaded on fruit smoothies and vitamin C. Shuffle forward on a single line track. Now new houses, The Railway Hotel, a teasel on the tracks, bricks in the soil. Silver birch and Viridor.

*...the next stop and the next*

Failsworth – an oxymoron. A delay, in one bay window: a ship in a bottle. *Tramway*.  
*Look both ways*.

Hollinwood – anonymous new industry among the bones of the old. An anti-suicide bridge over the M60.

South Chadderton – tattoos on knuckles, deed poll name changes. Ash and bramble.

*next*

Freehold –free the hold, let go. Held then free from the Raven mill, its windows punched out. On the other side, what was a bleachworks, its name is bleached out, trees poke out the top, an unintended roof garden. No one gets on at Freehold. No one gets off.

Westwood – 1842. Bend a U-shape to the Hartford Works. Metal against metal. A crow. *Crash Friendly*. A shop filled with shimmering salwar kameez.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale via Oldham, the next stop will be*

Oldham King Street – a pigeon waits for the tram. *Road Traffic Collision At Mosley Street, Services May Be Delayed*.

Oldham Central – angry goose tram honk then a return to the *TOOOP*. Cobbles and gulab jamun. Thin man with a black eye, teardrop inked under one eyelid in deep blue, wearing a grey sweat shirt, grey jogging bottoms. Grey grey grey. Masonic hall and ballroom, vacant, *For Sale*.

Oldham Mumps –lumpy with a croaky voice, all downhill from here. Closed shops, plywood windows.

*This is a Metrolink service to Rochdale*

Derker – the gun stutter, crack back the D and K. In broken tree planters, saplings of hawthorn, holly. Anti-trespasser trees.

*...to Rochdale*

Shaw and Crompton – doubleplace near rubble lumps. Suddenly, deconstructed valleys, hills. Horses, reeds, pasture, and cloud mist. Then dumped brick, slag heap, car park. The Hermes warehouse, full of undelivered parcels. Square grid fencing off a grass tangle and leaf litter leeching tannins into the top soil. *In Emergency Strike Cover*, green fists in motion.

Newhey – Plastic binbag bunting in the trees, empties in the brook. *Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Cotton House*. No one off and no one on.

*Rochdale*

Milnrow – leggy birch trunks. *Cask Ale's and Great Food!* Bindweed without creamy trumpet flowers.

Kingsway Business Park – desolate of business, an epitome of irony. Somehow, a scrape with black-headed gulls, lapwings. A woman walks a squat square dog along the water side. A gang of Canada geese crack knuckled feet.

Newbold - the yellow Morrison's, *here all year* for your supermarket needs. *The Kingsway Practice NHS Now Taking New Patients*. Watch more people walk across the marsh towards the Business Park. Slightly uphill, parallel to the train line then

Rochdale Railway Station – graffiti tags: *The Happy Joker* and *Newbold Grass*. Blue glass of the mosque, left behind to catch scant sunlight. *Keep Calm and Eat. It's a Jungle Out There*. Haji Cash and Carry since 1955, Nye Bevan House. To Drake

Street, the *Polski Sklep*, and *Brides of Rochdale*. The smokers outside The Regal Moon, where Gracie sang, now a Wetherspoons. *Sing as we go and let the world go by...there's always tomorrow to think of today*. Finally

*The Next Stop Will Be Rochdale Town Centre. Where this Service Terminates.*

# Introduction: (Re)claiming Rochdale

The tram's final stop is Rochdale. Welcome to Rochdale – the town that lends its name to a metropolitan borough of the Greater Manchester region in north-west England. Rochdale – one of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester, the others being Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan. Imagine, you've reached your destination and have stumbled off the tram in the greige of rain. This is the centre of the town. You will see that to your north are the shuttered wooden huts of the outdoor market, semi-varnished with water. Beyond the market: the stained glass of the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre dulled without sunlight. To your west: the curve of the road towards Drake Street, where the flood reclaimed the concrete in 2015, follow the tram line past the Regal Moon pub with your eyes. (You will not be able to see the statue of Gracie Fields from here.) To your east: the glass and steel frame of Number One Riverside - a mix of architecture, a medley of eras from the nineteenth to twenty-first century. You can just about hear the rush of the river Roch through the downpour. The angry honk of a bus horn marks the south part of this street view: the Rochdale Interchange bus station. In the distance, on the eastern horizon, and even when it rains you can trace the brown-green outline of the Pennine fringe.

Your main host, perhaps a tour guide, for this thesis is the researcher and the writer (denoted in blue – 'hello!') – two aspects of the same person.<sup>1</sup> This thesis utilises a hybrid style of writing that fuses the academic narrative with the imaginative writing of place. This hybrid writing is one that comes from different tensions and schools of thought. The research and writing were carried out from 2014 – 2017 and

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<sup>1</sup> An explanation on the use of the different personas, and the practice-as-research approach, is discussed further in Part Three of this thesis.

was supported by Manchester Metropolitan University's Department of Interdisciplinary Studies. The English Studies department, in particular, prides itself on its unashamed discipline-crossing practice. This offers useful tools in which to explore place, text, and creative writing practice. Place/s, arguably, are multifaceted and thus require a multifaceted approach. While there are overlaps in disciplinary approaches, this presents interesting tensions to explore: the tension between discipline, the tensions within places, the tensions of academy / communities. This is reflected in the discussions between the researcher and writer. The project is a critical-creative exploration of Rochdale: a densely populated, largely urban area with rural fringes that – rather unfortunately - occupies a problematic position within the British contemporary imagination. The thesis seeks to redress some of these perceptions by exploring the complex, and often competing, ways in which Rochdale has been made through different types of cultural text: literary writing and maps.

Additionally, the thesis is concerned with the ways in which Rochdale can be reimagined, and recreated, through new forms of cultural representation. The first two parts draw upon contemporary critical thought to offer close readings of Rochdale and its cultural representation/s. This thesis will use theoretical tools from different fields to contribute to current, and nascent, interdisciplinary scholarly fields including cultural and literary geographies, environmental and geohumanities, and creative writing research and practice that is focussed on place. Further, there is a predilection to interrogate the close relationship between critical and creative approaches to place particularly in the third part of the thesis. Specifically, this project is interested in how theoretically informed creative practices can inspire, and prise open, new thinking about a specific location. This exploratory thesis is informed by a self-conscious preoccupation with the synergies and tensions between critical and creative writing.



As a result, the thesis is divided into three parts: reading, mapping, and writing- the latter part also interrupts the thesis with creative interventions.

So, why Rochdale? Rochdale is a place that is, to apply the socio-spatial thinking of Rob Shields, ‘a place on the margins’.<sup>2</sup> Geographically, it is a place that lies on the fringes of Manchester: that great city of global industrial importance. Rochdale is also marginalised in cultural terms. So, for example, very little has been written about the literary history of the borough. Alan Garner repeatedly posed the question: ‘*if this is your land, then where are your stories?*’.<sup>3</sup> This thesis, then, is partly an attempt to respond to Garner’s call to narrative arms. However, there is a problem here. That is to say, Rochdale is not my land as I was born and brought up elsewhere (Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Greater Manchester). This thesis, therefore, is informed by a tension – worthy of study – emerging from the fact that I am not from Rochdale and that I came to Rochdale, as an outsider, with a set of preconceived ideas. Connected with this, at the heart of this thesis lies the notion of practice-as-research: the idea that my sense of Rochdale emerges out of an entanglement of scholarly study of extant cultural texts and the production of original creative writing. In thinking about Rochdale, then, this thesis is a study of how a place – a place located on the margins of the city – is written.

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<sup>2</sup> Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991).

<sup>3</sup> Alan Garner, ‘By Seven Firs and Goldenstone: An Account of the Legend of Alderley, Society for Storytelling Keynote Speech’, 2012.

## Locating Rochdale

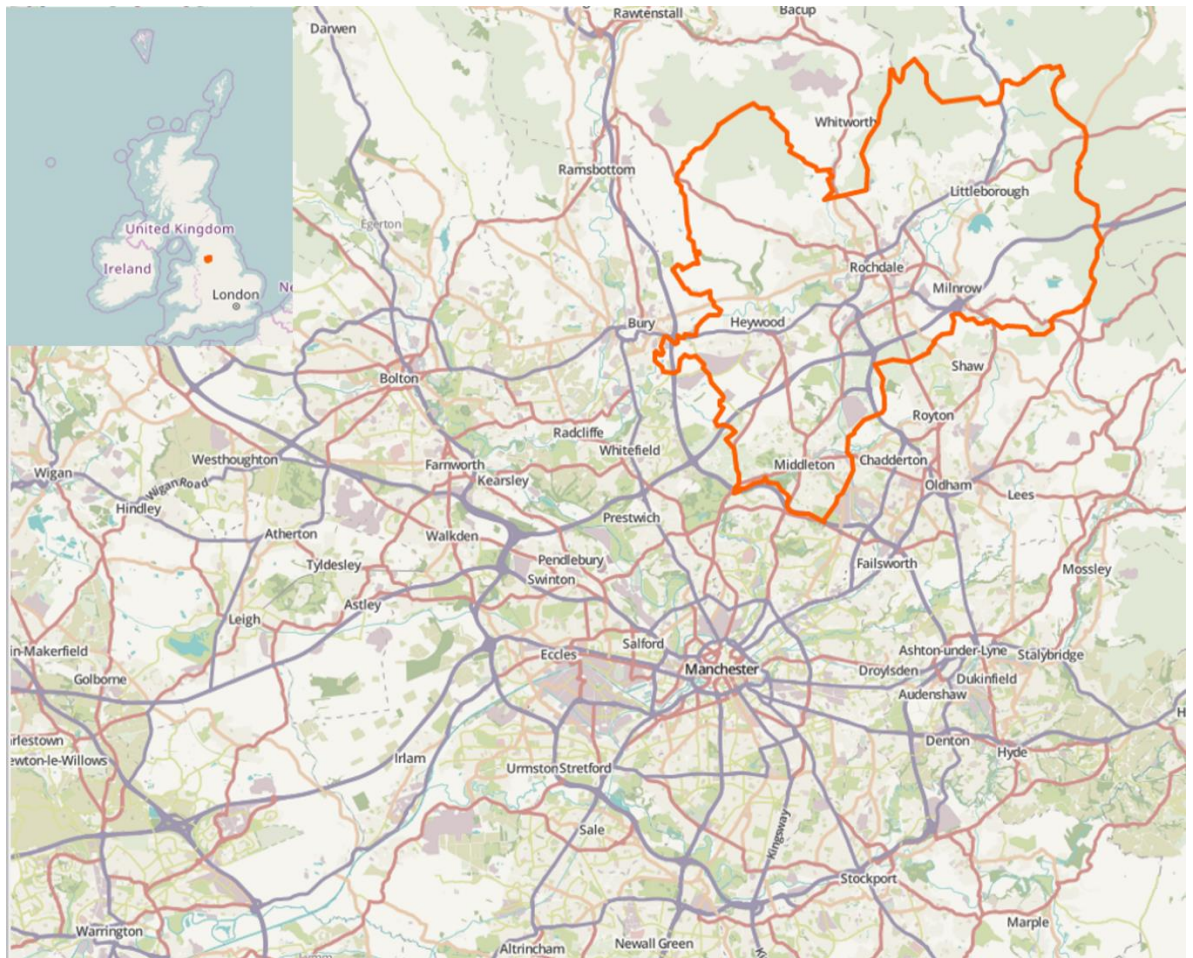


Figure 1: Locating Rochdale: the orange boundary represents the borough. (Open Street Map: Online).

Figure 1 details the shape of the Rochdale borough – a slightly squashed orange butterfly with the titular town near to the centre. The history of Rochdale – its location in space and time – is tied up in the regional development of north-west England. Prior to the twelfth century, south Lancashire was split into six divisions known as “hundreds”, which were medieval administrative units set within the wider geographical area. In Lancashire, these units included: West Derby, Leyland, Blackburn, Salford, Warrington and Newton. These units have been historically mapped and described: in the Domesday book; by cartographer John Speed in 1610; Rochdale historian Henry Fishwick in 1889; and by Eilert Eckwall in *The Place*

*Names of Lancashire*.<sup>4</sup> One in-depth study on the hundreds is Olaf Anderson's *The English Hundred-Names* (1934), a work described by archaeologists Alex Tudor Skinner and Sarah Semple as 'the only comprehensive work on hundred names in England'.<sup>5</sup> The south Lancashire hundreds were bordered by the rivers Ribble - to the north, and Mersey - to the south; and bracketed by the Irish sea - to the west, and the South Pennine hills - to the east. The Domesday Book of 1066 has a record of Rochdale - then called Recedham/Recedha Manor - and situates it, along with Manchester, in the Salford Hundred.<sup>6</sup> In *The Domesday Geography of Northern England*, historian Ian Terrett notes that Lancashire does not seem to have been established as a county until the 'end of the twelfth century' (1962, p. 392). This, as Terrett surmises, was possibly due to poverty within the Salford Hundred - then part of the wider Cheshire county - during the eleventh century. Terrett suggests that there would have been little information about geography and population available. Following the formation of The County Palatine of Lancashire in 1182, the parish of Rochdale was located towards the south of the county, placed north of Cheshire and bordering Yorkshire.

The development of the county, and of the changing of borders, is partly reflected in historian Henry Fishwick's *The History of the Parish of Rochdale In the County of Lancaster* (1889). Fishwick traces some of the toponym changes from

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<sup>4</sup> The hundreds and further historical information can be located in, for example: John Speed, *The Countie Palatine Of Lancaster Described and Divided into Hundreds 1610* (London: George Humble, 1610); Henry Fishwick, *History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster* (Rochdale: James Clegg, 1889); Eilert Eckwall, *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1922); Olaf Anderson S., *The English Hundred-Names* (Lunds, Sweden: Lunds Universitet, 1934); Ian B. Terrett, 'Lancashire', in *The Domesday Geography of Northern England*, ed. by Henry Darby Clifford and Ian S. Maxwell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), pp. 392-418. Further references to these texts will be given parenthetically.

<sup>5</sup> Alexis Tudor Skinner and Sarah Semple, 'Assembly Mounds in the Danelaw: Place-Name and Archaeological Evidence in the Historic Landscape', *Journal of the North Atlantic*, 8.sp8 (2015), p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> Anna Powell-Smith, 'Rochdale - Domesday Book', *Open Domesday* <<http://opendomesday.org/place/SD8913/rochdale/>> [accessed 7 June 2018].

1066's 'Recedham' to 'Racheham', 'Rachdale', 'Ratchdale' and 'Rachedale' in 1363. Eilert Eckwall, in *The Place-Names of Lancashire* (1922), similarly traces the formation of the sixty-four townships and villages that formed the original Rochdale Parish. The shifting name is also evident in literary texts of Rochdale. In 'The Goblin Builders', for example, a short story from John Roby's folklore collection, *Traditions of Lancashire Vol. 1* (1829) 'Recedham', 'Rache' and 'Rochdale' is used to refer to the town.<sup>7</sup> These fluctuations in name and in the changing of borders and boundaries demonstrates how a place's identity can never be completely fixed.

The economic development of Rochdale has similarly changed, for example, in the sixteenth century, the borough's key industries were: the cotton, baize, and woollen trades; mining of raw materials including coal; produce markets; and millinery.<sup>8</sup> Contested land rights, and the custodianship of Rochdale, saw the ownership of the land pass through different families. Part of the manor of Rochdale was held by the Byron family and later sold by the poet Lord George Gordon Byron in 1823.<sup>9</sup> After the Industrial Revolution, and by the mid-nineteenth century, the population had increased, and the town was administered by the Rochdale Parish (Fishwick, 1889). This Parish included Saddleworth, parts of Rossendale (including Whitworth, Facit, and Rochworth), Todmorden and Walsden (until 1896, the historic boundary between Yorkshire and Lancashire was the River Calder).<sup>10</sup> The remaining

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<sup>7</sup> See John Roby, *Popular Traditions of Lancashire. Volume 1* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1829). There will be further discussion in Chapter Two on some of Roby's works and the representation of places in Rochdale.

<sup>8</sup> See John Aikin, *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (London: John Stockdale, 1795). Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

<sup>9</sup> See John Beckett, 'Byron and Rochdale', *Byron Journal*, 33.1 (2005). This article reproduces a letter written by Byron while he stayed in Hopwood Hall, Middleton, in order to tie up his affairs by selling his manorial rights to the borough.

<sup>10</sup> The original Parish boundaries can be seen in John Aikin's *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (1795) and by *The Place Names of Lancashire* (1922). The *Local Government Act, 1894*, c. 73 set out the new parameters of the Rochdale borough. See also *The Victoria History of the County of Lancaster*, ed. by William Farrer and John Brownhill (London: Constable, 1906).

Rochdale Parish lasted until the United Kingdom Government's Local Government Act (1972) came into force in 1974. Here, the regional borders were again manipulated, and contemporary Rochdale now comprises of twenty wards and is part of the Greater Manchester region.<sup>11</sup>



Figure 2: Hand drawn map adapted from Rochdale Borough Profile New Ward Map (Stats & Maps, 2011).

Figure 2 details the twenty wards of Rochdale. Like counties and boroughs, a ward is an electoral and administrative unit within a borough. The wards represented in the map above detail the villages and towns within Rochdale. As the map depicts, the

<sup>11</sup> See the *Local Government Act, 1974*.

larger towns, such as Middleton – which was itself a separate Lancashire parish until 1974 – are subdivided. The map is a hand-drawn copy of a map that was from *Rochdale Borough Profile* a summary document produced by Stats & Maps for Rochdale Borough in 2011.<sup>12</sup> Within this document, twenty-six maps are provided to illustrate a report on a range of social issues such as: prosperity; health; culture; crime; children and young people; older people; environment and sustainability; and housing. The map in figure 2 is developed from the map that depicts the geographies of the borough's new wards (2011, p.10). The maps within this document are provided to highlight demographic and other statistical information. There are issues, however, surrounding the maps including the lack of other place names within the wards and the lack of information on the wildlife of the borough. Excluding an aerial photograph on page 9, the physical geographies of the borough are not evident. Yet, as well as offering a useful overview on the everyday lived experience of Rochdale, the key thing that drew me to these Rochdale maps is that, like the map in figure 2, that they are presented in isolation from other boroughs that border it – Bury, Rossendale, Calderdale, Oldham and Manchester. Rochdale, in the Stats & Maps document, and in figure 2 above, is separated from the Greater Manchester region and the country.

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<sup>12</sup> See Stats & Maps, *Rochdale Borough Profile 2011* (Rochdale: Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council, 2011). Further references to the document will be given parenthetically.



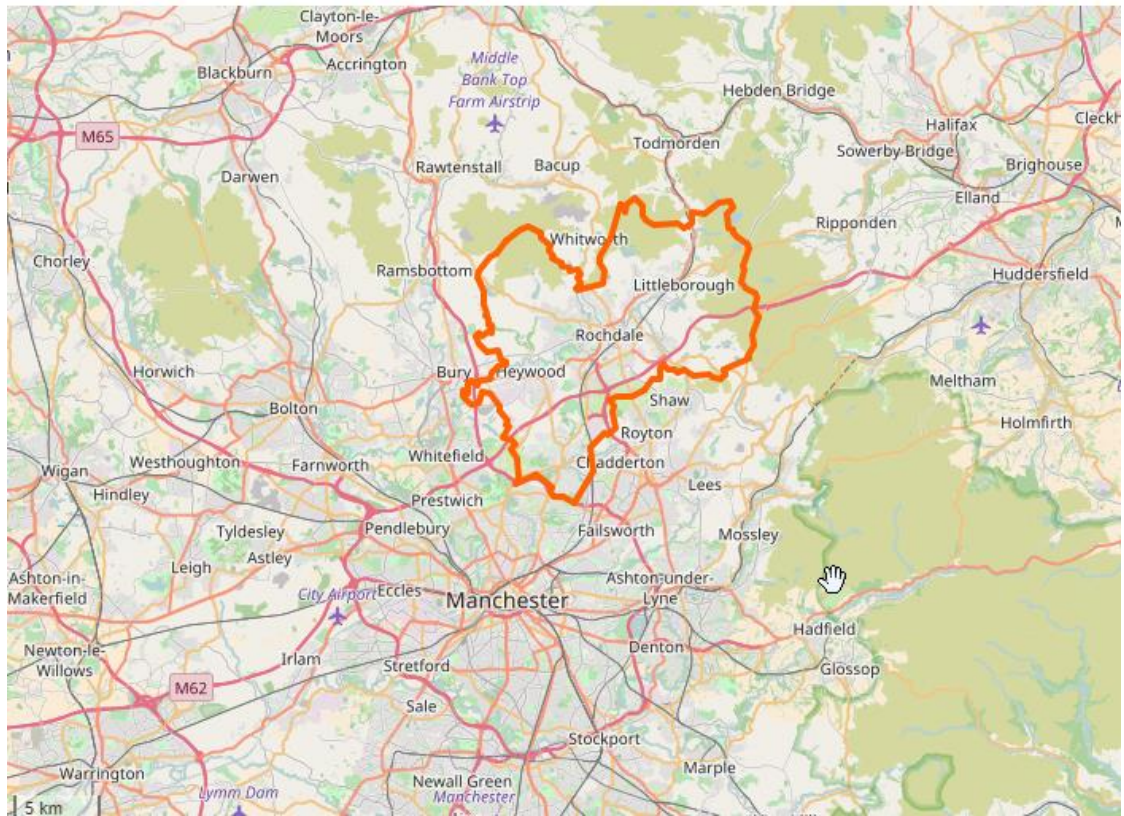


Figure 3: Rochdale’s location in relation to Manchester (Open Street Map, Online).

The Open Street Map in figure 3 above is presented as a contrast to figure 2. This map shows the Rochdale borough in relationship to other areas. This too is an incomplete picture: although it is not captured on this map, the area is at a higher elevation than the flatter boroughs of Stockport and Trafford due to its proximity to the south Pennine hills. The borough reaches its zenith at the north-east of Littleborough, where a track marked ‘The Roman road’ leads up to the dark Carboniferous millstone grit hills of Summit and Blackstone Edge.<sup>13</sup> In 2014, Rochdale’s geological, social, and rural/natural resources were identified by quasi-non-governmental organisation Natural England as important to the ‘national character’ of the Southern and

<sup>13</sup> The ‘Roman Road’ is an inaccurate description, for example, in A.P. Wadsworth's *Rochdale's Main Roads: The History of Turnpikes* (Rochdale: J.D. Howarth, 1919), Wadsworth states that it is a medieval pack horse track. See also B. Pearson and others, ‘The Rochdale Borough Survey’, in *The Greater Manchester Archaeological Journal Volume I*, ed. by Adrian Tindall (Manchester: Greater Manchester Archaeological Unit, University of Manchester, 1985), pp. 102–32.

Manchester Pennine Ranges.<sup>14</sup> This predominantly elevated land forms a boundary that divides the Lancashire and Greater Manchester regions from Yorkshire, running from northern Littleborough to New Mills located to the southeast of the Stockport borough.

North-west England is one of the wettest areas of the United Kingdom.<sup>15</sup> Water is an important feature in the geography of Rochdale – it is perhaps more ‘watery’ than expected. This rather unexpected discovery offers another picture of a ‘blue’ borough that exists in tandem with human activities. The borough’s hydrology affects which areas are more populated, for example some of the most densely populated areas are in the nucleated settlements near the town centre and river Roch and its tributaries, and in Middleton near the river Irk. The Rochdale canal was once a transport route for trade and the visible remains of Rochdale’s industrial histories can be seen from various parts of the towpath. Its course was constructed between Sowerby Bridge in Calderdale and Castlefield Wharf in Manchester. Sections of the canal have now been deemed by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to be of European importance for floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*) and is designated as a Special Area of Conservation.<sup>16</sup> The canal flows through the borough, running to the south of the centre of Rochdale while the river Roch runs through the built environment of the town centre. The many water courses throughout the borough - such as Trub Brook and the rivers Irk, Beal, Sudden, and Roch – carry the imprint of human intervention, having been culverted or constructed to service industries such as mills, bleachworks, reservoirs, fishing lodges, and feeding the canal.

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<sup>14</sup> See: Natural England, *National Character Area Profile: 36. Southern Pennines*, 2014 <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/511867>> [accessed 20 May 2015]; Natural England, *National Character Area Profile: 54. Manchester Pennine Fringe*, 2014 <<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4631438>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>15</sup> Met Office Press Office, ‘What Is the Wettest City in the UK?’, *Official Blog of the Met Office News Team*, 2014 <<https://blog.metoffice.gov.uk/2014/10/20/what-is-the-wettest-city-in-the-uk/>> [accessed 18 November 2018].

<sup>16</sup> This statement features in both Natural England *National Character Area* profiles for the Southern Pennines and Manchester Pennine Fringe.



The wildlife of the water courses and within the borough offer another perspective; a ‘green’ vision of Rochdale, one that is inclusive of flora and fauna. There are areas within the borough designated ancient woodlands including the Pennine Edge Forest, Lords Wood, Oaken Bank and Glade Woods. In *A Tale of Trees: The Battle to Save Britain’s Ancient Woodlands*, conservationist Derek Niemann cautions against this description, suggesting that ‘ancient woods are identified as those which appear on the oldest reliable maps (1600 in England and Wales, 1750 in Scotland [...])’<sup>17</sup>. Instead, Niemann offers practical suggestions on how ancient woodlands could be identified.<sup>18</sup> This opening section has offered an overview of the histories, geographies, demographics, hydrographies and wildlife of Rochdale. As a result, different perspectives of Rochdale can be seen as coming into being. Even this introductory overview, therefore, begins to offer a counterpoint to the way Rochdale is perceived in the contemporary British imagination: a Rochdale that has been presented and packaged by the mass media.

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<sup>17</sup> See: Derek Niemann, *A Tale of Trees: The Battle to Save Britain’s Ancient Woodlands* (London: Short Books, 2016) p.15. The reliability of maps comes into question in Chapter 3.

<sup>18</sup> See also: Rachel C. Thomas and Patty M. Phillips, *Ancient Woodland Inventory (Provisional) England. No. 72 - English Nature Research Reports* (Peterborough: English Nature, 1994) and Oliver Rackham, *Ancient Woodland: Its History, Vegetation and Uses in England* (Dalbeattie: Castlepoint, 2003).



Figure 4: Screenshots of news headlines, clockwise: *Manchester Evening News*, *The Sun*, *The Times* and a screenshot of the BBC docu-drama *Three Girls*.

The popular perception of Rochdale is one associated with many post-industrial places of comparable size: the decline in industry, coupled with the resultant socio-economic deprivation, means that the dominant narrative is one of decay and peripheralisation. Rochdale, though, has also come to be associated with specific histories and events. The borough was thrown into the national spotlight, for example by the alleged abuse perpetrated by Cyril Smith, Liberal MP for Rochdale from 1972 - 1992, although exposed in the late 1970s by activist newsletter Rochdale Alternative Press was not acted upon until after Smith's death in 2010.<sup>19</sup> Further, the headlines depicted in Figure 4 colour how Rochdale is imagined. The inclusion of a still in Figure 4 is from *Three Girls*, a drama-documentary of the Rochdale grooming scandal.

<sup>19</sup> See: Simon Danczuk and Matthew Baker, *Smile for the Camera: The Double Life of Cyril Smith* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2012).

This short serial was cited as the catalyst for the murder of a Muslim worshipper by far-right activist Darren Osborne in 2017.<sup>20</sup> This case, and the contemporary portrayal of Rochdale, lends itself to one grim understanding of Rochdale and a short-hand for how the place is understood.

News headlines are not the only factor in crafting, or curating, how we perceive a place, and these negative media-crafted tropes are not the only contemporary place-narratives. In March 2005, a document entitled *Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan* was produced by international landscape architecture firm EDAW under commission from the Rochdale Local Strategic Partnership, a consortium which includes the council, voluntary and community groups, and private bodies (both for- and not-for profit companies).<sup>21</sup> This document sets out a ‘fifteen-year vision’ for how the borough

[...] will offer an attractive location in a successful city region, with a distinctive lifestyle and identity [...] To seize the opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Borough must restructure and use patterns, make improvements to the built and natural environment and improve its public transport. [It is a] spatial strategy that will direct these essential changes [...] a regeneration framework from which new economic opportunities to develop.<sup>22</sup>

Within this document, there is a (late) capitalist focus on Rochdale-as-resource; place is perceived and projected as a space to be used and improved to facilitate post-industrial economic productivity. This example demonstrates the language used in

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<sup>20</sup> Kevin Rawlinson, ‘Darren Osborne Jailed for Life for Finsbury Park Terrorist Attack’, *The Guardian*, 2018 <<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/feb/02/finsbury-park-attack-darren-osborne-jailed>> [accessed 5 February 2018].

<sup>21</sup> As of November 2017, the current membership of the Rochdale Local Strategic Partnership includes Link4Life, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, Rochdale Development Agency, and services company Agilisys. See: <http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/more-about-the-council/Pages/organisations-we-work-with.aspx> for current membership.

<sup>22</sup> EDAW, *Rochdale Borough Renaissance Masterplan* (Rochdale: Special Projects Team / Rochdale Local Strategic Partnership, March 2005), pp.3-5.

regeneration which focuses on neoliberal ideas of seizing economic ‘opportunities’. Neoliberal ideas, here, are defined by the notion that private interests and deregulation are privileged over, for example, previously publicly owned goods, services, and land.<sup>23</sup> EDAW, the consultation body who prepared this plan for Rochdale council, were acquired by AECOM an American multinational services corporation in December 2005. The current regeneration companies involved in the major Rochdale town centre regeneration project in partnership with the council are: Manchester regeneration company Genr8; construction firm Wilmott Dixon whose headquarters are based in Letchworth with a satellite office in Oldham; and Japanese developer Kajima.<sup>24</sup> Rochdale is deemed as a site worthy of regeneration and has found itself caught within the complex, placeless economic flows and networks of late capitalism.

The language of regeneration seeks to create a commercial narrative that will effectively rebrand Rochdale through changing the built environment. In 2018, areas around the centre of Rochdale will be designated as a Cooperative Connection Heritage Action Zones, an initiative set up to revive conservation areas around Drake Street and Toad Lane.<sup>25</sup> Toad Lane is the site where the Rochdale Pioneers set up the principles that now underpin the global cooperative movement. In tandem, the language of regeneration simultaneously – and contradictorily – celebrates culturally entrenched heritage narratives (such as the cooperative movement and the life and career of 1930s musical theatre actress Gracie Fields) while pressing forward with a project that is focussed on retail and leisure.

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<sup>23</sup> A definition of neoliberalism is in the glossary that can be found in Appendix 1.

<sup>24</sup> Anon., ‘Contractor Appointed for Rochdale’s New Retail and Leisure Development’, 2018 <<http://www.rochdaletowncentre.co.uk/news/contractor-appointed-for-rochdales-new-retail-and-leisure-development/>> [accessed 5 February 2018].

<sup>25</sup> See: Anca Voinea, ‘Rochdale Council to Use Co-operative Heritage to Regenerate the Town’, *Co-operative News*, 2018 <<https://www.thenews.coop/128758/sector/rochdale-council-use-co-operative-heritage-regenerate-town/>> [accessed 28 May 2018].

These regeneration and conservation approaches are types of place-making, where the areas are changed for unnamed communities. Initially, place-making projects appear to be facilitated from grassroots groups, however there are questions around who is ‘making’ what for whom. The changing centre of Rochdale is not a new phenomenon; the regeneration projects of today will be the historical sites of the future.

### ***Navigating Rochdale: A Chapter-by-Chapter Overview***

The previous section offered one way of navigating the complicated, and complex, stories of Rochdale. It is important to note that these selected highlights are coloured by my own approach. As well as offering original scholarship on an understudied area of the United Kingdom, I am also approaching Rochdale as a writer, creative writing workshop facilitator, and as an environmental campaigner. As well as the histories, geographies, literary texts, maps and creative responses, an underlying concern emerges from the hydrogeographies and wildlife of Rochdale. These are woven into the text of the thesis and within the creative responses to Rochdale.

The changing narratives of Rochdale form a large part of the thesis. This thesis is divided into three themed ‘Parts’: Reading Place, Mapping Place, and Writing Place. The conceptual emphasis of each Part is signalled by an introductory epigraph that locates the reader and introduces some of the thematic material contained within. Part One is introduced by an ‘argument’ – a summary that explains what will happen in that section and orients the reader. Part Two introduces critical cartographies and the *dramatis personae* of a play that acts as a creative intervention. The third and final Part is prefaced by a short manifesto of creative response to place that considers how and why creative writing interrupts the critical narrative of a traditional PhD thesis

through the metaphor of weeds growing through walls, a gesture towards the organic nature of places. This thesis is informed by an understanding of, and sensitivity to, the messy, difficult-to-define nature of place – which can somehow seem chaotic. The tripartite structure serves as an attempt to impose some sort of order on this multi-layered ‘chaos’. In the thesis ‘reading’, ‘mapping’ and ‘writing’ are spatial practices that serve, along with a suite of theoretical ideas, as navigational tools as this project attempts to develop *an* understanding of a particular place.

To commence this exploration, the overarching focus in Part One: Reading Place is on theories of space and place and how these can be used to offer spatial readings of text. The first chapter explores the thesis’s key conceptual term: place. The first section of the chapter introduces a series of key theorists who have influenced the development of my own thinking on place: theorists who have emerged from a range of different – and sometimes competing – conceptual and philosophical traditions. The second part of the chapter then builds upon this theoretical discussion to explore the notion, and practice, of place-making. Place-making, as defined, is a way of looking at a location’s assets to design, and create, public spaces that are focussed on a community’s health, happiness and welfare. There is a correlation between place-making and regeneration; place-making is a process that focusses on how a place is used and regeneration is implemented by those who ultimately manage the place. Place-making was initially conceived in north America in the 1960s and has since spread across the world. Since the late 1990s to 2010s, theories of place-making practice have had a demonstrable impact on the ways that town planners, architects, and local authorities perceive and manage locations in the United Kingdom.

Place-making – in contrast to top-down regeneration projects and processes – is purportedly rooted in a commitment to community engagement and the

development of grassroots initiatives. In this chapter I argue that the concept of place-making often overlaps and intersects with traditional regeneration projects and practices. The term, ‘place-making’ – with its associations of collaboration and interaction - has often been used to rebrand what are essentially top-down regeneration projects predicated on the late capitalist preoccupation with hyper-consumerism. This argument culminates in a close reading of a non-literary text: the original Northern Powerhouse speech which George Osborne – the then Chancellor of the Exchequer – delivered at the Museum of Science of Industry in central Manchester on 23 June 2014. In that speech, which was subsequently uploaded to the UK government’s official website, Osborne grandiloquently proposed a mechanism to combine the various industries of a ‘belt of cities’ from Liverpool in the west to Hull on the east coast. The speech was predicated on the projection of this unified ‘North’ as post-industrial ‘Powerhouse’: a vision which, according to Osborne, would be fuelled by external investment and the support of the Treasury. Ostensibly, Rochdale is as much part of the Northern Powerhouse map as central Manchester. Chapter One argues that there is a significant gap between this top-down rhetoric and the on-the-ground realities in Rochdale: a town that is featured on the Office for National Statistics indices of multiple deprivation; and a town that the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has deemed to be most deprived in the so-called Northern Powerhouse region.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the chapter debunks Osborne’s narrativised mythologisation of the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ as a homogenous, uniform space.

The timeliness of exploring the language of the Northern Powerhouse shows that, like the regeneration narratives, the project is in flux and demonstrates how

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<sup>26</sup> See Office For National Statistics, ‘Towns and Cities Analysis, England and Wales, March 2016.’ <<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/articles/townsandcitiesanalysisenglandandwalesmarch2016/2016-03-18>> [accessed 3 March 2017]; A. Pike *et al*, *Uneven Growth: Tackling City Decline* (York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2016).

quickly these stories shift and change. Further, there is a renewed interest in place-based and urban studies – in higher educational institutions and beyond the academy. This thesis will add another facet to this through the exploration of a place that has either been overlooked or has been reduced to labels such as ‘sex grooming town’.<sup>27</sup> During the time of writing, there has been a snap General Election and the future of the Northern Powerhouse project is unclear. Articulating theoretical standpoints and my own take on place-making, this chapter offers a foundation for the rest of the thesis.

Chapter Two continues the reading of place by turning to the literary geographies of Rochdale. It opens with a discussion of literary geography and suggests how tools from this interdisciplinary scholarly field can be used to facilitate readings of place-specific literary texts. The chapter includes a literary survey of texts about the borough, highlighting dominant themes and tropes that make different senses of place in Rochdale. In offering this survey, this thesis represents the first scholarly attempt to explore the literary geographies of this culturally marginalised place. As a result, the critical discussion is supplemented by a literary historical timeline, as well as synopses of key texts, in order to provide the bibliographic foundations for further literary critical research (see Appendix 3). In an attempt to construct a – necessarily partial – corpus of Rochdale writing, I have focused on texts associated with locations within the 1974 administrative boundaries of the borough. These parameters are problematic: this thesis is concerned with how bureaucratic sculpting and political administration of place affects how it is perceived and controlled, yet this editorial decision accepts one such bureaucratic boundary-making. The seeming arbitrariness was required as it

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<sup>27</sup> See John Simpson, ‘Imam Beaten to Death in Sex Grooming Town’, *The Times* (London, England, 20 February 2016), p.9.



would be beyond the scope of this survey to consider literary texts of locations that were part of the Rochdale Parish prior to 1974. While this survey is not exhaustive of all the literature of and about Rochdale, key themes and tropes can be pulled out which illuminate different geographies and lived experiences. The identification of these textual tropes interrogates everyday lived experiences: dialect writing that creates a specific (and introspective) Rochdalian cultural identity; the imaginative representation of the dialectics of insideness and outsideness; and the articulation of uncanny geographies. Furthermore, the chapter points to further research as it is clear that a genre of wider ‘urban grit’ literature flows from the late nineteenth century to post-industrial, contemporary Rochdale that is worthy of research and has the potential to fit within a wider Northern English literary canon.

In Part Two: Mapping Place, the thesis moves from interrogating topographies described within literary texts to mapping and the cartographic representations of place. Part Two is underpinned by the post-positivistic belief that maps can be read as texts that narrativise and even create place: ideas which can be applied to the maps of the borough above (figures 1-3), on which a thick orange border is used to circumscribe space and to define place. Chapter Three is concerned with critical cartographies of place, and focusses on critical mapping theories and cartographic practice. This is inspired by the cultural turn in the social sciences, where cultural criticism and practice were employed in scholarship, particularly in human geography, and hinges on the important work of J. Brian Harley. Harley’s ground-breaking work on critical cartography opens up a conceptual space for critiquing the role played by maps and mappings in contemporary place-making practices. That is to say, I am interested in drawing upon Harley’s thinking to explore how maps have been used to organise and narrativise Rochdale. Three maps are offered as “official” narratives of

Rochdale provided by Rochdale Town Centre Management, Rochdale Borough Council/Link4Life, and the Environment Agency, and are deconstructed in this chapter. This approach takes inspiration from and is theorised by Harley's critical practices and brings in the conceptual framework of place and place-making from Chapter One, and spatial reading from Chapter Two. Crucially, the critical-conceptual discussion of Chapter Three is interrupted by a creative intervention: a new play inspired by John Speed's *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611-1612). This is a creative intervention that lies at the heart of this thesis. This dual use of 'play' - theatrical and ludic - suggests that maps are performative. The mythology of maps similarly comes from the revealing and concealing of toponyms, routes, buildings, water courses, and wild spaces.

Chapter Four – the second chapter in Part Two – builds on this theoretical discussion to explore the imaginative and critical affordances of the making of maps. The chapter begins with a brief discussion on how maps are used in art and literature; and it then goes on to present, and discuss, my own attempt to construct three alternative ways of mapping Rochdale. The first act of counter-cartography is an attempt to map the water courses of Rochdale. One of the surprising revelations of this research has been the discovery of Rochdale as a fluid, watery place. The first counter-cartography wrestles with the apparent impossibility of mapping the unmappable by cartographically representing water. The second counter-cartography is concerned with acoustic geographies or the polyphony of place and offers further suggestions for multi-sensorial maps of place. The third and final map suggests another form of counter-cartography: a digital gaming map. Central to this discussion is an acknowledgment of the ultimate failure of this cartographic project; but, drawing upon a processual understanding of maps and mapping practices, I will indicate how this

self-conscious experiment demonstrates the difficulty of pinning place down through the conventions of cartography. It does indicate that there are different ways of perceiving Rochdale and challenge contemporary portrayals of the borough.

The creation of different forms of cartography requires the need to unpick the creative process. The final part, Part Three: Writing Place, offers an exegesis for writing place and signposts how place can be composed – both literary and cartographical. Rather than being split into two chapters, the creative gradually takes over. This is a significant methodological shift; rather than producing a separate creative piece on the borough, as may be expected of a critical-creative thesis, the creative pieces gradually take over the critical narrative. In this Part is the notion of the triangulation of the text (literary and cartographic maps), the writer's process and practice, and the creative work/s. It uses methods from the scholarly and practical fields of creative geographies, practice-as/practice-based research, and geohumanities practices and highlights creative place writing and artworks of place that have influenced my own creative practice when responding to Rochdale. Here, the creative-critical approach is discussed as a form of both research in practice and research as practice. As an educator and practitioner, I have produced examples of place writing activities to encourage new writing and stimulate creative debate; these can be seen in Appendix 4. I have also included some of the pieces that were not included in this thesis. This takes the form of creative work (a weaving) and notes written in a notebook I kept during the project. While these pieces have not been part of the of the main thesis text, they were important in the development of both my creative and critical thinking. These can be found in Appendix 7.

The final creative piece demonstrates literary geography and hybrid writing in action. It presents different forms of creative place writing that meld folk tales, poetry,

field notes, maps and fiction. These experimental approaches explore the different textures and textualities of Rochdale. The ‘creative takeover’ builds throughout the thesis in the form of the creative interventions, which expand as the argument progresses, offering an undertow of creativity which reinforces but also critiques the overtly theoretical and critical readings offered. There is a precedent for this experimental approach; for some time, geographers – such as Tim Cresswell, David Matless and Harriet Hawkins – have been using creative responses to explore place and space. These are deep mapping approaches that use creative montage, poetry, and prose in, and within, scholarly research. Other geographers are taking a creative turn in their work, including activities such as curating art exhibitions and yarn bombing.<sup>28</sup>

There is a continued interest in practice-based research within normally deeply theoretical work. I am not a geographer, however, in some ways I am approaching Rochdale in the role of writer-as-geographer. This is to reclaim some of the ground taken by geographers working as creative practitioners, while acknowledging the groundwork that this approach provides other researchers, researcher-practitioners, and practitioners. While writing, observing, and researching I have had to learn how to think like a geographer. Rather than separate the creative work from the critical literary and cartographic analysis, the creative responses cut through the expected narratives of the traditional critical thesis and form desire lines: like the shortcuts we take when trying to get home, walking over the grass rather than following the pavement. This innovative approach assists understanding of some of the ways in how

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<sup>28</sup> See, for example, Dydia DeLyser and Harriet Hawkins, ‘Introduction: Writing Creatively – Process, Practice, and Product’, *cultural geographies*, 21.1 (2014), pp. 131–134; Harriet Hawkins, *Creativity* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017); Sarah de Leeuw and Harriet Hawkins, ‘Critical Geographies and Geography’s Creative Re/Turn: Poetics and Practices for New Disciplinary Spaces’, *Gender, Place & Culture*, 24.3 (2017), pp. 303–324. Further references to these works will be given parenthetically. One forthcoming text also on this area is Laura Price and Harriet Hawkins (Eds) *Geographies of Making, Craft and Creativity* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2018).

we make place in our imaginations. Rochdale, like many other places, has fragmented stories, convoluted plot lines, messy and mundane narratives. By the end of the thesis the creative has taken almost over, yet the critical remains; the critical reflection from the conclusion is woven back into the fabric.

### ***Towards a Deep Map of Rochdale: An Interdisciplinary Methodology***

Before moving onto Chapter One, I will describe my methodology. This is influenced by the spatial turn in the humanities which is what I define as the use of tools and theories from cultural and human geographies to unpick the literary and cartographic texts of Rochdale. The geographical focus on space and place has allowed the development of a theoretical framework to investigate how the landscapes, placescapes, and identities of Rochdale are textually and spatially represented. It is grounded in scholarly research and is an attempt to advocate for Rochdale which has been unfairly maligned in the contemporary imagination; but it also acts as a critique to the language of place-making and regeneration agencies that seek to remake Rochdale with a handful of carefully crafted narratives with the potential homogeneity of creating another ‘clone town’.<sup>29</sup> Finally, this thesis is a riposte to the ongoing Northern Powerhouse project: a top-down governmental initiative which is predicated on the vacuity of place-generic language as well as the rebranding of municipal projects.

I am approaching Rochdale as a researcher and creative writer. This allows for different ways of approaching place and offers an original contribution to knowledge

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<sup>29</sup> Andrew Simms, Petra Kjell, and Ruth Potts, *Clone Town Britain: The Survey Results on the Bland State of the Nation* (London: new economics foundation, 2005), pp.1–44. Further references to this will be given parenthetically. There is a broader discussion in Chapter Three on this and the language of regeneration.

through: the critical investigation of extant cultural representations of the borough (the poetics of Rochdale); the artistic exploration of the borough (creative practice in Rochdale); and the creation of tools for others to use in their own exploration of the borough (pedagogy and collaboration within Rochdale). Deep mapping is a relatively recent area of scholarship: a sub-strand within the broader push for interdisciplinary geohumanities study. The emergence of deep mapping within academic discourse and practice was signalled, for example, by a special issue of the journal, *Humanities*, dedicated to this area of research. A deep map, as defined by Les Roberts, is ‘a loose configuration of spatio-cultural methods and practices’.<sup>30</sup> Saliently, given the creative-critical preoccupations of this thesis – deep mapping has earlier roots in experimental place writing.<sup>31</sup> The loose configuration presented in this thesis is a deep map of sorts – layers of literary texts and maps, photographs that capture snapshots of time and place, a part-archaeological excavation of Rochdale and the practice of creating new imaginative responses to Rochdale. A deep map, although quite slippery to define, goes deeper than a representational, or ‘thin’ map, in that it is concerned in the verticality of places and layers offered from other forms of topographical representation/s. As geographer John Pickles suggests, the world is ‘too full to represent everything’.<sup>32</sup> As such, this thesis takes a multi-modal and multimedia approach including: historical geographies research; socio-cultural concerns; literary texts of place; folklore; maps and mapping; photography; sound recording; and new responses to place, including: place writing, poetry, script writing, flash fiction, drawing, and zine making to investigate the (socio-)cultural geographies of Rochdale.

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<sup>30</sup> Les Roberts, ‘Deep Mapping and Spatial Anthropology’, *Humanities*, 5.1 (2016), 1–7.

<sup>31</sup> See: *Deep Mapping*, ed. by Les Roberts (Basel, Switzerland: MDPI AG, 2016).

<sup>32</sup> John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World* (London: Routledge, 2004) p.34, further discussions from Pickles on mapping can be found in Chapter Three, references to this book will be given parenthetically.

This is a way of excavating place that takes starting inspirations from William Least Heat-Moon's *PrairyErth: A Deep Map* (1991), Alice Oswald's *Dart* (2002) and Tim Robinson's writing and mapping work including the *Connemara* series: *Listening to the Wind* (2006); *The Last Pool of Darkness* (2008) and *A Little Gaelic Kingdom*

These texts, and other deep mapping approaches, demonstrate the plurality of place, or perhaps what Jos Smith calls 'multiform place'.<sup>33</sup> They also portray some of the experiences of being-in-place and what Les Roberts calls the 'flux and messiness of everyday life'.<sup>34</sup>

The hybrid approach of this thesis, a melding of critical-creative writing, has been established in other disciplines, including human and cultural geography (for example: Georges Perec, Allan Pred, Tim Cresswell, Clare Madge) and literary studies (for example: John Schad's *Someone Called Derrida* (2007)). The novelty in this approach is that it pushes at the boundaries of the traditional literary studies thesis and, instead of offering an answer to what Rochdale *is*, argues this is an attempt to 'map the unmappable'.<sup>35</sup> This thesis is not a policy document; rather, this methodology contributes to literary studies in providing original research on literary texts of Rochdale and, more broadly, contributes to ongoing research on the literary texts of northern England. Secondly, this contributes to geohumanities scholarship through the critical approach to place-making research and practice, thereby demonstrating one way of deep mapping an area.

I have found throughout my research that mapping, making meaning, and making sense is a messy process. I argue that that is acceptable; my research starts from the

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<sup>33</sup> Jos Smith, *The New Nature Writing: Rethinking the Literature of Place* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2017).

<sup>34</sup> Les Roberts, 'Deep Mapping and Spatial Anthropology', *Humanities*, 5.1 (2016), p4. Further references to this journal article will be given parenthetically.

<sup>35</sup> Phrase borrowed from architect scholars Stan Allen and Diana Agrest, *Practice: Architecture, Technique and Representation* (Amsterdam: G&B Arts International, 2000).

premise that, as Alan Garner asserts, everywhere has stories – negative, positive, banal, weird, and magical – voices that are not always heard and stories that do not always mesh with the media or official depictions of a place. Other stories breeze in as if from the tip of the wind turbine blades on Scout Moor, or bubble up like the scum on the Irk as it burps through Alkrington woods. From the landscape of Summit, to the Rochdale canal, I have included as much of the borough as possible in pursuit of creating new stories of place. I do not intend for these new works to be the final words on Rochdale. In a modest way, I hope to encourage new writing of and in the borough. I posit that literature – and maps – are alive and mutable, they progress as the place itself will continue to progress. The creative writing of place today then become literary texts ripe for criticism in the future. This threefold approach of reading, mapping and writing combine to create one aspect of a deep map of Rochdale, suggesting new, experimental, and creative ways for the practice of doing literary geographies.



## Part One: Reading Place

Where the Reader discovers more about theoretical approaches to non-representational place and which ones that the Researcher will employ in her analysis of literary texts of Rochdale ~ A presentation of literary texts of Rochdale follows with a discussion on the themes and tropes of the borough ~ One poem is present within the text but should not intrude upon the Readers' experience of the critical notions and thinking within the text, indeed it is there to demonstrate local dialect writing inspired by Edwin Waugh ~ Suggestions are made following this as to how Rochdale has been aesthetically represented over time and space ~ Part One concludes with an image of a zine created that explores some of the post-industrial ruins of Rochdale.

## Chapter One: Making Sense of Place/s

How does one get to *know* Rochdale? How can one understand and/or make sense of place? In his book-length poem and poem-film, *Xanadu* (1992), Simon Armitage records his nascent knowledge of Rochdale:

The six things I knew about Rochdale, I'll list them:

a football team in the fourth division,

a famous bridge of considerable width,

home of the Co-op and Cyril Smith,

the pitch of Gracie Fields singing 'Sally,

Sally, pride of our alley',

and a housing estate called Ashfield Valley <sup>36</sup>

There were four things I knew about Rochdale before starting this thesis: the cooperative movement; various political scandals; the shocking sexual abuse cases; and an unexpected treasury of folktales and poetry discovered while researching *Lancashire Folk Tales* (2014), a book I co-authored with Prestonian storyteller David England. What I did not have was a sense of what Rochdale *is* as a place; only fragments of the borough sat in my imagination. In this opening chapter, I explore the conception of place and attempt to answer the question: how is place made? The theoretical foundations in the first part of the chapter are there to build a conceptual framework which can then be used in later chapters to offer spatial readings of previously understudied literary and cartographic texts of Rochdale.

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<sup>36</sup> Simon Armitage, *Xanadu* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1992) lines 48 – 51. There is a longer discussion on this poem in Chapter Two, and further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

The second part of Chapter One revolves around a discussion on the rise of place-making: a term used in urban planning to reimagine places as congenial social spaces. In other words, although it may consider the ecology of a particular location, place-making is predicated on an anthropocentric conceptualisation of place; it is concerned with the ways place is practised by human agents. As place-making is a relatively recent concept in urban planning, a brief outline of the genesis of place-making is made following its development in North America. While similar terms are used for this practice – place making, placemaking, and place-making – for clarity, throughout the thesis I have chosen to use the construct ‘place-making’. There is a clear link to phenomenological philosophy, the *genius loci* of place, in the practice of place-making. Nominally, this is rooted in ideas of community engagement and/or grassroots initiatives; however, it is also a way to rebrand top-down regeneration projects. Here, place-making has been used as a way of storying and encouraging consumerism rather than creating a meaningful sense of place. Further, it relies on the spatial imaginary; the making of place, through texts and maps, of a site which has yet to come into being. To explore these ideas, I turn to the Northern Powerhouse and the original proposal for the project given by the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne. I posit that the conception of the Northern Powerhouse is nebulous, and slippery. Within this section on place-making I suggest that there are questions around how Rochdale can be located within the transient boundaries of the Northern Powerhouse ‘region’. Finally, in this chapter, I turn to one of the (many) urban plans for regenerating the borough suggesting that although this is place-making on the microscale the language used contains specific tropes that seem pertinent to place-making more generally.

## *Theorising Place*

This first section of the chapter explores different ways of conceiving and understanding place, this thesis's cardinal term. In broad terms, the theoretical framings of place can be divided into two main categories: the phenomenological and the socio-cultural. Phenomenological approaches to place have an emphasis on the body being-in-place. Contemporary developments in phenomenology pertinent to this section of the thesis are non-representational theory and hybrid geographies; these have more of a focus on practised place, as the physical geography becomes a text read through action. As Hayden Lorimer, in a 2005 article for *Progress in Human Geography*, puts it, non-representational theory 'has become as an umbrella term for diverse work that seeks better to cope with our self-evidently more-than-human, more-than-textual, multisensual worlds'.<sup>37</sup> To be non-representative means to eschew symbols and instead concentrate on an embodied experience. This meshes with the second theoretical category: place as a social space. Here, place/s are constructed, and are affected, by culture, politics, and inside and outside forces.

Ultimately, I argue that place is a braiding of the phenomenological and the social, positing that it is both simultaneously. The experience is phenomenological; the context is social/political/cultural. While the concept of place *is* complex, in order to provide a framework for thinking about Rochdale as a place, I want to explore the term in relation to a series of – increasingly expansive – spatial scales. I will also draw attention to the dialectics of each scale of place: the body; the house; the local; the regional; and the global.

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<sup>37</sup> Hayden Lorimer, 'Cultural Geography: The Busyness of Being "More-than-Representational"', *Progress in Geography*, 29.1 (2005), p.83. See also: *Taking-Place: Non-Representational Theories and Geography*, ed. by Ben Anderson and Paul Harrison (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010).

You, as the reader, and I, are beings-in-place, imbued in a rich collection of sensorial experiences and socio-cultural understandings; our lives are part of the histories of the location/s in which we move through or dwell. The phenomenological tradition, and later development of non-representational theory, discusses these embodied practices and everyday living. Before I demonstrate the practice of place, firstly a discussion of what place *is*, is required. The word 'place' is complex: it is a physical locality on the earth's surface, a rooted position. It is also: a public area, a prominent position (first place, pride of place), a home (our place), or moderate chaos (being all over the place).<sup>38</sup> Although the meaning shifts, 'place' has everything to do with lived experience. There is a need to build a vocabulary for different definitions, or aspects, of place and discuss the distinction between space and place. To trace some of the roots of space and place philosophies, a turn to early twentieth-century phenomenology assists in thinking about everyday living.

Contemporary phenomenology can be traced back to the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who, at the turn-of the twentieth century, developed his ideas following Hegel and Kant. In his influential philosophical work, *Logical Investigations*, published in 1901, Husserl superimposed a formula to analyse perceptual experience through describing the experience of everyday living from a first-person perspective. This approach is a way of stripping back material (tangible) and immaterial (intangible) objects to their essence, in summary, to reduce objects 'back to the things themselves'.<sup>39</sup> This approach was influential on Martin Heidegger, who developed his phenomenological thinking through Husserl, towards a more existentialist

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<sup>38</sup> See Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction. Second Edition* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015); and the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) definitions of 'place', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2015) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/144864> > [accessed 30 March 2015]. Further references to *Place: An Introduction* will be given parenthetically.

<sup>39</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations. Second Edition*, ed. by Dermot Moran (London: Routledge, 1900/2001), p. 168.

phenomenology.<sup>40</sup> Heidegger's most important work, *Being and Time*, first published in 1927 and originally dedicated to Husserl, had a huge influence on continental philosophy as it was concerned with ontology: the nature of being, and of making meaning. In this work, Heidegger defined *Dasein* (being there) and *in-der-Welt-sein* (being in the world) as states of Being. *Dasein*'s literal translation is 'to be there' and is centred on individual experience and self-interpretation. The self in the world *in-der-Welt-sein* is an attempt at making meaning.<sup>41</sup> A hermeneutic phenomenology is to do with interpreting things and the world while existing within it.

This concept has had a profound effect on contemporary human geography scholarship and further ideas from these phenomenological geographies provide ways for understanding place/s and embodied place. An understanding of the phenomenological complexity of the body-in-place can be gleaned by turning to a literary text. In James Joyce's Modernist *Bildungsroman*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1914), Stephen Dedalus tries to make sense of his place in the world by detailing his address in his schoolbook:

*Stephen Dedalus*

*Class of Elements*

*Clongowes Wood College*

*County Kildare*

*Ireland*

*Europe*

*The World*

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<sup>40</sup> Both philosophers were to fall out over the rise of National Socialism and Heidegger's complicity in this. This relationship is explored in Sarah Bakewell, *At the Existentialist Café: Freedom, Being, and Apricot Cocktails* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016).

<sup>41</sup> Hubert L. Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990); T. Sheehan, 'What, after all, was Heidegger about?', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 47.3–4 (2014), pp.249–274.

*The Universe* <sup>42</sup>

Here, Joyce's Dedalus articulates an infantile sense of the nested hierarchy of a body's place-in-the-world. Yet, unwittingly, Dedalus reveals the complexity of the networked spatiality of the individual phenomenological subject. He realises his small existence within the rest of the universe.

In thinking about place, I want to follow Dedalus's Russian Doll model of what it means to be-in-the-world; and, to begin, I want to turn to the intimate space of the house. The symbol of the house is suggestive of a pause, a reflective space that is known and, perhaps, engenders a sense of emotional attachment. This idea is central to the geo-philosophical work of humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan and the idea of place-attachment or 'topophilia': a transliteration from Greek: place (topo) and affection/love (philia). Tuan's *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (1974) draws upon phenomenology to broadly define his main concern:

to include all of the human being's affective ties with the material environment. These differ greatly in intensity, subtlety, and mode of expression. The response to environment may be primarily aesthetic: it may then vary from the fleeting pleasure one gets from a view to the equally fleeting but more intense sense of beauty that is suddenly revealed.<sup>43</sup>

Here, Tuan articulates his positive geo-philosophical conception of place; and, throughout his *oeuvre*, the human geographer indicates how this positivity is inextricably indexed to notions of home.

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<sup>42</sup> James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1914), p.12. Original italics.

<sup>43</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (New Jersey: Prentice hall, 1974) p.93. Further references will be given parenthetically.

In placing such emphasis on what might be described as at-homeness, Tuan takes his geo-philosophical lead from Heidegger. In an essay titled ‘Building Dwelling Thinking’ published in *Poetry. Language, Thought*, Heidegger conceives of home as a dwelling-place; a space that is opened up ‘by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man. To say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling*, they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locales’.<sup>44</sup> Tuan suggests that a place is a home because it is ‘the locus of memories, and the means of gaining a livelihood’ (Tuan, 1974, p.93). Home as a metaphor for ‘place’ becomes a network of communal activities, memories and stories passed between families, friendship groups, workplace colleagues and different communities. Therefore, this portrays ‘place’ as a centre of positive phenomena with its environment, architecture, and physical layout in which quotidian activities can be played out. As geographer and poet Tim Cresswell argues, Tuan’s geo-philosophical thought builds on the thinking of Heidegger through a triangulation of ‘philosophies of meaning, phenomenology and existentialism’.<sup>45</sup> In constructing this triangulation, Tuan’s method is predicated on a dilution of pure phenomenology; but, in braiding different philosophical ideas, he manages to transcend the limitations of Heidegger’s solipsistic abstractions in order to provide a meaningful conceptual framework for understanding how people live in, and make meaning from, place.

The next level – in my Dedelian model of the body-in-place – involves thinking about the local. The local is the site of everyday histories, where communities coalesce in social spaces and can be on various scales, for example: the street, the

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<sup>44</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1971) p. 159, original italics.

<sup>45</sup> Tim Cresswell, *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) p.278. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.



town, or city scale. It is the site of a mix of communities and diaspora, with a spectrum of outlooks ranging from the provincial to the metropolitan. The local does not exist in isolation; it can be experienced in different ways and localities are networked with other places. That is, that “local” can mean different things to different people and communities in a geographical location.

The local is rooted in physical geography. Following the spatial spirit of Dedalus’s model, the next level that I wish to discuss is that of the landscape. Landscape, in the singular, is part of the earth’s surface, however, it can be experienced on different levels. For example, the landscapes of Rochdale are made up of geological landforms – hills, non-culverted water courses, low lying valleys – and human-made, or cultural, landscapes – buildings, canals, roads – an overview of which can be seen in this thesis’s Introduction. Further, the word ‘dale’, within the name “Rochdale”, gestures towards the physical geographies of the borough and its relationship to them. ‘Dale’, translates as valley - from the Anglian ‘dæl’ with the town nestled in the valley.<sup>46</sup> Where a place is situated can have tangible and intangible effects on the communities that exist within it. Therefore, the landscape can have an impact on human activities and identities developed within it. This notion is discussed by geographer John Wylie in a journal article entitled ‘Dwelling and Displacement: Tim Robinson and the Questions of Landscape’. Wylie suggests that dwelling in the landscape is:

a communion of land and life, nature and culture, and therefore as a reservoir of existential value, identity and authenticity, albeit one either under imminent threat, or already long evaporated.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> For more on the etymology of toponyms in England see: *A Dictionary of British Place Names*, ed. by David Mills (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> John Wylie, ‘Dwelling and Displacement: Tim Robinson and the Questions of Landscape’, *cultural geographies*, 19 (2012), p.366.

Landscape, like the local, is not an area that is preserved in aspic; the identities are constantly changing. It is open to critical or poetic interpretation.<sup>48</sup> A landscape becomes a text of place that can be ‘read’, quite literally geo-graphy: the writing of the earth.<sup>49</sup>

In the second edition of his book *Place: An Introduction*. (2015), geographer and poet Tim Cresswell argues that ‘landscape’ refers to ‘the material topography – of a piece of land’; for Cresswell, landscapes are visual, to be looked at rather than lived in (2015, p.17). My thesis suggests that landscapes are not just to be viewed – one can look at landscape as a backdrop *and* dwell within that landscape. The ‘local’, as discussed above, is part of a landscape. This suggestion follows philosopher Edward S. Casey’s proposal that landscapes are interconnected ‘placescapes’ which are, as he describes in *Getting Back into Place: Toward a New Understanding of the Place-World*: ‘the joint product of the interaction of [the] body and the landscape’.<sup>50</sup> Casey’s philosophical work is concerned with space and place. In a later work, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (2002), he proposes that there is no landscape without place because landscapes are ‘congeries of places in the fullest of experiential sense’ (p. 271). The use of ‘congeries’ suggests that there is a sense of an unruly heap; it supports the notion that places are complex and somewhat messy, interconnected yet unfixed.

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<sup>48</sup> For more on this discussion see, for example: Edward S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting and Maps* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2002); and John Wylie, *Landscape* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007). Further references to these works will be given parenthetically.

<sup>49</sup> See Edward Relph, ‘Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-World’, in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. by David Seamon and Robert Mugeraur (Malabar, Florida: Krieger publishing company, 1995), pp. 15-31. Further references to this chapter will be given parenthetically.

<sup>50</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a New Understanding of the Place-World. Second Edition*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993) p. 381.

Landscape, like place is a cultural concept, existentially focussed on identity construction, rather than on the how landscape is constructed aesthetically or physically. They evolve through history, cultural, identity, and memory. They are interpretable topographies that incorporate, among other things, houses, schools, and urban parts. Concurrently, the physical geography – the ground upon which landscapes exist – move at a slower pace. As geographer Doreen Massey suggests in her article ‘Landscape as a Provocation: Reflections on Moving Mountains’, landscape topographies are ‘constantly evolving’.<sup>51</sup> This non-human/human mutability – where everything is migrating and changeable – supports Massey’s notion of a ‘global sense of place’, which will be discussed below. Landscape, here is defined as more than a panoramic sweeping blur; it is filled with meaning.

The next scale of reading place zooms out from the landscape level to consider the notion of the region. A region marks out the territory where places are situated. It is larger than the local and the landscape. For example, Rochdale’s physical geography is used to delineate where the borough Rochdale begins and ends: the north-east side is bounded by the Pennines; the river Roch forms the boundary of the majority of the north and south-west of the borough. In turn, the Rochdale borough is nested into the city-region of Greater Manchester region which fits into the wider region of north-west England. These contemporary regions are, in turn, shaped by political gerrymandering and antiquated organisation of space including parishes and hundreds as discussed in the introductory segment on the historical development of Rochdale from its manorial inception as Recedham. Whilst these regions are shaped by a top-down system of organisation, the people who live within them develop their own

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<sup>51</sup> Doreen Massey, ‘Landscape as a Provocation: Reflections on Moving Mountains’, *Journal of Material Culture*, 11.1–2 (2006), p.34. Further references to this paper will be given parenthetically.

narrativised localised identities through the practice of everyday life. That is to say, whilst administrative regions are constructed out of a political endeavour to demarcate and control space, people still make meanings and memories which sit outside such bureaucratic structures.

A 'region' is defined here as an area that is distinguishable from another by, for example: 'culture, government, topography, climate, flora or fauna'.<sup>52</sup> While it might be possible to roughly pinpoint where somewhere is by its postcode within a specific area, regions, as Tim Cresswell puts it, separate 'the local from the global' (2013, p.280). Other theoretical approaches to the idea of region seem to have a consensus; Edward Relph considers regions are expansive yet 'distinct from other areas' (1995, p.5) while Derek Gregory *et al* define a region as a 'more or less bounded area possessing some sort of unity or organizing principle(s) that distinguish it from other regions'.<sup>53</sup> Finally, Edward S. Casey posits that a region is a place in its own right.<sup>54</sup> I suggest that regions are networks of places that are viewed through boundaries, ecology, cultural and socio-political filters, and communal attachments such as 'regional identity'. Regional borders can have a profound effect on the people living in them. The experience of living in Rochdale compared with Manchester can be perceived differently – as will be seen in Chapters Two and Four. There are areas of wealth and deprivation within a couple of miles; a contrast of lives that rub up against each other. The experience of being-in-place within the region can have stark differences. Rochdale is a mix of urban and rural locations.

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<sup>52</sup> See the Oxford English Dictionary, 'Region, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/161281>> [accessed 7 February 2018]. There is also a definition offered in Appendix 1.

<sup>53</sup> *The Dictionary of Human Geography. Fifth Edition*, ed. by Derek Gregory *et al*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p.687.

<sup>54</sup> Edward S. Casey, 'How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time', in *Senses of Place*, ed. by Steven Feld and Keith Basso (New Mexico: School of American Research, 1996), pp. 13–52.

The idea of the region can be seen to be predicated on the political carving up of space. At the same time, though, the idea of the region can also be understood in ecological terms. Rochdale offers, like other areas around the borough, a fast commuter route to Manchester. While people are interconnected through transport and technology, the physical geographies and wildlife of Rochdale are interconnected. Rochdale can be placed within the context of bioregionalism - an ecologically defined area that does not necessarily correspond to socio-cultural constructed regions. Bioregions include ecotones – transitional areas where sets of biological and/or marine flora and fauna overlap. They are affected by environmental, geological, anthropocentric and geo-locational factors. Further, as well as biota there are climate zones, areas where phenomena such as the weather affects places. Environmental phenomena effects regional identity and human experience through the availability of natural resources to locating suitable apparel for the climate. The climatic, cultural and social construction of regions have a bearing on place attachment, and regional identity.

Environmental psychologists Richard Rijnks and Dirk Strijker utilise a phenomenological approach that applies cultural filters to posit that *a priori* sense of place is required when:

the identity of a region as described by a person is dependent on the regional identity of that person, whether a person identifies with a region (when a region and the people in the region are perceived as congruent with the 'self') or against a region (where the region and its inhabitants are considered incongruent with the 'self').<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Richard H Rijnks and Dirk Strijker, 'Spatial Effects on the Image and Identity of a Rural Area.', *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 36 (2013), p.104.

This is particularly salient in the more rural areas of Rochdale which are explored within literary and cartographic texts; many areas retain ancient toponyms even though they have changed. While Rijnks and Strijker suggest that identifying with a place provides a sort of communal congruence, there is a lack of acknowledgement towards what happens when there is tension in place. Corresponding to a regional identity may reinforce stereotypes or present hostile cliques on certain people who may be viewed as out-of-place.<sup>56</sup> Geographer Edward Relph discusses this idea in a chapter entitled ‘Geographical Experiences and Being-in-the-World’, published in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, and suggests that this is because regional identity is ‘rather superficial and involve[s] simplifications of personal and place difference’ but that these simplifications ‘precede any academic, geographical attempt to explain regions’ (1995, p.2). These simplifications are discussed in Chapters Two and Three, positing that place identities, and identities within places, are more complex and multifaceted than perhaps expected. There are tensions in these identities on different scales – local, regional, national and international.

Rochdale does not exist in isolation; rather it networks and relates to other places around the world and yet there are strong feelings of place identity within the borough. In the local vernacular, those who are from Rochdale are termed Rochdalian, whereas those from Manchester might consider themselves ‘Mancunian’. Further, that they may, more broadly consider that they identify as English. There is a sense of local, regional, and national identity that perhaps distinguishes one person from another. This idea of distinctiveness is of importance when building an identity. For

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<sup>56</sup> See for example Edward Relph, 1995, and Tim Cresswell, *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

example, the marketing of Rochdale to the wider Greater Manchester region, or place branding in the world. Here, the contemporary regeneration of Rochdale is mired in neoliberal globalisation which exemplifies the next level in thinking about place in global terms. This is keenly seen in the privatisation of public spaces: where, under the watchful eye of CCTV surveillance, these are the areas once municipally owned but which may be now managed by private multinational companies and foreign investors.<sup>57</sup> To consider the globalisation of places necessitates thinking about the compression of both time and space. That is to say, the increase and speed in communication and production which impact on the social relations between people and place. In Doreen Massey's essay 'A Global Sense of Place' published in *Space, Place and Gender* (1994), she discusses the idea of writing about a locality and the need 'to think through what might be an adequately progressive sense of place [one that is not] defined primarily by administrative or political boundaries'.<sup>58</sup> And yet, as she extends in her book, real places are influenced by global forces historically and contemporarily on different levels. For example, Rochdale can be framed as a globalised borough as it features multinational stores (such as Pizza Hut and McDonalds), takeaways (Kobeda King kebab shop, China City Buffet, and Jojoz Pizza), products that are shipped globally (such as McBride's household chemical products), and it features people from different diasporas who have travelled and settled in Rochdale – Irish, Pakistani, Ukrainian, Polish etc.

There are opportunities to cultivate approaches around a global sense of place.

An example here is demonstrated by Doreen Massey in *Place, Space and Gender*,

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<sup>57</sup> See: Simon Coyle, 'Shopping Centre Is Sold to Investment Company', *Manchester Evening News*, 2013 <<http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/local-news/rochdale-exchange-shopping-centre-sold-6253359>> [accessed 6 February 2018].

<sup>58</sup> Doreen Massey, *Space, Place, and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity Press., 1994) pp.151-152. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

where she describes a walk down Kilburn High Road ‘a pretty ordinary place, north-west of the centre of London’ (1994, p.152). During her sketch, it becomes clear that this seemingly everyday place is not only locally but globally connected; it is not, as Massey concludes:

a seamless, coherent identity, a single sense of place which everybody shares [...] not only does ‘Kilburn’, then, have many identities (or its full identity is a complex mix of all theses) it is also, looked at in this way, absolutely *not* introverted. It is (or ought to be) impossible even to begin thinking about Kilburn High Road without bringing into play half the world and a considerable amount of British imperialist history (p. 153, original italics).

There is, as Massey proposes here, and in her later book *for space* a progressive sense of place that includes global connectivity; a rich diversity of ethnic, gendered, social, and cultural beliefs and intersections between these and beyond. Places, for Massey, are not merely akin to pins on a map and, therefore, not necessarily fixed. Places are, as Massey puts it, ‘woven together out of ongoing stories’.<sup>59</sup> The use of ‘woven’, here, works as a metaphor for the textiles industry of Rochdale too. A proportion of the cotton that fed Manchester’s “Cottonopolis” was exported from America. The source of this American cotton tended to be that produced in slave-owning states. The ‘cotton famine’ was a depression caused by global factors, but also garnered civic action. In Rochdale, workers expressed support for the abolition of slavery and raised funds to build the cobbled ‘Cotton Famine Road’ in Rooley Moor. This was an act of solidarity with cotton pickers in America, linking a local struggle with a transatlantic cause. This historical link highlights one of myriad local and global stories that demonstrate how

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<sup>59</sup> Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage Publications, 2005) pp. 130-131. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.



Rochdale connects to the rest of the world. These are stories of space (the geographies that are linked), place (the locations that network) and time (past and present). The borough, like other places, has internal conflict over the past, present and future of life within, but it is saturated with local, regional and global connections.

These scales of place – body-in-place, the house, local, regional and global – provide a framework for beginning to think about and with place. At the same time, though, there is a need to acknowledge that there are landscapes and phenomena that complicate this model such as edgelands, non-places, space and time. Edgelands are liminal spaces that are temporary and unfixed parts of the landscape – such as brown field sites that are built over, or verges with their own trashscapes of plastic bottles and other detritus - and have been interpreted aesthetically as well as geographically by writers and scholars such as, for example, John Wylie (2007) and Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts (2011). In Rochdale, these edgelands appear and disappear, particularly around the post-industrial town centre. Edgelands, and post-industrial ruins, are integral to the identity of the local landscape, though the borough is in the shadow of Manchester's 'cityscape'.<sup>60</sup> Rochdale's urban landscapes and rural fringes have a flow to them; there is a sense of constant change.

If place has an element as being understood through experience, then a pause is required to consider the relationship to space, the concept of which is as contested as place. The scholarly consensus on the ontology of space is that, at its simplest construction, it is an abstract realm that is difficult to represent. Space is, as Doreen Massey puts it, 'the sphere of openended configurations within multiplicities' (2005, p.91). The leading geography journal, *Environment and Planning D*, is preoccupied

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<sup>60</sup> For more on the notion of post-industrial ruins see Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality* (Oxford: Berg, 2005). Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

with interrogating the relationship between ‘society and space’. In ‘Putting space back into place: philosophical topography and relational geography’, a paper published in *Environment and Planning D*, Jeff Malpas – a philosopher whose spatial thinking is largely characterised by a Heideggerian interest in the materiality of place – defines space as a force that:

appears as a swirl of flows, networks and trajectories, as a chaotic ordering that locates and dislocates, and as an effect of social process that is itself spatially dispersed and distributed.<sup>61</sup>

Space, therefore for Malpas, operates as the moderately oxymoronic ‘chaotic ordering’ whose ‘dispersions’ are somewhat similar to Massey’s notion of ‘openended configurations’. While sympathetic to Malpas’s proposal of ‘flows, networks, and trajectories’, I define space following Doreen Massey’s suggestion as the ‘dimension of the world in which we live [...] a pincushion of a million stories’.<sup>62</sup> Take, for example, the Wheatsheaf, a shopping centre in Rochdale. The Wheatsheaf is a space where people work, pass through, and shop but it is also linked with global forces: through the products that are traded, the coffee that is drunk in staff workrooms or by customers in the café. Our myriad relationships with space and place have power, what Massey calls ‘power geometry’ where ‘[d]ifferent social groups have distinct relationships [...] some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it.’ (1994, p.149). Further, this relates to people’s relationships in space – who has power to change, or influence others within this

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<sup>61</sup> Jeff Malpas, ‘Putting Space Back into Place: Philosophical Topography and Relational Geography’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 30 (2012), p.228. Further references to this paper will be given parenthetically.

<sup>62</sup> Social Science Bites, ‘Doreen Massey on Space’, *Social Science Space*, 2013 <<https://www.socialsciencespace.com/2013/02/podcastdoreen-massey-on-space/>> [accessed 7 February 2018].

space. Space, with all its complexities, when imbued with meaning, can become a place - a nexus of work, leisure, or dwelling; where the homeless rub shoulders with bankers and shoppers.

The political frameworks of space – particularly in the context of the city - is of concern to thinkers such as Henri Lefebvre. In a translation produced posthumously in 2014 in *Environment and Planning D: Society & Space*, Lefebvre suggests that space, especially city space, is often ‘divided into plots that can be bought and sold’.<sup>63</sup> This means that space is commodified and the city is dissolved through capitalism, homogenisation, and the hegemony of a ruling class. Lefebvre’s approach to space, as discussed in *The Production of Space*, is a triad of spatial practice (production and reproduction), representations of space (related to production), and representational spaces (incorporating symbols – often an aesthetic representation).<sup>64</sup> Other Marxist considerations of space see place as fixed capital linked to exploitation, domination and oppression. For example, geographer David Harvey posits that place is easy to subvert whereas abstract space is not, and that in order to challenge the bourgeois *milieu*, working class movements ‘are better at organising in and dominating place than they are at commanding space’.<sup>65</sup> Pertinent issues arise as to how places are constructed, managed, controlled and how they compete with other places.<sup>66</sup> It is this competition that trickles into regeneration and the creative non-fictional narratives of Rochdale that seems to pit the borough in competition with surrounding areas such as Manchester, Bury, and Oldham. This example of competition, Harvey suggests,

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<sup>63</sup> Henri Lefebvre, ‘Dissolving City, Planetary Metamorphosis’, *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 32 (2014), p. 205. This article was originally published in French in 1989.

<sup>64</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

<sup>65</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).236. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

<sup>66</sup> See David Harvey, ‘From Space to Place and Back Again’, in *Mapping the Futures: Local Cultures, Global Change*, ed. by John Bird (New York: Routledge, 1993).

perpetuates the force and thrall of capitalism; an anti-democratic game in which there are only ever winners and losers. This Marxist lens of place is helpful when challenging capitalist structures that require complete dismantlement through some sort of revolution.

Now I wish to turn to considering negative experiences of place. While these have been gestured at above – in terms of power geometry – conflicts in place have been and remain seen in communities that are dispossessed (the poor), reviled (the Muslim community after the sex abuse scandal), and/or mocked (the Irish diaspora in the late nineteenth century). If place is a centre of experience and meaning it is not always of a positive nature. It may emerge that a geo-specific location becomes a ‘no go’ area, either of human (high crime area) or natural (bog land on the moors) cause. The notion of ‘topophobia’, juxtaposes with Tuan’s topophilia. This fear of place is explored by Tim Cresswell in *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression* (1996) with notions of out-of-placeness. A form of resistance to this out-of-placeness is taken up by sociologist Beatriz Muñoz González in her feminist criticism of topophilia. She argues that women are forgotten in Tuan’s notion of home as a ‘focal point’. González suggests that the home can be a centre of oppression or place of drudgery ‘where a series of everyday rituals full of ritualistic symbols are at play’.<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, she argues that perhaps the role of home-maker is often not one of choice for women. This form of domestic dwelling, here, presents a scene of repression and yet, as González posits, the home presents an opportunity for creation and solidarity with other women in similar situations within their social space engendering a form of group belongingness.

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<sup>67</sup> Beatriz Muñoz González, ‘Topophilia and Topophobia: The Home as an Evocative Place of Contradictory Emotions’, *Space and Culture*, 8.2 (2005), p. 203.

Group belongingness in place is problematised by geographer Edward Relph in *Place and Placelessness* (1976) and in anthropologist Marc Augé's *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (1995). Relph suggests that certain places, for example, theme parks and fast food chains, are placeless as they are superficial and inauthentic. They become 'objects' that 'are manipulated for the public interest and decisions are taken in a world of assumed, homogeneous space and time'.<sup>68</sup> Relph's notion of placelessness presents controlled locations that exist only to encourage consumerism and provide a fleeting, almost touristic experience; these are places that are not for anchoring oneself to, nor to get attached to.<sup>69</sup>

Augé takes a similar approach to Relph, albeit using an anthropological lens and a different label: non-place. He defines non-places as:

two complementary but distinct realities: spaces formed in relation to certain ends (transport, transit, commerce, leisure), and the relations that individuals have with these spaces [...] non-places mediate a whole mass of relations, with the self and with others, which are only indirectly connected with their purposes. As anthropological spaces create the organically social, so non-places create solitary contractuality.<sup>70</sup>

It is humans that make place meaningful and sociable. The late twentieth-century's push towards supermodernity – consumerism, the high uses of information technology, constant global travel for making money rather than making meaning –

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<sup>68</sup> Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976) p.81.

<sup>69</sup> The discussion on theme parks is central to Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1994). Baudrillard is interested in hyper-real worlds that intersect with the everyday world such as Disneyland. Disneyland is also of concern to Naomi Klein in *No Logo: no space, no choice, no jobs* (2000) where she discusses the ubiquity of brands and the manicured manipulation of these imaginary yet physical places.

<sup>70</sup> Marc Augé, *Non-Places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1995) p.94. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

has led to some humans spending some of their lives in ahistorical, globalised space in which localised detail is flattened out. The practice of everyday life becomes shorn of local meaning as the processes and forces of supermodernity create non-places that can be understood as 'palimpsests on which the scrambled game of identity and relations is ceaselessly rewritten' (1995, p.79). Augé identifies a range of familiar sites that encapsulate the phenomenon of the supermodern non-place: from hotels to transport hubs. Any sense of spatial meaning in such sites is, at best, fleeting. Augé's concept of the non-place is closely indexed to Relph's earlier emphasis on placelessness. Both theorists are interested in, and worried by, the late capitalist construction of globalised spaces; sites in which we, as credit card-carrying consumers, are encouraged to buy rather than make meaning. The terms non-place and placelessness are useful when critiquing regeneration narratives and building an emphasis on shopping not 'stopping' (as will be discussed below and in Chapter Three).

Drawing upon the theoretical language of philosopher Michel de Certeau, I want to suggest that the negative formulations articulated by both Relph and Augé only partially explain how the practice of everyday life unfolds in such sites. That is to say, I want to argue that, in constructing their concepts of placelessness and non-place, Relph and Augé do not pay sufficient attention to those people who work and live in such sites, people for whom – in the words of de Certeau – airports and transport hubs can be understood as practised places where workers practice 'everyday arts [such as] cooking, cleaning, sewing, etc.'<sup>71</sup> Someone who works, for example, in an airport makes meaning in this place; it is a site of employment with the potential to offer the

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<sup>71</sup> Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (California: University of California Press, 1984), pp.69-70. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

workers day-to-day camaraderie as well as economic stability. For environmentalists, an airport symbolises the serious impact that aviation has on climate change and the ecological impact that building runways have on the land. For the holidaying family, the airport represents escape and the beginning of making further memories. While the holidaymakers have the money to travel, they do so within the networks of a globalised, capitalist space. The airport is practiced, and conceived, in different ways; it is a place that, as de Certeau suggests, has ‘instantaneous configurations of positions’ (p.119). So-called non-places offer moments to pause and reflect on their myriad meanings, this then imbues placial qualities upon them.

When differentiating space with place, and following on from his work on topophilia, Tuan asserts in *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* that if space ‘allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place’.<sup>72</sup> Non-places, and placeless locations, therefore, do hold some significance: they are like mini-pauses, like a home or a village they too have complex properties and some flux. These confluences are influenced, and continue to be influenced, by history, socio-cultural power structures, geology, and climate. They are linked globally through interconnections of trade, travel, media, and communication. These are places that people pass through or work at. Here, Doreen Massey’s thinking on place can be applied to so-called non-places such as airports as they are place/s are sites of ‘multiple identities and histories [that are] never fixed and bounded’ (2005, p.109). Places do not live in isolation, and do not have a fixity, instead they have flow. Massey’s approach demonstrates the complexities and entanglements of place and space. Like David Harvey’s thinking on

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<sup>72</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977) p.6. Further references to this book will be given parenthetically.

place and power, Massey's work suggests that while power balances in place are uneven, people make meaning in these globalised spaces by challenging and exploring them in playfully subversive ways. These acts may not be self-consciously motivated by a political radicalism; but they can be read as part of the human impulse to appropriate, personalise and localise non-places. Here, activities of these playful acts could include skateboarders grinding on metal railings, or parkour traceurs freerunning between buildings.

Having explained how non-places *do* have meaning, I now want to turn from the theoretical consideration of non-places to the *practice* of place. More particularly, I want to turn to the counter-cultural practices of psychogeography. I am interested in how these practices can work as methods for understanding place/s particularly through more ludic activities. One example is that of the flâneur, a concept whose coining is attributed to the nineteenth century poet Charles Baudelaire. A flâneur is someone – usually a man – who saunters through a place wondering, and pondering, its existence. This laissez-faire attitude, Walter Benjamin, notes in his unfinished work *The Arcades Project*, presents a dual existence of the flâneur:

on one side, the man who feels himself viewed by all and sundry as the true suspect and, on the other side, the man who is utterly undiscoverable, the hidden man.<sup>73</sup>

The nineteenth century depiction of the flâneur was normally of a middle-class, bohemian man whose 'indolence [is] presented as a plausible front' (1999, p. 442). This gendered image of the male walker presents one of privilege. This image is one that has perpetuated into the twenty-first century with the popularity of

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<sup>73</sup> Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1999) p.420. Further references to this will be given parenthetically.



psychogeographical literature by authors such as Will Self, Ian Sinclair, Merlin Coverley, and Nick Papadimitriou. There have been approaches to psychogeography by women writers and scholars which we will turn to below.

Psychogeography is way to practice place. It has its historical roots in nineteenth century *flânerie*, mid-twentieth century surrealism, and the Situationist International (SI).<sup>74</sup> The SI was a consortium of loosely associated French avant-garde artists and organisations which was at its most active during the 1960s.<sup>75</sup> A key spatial act of psychogeography is the *dérive* – or drift. The drifter allows themselves to travel in various directions by allowing hidden histories, feelings and/or emotion to choose the direction. Psychogeography is an attempt to allow for a curious, existential, creative, and sensual experience of the physical and psychological environment. As geographer David Pinder puts it in ‘Arts of urban exploration’, an article published in the journal *cultural geographies*, the practice of ‘experimental arts and modes of exploration can play a vital role in the development of critical approaches to the geographies of cities [and other places]’.<sup>76</sup> While psychogeography and *flânerie* are closely related cultural phenomenon, they differ in approaches.

Crucially, contemporary approaches to psychogeography and *flânerie* have criticised these practices as being masculinist and elitist, where the ‘opportunities and activities of *flânerie* [are] predominantly the privileges of the man of means’.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Charles Baudelaire, ‘The Painter of Modern Life’, *Le Figaro*, 1863; Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (London: Pocket Essentials, 2010). Further references to Coverley will be given parenthetically.

<sup>75</sup> The history and development of situationism and, latterly contemporary psychogeography, are explored in works such as: Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994); Amy J. Elias, ‘Psychogeography, Détournement, Cyberspace’, *New Literary History*, 41.4 (2010), pp. 821–845; and A. E. Souzis, ‘Momentary Ambiances: Psychogeography in Action’, *cultural geographies*, 22.1 (2015) pp. 193–201.

<sup>76</sup> See David Pinder, ‘Arts of Urban Exploration.’, *cultural geographies*, 12 (2005), p.385.

<sup>77</sup> Deborah Parsons quoted in Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016) location 140, Kindle eBook.

Women's approaches to practicing place in a psychogeographic-esque style is detailed in works such as Virginia Woolf's essay 'Street Haunting' (1927), Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust* (2000), which incorporates walking reflections around the main text, and Lauren Elkin's *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (2016). Woolf, Solnit and Elkin's non-fictional reflections on walking through and in different locations are integral when considering the experience of gender and place. Here, they are useful for this project's later practice in writing place and considering the experience of being a woman in the built environment.<sup>78</sup> These practical approaches help to explore the theoretical concept of place through practice. Through my perambulations through Rochdale, I have found that I have engaged both creatively and critically. I have tried to approach the borough in different ways, that is to say that I have self-consciously spent time at sites which, according to the theoretical framings of Relph and Augé, might be labelled as 'placeless' or non-places. More particularly, through a temporal investment in these sites, I have endeavoured to find and make place-specific meaning. Whether by reading bus station timetables, engaging in conversation, passing the time by trying to identify the flora of train stations (predominantly buddleia, rosebay willowherb, ragwort, and poppy), I am acutely conscious that, in offering this personal portrait of place, I am in danger of articulating what John Keats famously described – in reference to the poetry of William Wordsworth – as 'the egotistical sublime': an intrinsically subjective account of a place in which, saliently, I have never lived.<sup>79</sup> Yet, throughout this thesis, I endeavour to use the subjective, phenomenological experience of place as a

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<sup>78</sup> See, for example, Morag Rose's PhD thesis on psychogeography, gender and ableism: Morag Rose, 'Women Walking Manchester: Desire Lines Through The Original Modern City' (University of Sheffield, 2017).

<sup>79</sup> Keat's quote, given in a letter to his friend Richard Woodhouse in 1818, is reprinted in Frederick Garber, 'Nature and the Romantic Mind: Egotism, Empathy, Irony', *Comparative Literature*, 29.3 (1977), p.199.

springboard for establishing wider connections. In other words, I consistently endeavour to connect this individuated sense of place with the collective, communal experience of Rochdale.

This discussion of my theoretically informed creative procedures returns me to the conceptual framings with which this chapter began. Many of the cultural geographers to whom I have turned have rooted their understandings of place in phenomenological thought. Ultimately this thesis is informed by a theoretical eclecticism. In the next section of this chapter, I want to move on from these theoretical framings to consider how ideas of place have been central to attempts to regenerate, and rebrand, Rochdale, and to situate the wider context of the so-called Northern Powerhouse. Central to this discourse is the idea, and practice, of place-making: the re-imagining and re-designing of public places incorporating cultural, economic, social and ecological values.

***The Era of Northern Powerhouse: Place-making as Storytelling and a Textual Analysis of the Language of Regeneration***

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015: Drake Street, Rochdale

It's raining again. Incessant rain, unrelenting rain, record-breaking rain. The water runs down windows, first in whispers then in waves, blurring and bluing sharp lines of buildings, washing away the edges in grey slurs. At the nexus of the rivers Spodden and Roch the banks have had it: shrugging off boundaries, overflowing, rising, making a swamp of carefully curated gardens, lapping at the bark of urban planner planted trees. A tumble of water, the slosh of back wash as the levels change – the dips and kerbs of the town centre are smoothed by the tidal swell, hidden depths offer temporary rapids that only an extremist canoeist would enjoy. ***A nightmare.*** From the centre of Rochdale across the landscape of the north of England, villages, towns, cities are submerged, centuries old bridges crumble into the deluge. ***What more can this day throw at us?*** After the rains: a nest of branches, planks, crisp packets, the compost waft of humus, and the stench of something ever so slightly human. What was once now is.



Figure 5: After the flood: Drake Street, Rochdale (photograph taken by the author 7<sup>th</sup> January 2016).

The above sketch accompanies an image of Drake Street, in the centre of Rochdale, after the December 2015 floods. In 2016, after a two-year project to remove parts of the road and pavement, new viewpoints of the river Roch have been revealed, showing the layers of time through the various underground bridges which had been concealed under the built environment. The more time I spend in Rochdale, the more

attached I feel to the borough. I am a visitor that is time-bound to my engagement of Rochdale. This strange, internal or even emotional phenomenon is akin to making a friend, as Edward Relph puts it, ‘to be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are, the stronger is the identity with the place’ (1976, p. 49). I don’t feel like I *belong* in Rochdale, however, I do feel that I understand the borough more. When becoming acquainted with Rochdale, new routes are identified, for example, the shortcut to Yorkshire Street, the main shopping strip, via the car-park opposite the tram station and the steps behind The Regal Moon pub. The initial feeling, or the fear, of becoming lost, can be overwhelming. This is then balanced with a sense of observing the mundane. As Rochdale became more ‘known’ to me, I had an urge to find ever more desire paths to get to my destination. While new knowledge and gradual familiarity has tempered initial inquisitiveness, a new curiosity arises about how the place came about in the first place: how was it made, and who made it?



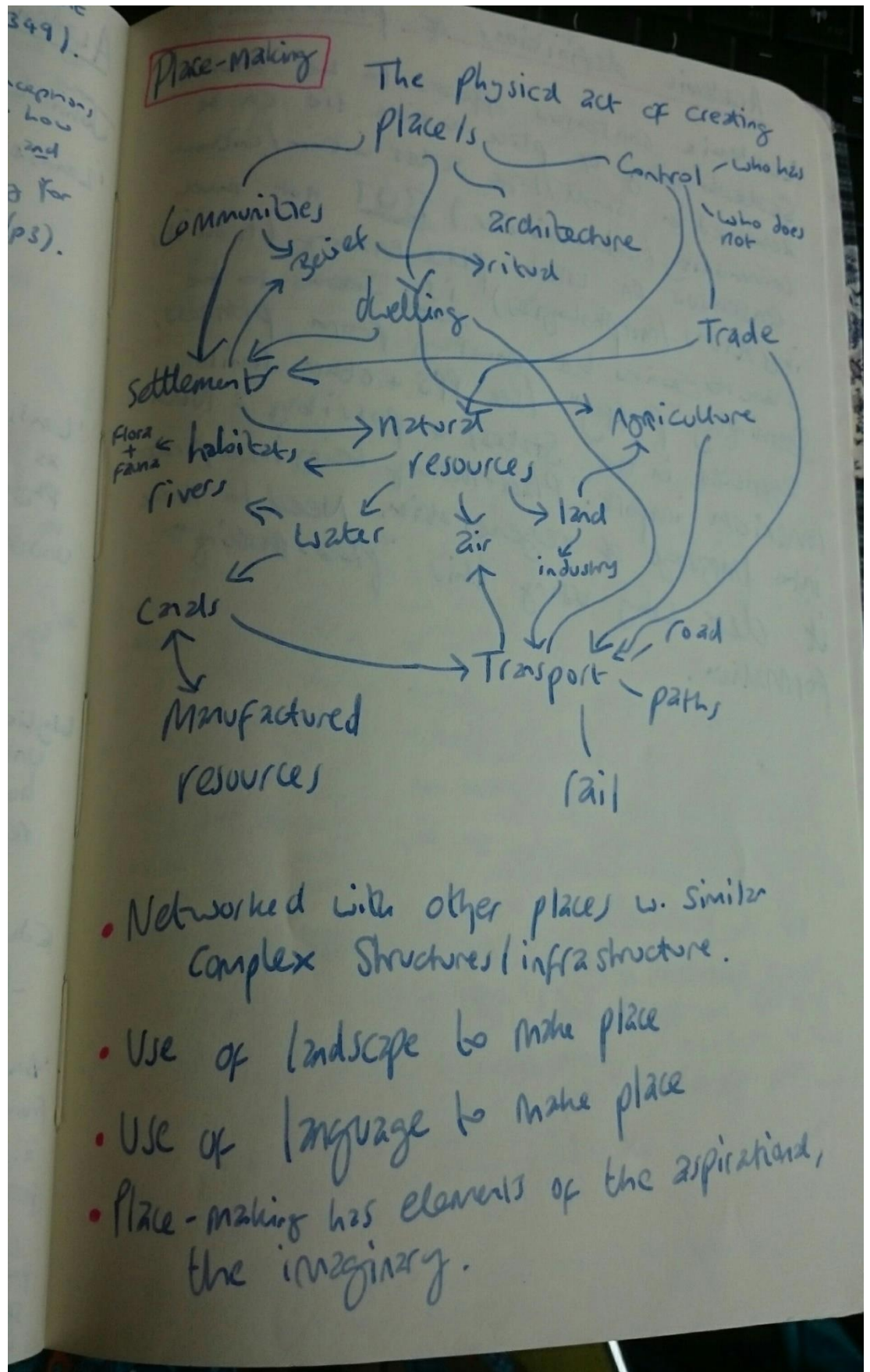


Figure 6: Mind map of place-making (photograph author's own).

The image above demonstrates a way of thinking through what place-making *could* mean and what it could incorporate. At the same time, this image demonstrates how ideas can be captured in a mind-map. As this thesis's approach and research demonstrates, writing and thinking are an ongoing, always emerging, iterative processes. I consider place-making as an intertwined term, complex and co-dependent on different aspects. The genesis of place-making can be seen in the etymology of 'making' from Old English, possibly Germanic.<sup>80</sup> 'Making' is creating, curating, moulding, shaping, and controlling. To 'make' takes something that is malleable and improve, change or bring something into existence as a new form. The practice of place – 'making' a place – on one level pertains to activities of belonging; of collective and individual memory and identity that includes the sensual and memetic (Tuan, 1977; Casey, 1996; Cresswell, 2015).<sup>81</sup>

'Place-making', including the interchangeable constructions of 'placemaking' and 'place making' - is a term, or phrase, commonly used by urban designers, town planners, real estate agents, and construction companies. This considers how a place is constructed, how its identity is set, and how a place differs, or competes, with other (usually urban) locations. Urban and corporate governance scholars Philip Lawton, Micha Méczyński and Austin Barber suggest how place-making can be used for policy making in a chapter entitled 'Policies towards Place Attraction and Policies for Place Retention', published in *Place-Making and Policies for Competitive Cities*. In this

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<sup>80</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, 'Make, v.1', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2016) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/112645#eid38203381>> [accessed 18 January 2016].

<sup>81</sup> This includes, for example, other scholarship on phenomenological, ethnographic, and sensual place engagement: Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a New Understanding of the Place-World. Second Edition* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993 / 2009); Lucy R. Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in Multicentered Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997); and Victoria Henshaw *et al*, 'Marketing the "City of Smells"', *Marketing Theory*, 2015, pp.1–18. There is a discussion on mapping with the senses in Chapter Four and further references to these texts will be given parenthetically.



chapter, the authors place a strong emphasis on improving economic development, suggesting that, ultimately, place-making has ‘a strong emphasis’ on place branding, place management, and ‘on urban design’.<sup>82</sup> Conversely, the term is also used by some community groups who deem it a bottom-up approach to changing or improving places. This is where the ‘making’ comes from people who are trying to change their local area through increased cultural opportunities and green space.<sup>83</sup> These contrasting forms of place-making are characterised by their contrasting scales. At one end of the spectrum, place-making consists of grassroots initiatives that focus on people, creativity, communities, and the local more-than-human environment.<sup>84</sup> At the other end, place-making can simultaneously refer to the type of top-down, economically driven programme exemplified by the Northern Powerhouse project discussed in detail below.

On the 23 June 2014, at the Museum of Science and Industry (MOSI) in Manchester, England, George Osborne, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer of the UK Government, announced a proposal for a ‘Northern Powerhouse’ (this speech is reproduced with corresponding line numbers in Appendix 2).<sup>85</sup> This thesis posits that

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<sup>82</sup> Philip Lawton, Michał Męczyński, and Austin Barber, ‘Policies towards Place Attraction and Policies for Place Retention’, in *Place-Making and Policies for Competitive Cities*, ed. by Sako Musterd (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), p.108.

<sup>83</sup> See, for examples, the definition provided by the organisation Project for Public Spaces, ‘What Is Placemaking?’, *Project for Public Spaces*, no date <[http://www.pps.org/reference/what\\_is\\_placemaking/](http://www.pps.org/reference/what_is_placemaking/)> [accessed 4 January 2016]; an academic paper by Jeffrey Hou and Michael Rios, ‘Community-Driven Place Making’, *Journal of Architectural Education*, 57.1 (2003), pp.19–27; and not-for-profit organisation City Repair, *City Repair’s Placemaking Guidebook. Second Edition* (Portland, Oregon: City Repair, 2011). Further references to these will be made parenthetically

<sup>84</sup> For more on this discussion, and on how a communal sense, or spirit, of place is engendered see: J. Nicholas Entrikin, ‘Democratic Place-Making and Multiculturalism’, *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography*, 84.1 (2002), pp.19–25; Nicholas DeMaria Harney, ‘The Politics of Urban Space: Modes of Place-Making by Italians in Toronto’s Neighbourhoods’, *Modern Italy*, 11.1 (2010), pp.149–165; and Manuel A. Vásquez and Kim Knott, ‘Three Dimensions of Religious Place Making in Diaspora’, *Global Networks*, 14.3 (2014), pp.326–347.

<sup>85</sup> See: George Osborne, ‘Chancellor: “We Need a Northern Powerhouse” - Speeches - GOV.UK’, 2014 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/chancellor-we-need-a-northern-powerhouse>> [accessed 17 December 2015]. The speech was published under the Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government on 23 June 2014, the original script may differ from the delivered version. Further references to the speech will be given parenthetically with corresponding line numbers.

the following assertions made by the then Chancellor in this speech demonstrate place-making on a large scale; it involves an imagined north, and a set of political promises as to what the government ‘can do to make the cities of the north a powerhouse for our economy again’ (lines 5-6). The backdrop for the speech was the Power Hall building which houses a long-term exhibition of steam engines, rolling stock and locomotives, including an engine that powered a mill in Rochdale. The speech itself, full of metaphorical allusions to the space in which it was delivered, argued for a mechanism to combine the industries of a belt of cities from Liverpool to Hull. It should be noted that this was not a novel idea; in 2004 the then New Labour Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott mooted the possibility for a ‘super city’ that could span from the north-west to the north-east.<sup>86</sup> Such policy proposals, and such rhetoric, has united the two main parties in the twenty-first century.

Prior to considering where a ‘Northern Powerhouse’ might be situated, as well as what it would constitute, it is worth pausing to consider both of the words. A ‘powerhouse’ evokes images of a building to generate electricity. To be a ‘Northerner’ in England evokes a wider discussion on the notion of northernness and of an imagined north.<sup>87</sup> The British distinction between north and south is one that is imagined, or evoked, through economic divides simplified as the ‘rich south’ and ‘poor north’. This distinction has been key in fiction, poetry, and political writing from Benjamin Disraeli’s *Sibyl, or The Two Nations* (1845) to Danny Dorling’s political geography in *Injustice: Why Social Inequality Still Persists* (2011). In such fictional and political writings, ‘the north’ is presented as a uniform, homogenous ‘other’ to the

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<sup>86</sup> This area was modelled in Will Alsop, *Supercity* (Manchester: Urbis, 2004).

<sup>87</sup> See, for example, Dave Russell, *Looking North. Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004); Paul Morley, *The North* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); and Peter Davidson, *The Idea of North* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016).

metropolitan centre. In his speech, Osborne, too, feeds off and back into such culturally entrenched othering. Osborne explicitly acknowledges the division of the country and suggests that his own split identity will allow him to reconfigure the historical north-south binary: ‘being a Londoner proud to represent a Northern constituency’ (line 13). Yet, although Osborne purports to redraw the economic map of the country, he presents the north as a uniform, flattened space rather than a constellation of discrete and diverse places. That is to say, in spite of his status as MP for Tatton in Cheshire, Osborne demonstrates no awareness of what dialect scholar, Christopher Schubert suggests are ‘textures of identity’.<sup>88</sup>

Osborne’s Northern Powerhouse emerges as a thematic concept rather than a political vision predicated on the particularities of place. This is regardless of the promise to not offer other places an ‘identikit model’ (line 280). Osborne identifies the following areas as being part of his vision of the north: regions (Cheshire, Lancashire, Teesside and Yorkshire); cities (Bradford, Durham, Hull, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York); towns (Gateshead, Redcar, Rochdale, Rotherham and Wakefield); and villages (Daresbury and Alderley). Osborne concentrates on theming the northern powerhouse rather than presenting geolocations, gesturing towards the diverse range of communities within the new region, or presenting a firm plan on where and how the northern powerhouse will begin and be.

Although a ‘true’ geographical north is not defined, and may be impossible to define, Osborne’s speech – for the sake of clarity – continues this illusion of a unified northernness through the use of toponyms, municipal areas, and political figureheads

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<sup>88</sup> Christopher Schubert, ‘Dialect and Regional Identity in Northern England’, in *Thinking Northern: Textures of Identity in the North of England*, ed. by Christopher Ehland (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 73–90.

in and around his vision of north. As well as geographical allusions, there are historical references made, in a celebratory tone, to the Industrial Revolution in Manchester: ‘the beam engines [...] that made this part of Britain the economic powerhouse of the world a century ago’ (lines 3-4). At various places in Osborne’s speech he emphasises the past wealth of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, for example: ‘a factory would be located where you could find raw materials, power, and cheap labour’ (lines 67-68); ‘[t]his is the area that invented modern transport’ (line 127); and ‘[m]any of [the universities in the north] were founded by enlightened industrialists’ (line 195). The celebratory references to a bygone ‘economic powerhouse’ juxtaposes with Adam O’Riordan’s poem ‘Manchester’ where he retrospectively personifies the city as ‘Queen of the cotton cities’ and a city at the centre of Empire, the ‘globing of the world, a litany of cities / cast and re-made in your image’.<sup>89</sup> The key difference is that O’Riordan lyrically evokes a civic status that can never be recovered whereas Osborne implies, invoking the spirit of the British Empire, that it could happen again. O’Riordan’s poetic reconstruction of place – a historical, industrial Manchester pieced ‘back into existence’ (line 2) – allows for the less salubrious, and politically problematic, elements of this vision of the city of Empire.

As well as offering some historical revisionism, Osborne touches upon a series of themes and tropes including health, heritage, science, engineering innovation, war and sport. The cardinal message of the Northern Powerhouse rhetoric, though, is that the country’s economy is ‘sick’ and a ‘long-term economic plan’ delivered by a Northern Powerhouse, will continue ‘delivering a recovery everywhere’ (line 45). The key reason for this, he indicates, is because ‘the powerhouse of London dominates

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<sup>89</sup> From ‘Manchester’, lines 1 and 10 – 11 respectively in Adam O’Riordan, *In the Flesh* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2010) p.1. Further references will be given parenthetically.

more and more. And that's not healthy for our economy. It's not good for our country' (lines 53-54). This idea of health and goodness is there to illustrate, again, the north/south gap. The rhetorical repetition of 'not' emphasises this, and this theme is revisited later in the speech when Osborne, reinforces his previous message stating: 'we're determined to cure the British disease of inventing things but letting others get the commercial benefit from them (lines 209-210). The sickness theme, here, is overlaid on to an economic message which directly connects with his immediate surroundings in MOSI's Power Hall. Surrounded by historic turbines, he invokes his immediate material context to add visual emphasis to the speech. Moreover, he moves beyond the material fabric of his immediate environs to refer to fantastic 'museums and theatres' (line 107) and, saliently, 'fantastic Victorian parks' (line 259).

In offering such references, Osborne emphasises a desire to preserve the past and, by extension, for the social values of the Victorian industrial north to shape the future economic regeneration of the upper half of England. Saliently, though, in referring to urban parks, Osborne alludes to a complicated form of nineteenth-century place-making. On the one hand, the creation of urban parks was a philanthropic gesture; an attempt to create restoratively green spaces in the smog-filled industrial city. At the same time, the creation of these spaces was underpinned by the need to placate the urban workforce.

Alongside the health-as-economics theme are engineering metaphors and Osborne places himself in the speech as the chief conductor who will 'change the economic geography' (line 164). This role is established through the line: 'Now I'm trying to fix this with a series of massive investments in the transport infrastructure in the north' (lines 137-138). 'Fix' is used, simultaneously, as a health metaphor (to heal) and as an engineering metaphor evoking images of soldering and physical labour. In

his imagined north, Osborne presents a map that acts like an electronic motherboard with a desire to 'hook up Hull to our national network' (line 141). Further engineering, science, and production motifs stack up: 'fuel that powerhouse' (line 191), 'science [...] turned into products' (line 197) 'manufacturing the materials of the future' (line 208), and '[w]hat's the Crick of the north going to be? Materials science? Nuclear technology?' (line 225 - 226). The language of geoengineering where 'the cutting edge of manufacturing the materials of the future' (lines 207 - 208) will present an 'incredible opportunity to change the landscape of British science' (line 222). This image of reshaping a large area of the country occurs in two incidences where these images of terraforming are invoked to 'change the landscape' (line 203). There is an imaginative shrinking of the country's geography where 'London and Manchester are just an hour apart' (lines 165). In the second incidence, he imagines an 'ambitious plan' to create a mega city: a 'northern belt radically more connected from east to west - to create the equivalent of travelling around a single global city' (lines 172 - 174). He reiterates the idea of size and speed: the HS2 rail link, the construction of 'one of the world's largest and fastest supercomputers' (line 204), and the ownership of the 'biggest digital hub' (line 251).

There is much repetition and reinforcement of motifs throughout the speech. There are interchangeable superlatives, for example: 'strong' and 'power'. A few semantic fields are drawn upon to emphasise the rhetoric of the speech. Construction words such as 'build' and 'building' are mentioned seven times. 'Strong' and 'strength' are reiterated ten times. The word 'growth' is mentioned nine times. 'Great' is used sixteen times with the comparison adjectives 'big', 'bigger', and 'biggest' mentioned eleven times. The word 'hard' is used six times to show the enormity, and

difficulty, of the task to create a Northern Powerhouse, with the key words of the speech: 'powerhouse', 'powering' and 'power' repeated twenty-nine times.

Elsewhere in his speech, Osborne turns to militaristic language as he presents economic growth as a battle where 'the dice are unfairly loaded against the north' (lines 18-19). He surmises that:

The cities of the north are individually strong, but collectively not strong enough. The whole is less than the sum of its parts [...] We need a Northern Powerhouse too. Not one city, but a collection of northern cities - sufficiently close to each other that combined they can take on the world. (lines 51-57)

Osborne once again draws upon the rhetoric of empire as he imagines how the post-industrial urban centres of the North might come together to 'take on the world'.

Saliently, these militaristic images are coupled with images of another kind of competition: the world of sport or, more particularly, professional football:

if you brought together the best players from each of the Premiership [football] teams in the north, you'd have a team that would wipe the floor with any competition. We need to bring the cities of the north together as a team – that's how Britain will beat the rest. (lines 60-64)

Throughout the speech Osborne draws upon the rhetorical strategy of 'othering' as he creates a binary opposition between us and them, the north and elsewhere. Clearly, there is a double meaning to the verb 'beat': one physical and the other sporting.

Osborne expands on this language of aggression as he promises an 'elected mayor' who will 'fight your corner in the world' (lines 288 – 289). Yet it remains fundamentally unclear as to whom, or what, the Northern Powerhouse will be 'beating'. It is this anonymous 'rest' who have had 'commercial benefit' (line 210)

from British invention. At the crucial climax of the speech, Osborne clarifies that his vision is of a ‘Northern Powerhouse – not to rival the South, but to be its brother in arms as we fight for Britain’s share of the global economy’ (lines 311 – 313). Here Osborne stresses that his aim is not to reinforce the historic division between north and south but, rather, to work in partnership with the south – clustering around, of course, the metropolitan centre – against an externalised other. Osborne underlines that the long-term vision of the imagined powerhouse will ‘bring our northern cities together so they’re bigger and better than anyone can be alone’ (lines 314 – 315). Moreover, the speech concludes with a plea and a ‘promise [to] work tirelessly with anyone across political divides in any of these great cities to make the Northern Powerhouse a reality. For this plan is bigger than any one of us – and it’s worth it for us all’ (lines 319-321). The use of ‘us’ re-emphasises a collective responsibility; an imperative for politicians and people to work ‘across political divides’ and to create an imagined ‘Powerhouse’ out of social duty. Crucially, though, the question remains as to what is the social, economic, cultural relationship between the collective north and the south in this vision of the future? What, exactly, is the relationship between the ‘Powerhouse’ and the metropolitan centre? Such questions proliferated when, after the European referendum in 2016 and his subsequent demotion from the role of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Osborne left front-line politics to become editor of the *Evening Standard* newspaper in London.

The Northern Powerhouse speech demonstrates how political projects are conceived to reframe how places are imagined. Aspects of the speech could then go on to be used to implement spatially-focussed policies. The implementation of such policies would normally be delegated to other departments within government, then



any contracts for promoted to regions, and/or companies to ‘pitch’ for business.<sup>90</sup> Some of the projects mentioned in the Northern Powerhouse speech were already underway and have become part of the ‘Northern Powerhouse’ rebranding. This reconfiguration is, as geographer Neil Lee argues, a label which can be applied to often pre-existing policies to give them coherence, focus and portray the government as acting for the North’.<sup>91</sup> Here, according to Lee, the definition of the north is ‘fuzzy’ as the precise ‘geographical scope of the Northern Powerhouse has never been defined’ (p.484). What emerges is a homogenous view of the north that is essentially predicated on a vision of the urban centre of Manchester. So, for example, although Osborne seeks to project an image of northern civic solidarity, one of his attempts to link the cities of the Powerhouse is based upon a sporting analogy: an analogy which feeds off and back into Manchester’s self-projection as a footballing city. Rochdale is name-checked in the speech; but, saliently, it is mentioned as the birthplace of the then Culture Secretary, Sajid Javid (line 244), rather than a place with its own distinct identity, ambitions and needs. According to Lee, Osborne’s avoidance of specifying what will happen to other places in a re-imagined and re-invigorated ‘North’ is ‘a clever piece of politics’ (p. 487). The question remains as to how does a town such as Rochdale fit into the overarching spatial narrative that Osborne articulated in his Northern Powerhouse speech?

In order to open up further thinking about Rochdale and place-making, there is a need to focus on more localised projects and practices. While the political

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<sup>90</sup> For example, the UK Trade & Investment, ‘Northern Powerhouse Investment Pitchbook’ (UKTI, 2015) <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/464356/Northern.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/464356/Northern.pdf)> [accessed 1 April 2016]; and Department for Communities and Local Government, *Northern Powerhouse Strategy (Report)* (London, November 2016). <[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/571562/NPH\\_strategy\\_web.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/571562/NPH_strategy_web.pdf)> [accessed 12 October 2017].

<sup>91</sup> Neil Lee, ‘Powerhouse of Cards? Understanding the “Northern Powerhouse”’, *Regional Studies*, 51.3 (2017), p. 480. Further references to this article will be given parenthetically.

machinations and priorities of the Northern Powerhouse project change, the Greater Manchester region incorporates smaller spatial visioning practices. There are projects located inside, and outside of the Rochdale borough that are examples of regeneration practices and top-down place-making. In 2015, for example, Rochdale Borough Council chose to commemorate the First World War by rededicating a handful of residential roads – already named for military battles - in the Spotland area of the town. The ‘Battle Streets of Rochdale’ project was led by the then council leader Richard Farnell to change ‘community's physical environment to reflect the personal and individual sacrifices made for our national security’.<sup>92</sup> This rededication took the form of producing new street signage for five streets: Jutland Avenue, Marne Crescent, Mons Avenue, Verdun Crescent, and Falkland Avenue. This is an attempt at top-down place-making to produce a collective nostalgia. This creates, geographer Tim Edensor suggests in his book *Industrial Ruins*, a new social memory where ‘these commemorative processes replace memories that are embedded in everyday habits, traditions and social interactions’ (2005, p. 127). For me, I would argue that this decision, imposed on the communities living on the streets, perhaps goes against what World War One was supposedly for: to defend democracy from autocratic control.

Such top-down decisions shape, and re-shape, how Rochdale is made in the imagination of both residents and visitors alike. These processes can be further unpicked by turning to textual documents that provide the foundations for place-making strategies and practices. The first such text, *Shaping Rochdale's Future*, was a six-page document produced in autumn 2014 by regeneration company Rochdale Town Centre, aimed at residents, business owners, and workers. In 2012, parts of the

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<sup>92</sup> A map of the battle streets can be found here: Anon., ‘The Battle Streets of Rochdale’, 2015 <<http://www.rochdale.gov.uk/armed-forces-personnel/Pages/the-battle-streets-of-rochdale.aspx>> [accessed 6 February 2018].

built environment of Rochdale town centre were demolished as part of the *Rochdale Renaissance* regeneration project. The main themes from *Shaping Rochdale's Future* are of transformation and value. The front cover of the document is an image of a bright yellow tram with the boxy glass shape of Number One Riverside, a building that houses the main library and council services. This transformation is emphasised by the language within the document; the word new is repeated twenty-seven times over the course of the document.

Yet, crucially, this emphasis on newness and creation is placed alongside images of renewal. The document is informed – and destabilised – by an implicit tension. There is a simultaneous desire to both build upon and forget the past. This erasure acts as a way of trying to change how Rochdale is conceived in the contemporary imagination: the abuses caused by Cyril Smith; the scandals during Simon Danczuk's role of Rochdale's MP; the horrific sexual crimes committed by a handful of predominantly, but not exclusively, Asian men against young women in the early 2000s; and earlier racial tensions in the 1970s and 1980s. The radical transformation is hinted at through the changing geography of the built environment. There are maps produced in the document: an overhead shot of Rochdale and a road map used to illustrate the changes, and to visually represent proposed future developments for the town. The 'reshaping' juxtaposes creation with destruction. The word 'demolition' is repeated five times but is balanced with the notion of 'temporary' fixtures which are essential if this transformation is to be realised. There is the language of compromise: 'A brand new place of worship on Entwisle Road replaces the old church, demolished to make way for the Town Centre East development'.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Rochdale Town Centre, *Shaping Rochdale's Future. Autumn 2014* (Rochdale: Rochdale Town Centre, 2014) <[http://www.rochdaleexchange.co.uk/images/2191-Regen\\_A4\\_6pp\\_WEB\\_NOV\\_14.pdf](http://www.rochdaleexchange.co.uk/images/2191-Regen_A4_6pp_WEB_NOV_14.pdf)> [Accessed 4 January 2016] p.5. Further references to this document will be given parenthetically.

Here, faith has a new topography, however, the image chosen to accompany this statement displays an uninviting image of a squat, beige building.

All the images of the new/renewed buildings, and in the text, are quantified by value.<sup>94</sup> To value something means that it is not taken for granted, that it is cherished, something that is valued can be assumed to have an emotional attachment. Of course, though, the term 'value' also carries monetary associations; if something is good value it is worth the cost and in *Shaping Rochdale's Future* 'value' is measured in money. The costs cited within the document are listed: £4million uncovering the river; £21million for the new Rochdale sixth form college; £11.5million for a new bus station; £7million re-cladding for Hopwood Hall, a Further Education college; a £20million police station refurbishment; a £2.3million extension of Rochdale Pioneers' Museum; and a £11million new pool and leisure centre (p.5). There is an emphasis placed upon the value of the shopping centre, museum, and leisure centre: activities that involve an input of capital to be enjoyed. These centres of retail, culture and leisure are to provide short-term bursts of entertainment rather than to engender a sense of place, or to even encourage communities or individuals to experience topophilia (Tuan, 1974). These investments are justified as they mean: 'value added performance', 'modern passenger facilities', leading to generic awards such as: a 'new and award-winning library', and an award for 'best corporate workplace in the country' (p. 5).

The final page of the document notes the 'increasing levels of private sector investment' (p.6.) This is a re-organisation of the social space of the town centre where parts of a place are leased out or sold to private concerns. This is framed as something that is 'helping revitalise Rochdale town centre as a vibrant hub' (p. 6). Clearly,

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<sup>94</sup> The map from this document of the buildings will be discussed in Chapter Three.

though, questions need to be raised about the nature of the democratic process: large pieces of land are no longer considered to be held in common, there are no other ways to participate in this place apart from the sort of activity that involves spending money, and there is no recourse for participation in a democratic place-making process.

Another problem with this top-down form of place-making is what Per Gunner Røe calls, in a discussion of ‘suburban Oslo, the threat of ‘dominating discourses’.<sup>95</sup> These are made by an organisation, or individuals, from outside the community attempting to control what happens within a place. Røe’s concern lies around the issue that some of these private investment mechanisms do not allow for public intervention; there is no community involvement and so a company ends up shaping the place instead. The lack of democratic participation from the people for whom this social space has been created runs the risk of creating further ‘blandscapes’ or what Andrew Simms *et al* coined ‘clone towns’ in *Clone Town Britain: The Survey Results on the Bland State of the Nation*, produced in 2005 for the New Economics Foundation (nef). The nef report contends that as the high street of a city, or town, becomes saturated with the identikit multinational companies and chain stores, this creates a homogenous look and feel. These places become like anywhere else with a similar offering and are only a shopping experience.

The brands and images scattered throughout the *Shaping Rochdale's Future* document are indicative of how a place is represented, imagined, and made. There are illustrations and images used throughout the document. The palette of the cover image utilises shades of grey, blue, black, yellow, with small splashes of red from the signage and the red lights of the tram. There are few instances of green used and no green used

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<sup>95</sup> Per Gunnar Røe, ‘Analysing Place and Place-Making: Urbanization in Suburban Oslo’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 38.2 (2014), p.501.

at all on the cover image. The front page of the document is a photograph featuring slightly hunched over white adults – who could possibly be determined to be of middle age or older - walking away from a bright yellow tram. Behind these people is a blocky building, looming in the background like a steel and glass ice cube tray. There is a CCTV camera post, offering security and at the same time a slightly sinister omniscient surveillance. Warning signs in yellow, blue, red and white are attached to lamp posts and the tram's destination states: 'East Didsbury via Oldham'. These images present quite a grim aesthetic, with the emphasis on grey and on surveillance. Further, unless you were familiar with Rochdale there is nothing that represents or that identifies it, there is no *sense* of place.

Both the Northern Powerhouse speech and *Shaping Rochdale's Future* demonstrate a neoliberal agenda: one that privileges economics and of ever-expanding growth at any cost and could be suggested as continuing the repetitive crises caused by untrammelled capitalism and consumption. This agenda is but one narrative among many other narratives, yet it is one that is easily, or forcibly implemented by those who have power. Place-making, regeneration, and other words interchangeable for development are ways of telling stories – albeit some whose stories have sanctioned, or approved, narratives. There is a danger, too, of privileging one narrative over another, allowing one narrative - in this instance, one of top-down place-making discourse - to dominate, and/or appropriate, other narratives and smooth these stories to fit certain agendas.

Alternative place-making practices embrace the spirit of place through different mechanisms including: subversion, display, observation, food, and walking. This has been explored in a few areas, for example: geographer Clare Tunnacliffe is concerned with how street art acts as a subversive creative intervention in place-

making; Maarten Loopmans *et al* concentrate on photography and the politics of everyday place-making; Victoria Henshaw *et al* are interested in how place is observed through scent; and ethnographer Sarah Pink analyses how communal connections are made through sharing food and walking experiences.<sup>96</sup> Further engagement with place-making includes the application of new technologies such as augmented realities and computer assisted design. The above demonstrates a form of what geographer Cara Courage calls ‘social place-making’.<sup>97</sup> While place is present on the different scales as outlined above, the practice of place, and the language of all these place-making processes is ultimately a collection of different realities. These realities incorporate placial community narratives: the collected and individual stories that constitute social place-making methodologies.

While the above social place-making approaches allow concessions within their research on creative and/or social activism, they tend towards being anthropocentric. This is also an issue in some of the place-making literature where there is no concern for the ecologies of place. Anthropogenic climate change has been argued as being one of the drivers of the 2015 floods and a move towards incorporating environmental concerns and that ‘future-proofing’ will be imperative. There are a few focussed examples of anthropocentric place-making practices that are concerned with working towards a post-carbon society, incorporating ‘greening’

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<sup>96</sup> See: Claire Tunnacliffe, ‘Street Messages and Creative Placemaking’, *The Bartlett Development Planning Unit*, 2015 <<http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/dpublog/2015/11/17/street-messages-and-creative-placemaking/>> [accessed 1 May 2016]; Maarten Loopmans, Gillian Cowell, and Stijn Oosterlynck, ‘Photography, Public Pedagogy and the Politics of Place-Making in Post-Industrial Areas’, *Social & Cultural Geography*, 13.7 (2012), pp. 699–718; and Henshaw *et al* (2015); Sarah Pink, ‘An Urban Tour The Sensory Sociality of Ethnographic Place-Making’, *Ethnography*, 9.2 (2008), pp.175–96.

<sup>97</sup> Cara Courage, ‘Placemaking as Performative Art’, *Royal Geographical Society Annual International Conference*, 2014 <[https://www.academia.edu/8099324/Placemaking\\_as\\_performative\\_art](https://www.academia.edu/8099324/Placemaking_as_performative_art)> [accessed 15 January 2016] p.3.

initiatives such as green roofs, geothermal heating, and sensitive architecture that utilises the changing weather.<sup>98</sup>

If there is no focus on ecological processes, and wildlife, then this poses issues around imaging, and reimagining, places. Further, it raises questions around who makes the decisions about conservation and construction. These projects seem focussed on neoliberal interventions such as privatising space (selling buildings or land to private enterprise), improving commercial opportunities in the shape of consumer centres, or on implementing ways to brand and/or re-brand a place. They lack democratic input from the communities who live, work, and play in these areas – rather, they are imposed upon communities. They are projects that utilise persuasive rhetoric, evocative, and emotional language conjuring utopian images in the imagination implying that a “nice” place can only be realised by neoliberal interventions facilitated by those in charge.

This thesis suggests that ultimately, place-making is a form of story-telling. The myriad realities in everyday Rochdale are different to the stories told in official documents and urban planning. As the Northern Powerhouse project demonstrates, these are policies and strategies that are in flux. Places, to return to the theoretical definitions with which this chapter began, do not have a simple state-sanctioned story, but possess a plethora of narratives: communal and individual stories that make a place through imagination and everyday lived experience. Throughout this thesis I argue that places are not simply made through shops and sky-high shards of glass and

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<sup>98</sup> For examples of ‘green’ place-making see: Michael Hebbert, ‘The Three Ps of Place Making for Climate Change’, *The Town Planning Review*, 80.4/5 (2009), pp.359–70; Elizelle Juanee Cilliers *et al*, ‘Green Place-Making in Practice: From Temporary Spaces to Permanent Places’, *Journal of Urban Design*, 20.3 (2015), pp.349–66; Alex Franklin and Terry Marsden, ‘(Dis)Connected Communities and Sustainable Place-Making’, *Local Environment*, 20.8 (2015), pp.940–56; and Terry Marsden and Francesca Farioli, ‘Natural Powers: From the Bio-Economy to the Eco-Economy and Sustainable Place-Making’, *Sustainability Science*, 10.2 (2015), pp.331–44.



steel, but are made - and understood - through other mechanisms such as: mundane day-to-day existence; specific ecology – from human existence to the mosses in the pavement; creative interventions – temporary street art and architecture; and sensory experience – the tactility of a place through smell, sound, taste and feel; and creative responses such as art, writing, and movement.

It is this processual and mutable nature of place that leads Jeff Malpas to suggest that: ‘place has to be understood as itself a rather dynamic and relational structure in which we are already embedded, rather than some static object’.<sup>99</sup> The dynamism of place, and places, is complex; places are imbued with meaning, experienced in different ways by humans, and those that are more-than-human, individually and collectively. Places have the potential to be elusive, weird, inviting or exclusive. Given this plurality, there is much continued theoretical discussion as to what ‘place’ means. Places do not exist in isolation; these locations are part of a wider domain. There are many different theoretical approaches to place and this chapter has homed in on a discussion of some of the major theories and thinkers. These methodological explorations help to provide theoretical contexts for understanding what might be meant by a sense of place and for reflecting on the lived experience of place. Moreover, they help to provide theoretical contexts for the critical analysis of examples of textualised top-down place-making. In the next chapter, I build upon these theoretical foundations to explore how the place of Rochdale has been perceived and made in another form of writing: literature.

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<sup>99</sup> Jeff Malpas, ‘Place and Human Being’, *Environmental and Architectural Phenomenology Newsletter*, 20.3 (2009), p.22.

## Chapter Two: The Literary Geographies of Rochdale

The chapel of St Chadde was accordingly built on the hill-top, where the church now stands, and unto which the foundations had been so marvellously conveyed. One hundred and twenty-four steps were dug to accomplish the ascent, and enable the good people to go to prayers (John Roby, 'The Goblin Builders', 1829, p.41).

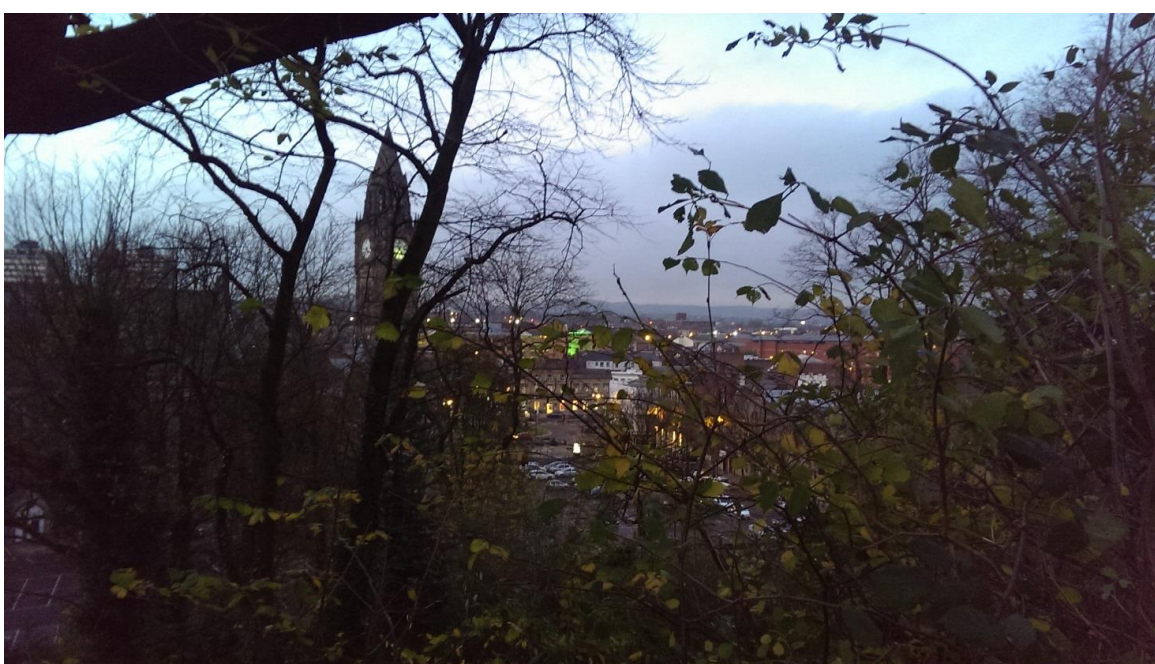


Figure 7: Rochdale Town Hall from Saint Chad's Churchyard (source: author's own).

According to local folklore, Saint Chad's church was supposed to be built in the heart of the town centre during construction, the pagan spirited goblins stole the foundation stones at night. To thwart the goblins, the church was built at the top of a hill.<sup>100</sup> This is the purported reason why Saint Chad's church was built on the hill overlooking Rochdale town. As the church overlooks the town, it offers a leafy panorama of the town and the Pennine hills beyond it. Imagine, now, that it's autumn 2014, the

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<sup>100</sup> There is a full retelling of this legend in John Roby, *Popular Traditions of Lancashire. Volume 1* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1829).

beginning stages of my PhD project. It's early evening, nearly November. I leaned against a low boundary that delineates one of the edges of Saint Chad's churchyard; it is known as the 'Saxon Wall' and constructed from slotted slabs of shale-coloured stone. This wall protects me from tumbling down the moderately steep slope of Sparrow Hill, the eponymous birds of which have long gone to roost. I try to capture as much of the skyline as I can in the small screen of my phone (see figure 7). I'm facing northwards-ish. To my left, through the shrubs and tree leaves, is the clock tower of the town hall with two of the 'Seven Sisters' just visible through twiggy branches. If you were to follow the wall along, to the north-west, you would come to the church steps, there are one hundred and twenty-three – or is it twenty-four, I always lose count halfway down – where you descend the hill, past Packer Spout, and onto the Town Hall carpark. Turn around, look at the steps. These were the steps that stopped the goblins hindering the building of the church, or so the story goes. There are many odd stories like this, folk tales, poetry, prose that still await me. There is a Rochdale literary canon; a rich seam of writing about place.



Figure 8: Rochdale Town Hall from St Chads Churchyard (Source: John Trafford Clegg, 1895, p.300).

The image above of Rochdale town hall is in *The Works of John Trafford Clegg* (*Th' Owd Weighver*). *Stories, Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect*, a collection of textual sketches that use the local dialect. While this picture, when set alongside the one I took, depicts how Rochdale has changed over time, the borough's literary geographies similarly depict how Rochdale is represented as a place. This chapter explores these shifts, firstly by outlining the scholarly thinking and practice of literary geographies, including a brief historical overview. This illustrates how tools and ideas from literary geographies can be used in tandem with placial thinking and place-making practices to prise open the literary texts of Rochdale. This discussion highlights some of the thinking in critical literary geography, and while I take a starting point with geocriticism, I am particularly interested in geohumanistic ideas from this scholarly field which feed into my creative-critical approach. The second part is a discussion of the method of selecting the literary texts and indicates how they

will be used. The final, and most substantial, part of the chapter is dedicated to exploring dominant themes and tropes that make up Rochdale's literary geographies and as they build different senses of place, multiple narratives and multifarious Rochdales emerge. As the chapter progresses, there is a creative intervention: a dialect poem presented like a form of direct action against the critical text. This demonstrates that the creative cannot resist the critical (and vice versa).

### ***Literary Geographies: An Overview***

‘[P]laces are dynamic, changeable, moody beings that shape their inhabitants and are shaped by them at the same time’ (Paul Evans, *Field Notes from the Edge*).<sup>101</sup>

In Chapter One, I discussed the different ways in which nonrepresentational place can come-into-being. Literature has great potential to make place, to shape locations in the reader's imagination. ‘Literature’, as Douglas C.D. Pocock surmises, ‘is both a source and a tool for geographical exploration, while at the same time offering or suggesting a variety of roles which the scholar may adopt’.<sup>102</sup> In this section, I trace a ‘variety of roles’ the scholarly field of literary geographies offers to a researcher/writer concerned with Rochdale. This dynamic field uses interdisciplinary approaches to read the writings of society, space, people and place. It is, as Sheila Hones *et al* in the Editorial for the inaugural issue of *Literary Geographies* put it, ‘essentially a way of reading’.<sup>103</sup> Contemporary literary geography scholarship, as the authors of the Editorial suggest,

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<sup>101</sup> Paul Evans, *Field Notes from the Edge* (London: Rider, Ebury Publishing, 2015) p.ix.

<sup>102</sup> Douglas C. D. Pocock, ‘Geography and Literature’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 12.1 (1988), p. 96. Further references will be given parenthetically.

<sup>103</sup> Sheila Hones, Alexander Neal, David Cooper, James Kneale, and Juha Ridanpää, ‘Editorial’, *Literary Geographies*, 1.1 (2015), pp. 1–2. Further references to this will be give parenthetically.

is 'situated at the interface between geography and literary studies' (2015, p.3). In order to tease out how tools from literary geographies can be used to investigate the literary texts of Rochdale, while keeping in mind the plurality of definitions of place, it is helpful to trace the historical development of this emerging interdisciplinary field and the different scholarly approaches within it. Moreover, there are a plurality of approaches in literary geography, the genesis of which lies with William Sharp at the turn of the twentieth century.

Sharp produced a series of articles entitled 'Literary Geography' for British literary publication *Pall Mall* in 1904 - 1905. Sharp, who also wrote poetry and prose under the name of Fiona Macleod, later collated these into a book of the same name: *Literary Geography*.<sup>104</sup> The aim of the articles, and, subsequently, the book, was to facilitate exploration of topographical and geographical writing from a range of (predominantly) nineteenth century writers including the Brontës, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and William Makepeace Thackeray. The final three chapters in the book do not follow a single author directly; rather, they focus on places – the Lake District, the River Thames and Lake Geneva – and consider how those locations are positioned in literature. Throughout the book, there are reproductions of art and photography of places. Additionally, busts and portraiture of key people are mentioned within the text. As the 'Forward' states, the intention of the book was for the 'literary tourist' to wander 'through literary lands' from the comfort of their armchair.<sup>105</sup>

Literary geography, as a term and a practice, disappeared from view for much of the twentieth century. Further developments unfolded in the 1970s as a result of the so-called cultural turn in geography and the social sciences. Suddenly, culturally-

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<sup>104</sup> For more on the life of William Sharp and his pseudonymous creative alter ego see Elizabeth A. Sharp *William Sharp A Memoir*. (New York: Duffield & Company, The Trow Press, 1910).

<sup>105</sup> From the 'Foreword' of William Sharp, *Literary Geography* (London: Pall Mall Publications, 1904) n.p.

minded geographers identified literary texts as having geographical application; texts could be used for studying landscape, space, and place. This interface, geographer Pocock suggests in his article ‘Literature and Geography’, could be used to look at, for example, the plot of a text to go ‘deeper than any spatial correlation. Literature recounts a story in the telling of which we are, directly or indirectly, privy to the character’s innermost thought, feelings and experiences’ (1988, p.93). This could be used to unpick a character’s perception of their environment, the impact of the settings on their emotions, how a character moves from place to place. In such an example, the fascination for geographers using literature lies in exploring *how* literary works might represent place. Crucially, geographers were simultaneously preoccupied with the notion that literary works can actually serve to shape our sense *and* understanding of that geographical world. In other words, geographers became alert to the fact that literary texts produce geographical knowledge.

The next major shift occurred in the 1990s and arrived with the ‘spatial turn’ across the arts, humanities and social sciences. This shift was noted by the literary critic, John Kerrigan, in an article published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, in 1998. In that article, entitled ‘The Country of the Mind’, Kerrigan traced how ‘a powerful set of factors, including the growth of postcolonial criticism, is edging geographical material into the literary field’.<sup>106</sup> Such spatial-critical thinking continued into the 2000s as evidenced, for example, by a special issue of *New Formations* published in 2005-2006.

*New Formations* is an interdisciplinary journal focussed on provoking discussions on contemporary and political issues. The 2005-2006 edition was themed ‘The Spatial Imaginary’ and was produced following ‘Textual Spaces/Spatial Texts’, a discussion

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<sup>106</sup> John Kerrigan, ‘The Country of the Mind’, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 November 1998, p.3.

at a 2004 conference session at the Royal Geographical Society. In the Editorial for the journal, Richard Phillips and Scott McCracken noted how the discussions were transgressing ‘disciplinary boundaries’ between cultural studies – such as critical literary studies – and geography.<sup>107</sup> In this issue, literary critic Andrew Thacker proposes the development of ‘a critical literary geography’. Thacker presents an overview of the ‘growing interest in textuality of space and the spatiality of text’, noting that ‘questions of space and geography have become recognized as legitimate and important topics in many areas of literary and cultural studies’.<sup>108</sup> He argues for a materialist analysis of space and an ‘engagement with representations of space and the impact of lived places on the writer’ (2005-2006, p.73). This is in order to offer new interpretations of text and his article demonstrates one approach within literary geographies scholarship. Thacker’s approach is Marxist at its heart, ‘revolving around a triumvirate of materiality, history, and power’ (p. 59).

Literary geographies is a broad church and, as Sheila Hones *et al* propose in the Editorial for the inaugural issue of the journal *Literary Geographies*, the intervening years have seen the emergence of a much more open literary geography, ‘which has come to include work grounded in a wide range of academic fields including not only human geography but also literary criticism, literary cartography, geocriticism, comparative literature, and the digital and spatial humanities’ (2015, p.1). Thus, while contemporary literary geographical practice might take on many different forms, crucially, most of this work is characterised by interdisciplinarity, methodological eclecticism and a commitment to collaboration.

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<sup>107</sup> Richard Phillips and Scott McCracken, ‘Editorial: The Spatial Imaginary’, *New Formations*, 2005, p. 8.

<sup>108</sup> Andrew Thacker, ‘The Idea of a Critical Literary Geography’, *New Formations*, 57.1 (2005), p.58.



The term ‘literary geography’ may first have been used over a century ago, but I would argue that it has only truly emerged as a genuine field over the last decade or so. Lively debate continues as to what ‘literary geography/ies’ means and how it can function as a theoretical framework for theory and practice. The different strands from humanist to Marxist presents a fertile arena for debate, critique and collaboration. Further, there are continued discussions on the different schools of thought and approaches to exploring these geographic/literary intersections such as: considering the physical space of the text (Hones, 2008); analyses of post-war poetry and geography (Alexander & Cooper, 2013); authorial writing practice (Saunders, 2016); and exploring literary mapping in the ‘digital age’ (Cooper *et al.*, 2016).<sup>109</sup> For this thesis, the pluralism of literary geographies offers useful interdisciplinary approaches to explore literary texts of place and make connections in a geographically ‘attuned’ way.<sup>110</sup> Positioning this thesis in the realm of literary geographies scholarship allows access to previous interdisciplinary approaches and rich seams of experience; it strengthens foundations of a literary survey of Rochdale allowing for the borough to be ‘read’ in different ways.

I argue that literary geographical scholarship shares kinship with the geohumanities through its inter- and multi-disciplinary “cross-pollination” approaches in that it is concerned with: creation, practice, content, production, dissemination, and critical reflection. I am taking the collaborative approach from both fields (with place, with people, and my professional practice in Rochdale). I am taking the creative element of both schools of thought to thread through the thesis, reclaiming some of the

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<sup>109</sup> See: Sheila Hones, ‘Text as It Happens: Literary Geography’, *Geography Compass*, 2.5 (2008), pp.1301–17; *Poetry & Geography: Space & Place in Post-War Poetry*, ed. by Neal Alexander and David Cooper (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013); Angharad Saunders, ‘Interpretations on an Interior’, *Literary Geographies*, 1.2 (2016) pp.174–194; and David Cooper, Christopher Donaldson, and Patricia Murrieta-Flores, *Literary Mapping in the Digital Age* (London: Routledge, 2016).

<sup>110</sup> Sheila Hones, ‘Literary Geographies, Past and Future’, *Literary Geographies*, 1.2 (2015), pp.1-5.

ground which Douglas Pocock entreated other geographers to ‘write creatively themselves’ (1988, p.97). Finally, I am taking the critical element in the reading of the Rochdale texts.

The literary geographies of Rochdale in this chapter are exemplified through a selection of texts which forms part of a broader literary survey of Rochdale (see Appendix 3). The texts dealt with here have been chosen because they mention specific locations, and include recognisable locations through description or toponyms. The method for selecting these texts was unstructured and exploratory. The texts emerged by visiting three public libraries, one private library, online archives, literature searches, and open leads from work left over from co-writing *Lancashire Folk Tales*. Saliently, there is little extant scholarly work on the literature of Rochdale. There is research in the field of dialect studies focusing on the work of dialect poet John Collier/Tim Bobbin by scholars such as Martha Vicinus, Brian Hollingworth, Susan Zlotnick, Paul Salveson, D. M. Horgan and Taryn Hakala.<sup>111</sup> Connected with this, community groups such as Castleton Literature and Science Group and The Edwin Waugh Society demonstrate the enduring popularity of Lancashire and Rochdalian dialect writing as they continue to offer talks, poetry competitions, and events.<sup>112</sup> Yet, although there is scholarly literary critical work on the writings of Elizabeth Gaskell, there is scant research on other Rochdalian authors and there is nothing – outside Touchstones Heritage Centre’s local studies centre – on Rochdale’s

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<sup>111</sup> See, for example: Martha Vicinus, ‘The Study of Nineteenth Century British Working Class Poetry’, *College English*, 32.5 (1971), pp.548–62; *Songs of the People*, ed. by Brian Hollingworth (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977); Susan Zlotnick, ‘“A Thousand Times I’d Be a Factory Girl”: Dialect, Domesticity, and Working-Class Women’s Poetry in Victorian Britain’, *Victorian Studies*, 35.1 (1991), pp.7–27; Paul S. Salveson, ‘Region, Class, Culture: Lancashire Dialect Literature 1746-1935’ (University of Salford, 1993); D. M. Horgan, ‘Popular Protest in the Eighteenth Century: John Collier (Tim Bobbin), 1708-1786’, *The Review of English Studies*, 48.191 (1997), pp.310–31; and Taryn Hakala, ‘A Great Man in Clogs: Performing Authenticity in Victorian Lancashire’, *Victorian Studies*, 52.3 (2010), pp. 387–412.

<sup>112</sup> Arts Council England funded ‘Edwin Waugh: the Lancashire Burns’ an event on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2017 that celebrated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the writer’s birth.

literary history. This thesis seeks to address this critical lacuna. Appendix 3 offers a comprehensive and chronological bibliography of Rochdale writings: this is an original resource which may be of use to future researchers.

This particular chapter privileges the spatial over the temporal as I seek to identify some of the main themes and tropes of Rochdale literature, which cut across literary historical periods. As with the discussion on scales of place in Chapter One, I have found it necessary to corral these literary texts into four – overlapping – subsections for discussion: Reading the Rock; Reading Identities; Reading the Mundane and Reading the Urban/Rural landscape. I begin from the rock that Rochdale stands upon and build from there ([metaphorically and literally!](#)). The organisation of these subheadings is, by its nature, arbitrary but it is necessary to demonstrate that any of these works can overlap in these categories as this is a way of managing and acknowledging the limitations of this study in order to generate new knowledge. My starting point is geocriticism: connotative places and the relationship between text and place. This provides a necessarily neat way of presenting complex themes and tropes. They are not the definitive literary geographies of Rochdale, rather, they open up the potential for further discussion and research.

There is, at the time of writing this project, no critical writing on a literary Rochdale and I am presenting one way of approaching this as a writer/researcher. I am not interrogating one text but am looking at a holistic vision of place – the starting point is Rochdale rather than the text. With that in mind, it is worth bringing to bear that many of the texts feature more layers than the ones discussed. I could, for example, have chosen to focus on nostalgia, water, gender, class, etc. These four sections demonstrate different ways of ‘reading Rochdale’ and begin to establish

Rochdale's literary geographies as part of a wider northern English urban grit – particularly in contemporary literary and filmic representation.

While this section is focussed on critical research, I am approaching this area of discussion as a writer. This brings in my professional aspect to the study. I have used some of these texts for creative writing activities for my writing group in Rochdale. I am interested in observing structure, themes, tropes and the mechanics of writing a Rochdale literary text for my own writing and educative practice. With this, a sense of my entangled writing-research-educative identity emerges in the study of these texts as I bridge these to see through the eyes of other writers over space and time to see how Rochdale has changed or developed. This supports my broader argument that everywhere has stories, and my intention to inspire writers from different communities in Rochdale with texts written about “their place” in order to enable new writing/s of place. As Pocock puts it, ‘works of minor literary merit may be of major research work’ (1988, p.93). Literature is a dialogue between writer and reader regardless of how it is weighed in “merit” and I would argue against the somewhat pejorative “minor literary merit” comment. Here I will trace Rochdale's literary texts of place and shine a light on myriad presentations of human existence. This survey is an attempt to shine a light on texts that would otherwise have been left understudied, and potentially left unused as stimuli for further creative practice.<sup>113</sup>

### ***Reading the Rock: Imaginary and Gritty Landscapes***

One of the best places to start with a literary investigation concerned with unpicking common themes and tropes is to metaphorically clamber up to the trig point on

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<sup>113</sup> An example of where I used Rochdale texts for a creative writing session can be seen here: <https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2018/09/07/building-storeys-building-stories-creative-writing-session/> Other creative writing session plans are included in Appendix 4.

Blackstone Edge. If it's a clear day, you can see Bear Hill below and the heart shape of Hollingworth Lake. If you have binoculars you could trace out the radio mast on Winter Hill in the distance. Then, climb down from the trig pillar, scramble and scrape your knees on the dark millstone grit of the edge. Sink your feet into the earth with its layers of grass, soil, and the strata of rock beneath.

There are stories written from the landscape and about the surface of places. There are stories and folk tales that pertain to the rock, the toponyms of glacial deposits – Aiggin Stone, Robin Hood's Bed – and texts that seem as if they came from a combination of rock, concrete, and tarmacadam. This first subsection in this chapter is concerned with some of the legends associated with Rochdale. This folkloric exploration comes out of research carried out prior to the PhD when I co-edited *Lancashire Folk Tales*. As a writer, I am curious about the tales that people tell about their land. The second part of this subsection is concerned with more urban portrayals of place – to extend the rock metaphor, these present more “gritty” subject matter than the fantastical stories of the borough.

Folk tales are slippery; as they are told, and retold, their narrative can mutate – particularly in the case of oral storytelling. Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson's *The Lore of the Land. A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys*, published in 2006, is a compendium of folk tales organised geographically. In their introduction, they propose that legends develop on two levels, they ‘grow out of a community's natural curiosity about itself and its surroundings’ on one level, on the other ‘they echo and enhance the community's pride in its own identity, highlighting some striking even which its neighbours

cannot'.<sup>114</sup> Another way of putting it is that local legends are place-making tools with specific, localised narrative motifs. In *Morphology of the Folktale*, published in 1968, Vladimir Propp proposes a sophisticated, if reductive, narrative taxonomy of common structures of folklore which he divides into: tales with 'fantastic content', tales of everyday life; and animal tales. Many of these stories do overlap and Propp codifies these.<sup>115</sup> The folk tales of the Rochdale area are complex and fragmented, they change in their retelling. Even though Propp proposes a sophisticated taxonomy of folklore, and Westwood and Simpson offer a geographical catalogue of tales complete with a map, both works are somewhat reductive in that they cannot capture the complexity, or malleability, of Rochdale's folktales, nor the way folktales travel.

Can I tell you how folktales travel? Let me tell you the story of the Middleton Moonrakers. The first occurrence I found of this story was recorded in 1982 by writer Margaret Smith.<sup>116</sup> In Middleton there's an unusual monument near the Arndale shopping centre in the shape of three rakes. Don't believe me? Here's a picture.

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<sup>114</sup> Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson, *The Lore of the Land. A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys* (London: Penguin, 2006) p. viii. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

<sup>115</sup> See Vladimír Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005).

<sup>116</sup> See Margaret Smith, *Collected Articles on the History of Middleton* (Middleton, Rochdale: Edward Pilling (Printers) Ltd., 1982).



Figure 9: Middleton Moonraker statue. Image taken by the author on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

Weird isn't it? Not really to my taste though. . .

. . . Can you get on with it? There's quite a lot of chapter to get through here.

Fine. The story goes that late one night, after closing time at *The Olde Boar's Head*, two drunken men were meandering their way home. As they were crossing the field, they spotted a pool and what looked like a round, delicious, wheel of cheese submerged in the middle of the water. These being the days before a nifty kebab and the 59 bus home, the two men smacked their hungry lips together and set about retrieving the cheese from the pool. One man found a rake nearby and they proceeded to busy themselves trying to comb the lactic snack out from the depths. A while later, cold, wet, and cheese-less, they found they were not unobserved. A crowd of people had gathered around to laugh at the men's folly, for, of course, they had been tricked by the full moon's reflection on the water's surface.

A nice story, it demonstrates the travelling potential of this tale. It has been attributed to: Grendon, Northamptonshire; Bishop's Cannings, Wiltshire; and Downton, Wiltshire (Westwood and Simpson, 2006). As to which place appropriated it first, well, that's another story for another time. As Westwood and Simpson admit, folklore can migrate with little known about the tales' genesis. These stories 'could have existed elsewhere for generations, and accurate dating is hardly ever possible' (2006 p. viii). Therefore, the accurate mapping of folk tales is arguably an impossible task.

In the nineteenth century, physician and folklorist John Roby travelled around north-west England collecting stories, in some ways trying to map where certain local folklore originated. He recorded these in *Traditions of Lancashire* (1829 and 1872), two volumes of folk tales and oral narratives collected from around the borough. Roby



began his working career as a banker in Rochdale and later went on to write poetry, collect folk tales from the Lancashire region, and teach the histories and “oral traditions” of storytelling. One story, ‘Mother Red Cap’, in volume 2 (1872), follows the tale of Grace and Gervais who, on their way home from the moors, spot a figure on the rocks of Blackstone Edge. Roby presents the visual geography near the opening of the story:

They had toiled up a narrow pathway on the right of a woody ravine, where the stream had evidently formed itself a passage through the loose strata in its course. The brook was heard though hidden by the tangled underwood [...] Soon they gained the summit of a round heathery knoll, whence an extensive prospect rewarded their ascent. The squat, square tower of Rochdale Church might be seen above the dark trees nestling under its grey walls [...] The sky was already growing cold and grey above the ridge opposed to the burning brightness of the western horizon [...] an eminence marking the horizon to the north-west [...] On this hill stood Robin Hood’s coit-stones.<sup>117</sup>

Rock is alluded to throughout this passage – the ‘grey’ rock that makes the church, the ‘cold and grey’ colour of the sky, the cleft of the ‘woody ravine’ brook runs through, the knoll capped with heather, and the ridge of the South Pennine hills. One could locate their walk on a map, tracing Trub Brook to the place where it rises and following the horizon along the ridge of Blackstone Edge to the rock formation known locally as Robin Hood’s Bed.<sup>118</sup> There, one would find on the marking stone, the largest of the rock formation, a figure who later transpires to be the titular Mother Red

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<sup>117</sup> John Roby, *Popular Traditions of Lancashire. Volume 2 (Fifth Edition)* (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1872) p.349. Further references to this work of Roby will be made parenthetically.

<sup>118</sup> For more on folk tales pertaining to this area and to the origin of ‘Robin Hood’s Bed’ see Roby; and Jennie Bailey and David England, *Lancashire Folk Tales* (Stroud: The History Press, 2014).

Cap. Roby describes Mother Red Cap as ‘wild-looking and haggard’, wearing ‘worn and tattered’ clothing with her head ‘bent forward beyond the knee as though she were listening towards the ground’ (pp. 349-350). The woman is already a known pariah, she is socially ostracised and dehumanised. As Gervaise explains to Grace, Mother Red Cap’s:

coming as I have heard, always forbodes [sic] disaster to our house. Hast not heard of a Red Woman that sometimes haunts this neighbourhood? [...] I’ve heard strange and fearful stories of her appearing some years ago, and blighting the corn, poisoning the cattle, with many other diabolical witcheries (p. 350)

Mother Red Cap’s diabolical witcheries also manifest in an animal companion that takes the shape of a raven. In some European cultures, this bird is a symbol for death and witchcraft. For example, in the Poetic Edda of Norse mythology, the ravens Huginn and Munnin are the eyes and ears of Thor – Mother Red Cap’s raven is similarly also an otherworldly messenger. Mother Red Cap’s voice is preternatural, she has a ‘hollow voice, hardly like the tones of a human voice’ which bestows ‘a doom and a curse to each’ (pp. 351-352). As the tale goes on, Grace falls into a death-like coma and is kidnapped by the Rosicrucians, a group who practiced arcane methods, who are in league with Mother Red Cap. The real-life figure of Elizabethan occultist Doctor John Dee is introduced into the story, possibly to lend some sort of credence to the tale, to assist Gervaise. Gervaise then locates Grace in a dungeon-like cellar and the use of this space as a locus of terror is a horror trope. The cellar, as Gaston Bachelard describes, ‘is first and foremost the *dark entity* of the house, the one

that partakes of subterranean forces [...] The creatures moving about in the cellar are slower, less scampering, more mysterious'.<sup>119</sup>

While there is an element of the supernatural in the storytelling, the 'horror' within 'Mother Red Cap' is somewhat hampered. The narrative of the story becomes a victim what William Hansen (1997) calls 'conceptual vagueness'.<sup>120</sup> The vagueness here lies in the introduction of other characters into an already complicated plotline. There are myriad story lines across a convoluted plot. The treatment of Mother Red Cap – like Lizzie Leigh as we shall see below – shows a woman in isolation, shunned, and mistrusted for different reasons. In Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde. On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (1995), a comprehensive, feminist analysis of women in fairy tales, Warner suggests that '[h]atred of older women, and intergenerational strife, may arise not only from rivalry, but from guilt, too, about the weak and dependent'.<sup>121</sup> By the conclusion of the story, Mother Red Cap is weakened by Doctor Dee with an iron ring attached to the side of Grace's house. This ring concealed a charmed core 'wrought out by a cunning smith' and Mother Red Cap is 'shorn of her strength [sinking into] the condition of a hopeless wretched, maniac' (p. 389).

The tale of 'Mother Red Cap' demonstrates how folklore, as legends of place, are uncanny stories that fall between the cracks – they have liminal borders that do not fit into a simple urban / rural dialectic. They are edgelands-esque, where the retelling of a narrative can be unreliable, or, perhaps, misheard. Folk tales are effective as they

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<sup>119</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (New York: Orion Press, 1994) p.39, original italics. Kindle e-book.

<sup>120</sup> William Hansen, 'Mythology and Folktale Typology: Chronicle of a Failed Scholarly Revolution', *Journal of Folklore Research*, 34.3 (1997), p.276.

<sup>121</sup> Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde. On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995) p.227.

are situated in a place, featuring localised aspects and names that would be familiar to those who live nearby such as: the river ‘Spodden that ‘gushes through the rocky cleft [of Healey Dell’s fairies’ chapel]’ (p. 349); ‘Clegg Hall’ – the home of the fictional Grace (p. 349); ‘Tod Lane [and] Manchester’ (p. 354); ‘Beil or Belfield, where the Knights Templars had formerly an establishment’ (p. 358); and popular family names such as Ashton, Buckley, Byron, and Clegg. These stories mythologise that specific place and are collected and passed on by the community, becoming embedded in the collective imagination (Warner, 2006). Folk tales, no matter how fantastical, or weird, they are, belong to everyone (Hansen, 1997; Garner, 2011). There is a continued fascination with this oral tradition and these stories are flexible; they morph into new tales as culture changes. These spooky stories have metamorphosed into stories of unidentified flying object sightings in Littleborough and liquid poltergeists.<sup>122</sup> Alien abductions, and other numinous phenomenon are added to the palette of folklore and embedded into the imagination. As folklorist and author Alan Garner (2011) puts it:

We may have lost our terror of the cornfield and the greenwood, but we still need terror. [Mystical beings] now ride flying saucers, and it is in the galaxy, not the churchyard, that menace lies.<sup>123</sup>

The imaginary geographies of folk tales and urban legends are not always well-formed stories, they are a form of escapism to be performed or read that conjure up a Rochdale that is magical and mutable.

In direct contrast to these transient tales, are the stories and poems that involve a ‘northern grit’. Simon Armitage’s *Xanadu* (1992) is useful for discussing this trope.

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<sup>122</sup> See John Michell and Bob Rickard, *Unexplained Phenomena. A Rough Guide Special* (London: Rough Guides, 2000).

<sup>123</sup> Alan Garner, *Collected Folk Tales* (London: HarperCollins, 2011) p.4.

The 'Xanadu' in the title is Ashfield Valley, a social housing block that was demolished in 1992. The Ashfield Valley estate is mentioned in Hoyle's *Rule of Night* (1975), as the broken – in both the metaphorical and literal sense – home of main character Kenny. It offers 'home' as a motif of urban northern grit and, by extension, a (mostly) topophobic place. Simon Armitage's *Xanadu* (1992), is Armitage's second collection. Armitage's first poetry collection, *Zoom* (1989) positioned him as an edgy poet, one who utilised northern vernacular, and narratives, in his lyrical poetry. The language and poetic style is similar in *Xanadu* (produced after the film-poem of the same name) and there are recurrent themes within it. The key ones mentioned here of dreaming, drifting, and the domestic all appear together in the following lines within the long poem:

Last night I dreamt

I sailed to Mandalay;

walked on the roof,

looked east and westward

for the sea and saw

the whole of Rochdale

as a bay

and Ashfield Valley as a cove

deep and dark

with us in its hold (lines 468-477)

Refrains of these notions, and concepts, of dreaming, sailing, and home drift in and out of the poem. There is sense of topophobia with the ‘deep and dark’ cove of the housing estate, and seemingly no escape from a place that has ‘us in its hold’.

Similarly, to the Xanadu of Samuel Coleridge’s ‘Kubla Khan’, Armitage creates a Xanadu of Ashfield Valley; an unfilled dream of an ironic stately pleasure dome, and a building that was allegedly sinking into a ‘lifeless water’ (‘Kubla Khan’, line 28).<sup>124</sup> Ashfield Valley was built during the mid-1960s and opened in 1968. It was envisaged as ‘the place to be’ (*Xanadu*, line 535) with architecture based on the Swedish Skarne method and inspired by Le Corbusier’s ‘streets in the sky’ designs. The streets in the sky were concrete bridges supposed to connect communities between each building. The initial optimism of the blocks is explored by Armitage throughout the poem; there were twenty-six blocks named for locations outside of Rochdale such as Buttermere, Jevington, and Otterburn. The connecting bridges, the ‘streets in the sky’ of this place were described by Hoyle’s narrator in *Rule of Night* thus: ‘below you the concrete walkways and dilapidated flowerbeds’<sup>125</sup>. As *Hardcore Valley*, a Granada Documentary produced in 1990 put it, Ashfield Valley was ‘a planning dream that became a nightmare’.<sup>126</sup> The flats became an unpleasant place to live through a lack of municipal concern. Most of the flats were demolished during the early 1990s and the rest of the site is now the locus of an industrial and shopping centre.

While the history of the flats is bleak, Armitage’s grim aesthetic situates it alongside other artistic and cultural touchstones. As well as Coleridge, Armitage

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<sup>124</sup> Originally written in 1797 and republished in Samuel Coleridge, ‘Kubla Khan’, in *Selections from Coleridge*, ed. by Andrew Lang (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1898).

<sup>125</sup> See: Trevor Hoyle, *Rule of Night* (London: Quercus Editions Ltd., 1975). location 93, Kindle e-book, Further references will be given parenthetically.

<sup>126</sup> See: Charles Tremayne, ‘Hardcore Valley’ (Granada North West: Granada TV, 1990).

evokes Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) and Michael Dobbs's *House of Cards* trilogy (1989 - 1994) with recurring images and themes including: shipping and being lost at sea; dreams, somnolence, nightmares; prison / incarceration; more-than-human life / urban wildlife; home and place attachment; and Manchester and Rochdale's geographies (and the tensions between these places). As the poem's focus moves inside and outside the building, the speaker is like a ghost, passing through walls and into the intimate space of the home. Ashfield Valley is space imbued in meaning, and made through everyday experience, 'it is not', as Gaston Bachelard puts it, 'an inert box' (1994, p. 47). The housing estate may be shaped into boxes that are unlovely, but they have significant meaning for those who dwell there. Armitage traces the decline and fall from the time when Ashfield Valley 'this house of cards, these Meccano apartments / thirty years ago were the cat's pyjamas' (lines 543 - 544), through to their demolition. There is an element of performance in the demolition with the use of the phrases: 'raise the roof / bring the house down' (lines 635 - 636). These phrases are usually associated with theatre where great shows 'raise the roof' and where particularly sublime moments 'bring the house down', the echo of applause around the venue. This demonstrates an ironic humour with the juxtaposition of demolition and of audience appreciation. The poem ends at an impasse, the 'vision of a dream' broken into fragments where, in the closing stanzas, the previous denizens are

[...] idle now on waiting lists, and dream

of runways, level crossings, traffic queues;

waiting to come clean,

to break the news

of how we live, of what we have seen,  
of how it leaves us, and what that proves.  
A light goes green,  
but nobody moves. (lines 661-664)

Armitage's poetic imagining of a housing estate in Rochdale is held on a pause. There is an anticipation for *something* to happen.

### ***Reading Identities of Rochdale: From Cooperation to Isolation***

The Cooperative, and ideas of cooperation, are common themes in some of the contemporary texts about Rochdale. *The Cooperative Revolution*, written by political cartoonist Paul 'Polyp' Fitzgerald and published in 2012 by *New Internationalist* magazine and The Cooperative Group is a graphic novel that starts with the history of the Rochdale Pioneers. In the graphic novel, the artist quickly moves out from the pioneers and Rochdale to explore contemporary cooperation. Fitzgerald offers an imagined future of ecological, and just, global cooperation. Even though the action moves from the borough, throughout the graphic novel there is a repetition of "Rochdale!" to recall the original 'Rochdale Principles' that now inform the international cooperative movement.<sup>127</sup>

In contrast to the communal, cooperative aspects Polyp focuses on, one of the main, recurring themes of Rochdale's literary geographies is that of isolation and

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<sup>127</sup> See International Co-operative Alliance, 'ICA: Cooperative Identity, Values & Principles' <<https://www.ica.coop/en/whats-co-op/co-operative-identity-values-principles>> [accessed 25 September 2018].



othering. In Vikram Seth's *An Equal Music* (1999) the main character, musician Michael Holme, is portrayed as a Rochdalian in exile. Michael is based in London but is pulled by the lure of his childhood home of Rochdale and the idea of a northern existence that is always out of reach: 'I could sell my flat and buy somewhere cheaper [in a city] like Manchester, Leeds or Sheffield'.<sup>128</sup> The confusion of identity and place is explored through the musician's discontent and his relationships, both romantic and placial. Rochdale and 'The North' is a magnet that Michael, the first-person narrator, is simultaneously tugged towards and repelled by. While he does not feel at home in London's 'violin jungle', he is attracted to the capital's 'heartache', 'busyness', and 'varied pickings' (p.481). Rochdale, without any 'varied pickings', is a place that book reviewer Karl Miller describes as 'unemotional Lancashire'.<sup>129</sup> Yet it is not an unemotional Lancashire as Michael's internal turmoil, and the external flux in his relationships, stem from his unsettled emotional state and inability to determine his identity. He is continually drawn and repelled by a return 'home':

Even if my speech throws up only the odd Lancastrian trace, once here my ears relax into the lilt; they are at home with Bacup and Todmorden and all the names that aliens distort...But then, why not Rochdale itself with its moors all around...No, not Rochdale with the heart torn out of it, the claustrophobic market, the murdered street of my childhood, gutted into vertical slums. (1999, p.377)

There is topophobia in the dark, melodramatic descriptions of Rochdale, from the panoramic moors to the focus on the town's 'torn out' heart and feelings of claustrophobia from the shopping spaces and 'the murdered street' of his childhood.

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<sup>128</sup> Vikram Seth, *An Equal Music* (London: Orion Books Limited, 1999) p.481. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

<sup>129</sup> Karl Miller, 'Books Without Borders', *New Republic*, 221.2 (1999), p.45.

Conversely, because of Michael's Lancastrian traces, he doesn't 'fit' in London either even though he has settled there. This mirrors the author Vikram Seth's experience as an Indian author living in England, described by literature scholar Rita Joshi as an 'international writer who is a global, world citizen'.<sup>130</sup> The depiction of Michael's unsettled existence. He is a citizen who is somewhere between here (London/Vienna) and there (Rochdale), is what Silvia Albertazzi suggests as being a 'postcolonial representation of European culture'.<sup>131</sup> The oscillations of Michael between London (the city, work and love life), Rochdale (place of birth, simultaneously urban and rural), and Vienna (the crucible of Classical music) demonstrates how Seth captures tensions of place and isolation within it. When Michael picks up his violin in London and plays the rising sequences of Vaughan Williams's 'The Lark Ascending' 'it evokes', as Fae Bushnell posits, 'his hometown, Rochdale, center [sic] of England's gritty industrialism, where larks are nonetheless common in the surrounding country'.<sup>132</sup> The symbol, and the music, of the lark brings Michael back to Rochdale for a ritualistic solo performance of the same piece of music on the snowy surrounds of Blackstone Edge. He plays without an audience until his 'part runs out' (p.481). The novel ends back in London where the continued culture clash of Rochdale/London/Vienna returns the violinist to self-absorbed isolation. This is an isolation where he cannot communicate by speech to his lovers or his fellow musicians. He allows his violin to speak for him instead.

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<sup>130</sup> Rita Joshi, 'The Writer as Traveler: The World of Vikram Seth', *World Literature Today*, 82.3 (2008), p.50.

<sup>131</sup> Silvia Albertazzi, 'An Equal Music, an Alien World: Postcolonial Literature and the Representation of European Culture', *European Review*, 13.1 (2005), p.103.

<sup>132</sup> Cameron Fae Bushnell, 'The Art of Tuning: A Politics of Exile in Daniel Mason's "The Piano Tuner" and Vikram Seth's "An Equal Music"', *Contemporary Literature*, 50.2 (2009), p.350.

The notion of speech and communication through music and/or words can be inclusive and exclusive. The dialect writing of Rochdale demonstrates this, and the Lancashire dialect writing genre arguably begins with John Collier (1708 - 1786).<sup>133</sup> Born in Stretford – now part of Greater Manchester – Collier moved to Milnrow in the Parish of Rochdale in 1729. He supplemented his income by developing an artistic style akin to the satirist William Hogarth, earning him the moniker of the ‘Lancashire Hogarth’.<sup>134</sup> Collier was better known as ‘Tim Bobbin’, a satirical artist and Lancashire dialect writer inspired by Geoffrey Chaucer’s *The Canterbury Tales*. A century later, the fashion of dialect writing was rekindled by Edwin Waugh and had a resurgence towards the end of the nineteenth century. Dialect writing offers another way of perceiving the character of a place through language. In *The Review of English Studies*, D. M. Horgan suggests that it is a mistake to regard Collier merely as a dialect poet as the poet’s parodic style mocked authorities and the hypocrisy of those in high places. Horgan suggests that Collier got away with it because: ‘as the comic Bobbin’ the political caricaturist [was] less threatening, [the] Lancashire “clown” disarmed, deflecting to the comic voice of the protester’ (p. 311). Collier could safely revel in his role of a popular ‘Plebian’ protestor with his satire thus preventing any authoritarian repercussions.

Dialect writing works as a form of protest or subversive communication. Work on the use of radical dialect has been explored by contemporary historians such as Katrina Navickas (on the use of Lancashire dialect to communicate messages to a

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<sup>133</sup> See, for example: F. H. Amphlett Micklewright, “‘Tim Bobbin’s Epitaph’”, *Notes and Queries*, 2.22 (1949) p. 35; Richard Lawson, “‘The Tim Bobbin’”, *Notes and Queries*, s9-XI.276 (1903), p.297; and St. Vincent Troubridge, ‘Tim Bobbin’, *Notes and Queries*, 180.9 (1941), p.152.

<sup>134</sup> See D. M. Horgan, ‘Popular Protest in the Eighteenth Century: John Collier (Tim Bobbin), 1708-1786’, *The Review of English Studies*, 48.191 (1997), pp.310-311. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

specific audience and elude detection by those in authority), and on the use of poetry and song as resistance (John Kirk *et al.*, 2012).<sup>135</sup> Samuel Bamford, an integral voice during campaigns for parliamentary reform, was an admirer of ‘Tim Bobbin’, dedicating a dialect poem to him. In ‘At Tim Bobbin’s Grave’ (1834), the speaker brings the dead poet back to life for a ‘saup o’ th’ best breawn ale’ (line 11). The speaker’s subversive action perhaps delineates Bamford’s biographical radicalism. Born in Middleton in 1788 into a working-class family – his father was a weaver and teacher – Bamford was politicised after witnessing the 1819 Peterloo massacre in Manchester. His poem, ‘Ode to a Plotting Parson’, written in 1819, and published in 1821, was an angry response to the duplicity of Reverend William Hay, one of the senior magistrates at the time:

Then, the joys which thou felt upon Saint Peter’s Field,  
Each week, or each month, some new outrage shall yield;  
And thine eye, which is failing, shall brighten again,  
And pitiless gaze on the wounded and slain.<sup>136</sup>

This is an unsubtle depiction of the Reverend William Hay, accused by the Reformers of perpetrating the massacre, turning a literal and metaphorical ‘failing’ blind eye to those for whom the clergy purports to defend. Bamford believed that Hay’s complicity in the massacre led to his promotion to Rector of Rochdale. The anger in this poem is

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<sup>135</sup> See: Katrina Navickas, ‘Theaw Kon Ekspect No Mooar Eawt Ov a Pig Thin a Grunt’: Searching for the Radical Dialect Voice in Industrial Lancashire and the West Riding, 1798–1819’, in *United Islands?: The Languages of Resistance. Poetry and Song in the Age of Revolution*, ed. by John Kirk, Andrew Noble, and Michael Brown (Abingdon: Pickering and Chatto, 2012), pp.181–94; and Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2015).

<sup>136</sup> Samuel Bamford, *Miscellaneous Poetry by Sam Bamford, Weaver, of Middleton in Lancashire. Lately Imprisoned in the Castle of Lincoln* (London: Thomas Dolby, Britannia Press, 1821) lines 29-32.

as palpable as the vitriol within Percy Bysshe Shelley's more known response to Peterloo 'The Masque of Anarchy' (1819). A passion for social justice and anger is visible in much of Bamford's political writing. His diaries –*Life of a Radical 1839 – 1841* and *Early Days 1848 – 1849* – continue his invective when describing the hard conditions of working-class Lancashire life.<sup>137</sup>

While Bamford was a political figure in later life, he continued to use the vernacular dialect of where he was from in some of his creative works following in the traditions of previous Lancashire dialect writers. This place-specific language was remarked upon in 1795 by physician and historian John Aikin in his book *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester*. Here, Aikin suggests that:

Rochdale and its vicinity may be considered as the centre of the genuine Lancashire dialect, a variety of the English tongue, which, though uncouth to the ear, and widely differing in words and grammar from cultivated language, is yet possessed of much force and expression (1795, p.250)

While 'uncouth to the ear' this seems a little disparaging, there is an admiration of the 'force and expression' of this dialect. An example of a writer working fully in this dialect is Oliver Ormerod who was influenced by Collier and Edwin Waugh. *The Writings of Oliver Ormerod*, edited by historian Henry Colley March, was published in 1901. These writings form comic reflections of Ormerod's experience at the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. In the first piece, writing as 'Felley from Rachde',

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<sup>137</sup> See Martin Hewitt and Robert Poole, *The Diaries of Samuel Bamford* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 2000).

Ormerod writes in a transliteration of the dialect. To exemplify this, here is a segment from the text regarding Ormerod chancing upon Sam, a person he knew from Oldham:

Wel, us aw wor gooin hinto won uth reawms, whoo shud aw see but Sam  
o'Jacks fro Owdum. E wor us gloppent up seein me us aw wor ut seein im.  
Sam's o reglur rufyed, fur they koen Owdum foke rufyeds oppo sum keawnt,  
aw dunnut eggsaktly kno wat fur but ony buddi e Rachde knone us it is so. Aw  
shuddent loike fur to sa naut ogen Owdum foke, siame toi me aw connut get it  
eawt o me yed us ther welly o moile behinnd foke ony wheere elze;  
heawsumevur, they'r gradely gud Raddikils e they dun ware greyt fustiun  
swingurs un thik clogs.<sup>138</sup> (Ormerod in Colley March, 1901, p. 51)

While there is some rivalry, Oldhamers are 'gradely gud [...] e they dun ware greyt fustiun swingurs un thik clogs.' The last part of this segment is made with regard to the Oldhamer's sartorial choices: the 'thik clogs'. Even though Ormerod is perhaps concerned that he 'to sa naut ogen Owdum foke', he makes a gesture here towards the activity of 'purring', or clog fighting, a popular, if violent, pastime for some of the mill workers in Oldham. (That's kicking the shins of the other competitors with the metal capped clogs, first one to submit loses. Yowch!) This highlights the differences between the two towns, and to portray Oldham in a slightly more negative way. This identification with these two places, coupled with the comical depiction of Sam O' Jacks 'o reglur rufyed', probably would have amused a Rochdale audience.

Dialect writing was championed by George Milner who edited much of Edwin Waugh's poetry. In Milner's 'Introductory Essay on the Dialect of Lancashire

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<sup>138</sup> H. Y. Colley March, *The Writings of Oliver Ormerod with a Memoir of the Author* (Rochdale: The Aldine Press, 1901) p.51.

Considered as a Vehicle for Poetry' published in *The Poems and Songs of Edwin Waugh* (1893) he suggests that the reason why people 'unaccustomed to the Lancashire dialect declare it, at first sight, to be harsh, uncouth and awkward ... It is only harsh in the hands of those who cannot write it, or in the mouths of those who cannot read it'.<sup>139</sup> Dialect writing was written to be spoken and performed. The space between the page and the reader offers another way of reading place. The late nineteenth century was, as Brian Hollingworth (1977) posits, the 'golden age' of dialect poetry before it gave way to the nostalgic tones, moving 'away from a living expression of the 'songs of the people' to a rather nostalgic attempt to 'conserve a dying culture and language' (p. 5). Hollingworth's work was focused on nineteenth century and contemporary dialect. This can certainly be seen in the Heyworth poem 'Saturday's Last Train Fro' Rachda to Bacup' (1973) which is discussed below.

There is a great deal of solidarity in these stories, and in the language that has been chosen to tell these. It is a language, to borrow the words of writer James Kelman, 'composed of all sorts of particular influences'.<sup>140</sup> Dialect writing begets a form of solidarity for those who read it. William Baron's 'In a Sweater's Den (An Appeal To T' Masses)' (1901) depicts the horror of mill work:

In t' dingiest room uv a dingy court, shut eawt bi buildin's fro' t' leet o' day,  
 Its windows grimy wi' smook an' dust, throo which no sunbeam con ever stray -  
 Wheer th' air hangs heavy, an' smells are bad, an' never a breath uv a freshenin'  
 breeze (lines 1-3)

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<sup>139</sup> *Poems and Songs by Edwin Waugh. With a Preface and Introductory Essay on the Dialect of Lancashire Considered as a Vehicle for Poetry*, ed. by George Milner (Manchester: John Heywood, 1893) pp.xxviii-xxix.

<sup>140</sup> James Kelman, *Some Recent Attacks: Essays Cultural and Political* (Stirling, Scotland: AK Press, 1992) p.84.

When read aloud, the flattened vowels indicate local identity. Baron uses this to raise awareness of horrendous working conditions and garner solidarity and/or sympathy for the workers. This is poetry for the people who work ‘in t’ dingiest room [...] windows grimy wi’ smook an’ dust’. The speaker tries to evoke empathy with the depiction of ‘bad’ smells and no ‘freshenin’ breeze’ to clear this away. The populace of these mills, the speaker tells the reader is where:

[...] yo’ll see a pinin’ an’ sickly band

Uv men an’ women, an’ childer, too; an’ t’ meanin’ o’ slavery weel they know,

As they drudge away for starvation pay - poor victims o’ avarice, want, an’ woe!

Oh! what a terrible lot is theirs! — wi’ griefs so plentiful, joys so few!

(lines 6-9)

It is not, the speaker reinforces, just the male workers, the women ‘an’ childer’ know the meaning of ‘slavery weel’, the money for their labour merely ‘starvation pay’. The line break reinforces the ‘Oh! what a terrible lot is theirs!’ and, like Bamford’s ‘Ode to a Plotting Parson’, offers a form of protest poetry that is written in solidarity rather than through direct experience. The use of the words ‘starvation’ and ‘slavery’, where the people written about are the ‘victims of avarice’ depicts a class hierarchy. The people who suffer are not the rich titular ‘Sweaters’: the owners of the factories or mills. The use of dialect in the poem is an example of what socio-linguist Basil Bernstein calls ‘linguistic determinism’, this is where speech, or the transliteration of an accent, symbolises where a person is situated on a socio-economic stratum.<sup>141</sup> The

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<sup>141</sup> Basil Bernstein, “‘Language and Social Class’”, *The British Journal of Sociology*, 11.3 (1960), pp. 271–276.



everyday lives of individuals, and communities, are complex and identities are determined on different levels - similar to the different levels of place. These textures of place and identity assist in building group belongingness.

Dialect writing adds to the textures of Rochdale and has been considered of such importance that there is a prominent memorial statue overlooking the town dedicated to the borough's major dialect writers: Edwin Waugh, Oliver Ormerod, John Trafford Clegg and Margaret Lahee. This permanent memorial, looking back at the past, may be of little relevance to contemporary Rochdadians, and, as suggested, may 'lock' a reader outside of the text and so from one of the meanings of place.

This notion of being 'locked out' is mirrored in one of the many tropes in the literature of Rochdale is concerned with notions of "otherness". The work of Michel Foucault (1975) and Derek Attridge (1999) among many others suggest that otherness is relational; it is a perceived (or created) dichotomy which can create a power imbalance. As Attridge puts it, 'to be other is necessarily to be other too'.<sup>142</sup> A person could be 'other' due to their socio-economic background, class, sexuality, ethnicity, race, ability, religious beliefs, political ideologies and/or intersections of any, or all, of the above. Following the motifs of race and place in selected Rochdale texts offers a way of seeing how people cooperate or are isolated because of it. This line of inquiry into representations of race as a form of "othering". This is, as sociologist Bethan Harries suggests, because race 'is primarily understood as a social and discursive process'.<sup>143</sup> A person's race could lead to either feelings of belongingness or neglect leading to a feeling of being in, or out, of place.

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<sup>142</sup> Derek Attridge, 'Innovation, Ethics: Relating to the Other', *Modern Language Association*, Special Topic: Ethics and Literary Study, 1.114 (1999), pp.22.

<sup>143</sup> Bethan Harries, 'Talking Race in Everyday Spaces of the City' (University of Manchester, 2012) p.17.

As a writer, I have found that writing the “other”, or as “other”, is a tricky balancing act. As writer Kit de Waal suggests in an article for *The Irish Times*, as writers ‘we need to ensure that they are fully rounded, viable, flawed, sometimes unlikable but believable and authentic people, not representative of a whole culture but representative of themselves’.<sup>144</sup> The bifurcation of being ‘inside’ or ‘outside’ of Rochdale represented in literary texts demonstrates tension experienced in shared places. This tension particularly comes about in contemporary literature of Rochdale, where the borough is associated with tensions between diaspora and class. This can be seen, for example, in the portrayal of the working-class girls of the 2017 BBC docu-drama *Three Girls*, who were groomed by (predominantly) Asian men. These are not unique tensions: issues around migration and xenophobia are not limited to contemporary texts, although the focus of them has differed. Looking back to the nineteenth century, for example, the commonly vilified other in Rochdale narratives was the Irish diaspora.

One literary example of the depiction of the Irish diaspora is in ‘If Monkeys Could Talk’, a short story by a writer only known as ‘The Gravedigger’. There is little detail on the pseudonymous author, however, they were included in a collection of Lancashire stories written by Teddy Ashton, ‘Capanbells’, Ben Adhem and ‘The Gravedigger’, published in 1894. The backdrop to ‘If Monkeys Could Talk’, is the burgeoning trade and growth in industry in ‘shock city’ Manchester and its neighbouring towns, boroughs, and parishes. The construction of the Manchester Ship Canal was attractive to the growing Irish population of Merseyside, Manchester and Lancashire. Historical and social research carried out by W.J. Lowe (1989), Tom

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<sup>144</sup> Kit de Waal, ‘Don’t Dip Your Pen in Someone Else’s Blood: Writers and “the Other”’, *The Irish Times*, 30 June 2018 <<https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/don-t-dip-your-pen-in-someone-else-s-blood-writers-and-the-other-1.3533819>> [accessed 3 October 2018].

Hayden (1997), and Jeremy Black and Donald Macrauld (2003) demonstrate that some Irish families had migrated to these areas due to the 1840s potato crop failure and the ongoing land evictions by the English who still controlled Ireland.<sup>145</sup> In 1847, these tensions had escalated in Liverpool, Manchester and Rochdale due to the growing population, poverty, overcrowded households and outbreaks of typhus. During the 1850s there were physical fights, culminating at times in violent riots between the English and Irish communities of Manchester, Stockport, and Salford. Moreover, there was a disapproval of the Irish communities stoked up by the popular presses to quash any assertion of presence in north-west England. Lowe posits that the Irish diaspora:

were developing a distinctive and very functional community life and identity to complement and refine their ethnic awareness. At the same time, English residents of Lancashire had adopted an elaborate popular image of the Irish that served as a convenient cultural shorthand and formed part of an attitude toward them that underpinned anti-Irish sentiment (1989, p.147)

These anti-Irish feelings seeped into art and literature at the time. English magazine *Punch* featured cartoon strips using this ‘convenient cultural shorthand’ where Irish characters were portrayed negatively. Some of the images suggested that the Irish were fat, lazy, apes or bloated ‘devil fish’.<sup>146</sup> One strip depicted a sign pleading with an Irish character to ‘be a good boy and go home’.<sup>147</sup> ‘The Gravedigger’s’ short story refers to

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<sup>145</sup> For more on Irish histories see, for example: William J. Lowe, *The Irish in Mid-Victorian Lancashire. The Shaping of a Working Class Community* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1989); *Irish Hunger: Exploring the Legacy of the Potato Famine*, ed. by Tom Hayden (New York: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1997); and Jeremy Black and Donald M. MacRaild, *Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003). Further information from these works will be given parenthetically.

<sup>146</sup> See: John Tenniel, ‘Irish Devil Fish’, *Punch*, 1881  
<<https://punch.photoshelter.com/image/I0000Q1uMqi5bOgA>> [accessed 3 October 2018].

<sup>147</sup> For more on Irish caricatures see: Lewis Perry Curtis, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1971).

an apocryphal “legend”, and from depictions in the popular press, that the Irish outsiders were more simian than human. The Irish, here, are the ‘apes’ of the story. The legend that ‘The Gravedigger’ is probably referring to, is a joke that originated in Heywood regarding the Irish accent. Here, the Irish engineers were said to pronounce ‘Heap Bridge’, a nearby area of the village, as ‘Ape Bridge’. This further cemented the stereotype and led to the insulting moniker of the Irish diaspora in that area of Rochdale being deemed ‘Heywood monkeys’.

The short tale 'If Monkeys Could Talk' is delivered by an omniscient narrator musing on what would happen if monkeys learned the power of (the English) language. This takes the form of recounting an experiment on the ‘pure and undefiled monkey, the unadulterated animal which, by all the same, according to science and evolution is related to us by a common - in this case very common – ancestry’.<sup>148</sup> There is an intellectual snobbery here with the reiteration of common to stand in for “lower class”. The implication is that if you can read the short story then you are not an ‘unadulterated animal’. There is further besmirching of the honesty of ‘apes’ where the narrator suggests they are liars who:

have all along possessed the power to use language, but under the inspiration of a wisdom and discretion not generally founding in their cousins the "humans", they refrain from speaking for fear lest they should at once be seized upon as rational beings and made to work like their unfortunate kinsmen who labour in mill, and mine, and workshop (p. 129).

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<sup>148</sup> Teddy Ashton *et al*, *A Basin O’ Broth (Mostly Lancashire Herbs). Being Tales, Rhymes, and Sketches* (Manchester: John Heywood, 1894) p.129. Further references to The Gravedigger’s short story will be given parenthetically.

There are implications of fecklessness, work-shyness, deceit and deception. The rest of the narrative follows the experiments of ‘Yankee Professor’ Garner. There is an aside where the Professor travels to an unnamed county in the African Continent – here simply dubbed ‘Africa’ – with a German servant. When a female ‘African’ orang-utan falls in love with his servant this is treated as:

remarkable news. That any respectable female monkey, which thought anything of itself, should fall in love with a German servant, at least shows that civilisation is making its demoralised mark on the orang-outans [sic] (p. 130).

This is a statement on wider society, the narrator here commenting on a ‘demoralised’ civilisation. There is an othering of the German servant with the use of the mocking word ‘respectable’. While the servant is situated as a lower-class citizen, the apes are portrayed as somewhat carefree. This, the narrator explains, is because the monkeys:

have no desire to work for a living ... They don't intend to become part and parcel of the glorious commercial system of Britain and learn what it is to be out of work and to want bread and fire. They prefer a lazy Bohemian life and are quite in the right to do so (p. 129).

The narrator imagines a future where the primitive language of the monkeys could be translated ‘into the inferior tongue of English’ (p. 131). This, ‘The Gravedigger’, concludes is because:

it seems evident that monkeys can talk. . . They will be writing verse next and coming out as novelists . . . If they begin to use speech they will become thoroughly human and make fools of themselves, setting up Parliaments, Town Councils, Pulpits, platforms, universities, and other such like mortal institutions

wherein certain men, called M.P.'s, parsons, teachers &c., talk to a lot of others called voters, congregations, scholars, &c., about what neither pupil nor instructor knows anything at all' (pp. 131 - 132).

The narrator has been leading us here all along; the deceit has been seen through and the next step is for the 'monkeys' to take over from 'certain men' (the educated and those in power). The story concludes with the hope that the monkeys will learn to be 'silent' again so that they do not 'make fools of themselves'. This text can be read in two ways. Firstly, the narrator offering an ironic tension throughout the text where the apes: 'will become thoroughly human'. Or the narrator wishes to affirm the need for class stratification, where the apes should not get beyond their station and be 'silent'.

Writing the other, especially with writing about those who have migrated to the UK, can be problematic and draw on stereotyping. In his 2010 book *Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class*, political commentator Owen Jones suggests that there is false reporting, and fear stoking around immigration. This, Jones argues, is in order to support capitalism and the suppression of the working class where:

the great backlash against immigration is being driven [...] by material concerns [...] it has been easy for the idea that all social problems are caused by outsiders, *immigrants* ... It is a myth that, fanned by right-wing newspapers and journalists, has resonated in working-class communities across Britain.<sup>149</sup>

Similarly to the Victorian newspapers publishing pictures imagining Irish workers as apes, Jones suggests that this 'myth' is a constructed narrative devised to control communities, stoking up violence in a race to the bottom. John Siddique's confessional

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<sup>149</sup> Owen Jones, *Chavs: The Demonisation of the Working Class* (London: Verso, 2010) location 4048. Kindle e-book. Original italics.

sequence poem 'The Knife' from his 2011 collection *Full Blood* offers another take on this. This sequence poem depicts violence against the speaker, a young black man. This poem offers one way of developing a narrative that portrays being 'outside' of place.

'The Knife' is structured in five sequences entitled: THE NATIONAL FRONT; ANDREA OR JULIE; ANDREA; ROCHDALE BUS STATION; and JOHN STREET. The sequences vary in length and act as snapshots of a Rochdale situated in the late 1970s / early 1980s. Post-industrial Rochdale is no longer buzzing with mills, canal trade, or factories. These have been replaced by bus stations and supermarkets. Rochdale, in 'The Knife' has become the literal and metaphorical stomping ground for the far right and football hooligans. The language Siddique utilises is unyielding with an unflinching use of slang and swearing; the threat of violence is immediate and depicts racial tension. In THE NATIONAL FRONT, Rochdale at night is patrolled by members of the far-Right National Front whose 'mouths are full of fire and alcohol'<sup>150</sup>, where there are:

Two main no-go areas - the bus station

and the shopping centre - out of town it's not

good to go through Littleborough or Whitworth (lines 3-5)

These are places where 'everyone wears a uniform': the shaved heads and 'ox-blood' Doctor Marten's boots of the National Front. The speaker instinctively knows where to go and what to do:

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<sup>150</sup> John Siddique, *Full Blood* (London: Salt, 2011) line 1. Further references to the poem and line numbers will be given parenthetically.

These are the rules – Never be in the bus station

or the market at night, not even if

you are with friends. Always stick to the main streets

but have a side street escape route planned.

Make sure you are carrying a knife (line 18).

The speaker, and his friends, do not have the luxury of desire paths, they 'continually run the gauntlet' (line 20). The tone of this sequence is matter-of-fact: these are the rules, if you do not follow them, the potential consequences are bloody.

These visceral images create a troubling reality and this realism is extended through links to a historical and cultural context. In the 1970s, there was an increase in tension between the predominantly white, working-class community and the Pakistani and Bangladeshi diaspora (whose social class stratification varied from working to middle class). Siddique, as a British-Asian, would have been aware of this growing up in Rochdale during the early to late 1970s. The controversy of the then Liberal party courting the Pakistani vote for the 1974 General Election led to the rise of the local right-wing 'British Campaign to Stop Immigration Party'. This period was recorded in Muhammed Anwar's *The Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain* (1979), where he interviewed the Pakistani community in Rochdale. Anwar recorded reflections from those who experienced 'the repetition of the intimidation and harassment [...] at polling stations'.<sup>151</sup> This harassment is mirrored in the final sequence of 'The Knife', JOHN STREET, where a member of the National Front spits out: '*You paki cunt.../ I know you have a knife, I'll take it off you / and shove it up your arse*' (lines 25-28,

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<sup>151</sup> Muhammed Anwar, *The Myth of Return. Pakistanis in Britain* (London: Heinemann, 1979) p.155.



poet's italics). The accusation leaves the speaker from a first-person perspective feeling 'small and dirty' and 'left littered' amongst the scrubby, rubbish-strewn flora of the grounds of St James Church (lines 31 and 37). Here Siddique's 'The Knife' presents a dystopian Rochdale. For the black speaker, Rochdale is a place of fear replete with 'no go' areas. This poem presents the speaker in a violent conflict over place.

The speaker's perspective in Siddique's poem contrasts with the racist, skinhead characters of Trevor Hoyle's *Rule of Night* (1975). The Rochdale of *Rule of Night* is similarly bleak. The novel follows the main character Kenny Seddon and his gang around the damp, broken glass strewn streets of Rochdale. The urban skinhead subculture, what Angelo Sindaco (2007) calls 'skinstreet', resides in a dystopian world of Augéan non-places such as bus stops and towering grey, Ballardian flats.<sup>152</sup> Kenny is grotesque, a mess of bodily functions and simmering violence trying to justify his existence, and masculinity, in a poverty-stricken, post-industrial portrayal of Rochdale's environs. This bleakness is not exclusive to Rochdale, it stretches out throughout the north-west. This is exemplified by the depiction Kenny and his gang taking a trip to Chorley – a town in South Lancashire. Here, the place is described as 'a right dead hole' but 'no deader than Rochdale' (location 716). 'Chaaawley', the skinheads find, is 'a real dumb hick town' that is nearly as 'shit' as Rochdale, but at least their home town had 'a league football team' (location 752-759). On the train returning to their home town, after causing havoc in Chorley, the gang pass the journey with games of extreme flatulence, each trying to outdo the other to the detriment of the rest of the passengers in the train. This is a masculinity portrayed as competitive, to determine 'who' in the gang 'deserved the title of 'King Arse''

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<sup>152</sup> See: Angelo Sindaco, *Skinstreet: The Skinhead Way of Life* (Rome: Drago, 2007).

(location 811). In a reversal of monarchy where the king is normally associated with head and higher ideals, they are battling to be the worst of the worst and thereby attain power in this underclass. As John Milton puts it in *Paradise Lost*: '[b]etter to reign in Hell, than serve in heav'n'.<sup>153</sup>

In this Hell-ish version of Rochdale, Hoyle's aesthetic of the skinhead is stereotypical; the characters act as ciphers for violence; there are few redeeming qualities to Kenny and his friends 'an indivisible force standing against the world' (location 957). The notion of 'skinstreet' is still one that is explored over thirty years after the UK skinhead subculture diminished into a symbol of the far Right.<sup>154</sup> *Rule of Night* is less a linear narrative than a series of sketches, similarly, the sequences in 'The Knife' act as twisted postcards with the past acting as a foreign country. Rochdale is written as a place where there may be a need for outsiders to learn how to defend themselves. It is overly simplistic to argue that these two texts demonstrate how history – in the form of xenophobia or racism – repeats itself. Rather, this opens further questions and opportunities for exploration. In terms of using these texts to explore inside/outsideness, writing place-as-dystopia for a character to reside within involves considering constructions of identity and modes of local belonging.

### ***Reading the Mundane: Everyday Place, Everyday Identities***

Elizabeth Gaskell's short story 'Lizzie Leigh' offers one such textual representation of writing place from a canonical, female author. This story overlaps notions of identity and of everyday place, it was published in Gaskell's collection *Lizzie Leigh and Other*

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<sup>153</sup> John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (London: Penguin Classics, 1667) Book One, line 263.

<sup>154</sup> See Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Routledge, 1979).

*Stories* (1855) and is worthy of mention in terms of writing place. The discussion has, thus far, been male dominated with perspectives of male writers, characters, and experiences. As a writer, and a woman, I am interested in exploring women's portrayal of places, to assist in amplifying women's literary texts no matter how "minor" a piece of literature they may be considered. Gaskell's short story is concerned with the former isolation of the titular character Lizzie. Although Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication on the Rights of Women* (1792) provoked an 'awakening of feminist consciousness' (Black & Macrauld, 2003), women's so-called 'standing' in society remained precarious. Gossip and scandal acted as a social function that could make, or break, a woman's future. Shaming was one form of subjugating, or isolating, a woman. Becoming a single mother had a high price to pay. 'Lizzie Leigh' is a story of shame, family estrangement, the juxtaposition of town and city, and offers an (incomplete) redemption for the titular character.

The story opens with the abrupt death of James Leigh, the patriarch who, 'minutes before his death' forgave his estranged daughter. Lizzie 'not yet seventeen' had been cast out of the family after having a daughter out of wedlock. The Leigh's home – Upclose Farm – is described as 'an old-fashioned kind' with 'about seven acres of barren, unproductive land, which they never possessed capital enough to improve; indeed they could hardly rely upon it for subsistence; and it has been customary to bring up the sons to some trade - such as a wheelwright's, or blacksmith's'.<sup>155</sup> This sets up the domestic geography of the Farm as providing subsistence agriculture. There is an emphasis on the lack of privilege of the Leighs where they were 'hardly [...] above the rank of labourers' (p.3). After James's death,

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<sup>155</sup> Elizabeth Gaskell, *Lizzie Leigh And Other Tales* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1855) p.3, further references will be given parenthetically.

his wife Anne is determined to let out the farm and take her two sons Will and Tom to find Lizzie in Manchester. Manchester is juxtaposed with the more rural 'Milne-Row', and, before leaving for the city to search for Lizzie, the Leigh's 'oldest family friend' Samuel Orme, warns 'Thou'lt be sadly potted wi' Manchester ways [...] why thou'lt have to buy potatoes; a thing thou hast never done afore in all thy born life' (p. 4).

Anne Leigh's longing for home is re-engaged when the family relocate 'for twelvemonth'. In Manchester, the Leigh family have 'no garden, or outbuilding, no fresh breezy outlet, no far-stretching view over moor and hollow' (p. 6). Throughout the story, Lizzie is referred by the omniscient narrator, and other characters, as 'sinning' or the 'poor sinner'. After her daughter dies in an accident, Lizzie is described as 'old before her time [...] even in sleep she bore the look of despair' (p.16). The family return to their Farm in Rochdale and the child is buried on 'a lone moorland graveyard, where long ago Quakers used to bury their dead' (p. 25). A sweet moor 'where the earliest spring flowers blow'. Although this place is portrayed as a green pastoral idyll, Lizzie is cursed to 'pray always and ever for forgiveness - such forgiveness as may enable her to see her child once more' (p. 25). While scarred by a reputation handed down to her by others, and isolated from some of the village folk, Lizzie is emotionally broken by the loss of her beloved child and 'weeps bitterly' in the 'sunny graveyard in the uplands' (p.25). The juxtaposition of 'sunny graveyard' depicts a solemn but pretty place, perhaps offering some hope for Lizzie Leigh. The use of landscape to contrast emotion could be of use to the creative writer; even the most quotidian places can be used for effect.

For the rest of this subsection, I want to turn towards the tensions in everyday life and quotidian place. John Priestnall's *Heppleshaw* (1936) was originally published as a serial in the *Rochdale Observer*. Priestnall's *Heppleshaw* is a semi-fictional village

created to build an alternative version of Littleborough. It is a series of short sketches that presents cosy visions of vicars, fetes, and village life. Agnes Garner Hilton's *The Promise of Life: A Romance of Middleton*, published in 1936, offers another portrayal of village life in Middleton. The novel is semi-autobiographical as Hilton admits:

The story is founded on fact; most of the incidents are true, but names are fictitious. In the case of most of the characters the originals are still with us, and will, I hope, enjoy all references to incidents in which they took part.<sup>156</sup>

([May bear resemblances to those living or dead! Good luck using \*that\* with your creative writing in these litigious times!](#)) Hilton's novel is concerned with histories of Middleton. There are insertions of poetry within the text including poetry by Samuel Bamford, and Captain A.R. Brierley's poem 'The Boar's Head Pub' (a public house that still functions within the town). Black and white photography is included, detailing places captured in time like a fly in amber: Little Nook farm, Bowlee Road, the "New Library", and Middleton Parish Church. The story that runs as a sub-plot to a history of Middleton follows Jim and Polly Royd and their lived experience in Bowlee, a small village situated in Middleton, where the scenery is 'of a bare bleak character' (p. 11). The use of these toponyms, and brief descriptions of each place, lends credence to Hilton's text.

The story focuses on semi-fictional characters who live and work in the village and predominantly focusses on the ill health and love affairs of Jenny Brooks, the main character of the novel. Hilton includes some social commentary to inform the activities of the book's main protagonists, and this colours her history of Middleton. It is difficult to pin a genre on this book as it includes historical detail, historical re-

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<sup>156</sup> Agnes Garner Hilton, *The Promise of Life: A Romance of Middleton* (Manchester: Sherratt & Hughes, 1936) p.5, further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

enactment, romance, semi-autobiography, and social activism. In the closing paragraph of the novel, the narrator implores her readers to read the book:

in the spirit in which it is written, entertaining the reader with Lancashire customs, and humour, also giving a little history of one of its quaint old towns, showing the benefits of manipulative surgery and drawing attention to the needs of people over sixty years of age and to the needs of the young unemployed (p.119).

This subversive, and optimistic, call to arms suggests that the everyday characters of this novel are merely vehicles to tell stories of place and to get across a wider social justice message of accessible, and affordable, health care for all. Hilton's work is one example of deep mapping Middleton through its histories and geographies, using creative writing to get these stories – and a wider social message - across. This type of literature could be deemed 'hyperlocal' as it focusses on a small area. The concept of hyperlocalism has its beginnings in community journalism that concentrates on a town rather than on the larger region.<sup>157</sup>

The idea of a hyperlocal literary text can be similarly applied to William Baron's 'Th' Vagabond Son (A Tale o' Kesmas Eve)' (1903), a dialect poem that valorises simple working-class life. The poem is an imagined snapshot of a young man, from a 'humble cottage', who left home to seek his fortune leaving his parents – 'Silas Breawn an't' wife' (line 5) – 'on t'brink o' deep despair' (line 14). The son, returning on a cold Christmas Eve, explains to his heartbroken parents that he ran

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<sup>157</sup> See, for example, Emily T. Metzgar, 'Defining Hyperlocal Media: Proposing a Framework for Discussion', *New Media & Society*, 13.5 (2011), pp. 772–87; Damian Radcliffe, *Here and Now: UK Hyperlocal Media Today* (London: NESTA, March 2012); and Marco van Kerkhoven, 'The Hyperlocal In Practice', *Digital Journalism*, 2.3 (2014), pp. 296–309.

away from home because the ‘gowd rush turned mi brain’ (line 45).<sup>158</sup> Themes of coming, and going, into Rochdale are quite common when reading the (Rochdale) mundane. For example, road transport and construction are the main topics of A. P Wadsworth’s slim pamphlet entitled *Rochdale’s Main Roads: the History of Turnpikes* (1919) produced by Rochdale’s Literary and Scientific Society. Wadsworth’s pamphlet follows the history of the turnpike on Blackstone Edge but also offers a detailed geographical perspective where place is understood from the arterial roads and turnpikes of the Parish. Wadsworth was a member of the Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society which published and distributed this factual pamphlet.

The road as depicted by Wadsworth presents new opportunities for trade and transport. Similarly, the train features in these texts as ways to get to work, get home, and get away. In a paper published in *British Studies* entitled ‘Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900–1940’, Nicola Bishop suggests that train travel offered an escape for the worker to ‘leave the grime of the city’.<sup>159</sup> Train travel is detailed in Clifford Heyworth’s dialect poem ‘Saturday's Last Train Fro' Rachda to Bacup' (1973). In this fifteen-stanza poem, the speaker travelling via the titular train line offers a lament in the opening lines: ‘Neaw t' last train fro' Rachda, as most oh you know, / Is noted bi' t' public for gettin' wom slow’ (lines 1-2).<sup>160</sup> Over the course of the poem, the train becomes stuck in the snow where the speaker, along with other travellers, assist in pushing the train in a show of solidarity:

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<sup>158</sup> William Baron, *Echoes from the Loom. A Collection of Poems Chiefly in the Dialect* (Rochdale: Ormerod Bros., 1903).

<sup>159</sup> Nicola Bishop, ‘Ruralism, Masculinity, and National Identity: The Rambling Clerk in Fiction, 1900–1940’, *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), p.676.

<sup>160</sup> Clifford Heywood, *Nobbut a Thought from Lancashire. Poems, Stories and Anecdotes* (Bacup: Howard and Hargreaves Ltd., 1973). This train line no longer exists as it was a victim of the Beeching cuts of the early 1960s.

Folk rushed in and they pushed one another abeawt

For thought it wer' cawd, they wer' glad to be eawt-

Of such an owd train that had travelled so slow (1973, lines 53 – 55)

This poem presents a snapshot in time and space: a failed vehicle, tempestuous elements, and the attempt to move it through the landscape to its destination.

I am now going to bring the focus of literary critical analysis up-to-date with the publication of *Links* in 2015. This small book, edited by Danny Fahey, is a collection of short stories and poems that are composed by people living in Rochdale from a broad diaspora. The contributors are, as Fahey puts it: 'people who have lived in Rochdale their whole lives, people who are from Rochdale that have gone to live in far away places [...] and people who have come to Rochdale from different parts of the U.K. and from all over the world to make a new life and give to the community'.<sup>161</sup> The writers in *Links* offer different perspectives on Rochdale as a place to live through different poems, short stories, and artwork. There are few loco-specific pieces within it and the overall theme of the book is focussed on the everyday lived experience of the writers. In the poem 'Scotland to South Africa to Heywood and Back' by "Back O'th Moss", for example, the speaker tells the reader the reason for returning to Rochdale is because 'My son is here and that makes it home' (p.13, line 13). Interestingly, there is a lack of toponymic detail in many of the pieces, however, they could be argued as being recognisably from the area. In a section of the book entitled Urban or Rural? the poets explore what this could be: 'so confusing' is the answer in Julie Hughes' poem 'Confused' (line 2); 'year long summers, to cold / wet pavements' Muhammad Miah's

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<sup>161</sup> *Links*, ed. by Danny Fahey (Heywood: Tell Us Another One, 2015) p.7. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.



poem suggests (lines 1-2); and 'Rural or Urban' by Sharon Roddy offers: 'Peaceful spacious fields / Barren moorland [...] Houses too close together / Less room to blossom' to depict the urban/rural dichotomy. The tensions of change in communities is explored through seemingly mundane ways. In Maureen Harrison's prose piece 'My Street', the first-person narrator states:

'I have lived on my street for nearly fifty years and, during that time, there have been changes. [...] in our younger days community equalled friendship [...] at the back of the house [...] people walk their dogs. [...] Funny really. I usually know the dog's name but not its owner's name' (p.26).

It is the lived experience of place, the creative writer's identity in place, that is privileged rather than the place itself. These tensions of identity can be explored in this notion of reading, and writing, the urban/rural.

### ***Reading the Land: Rural / Urban Tensions***

We start this final subsection back where we began: on the moors of Summit and Blackstone Edge. This is a phenomenological experience which privileges the visual over the other senses; but here, in this high place, the walker can gaze at most of the borough of Rochdale. These are sites in which the walker can head away from the quotidian spaces of the built environment and out into a wild, rural landscape. High on Summit and Blackstone Edge. The walker experiences the continual visual pull of the town. These high places, therefore, call attention to the tensions between the rural and the urban which run through much of the literary writing about this particular place. It is an anthropocentric view, what poet Kathleen Jamie, when referring to male nature

writers, calls ‘theatrically empty’.<sup>162</sup> The stage is set for the main (human) character and the other players are not yet seen or heard. Once in place, the writer populates the landscape with their – possibly his – words with a rural idyll as their muse. (Oi, this is probably an unfair observation here! You’ve done this plenty in your writing over time too, Ms Researcher...)

Edwin Waugh (1817 – 1890) was a Rochdale born writer whose key works consist of sketches and poems on place, normally valourising an imagined rural idyll. In Waugh’s 1881 dialect poem ‘Aw’ve worn my bits o’ shoon away’, the speaker wishes to escape from ‘cities grand’ and relocate to the moorland. There is a longing for the freedom of leisure time, a return to childhood and an urge for simple living, culminating in the speaker ‘visually objectifying’ the moorland (Urry & Larsen, 2011). These are recurring features in Waugh’s work; in this poem, he locates the triad of space ‘yon moorlan’ valleys’ (line 3), time ‘at th’ end o’ sweet July’ (line 19) and people, ‘there’s jolly lads among yon hills’ (line 26). It is a nostalgic account of place which can be understood by turning to John Urry and Jonas Larsen’s influential notion of the ‘tourist gaze’. According to Urry and Larsen, in the third edition of their book *The Tourist Gaze*, this titular gaze, the authors suggest:

is directed to features of landscape and townscape which separate them off from everyday experience. Such aspects are viewed because they are taken to be in some sense out of the ordinary. The viewing of such tourist sights often involves different forms of social patterning, with a much greater sensitivity to

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<sup>162</sup> Kathleen Jamie, ‘A Lone Enraptured Male’, *London Review of Books*, 6 March 2008, pp.25–27.

visual elements of landscape or townscape than normally found in everyday life.<sup>163</sup>

In this poem, Waugh can be understood to be adopting the position of the gazing tourist as he looks upon the lost landscapes of his childhood. Waugh captures, reproduces, and redistributes ‘visual elements’ in his egocentric gaze of the landscape. He creates his own landscape signs and symbols that to create ‘the rural’: moorland villages (‘The Goblin’s Grave’, 1865; ‘Ramble from Rochdale to the Top of Blackstone Edge’, 1869; ‘My Gronfather Willie’, 1893; ‘Heigh Jone, Owd Brid!’, 1893, ‘Oh, the Wild, Wild Moors’, 1893), the skylark ‘layrock’ is a symbol of this moorland freedom: ‘Aw’d rather live where th’ layrock sings’ (‘Aw’ve worn my bits o’ shoon away’, 1881) and his grandfather ‘a grey-yedded layrock’ is transmogrified into the bird:

He’d weave an’ he’d warble

He’d root an’ he’d delve

Fro’ daybreak to sunset,

Then creep to his nook,

At the sweet ingle-side,

For a tot an’ a smooke. (1881, lines 39 - 44)

This is one of the few magical transformations where either the speaker, or the subject, is poetically reimagined as part of Nature – his grandfather warbling like a layrock (a sky lark) following the flow of a day ‘fro’ daybreak to sunset’. More broadly, this is

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<sup>163</sup> John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze. 3.0*, (London, 2011), p.4. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

also seen in the Waugh's usage of geolocations and toponyms of places both inside and outside Rochdale (Pendle Hill, Swarthmoor, Ulverston, Black Coombe, Blackstone Edge, Tooters Hill, Wardle Hill, Blue Pots Rill, Crag Valley and Blackstone Edge) and megalithic or geological features (Robin Hood's Bed, Two Lads) to conjure up place, embed it in the mind, then reproduce this gaze and memory to distribute via a hierarchy of place, page, reader. Before carrying on with this discussion, there is now an intervention that answers back to the dialect poem that made Waugh's famous 'Come whoam to thi' childer an' me' (1855).

**Nowe, aw'm not comin' whoam**

Thi childer ar nowty, lik mogs under't feet,  
so aw left an' aw've not tramped too far,  
an' neaw it's onny bin a couple o' weeks  
an' yo were t' one oo left ofore.  
Aw left 'coz aw'm pownd t' a fine bant  
thowt it could onny be cured by a roam,  
fer now aw'm off 'avin' a lingerin' jawnt,  
'appens it won't be long tilly come whoam.

'Twas th' snook, th' fug o' bacco, drove me mad,  
thick blue smoke in th' carpet an' air  
gatherin' deep in t' lungs o' me an' the babs  
an' packets o' fags on an untidy floor.  
Aw'd 'ad onough o' packin' Rick's stuff up  
an' stackin' it up Bento Box neat,  
steppin' on 'is Lego, plastic in th' foot.  
Aw'm done wi' Sal's sick on th' seats.

An' I'm done wi' yersel, yer lurdin,  
wi' a life lackin' glimmer an' thrills.  
Appens aw'll come whoam t' yo all,  
but fer neaw aw'm owey t' th' hills.

Aw'm leavin' this concrete teawn  
t' follow th' Rach t' hoo source,  
aw'll listen out fer th' ousel cock  
as aw seek out th' spring o' th' moor.

Tho' monny 'ard words'll be spok'n,  
aw no longer want t' wroastle.

Aw needed t' be 'igh as a learock,  
an' neaw aw'm singin', free as a throastle.

Fer th' throastle hoo whistles an' trills  
ofore th' wint drums th' knaggy grass flat,  
th' hummobees o'er Solomon's Cuttin'  
huzz t' me "*not time t' go whoam yet*".

So aw'll stop out eendneaw,  
An' aw know yoan walladay yet.  
Yer lass needs space fro' yer pews'nt place.  
Fair-faw fro' yer lass, in time yoan forget.

This poem is a riposte, a protest if you will, to escape to the 'rural place' from the  
'pewsn't place' or the town. No, I'm not offering a translation. You can read it out

loud and you'll hear the music of the Lancashire dialect. Feel better now that you've got that out of your system? For now... I'll be back though. Returning to Waugh's rural landscape, this is a place that is imbued with memory and this is particularly seen in 'To the River Roch' (1893). This is an apostrophe poem in ballad form, dedicating itself to the river while using it as an extended metaphor for life.

River-as-life is a common trope in literature and the poem itself seems closely modelled on William Wordsworth's 'The Fountain, a Conversation'. Before discussing Waugh's poem at length and comparing it with Wordsworth's piece, it is worth evoking one of the earliest descriptions of the Roch in Raphael Holinshed's *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (1577). This presents more images of rurality that follows the spring to the confluence with the river Irwell in Bury:

The Rache, Rech or Rish consisteth of sundrie waters, whereof ech one in maner hath a proper name, but the greatest of all is Rache it selfe, which riseth among the blacke stonie hils, from whence it goeth to Beile, Littleborough, and being past Clegge, receiue the Beile, that commeth thither by Milneraw chappell. After this confluence also, it méeteth Sprotton. With a rill néere vnto Rachedale, and soone after with the Sprotton Sudleie.water, and then the Sudleie brooke, whereby his chanell is not a little increased, which goeth from thence to Grisehirst and so into the Irwell, Bradsha.before it come at Ratcliffe. The second streame is called Bradsha. It riseth of two heds, aboue Tureton church, whence it runneth to Bradsha, Walmesleie and yer long taking in the Walmesleie becke, they go in one chanell till they come beneath Bolton in the More. From hence (receiuing a water that commeth from the roots of Rauenpike hill by the way) it goeth by Deane and

Bolton in the More, and so into Bradsha water, which taketh his waie to  
Leuermore, Farnworth, Leuerlesse, and finallie into the Irwell, which I before  
described, and whereof I find these two verses to be added at the last:

Irke, Irwell, Medlocke, and Tame,

When they meet with the Merseie, do loose their name.<sup>164</sup>

This description of the watery confluences is gestured at in the final stanza of Waugh's poem: 'Like thee my little life glides down / to the great absorbing main' (1881, lines 17-18). Here, the 'great absorbing main' has a double meaning: of the eventual confluence with the Irwell and then the sea, and of a religious afterlife. Here, there is a poetic comparison that can be made to William Wordsworth's 'The Fountain, A Conversation' from the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1800). Both poems use common metre, although Waugh's poem is shorter (five quatrains to Wordsworth's eighteen), and reflect on youth, age, water and Nature. The loss of childhood is recorded by both: Wordsworth in lines 29-30 'My eyes are dim with childish tears, / My heart is idly stirred'; Waugh 'Oft when a careless boy, / I've prattled to thee in a dream'<sup>165</sup> (1800, lines 6-7) and 'I've paddled in thy water's clear / in childhood's happy days' (1893, lines 13-14). There is sound and movement throughout both poems too: Wordsworth's 'From the turf a fountain broke / And gurgled at our feet' and 'let us match / The water's pleasant tune' (1800, lines 8 and 10); and Waugh's 'The quiet Roch comes dancing down, / from breezy moorland hills' (1893, lines 1 - 2). In Anne Kostelanetz's literary critical reading of Wordsworth's 'Two April Mornings' and 'The Fountain' published in 1966, she suggests that there is a sense of transcending

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<sup>164</sup> Raphael Holinshed, *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande* (London, 1577) p.143. Further references to this will be given parenthetically.

<sup>165</sup> William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads with Other Poems* (London: Biggs & Cottle, 1800).

‘mutability and mortality’ in ‘The Fountain, a Conversation’.<sup>166</sup> This mortality is present in Waugh’s poem too, albeit with a heavier hand. This could possibly be in a pastiche of Wordsworth; although there is no evidence to suggest that Waugh had read the poem, there are striking similarities. Both poems are about sensing water, however, Waugh’s poem also offers the speaker a sense of peace in the landscape in his return to the spring of his river and his youth.

Remaining in rural Rochdale, landscape is represented in a craggier form in the third volume of Daniel Defoe’s *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1725-1727), where he refers to the Pennine fringes of Summit as ‘those Andes of England’.<sup>167</sup> This could be due to the steep gradient of the hills overlooking Rochdale. The springs of other rivers in this area, as noted by Raphael Holinshed are similarly recorded by Defoe: ‘as the Calder rises in Blackstone Edge, so the Aire, another of the Yorkshire rivers, rises, though in the same ridge of hills’ (1991, p. 485). Defoe’s walk is a direct contrast to Waugh’s ‘sweet’, ‘lonely’, ‘breezy’, ‘wild moors’ (‘Oh, the Wild, Wild Moors’, 1893). The weather is more changeable in Defoe’s account from being ‘calm and clear, and the sun shone, but when we began to mount the hills, which we did within a mile, or little more of the town, we found the wind began to rise, and the higher we went the more wind [...] as we ascended higher it began to snow again’ (p.487). Unlike Waugh’s nostalgic ‘sweet wild moor’, Defoe’s perception of the rural landscape is one that presents ‘a frightful precipice on one hand, and uneven ground on the other’ (p. 488). Blackstone Edge is presented as a liminal zone throughout the literature of Rochdale, it is a place that is away from the urban conurbations of the

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<sup>166</sup> See: Anne Kostelanetz, ‘Wordsworth’s “Conversations”: A Reading of “The Two April Mornings” and “The Fountain”’, *ELH*, 33.1 (1966), pp.43–52.

<sup>167</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A Tour Through The Whole Island of Great Britain*, ed. by P.N. (Nick) Furbank and W. R. (Bob) Owens (New Haven: Yale University, 1991). Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.



borough yet not quite rural. Blackstone Edge is imbued with folk tales, the myth of the ‘Roman road’, and continues to be well-trodden by ramblers.

The poetic representation of Blackstone Edge is presented like an agreeable tourist experience. As Urry and Larsen suggest: ‘the fundamentally visual nature of many tourism experiences [...] demarcates an array of pleasurable qualities to be generated within particular times and spaces. It is the gaze that orders and regulates the relationships between the various sensuous experiences while away, identifying what is visually out-of-ordinary, what are relevant differences and what is ‘other’ (2011, p.14). The literary presentation of Rochdale as a ‘pleasurable’ rural space, challenges popular perceptions of the Borough as a – socially troubled – built environment. Yet, crucially, such writings are predicated on the touristic othering, and objectification, of a landscape which is topographically and ideologically set apart from the town. For Waugh – the tourist of the rural landscapes of his own youth – the built environment is a space to be left behind. The moorlands – in particular the area around Blackstone Edge – represent an escape from the practice of everyday life. And yet other writers have self-consciously engaged with quotidian realities of the communities within the borough, for example Elizabeth Gaskell and William Baron. There is such a tension in Waugh’s rambling, which is never carried out in urban settings as the urban seems anathema to the writer. Rural settings, and, more broadly, the countryside, as geographer and poet David Matless points out, ‘has often been presented in England as symbolic of national identity’.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> David Matless, ‘Doing the English Village, 1945-90: An Essay in Imaginative Geography’, in *Writing the Rural: Five Cultural Geographies*, ed. by Paul Cloke and others (London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd., 1994), pp. 11. See also, Raymond Williams *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973) for a discussion on rural / urban dichotomies.

This section concludes the investigation into some of the main themes and tropes of Rochdale. From my exploration above, and with running creative writing sessions, I have found that there are recurring motifs in the literary geographies of Rochdale. This includes: quotidian life; the relationship and resistance to Manchester's gravitational pull. There are the tensions between urban and rural identities and the intersections of and within these with issues of: gender and place; regional and local identity through dialect and vernacular, dress and affiliations; community identities of diaspora and faith and the relationships, contestations, and intersections between communities. There is further tension with the recurring images of deprivation, poverty, violence, and class. The weather and landscape features as literary devices and to set the scene. There is a yearning presented to escape from Rochdale or escape to a "nostalgic" time that may not have ever existed. All the while there are the industrial motifs of mills and factories followed by later representations of these as post-industrial ruin. While these themes and motifs are not uniquely specific to a purely Rochdale literary treasury. These are themes that run through many literary texts. The focus on these aspects are indicative of perhaps a wider and specifically northern English literary canon, which I am calling literary northern English grit. As argued in the introduction to the thesis, a northerner, by popular definition, is a person who is either a native or an inhabitant from the "north" of the England.

The idea of north is slippery. It is, as Martin Wainwright suggests, 'both our glory and our problem. It is the land that gave birth to all the clichés – dark, grim, cobbled and the rest of it – because in its heyday it was true'.<sup>169</sup> In common parlance, "Northern grit", is nominally given to a person/people from northern England who

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<sup>169</sup> Martin Wainwright, *True North: In Praise of England's Better Half* (London: Guardian Books, 2009) p.17. See also Dave Russell, *Looking North: Northern England and the National Imagination* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

displays characteristics of motivation, striving against adversity.<sup>170</sup> I would extend this further: “grit” is denotational and connotational – it is metaphoric for the north’s industrial and natural legacy – resonating with the gritty pollution of industry, and the grit of the very stones from which the people and place are built. These ‘gritty’ motifs are similar to other northern English literary texts with similar thematic concerns like the ones listed above such as: crime and justice in Manchester (Val McDermid’s Lindsay Gordon crime series); northern humour (the comedy-of-manners books of Stuart Maconie); and what literature scholar Katy Shaw calls ‘Yorkshire Noir’ (Dave Peace’s *Red Riding* series).<sup>171</sup> (I reckon that perhaps there needs to be further debate on defining not only what but where this ‘northern grit’ starts. The north is understood to exist in relation to the south, however, a more solid definition than “not London” is required. I wonder where “The North” could start. . .) For example, there are contemporary literary texts and writers who are concerned with the portrayal of specific locational identities. They form an umbrella of “northern Englishness” under which sit myriad local identities and idiosyncratic geographies. There is existing scholarship on texts which critique the north, and northern placial identities and literary movements, such as the Mersey Sound poets of the 1960s and 1970s Liverpool scene, Yorkshire noir as exemplified by David Peace, and diasporic writing of postcolonial Manchester, books on poetry and the city, and articles on writers and literary northern locations.<sup>172</sup> There is scope for a further, contemporary survey of

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<sup>170</sup> See, for example, different uses of the phrase ‘northern grit’ in the following news reports: Robert Sandall, ‘Rock with True Northern Grit; The Stone Roses’, *Sunday Times* (London, 11 November 1990); Robert Armstrong, ‘Northern Grit Wins the Day’, *The Guardian* (London, 4 December 1989), section Sports News, p.15; Diana Coyle, ‘Blair’s Promises Fail to Soften Northern Grit’, *The Independent*, 20 August 1996, p.6; and Stephen Hoare, ‘A Journey from Stand-up to Start-up As the North Opens a Leadership Academy, Stephen Hoare Speaks to the Woman Whose Northern Grit and Determination Represents the Perfect Role Model for Business’, *Daily Telegraph* (London, 24 May 2007), section News, p.5.

<sup>171</sup> Katy Shaw, *David Peace: Texts and Contexts* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2011).

<sup>172</sup> See, for example: Adrian Henri, Brian Patten, and Roger McGough, *The Mersey Sound* (London: Penguin, 1967); Peter Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* (Manchester: Manchester

post-industrial northern literary texts to build this corpus. This would offer the opportunity to build a literary Northern Powerhouse; claiming the phrase for artistic and literary purposes.

It is important to reiterate that both the literary survey and narratives offered here as representative and interpretive tools of Rochdale are in turn selective interpretations by this researcher and necessarily not an exhaustive review of all the literature of Rochdale ever written. These literary texts are one way of making meaning about place or of bringing place into being. The texts reviewed in this chapter demonstrate multiple ways to understand the literary geographies of Rochdale. The following chapter will explore this – discussing theories of mapping place and create literary maps of the borough to develop a deeper understanding of Rochdale through its spatial representations.

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University Press, 2000); Katy Shaw, *David Peace: Texts and Contexts* (Brighton: Sussex Academic, 2011); and Corinne Fowler, 'Rebels without Applause: Manchester's Poetry in Performance', in *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora Space and the Devolution of Literary Culture*, ed. by Lynn Pearce, Corinne Fowler, and Robert Crawshaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), pp. 207–267.

## Part Two: Mapping Place

This Part continues from the literary textual representations of Rochdale and is concerned with maps. A map is normally regarded as a tool, a way of geolocating oneself. Here, though, maps are presented as forms of texts that are fair game for critique. Chapter Three is concerned with critical cartographies – arguing that, as well as being a tool or a starting point, maps tell stories and have agendas. The end of this chapter culminates in the interrogation of three different spatial representations of Rochdale. Chapter Four presents new cartographies of Rochdale, playing with the idea of creative cartographies with the writer/research acting as a cartographer. Reflections are offered to the reader on the creation of these new maps. Soon enough, the writer/researcher/wannabe cartographer discovers that she too has created maps that are problematic and ripe for dissection. Throughout this exploration, and creation, of maps, she is constantly interrupted by. . . [the 2017 production of \*The Theatre of the Borough of Rochdale\*, a creative intervention presented for the enjoyment of all.](#)

### *Dramatis personae*

#### **The Researcher:**

knows more than she thinks she does, knows less that she does (also plays **That Writer**).

#### **That Writer:**

desperate to write something that isn't dry, repetitive, reiterative. Tries to pin down meaning even though it sometimes eludes her. She finds this rather depressing.

#### **Pigeon:**

a pigeon (*Columba livia*). The original rock dove, full of Mancunian swagger and discarded chips.

#### **Raven:**

a raven (*Corvus corax*). Doing its corvid thing. philosopher.

#### **Ghost of Michel de Certeau:**

unseen character whose work permeates the

#### **Spirit of J. Brian Harley:**

thinking of maps

**The Heywood Pub Older Lad:**

a lippy kid, too old for youth clubs, too young for legally buying alcohol. Nothing to do except hang out and mess about. Doing the kind of things that some young men have been doing since time immemorial.

**The Heywood Pub Younger Lad:**

brother of the older lad, heading towards 14.

**A Gongoozler:**

happiest on a canal bank with a flask of sweet milky tea.

**The Rochdaliens:**

interchangeable characters from Rochdale.

**The Audience:**

you, me, everybody. Mostly human but not necessarily so.

## Chapter Three: Rochdale Cartographies

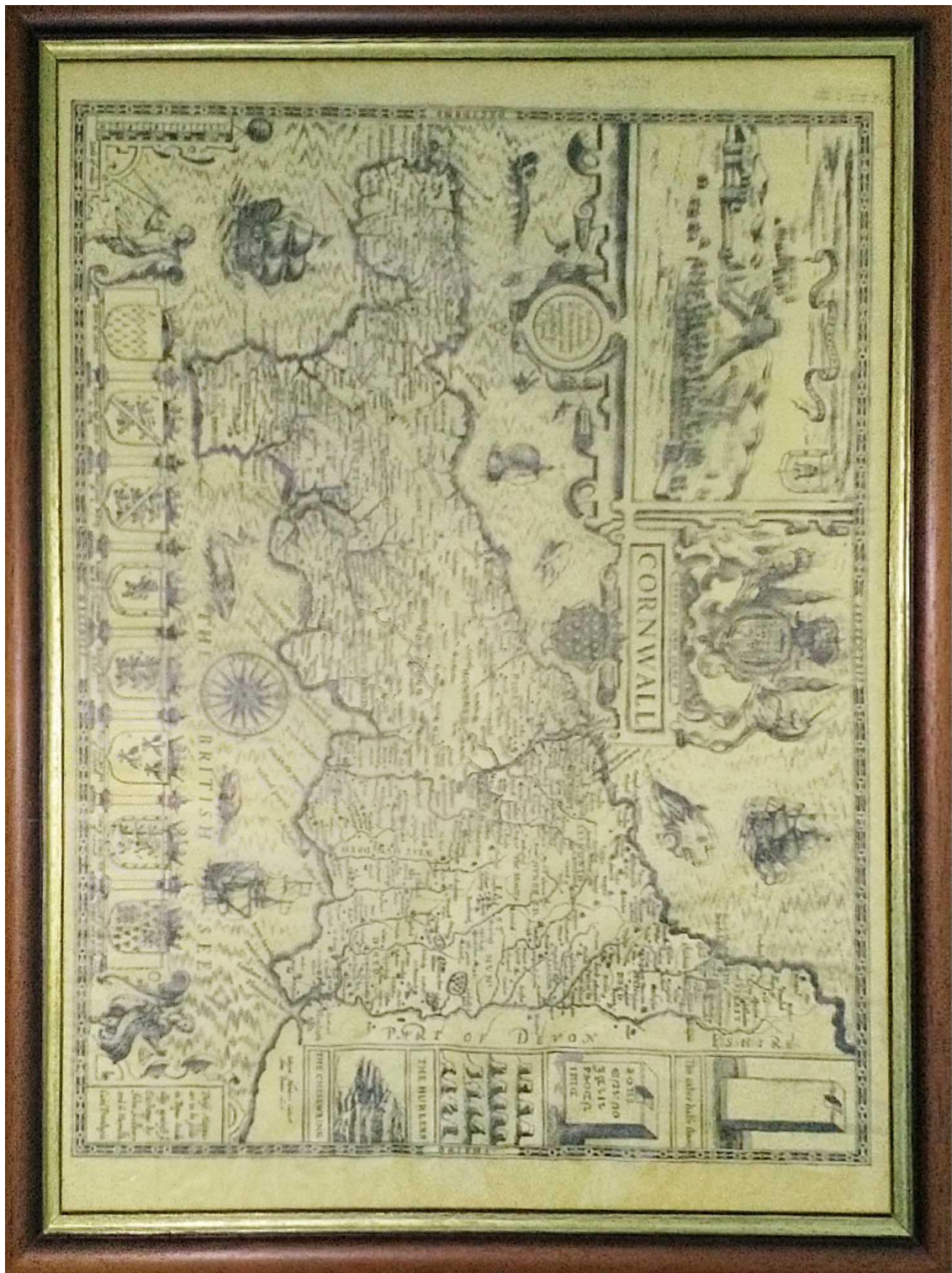


Figure 10: Grandad's Map (author's image).

Let me tell you a story: the map, detailed above in figure 10, belonged to my Grandad. It hangs midway up the stairs in our house and is only visible when descending the stairs. This map has my Grandad's personal stories attached to it and his topophilia of Cornwall. Although he was not born there, it was the county that he loved and where he last lived. After he died, I chose this map from what was left of his meagre belongings left behind in his sheltered accommodation. It is a map that, for me, tells another story and memorialises a complex man. The map is now in a house in Yorkshire, and it is now part of the domestic geography of another dwelling. Here's another story: yes, it is a map of Cornwall, but it was one of three similar maps that my Grandad had in his retirement flat in St Ives. My Grandad spent a large proportion of his life in the county, he identified himself an honorary Cornishman even though he grew up on a farm near Biddulph Moor, Staffordshire. It is a material object to represent a place that he identified himself with. There's time for one last story: look closely at figure 10, you can see that the map is slightly crumpled. Before my Grandad was too frail, he flitted between living in his beloved southern Cornwall and Amsterdam. The map, like other belongings, was damaged in transit. Now, behind the frame and the glass, there are new topographies in the paper.

Although the map may look old – it is dated 1610 – it is a reproduction of the original. As befitting an antique map, there are common cartographic cartouches: a royal crest, graphic scale, some information about the cartographer, a compass rose, armorials, blowing winds, side panels detailing some of the features within the county, place names are rendered in a delicate font, sea monsters stalk the coasts of Newquay and Penzance and it is all boxed off within the embellished neatline.

This chapter is concerned with stories of maps and the stories that maps can tell. When I researched the origins of my Grandad's map, I discovered that it is a



reproduction of a map by John Speed. Speed is the cartographer renowned for *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine*, an atlas of hand drawn county maps published between 1611 – 1612.<sup>173</sup> I began writing this chapter in Cheshire, which – rather poetically and serendipitously – is the county where John Speed was born in the early seventeenth century. My Granddad’s map presents me with one representation of Cornwall. The map’s projection makes the county look somewhat stretched, and certain details such as the industry and the armorials, are given their own importance. This privileging of detail is what cartographic designers call a ‘visual hierarchy’, where certain cartographic aspects are enhanced to draw the eye.<sup>174</sup> The Cornish peninsula has been given a thick black border to denote where the land meets the sea. To ensure that you are aware that this is water, within this area there are boats and sea monsters dotted around. Instead of “bleeding out” the details into the next counties – Devon and Somerset – the border between the counties has been taken over by other information, such as mining and “natural” points of interest, for example: the Hurlers Stone Circle and Cheesewring Tor.

While these megaliths are illustrated on the map, the stories behind them are not detailed. Although interest may be piqued, the tales of the stones are not explained. If it were, whomever was to behold the map would find out that the legend of the Hurlers is the tale of men turned to stone for, as musician and antiquarian Julian Cope

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<sup>173</sup> For more on the life and work of John Speed and his county maps see: Kenneth Cecil Harrison, ‘Old County Maps and Their Makers’, *Library Review*, 44.4 (1995), pp.36–41; Sarah Bendall and John Speed, ‘Draft Town Maps for John Speed’s “Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine”’, *Imago Mundi*, 54 (2002), pp.30–45; and John Speed, ‘The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine’, *University of Cambridge Digital Library*, 1611 <<https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PR-ATLAS-00002-00061-00001/36>> [accessed 6 September 2017].

<sup>174</sup> See Ordnance Survey, ‘Cartographic Design Principles: A Clear Visual Hierarchy’, *The Official OS Blog; for Everything Geography, GI and Mapping*, 2014 <<https://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/blog/2014/11/cartographic-design-principles-a-clear-visual-hierarchy>> [accessed 4 October 2016]. Further references to this and the work of the British Ordnance Survey will be given parenthetically.

explains, ‘playing the Cornish game of hurling on the Sabbath’.<sup>175</sup> There are more questions than answers posed from this map such as the spatial arrangement and the choices made in terms of what information is privileged. The cartographer makes choices. These details, cartouches and choice of what to reveal and what to conceal, can indicate the ideology behind a map; these cartographic idioms tell a story of their own. Looking at this map I am left wondering whether I can trust it: is it a true representation of Cornwall? Does it tell me what Cornwall is or how I get there or what to expect? Is it simply an aestheticised geographical representation, an elaborate form of fiction? Or, perhaps it is a mix of all these. This Cornwall map has more stories within its spatial representation of the county. And, with some of these questions in mind, this chapter sets out some methods to find a way into these spatial stories of Rochdale.

In the first Part of this thesis – Reading Place – there was an emphasis on how place is storied with a discussion on the themes and tropes of literary Rochdale in Chapter Two. Developing this ‘storying’ thread opens up further discussions in how maps and mapping can be defined and explored.<sup>176</sup> Part Two of this thesis draws on these discussions on the different ways in how place/s are made and understood through reading literary texts. The first part of this chapter draws upon the history of critical cartography offering an overview on contemporary thinking around maps and mapping. Following several key thinkers, this thesis proposes that maps are ‘texts of place’ and so can be read like a literary text. A conceptual framework built from these ideas, meshed with theories from Part One, allows for an interrogation of maps and mapping practices. With this in place, the second part of the chapter is dedicated to a

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<sup>175</sup> See Julian Cope, *The Modern Antiquarian* (Thorsons: London, 1998) p.173.

<sup>176</sup> Concise definitions of maps, mapping, and cartography is to be found in The Glossary in Appendix 1.

spatial reading of three maps of Rochdale. The Chapter closes with a discussion on how real, and potentially imagined, geographies have been presented as maps, and explores the potential for new maps of Rochdale.

Interrupting the theoretical narratives of Chapters Three and Four are excerpts from a production of the play *The Theatre of the Borough of Rochdale*. This play does not exist and will never be performed. The scenes and dialogues take their initial inspiration from John Speed's *The Theatre of the Empire of Great Britaine* (1611-1612). These creative interventions, in the form of scripted pieces and stage directions, interact with this thesis's notion that, ultimately, maps are performative, and the information is out of date, or even obsolete, once they are written and disseminated. Maps are like the liminal space of the theatre; the area that exists between cartographer and map user. The moment is gone as the words are spoken by the actor. Behind the writer, director, and characters, and sometimes paid no heed by an audience, are the stage and the backstage areas. Within, and without the stage and backstage are the technical team, backstage hands, the cleaner who mucks out long after this piece of seen theatre has ended. The productions may change, and this conceptual physical space too is a changeable domain, the 'flats' – moveable panels – used to depict scenery, the spiders that live quietly above the lighting rack. This physical three-dimensional space and everything within it, and without, has made meaning for this space to exist.

These creative intrusions also work as metaphors for making sense of maps; building a spatial sense of awareness; and of being/not being in Rochdale. Place, as geographer Alastair Bonnett puts it, 'isn't a stage, a backdrop against which we act out

our lives: it is part of what we are'.<sup>177</sup> The use of theatrical interventions play with this notion of place being more than a backdrop and allows for exploring (and exploiting) all the traditions of drama from Greek myths, Italian commedia dell'arte, traditional storytelling and folk song, to contemporary absurdist theatre. The addition of The Rochdaliens performing the annual Pace Egg play - a play within a play - represents one of many stories within a map as well as one of many stories within place. These plays, like maps that purport to represent place, are unfinished, sometimes unreliable, and ever-evolving.

## ACT 1

### Scene 1

*SETTING: Early morning. The Memorial Garden, just off the Esplanade in the centre of Rochdale, a Victorian rectangle of green space. The sun streams down on a fountain in the middle of the gardens which chucks water up in silvery chunks. The Town Hall clock can be heard tolling twelve times. To the right of this stage is the Magistrate's Court, to the left are some nondescript grey buildings. THE RESEARCHER enters from the left, she is struggling with a heavy bag over both shoulders holding onto the bag rather than her glasses which are threatening to leave her face. She sits on a bench opposite the fountain.*

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<sup>177</sup> See Alastair Bonnett, *Off the Map: Lost Spaces, Invisible Cities, Forgotten Islands* (London: Aurum Press, 2014) p. 108. Further references to Bonnett's book will be given parenthetically.

## THE RESEARCHER

Right, so, um. OK. So, if I can make maps then I'll understand things better. Pin things down for posterity. That sort of thing.

*THE RESEARCHER fishes out a flask, a notebook and pencil case removing many other objects: books, a large key chain, a broken purse that spews copious copper coins onto the concrete under her feet, loose sheets of paper in the light breeze. After a few moments of clumsy sorting and retrieval, she begins to sketch. A PIGEON flies in from the over back of the stage, it flutters down sits next to her, bobs its head as it watches her scribble. She holds up the book briefly and the title Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory is clearly visible. She turns the book around to reveal that she has been scrawling a picture of a dandelion from its roots to its seeded head over the text.*

## PIGEON

(Disgusted)

Crooo, croo, what you do idlin'? Don't you have a proper job proper job proper job?!

Vandalisin'! Interruptin' vital, critical woook with frippery?

## THE RESEARCHER

(Brief pause before continuing drawing)

I'm making a map. Wondering how weeds float out of the walls, defy gravity.

I want to know. I want to understand the thin threads of it all, how they appear from the root, how they weave, fray, die, regrow...

How each little life has a story to tell.

## **PIGEON**

Crrooo, and what makes YOU think you can do a better job better job better job? Who do you think you are tryin' to better others' thinkin'?

## **THE RESEARCHER**

I don't know if I can do a better job. But I can try thinking why a map works how it does, what its stories are, how it could tell other stories too.

## **PIGEON**

Right. Don't expect anyone else to get what you're doing.

*THE PIGEON flops off the bench with an awkward scuttle of stumpy toes and time-worn feathers.*

## *Mapping and Map Making*

Like the word ‘place’, the term ‘map’ has many definitions and uses. There seems to be something of a consensus on the locational, illustrative, and communicative nature of maps. They are produced by cartographers – literally “map writers” – who practice the art of mapping through drawing and/or computation. Mapping, here, is considered as an attempt to chart space, to record a way of representing travel routes, area, boundaries, and territories. Once produced, these maps normally correspond with the user through: meridians, graticules, scales, codes, colour, select toponyms, geometry, coordinates, and shorthand codes unlocked with a Key. Maps are beautiful things; intricate place names inked in, dots of walking routes, codes and road lines, decorative, and covetable. Maps can be a piece of art; something to be framed and admired, like my Granddad’s map. Or, they are more utilitarian: for displaying demographics, the social stratifications within communities.<sup>178</sup> They could map flood zones and territories, delineate borders, and divide land. The quotidian use of a map, ultimately, is as a navigational tool; something to orientate and spatially locate, to get you from one place to another.

Maps, and the interpretation of maps, seems innocuous: an innocent piece of paper; a voice that calls out from the GPS helping you with the optimal drive to your destination (with the additional warnings about speed cameras); an online, virtual walk along streets without leaving your keyboard or putting down your smartphone; or staring at a screen, hovering above GoogleEarth like a satellite. Once orientated, maps are projections scalable to some extent, presentations, and representations of place that assist in building understanding of the spatial arrangement of a place. Yet they are a

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<sup>178</sup> See, for example, Danny Dorling and David Fairbairn, *Mapping: Ways of Representing* (Essex: Prentice Hall, 1997) and Danny Dorling, *Injustice: Why Social Inequality Persists* (Bristol: Policy, 2011). Further references to Dorling & Fairbairn’s text will be given parenthetically.

form of text open to critique and interrogation; we can wonder who their author was, in this case a cartographer. In a sense, cartographers also act as topographers – place writers – they contribute towards the way in which place is conceived, understood, and offer the user – the reader – an illustration located in space.

## ACT 1

### Scene 6

**SETTING:** *Outside the Hotel Cartography there's ivy crawling up the walls, entering and exiting crevices in the masonry, meandering into the mortar. Opposite the hotel is a mature copper beech tree (*Fagus sylvatica*).*

*It is dusk, Eliot's violet hour, a hotel bedroom light comes on and blinds are lowered.*

*Dusk darkens to an indigo.*

*In the tree, the dialect of a tawny owl (*Strix aluco*)*

*woo-hoo*

*woo*

*woo-huh hooo woo-ha hoo*

*woo-hooooo                  woohoo*

*Then, the sound of small scuttling noises, scratches, branches against branches, the creak of a birch against the wind.*

*Then, a fluting: robins, blackbirds, chaffinch, chiffchaff.*

*Then, cars in the distance crunch through the gravel of the car park onto the plane of road tarmac.*



*The window of a hotel bedroom the blinds are raised, window open just a crack as if to let out sleep sweat and shower steam.*

*The sunlight moves across the hotel, a fleeting rain shower glazes the ivy to well-polished Pantone 2427 C.*

*The drizzle clears, clouds dapple the walls of the hotel in shades of brown, grey, late afternoon sunshine.*

*Then, it's as if everything has been dip-dyed gold, bruise backwards to purple. A cerulean dome. Sirius, Canis Major, those vibrations of light from decades ago.*

*The blinds in a bedroom of the Hotel Cartography are lowered.*

*The cycle begins again.*

*Faster.*

*Seasons of rain, snow, sun, sleet, hailstones, greys. The ivy dies back, regrows thicker before being strimmed by a man in navy overalls on a ladder. This place, this hotel, home for more than the staff within it, the transient clientele, the cars shipped over from Germany or Italy or South Korea that are bought in garages from around the country, different boroughs. Satnavs with drop-down options for more than one Middleton, many mispronunciations, odd syllable stresses on 'Newhey' and 'Littleborough'.*

*A textual still life, on the map and off the map.*

One can get a sense of direction from maps; they are, as cartographic historian and theorist J. Brian Harley suggests, ‘central to discourse on geography’.<sup>179</sup> Maps are central to a discourse on place and how it appears in the imagination. You can get an idea of the shape of the shape of a place through the way it is depicted on the page or screen. Here different meanings could be made per the map and what is presented on there. Any gaps present on the map, lines, colours, or symbols even if decoded by the map’s Key are still open to different interpretations. There are questions as to why the maps were made, who the maps were made for, and what other purposes maps can, and do, serve.

## ACT 2

### Scene 6

**SETTING:** *The road, early evening. By the side of Halifax Road, near the Roman Road, the noise of speeding traffic – motorbikes, lorries, cars - can be heard. THE RESEARCHER emerges from the grass verges trampling sedges and grasses, a cloud of midges wafts up around her. She is holding a cardboard sign that has “☺ BE BIG! TAKE ME TO SMALLBRIDGE ☺” written on it in stubby black marker pen. She is thumbing for a lift and reads from the back of the piece of cardboard.*

### **THE RESEARCHER**

This is a poem called ‘The Hitch-Hiking Bible’

An aging road atlas, permanent pen

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<sup>179</sup> J. Brian Harley, *The New Nature of Maps. Essays in the History of Cartography* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 2001) p.53. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

the Ⓐ is for “anarchist” scrawled over  
tell-tale signs of Michelin, Little Chef,  
logos for a spare tyre, lacklustre lunch:  
blood spatter beans, white foam and margarine,  
lollipops brightened with invented fruit.

Thumb through all the damp pulpy pages,  
the veins of thick blue motorway lines  
circle anonymous cells of white space.

This motorised body of roads, the flows  
the pulmonary thud, of cars, lorries,  
a clot of blue, green, red arteries  
connecting cankered city hearts.

### **RAVEN**

Craaaaaa craaaaaaaaaaaaaap

### **THE RESEARCHER**

Oh, come on. All art's subjective!

At the heart of critical thinking on cartography is the notion that there is power that lies within a map and, potentially, behind a map's construction. While maps make meaning – they are, after all, potentially a starting point for a place – there is also an element of storytelling in these spatial texts. There may be incorrect locations such as “trap streets” added to the map by a cartographer to discourage copyright and

‘demonstrate [any potential] plagiarism’.<sup>180</sup> Or, there may be places visible on one map yet missing on another. As a writer, intrigued by maps, I am interested in exploring these unusual idiosyncrasies. These could be seemingly “lost” or “invisible” locations that are, as geographer Alastair Bonnett describes, ‘unruly places that defy expectations’ (2014, p.5). Or the cartographer could instead choose to create esoteric ley line maps, such as that demonstrated in academic Joanne Parker’s book *Brittania Obscura*. Either way, mapping, here would involve a preferencing of data which would then spatially represent place/s.

In the foreword of Danny Dorling and David Fairbairn’s textbook *Mapping: Ways of Representing the World* the authors argue that, as well as the technical, aesthetic, and processual nature of mapping, maps tell us as much about ‘the people and powers that create them as about the places they depict’ (1997, p.vii). Maps have narratives that can privilege certain details over others. If maps have a narrative, then they are also a form of text open to critique. As Mexican poet Alberto Blanco suggests in the second sequence of his poem ‘Maps’: ‘A map of the real world is no less imaginary than a map of an imaginary world’ (lines 7-8).<sup>181</sup> This aesthetic meditation on maps as imaginary objects is of similar concern to some cartographers and scholars.

In order to explore how maps are more complex than mere tools, I am going to give a brief overview on the development of cartographic history as the impact of the cultural turn in the social sciences affected how maps are perceived and problematised. In the introductory chapter written for the comprehensive, and extensive, three-volume work *The History of Cartography*, J. Brian Harley suggests that the enduring

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<sup>180</sup> See: Jonathan Leib, ‘Trap Streets’, in *Encyclopedia of Geography*, ed. by Barney Warf (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2010) <<http://sk.sagepub.com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/reference/geography>> [accessed 30 September 2018].

<sup>181</sup> See Alberto Blanco, *Maps*, ed. by Juvenal Acosta (San Francisco, CA: City Light Books, 1995) line 24. There will be an extended discussion on poetry and prose as forms of maps and mapping in Chapter Four.

popularity of maps is significant because their production, and subsequent reproduction, ‘derives from the fact that people make them to tell other people about the places or space they have experienced’.<sup>182</sup> Humans, as Harley suggests, are map minded. Arguably, the practice of cartography is an enduring human concern beginning with cave paintings, progressing to the strange creatures of Medieval maps and religious *MappaeMundi*, to the elaborate, “celebratory urban”, colonial, empirical maps devised by cartographers such as John Speed. The convention – inherited from Eudoxus and Ptolemy– in laterality of all points to Polaris and the magnetic north, has been widely written on. The extensive volumes of *The History of Cartography* explore these notions in depth.<sup>183</sup> This northern centrism, or egocentrism, was seen in maps made by European cartographers which, as Harley describes, helped to ‘create myths that would assist in the maintenance of the territorial status quo’ (2001, p.57). In the frenzy of Empire building, the acquisition of a cartographic literacy allowed for locating, navigating, and controlling space. Once the rules of the language are understood, then lines could be placed on a page to delineate territories and facilitate the control of space with borders and boundaries. Maps were drawn, and redrawn, favouring whomever claimed victory and dominium over certain spaces. Prior to the late twentieth century, it seemed to be axiomatic that if one wanted to know how a

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<sup>182</sup> J. Brian Harley, ‘1. The Map and the Development of the History of Cartography’, in *The History of Cartography. Volume One: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>183</sup> See, for example: J. Brian Harley, ‘1. The Map and the Development of the History of Cartography’, in *The History of Cartography. Volume One: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) pp. 1-42; J. Brian Harley, David Woodward, and Germaine Aujac, ‘8. The Foundations of Theoretical Cartography in Archaic and Classical Greece’, in *The History of Cartography. Volume One: Cartography in Prehistoric, Ancient, and Medieval Europe and the Mediterranean*, ed. by J. Brian Harley and David Woodward (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp. 130–47; and Dennis Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision. Seeing, Imagination and Representing the World* (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2008). Further references to these works will be given parenthetically.

place was arranged in space then you turned to a map: a truth-telling, seemingly benign object, with no question of its construction.

The cultural turn in geography, and in other social sciences, in the 1970s led to a humanistic focus on meaning and making sense of the world.<sup>184</sup> Harley's scholarly challenge to the claim of maps' neutrality arrived in 1988 with 'Silence and Secrecy: the Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe' an article published in *Imago Mundi*, an international journal for the history of cartography. In this paper Harley probed not only the technical information about white spaces on the map, but also offered a political reading of the map to address these silences in looking for any potential agenda that would 'maintain the political status quo and the power of the state'.<sup>185</sup> The epigraph at the beginning of the essay, a quote from environmental economist Ernst Friedrich Schumacher, sets out a stall for the cartographic historian to explore 'a map which failed to show many things I could see right in front of my eyes' (Schumacher cited in Harley, p. 57). Schumacher's first book, *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (1973), lays out concerns regarding the ecological and social impact humans have on the world. Harley similarly worries about the impact and influence that power-imbalances, seemingly hidden on a map, have on the way that a map could be designed and consumed. He posits that maps are 'actions rather than [...] impassive descriptions' (1988, p.71). Maps, in other words, should be critically examined because 'that which is absent from maps is as much a proper field for enquiry as that which is present' (Ibid., p. 58). Absence is a key concern for Harley because the map is a form of communication where 'silence can

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<sup>184</sup> For more on the cultural turn in geography see, for example: Cresswell, *Geographic Thought: A Critical Introduction*; Stuart Aitken and Gill Valentine, *Approaches to Human Geography*, Second Edition (London: Sage Publications, 2015).

<sup>185</sup> J. Brian Harley, 'Silences and Secrecy: The Hidden Agenda of Cartography in Early Modern Europe', *Imago Mundi*, 40 (1988), p.57. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

reveal as much as it conceals and from acting as independent and intentional statements, silences on maps may sometimes become the determinate part of the cartographic message' (1988, p. 58). The messages, and silences, of maps can, as Harley warns, lead to a subconscious, or even tacit, acceptance of control, particularly state power.

In a further exploration, Harley pursued the idea that maps exert power in a paper entitled 'Deconstructing the Map', published in 1989 in scholarly journal *Cartographica*. This journal, the publication of the Canadian Cartographic Association, is concerned with progressive, and interdisciplinary research to contribute towards thought on cartography and geovisualisation. In the article, Harley challenges the notions of a map, positing that the map is a 'cultural text' that has, and exerts, power. Maps, as Harley puts it, are 'never neutral'.<sup>186</sup> Maps have a political as well as navigational purpose; they are tools that have been used to write and codify empire, to over-write place, and as a tool of control for social elites to displace those who were formerly attached to the land (Harley, 2001). Harley's analysis of maps is influenced by the poststructuralist theories of French philosophers Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Utilising Foucauldian notions of power and control, with Derridean deconstruction to 'interrogate the hidden agendas of cartography', Harley set about analysing maps suggesting that, if used uncritically, the map reinforces and 'embodies a systematic social inequality' (1989, p.7). If these inequalities are not addressed then this leads to geography that privileges information excluding that which is seen as unimportant, or that which the map maker may wish to conceal. If we acquiesce to maps, rather than interrogate the map's authority or authenticity, then those with

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<sup>186</sup> J. Brian Harley, 'Deconstructing the Map', *Cartographica*, 26.2 (1989), p.8. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

power have the potential to exploit us – to re-make places. There is a need to develop a critical standpoint when approaching or using maps; this previous, seemingly unimpeachable, privilege of cartographic literacy is open to challenge.

### ACT 3

#### Scene 1

**SETTING:** *Behind The Heywood Pub, by the Rochdale canal, mid-afternoon.*  
*Curtains open to reveal a set of chairs and table. On the table is one high-ball glass with a plastic straw and melting ice, two abandoned pints, and a half-full ashtray. Enter the OLDER LAD stage-right, they set up next to the canal. The YOUNGER LAD tries ineptly to roll a cigarette, the other goes to look at the canal.*

#### **OLDER LAD**

*(Soliloquy)* Down by the Rochdale canal, we know where we are.

We're Strongbow an' lols.

Sunny 2pm skivers striving fer an education we get 'ere an' 'ere alone.

*The sound of a lighter, a deep breath as the YOUNGER LAD inhales smoke, then tries not to cough.*





cartography, these essays are ‘passionate debates intended to galvanize his readers’ (2001, p. xii). Harley’s final essay in the book ‘Can There be a Cartographic Ethics?’ demonstrates critical concern towards positivistic scientist rhetoric and on existing, and future, mapping technologies. These discussions continue to ripple through contemporary thinking on cartography, undergirding radical, political, and playful thinking (and rethinking) on maps and mapping.<sup>187</sup> Contemporary maps can be made using GPS (global positioning system) technologies into digital mapping applications. While GPS and GIS (geographical information system) were originally developed for military purposes<sup>188</sup>, later desktop uses of sophisticated new technologies have allowed anyone access to ‘visiting’ different parts of the world without necessarily going/being there.

My three-year-old Android phone can show me Rochdale, Massachusetts while I’m sat waiting for a (delayed) tram in Rochdale, UK, and it is as if the world shrinks in the palm of a hand. Another example: you are in a car and lost, you turn on your SatNav (short for satellite navigation) to locate where you are and how to find the route out of there. A global positioning system (GPS) receiver is a component in your SatNav. This is dependent upon satellite information and calculates positionality from the time signals sent from these. In order to find a geo-location, coordinates can be input into the GIS (geographical information system), such as 53°36'56.9"N 2°09'32.7"W and this would land on a certain spot.<sup>189</sup> Geographical Information

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<sup>187</sup> See, for example, *Mappings*, ed. by Denis E. Cosgrove, Critical Views (London: Reaktion Books, 1999); and *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory*, ed. by Martin Dodge, Rob Kitchin, and Chris Perkins (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011). Further references to these works will be given parenthetically.

<sup>188</sup> See for example, Neil Smith, ‘History and Philosophy of Geography: Real Wars, Theory Wars’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 16 (1992), pp, 257–271; Jeremy Crampton, ‘Maps as Social Constructions: Power, Communication and Visualization’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 25.2 (2001), pp. 235–252; and Jeremy Crampton, *Mapping. A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Further references to Jeremy Crampton’s work will be given parenthetically.

<sup>189</sup> These coordinates, when inputted into GoogleMaps, should take you to Rochdale Town Hall.

Systems are ways of digitally storing, manipulating, representing and analysing data that has a 'spatial reference' - a geospecific location.<sup>190</sup> These systems can compare, layer and/or display different types of information, which can be either created digitally and/or takes the form of a digital interface.

One of the first examples of GIS was John Snow's cholera map from 1854. Snow used spatial analysis to trace, and eliminate, the source of a cholera epidemic in London and this method was later developed in 1889 by Charles Booth when he mapped the demography of streets in London. John Snow's cholera map is often cited as the start of spatial analysis; by overlaying one set of data (locational pinpointing of cholera cases) onto another layer of data (an existing map).<sup>191</sup> In the United Kingdom, the rapid development of technology and software from the 1970s led to discussions on the merits of developing global information systems. In 1983, the Committee of Enquiry into the Handling of Geographic Information was set up to discuss remote sensing and mapping, it was overseen by Roger Chorley, a hereditary peer.

Overlaying one set of data with another set can lead to a deeper understanding of the area, which could assist with town planning and could help develop other ways of understanding the layers of place. Yet there remain problems around control and power. In *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS* (2010), geographer Jeremy Crampton suggests that while GIS mapping has become accepted as a scientific, and therefore deemed neutral, way of mapping but argues that there are now public, or creative commons software available. While GIS is, as Crampton points out, lucrative, with much information controlled by huge corporations such as

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<sup>190</sup> See: Department of the Environment, *Handling Geographic Information. Report to the Secretary of State for the Environment of the Committee of Enquiry into the Handling of Geographic Information* (London: HMSO, 1987); Nick McWilliam *et al*, *Field Techniques: GIS, GPS and Remote Sensing* (London: Geography Outdoors / Royal Geographical Society (with IBG), 2005).

<sup>191</sup> See Saul Jarcho, 'Yellow Fever, Cholera, and the Beginnings of Medical Cartography', *History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 25.2 (1970), pp.131–142.

Google or by the military-industrial complex, there is chance to remake, and rethink, these technologies as well as use them to see how the shape of a place can change.

The malleability of mapping place/s is discussed in *Rethinking Maps: New Frontiers in Cartographic Theory* (2011), a book that explores the notion of changeable maps. The essays in the book offer a dialogue between practice and theory, exploring different modes of mapping such as digital, pictorial and writerly, and different methodologies for map study (materiality, building political understanding, ethnographic and evaluative models) and methods for mapping ‘moments’, such as senses, events, and practices (Kitchin *et al*, 2011). One of the many criticisms of digital GIS is of the rigidity of the tool, for example, while a tool such as GoogleEarth can give you an idea of the place by dropping the orange person onto a street, it can only follow the legal or road/pavement routes; it cannot show ginnels, rights of way, or shortcuts. GIS has a role to play in visualising multiplicities of place and space, yet it has still to realise a fuller phenomenological mapping potential. GIS cannot offer the experience of the textualities of place – taste, smell, touch – perhaps this will come with time and new advances in augmented reality.<sup>192</sup> The digital visualisation of place, while offering a chance to enhance or experience green space, is no replacement for the visceral thrill of breeze in the hair, the sharp smell of salt and vinegar on fat chips, or watching a sunset, or seeing the bioluminescence of common glow-worms while camping near a copse.

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<sup>192</sup> For further research on this see Henshaw and others (2016); Les Roberts, ‘Mapping Cultures: A Spatial Anthropology’, in *Mapping Cultures. Place, Practice, Performance*, ed. by Les Roberts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 1–25. Also see Marko Juvan, ‘From Spatial Turn to GIS-Mapping of Literary Cultures’, *European Review*, 23.1 (2015), pp. 81–96, a paper which explores Slovenian literary and socio-cultural geospaces using GIS and geographical text analysis GTA and various examples of augmented realities technology.

## ACT 3

### Scene 2

**SETTING:** *Further down the Rochdale canal, June morning. Navigating the canal: a pair of swans and five cygnets. Sugar of meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), bridal froth of flowers. A GONGOOZLER is sat on Lock 38 watching a greying couple on the deck of a painted boat ~~ deep bottle green, wide paint brush strokes are seen ~~ they are drinking tea out of hardy ceramic cups decorated with bright floral designs, slow lines of water smooth and flatten as the boat called 'The Journey Home' passes by. A dart of dark blue as swallows skim the skies, bubbles of water blob up from the depths of the iron brown canal. Perhaps perch or some other aquatic dweller? The fuzz of bees (*Apis mellifera*) can be heard just behind the ear, they briefly alight on the Himalayan balsam, emerge dusted in off-white pollen.*

### ***Three Critical Readings of Rochdale Cartographies***

In this section, I have offered a discussion on three different maps of Rochdale. Each of them is an example of a text of place. As a researcher, I am interested in critically assessing maps. As a writer I am more interested in pulling out the stories that maps could tell. On the surface, these three maps purport to inform the user of different things: the first map was produced to depict development work in Rochdale Town Centre; the second is a tourist map; and the third shows potential flood zone areas. These maps were commissioned and, as they appear to have some sort of

authorisation, act as sanctioned maps of Rochdale town centre. The theoretical approach for this section draws upon cartographic deconstruction to decode the narratives of each map. This approach considers different interpretations of each map, examining potential power structures that underlie them including the symbols, codes, and languages of the map's text. I am interested in uncovering what de Certeau calls the 'spatial stories' of these maps: what themes can be drawn out of each, and what these "stories" could be. This leads to an interrogation of how the maps' narratives create meaning. The organisation of a map, as Michel de Certeau suggests, 'can be discerned in stories about space in everyday culture' (1984, p.121). These spatial stories are mutable – like language. Following the dissection of the Rochdale maps is a brief discussion on alternative narratives for each map and how further questions could be posed towards these alternatives.

## Map One: The Town Centre Regeneration Map

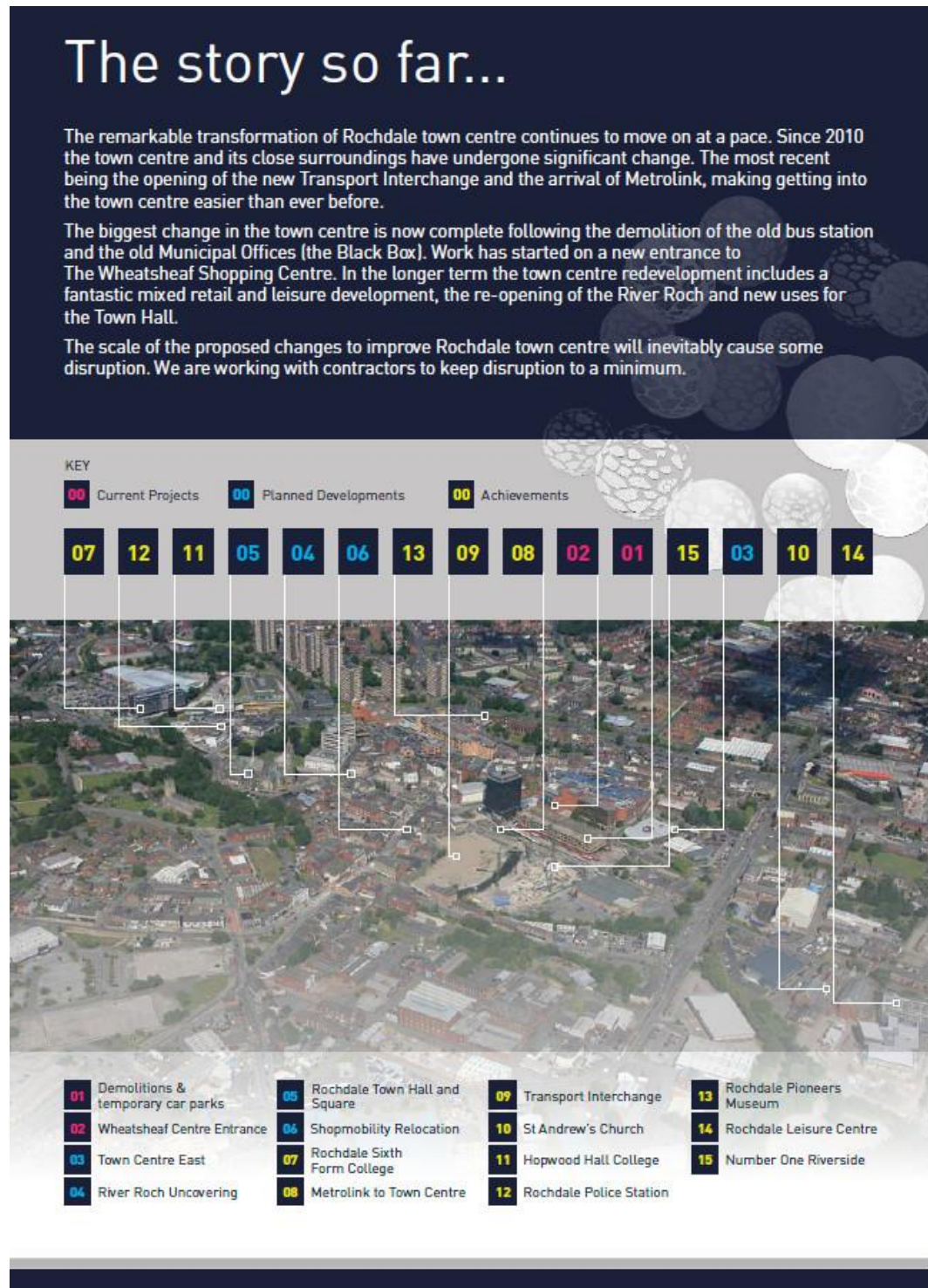


Figure 11: *Shaping Rochdale's Future*, Rochdale Development Agency, 2014 (used with permission).

If you had been living, or working, in Rochdale town centre over the last couple of years, you would have noticed construction work and the demolition of the old bus station, the place John Siddique called a “no go area” in ‘The Knife’ (2011). The map

titled ‘The story so far...’ above features on the second page of *Shaping Rochdale’s Future*, a 2014 booklet from Rochdale Town Centre Management Company, a private limited company, incorporated in 1992 without share capital.<sup>193</sup> Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council appoints three councillors to sit on the company’s board<sup>194</sup> and the company is partly responsible for Rochdale town centre’s current regeneration project. This is meaningful considering that municipal responsibilities are being delegated to private companies as it raises questions around democracy and accountability. I found a physical copy of this booklet in Rochdale Town Hall, a building that symbolises the town’s democracy.<sup>195</sup> When seen for the first time, this map is quite inaccessible, even though it details the ongoing regeneration, and its purpose is to disseminate information about the project.

On one level, this map and accompanying text are merely for information: an update on the works in the city centre and a way of locating where these works have been carried out. And yet there are other stories and messages embedded in this map. I chose to focus on it because it is prefaced by a prose piece that acknowledges the spatial story of the development using the phrase ‘The story so far...’. As Denis Cosgrove argues in *Geography and Vision. Seeing, Imagination and Representing the World*, ‘written narrative and description hold as significant a place as cartographic representation [...] the graphic can be textual as much as it can be pictorial’ (2008, p. 6). This preface is as much a map as the image below it. It has a momentous feeling, like a fictional work, the ‘new’ replacing ‘old’. The addition of an ellipsis lends a compelling, fairy tale feel - the storying of the regeneration of a town centre. In three

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<sup>193</sup> Companies House, ‘Rochdale Town Centre Management Company - Overview’

<<https://beta.companieshouse.gov.uk/company/02760393>> [accessed 24 September 2018].

<sup>194</sup> In 2016, the councillors that sat on the committee were: Ashley Dearnley, Richard Farnell (Leader of the Council and Lead for Regeneration), and Shaun O’Neill.

<http://democracy.rochdale.gov.uk/mgOutsideBodyDetails.aspx?ID=206>

<sup>195</sup> This map is also available online: <http://www.rochdaletowncentre.com/home/Documents>



short paragraphs, the text describes the benefits of the town's transformation and regeneration. The first two paragraphs contain adjectives such as: 'remarkable', 'significant', and 'fantastic'. These words work like little adverts; the semantic field, using these superlatives provides positive images to sell an aesthetic of the change. The juxtaposition of words such as 'demolition', 'addition', 'construction' used in close proximity are used to create a more positive message. There is assumed knowledge in the use of proper nouns for 'the old Municipal Office (the Black Box near the centre of the image)' and 'Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre', this information privileges those who know the area. Geographer and topographic scientist James Keates suggests that the use of these place names is 'an important element in a person's consciousness of self location'.<sup>196</sup> These proper nouns, the 'Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre', are there to reorient further: if one is not able to recognise the changes, then at least one would be able to identify what that place was.

The use of 'old' is juxtaposed with the repetition of 'new', if 'old' is inferior then 'new' is reified. When the 'old' has been razed to the ground this offers a blank space on which to (re)develop. This is, as Michel de Certeau suggests, why every 'urban "renovation" prefers a *tabula rasa* on which to write in cement the composition created in the laboratory' (1984, pp.200-201). The glass and steel building that is Number One Riverside, is a new construction to not only replicate the last incarnation's purpose (a lending library) but also to include ways of commodifying space and place. Even the new bus station, opposite Number One Riverside, with its newsagent and café, is now a centre of consumption.<sup>197</sup> By the end of the second paragraph of the text, the narrative has moments of vagueness – possibly to do with providing dates for completion or with

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<sup>196</sup> James S. Keates, *Understanding Maps, Second Edition* (Harlow, Essex: Addison Wesley Longman, 1996) further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

<sup>197</sup> For more on cities as sites of consumption see: Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1996).

planning decisions – when it mentions ‘new uses for the Town Hall’ without illustrating what these ‘uses’ will be. The first two paragraphs of the text seem to be an attempt to offset the more negative connotations from the final paragraph regarding the task to ‘improve Rochdale town centre’ which involves a repeat of the word “disruption” in just two lines. The repetition of ‘disruption’ speaks of an awareness on the part of the author; this map is meant to prevent anxiety or quell further anger as the familiar landscape is disrupted. This demonstrates how councils, regeneration committees, town planners and map makers negotiate accord between public and municipality. This use of spin does raise tensions in communicating this. It raises questions on the type of map making this actually is: one of conciliation and of justification for demolition.

As your eye moves from the main narrative of construction/demolition to the image below, the map that occupies about two thirds of the page comes into view with no indication of orientation. The preceding text, coupled with the Agency map’s assumed purpose, indicate that this map is not interested in scale. Various points are demarcated by tiny white boxes and white lines and are codified using numbers and colour. The use of colour, as Keates posits, ‘is important because it introduces variables which can enhance contrast, and therefore extend the number of perceptible differences which can be employed in discriminations’ (1996, p. 45). For Keates, any ‘discriminations’ in this context are determined by the visual perception of the map and the use of hue saturation, lightness, and colour dilution to bring out certain aspects within the image of the map. This discriminates which information the map reader receives: the number and colour key is at the top of the map, and there is further detail at the bottom as to what each locational point represents. The colours depict the stages of town centre redevelopment at the time of the booklet’s publication: ‘Current Projects’ in fuchsia; ‘Planned Developments’ in cyan; and ‘Achievements’ in bright

yellow. This use of colour works as symbols or “semiotic markers” that function like a textual metaphor.<sup>198</sup> The choice of fuchsia rather than red could be because red is symbolic of rage, danger, sexual attraction, or blood; blue is a cool, corporate colour; and yellow is positive – the colour of sunshine and action. There is a broad body of literature on colour theory, and the use of colour which seems to have its genesis in Charles Eastlake’s work on Goethe’s colour theory published in 1840.<sup>199</sup> Other thinkers and scholars seem to draw on elements from this to discuss: psychology (Berlin & Kay, 1969; Elliot & Maier, 2014; Fetterman *et al.*, 2014); and brand identification and marketing using colour (Aslam, 2006, Sable & Ackay, 2011; Fetterman *et al.*, 2014, and Elliot & Maier, 2014).<sup>200</sup> While much of the burgeoning literature on colour theory is somewhat problematic – Goethe’s comments on skin colour and aesthetics are a case in point – colour is still an enduring concern particularly in branding and marketing.

Along with prominent colours displayed on Rochdale Development Agency’s map there are also images and pictures of the Metrolink tram service. This service connects most of the Greater Manchester region – which, as the text suggests, makes ‘getting to the town centre easier than ever before’. The addition of the Metrolink mirrors the introductory text; there is a sense of transition as the town centre is shaped: the projects are moving ‘at a pace’ giving a sense of speed and another

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<sup>198</sup> See Francisco Vaz Da Silva, ‘Red as Blood, White as Snow, Black as Crow: Chromatic Symbolism of Womanhood in Fairy Tales’, *Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies*, 21.2 (2007), 240–52.

<sup>199</sup> *Goethe’s Theory of Colours*, ed. by Charles Eastlake (London: John Murray, 1840).

<sup>200</sup> See: Brent Berlin and Paul Kay, *Basic Color Terms: Their Universality and Evolution* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969); Mubeen Aslam, ‘Are You Selling the Right Colour? A Cross-Cultural Review of Colour as a Marketing Cue’, *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 12.1 (2006), pp.15–30; Paul Sable and Okan Akcay, ‘Response to Color: Literature Review with Cross-Cultural Marketing Perspective’, *International Bulletin of Business Administration*, 11 (2011), pp.34–41; Adam Fetterman, Tianwei Liu, and Michael Robinson, ‘Extending Color Psychology to the Personality Realm: Interpersonal Hostility Varies by Red Preferences and Perceptual Biases’, *Journal of Personality*, 83.1 (2014), pp.106–116; and Andrew Elliot and Markus Maier, ‘Color Psychology: Effects of Perceiving Color on Psychological Functioning in Humans’, *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65.95 (2014), pp.95–120.

acknowledgement of motion both in terms of transport and towards completion.

Alongside the sense of speed for the regeneration, the cultural life of Rochdale is represented on the map by the Rochdale Pioneers Museum. The Pioneers Museum is a heritage centre dedicated to retelling the story of the cooperative movement, and celebrating the town's link with the wider global cooperative movement. There is no detail on what the Rochdale Pioneers Museum is or what to expect from any redevelopment. With the juxtaposition of old and new, culture and commerce, there seems to be a desire to progress yet to also preserve the town's nineteenth-century heritage. The reassertion of the narrative of the past is something that Frederick Jameson warns against. This is the notion that 'we seem condemned to seek the historical past through our own pop images and stereotypes about the past, which itself remains forever out of reach'.<sup>201</sup> The recent unveiling of a Gracie Fields walk around the town centre seems to support this. Gracie Fields, born in Rochdale, was a Hollywood Star in the mid-twentieth century and this trail again harkens back to one narrative of Rochdale's past.

Out of the fifteen points shown on the Rochdale Development Agency's map, locational 'Achievements' outnumber 'Current Projects' and 'Planned Developments' points. The excess of yellow and concentration on 'Achievements' works as an encouraging narrative, a tool to appease those who are perceived to be disadvantaged, to counter underlying messages of inconvenience caused by a 'scale of changes' required to 'improve' the space. The language of appeasement is again in play. This rhetorical tool is used to shape the social vision of a place, deconstructing this language begins to reveal that this map is not neutral. It is a map that seeks to convince

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<sup>201</sup> Frederick Jameson, *The Cultural Turn. Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983 – 1998* (London: Verso, 1998) p.10.

and persuade.

Even as a tool of persuasion, the spatial layout and construction of this map does seem to have significant design issues. The crossing white lines are confusing, and the quality of the map is murky – the overall palette features greys, brick browns, and beiges with scattered obtuse green shapes. It is arguably not a particularly aesthetically pleasing map. While there has been some attempt to bring out other design features, the built environment is blurred out towards the bottom to create a sense of contrast between locational information and the image. This is a concession to the aerial view, it perhaps demonstrates that the ‘blurred’ information is somewhat lesser to what is privileged. The map lacks legibility, blurring seems to affect the entire image, the buildings are anonymous. It would be difficult to discern that you are looking at Rochdale if it were not for the textual information.

There is no real sense of place evoked by this map nor any sense of toponophilia (Tuan, 1977). The map’s text, and the text that prefaces the map, is ultimately about improved access to where you can shop. The map has more of a neoliberal discourse: it is about consumption rather than leisure or creativity. There is scant information within this story on free activities, experiential contact, or on communal nodes that may begin to develop place attachment. There could be ways of using this map as a base and begin working towards a more democratic map, undertaking what Nancy Duxbury *et al* call ‘counter-mapping’, a process influenced by indigenous populations where ‘alternative senses of space and place [are incorporated] into mapping processes’.<sup>202</sup> Some of the areas indicated on the map could be enhanced by local knowledge to begin to build a sense of community such as the police station, the

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<sup>202</sup> Nancy Duxbury, W.F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan, ‘Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry. Introduction to an Emerging Field of Practice’, in *Cultural Mapping as Cultural Inquiry*, ed. by Nancy Duxbury, W.F. Garrett-Petts, and David MacLennan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015) p.4.

church, and the further education institutions.

Strikingly, what is mapped is what has changed in the town centre, it is not a neutral map, nor is the text neutral. It is a map that lauds increased commerce in the town centre. The addition of more shopping opportunities fulfils a more neoliberal place-making agenda. This moves Rochdale towards being yet another ‘clone town’ where any capital goes into national, and multinational, chains rather than remaining in the local economy (Simms *et al*, 2005). While this map’s story offers a sense of progression – the story is not yet over, and the ‘shaping’ is continuing – there is a bias towards consumption rather than community. The overall impression is that this narrative is working towards a fixed state of being – one that is purely biased towards commercial interests which is the purpose of this map. A different map could acknowledge other ways for people to become involved in its story such as, for example, a tourist map.

## Map Two: The Visitor Map



Figure 12: *Welcome to Rochdale* Map, Link4Life/Rochdale Borough Council, 2015 (used with permission).



Picture the scene: you are in a town wondering how to locate yourself. You are a stranger to this new place. A ‘visitor’ from old French –*visiteur* – an inspector; a sightseer or a tourist.<sup>203</sup> You could have travelled for many reasons, fulfilling specific desires be they gustatory, cultural, climatic, seeking “natural spaces” or simply just passing through. The term “tourist” has been in use since the eighteenth century<sup>204</sup>, and sometimes evokes images of young men on their Grand Tours of Europe. In his book *Global Tourism* (2005), William Theobald argues that contemporary tourism is ‘distinctly a twentieth-century phenomenon [producing] a means of earning foreign [and local] exchange’.<sup>205</sup> Someone who is visiting is assumed to have time, and presumably money, for leisure and pleasure; they may not have an itinerary which is where the Visitor Map could assist.

The tourist, or visitor, map offers an itinerary (de Certeau, 1984). It offers suggestions for where to go and what to see. The map reproduced above was one of many copies that were free from the visitor information desk in the gift shop of Touchstones heritage centre. Touchstones is an art gallery, events space, café, heritage museum, and local studies centre. In keeping with the map’s origin from the Visitor Information Centre, I am defining this map as a ‘Visitor Map’ rather than ‘Tourist’ map. This map seems to be for pedestrians, whereas the first map is arguably aimed at those who reside or work in Rochdale. These visitors will negotiate the land using both the map and their perambulations. The user may require public transport, so it is important that is detailed; they will locate themselves along the pavements, following

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<sup>203</sup> “Visitor” as defined in both the Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Visitor, N.’, *OED Online* (2018: Oxford University Press, 2018) <<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.mmu.ac.uk/view/Entry/223975>> [accessed 15 May 2018]; and the Online Etymology Dictionary, ‘Visitor’ <<https://www.etymonline.com/word/visitor>> [accessed 15 May 2018].

<sup>204</sup> “Tourist” as defined in Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Tourist, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/203937>> [accessed 15 May 2018].

<sup>205</sup> William F. Theobald, ‘The Meaning, Scope and Measurement of Travel and Tourism’, in *Global Tourism (3rd Edition)*, ed. by William F. Theobald, 3rd edn (Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005) p.5.



invisible traces, the ‘chorus of idle footsteps’ and other ‘travel stories’ that went before them (de Certeau, 1984).

In Harley’s *The New Nature of Maps* (2001), he suggests that there is a dialogue between the would-be visitor (the map’s user) and the cartographer (the “Visitor Map” maker). Visitor maps, or ‘topographical maps’ as Harley calls them, are ‘designed for a variety of purposes [...] made to fulfil several needs at once.’ (2001, p. 39). These maps, as Harley posits, ‘always represent more than a physical image of place’ (2001, p. 48). The historical influence on this particular map is clear to see in the its subtitle ‘The World Capital of Co-operatives’. Although not examined on the map, the Rochdale Pioneers were the progenitors to contemporary cooperative principles.<sup>206</sup> This subtitle demonstrates what urban strategist Malcolm Allan describes as ‘place and destination branding’, a strategy to distinguish one place from another, establishing an identity and defining a vision.<sup>207</sup> The ‘spatial story’ is curated by the map through this title, the key, the topological space, the visible toponyms and those greyed-out anonymous places visible on the map’s text (de Certeau, 1984; Harley, 2001).

If this map is acting as a storytelling device, there is an absence of an explanation as to what the ‘World Capital of Co-operatives’ is. Further, there is nothing to indicate where this Capital is located. James Keates suggests that the signs on the map should relate to the phenomena that they represent; there is a semiotics of a map where semantic ‘information shown on the map must depend on the use of shared

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<sup>206</sup> The International Co-operative Alliance definition, values, and principles are drawn from the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers Society. The Alliance is now based in Brussels, Belgium. See International Co-operative Alliance.

<sup>207</sup> See: Malcolm Allan, ‘Report / The Contribution of Place Brand Strategy to Placemaking | The Academy of Urbanism’, *The Academy of Urbanism*, 2015 <<http://www.academyofurbanism.org.uk/report-the-contribution-of-place-brand-strategy-to-placemaking/>> [accessed 15 January 2016]. This report on place-making and place branding accompanied a talk given to early career urban planning academics and professionals at the Academy of Urbanism on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

symbols to make the symbols intelligible and not based on personal conception’ (1996, p.75). There is no sign to “point the way” and therefore there is a breakdown in the chain of communication between map maker, map, and map user. Without prior knowledge, there is no description of how to link the sign vehicle of the ‘Pioneers Museum’ (seen as a pinkish shape off Saint Mary’s Gate on the map) and the history of cooperation.

The Visitor Centre, located centre left on this map, acts as a locational tour guide in the quest to interpret the map. The *i* stands in for “You Are Here”, to locate you, as Edward S. Casey suggests, ‘in a given terrain in relation to where you are now situated as you read the map itself’ (2005, p. xx). The “You Are Here” point has an *othering* effect, marking the user out as newcomer, the Visitor Map is thus a map for *others* (Casey, 2005). The Visitor Map is an attempt to rationalise in its ‘narrative activity’ (de Certeau, 1984, p.126). There are seemingly liminal places in this map: the ghost roads – the white, unnamed routes – and grey anonymous spaces, they are silences on the map (Harley, 1988). This map offers the user a search, a treasure hunt for discovering what has been de-emphasised, where ‘interpretation’, as Harley writes ‘becomes a search for silences (2001, p. 45). With the map in hand, the user might find it hard to resist the map’s push towards consumption. If it was resisted, the map-user then becomes the *flâneur*, wandering the streets as a ‘detached observer [...] immersed in the crowd but isolated from it’ (Coverley, 2010, p.60). Walking around the town, the visitor can briefly enunciate and appropriate the town’s topography, carrying out a ‘spatial acting out of the place’ (de Certeau, 1984, pp. 97-98).

This map is a spatial snapshot taken at a specific time, yet it represents different moments in time. Although the totems of cooperation are emphasised in the title any meaning as to what “cooperation” *means* is obfuscated. The town’s industrial

heritage as an urban nexus linked to Manchester can be seen by the links provided by the railway and tram stops. Towards the bottom right of the map the direction of the trains and trams are indicated as ‘To Manchester’; ‘To Manchester/Oldham’, and “To Leeds/Littleborough”. Off the map, and on the tram, the post-industrial remains of nineteenth-century mills and warehouses – as detailed in ‘Preamble: Tram Lines’ the opening poem to the thesis – can be viewed from the windows on the tram and train routes into Rochdale from Manchester. This map assumes that the visitor has some cartographic literacy and perhaps placial prior knowledge. The broad concept of this map, although seemingly for heritage, faith (represented here by the Golden Mosque and symbol of a cross to represent churches), and culture does paint another picture of Rochdale. Unlike the first map, this map does take culture into account, however, it is a printed sheet that, as the town centre changes through the regeneration projects, will require updating and reprinting. This is a map that is a starting point to interact with Rochdale, a digital map would allow for further functions. A digital map can provide layers of information, just as the next map demonstrates.

### Map Three: The Flood Map

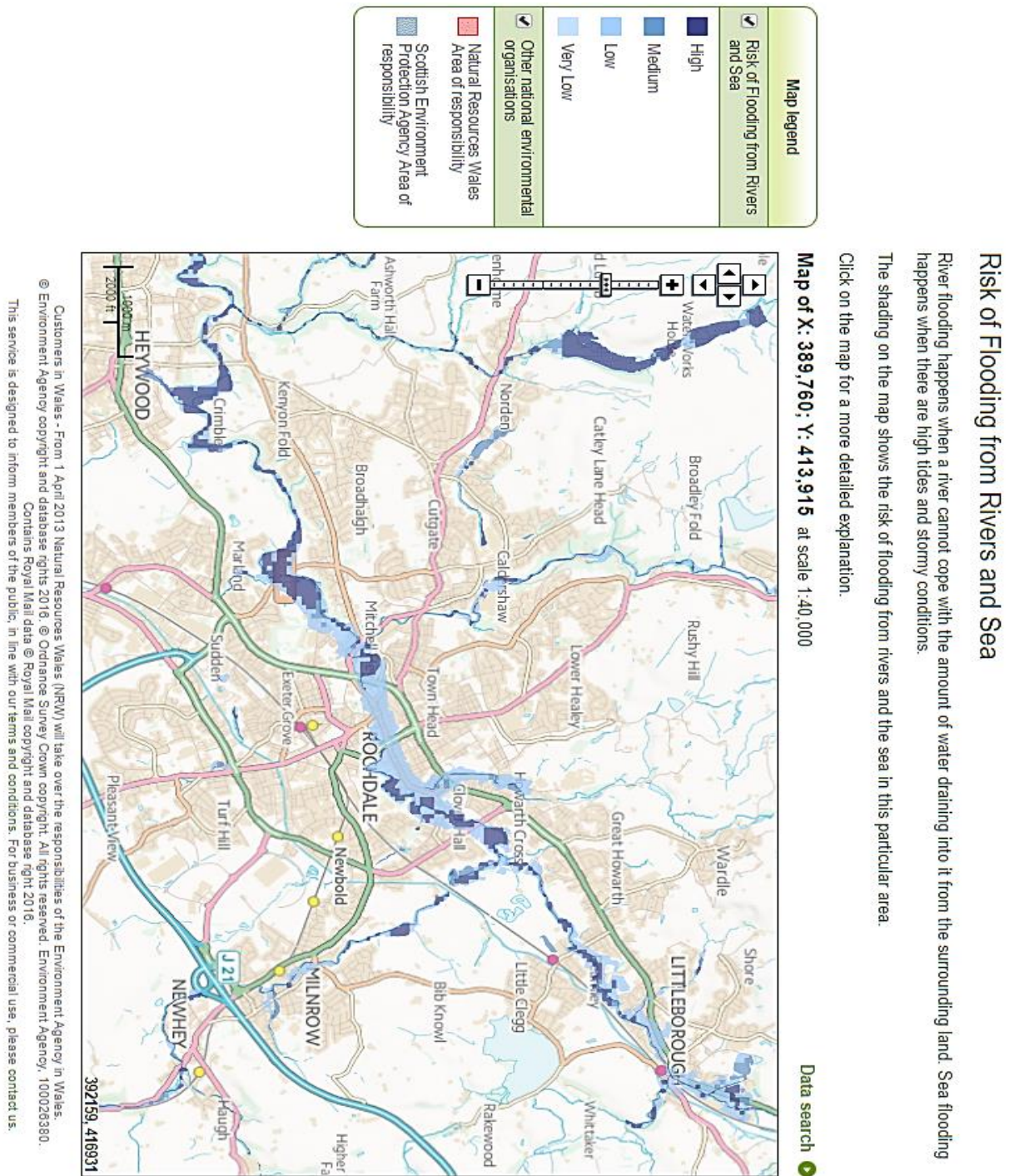


Figure 13: Screenshot of Flood Risk Map, Environment Agency, © Crown Copyright.<sup>208</sup>

<sup>208</sup> Screenshot from: Environment Agency, ‘Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Sea’, 2016 <watermaps.environment-agency.gov.uk/wiyby/wiyby.aspx?topic=floodmap#x=389760&y=413915&scale=8> [accessed 6 July 2016].

The quiet Roch comes dancing down  
From breezy moorland hills;  
It wanders through my native town,  
With its bonny tribute rills.

(From 'To the River Roch', Edwin Waugh, 1889, lines 1-2)

As discussed in Chapter Two, Edwin Waugh's 'To the River Roch' is a post-Romantic pastoral poem. The text begins with natural imagery as the speaker's gaze is drawn towards the 'breezy moorland hills' (line 2) above the town. The speaker then goes on to articulate a personal relationship with the titular river, his 'native stream' (line 5) as he entangles the transience of his life with the transience of water. Waugh's Romanticised river perhaps is not representative of the contemporary Roch. On the 26 December 2015, a large concentration of rainfall caused the River Roch to burst its banks near to the municipal building 1 Riverside Place (the library and council services). This building is south of where the Roch intersects with the River Beal, and caused a large part of Drake Street, in the centre of Rochdale, to act like a bowl, flooding out a significant part of the built environment. (See figure 5 for an image taken after the flood.) It was not the only place that was deluged; Littleborough, located in the north-east of the borough, was similarly affected along with many other places in the north of England. The map overleaf details future flood risk in the area that makes up the metropolitan borough of Rochdale.

At the time of writing this thesis, the UK was a member of the European Union (EU) and, under the EU Floods Directive of 2007, all EU nations must provide flood

risk maps for high risk areas.<sup>209</sup> The Flood Map, as detailed above, was produced by the Environment Agency, an executive non-departmental public body that, while sponsored by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, operates at “arm’s length” from government. If followed from right to left, this blue line follows the River Roch from Littleborough towards Heywood. The source of the Roch begins in the higher terrain of Summit, Littleborough on the South Pennine fringe, the described by Daniel Defoe described as ‘a fearful precipice on one hand, and uneven ground on the other’ (1991, p.488). On the map, the line in shades of blue, follows the source of the river, tracing from the top right of the map (north-east) to the left (south-west). The legend, to the right of the map, offers a key to the colours that overlay the map where risk is measured from Very Low (pastel blue) to High (an indigo blue), the colours mirroring the use of shades of blue to represent bodies of water. These maps were produced to depict future potential damage to the areas surrounding brooks and rivers due to ‘extreme rain fall’ and climate change (Environment Agency, 2016). This map is a snapshot in time as it depicts current and future flood risk areas of the Rochdale borough – these risk areas will change over time as will be discussed. Therefore, the Flood Map exists to communicate geographical information, the likelihood of flood, and has been digitally produced.

As Crampton describes in *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS* (2010), GIS is a form of mapping; and, as with traditional paper maps, GIS are characterised by underlying tensions of power, control and resistance. Drawing upon the work of J. Brian Harley, Crampton poses a similar argument regarding the ethics of map making, arguing that that GIS and GIScience has a political agenda.

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<sup>209</sup> European Parliament, *Directive 2007/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on the Assessment and Management of Flood Risks (Text with European Economic Area Relevance)*, 288, 2007 <<http://data.europa.eu/eli/dir/2007/60/oj/eng>> [accessed 8 February 2018].

While the Flood Map above has been produced to inform rather than persuade, it could be used to suit the agendas of property buyers or insurers who would look at the risk area and decide on the worth of the land and of buildings on that land. There is a subliminal story at play within this map. On the other hand, it could be used to empower a prospective house buyer: buildings in a blue-out region may be cheaper, and so the risk of future water damage, even if high, may be deemed a risk worth taking. The Flood Map, implicitly, tells us a story of climate change and of scientific consensus. As someone who has been involved in environmental activism, this is something that is of interest and something that concerned me when witnessing the floods in Rochdale town centre in 2015. In 1988, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) was set up by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Program to assess available scientific information on climate change, environmental and socio-economic impacts on climate change, and to suggest responses and strategies to influence international policy in mitigate and adapt in the face of climatic change.<sup>210</sup> The scientific consensus of the IPCC is that there is, and will continue to be, an increase in flash floods that are caused by anthropogenic climate change. The shades of blue on the Flood Map depict a scale of high – low risk and codify future flooding.

The positioning of colours on a map, particularly the blue lines of water, is one that features in *Elements of Cartography* (1995), where Arthur Robinson suggests that when mapping quantitative data, the cartographer must overlay a different colour to

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<sup>210</sup> See John T. Houghton, B.A. Callander, and S.K. Varney, *Climate Change 1992: The Supplementary Report to the IPCC Scientific Assessment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) <[https://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/1992%20IPCC%20Supplement/IPCC\\_Suppl\\_Report\\_1992\\_wg\\_I/ipcc\\_wg\\_I\\_1992\\_suppl\\_report\\_front\\_matters.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/ipccreports/1992%20IPCC%20Supplement/IPCC_Suppl_Report_1992_wg_I/ipcc_wg_I_1992_suppl_report_front_matters.pdf)> [accessed 30 October 2017]; and *Climate Change 2013: The Physical Science Basis Working Group. Contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, ed. by Thomas F. Stocker *et al* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

represent the data – for instance with the Flood Map, the risks associated with flood: water damage, destruction, drowning. To reproduce this information, the cartographer, working with GIS software, must ensure that this is scalable. As Andrew Herod posits: scale ‘allows us to talk about development’ the ‘local and the global’.<sup>211</sup> The first two maps of Rochdale are only present on one scale – there is no option to zoom in or to see what details, locations, and toponyms are preferenced and presented. Scaling is one way of modelling iterative, or layered, data. This can be seen in the Environment Agency’s use of Ordnance Survey maps where scaling still privileges a handful of place names, road networks and the thin blue line of the rivers Beal and Roch faintly masked by the flood risk data layer. The digital map is scalable but still highlights the road routes and transport nodes. There is no sense of place in these maps even though they spatially represent the river; there is no sense of time (the flooding from December 2015), or senses of place (Waugh’s gentle stream or the more edgy, polluted bodies of water depicted by Trevor Hoyle).

While the Flood Map, like the other two maps, purports to be a tool to communicate, it does not offer space for response or collaboration. There are examples of collaborative digital maps, for example, digital citizen mapping and science projects allowing: the addition of crowdsourced flood data in Argentina, France and New Zealand (Le Coz *et al*, 2016); sharing Chennai flood data and opensource code through GitHub (anon, 2015) and disaster relief ‘crisis-mapping’ (Douvinet *et al*, 2017).<sup>212</sup> While I would suggest that these present a more open, potentially more

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<sup>211</sup> Andrew Herod, *Scale: Key Ideas in Geography* (London: Routledge, 2010) pp.1-2.

<sup>212</sup> Jérôme Le Coz *et al*, ‘Crowdsourced Data for Flood Hydrology: Feedback from Recent Citizen Science Projects in Argentina, France and New Zealand’, *Journal of Hydrology*, 541 (2016) pp.766–777; OpenStreetMap India, *A Simple Web Map to Visualize Flood Information on Maps: Osm-in/Flood-Map* (OpenStreetMap India, 2018) <<https://github.com/osm-in/flood-map>> [accessed 30 September 2018]; Johnny Douvinet *et al*, ‘15 - Crowdsourcing and Crisis-Mapping in the Event of Floods: Tools and Challenges’, in *Floods*, ed. by Freddy Vinet (Elsevier, 2017) pp.209–223.



participatory, mode of mapping. Following the argument about what maps reveal and conceal, they are still stymied by presenting one narrative.

The three maps presented for discussion follow the map communication model (MCM). This functions as follows: the sender (the cartographer) transmits a message (a map) to the receiver (the map user). As Crampton points out in *Mapping. A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS*, there are many flaws in this model. It assumes a closed loop where the message is never misinterpreted or questioned. The Flood Map models information that may well be speculative. Weather is not completely predictable. The closed loop model excludes any other participants, or any other maps or map makers, there is no option to participate and no information on how to adapt or mitigate flood.

The Town Centre Map uses a MCM where the percipient is assumed as a Rochdale dweller/worker and the percipient in the Visitor Map is the unquestioning visitor whose needs are assumed as requiring locations for the best shopping and parking sites. As with the Visitor Map, there is a new language to learn. With the Flood Map there is an ecological language of flood and water where metaphors associated with water are no longer Waugh's 'bonny rills' but are the more technocratic language of threat: 'flood', 'risk', associated words such as 'hazard', and 'danger'. This is not a map for visitors like the Visitor Map: there is no cultural or shopping experience in sight. Although these maps are MCMs, they are mutable as the information presented must change with time.

### Act 3

### Scene 4

*SETTING: The Northern Powerhouse, an unknown unknown.*

Ultimately, these maps do not tell us much about Rochdale: what it is to be in Rochdale, what Rochdale is like, how Rochdale is. In all three of these Rochdale maps, there is no sense of place or of communal identity or agency. While there is more of an environmental message in the final map, there is nothing about the flora and fauna that live in the waters of the Roch nor about the influence of water on culture. These maps have neat narratives curated by the cartographers who created them and the organisations that commissioned them. There are missed opportunities for further cultural, social, and ecological representation. These maps miss out just what places are, were, and can be. As Alastair Bonnett puts it: ‘place is a protean and fundamental aspect of what it is to be human. We are a place-making and place-loving species’ (2014, p. 3). There is an opportunity to demonstrate what maps could do: inputting creativity into cartography; offering collaborative approaches: re-enchanting the map. In the final chapter of *The New Nature of Maps*, Harley poses the question: ‘Can there be an ethically informed cartography and what should be its agenda?’ (2001, p.199). In the next chapter I wonder this too in the creation of new – watery, sonic, and digital – maps of Rochdale.

## **END OF ACT TWO: AN INTERMISSION**



## Chapter Four: Creative Cartographies

### Scene 1

SETTING: *There's a sudden banging and THE ROCHDALIANS enter the scene banging at the walls of the page with Middleton Pace Egg Play cudgels. At the front of the crowd is the GHOST OF MICHEL De CERTEAU and THAT WRITER. A bucket of water is thrown over THE RESEARCHER by one of THE ROCHDALIANS.*

#### THE ROCHDALIANS

(In raucous unison) Middleton born, Middleton bred; strong in't arm but thick in't head. (They start dancing in a circle and begin to sing 'Beg Your Leave' over the conversation.<sup>213</sup>)

#### THE RESEARCHER

(Pompous but dripping wet) Can't you see I'm theorising here? Can't you go and do whatever it is that you're doing somewhere else?

#### THAT WRITER

Rochdale is in the imagination; it doesn't exist because you make it so. It's ideas that keep the place alive.

#### THE RESEARCHER

Yes, whatever, I realise that.

Do you know how hard it is to try and keep a handle on this without other people

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<sup>213</sup> See Annie Gilchrist, Cyril Sharp, and Frank Kidson, "Lancashire Pace-Egging Songs", *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 2.9 (1906) pp.231–236. Further references to the song will be given as footnotes.

interrupting or ...

(physically shivers) trying to collaborate?

### **THAT WRITER**

I'm really disappointed as I've not been able to let loose yet; I've tried but you've just been ignoring me.

Did you like the bit about the boys and the canal? I overheard a snippet of conversation and had a play with it. What did you think?

(Pacing as if trying to pace away jittery excitement)

Did you know I wrote a play once?

I was told that it was very good . . .

### **THE RESEARCHER**

(Has had enough) OI, don't you know I'm trying to write a PhD thesis here?

I'm trying to be S.E.R.I.O.U.S here.

If I'm not SERIOUS then I won't pass the viva. I need to get mapping – create territory, boundary, delineate meaning.

### **THAT WRITER**

You have no idea where you're going do you?

### **THE RESEARCHER**

(Sighs) I'm going to need a map.

(The GHOST OF MICHEL DE CERTEAU floats across the stage.)



## **THE GHOST OF MICHEL DE CERTEAU**

(Opens a copy of *The Practice of Everyday Living* as if to give a sermon. Clears his spectral throat.)

A-hem.

‘The map, a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a “state” of geographical knowledge, pushes away into its prehistory or into its posterity, as if into the wings, the operations of which it is the result or the necessary condition. It remains alone on the stage.’ Nineteen eighty-four, page one hundred and twenty-one.

## **THAT WRITER**

Yer wot?

## **THE RESEARCHER**

I think he means that while the map is static, that which it says it represents isn’t.

## **THAT WRITER**

Oh, er. Nope, still don’t get it.

Feel a bit sad for that map, though; it’s a bit like that bloke Krapp, you know, listening to the past in his present.

Memories and memories and memories of maps.

## **THE GHOST OF MICHEL DE CERTEAU**

‘What the map cuts up, the story cuts across...Boundaries are transportable limits and transportations of limits’ Nineteen eighty-four, page one hundred and twenty-nine.

(He floats above the heads of THE RESEARCHER and THAT WRITER and circles them, leaving contrails like an aeroplane, or a will-o’-the-wisp)

This ‘story is delinquent’, nineteen eighty-four, page one hundred and thirty.

(The GHOST OF MICHEL De CERTEAU exits, pursued by nothing)

## **THAT WRITER**

Shouldn’t you be reading that in French?

(But the GHOST OF MICHEL De CERTEAU has gone)

And another thing; how the heck does that work? Transportable boundaries?

Can I pick it up and carry it around with me then? Scrape up the unseen between

Chadderton and Mills Hill? Find the exact place where Rochdale becomes Oldham?

Is that line where the street sign reads ‘Queen Street, Middleton’?

(Getting carried away now.) Is the line where the trainline flies over Oldham Road or

Platform One of Mills Hill Station?

Which side of the station is in Oldham?

Which side in

Rochdale?

If I’m on the train does it matter?

## **THE ROCHDALIANS**

(Interrupt THE WRITER’s stream-of-conscious mutterings with a raucous, out-of-tune, refrain of the chorus of ‘Beg Your Leave’)

‘So we’re jolly boys, we do no harm. Wherever we do go, for we’ve come the pace-egging, as you very well do know’.<sup>214</sup>

(They form a tableau)

## THE RESEARCHER

(All of this is doing her head in now) Right. Shut up. Shut up all of you. I’d better get on with it. Chapter Four, here we go.

This chapter explores the complex relationships between place, maps, text, embodied experience and creative practice. It offers a series of ‘counter cartographies’ to previous maps discussed in Chapter Three. This takes inspiration from geographer Denis Wood’s call to take ‘the map back into our own hands, making it serve our interests – yours, mine, human interests – instead of those of a profession or a state’.<sup>215</sup> This Chapter is concerned with presenting other ways of framing Rochdale through maps, and about the democratisation of map making. I am not a cartographer, nor profess to be one. The cartographies are presented in this chapter are maps that take back and “talk back” to the previous three “official” representations of Rochdale in Chapter Three. The chapter is divided into three sections demonstrating different methods of map-making, exemplifying practice as-research and practice for-research. The first section focusses on fluid cartographies focussing on water, what the poet Simon Armitage terms ‘our common gold’ (2011, p.14). This map answers back to the fixed topographical representations of Rochdale’s water courses and explores how water can be used to make poetry. The second map is explorations and

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<sup>214</sup> Annie Gilchrist, Cyril Sharp, and Frank Kidson, “Lancashire Pace-Egging Songs”, *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, 2.9 (1906) p.231.

<sup>215</sup> Denis Wood, *Rethinking the Power of Maps* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2010) p.156.



experimentations in mapping the ephemeral through making a sound map. The methods for producing the map are discussed throughout this section. The resulting ‘listening map’ is concerned with moving through Rochdale, using the Visitor Map reproduced in Chapter Three. The final section features a short discussion on ergodic and interactive literature and how these could be used to produce a gaming map of Rochdale. Within this discussion is an example of an abortive digital map of Rochdale offering an opportunity to reflect on the complexity of cartography as well as a pause to consider how maps can be more collaborative. While there is an intrinsic ambivalence towards maps and mapping practice in this Chapter, these three different examples of counter cartography open up new ways of thinking about Rochdale – as watery, sonic, and digital – and highlight the importance of maps as text. Meanwhile, there is what Denis Cosgrove terms ‘cartographic anxiety’ in taking on the mantle of map maker. (Be honest, you’re busking it aren’t you?!) This anxiety presents a tension when taking on the guise of map maker.

### ***Maps, Meaning and Place-Making***

In William Least Heat-Moon’s *PrairyErth (A Deep Map)* (1991), the author writes: ‘facts carry a traveler only so far: at last he must penetrate the land a different means, for to know a place in any real and lasting way is sooner or later to dream it.’<sup>216</sup> Here, Least Heat-Moon was referring to Chase County in Kansas. The book is over six hundred pages long and is an example of a deep map including: common placing, observations, conversations, histories, geographies, and hand drawn maps. There is a

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<sup>216</sup> William Least Heat-Moon, *PrairyErth (a Deep Map)* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991) p.105.

long-standing literary preoccupation with maps, map making, and place-making.

Another example of this particular mode of place writing can be seen in Tim Robinson's *Connemara: Listening to the Wind* (2006). Both *PrairyErth (a Deep Map)* and *Connemara: Listening to the Wind* demonstrate a type of place-writing – two deep maps of particular places - that interweave essays, maps with particular focus on toponyms, geologies, histories and topographies.

The Ordnance Survey Explorer Map OL21, covers the South Pennines areas of Burnley, Hebden Bridge, Keighley and Todmorden. It includes areas around the boroughs of Rossendale and Rochdale. These offer Least Heat-Moon's assertion that 'facts that can take a traveler so far'. This map is a starting point for your adventure. If you have a copy, fold it out (either on a kitchen table or, if you're already outside then a handy, dry rock) and locate Summit, just north of Littleborough. Trace your finger to the right heading to Light Hazzles Edge - its name leaves a soft burr on the tongue. Follow the Pennine Way - that green trail dotted with rhombi - near the border between Rochdale and West Yorkshire, south towards Blackstone Edge Reservoir. Stop when you get to Cow Head because there you will find the 'Rain' stone, a poem carved into the crags of a disused quarry.

'Rain' is one of the Stanza Stones, a trail of six poems carved into different bodies of stone that were written by Simon Armitage in collaboration with stone carver Pip Hall, landscape architect Tom Lonsdale, and children from around the West Yorkshire area.<sup>217</sup> The book of the project features Armitage's poems, and contributions from Lonsdale and Hall. These stones were either dropped into place or

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<sup>217</sup> See Simon Armitage, *Stanza Stones* (London: Enitharmon Press, 2011); Simon Armitage, *In Memory of Water* (Rochdale: Andrew J. Moorhouse, 2013). Further references to *Stanza Stones* will be given parenthetically.

carved into the landscape in and around the South Pennine watershed. As Lonsdale puts it in *Stanza Stones*, as instigators of the project they were ‘making marks on the land’ (2013, p.23). The stones become place-making markers and are mapped out as a route or itinerary. The stones are an addition to physical and mental maps of place. They are an addition to the landscape, a physical reminder for the walker ‘of how water shapes and animates the whole South Pennines’ (Ibid.). The subsequent trail map created from the new landmarks are there to create different meanings of the South Pennines landscape, and to perhaps entice new walkers to visit these locations.

The Stanza Stones project was funded by iMove (a legacy trust from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games), Ilkley Literature Festival, the Arts Council, and Pennine Prospects, a rural regeneration agency.<sup>218</sup> The stones were presented as the ‘pages’ of a ‘book of the land’ (Ibid., p.29). While these artistic representations of the landscape offer physical touchstones to geolocate the walker/poetry reader or ‘used as a back rest’ they do present another form of place-making. This form is one that insists that the stones have created, and enhanced, ‘special spaces, possessing a distinctive sense of place’ (Ibid.). A criticism, perhaps, is that this new kind of map was funded as part of a regeneration agenda. The place that is insisted on is one that is cultural and for the benefit of health, that is, if one is able to undertake the trek. This Stanza Stones map like the Rochdale Development Agency map has an agenda of its own and creates its own narrative. The moving of stones, and chiselling of the surfaces of formerly quarried rock, may not have been welcomed by all.

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<sup>218</sup> See: Simon Armitage, *Stanza Stones: The Anthology*, ed. by Anthony Dunn (Ilkley: Ilkley Literature Festival, 2012) <<http://www.ilkleyliteraturefestival.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Stanza-Stones-Anthology-web.pdf>> [accessed 13 August 2018].

While the newspaper coverage of the project has been favourable, there are no studies on the environmental impact the project has had, or on whether it has affected the way in which regular walkers, and new walkers, perceive the stones in the landscape. The ‘Rain’ stone is located on the border of West Yorkshire and Rochdale and is a short distance from the nearby White House pub on Halifax Road. If visiting the area, the crags of Summit and Blackstone Edge are visible. These are part of the lithosphere; slow moving layers of mudstone, siltstone, sandstone. The geology of the borough is formed mainly of the ‘Lancashire coalfield’ – the Precambrian dark layer formed from pre-anthropoc fauna and flora.<sup>219</sup> These geographies of place are part of my own creative work. I am a non-cartographer meshing together what Sarah de Leeuw & Harriet Hawkins term ‘the relationship between geographical knowledge making and creative practice’ (2017, p. 305). This interdisciplinary relationship, de Leeuw & Hawkins note, is a long one; they note the rise in scholarship dedicated to exploring these boundaries such as dynamic journals focussed on creative practice and intersections of creative-critical practice (there will be further discussion on this in Chapter Five). I too am boundary-crossing, gleefully making maps as a non-map maker; in some way, (re)claiming some territory as a writer/researcher taking some of the role of geographer/scientist. This creative trespassing offers thoughts on how ongoing creative-critical and collaborative responses to the cartographies of Rochdale can offer new, more democratic, ways of considering how place can be made and remade. The theoretical framework draws upon creative experimentation of literary critics and geographers as well as the theories and methods offered from the previous

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<sup>219</sup> From a report on the geology of Greater Manchester produced by Chantal Johnson and Mark Fletcher, ‘STRATEGIC STONE STUDY A Building Stone Atlas of Greater Manchester’ (English Heritage, 2011) <<https://www.bgs.ac.uk/downloads/start.cfm?id=2050>> [accessed 22 November 2016]. Further references to this report will be given parenthetically.

chapter. As Jerry Brotton (2013) suggests, maps allow us to ‘dream’ place/s, familiar and unvisited.

There is an old saying, attributed to the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, that you never step in the same river twice. Gravity drags the river on, as it flows inexorably towards its destination. If you overlaid maps – printed and digital – of Rochdale produced over centuries, you will see: how the river is culverted; how the town expands; the increase in routes into and out of the borough; the addition of the canal and manufactured reservoirs; the gradual attrition of green space; and the increase in the built environment. A geographical history of Rochdale rendered in maps as seen in figure 22 below. When exploring Rochdale’s physical geographies, I was astonished as to how it is more watery than I first expected. There is a fluidity to the borough. Even the borough’s seemingly timeless rock strata, the crags of Summit and Blackstone Edge, are part of the lithosphere; they are moving layers of mudstone, siltstone, sandstone.

## Scene 2

*SETTING: It’s winter. THE RESEARCHER and THAT WRITER, bundled in scarves and mittens, are sat in Russells Café next to the escalators in the Wheatsheaf Shopping Centre. They are drinking complicated looking mugs of hot chocolate: filled with squirty cream, marshmallows, hundreds and thousands. There’s a piano being played in the background, it’s possibly a Lisa Stansfield number.*

### The Researcher

Right, the geology of Rochdale is formed mainly of the Lancashire coalfield, the Precambrian dark layer formed from pre-anthropoc fauna and flora. There are layers of rock across the country, if you look at a geological map it’s quite psychedelic. Sometimes these layers rub up against each other.

**That Writer**

(Humming *Around the World*) Like an earthquake?

**The Researcher**

Yeah, the map of the earth is never fixed. I can tell you about earthquakes. So, right, it was about a decade ago, I used to hitchhike -

**That Writer**

(Interrupting) Oh dear god, you're not going to do another 'poem' are you?

**The Researcher**

No! Promise. Picture the scene – I'm asleep on a knackered beige sofa in Whalley Range, the queen of the couch. I'd spent that day hitchhicking north from Oxford and was sofa surfing at Jacs's flat. Then, at around 1am (she slaps her hands together) there was this sudden CRACK judderjudderjudder. Then I tumbled to the floor; it was as if a huge lorry had crashed into the side of the Victorian terrace and ricocheted back. The living room seemed to contract and expand then Jacs, my soon-to-be-housemate, appeared, terrified.

Hang on, did you just yawn?

**That Writer**

(Stifles an obvious yawn) Oh no, do go on.

**The Researcher**

An earthquake, measuring 5.2 local magnitude on the Richter scale, a seismic wave to Manchester from its Leicestershire locus. Seconds later, it sounded like every single car alarm in South Manchester was triggered. Anyway, a day later, on the third hitch back, I thought of the earth's lithosphere.

**That Writer**

As you do.

### **The Researcher**

Can you stop interrupting? I've only got an eighty-thousand word limit here. So, the Earth's lithosphere is like a mosaic of moving tectonic plates. A subterranean map that shifts and slowly grinds beneath our feet.

### **That Writer**

I'd think of all those stories. Those mythologies we tell each other before science reassured us with theories and proofs. Like, the shudder of the earth as vengeful deities: Greek Poseidon, Fijian Ngendi, Japanese Nai-No Kami. An agitated cosmogony through the myths of some of the Battak tribes of Sumatra. Or tricksters and otherworldly henchmen like Kisin the earthquake, an assistant to the Yucatan god Usukun<sup>220</sup>. In *Lore of the Land: A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys*, folklorists Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson include tales inspired by earthquakes of 'swallowed-up' villages such as Talkin in Cumberland. Because of the immoral behaviour of the denizens of Talkin, the village was made obsolete. And the story of the lost village of Raleigh in Nottinghamshire. Devoured by the earth! The villagers in the next village said that every year, around Christmastime, there's this dull tolling of church bells; like the sound's coming up from below the soil. You talk about cutting-edge science, but we still make stories to make sense of the world.

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<sup>220</sup> An extensive exploration of histories behind global mythologies of physical phenomena can be found in Richard Aldington and Ames Delano, *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (London: Hamlyn, 1968).

### **The Researcher**

Right. Anyway, a month to the day later, I moved in with Jacs and Doctor Cat, shifting my own worldly possessions back up north.

### **That Writer**

Why do I get the feeling that this isn't the end of the story? (beat) Do you want my marshmallows? I'm not really a fan of ground up cow feet—

### **The Researcher**

—Hooves. (beat) Sure, thanks. Fancy having a wander to look at the water levels in town?

### **That Writer**

Whoopee. Can. Not. Wait. (Looks at her watch)



*Watery Cartographies*



Figure 14: View of the River Roch from Smith Street (author's image).

The image above was taken near Riverside One, the library and council building. Seconds before taking this photograph, two grey wagtails had fluttered towards the weir up stream, and a mallard drake, his iridescent green head bent nibbling the bright green strands, did not quite make it into the frame. What you can't experience from this picture is the feculent scent of drains, the depth of the water under the algae and water-milfoil. Left unattended, the water makes its own map in the route that it takes between builders' debris from the library refurbishment, the birds make their own route, traversing over solid mats of weeds and the bricks that jut out.

Watercourses, like the River Roch and other bodies of water, no matter how big or puddle-sized, bring their own ecologies: flora and fauna that grow in or around where they run through. Water is dynamic but it is controlled, culverted, harnessed, and dredged. During the most extreme hot seasons, water evaporates leaving cracked earth, if it is a wet season there's danger of flooding. The floods in late 2015, caused by Storm Eva, devastated the built environments in Rochdale. In the nearby Calder Valley area, a report by the University of Leeds for Calderdale Council and Upper Calder Valley Renaissance noted that 'over 2,800 houses and 1,600 business premises were affected'.<sup>221</sup> In Littleborough and Rochdale 275 properties were flooded.<sup>222</sup> Globally, flooding has a devastating effect on wildlife, human life, and livelihoods from Bangladesh to Texas. There is continued concern about the potability and the portability of water.<sup>223</sup> The consensus of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate

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<sup>221</sup> See: Paola Sakai, Anne Holdsworth, and Stephen Curry, *Economic Impact Assessment of the Boxing Day Floods (2015) on SMEs in the Borough of Calderdale* (Leeds: University of Leeds, 2016) <[https://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/uploads/media/Economic\\_Impact\\_Assessment\\_of\\_Boxing\\_Day\\_floods.pdf](https://www.see.leeds.ac.uk/uploads/media/Economic_Impact_Assessment_of_Boxing_Day_floods.pdf)> [accessed 25 September 2018].

<sup>222</sup> See: Greater Manchester Combined Authority, *Flood Investigation Report: Greater Manchester 26 December 2015* (GMCA, 2016) <[https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/article/91/boxing\\_day\\_floods\\_report\\_released](https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/news/article/91/boxing_day_floods_report_released)> [accessed 25 September 2018].

<sup>223</sup> See: Anon., 'Water and Sanitation | UN Global Compact', 2018 <<https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/our-work/environment/water>> [accessed 8 August 2018].

Change (IPCC) is that anthropogenic climate change is, and will, alter precipitation and water systems.<sup>224</sup> As a writer intrigued by water and passionate about global justice, I wondered whether it would be possible to create watery cartographies; a creative map that used the watery nature of Rochdale.

Back in Rochdale, underneath the feet of passers-by and the wheels of cars, there is a network of unseen connections. Water is controlled within hidden cartographies of pipework, heading to and from Manchester, the place that Martin Dodge and Chris Perkins call the ‘hydraulic city’. As Dodge and Perkins argue:

Natures must be harnessed and enrolled for the effective functioning of the city, and it is a form of *natural* asset that flows through the physical pipework, valves and sewers. Water has inherent physical properties that make it very distinct: it flows, is heavy, leaks can be dangerous when it moves, and yet its mass is now highly controllable and predictable within known parameters. In another sense, though, the water in the pipe is a social product, manufactured with its natural constituents changed and, after significant labour, capital and technology, turned into a commodity to be bought and sold like other goods.<sup>225</sup>

The harnessing of water, the privatisation of sources, the commodification of water is something that I find problematic in terms of justice and social equity. In Cochabamba, Bolivia, the ‘Cochabamba Water War’ was a huge public protest over

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<sup>224</sup> See: Stocker *et al* (2013); Russell G. Death, Ian C. Fuller, and Mark G. Macklin, ‘Resetting the River Template: The Potential for Climate-Related Extreme Floods to Transform River Geomorphology and Ecology’, *Freshwater Biology*, 60.12 (2015) pp.2477–2496; and Erich M. Fischer and Reto Knutti, ‘Anthropogenic Contribution to Global Occurrence of Heavy-Precipitation and High-Temperature Extremes’, *Nature Climate Change*, 5 (2015) pp.560–564.

<sup>225</sup> Martin Dodge and Chris Perkins, ‘Maps, Memories and Manchester: The Cartographic Imagination of the Hidden Networks of the Hydraulic City’, in *Mapping Cultures*, ed. by Les Roberts (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) pp. 101–20.

private water contracts and neoliberal structural adjustment programmes.<sup>226</sup> It lasted from the end of 1999 until April 2000.<sup>227</sup> This uprising was something that sparked the imagination globally as images of the mass protests, and teargassed communities, were shared as well as the news reports on how the water prices were pushing more people into poverty. It was these images that caught my imagination and angered me. Water is a human right. Water rights and ecologies are themes that consistently seep back into my own creative writing.

Water, or perhaps the idea of water, captures the imagination as well as shaping life in and around wherever it is. Water is mystical, it can be a sacred space to practice spiritual rites, or it can be used for ablution and in healing.<sup>228</sup> There are legends attached to water such as: local, oral folk tales (like Jinny Greenteeth who waits to pull unfortunate souls into the river Ribble); fresh water deities (like Celtic goddesses and naiads); demons (such as the monstrous Greek Gorgons). These tales, among many others, make up myriad myths and cautionary tales associated with water.<sup>229</sup> Water inspires fluvial creative writing, such as Alice Oswald's *Dart* (2002). Oswald's fluvial poetics weave in folk tales, conversations, histories and the geographies of the titular river from its source to the sea, linking the local with the global. Her book-length poem, as Rowan Middleton proposes, is multidimensional, combining 'spatial and temporal elements' with the material landscape and the physical experience of being-in-the-landscape with enchanted, uncanny

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<sup>226</sup> See: Oscar Olivera and Tom Lewis, *Cochabamba!: Water War in Bolivia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: South End Press, 2004).

<sup>227</sup> See John Crabtree, *Patterns of Protest: Politics and Social Movements in Bolivia* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2005); and A. Dwinell and M. Olivera 'The Water Is Ours Damn It! Water Commoning in Bolivia', *Community Development Journal*, 49 (2014) pp.44–52.

<sup>228</sup> For a discussion on the sacred nature of water and bathing see, for example, Alev Croutier, *Taking the Waters: Spirit, Art, Sensuality* (New York: Abbeville Publishing, 1992).

<sup>229</sup> River deities are detailed in Aldington & Delano *New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology* (1968) and English river folk tales are recounted in Westwood & Simpson's *The Lore of the Land. A Guide to England's Legends from Spring-Heeled Jack to the Witches of Warboys* (2006).

mythologies.<sup>230</sup> Oswald's *Dart* is a multi-storied bricolage of a poem, using the pages as well as words, rhythm and rhyme to portray the journey/s of the river.<sup>231</sup> This acts as a form of cartography, where Oswald's poem captures the feel, sound and shape of the river. One salient example are the blank half pages used to depict a quiet pause, where, justified to the right of the page in a smaller font, akin to a stage direction, is the word 'silence' (lines 20-21). The silences and voices of the river follow its gravitational flow, and throughout the speaker/s try to seek the 'real Dart', a river which 'writhes like a black fire, smelling of fish and soil' (line 17). The river is as 'slippery a customer' as the map (Harley, 1989, p.8). As Jamie Linton and Jessica Budds put it in their paper: 'it is not just society's relationship with water that is at stake, but the social nature of water itself'.<sup>232</sup> Water, human and more-than-human life are deeply intertwined. As Linton and Budds posit: 'water and people are not just related in a material sense, but are also connected in experiential, cultural and metaphorical ways' (p. 174). For me, as a writer, it is this connection and water's lack of fidelity that perhaps proves attractive to writers and artists.

Another contemporary example of water and flow is seen in Kei Miller's 'When Considering the Long, Long Journey of 28,000 Rubber Ducks' from his 2014 collection *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*.<sup>233</sup> Miller's poem is inspired by accidental pollution of thousands of plastic toys. They 'pass in squeakless silence over the *Titanic*' and are studied by oceanographers observing 'the movement of

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<sup>230</sup> Rowan Middleton, 'Connection, Disconnection and the Self in Alice Oswald's *Dart*', *Green Letters*, 19.2 (2015) p. 158.

<sup>231</sup> Alice Oswald, *Dart* (London: Faber & Faber, 2002), references to the poem will be given parenthetically.

<sup>232</sup> Jamie Linton and Jessica Budds, 'The Hydrosocial Cycle: Defining and Mobilizing a Relational-Dialectical Approach to Water', *Geoforum*, 57 (2014) p.170. Further references to this will be given parenthetically.

<sup>233</sup> See Kei Miller, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2014) lines from the poem are given parenthetically.

currents' (lines 8 and 11). In the poem, Miller connects freedom and oceanography, pollution and salvation in the final word: 'hail' (line 13).

These contemporary poetic examples show ways of recycling, or upcycling: Miller's rubber toys studied for scientific endeavour, and Oswald's recycling of conversation and histories in her riverine bricolage. Both poets are mapping place. This mapping can be seen through the four ways of mapping that Edward S. Casey proposes in *Earth-Mapping: Artists Reshaping Landscape* mapping of; mapping for; mapping with/in; and mapping out.<sup>234</sup> Both poems make: 'maps of' water (the textual and spatial representations in *Dart*, the tidal maps of 'When Considering the Long, Long Journey of 28,000 Rubber Ducks'); 'maps for' water (writing poems for a river and the oceans); 'maps with/in' water (following the tides and flows of the bodies of water) and the mapping out of water (becoming part of the water-scape, especially in *Dart* where the speaker/s become the voice of the river which is submerged into the sea) (Casey, 2005). Casey's ways of earth mapping offer new readings for these textual maps and open up ways to reconnect with the land and waterscapes through artistic representations of place that act as maps. To reknit the wounds of disconnection with the earth and reconnect what David Borthwick calls a 'lost communal culture'.<sup>235</sup> It is one way to nurture a more symbiotic relationship with water. Therefore, fluvial poetics offer ways to re-link the local and global, engendering an ecological poetics through watery aesthetics.

Attempts to create 'watery aesthetics' can take many forms. For example, water can be used as a decorative tool for place-making. In the United Kingdom, there

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<sup>234</sup> See Edward S. Casey, *Earth-Mapping. Artists Reshaping Landscape* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2005).

<sup>235</sup> David Borthwick, "'The Tilt from One Parish/Into Another': Estrangement, Continuity and Connection in the Poetry of John Burnside, Kathleen Jamie and Robin Robertson', *Scottish Literary Review*, 3.2 (2011) p.135.



was a fashion in the late nineteenth century for building water fountains for drinking and for providing a pleasant sight and sound in public parks. Decorative fountains became a feature in city centres, such as the Jubilee fountain in Manchester's Albert Square. This fountain once contained potable water that was drained and pumped down from Thirlmere reservoir in the Lake District, nearly one hundred miles from the Square. The municipal fountain – like the fountain in Rochdale's memorial gardens – is as much a piece of street furniture as statues and other pieces of public art.



Figure 15: Fountain in Memorial Gardens, opposite Rochdale Town Hall, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017

(author's image).

Water features can be costly and remove attention from existing watercourses that have existed far longer than nineteenth or twentieth century watery adornments. Watercourses and bodies of water also feed the aqueous imagination that tries to capture a sense of place.



Figure 16: Hydropower part-powers the Rochdale Transport Interchange (author's image).

The signage for the above image – situated opposite a small the hydroelectric turbine – is in a non-prominent place. There is a ‘map’ linking Rochdale to Kyoto although the reasoning is not clear. This is a map that if you had prior knowledge you could reason that it links to sustainable development and the 1992 Kyoto protocol on global warming and climate change. Harley suggests that every ‘map is a manifesto for a set of beliefs about the world’ (2001, p.204). This led me to wonder how maps of Rochdale’s waterways could be used to convey ‘a set of beliefs about the world’ and used to re-ignite the relationship between people, their local watercourses, and global water concerns. I wondered how watery cartographies could be made that are beautiful, useful, and would speak back to a map like the Flood Map in Chapter Three. As Harley asks, even if a map is created to promote social justice:

can any of us have a privileged claim to ethical truth or must we accept the idea that what might be a good map for one society, culture or group might be harmful for another? (2001, p.206)



How, then, does a novice cartographer wrangle with almost utilitarian dilemmas in what “truths” to represent? The transient nature of water is similarly difficult to capture and represent. The first stage of trying to capture information for the production of watery cartographies involved investigating the riverine systems of Rochdale. To explore this, below is a geovisualisation of the water courses of the United Kingdom.



Figure 17: QGIS output of the river system of England, Wales and Scotland (OpenSource data from the UK Ordnance Survey).

A GIS map of watercourses in the UK, when isolated from other geographic details, is an outline of a watery country. Like veins without a body.

The open source data for the image overleaf, and the image below, is from the UK Ordnance Survey exported from QGIS – an open source geographic information system (GIS) mapping software – into a portable graphic. These portable graphics are data layers which can be used singularly or overlaid. GIS data can include anything from population figures to water courses, road maps, terrain, territorial borders etc. This information is used to produce geovisualisations of different sets of data. The river data depicts the watercourses that run through the Rochdale borough. The soft jagged lines are like the images at the back of the retina after an eye test. While the data presented performs the role of mapping, it is too neat; the actual shape of these water courses is more complex. On this map the watercourses are quite jagged but the rivers that flow throughout the borough are changeable – sometimes subtly, sometimes more dramatically. The shape of the watercourses meander, form oxbows, and the water levels rise and fall after rain.



Figure 18: QGIS output of the river system of the Rochdale borough into Bury (OpenSource data from the UK Ordnance Survey).

Without toponyms or some sort of other narrative, the map detailed above is simply a collection of lines. Without prior knowledge of where it purports to represent no real sense of place can be gleaned from it. There is no understanding of depth, flow, ecologies or embodied geographies – the watercourses experience with human or more-than-human senses. This map requires an ‘interplay’ of symbols and linguistic signs; ‘graphical images and writing systems’ (Pickles, 2004, p.57).

When I set out to map the watercourses of the Rochdale borough it was to compose a piece of writing, with no idea of whether it would be poetry, fictive prose, prose-poetry or non-fictive place writing. I began by trying to follow the watercourses and major bodies of water in Rochdale. The borough is saturated with rivers, brooks, the canal and reservoirs as well as unnamed ponds and other minor watercourses. Not all the watercourses, ponds and other bodies of water are determined and identified on the above maps. The information on the table is drawn from a combination of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps 227 and OL21, the A-Z map of Greater Manchester, ‘Rivers in Merseyside’ Google Map (<http://tiny.cc/merseyrivermap>), OS river map data, and my own perambulations around the borough. This culminated in a list of river names.

<b>Brooks (starting points to confluence)</b>	<b>Rivers (source to confluence)</b>	<b>Canal</b>	<b>Bodies of water</b>
Brightley (Heywood – Hollins Brook)	Beal Irk	Rochdale (Sowerby	Hollingworth lake
Buckley (Wardle – Hey Brook)	Roch (Chelburn	Bridge,	Hamer Pasture
Cheesden (north of Cheesden, Bury – Naden Brook)	Moor – Springfield Park,	Calderdale – Manchester)*	reservoir
Ealees (Littleborough – River Roch)	Bury)* Spodden		Lodges (Rhodes / Alkington)
Fanny (Wardle – Buckley Brook)			
Langley (from Whittle Brook – Bowlee)			Kitcliffe reservoir (Newhey / Littleborough)
Longden End (Littleborough to feed Hollingworth Lake)			
Moss Slack (Rochdale – Longden End Brook)			Ogden reservoir (Newhey)
Naden (Norden - River Roch)			
Piethorne (Newhey)			Piethorne reservoir (Littleborough)
Roeacre (Heywood)			
Shore Lane (Littleborough)			
Stanney (Milnrow - Rochdale)			Hangling Less Reservoir (Littleborough)
Sudden (Milnrow)			
Syke (Syke Rochdale)			
Tack Lee (Heywood)			
Trub (Middleton)			Rooden reservoir (Littleborough)
Whit (Middleton / Boarshaw)			
Whittle (Heywood)			Norman Hill reservoir
Whittaker Spout Gutter			
Wince (Middleton)			Watergrove reservoir (Wardle)

Figure 19: List of local toponyms for watercourses and bodies of water in Rochdale.

Tracking the courses of the rivers and brooks is complicated as the waters flow into, and out of, each other. If I overlaid this toponymic information over the water map

above it would be cluttered. I listed the courses to try to imagine the shape of the river Roch, the watercourse names, the geography, the geomorphology of the area for composing a piece of creative writing I set out to roughly draw the routes of the River Roch and the Rochdale canal. Using a memory of the shapes of the canal and river, and the maps used for the table above I set out to draw maps of both, noting down ideas when they arrived in my imagination.

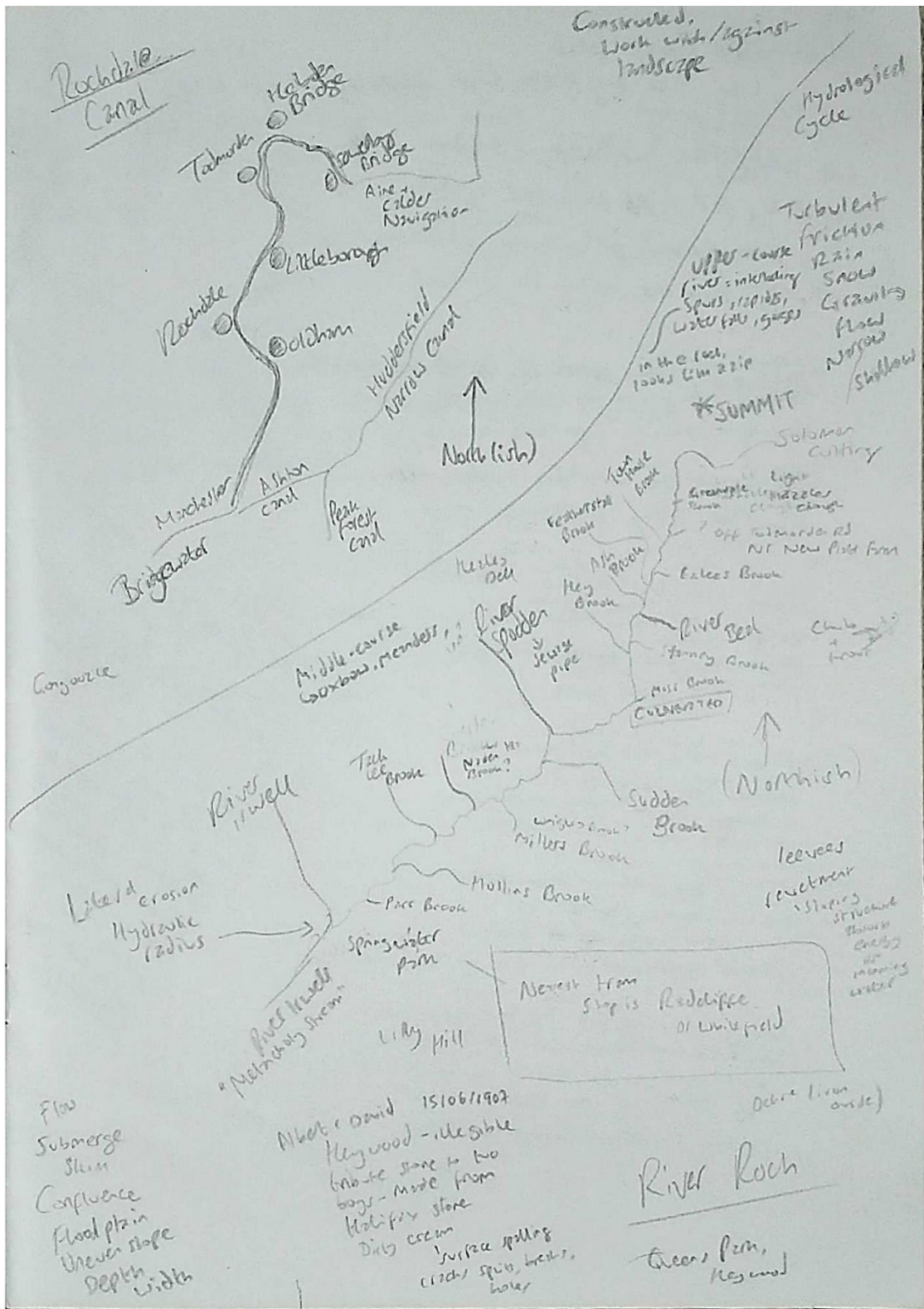


Figure 20: memory mapping the canal and the river, trying to capture histories and literary texts (author's image).

The above map depicts the watery cartographies of the River Roch and the Rochdale Canal. The map on the bottom right follows the route of the Roch with some of its feeder rivers and attempts to capture some environmental, riparian, and historical features. As well as the place names for features, rivers and brooks there are also names for features near the source of the river on Chelburn Moor: Solomon Cutting and Light Hazzles Clough. I have tried to capture the textures of place: notes have been made as to the ecology of the river, especially near to the source where chub and trout are present. There are notes as to where there is ochre from iron oxide spotted in one of the brooks as well as a palette of words that are associated with rivers and states of water: flow, submerge, skim, levees, revetment, turbulent, rain, snow, flow. There are geographical notes to the map that section the river into upper-course and middle-course, lateral erosion towards the Roch's confluence with the Irwell, and a historical note that in 1950, damaged by industry, the Irwell was called 'that melancholy stream' by *The Manchester Guardian*.<sup>236</sup>

Watercourses act as territorial markers, the riparian borders where, on one side of Brightly brook there is Rochdale, on the other Bury. There are some place names that seem evocative, attracting a poetic eye: Featherstall Brook, Healey Dell, Moss Brook, Tack Lee Brook. It is an attempt to reveal hidden or obscure routes that could be overlooked. It is not useful as an accurate map – there is no scale and some of the wiggle of the river is not an exact replication. It is a personal map in many ways and is an attempt to connect with the river and try to map the watercourses through language. The next three images show how a piece of writing was attempted inspired by the River Roch map.

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<sup>236</sup> See: Anon., 'A Melancholy Stream', *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959)* (Manchester, England 7 March 1949) p.4.



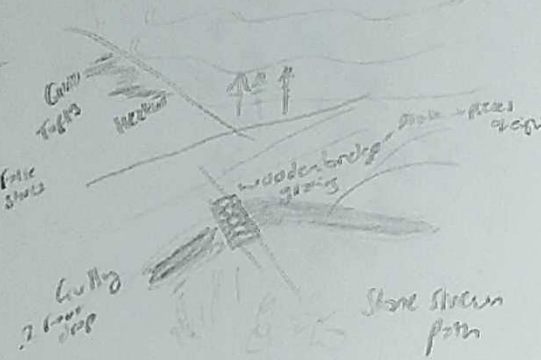
Reservoirs: Warkul, Leach, Hazza, ...

# Pennine Bridleway to Summit

## Bridge over Solomon's Cutting

Chelburn Moor

Pennines - busy  
Lugs, wheels, break  
Chelburn Moor



knobs in the wood of the bridge  
 (giving grass blades in the ransless brook  
 Hesther, dark mill stone grit,  
 Pylons frame and low legs and  
 Stone stream path of the bridge way  
 Cully and a two foot drop.

Bumps of grass  
ridges + mud

imitation  
Limitations of Goretex

Wind knocks the breath out of both of us  
 and the sentences never said into a breeze

Through the  
 wind the  
 to the  
 from the  
 for the  
 and we

fly we  
 will we  
 could we  
 follow we

Searches for  
of 5 points

not sure  
 what  
 to do

River Rock

Sand Shower

Upstream  
 ↓  
 Downstream

contributes to the travel  
 contribute to the  
 Ship and

### From the River Rock

(We face blades of grass  
 from the ransless brook)  
 walking along the bridge way  
 we step on the grass and like and look  
 we face two long blades of grass  
 known into (the) ransless brook

Chelburn Moor on a windswept day

Discovers the limitations of imitation Goretex  
 The rain bottles the moisture  
 wind knocking the breath out of both of us  
 never said sentences into the breeze

walking along windswept Chelburn Moor  
 the Pennine Bridleway to Summit  
 to Summit over the Pennine Bridleway  
 Sand Shower how brown black from  
 heavy, fast and mill stone grit

"Like me my little bee glides down  
 To the great absorbing main,  
 from whose mysterious deep unknown  
 We ne'er return again."  
 'To the River Rock'  
 Elwin Wagon

Punch through  
 Curt of grass  
 Cage rock  
 blow

Note from  
 Hill  
 Sun  
 11:11

\* Summit \*

Algae  
 Moss  
 Birds  
 Vines  
 Trees

From the River Poach

"Like knee my little knee glides by" - Edwin Waugh  
1) Chelburn Moor

We walked the windswept Chelburn Moor  
heather, peat, and millstone grit  
The stone stream path of the bridleway  
along Pennine way to Summit

Discovering limitations of imitation Goretex  
to the state of a <sup>bridge</sup> ~~material~~ we pass

kneel on the bridge, thumbs knuck in the wood  
we face long blades of grass

librium into his nameless brook  
put parts into <sup>my</sup> <sup>so</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>little</sup> <sup>brook</sup>  
they tangle together, separate and hug  
zings with all  
with the <sup>the</sup> <sup>others</sup> <sup>floats</sup>

disappear from <sup>the</sup> <sup>view</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>Solomon's</sup> <sup>Cutting</sup>  
No buses here will be here in two  
no Oxbow lake in a rusty crescent moon  
2 Semi-circle of brown and blue.

My long nose glides on beginning sight  
the low clouds cluster  
like unsaid words on the tongue  
Sentences knocked out of us from the breeze bluster

Gravity and flow pull the long grass on  
Sound shower hawl, brown brown paws  
Wind knocking the breath out of him now  
the Effing on our little lives  
light hazels clough - bluff

Phygm!

we didn't hear or see  
the Shutter <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>river</sup> <sup>bank</sup> <sup>stream</sup>  
at the soft mortal <sup>the</sup> <sup>river</sup> <sup>bank</sup> <sup>stream</sup>  
then on me

Recess words - dinkles over  
blissful ignorance of <sup>the</sup> <sup>world</sup>  
looking for other <sup>the</sup> <sup>river</sup> <sup>bank</sup> <sup>stream</sup>  
life - not <sup>the</sup> <sup>river</sup> <sup>bank</sup> <sup>stream</sup>  
individual infrastructure  
fumble on the ground  
getting back to  
nature idea  
lost in the  
wilderness

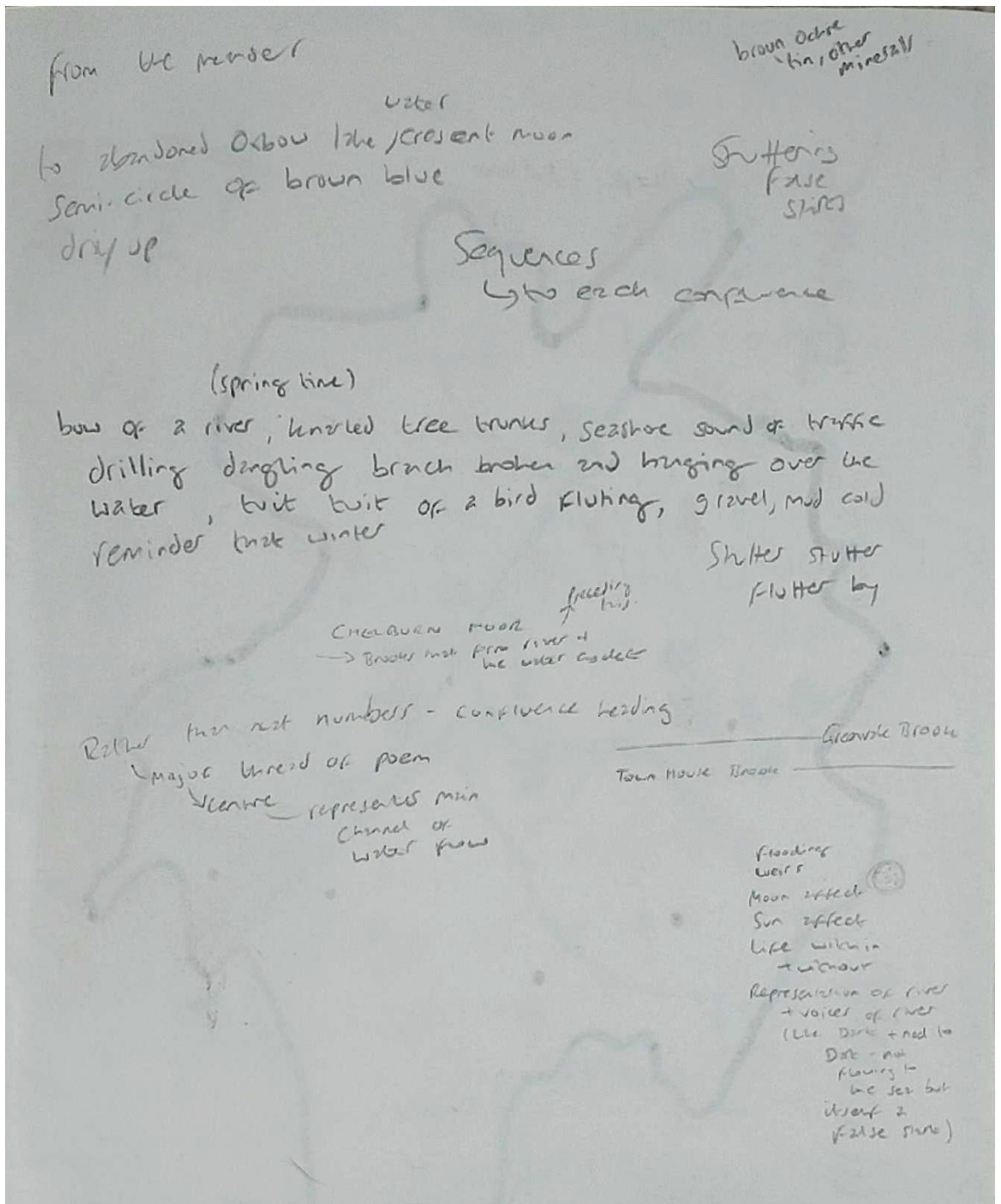


Figure 21: Mapping the river in words and image (author's images).

The sketches in figures 20 and 21 are attempts to “map” the course of the Roch from its source on Chelburn Moor, Summit to the confluence with the river Irwell. The three pages of notes and drawing is an attempt to capture the essence of a place through its main water course. This is not a novel endeavour; the writing process

involves the physical process of observation, of being in the environment that one is writing about, and about the processes that affect that environment both scientific and phenomenological. In Damian Walford Davies's *Geographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (2012), he stresses the interdisciplinary practice of 'opening up a dialogue between literature, science and the social sciences and the various graphic forms'.<sup>237</sup> He explores the many ways that literary geographical tools can be used to revitalise otherwise tired 'historicist paradigms', he pays particular attention to maps and the notions of map-making as:

the very quarry of a literary criticism/theory that seeks to reveal the ways in which a work of imaginative literature questions *itself* with maps, and locates itself in a precise cultural, historical and emotional territory (p. 14, original italics)

His scholarly deconstruction of his 'quarry' draws upon Franco Moretti's more quantitative studies on mapping nineteenth century novels. Using Moretti's work as a jumping off point, he challenges this rather positivist position to offer a hydrographic reading of William Wordsworth's poem 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey' (1798). This reading is useful for considering the relationship between poetic practice, the poetic form, and water in its physical, tidal forms and as a muse. He suggests that the poetic form registers bodies of water and includes 'bodies of knowledge, feeling, and social and cultural belonging' (p. 29). Wordsworth's 'Tintern Abbey' as well as a personal, emotional and spiritual reconnection with 'a sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused'<sup>238</sup>. Walford Davies maps the

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<sup>237</sup> Damian Walford Davies, *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012) p.8. Further references to this work will be given parenthetically.

<sup>238</sup> William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* (London: J & J Arch, 1798), lines 97-98. Further line references will be given parenthetically.



movements of the Wordsworths and the movement within the poem, proposing that his example of a hydrographical literary critique of Wordsworth's poem demonstrates that literary criticism could 'equip itself with appropriate scientific data to reach for a reading' that charts 'shifting rivers- and estuary-scapes' (2012, p.31). My poem 'River Roch' – a work in progress – takes its starting point from Waugh's 'To the River Roch'. The excerpt below shows how my River Roch sequence poem took an – imperfect – balladic form. It was made from the notes above in figures 20 and 21.

### 1. Chelburn Moor

On the walk swept Chelburn Moor  
heather, peat, and millstone grit,  
the trig points, rubble bridleway,  
the Pennine Way to Summit.

Stride past the false starts the River -  
you cannot yet hear or see -  
look for other signs of life,  
rambling on, seeking ways to be

as the rain becomes a grey veil.

OS mused lines: 'Light Hazzles Clough',  
the limitations of imitation Gore-TEX,  
notice that bridge over a small bluff.

*Slippery. More a plank than a bridge.*

Stop to race blades of grass,  
kneel down on the wet wood,  
try to spot the winner pass  
  
under the bridge. They look the same,  
slip downstream from view.  
Find a vantage point: Solomon Cutting,  
no babes here will to be torn in two,  
  
no oxbow lake, thwarted semi-circle,  
a watery crescent moon of light,  
will cut these journeys short.  
These thin green boats glide beyond sight.  
  
*“Gravity and flow keep these vessels afloat.”*  
Wishes into the nameless beck,  
unsaid sentences in spattering rain,  
so turn, and walk, and don’t look back.

This poem, although imperfect, acts as a watery map and glides through place names. I have used toponyms to offer a form of navigation. Solomon Cutting, in Littleborough, is a constructed gully from the reservoir to divert water into the river. It is possibly named for the Biblical story of the Judgement of Solomon (Kings 3. 16-28). There are myriad opportunities open to a writer responding to bodies of water.

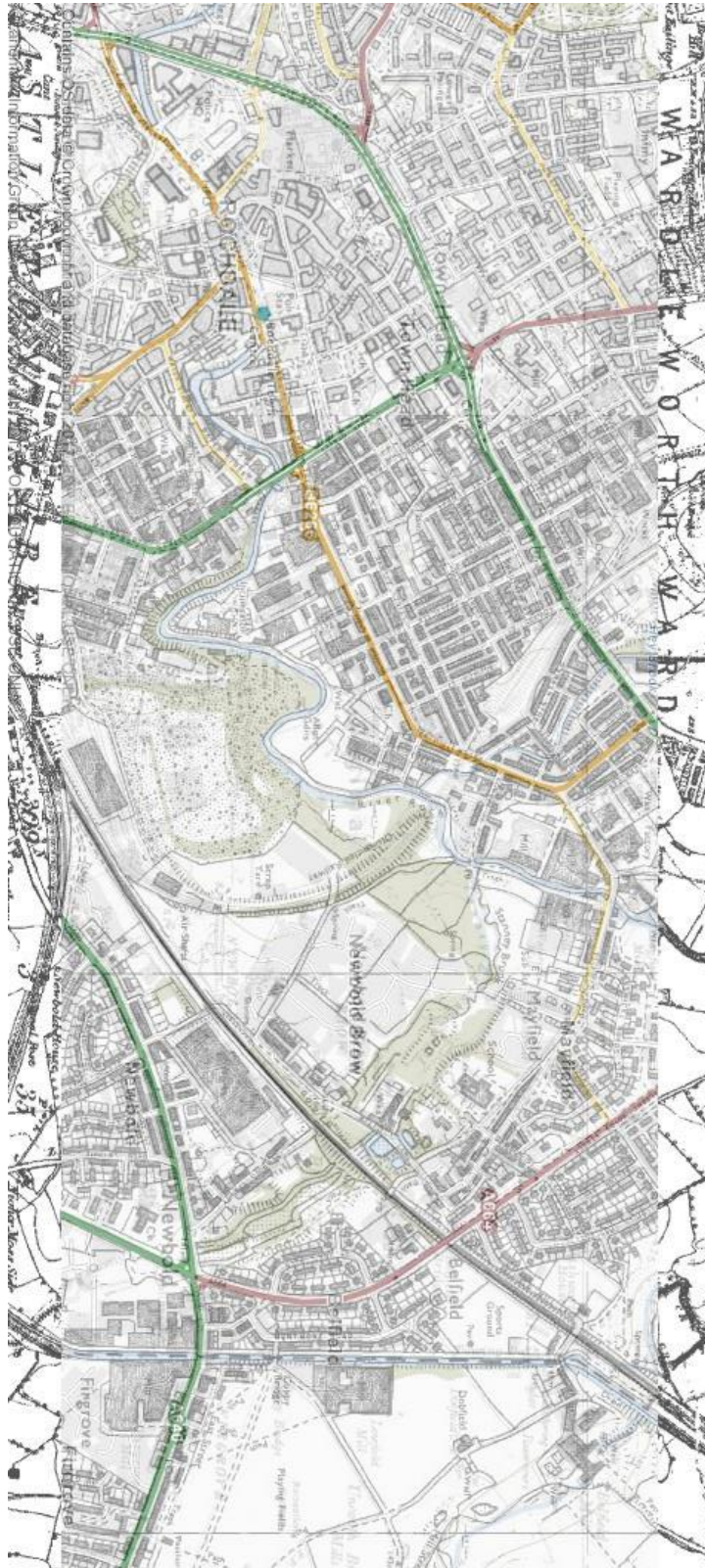


Figure 22: The historical geographies of the River Roch (maps reproduced under Historic Collection licence through the Edina Landmark Historic Digimap service, © Crown Copyright and Landmark Information Group Limited (2017). All rights reserved. (Maps used cover the years from 1890 to 2017.)

To create the image above, I used historical mapping data and layered maps from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century. This was in order to explore the historical spatial representations of the shape, and development, of the river. The shape of the river on the map has remained almost constant. I have tried to apply this digital practice to creative writing and creative cartographies, to avoid Edwin Waugh's nostalgic reflections of a singular 'quiet Roch', and try to complicate the writing with the confluences, intersections with other streams and rivers, its stutters, and utterances. This experimental overlaying can be seen in the final piece presented in Part Three of this thesis.

My original plan for creating a creative piece was to write it as a sequence poem, like figure 22, trying to overlay ideas, with each sequence beginning with either the feeder watercourse located on the right or the left as if following the river with a bird eye's view. This would utilise a sense of rhythm and rhyme at the beginning of the poem through using a strict balladic stanza form before the form became more wide and loose to capture the river's morphological structure (much like the widening sentences towards the end of Alice Oswald's *Dart*). This was to provide what Walford Davies calls a 'hydrographic map' that brings attention to the riparian and riverine, the topographies and ecologies, of the Roch. Following this poetic mapping exercise, a further mapping exercise would involve layering this word map over the GIS map. Including the flow of power down the river; dotted along the river there were mills, one example was a woollen manufacturer in Heap Bridge that took up the Arkwright milling system where 'a three-bayed cloth or 'fulling mill' was powered by the Roch.

As a proposal my nascent river Roch map is a call to reorient, reconnect with, and rediscover local watercourses, to raise their importance to that of the regeneration



projects that seek to harness or aestheticise them. It is an attempt to demonstrate their messy mundanity that is not harking back to an idealised – or Romanticised – nineteenth century representation such as Edwin Waugh’s ‘quiet Roch’. It is also an endeavour to move away from negative associations of the river. Underpinning this exploration has been the impulse to think of the Roch in more nuanced and ambivalent ways. As the river Roch is subsumed by the Irwell then the Manchester Ship Canal. Rochdale as a tributary place, is similarly subsumed by Manchester. This is part of the Northern Powerhouse narrative: Manchester as the ‘powerhouse’, powered by its satellite boroughs. Thinking about, and with, water presents allegories of messiness, unpredictability, risk, and liminality. Ultimately it draws attention to the way in the tensions between the positivist practices of conventional cartographers and the multidimensionality and polysensoriality of place. The following counter-map I made explores the idea of listening, and polyphony of place. Further, it explores the idea of collaboration and explore other textures of and for mapping, and how this can be used to make sense of Rochdale town centre.



Figure 23: The confluence of Roch and Irwell at Springwater Park, Bury. The Roch is on the bottom right with a semi-submerged tyre (author's own image).

## *Sonic Cartographies*

The sounds that water makes when it sloshes onto different sorts of bank are somewhat tidal. The sonic cartographies of water, say of the River Roch, change as the gravitational flow pulls it onwards. Then there are the sounds that the water makes when other watery bodies join it, or when geese splash down into it. There are also the sounds underneath the water: bubbles of oxygen and the more-than-human sounds of life within. Trying to create a definitive sound of a river would be impossible as the sounds constantly change. Yet, sound does have mapping potential. In this section, I detail experiments in listening and mapping sound. The first part discusses creating a drawn ‘sound map’ in situ and drawing on what the sounds evoked – literally and metaphorically. The second part follows a sound walk overlaid onto part of the Visitor Map explored in Chapter Three.

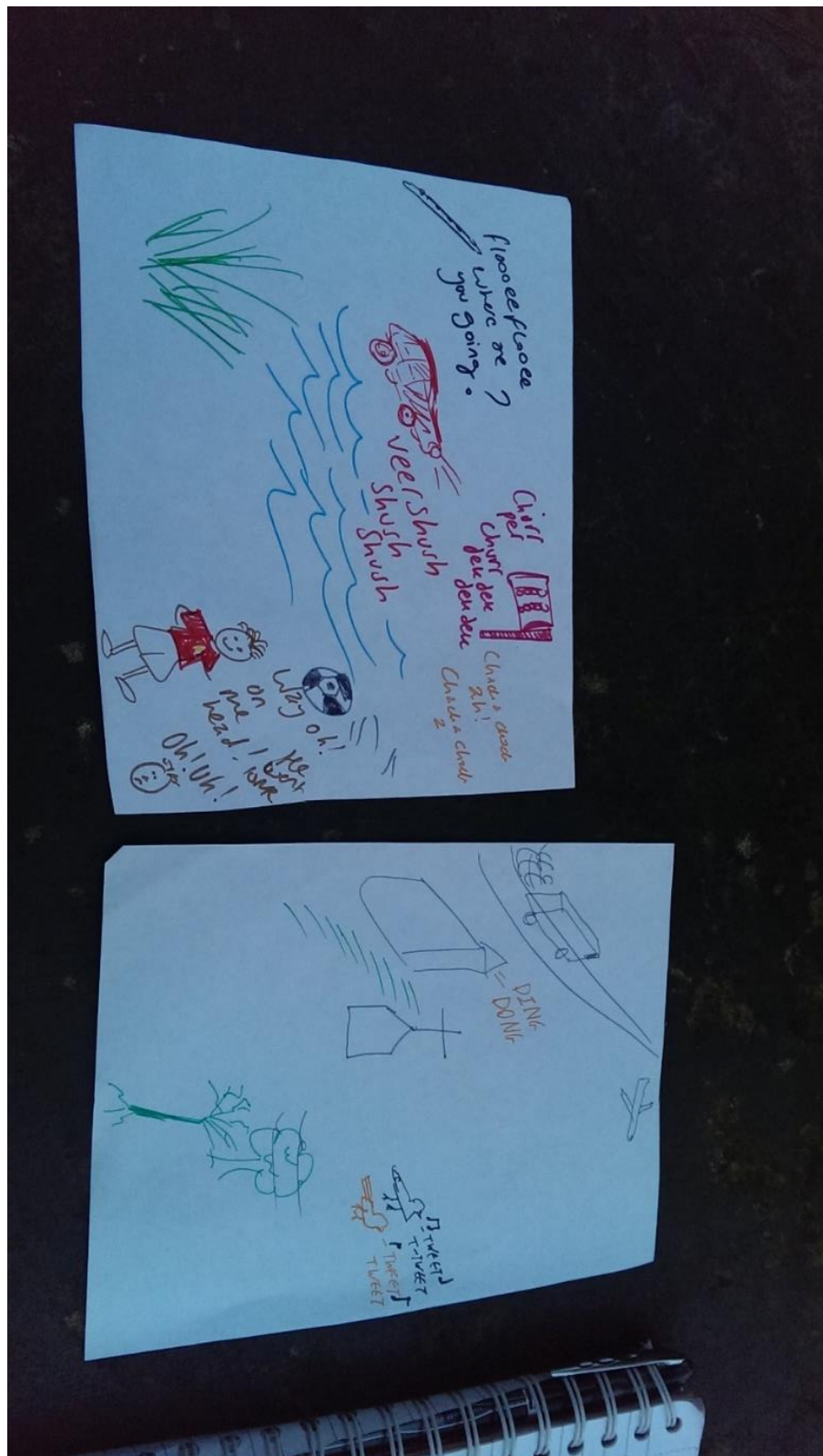


Figure 24: Sonic tourists' hand drawn sound maps, Saint Chads Church, Rochdale drawn by the author and Dr Richard Goulding (author's own image).

The first experiment at capturing, and mapping, the sonic environment was carried out collaboratively. This was an exploration of translating the acoustics of place through cartographic acts. The above maps in figure 24 demonstrates this trial approach. This was undertaken at the start of the PhD project in November 2014. Further, figure 24 demonstrates the iterative process of research and development – these maps were created prior to the research project being concretised. These sound maps were drawn in the graveyard of St Chad’s Church, the location of the goblin builders and Tim Bobbin’s grave as featured in Chapter Two.

The idea for this shared experience of phenomenological mapping was developed from a conservation exercise for RSPB Phoenix groups<sup>239</sup> and a creative writing exercise carried out with children in Reddish Vale Country Park in Stockport in 2013.<sup>240</sup> This activity was initially created to engender a deeper engagement with the wildlife of the park, and to encourage and develop new writing through listening. The mapping experiment involved a timed session of listening to the surrounding environment. The practice of listening is one that is discussed both creatively and critically in Angus Carlyle and Cathy Lane’s 2013 edited book *On Listening*. This features a collection of essays by practitioners and academics exploring scholarly and experiential practices of listening. The argument presented is that listening offers ‘commonalities across disciplines, geographical locations and across methodologies’ where, although a somewhat transient act, the ‘listening experience over time can lead to a meditative, inward-looking introspection’.<sup>241</sup> The editors argue that this

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<sup>239</sup> In 2012, the RSPB still offered support for volunteer-led youth groups Wildlife Explorers (8 – 12 years old) and Phoenix (13 – 19 years old) which included resources for creative activities focussed on conservation and developing what the charity called an engagement “with nature”.

<sup>240</sup> See: <https://www.wildwrites.org.uk/2013/08/next-session-saturday-31st-august-1-3pm/>.

<sup>241</sup> *On Listening*, ed. by Angus Carlyle and Cathy Lane (Axminster: Uniformbooks, 2013) p.9. Further references will be given parenthetically.

introspection, although seemingly egocentric, can offer the listener an ‘intimate connection to place and its inhabitants, sacred and profane’ (2013, p.10). This offers an anthropocentric approach to perceiving place in becoming aware of other humans in the environment, but there is an opportunity to create a sense of attachment or understanding of place, to place-make using the ears and perceive human-made and more-than-human sound.

A concentrated exertion is required to practice such critical active listening. I describe the notion of ‘active listening’ following Barry Blessed and Linda-Ruth Salter’s definition in *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture* of listening as ‘active attention or reaction to the meaning, emotions and symbolism contained within sound’.<sup>242</sup> Blessed and Salter are interested in acoustics, perception, cognitive psychology, space and art. They suggest that active or attentive listening changes our relationship with space to develop an auditory spatial awareness. Their arguments provide a useful primer on the importance of listening and a plea for improved listening. Here, I would extend that beyond the arena of space; when perceived, the sounds of place provide an emotional tug from familiar sounds such as an ice-cream van tune. This noise is translated in various ways as multiple “cues” are perceived and decoded by the brain.<sup>243</sup>

Memories of sound can create sonic landmarks that could be used in some way to navigate or to understand place. The evocation of sound adds verisimilitude and enhances a piece of writing. After the time had elapsed we tried to ‘map’ where we

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<sup>242</sup> Barry Blessed and Linda-Ruth Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007) p.5.

<sup>243</sup> See: Albert Bregman, *Auditory Scene Analysis: The Perceptual Organization of Sound*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1990), and Dmitry Zotkin *et al*, ‘Pitch and timbre manipulations using cortical representation of sound’, *Acoustics, Speech, and Signal Processing, 2003. Proceedings. (ICASSP '03). 2003 IEEE International Conference on 6-10 April 2003. V.5*, pp.517-520.

thought we heard the sounds in relation to where we were sitting. This was to capture, using words and images, what these sounds evoked. There is little sense of direction and no scale in the above maps. This creative-critical method is problematic: the subjective nature of creative writing straddles the line between useful critical reflection and egocentric introspection. We tried to work through our own relationships with the place through what we heard through the associated language and images we chose to represent the sound. This map, a spatial representation, is also an aural representation where associations were drawn with what was evoked by the sound, for example the ‘floey – floey, where are you going’ of robin song, an onomatopoeic ‘ding dong’ for the quarter hour chimes echoing up the hill from Rochdale town hall. As Hayden Lorimer and John Wylie put it ‘sounds lend intricate texture to experience’.<sup>244</sup> The addition of sound, I surmised, would lend texture to maps as a form of sound writing.

The idea of sound writing is drawn from geographers Michael Gallagher and Jonathan Prior who propose that phonographic – sound writing – methods:

could draw attention to the acoustic aspects of these topics: how sonic cues from vehicles are used to navigate urban space; designed sound such as automated announcement systems, alarms and car stereos; and ‘noise’ from road, rail and air traffic.<sup>245</sup>

In mapping the noises that we heard in the graveyard, ‘acoustic aspects’ of Rochdale, we were creating our own geographical understanding through writing with the sounds that we heard. Crucially, critical reflection is required on to make this

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<sup>244</sup> Hayden Lorimer and John Wylie, ‘LOOP (a Geography)’, *Performance Research*, 15.4 (2010) p.7.

<sup>245</sup> Michael Gallagher and Jonathan Prior, ‘Sonic Geographies: Exploring Phonographic Methods’, *Progress in Human Geography*, 38.2 (2014) p. 271.



endeavour meaningful and repeatable as an experiment. In Chapter Five I note how I experimented early on with different ideas and methods. Experimentation is valuable in exploring different research methods to perceive the sonic place-scape, and sonic landmarks during the process of moving through place.

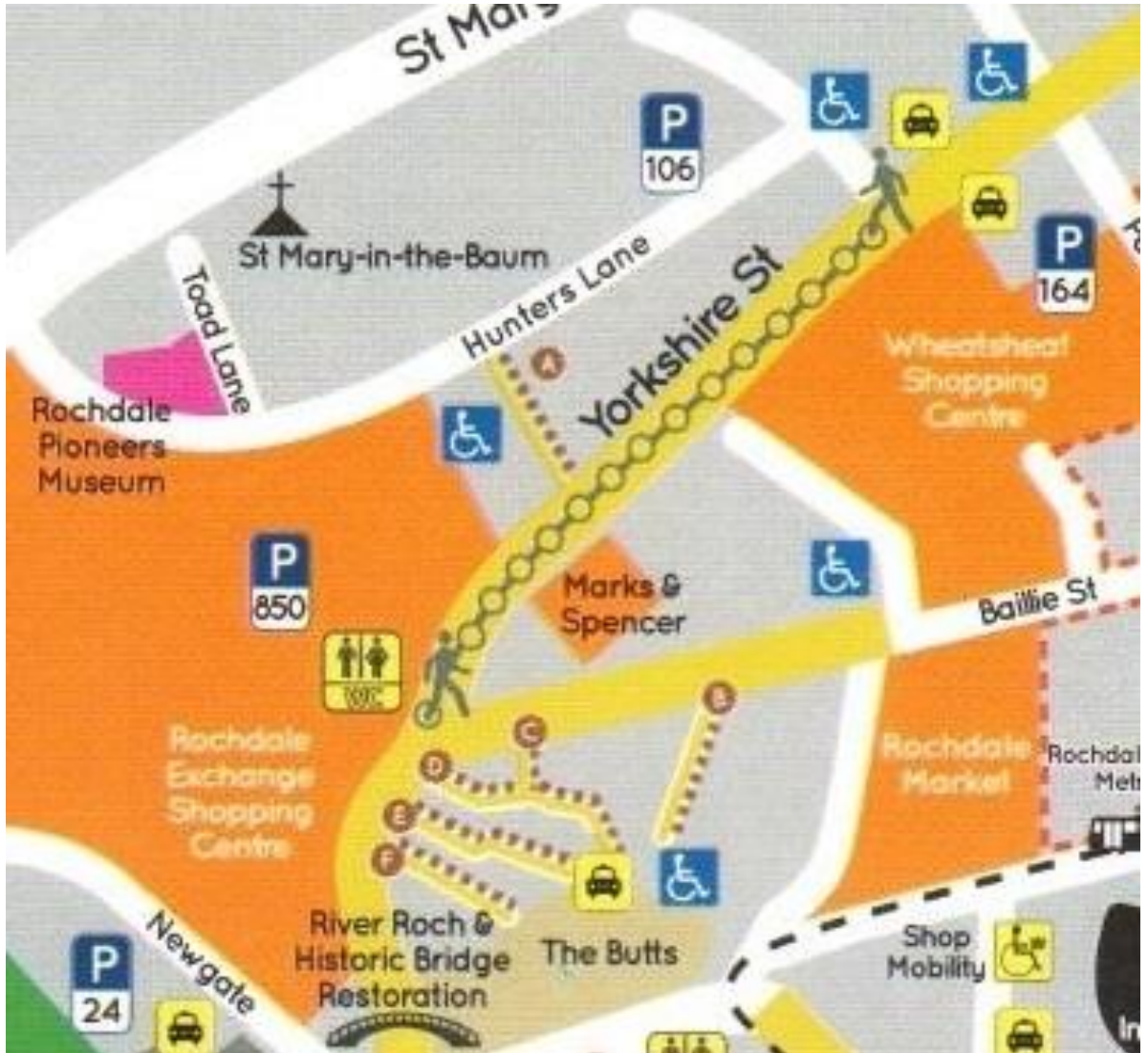


Figure 25: Yorkshire street from *Welcome to Rochdale* Map, Link4Life/Rochdale Borough Council, 2015 (used with permission).

The Visitor Map, as defined in Chapter 3, is a map for a user that may be more mobile than a denizen of the place. The orange areas, as defined in the previous chapter, are the ones that catch the eye – they are shopping hubs of the town centre. These are the Augéan “no places” of consumerism as mentioned in Chapter One,



imbued in meaning for those who work there, or who may crash out on the street, but for the map user the map is there to offer a shopping narrative to make place. The second map I made uses this Visitor Map as a platform and concentrates on the sonics of the town centre to offer a creative, and sensory, layer to the map. Underpinning this phenomenological approach is my personal and professional background as a writer and educator: reflecting upon learning. Further, this reflection explores the potential to share what philosopher and scholar-activist bell hooks calls an ‘engaged pedagogy’.<sup>246</sup> It is an attempt to inspire and raise awareness of sound, the senses, and place.

On Tuesday, 10 May 2016, following the grey dotted stripe of the pedestrian route, I recorded sounds while walking along Yorkshire Street in the centre of Rochdale. Yorkshire Street is the main shopping route in Rochdale and has independent shops as well as two large shopping centres along this route. The communities, and people who use this street change. Sometimes there are traders, charity campaigners, and *Big Issue* sellers in the middle of this pedestrianised “island”, as well as people bustling up and down the street itself. The following map was made by recording the surrounding environment with a SmartPhone and captured the light wind, footsteps and surrounding sounds of mostly human activity along with more-than-human sounds.<sup>247</sup> There are many levels of privilege in place including my own. I have technology able to record sound, the knowledge of editing and uploading this sound, the ability to travel and access public transport, my own class, ethnicity, gender, and height.

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<sup>246</sup> For more on the notion of engaged pedagogy and emancipatory education see bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (London: Routledge, 1994). There is further discussion on pedagogical approaches in Chapter Five and in the Place Writing Tool Kit in Appendix 5.

<sup>247</sup> The soundscape can be heard via Soundcloud:

<https://soundcloud.com/blackscarletbutterflies/rochdale-accordion-and-pneumatic-drill-soundscape>

Yet, walking can be empowering, and the Sonic Map is an example of mapping with the ears and the feet. Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust: a History of Walking* (2001), is a love letter to walking where the writer traces some of the histories and philosophies of pedestrianism. Walking, she argues, 'can be invested with wildly different cultural meanings, from the erotic to the spiritual, from the revolutionary to the artistic'.<sup>248</sup> Similarly, Laura Elkin's *Flâneuse: Women Walk the City in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice and London* (2016) reclaims the streets of cities around the world and embraces walking as a feminist act. By luck of birth, culture, and location, the act of walking as well as being a functional act is also one of liberation. Where I live is relatively safe and the risk of being stigmatised, or attacked, for lone walking is statistically low. When exploring Rochdale, I can go off the map and still experience a place with little fear. Adding elements of active listening as well as active visual observation, for me, seems important to assess safety and to physically locate myself.

The Sonic Map concentrates on the acoustics of the town centre at a particular space and time and from one level. This is the street level that features what Michel de Certeau calls the chorus of idle footsteps' (1984, p.97). The map is two-dimensional and horizontal, and this recording is two-dimensional, vertical and an individualist perspective. There are also issues around accessibility – not everyone can perceive this map, and it may be perceived in different ways as, like aesthetic taste, sonic perception can be subjective no matter how active the listening process. While the sounds are anonymised, there are ethical issues around whether other people want the noise of their footsteps, their mobile phone calls, their conversations captured no matter how obscured. Moreover, there are issues around how we could capture the organic, the

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<sup>248</sup> See Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Verso, 2001) p.3. Further references to this text will be given parenthetically.

more-than-human aspects, objects such as street furniture, the flora and fauna entwined in the ecologies of place. It captures a transience of place – sounds are fleeting, they can be distorted as one moves through places. Even recording sound may not quite capture how the sound was first perceived in place.

The transience of place soundscapes can be difficult to make meaning from. There are still questions attached to the Sonic Map; the transience of this approach can elude meaning. The equipment only captures ground level sound. As there is a single microphone, the sound is captured at its strongest in one direction. There is the potential for a hybrid approach, albeit nascent, where this recording is superimposed onto the Visitor Map. This would be easy to achieve via digital mapping technologies such as sound recording equipment and drone technologies. Further, the combination of the watery cartographies experiments, and sonic experiments, would glean two layers that could be superimposed to create a different, more dynamic, spatial representation of the river.

There may not be an easy way of overlaying copious sensory data onto a map. Such as other recorded maps of Rochdale, smell, climate, the nuances of soft to loud, the cloud that obscures the sun: a fully fleshed out version of moments of time. This could be a map that makes many Rochdales as these sensory moments change daily. The methods described above could be utilised by others to make their own maps – whether visitor or dweller. This offers a more democratic way of exploring, experiencing, developing and creating other narratives. Combining Watery and Sonic maps could offer a disruptive, hybrid approach that can begin to explore what a map could do. Another layer for this new (imagined) map could be digital. The next section discusses ideas from gaming, embodied cartographies, collaboration and textual mapping. Exploring how this too can be used to make sense of place.

***Playful Cartographies - Place-making Through Gaming. A Reflection on the (Failed) Creation 'Sundry Waters' Choose Your Own Adventure Computer Game.***

Maps in computer games normally function in tandem with a “quest”. The quest is a journey which the gamer progresses through. Here, maps are used to represent fictional locations or achievements such as levels. These could represent the journey towards certain goals such as: save the princess in the *Mario Bros* game; build cities and develop your empire in the *Civilisation* series; and world domination in the *Command and Conquer* series. As a writer who grew up with computer games, I am interested in how the maps in these are used to tell or progress the game’s story. This is an interest which stemmed from choose your own adventure games – interactive fiction popularised by Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone’s *Fighting Fantasy* franchise from the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>249</sup> The choose your own adventure form deconstructs the linear form of storytelling. Some of the stories were supplemented with a map, others were not leaving the responsibility of navigating the story with the reader. This offers an element of role-play with the reader as the hero of the story. The reader-as-player becomes a cocreator of the text. I wondered whether elements from these games could also be applied to the geo-specificity of Rochdale and offer more opportunities for collaboration. I tried to make a map that took this into account.

The rationale for creating a digital ‘gaming’ map of Rochdale came out from curiosity. I wondered how I could explore the historical and cultural geographies

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<sup>249</sup> For broader discussions on this see, for example: Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James, *A Short History of Fantasy* (London: Middlesex University Press, 2009); and Roger Schlobin, ‘Book Review Farah Mendleson and Edward James A Short History of Fantasy’, *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 22.2 (2011) p.292.

through this medium. I decided to attempt to create a choose-your-own-adventure game that featured characters from literary and historical texts who the gamer could interact with through the use of code. Code sits behind computer games, it is the “back stage” and is responsible for displaying the action that the gamer experiences. I chose to use Python, a programming language that can be used to script layers onto software such as QGIS and ArcGIS. Python allows data layers to be manipulated onto the map. As it is a text-based language, I decided to utilise this to create the text-based choose-your-own-adventure game. This text-based game would explore the centre of Rochdale and would involve: coding; creative writing influenced by my own knowledge; the literary themes and tropes of Rochdale; contemporary cartographies of the town centre; and other local phenomena to hybridise a textual map with an element of randomness and user input programmed in. The first idea I had was complex (see figure 26); I am a writer and a researcher, not a computer scientist. I have included the code that I wrote for the game below in figures 27 and 28. The names Trev, Lizzie, Ed and Gracie are based on fictional re-imaginings from the literary texts of Rochdale over different timeframes. Ed represents the nineteenth century offering a Romantic/romantic view of Rochdale (the poetry of Edwin Waugh), Lizzie represented some of the harsh realities of lived experience within rural Rochdale of the late nineteenth century (Elizabeth Gaskell’s ‘Lizzie Leigh’), Gracie is a caricature of the chippy northern characters depicted by Gracie Fields in her 1930s films, and Trev represented 1970s skinheads.

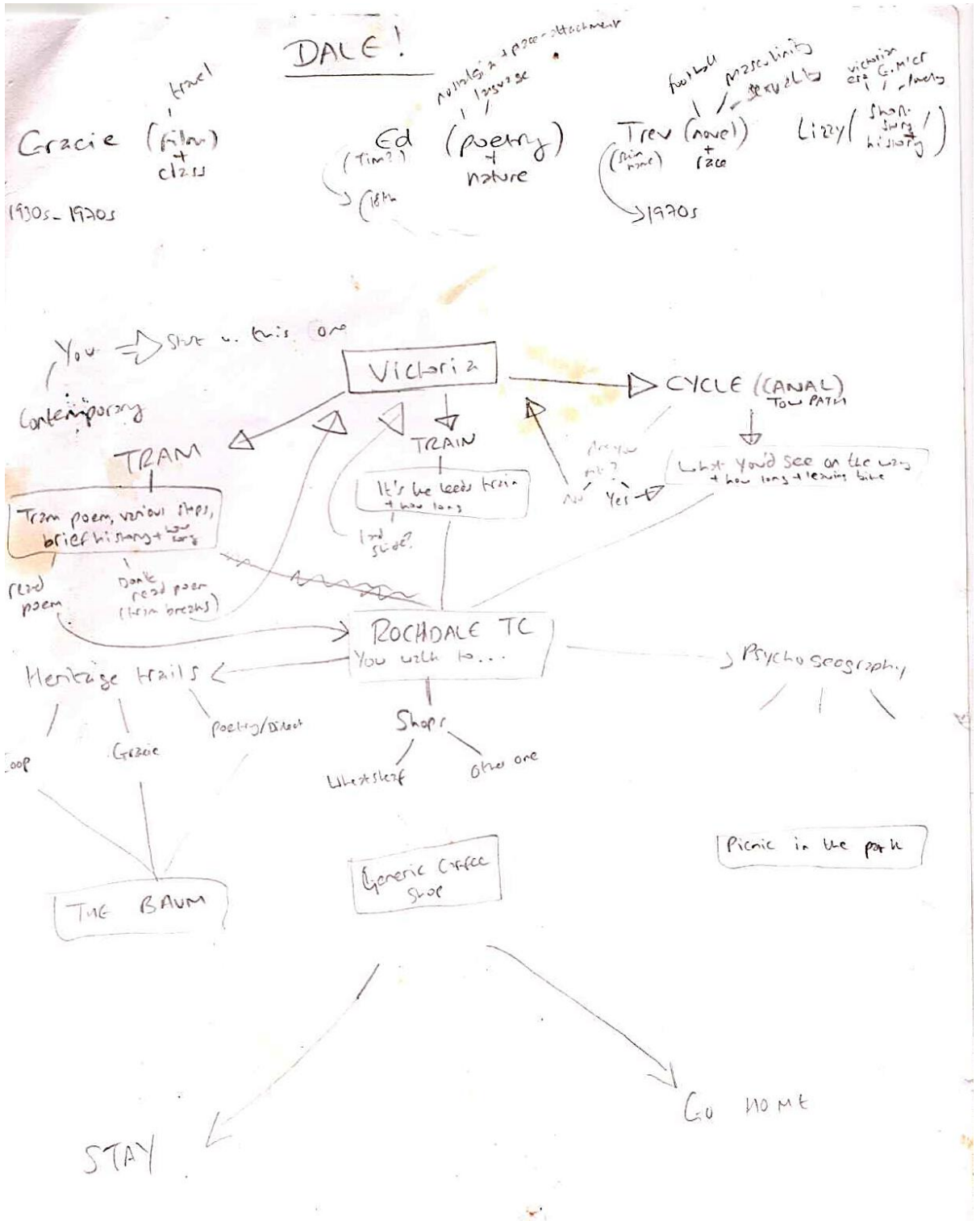


Figure 26: Initial map sketch of 'Dale' (original working title) and how the game would work including a few details of story developments (author's image).

As I learned how to code I realised the time-frame needed to create the game fully-fleshed could impact on completing the project and I was unsure on how to encourage a collaborative element. It also did not seem to achieve the element of cartographic practice that I wanted to include. The second approach I took was to simplify the narratives. The initial draft of the code for this is detailed below.

```

2 Rockdale Adventure (1) 108.16 KB (C:\Users\lambert\Documents\Python random\Rockdale Adventure_01.08.16.v2.py (3.5.1))
File Edit Format Run Options Window Help
#Rockdale Adventure
import random
import time
import datetime
import sys
import pygame

#State
print ("***SINNERY WATERS: A ROCKDALE ADVENTURE***")

#SET THE DATE AND TIME OF ADVENTURE

format = "%a, %b %d %H:%M:%S %Y"
today = datetime.date.today()
time.sleep(5)
print ("Today it's (" + format + ")")
print ("Through the fog in your brain you're aware of your own existence: the sound of your breath, the beat of your pulse. That dull ache.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You're obviously hungover with no idea how you got here.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("Whatever here is.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You look around. You're hunched up on a metal bench in a bus stop, a bus stop that looks just like any other bus stop.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You hear the purr of waiting engines, some people chat to each other, some people bark expletives into inexpensive mobile phones.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("The bus stop is all steel and high windows, all wipe-clean fixed metal furniture. The lino is filthy shades of beige.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("Through the glass you can see that it's another concrete grey day but it's muggy. So muggy. Sweat threatens to seep from your brow.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You leave your bench and wander north to the exit. You see a sign.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("The sign is silver, it's titled: 'Rockdale Bus Station. GOFTS.'")
time.sleep(5)
print ("Gumpster. Huh.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("The sign is informative - as you'd hope - it tells you what was excavated before the bus station was built, the remains of the past.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You think 'One day this bus stop will be the past.' And you hear the drag of your footsteps as you lumber onwards.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("What are you thinking of right now? Type in your thoughts.")
my_thoughts = input ()
time.sleep(2)
print ("When he thought you would be thinking ' " + my_thoughts + " '... 'oo. Oh well. I think you need to leave the bus station for now.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You leave the bus station by the caramel roast wafers from Dava Coffee Shop, a sticky sweet nag at the stomach.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("When you're outside, you see the retina staining yellow of the tram stop opposite. The library to your right.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You head right, towards the library, and stop on a stone bridge. The bridge has a dedication to Ukraine.")
print ("You lean over the bridge and see...")
time.sleep(5)
print ("... a boy paddling in the water pastfoot. He's wearing worn trousers, an old looking shirt. He looks up and speaks to you.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("Hello traveller, what is your name?")
my_name = input ()
time.sleep (5)

```

```

C:\Users\lambert\Documents\Python\random\RocheAdventure310810_010p_0331
File Edit Format Run Options Window Help
my_name = input()

#Explains the game and sets behind it
print ("The boy says 'Welcome to Rochdale, " + my_name + "! You are on Smith Street, when would you like to go?")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You wonder what the boy means by 'when', surely he means 'where',?")
time.sleep(5)
print ("The boy grins: 'I knew you'd think that! I mean when do you want to go, you can go to anywhere with the river Roch then I can take you anywhere along it too.'")
time.sleep(5)
print ("You are clearly confused; after all, you feel like your IQ has diminished and you feel every single year, month and day of your age in the low thrum of the pain in the back.")
time.sleep(5)
print ("The boy sees this; laughs at you.")
time.sleep(5)

#Ask the player to choose which when to go
time.sleep(3)
print ("The boy says " + my_name + ", would you like to go to either the 1880s or the 1970s? Rochdale?")
time.sleep(3)
print ("You look at the boy, you feel confused. He says, 'It's OK, type in the number you want, you can choose' + "\n" + "1 for 1880s" + "\n" + "2 for 1970s")
time.sleep(1)
print ("Type in your number")

while True:
    choice = input()
    if choice == "1":
        print ("You are in Victorian Rochdale. It is a sunny day but there's something vaguely spooky in the air.")
        break
    if choice == "2":
        print ("You are in the middle of a demonstration, the bus station is now opposite you. There's graffiti on the walls, skinheads in the streets. You feel scared." + "\n" + "As the writer is new to coding, this adventure is not yet finished. I hope, that won't work. Try again: 1 for 1880s, 2 for 1970s.")
        break
    print ("You are in a room, surrounded by men in tall hats. They're arguing.")

#In a room
print ("You think 'Where am I? And you imagine the reply: 'in a room.'")

#complete this while loop then...

#Get the player home
print ("Pshaw! That was an adventure. Now we need to get you home. Which way would you like to go?" + "\n" + "Type in the number you want, you can choose:" + "\n" + "1 for the canal," + "\n" + "2 for the Exchange," + "\n" + "3 for the Exchange")
while True:
    guess = input()
    if guess == "1":
        print ("You fall in the canal and join the ducks in their maligned kingdom")
        break
    if guess == "2":
        print ("You are attracted by the brightness of the Exchange. You have a cup of coffee, spend your bus money on shiny cat. You're going to have to hitch home." + "\n" + "THE END.")
        break
    if guess == "3":
        print ("You get on the bus and go home - have a cup of tea as your reward.")
        break

#What happens if you go straight to the bus
if guess == "3":
    print ("You get on the bus and go home - have a cup of tea as your reward.")

```

Figure 27: Screenshots of draft Python code and creative writing for Sundry Waters text-based adventure game and textual map (author's image).



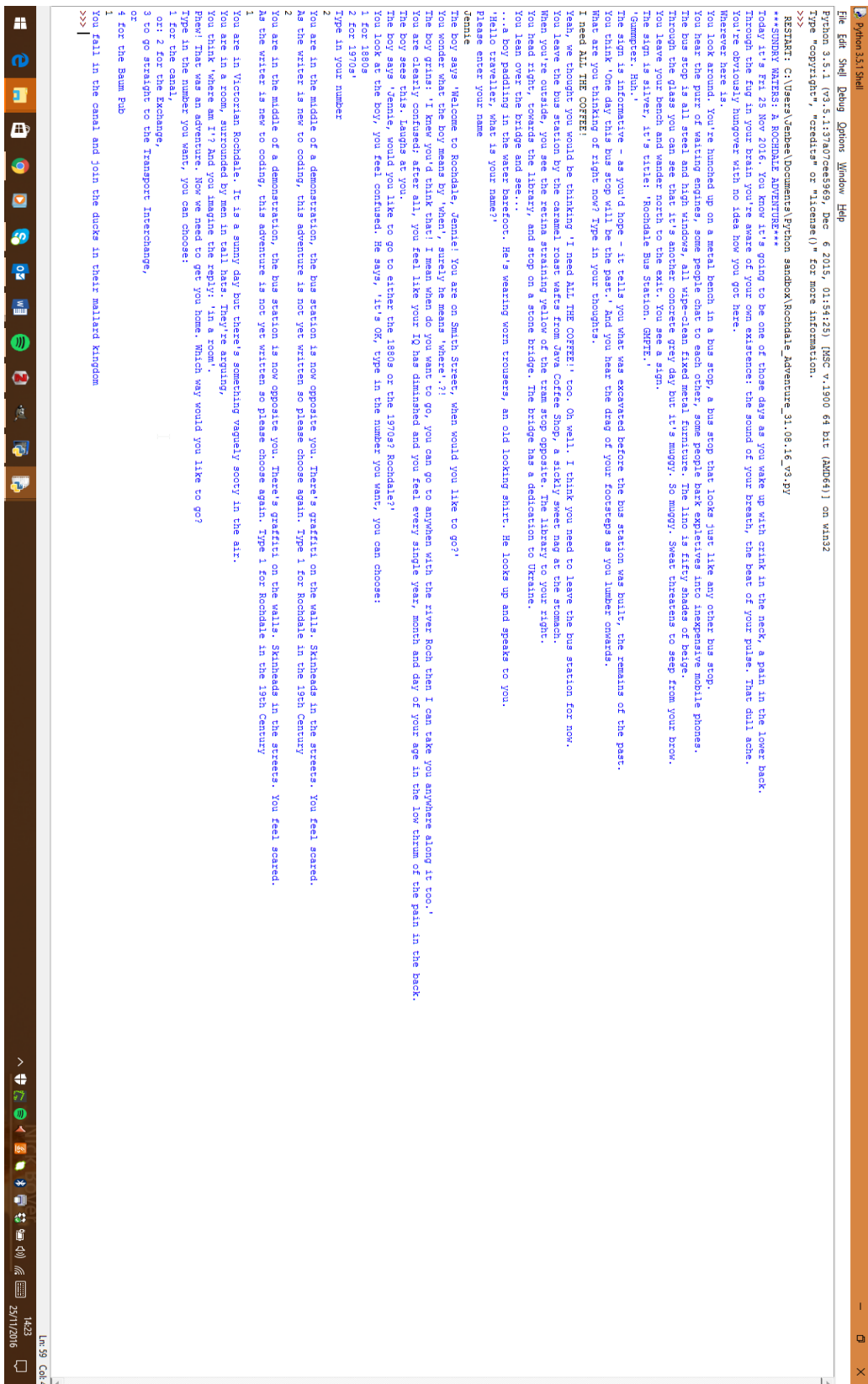


Figure 28: Renamed game 'Sundry Waters' in play: the gamer's view (author's image).

The envisioned game would follow the river in the centre of Rochdale and feature two adventures, based upon two literary texts from Waugh and Honished, two intertwined adventures with the option of printing the story out at the end and to link to a map that geolocated the gamers' journeys. I called the game 'Sundry Waters: A Rochdale Adventure' drawing upon the passage from Raphael Honinshed in his 1577 publication *The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande and Irelande* as he describes the river as consisting 'of sundrye waters' (1577, p. 143). I wanted to build on this creative fluidity – this written watery cartography - with a focus around the river in the town centre.

The theoretical thinking behind this form of text-based map-making is supported through Denis Cosgrove's argument in *Geography and Vision. Seeing, Imagination and Representing the World* where: 'written narrative and description hold as significant a place as cartographic representation [...] the graphic can be textual as much as it can be pictorial' (2008, p. 6). This textual representation is what I'm trying to portray in-game, with the potentiality of other ways of portraying place through the gamer's progression throughout the game. There is some scholarly work on the spatial practices of gamers such as: meaning, culture and violence in the world of the game (Shaw and Warf, 2007); how gamers involve themselves in spatial and sociospatial dimensions of games (Lammes, 2008); and issues around materiality, practice, and control of games (Ash & Gallacher, 2011).<sup>250</sup> There seems to be little in

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<sup>250</sup> See, for example: Sybille Lammes, 'Spatial Regimes of the Digital Playground: Cultural Functions of Spatial Practices in Computer Games', *Space and Culture*, 11.3 (2008) pp.260–272; Ian Shaw and Barney Warf, 'Worlds of Affect: Virtual Geographies of Video Games', *Environment and Planning: A*, 41 (2009) pp.1332–1343; and James Ash and Lesley-Ann Gallacher, 'Cultural Geography and Videogames', *Geography Compass*, 5.6 (2011) pp.351–368.

the literature regarding the practice of place (or of making place in the imagination) in gaming.

The aims of the game are to attempt the virtual practice of a real place through creative fiction and coding. This is in order to demonstrate a way of creative-critical map-making and to incorporate more elements of collaborative mapping with the gamer. The element of collaboration is where the gamer inputs additional information such as their own name, what the weather is like, and some of their thoughts. And yet there is an element of control over what a player can do in this virtual map. This makes this mapping proposal somewhat top-down. Further, the lack of programming skill led to this experiment being abandoned. The game serves as a modest proposal – were the code to be made portable, and geo-specific references programmed into a GIS, this game could be workable, shareable, and adaptable. The collaborative element, which seems to be the grail of these creative-critical mapping endeavours, is with the online coding community who share code and programming projects through areas such as GitHub.

While the OpenSource community is collaborative, and my game attempts to offer creative-critical collaborative textual cartography, there are issues around the individualist nature of gaming. Unless the game has the potential for being a multi-user endeavour there are no real community/communities in this form of map-making. There is a lack of collaboration. I programmed the game and no matter how much people partake and add their own input, I have set the parameters and the rules of the game through my own coding and creative writing. There are also questions around whether this assist with making sense of place. There is also a lack of dimensionality and temporality – how can one truly capture changes over time? – and difficulties in

capturing fleeting sensory phenomena. There are issues around digital literacy: to participate you may need to know some code or to be able to understand how to interact with the game and enmesh personal experience and local knowledge to the map. While there are questions around ownership (intellectual property rights), proprietary software (mapping data, character trademarking), social parity (the cost of, and access to, technology plus having time for the leisure of gaming) and the energy required to play the game (the potential CO2 output of gaming), the playful element of this type of map-making does offer another form of creative cartography.

This digital map can help describe space and give some sense of spatial awareness. The addition of phenomenological and emotional layers could be a useful addition in fleshing out cartographic representations of Rochdale. It could be that the map I am trying to make is un-makeable, or impossible, or perhaps so complex that if one was to visualise it, it might look like myriad colours woven into a complex carpet: some strands would have no discernible beginning and may not end. To 'see' each layer of this map you would need to isolate some of the strands to being to make sense of the stories and ecologies of place captured within it.

Map-making requires a creative element to tell other stories of place from fluidity to aural phenomena. The previous maps demonstrated attempts to overcome an ambivalence towards map making but also demonstrate tensions that occur when creating maps. This has the potential to develop place literacies and an understanding and an empathy with the pluralism of place with its histories, cultures, and geographies. This process of creative cartographic practice is exploratory in nature, it seeks to provoke other exploration. Different maps tell different stories through their spatial representation of places, so different exercises in mapping Rochdale offer other

ways of exploring and place-making in the imagination individually and collectively. The ideal (currently imaginary) map of a place would need to be dynamic, the physical and human geography constantly shifting. It may be difficult to represent in a coherent way. Strands would need to be pulled out and placed back in again to untangle the layered contradictory narratives, and cartographies, of Rochdale.

These experiments in this chapter contributes in an attempt to pull together a deep map of Rochdale. My cartographic experiments could be deemed ‘expressive art’ As Denis Wood puts it in *Everything Sings*, as they present ways ‘of coming to terms with the experience of place’.<sup>251</sup> The maps slot into creative practice and scholarship on other forms of creative-critical and counter cartographies including: hand-drawn maps, personal geographies, mental maps, and embroidered maps.<sup>252</sup> These processes, and reflections, offer different theories and methods of map-making. The counter cartographies in this chapter correspond to recent and ongoing debates in creative geographies by drawing upon previous, and ongoing, creative-critical practice. Therefore, my creative cartographies are anchored within contexts of ongoing, interdisciplinary practices and debates.

The next, and final, Part of this thesis is about reflecting upon practice-as, practice-with, and practice-for research. Chapter Five is concerned with the genesis and process of writing and on the scholarly possibilities offered by creative-critical hybrid writing and research. I have also shared my reflections on creating creative writing session plans I have used to stimulate other responses to place (see also

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<sup>251</sup> Denis Wood, *Everything Sings: Maps for a Narrative Atlas* (Los Angeles: Siglio, 2013) p.18.

<sup>252</sup> See: Kris Harzinski, *From Here to There: A Curious Collection from the Hand Drawn Map Association* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2010); Katharine Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2004); Peter Gould and Rodney White, *Mental Maps* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1974); and Judith Tyner, *Stitching the World: Embroidered Maps and Women’s Geographical Education* (London: Routledge, 2015).

Appendix 5). Chapters Five and Six bring together Reading and Mapping place as well as the slippery, non-map map of the Northern Powerhouse – a project that has no firm shape and remains, somewhat, a map of the imagination.

#### ACT 4

#### Scene 6

*SETTING: THE RESEARCHER and THAT WRITER are cycling on a tandem bike along the Rochdale Canal tow path towards Calderdale. They have crossed the border quietly, without any questions, without any knowledge of which bit of ragwort growing along the bank is the first to become West Yorkshire ragwort. THE RESEARCHER is at the front of the bike doing most of the hard pedalling but is sanguine about this fact. She has a copy of the Greater Manchester Street Atlas (A-Z Street Atlas) tucked under her arm, which makes holding the handlebars somewhat cumbersome.*

#### **THE RESEARCHER**

When it comes down to it, maps are just another form of language. They're not benign; they're loaded like language.

(Laughs, more to herself than as if sharing a joke with THAT WRITER)

Maps *are* a form of language, replete with the power to control or to assist. They try to tell us what places are.

But places change. All. The. Time. Look at Manchester; it's a constant facelift, nips, and tucks, skyscraper fillers. We're told about its heritage, but the maps tell us something different, and our bodies; like our eyes and ears, tell us different stories. It's a different story every day.

(Removes the armpit-stained *Greater Manchester Street Atlas* with one hand and tosses it into the canal.)

As Harley puts it 'cartography *is* politicised and always has been'. That's on page two hundred and six of *The New Nature of Maps*, that is. And those are his italics! The places that these maps are supposed to represent necessitate the map to change over time too.

SFX: *Above THE RESEARCHER and THAT WRITER a large, bright blue curtain is lowered obscuring the painted sky scenery. Across this curtain, words appear in wispy white, like aeroplane contrails, in THE SPIRIT OF J. BRIAN HARLEY'S handwriting.*

### **THE SPIRIT OF J. BRIAN HARLEY**

'How far do [cartographers] care about the world they portray? [...] It involves accepting the linkage between knowledge and power.' (Harley, 2001, p. 206).

### **THAT WRITER**

(Slowly cottoning on) Right. So, what you're saying, as the world is changing then the meaning of maps and the way that maps can make meaning will change too?

(In front of her, THE RESEARCHER nods her head)

Woah.

Head.

Blown.

### **THE RESEARCHER**

Yes. You see: maps are texts that make stories, they are also stories within the text.

And there are still so many stories yet to find, to unravel and unwind. So many different maps to make. And there's still so much to learn.

Keep up!

*Blackout.*

*Curtain closes.*

*Then the curtain opens to reveal THE ROCHDALIANS, A GONGOOZLER, THE HEYWOOD PUB LADS, RAVEN, PIGEON, THAT WRITER and THE RESEARCHER who take their bows as if for the final time.*

*The curtain closes, then immediately reopens for an encore of 'The Blackstone Edge Gathering'.<sup>253</sup>*

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<sup>253</sup> Chartist Ernest Jones wrote 'The Blackstone Edge Gathering' in 1846, the poem was later arranged by T. Cook (no date). For more on Jones's life and work see, for example: Y. V. Kovalev 'The literature of Chartism', *Victorian Studies*. 2(2), (1958) pp.117-138; Miles Taylor, *Ernest Jones, Chartism, and the*

## FULL CAST

(They sing the second verse in harmony)

‘But waved the wind on Blackstone Edge a standard of the broad sunlight’

(As THE CAST sing, The GHOST OF MICHEL De CERTEAU floats to the front of the stage, does a clog dance, then evaporates into the ether)

‘How distant cities quaked to hear

when rolled from that high hill

the cheer of hope to slaves to tyrants fear

and God and man for Liberty!’

*The curtain half closes then again fully opens.*

*The full cast bow, wave, gesture to the sound technicians, backstage crew, and the director.*

*THE AUDIENCE are on their feet.*

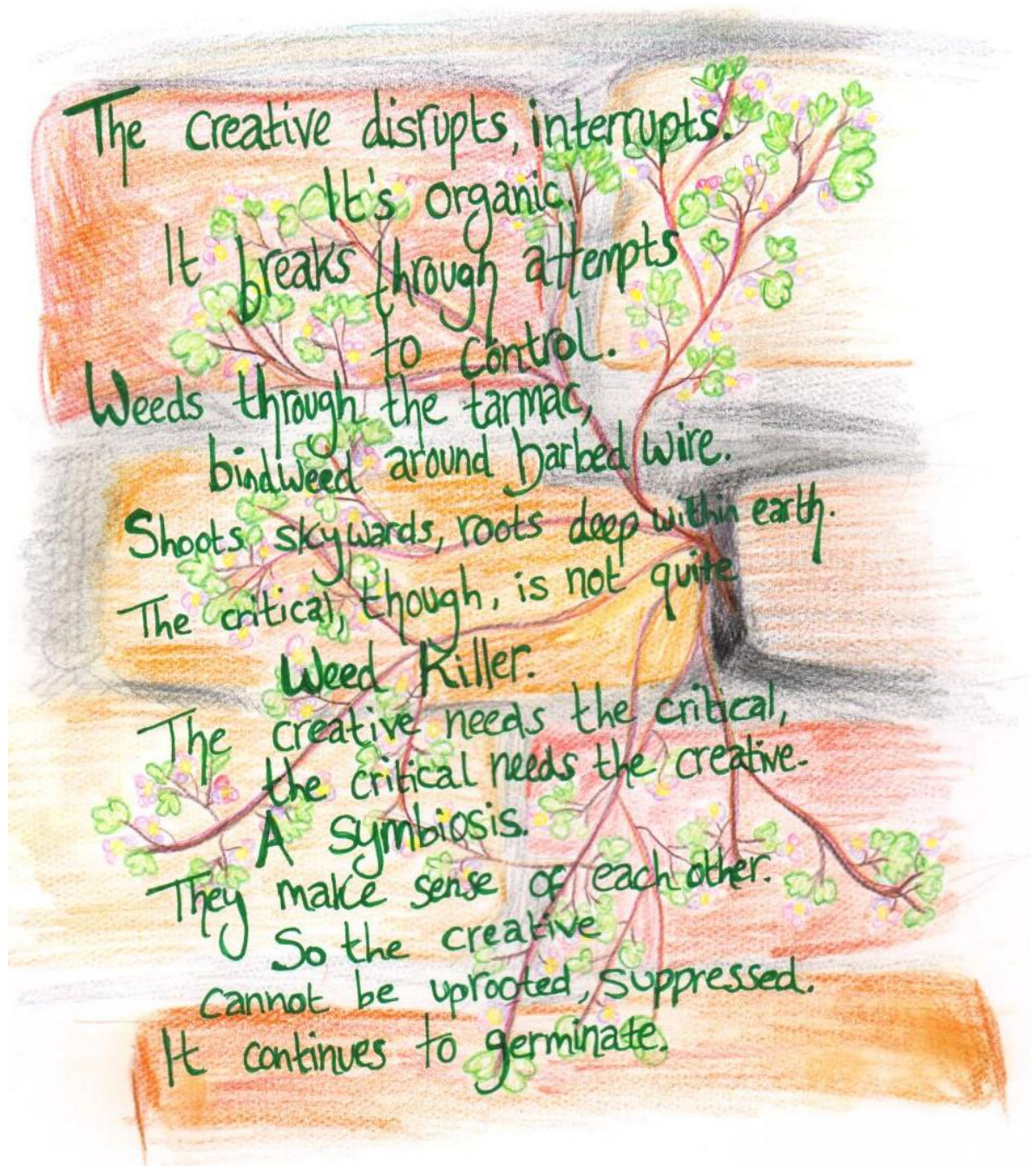
## THE END (OF PART TWO: MAPPING PLACE)

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*Romance of Politics 1819-1869* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); and Simon Rennie ‘The Poetic Negotiations of a Gentleman Radical: Ernest Jones and the "Mighty Mind"’, *Victorian Poetry*. 53(1) (2015) pp.57-76.



## Part Three: Writing Place



The above piece is a manifesto of sorts. It serves as an introduction to this final component of the project: a reflection on creative-critical writing and the process of responding to Rochdale drawing on contemporary arts and creative writing scholarship. This chapter begins with the audience still on its feet, pouring out from

the Gracie Fields Theatre onto Hudson's Walk. Cut through the cemetery (*if you dare*), to the bus stop on that busy road, where you will wait (*for longer than advertised*) for the dinky 442 Rosso Bus from Norden to Rochdale. And it *will* rain. Pull out your umbrella as this chapter follows on from the experimental cartographies of Chapter Four, and there will be more water to contend with. We're close to the end now, you can almost smell it, that tarmac-tinged petrichor that marks the end of urban summer, where there's something of a turn in the air. A creative turn (*ho ho*). In Part Three, everything is pulled together, albeit not in a neat way, it is not the final narrative of Rochdale nor does it attempt to present itself as such.

Part Three: Writing Place forms the third part of my thesis. It complements Part One (Reading Place) and Part Two (Mapping Place) by offering: a discussion on creative-critical research; exegeses of the creative interventions and an explanation on how these relate to the previous Parts; and presents another way of exploring place viz a viz Rochdale. Other interventions are woven into the fabric of Part Three which concludes with a creative takeover. The first section of Part Three comprises an overview on creative-critical research and practice with an overview of the current state of creative-critical research and practice in UK higher education. In this section, the different approaches to practice and research will be discussed. This takes the form of defining different approaches such as: practice-as, practice-for/led, practice-through, and practice-with research, and the blurring of the boundaries between these approaches. There is also an overview of each of these in the Glossary in Appendix 1. Practice sits at the heart of this creative-critical project, and the notion of 'creative-critical' in some of its guises will be explored, as aspects from these forms of experimental writing support my own hybrid approach demonstrated throughout this thesis. This is not a journey I take alone; the hybridity of this approach is one that

writer-scholars are utilising in journals such as *Geohumanities*, *Literary Geographies*, and *Writing in Practice: The Journal of Creative Writing Research*.

My own practice and experience as an educator, and the subjectivity in my own creative responses, cannot be separated from being a writer, researcher, and literary critic. I'm presenting what Tom Leonard calls a 'Literature in which is it possible for a writer to be nobody but [myself]'.<sup>254</sup> This perspective helps to shape the overarching argument of this thesis and its hybrid approach. The second section situates the theoretical, and creative realm that my creative-critical writing feeds into and off. Following this is the most substantial part of the chapter: exegeses of the previous creative interventions and of the interventions to come. This overt discussion is needed at this point as the end piece of this Part is fully creative: there is no critical explanation within it as to the conception and development of the creative aspects, so prior to the creative 'take over' some explanation is required. This includes considering influences on the pieces from other creative touchstones such as travel guides, maps, folk tales, non-fiction, poetry and music, as well as the literary geographies of Rochdale explored in Chapter Two.

Weaving in and around this chapter is the voice, of the Writer from Part Two ([hello again](#)). As before, in the previous chapters, these overtly metafictional interventions are presented, here, in blue ink. The use of the Writer is a device to pull back the curtain, exposing the craft behind the text ([ta da!](#)). Metafiction is, as Julie Armstrong suggests in *Experimental Fiction: An Introduction for Readers and Writers*, 'preoccupied with its own construct and status, it exposes the craft of the text, drawing attention to the text's fastidiousness, resulting in a self-reflexive, self-

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<sup>254</sup> See Tom Leonard, *Radical Renfrew: Poetry from the French Revolution to the First World War* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990) p. xxviii.

conscious fiction'.<sup>255</sup> Armstrong's scholarly text acts as an introduction to experimental and reflective writing, drawing on examples such as Virginia Woolf's use of stream-of-consciousness writing and John Schad's fictional/factual writing. The book includes exercises for the reader to try, acting as an encouragement to develop/enable new writing which is reflective, post-structuralist, and risk-taking. My own self-conscious creative interventions that run throughout this thesis have engaged with the critical narrative, using this narrative as fertile ground in which to root and grow. As the opening manifesto detailed at the beginning of Part Three suggests, 'it breaks through attempts to control'. This take over uses the literary texts and maps from the previous chapters which are braided into new creative responses to the literary geographies of Rochdale. The final piece 'You Are Here ↑' floods in before the Conclusion.

To begin this critical section, I want to consider practice as being at the heart of creative-critical writing. As a discipline, English studies comprises of reading, writing, and intellectual training which has emphasis on the critical analysis of different texts. The standards set for teaching English studies in UK higher education institutions (HEIs) are benchmarked by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) which sets out expected skills that students should acquire by the end of an academic programme. For English studies, these include the ability to 'develop independent and imaginative interpretations of literary, critical, linguistic or creative material'.<sup>256</sup> Within contemporary English studies, there is thus the opportunity for hybridity and multidisciplinary. In tandem with this is the recent increase in focussed

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<sup>255</sup> Julie Armstrong, *Experimental Fiction: An Introduction for Readers and Writers* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) p.106.

<sup>256</sup> Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, *Subject Benchmark Statement: English, UK Quality Code for Higher Education Part A: Setting and Maintaining Academic Standards* (Gloucester: The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, 2015) p.7.

post-graduate creative-critical practice at UK HEIs. Broadly, these take the form of creative practice with critical reflection on the epistemological development of the creative work. These offer the opportunity for further inter- and cross- disciplinary approaches to research, which primarily have been housed in English departments. The critical and creative are not held at different poles. Instead, there is an element of creativity in critical thinking (metaphor, curiosity) and elements of criticality within creative thinking (deducing, identifying). Conceptually, and etymologically, these have always been there: creative from the Latin to ‘bring into being’, and critical from Greek ‘to judge’.<sup>257</sup> I would, additionally, argue that criticism is not purely about judgement; rather, critique offers jumping off points for further discussion and encourages debate. For me, the hyphen between creative-critical represents how both words feed into each other; the creative is scaffolded by the critical and vice versa. ([A balancing act.](#))

This creative-critical investigation was supported by Manchester Metropolitan University’s Department of Interdisciplinary Studies which mentioned for its discipline-crossing practice and teaching in the Introduction. Other HEIs take a different tack to the creative-critical PhD, its educational outcomes, and its knowledge production. Three examples, from 2016, include the University of East Anglia (UEA), Bangor University and University College London (UCL) for projects assessed at PhD/MPhil levels. UEA stipulates a ‘substantial and original piece of writing accompanied by a critical essay’, Bangor University requests a similar ‘creative work accompanied by a critical commentary’, and UCL offers ‘the opportunity to develop innovative research ideas in a variety of forms not restricted to conventional academic

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<sup>257</sup> See: Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Creative, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2018) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/250820>> [accessed 9 February 2018]; Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Critical, Adj.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2018) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/44592>> [accessed 9 February 2018].



prose'.<sup>258</sup> UCL's flexible approach seems the most like this thesis's hybrid investigation. Instead of producing a body of creative work with a separate critical reflective exegesis, here, the creative pieces are woven into the body of the critical work. This method takes its inspiration from the textiles industry – at the heart of Rochdale's industrial heritage – using the metaphor of weaving and, more strongly, flow through like the water courses that run into and around the borough, and once fuelled the mills beating at its core. My writing is informed by the quotidian practice of place, however mundane, and by my research, which engages with literary texts, criticism, and geographical concepts.

Creative-critical approaches are not new. It is worth emphasising the innovative approaches at their centre. Over the last couple of decades, geography scholars have incorporated more creative approaches into their scholarly work, perhaps partly inspired by the blurring of writer/scholar in works such as Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, and Allan Pred's use of montage in his geographical work.<sup>259</sup> These creative tactics act as ways for tackling concepts of space and place. While often perceived as a recent development, in the Editorial of the inaugural publication of the *Geohumanities* journal, Tim Cresswell posits that the practice of geohumanities and the blurring of the geographer/artist is one that is thousands of years old.<sup>260</sup> It is this artistic blurring that is of interest to contemporary geography

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<sup>258</sup> See, for example: University of East Anglia, 'Fostering the Dialogue Between Creativity and Criticism', *Literature, Drama, Creative Writing / Research Degrees*, 2016 <[https://www.uea.ac.uk/literature/research-\\*degrees](https://www.uea.ac.uk/literature/research-*degrees)> [accessed 18 April 2016]; Bangor University, 'Creative and Critical Writing PhD/MPhil', *Postgraduate Courses at Bangor University* <<https://www.bangor.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/creative-and-critical-writing-phd-mphil>> [accessed 18 April 2017]; and University College London, 'Creative Critical Writing MPhil/PhD', *Centre for Multidisciplinary and Intercultural Inquiry*, 2016 <<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/multidisciplinary-and-intercultural-inquiry/prospective-students/creative-critical-writing-phd>> [accessed 18 April 2016].

<sup>259</sup> See: A. R. Pred, 'Hypermodernity, Identity and the Montage Form', in *Space and Social Theory: Interpreting Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. by G. Benko and U. Strohmeyer (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 119–40.

<sup>260</sup> See Tim Cresswell and others, 'Editorial', *GeoHumanities*, 1.1 (2015), pp. 1–19.

scholars such as, for example: Cresswell (author of poetry collections *Fence* and *Varve*); Clare Madge (using poetry to explore geopolitics), David Matless (writing poetry to explore place), Miranda Ward (interested in creative writing and cultural geography); and Harriet Hawkins (with work on art curation, creativity and geography). This meld of geographic scholarship and creative practice is visited in Miranda Ward's article, 'The Art of Writing Place', published in *Geography Compass* in 2015. This article offers a useful literature review on geographers who are engaged in what she calls creative-critical place-writing, which she traces back to the late 1980s. Ultimately, although cautious of creative writing approaches to geography, she notes that what she calls 'creative-critical writing' has value as a 'mode of engaging with geographical thought and expanding debates'.<sup>261</sup>

While responding to Rochdale creatively and critically I have become aware of the clear tensions between the writer/researcher and place. I have found that my own practice is developing what geographer-poet Clare Madge calls a 'geographically-oriented aesthetic'.<sup>262</sup> This, for me, is a way of exploring people in/and place, the more-than-human life that exists, drawing attention to the sensory and the social and trying to avoid traps of introspection or of over-simplification.

Exemplifying this, Madge wrote a poem as an emotional response to the abduction of two Syrian women. This act of 'creative-making', she argues, is a way of creating empathy with her poem as a research methodology, written as 'a catalyst for creative thinking and debate, as an expression [...] through a particular form of world-writing' (p.180). While wary of the complex nature in how poetry as a form of art is viewed and/or valued, I would concur with Madge in that poetry 'allows for hybrid,

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<sup>261</sup> Miranda Ward, 'The Art of Writing Place', *Geography Compass*, 8.10 (2014), p. 761.

<sup>262</sup> From Clare Madge, 'On the Creative (Re)Turn to Geography: Poetry, Politics and Passion', *Area*, 46.2 (2014), p.174, further references to this will be given parenthetically.

multiple, simultaneous interpretations by different people and the same person (re)interpreting a poem differently at different times' and in different places' (p. 180). Here the meaning of a poem responding to myriad situations shifts whether by the poet's design or by the reader's understanding thus engendering understanding and/or empathy. Like Madge, I too posit that poetry can be a tool that can be used to open discussions 'and stimulate a dialogic process between poet/reader/listener' (p.181). Composing a poem allows the writer to evoke images from an embodied experience raises interesting questions around what makes a 'good poem'.

In my own poetic composition, I have found this to be a constant tension in my own work, although I have been writing poetry for many years I am not comfortable in self-identifying as a 'poet'. Poetry is not the only form, or style, in which I write. I continually pose my own questions on whether a poem I write is either 'good art' or finished. This can be seen in the River Roch poem detailed in Chapter Four above. As a writer/researcher interested in the writing – and future writing – of Rochdale, I wonder about how some poetry is constituted as part of the British literary canon – what Tom Leonard amusingly, and polemically calls 'Keats and that'.<sup>263</sup> Whereas other works may not necessarily will be considered part of some vaunted canon.

In literary critic John Guillory's book *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation*, the author poses broader questions around how and why certain literary 'works are preserved, reproduced and disseminated over successive generations and centuries'.<sup>264</sup> I am similarly troubled by this replicated "cultural currency" of art and writing typically by people who are, as Liz Lochhead puts it in her poem 'Kidspoem/Bairnsang': 'posh, grown-up, male, English and dead' (line

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<sup>263</sup> Tom Leonard, *Intimate Voices: 1965 - 1983* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Galloping Dog Press, 1984) p.65.

<sup>264</sup> John Guillory, *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993) p. vii.



37).<sup>265</sup> Ultimately, though, the formation of literature is with the creative writer and subsequent criticism around how their work speaks to previous works (their own or of others), social events, or larger existential concepts such as being alive. The craft of the writer should be in practice and in paying close attention to the structure of poems. (With that said, rules are made to be broken, and questions around what is, and is not, “Literature” should be taken with a bucket’s worth of salt.)

It is equally important to experiment and take risks. As Clare Madge notes, there is valid case for scholarly application where showcasing ‘more experimental, more contingent and perhaps less-than-perfectly crafted poetic works as a methodological tool in the creative *process* of making geography’ (p. 182). While acknowledging the neoliberal obsession for continually gleaning results through pressure to publish, there are issues around measuring the success of long-term behavioural change, especially through exposure to different types of art. And questions as to whether this *should* be the purpose of art. As Madge herself concludes, with an emphasis on her own scholarly field, ‘employing creative expression does not automatically produced critical, significant geographical insights’ (p. 183). Critical reflection on creative expression, and representations of people, place, and the experience of being-in-the-world, can open spaces for contributing thoughts towards discussions not only around aesthetic merits but also on self-reflection and ethical writing practices. This form of writing is part of a wider spectrum of what Madge coins ‘geocreativity’, offers the geographer/writer the ability to explore, and discuss, geographical expression. Similarly, it offers a chance for the writer-acting-as-

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<sup>265</sup> Liz Lochhead, *The Colour of Black and White: Poems 1984 - 2003* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 2003) pp. 19-20.

geographer to either trespass into a geographical realm, and/or demonstrate how the non-geographer tackles geography creatively.

Whether identifying as a geographer/creative or writer/scholar, the nexus is the notion of practice, and practice – like place – is processual. These processes can be defined as practice-as, practice-for/led, practice-through and practice-with.<sup>266</sup> There are variable definitions of these as scholarship, and as protean methods of practice. These methods of practice are ascribed to a physical skill such as dance, sculpture, writing, painting, drama, composition, and visual arts. Furthermore, the development of these definitions – as, for/led, through, and with – to implementing them in creative and creative-critical writing is complex.

I define practice-as research where the practice is integral to the completion of the final piece. The phrase ‘practice-as research’ as applied to art and design is deemed to have originated in the mid-1990s with a paper by the cultural historian Christopher Frayling for the Royal College of Art and design engineer Bruce Archer's paper ‘The Nature of Research’, published in *Co-Design, Interdisciplinary Journal of Design* in 1995. Frayling’s influential taxonomy classified the different ways in which visual artists could: research into art, research through art, and research for art.<sup>267</sup> My own writing practice cycles between these.

The terms practice-as, practice-for/led, practice-through and practice-with can be used interchangeably and for different purposes. In the Introduction to Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt’s *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, for example, Barrett draws upon the Heideggerian notion of ‘handleability’. She posits that practice-as research poses an active model of experiential learning

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<sup>266</sup> There are short definitions of these terms in the glossary which is in Appendix 1.

<sup>267</sup> See Christopher Frayling, ‘Research in Art and Design’, *Royal College of Art Research Papers*, 1.1 (1993), p.5. Further references to this research paper will be made parenthetically.

where ‘exploration of artistic research demonstrates that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses’.<sup>268</sup> In a later chapter in the book entitled ‘History documents, art reveals: creative writing as research’, Gaylene Perry’s fictional writing as research has an experiential and material element. Perry utilises a similar approach to Clare Madge’s work, however, her work addresses complex, autobiographical issues which she approaches as a novelist rather than as a geographer. For Perry, writing is a therapeutic act where writing acts as a tool to search and to reveal.<sup>269</sup> The act of fictionalising autobiographical research, ‘the physical work of writing’, she argues, that ‘the act of writing, the physical work of writing, and the resistance it seemed to give back [...] could be seen as a healing practice’ (2007, p.45). In *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice*, author Patricia Leavy, like Clare Madge, is interested in practice-as research as a cross-disciplinary act. In the book, Leavy states that scholars should ‘adapt the tenets of the creative arts [and draw upon arts-based methods] in order to address social research questions’.<sup>270</sup> I argue that the above approaches separate practice and research. They do suggest that one impacts on the other, however, the authors do not overtly state that this is reciprocal relationship.

Prior to undertaking the PhD project, my previous creative practice-as research took the form of what Jen Webb in *Researching Creative Writing*, describes where: ‘the starting point is creative practice, not research planning.’<sup>271</sup> In the introduction to *Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts*, authors Hazel Smith and Roger Dean’s approach suggests that practice-led research and

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<sup>268</sup> Estelle Barrett, ‘Introduction’, in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 1..

<sup>269</sup> Gaylene Perry, ‘History Documents, Arts Reveals: Creative Writing as Research’, in *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, ed. by Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp. 42–44. Further references are given parenthetically.

<sup>270</sup> Patricia Leavy, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2009) p.3.

<sup>271</sup> Jen Webb, *Researching Creative Writing* (Newmarket, Suffolk: Creative Writing Studies, 2015) p.30.

its affiliates [...] are employed to make two arguments about practice which are often overlapping and interlinked: firstly, [...] creative work in itself is a form of research and generates detectable research outputs; secondly, to suggest that creative practice – the training and specialised knowledge that creative practitioners have and the processes they engage in when they are making art – can lead to specialised research insights which can then be generalised and written up as research. The first argument emphasises creative practice in itself, while the second highlights the insights, conceptualisation and theorisation which can arise when artists reflect on and document their own creative practice.<sup>272</sup>

Smith and Dean view practice-as research and research-as practice as a process that feeds back into itself. What Smith and Dean call practice-led research / research-led practice approach seems closest to my own creative and critical practice.

I have used the term practice-for/led as they are similar notions. The idea of practice-for/led research reverses slightly Frayling's notion of research-for where 'the end product is an artefact' (1995, p.5). Here, the artefact precedes the research where, for example, the writer sets out with little or no knowledge on what will be created; the product then becomes the research. This notion is explored below where I attempt to contemplate my writing as a literary critic as part of the creative-critical narrative of Part Three. I would argue that the notion of practice-led research is interchangeable with the term practice-for. This follows Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean's proposal that 'practice-led research can develop unique processes for creative work and for research' (2009, p.2). And that the reverse, in academic work that is research-led, 'can

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<sup>272</sup> Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, 'Introduction: Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice – Towards the Iterative Cyclic Web', in *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts*, ed. by Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 5. Further references to this chapter will be given parenthetically.

lead to creative practice' (Ibid.). Smith and Dean argue that practice-led research and research-led practice are akin to a cycle of learning: each iteration feeds, nourishes and informs further practice and scholarly research. This iterative process is possibly the closest to my own practice and research.

The remaining terms are practice-through and practice-with research. Here, I suggest that 'practice-with' incorporates some of the elements of practice-as/research-as practice cycle as proposed by Smith and Dean where there are element of study and creative trial and error. Practice-through or, as Christopher Frayling calls it, research-through art and design, is where research is created using materials that Frayling suggests communicate '*through* the activities of art' (p.5, original italics). For example, some of my practice is like practice-through research: I kept a field notes book, journaled and made artefacts to creatively respond to Rochdale (see Appendix 7). Some of these artefacts – a weaving and felted wool from barbed wire near Heywood - and some poems have not made the final cut. This is down to self-evaluation on whether the pieces selected work as creative responses to Rochdale and 'speak' to thesis. Following Smith & Dean, I argue that my research and practice inform each other. I composed creative pieces at different times during the process of pulling the thesis together. The placement of what became the 'creative interventions' act as ways to speak to the various parts of where they are placed. Writing, for me, is an experimental and iterative process which involves pen, paper and other media such as photography, embroidery and crochet. Where some pieces may not have made the final cut, other pieces were 'recycled' and used in different ways. For example, the sketch of the Baum rabbit in 'You Are Here <sup>û</sup>' was initially going to be cross-stitched. I have found that thinking through writing and/or making is incredibly useful in developing my creative-critical approaches and a selection of these pieces to

exemplify this can be seen in Appendix 7. The creative interventions are exploratory that my work is always coming-into-being. Offering different insights into how place is made and different moments in time in my own professional practice of composition. As the aim of thesis is to demonstrate, primarily, a creative-critical hybrid writing, they were deemed outside the remit. This self-evaluation is a form of research-through practice as I attempt to analyse my own work through the lens of a literary critic.

While these terms intersect, I have chosen to term my own work as practice-led and research-led as I used both these to create my own responses to Rochdale. My research into the literary geographies of Rochdale has led to work that is either inspired by or tries to speak to the literary texts. My experimental creative responses to Rochdale have vacillated between research-led through studying maps and texts about the borough. This is discussed below in the exegesis and analysis of the creative interventions that feature within this thesis. My practice attempts to capture, describe, and display the textures of place as a method of place-making. Due to the progressive nature of place, I argue that it is impossible neatly to make place or to capture one aspect like a fly suspended in ancient amber. My practice therefore tries to reflect Rochdale through words, maps, photography, art inspired by literary texts and cartography of Rochdale. Following Miranda Ward's suggestion that a creative approach to writing place is not always successful, nor complete, I would add that it is not enough to make something new, or beautiful; a successful form of creative-critical hybrid writing needs to tread a fine line between scholarship, best practice and reflective introspection.

## ***(Re)making Rochdale: Place writing and Exegeses of the Creative Interventions***

While the first part of this chapter has been focused on ‘my’ approach, this PhD thesis on Rochdale is not undertaken in complete isolation; it involves a team of people supporting the writer/scholar. This final section offers insight into the inspiration behind the creative writing responses. Writing these pieces has been an iterative process inspired by the collaboration between people and place. On a personal, anecdotal level, this was enacted alongside my PhD project when I became involved in facilitating writing sessions in Rochdale. To support these, I devised and developed activities to stimulate place writing, which I have detailed in the ‘Place Writing Tool Kit’ in Appendix 4. These activities encourage participants to draw upon their life experiences as well as their imagination. When devising sessions, I used an experiential learning model for creative writing. This is a model whereby, as David Kolb posits, *‘learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transaction of experience’*.<sup>273</sup> The learning and practice process incorporates a cycle of concrete experience (doing an activity, beholding phenomena of place), reflective observation (reviewing the experience through writing), abstract conceptualisation (considering ways in which the activity could be done, or modelled, differently) and active experimentation (testing the activity again).<sup>274</sup> The intention was to initiate discussion on writing creative responses to the borough. In addition to what is set out in Appendix 4, I have captured some of this process by sharing learning and session activities through reflections on my PhD blog ([www.WritingRochdale.wordpress.com](http://www.WritingRochdale.wordpress.com)).

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<sup>273</sup> David. A. Kolb, *Experiential Learning: Experience as a Source of Learning and Development* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1984), p.38, italics in original.

<sup>274</sup> Adapted from: David Kolb (1984); D. Boud, R. Keogh, and D. Walker, *Reflection: Turning Experience into Learning* (London: Kogan Page, 1985); and Ian Reece and Stephen Walker, *Training, Teaching and Learning: A Practical Guide. Sixth Edition*, (Houghton-Le-Spring, Tyne & Wear: Business Education, 2007).

My own practice of place through observation, research and writing creative responses has led to different understandings of Rochdale. This last section in this part, in the set up to the creative finale, features reflections on the composition, ideas, and analysis of the creative interventions that run throughout this thesis. Firstly, there is a discussion on the opening and closing pieces which bookend the main body of this thesis. Then, further pieces are introduced, offered and analysed. As the analysis builds, the final piece floods in and presents a creative take-over of this section.

The first and final pieces to the thesis are ‘Tram Lines’ and ‘The No. 17 to Manchester’. Both are poems of public transportation and they carry the reader into and out of the space of this thesis. They are journeys through place on two different forms of public transport: a Metrolink tram and a bus – the Number 17. The prose poem ‘Tram Lines’ is made up of actual observations made from two different tram journeys from Manchester Piccadilly train station. They are snapshots from 2014 and 2016, supplemented with imagined situations. The current draft presented in this thesis includes what I learned, saw, or imagined at each of the stops. The title for the piece involves word play on travel and on writing the ‘lines’ of the poem. At ‘Piccadilly’ the focus is on colour which is predominantly ‘sunless’, ‘grey’, the trams too are subdued in their shades of ‘muted optimism’ (lines 2 & 3). The colour ‘grey’ is emphasised throughout the poem, it is a reflection on the weather and the predominant colour palette of the city and its outskirts. The use of grey creates a feeling of dullness too. Other colours are used as points of contrast, for example ‘orange hi viz’, yellow and purple. The posters feature colour that promise ‘Transformation is coming. Keeping Victoria posh.’ (lines 30 & 31). There is a further emphasis on change with the ‘North Manchester Regeneration’ poster (line 46). Any regeneration or new industry glimpsed in the north Manchester, Oldham and Rochdale landscapes are surrounded



by ‘the bones of the old’ (line 57). These are post-industrial areas in flux, like the ongoing refurbishment of Manchester Victoria train station. The tram moves through these landscapes and through the layers of history on a geographical journey.

Alongside the histories of the area, I wanted to include wider cultural influences and touchstones such as music. I have used song lyrics to create poetic montages on earlier projects and the songs captured were what emerged while travelling.<sup>275</sup> This culminated with the addition of lyrics by The Kinks, David Bowie and Max Landis (as sung by Gracie Fields). These offer a sense of a musical geography as well, locating and linking specific place names with songs: Victoria station – named for Queen Victoria, the suffragette themed apartment blocks in North Manchester, and the Regal Moon pub is associated with Gracie Fields. This adds another layer to the piece, one of memory and of cultural influences outside of Rochdale.

Writing a slightly surreal journey with different layers is not unique and therefore I have included an epitaph of lines from ‘Tramcar to Frankenstein’ by poetry/performance collective The Liverpool Scene. The Liverpool Scene was a poetry band made up of a loose group of poets, including Adrian Henri and Roger McGough. They were influenced by the Beat Poets, but rather than the use of smoky, jazzy double bass tones, the group used idiosyncratic sixties pop motifs - such as the *Batman* theme tune - and some of the more clashing chords of ‘Tramcar to Frankenstein’ anticipated later punk motifs. As Corinne Fowler suggests, Adrian Henri, and by extension the Liverpool Scene, created a ‘distinctive yet multi-layered picture of

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<sup>275</sup> ‘Once Upon a Time in Manchester’ is a cento using song lyrics cut up and this strict lexicon was then repurposed into a new piece. This was recorded over sounds and video of the canal and cityscape. It was written for the 2015 ASLE Conference as part of a creative-critical paper on Manchester’s underground and can be read and viewed here: <https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2016/02/19/writing-place-some-thoughts-on-process/>

Liverpudlian life'.<sup>276</sup> I would suggest such multi-layered pieces are successful at portraying different levels and layers of place, albeit with more of the use of accented, poetic and dialectical sounds such as those of the Liverpool scene with the 'nasal resonance [provided by a] Scouse inflection'.<sup>277</sup> The use of accent and placial comments particularly about northern England lend a 'gritty', urban feel. 'Tramcar to Frankenstein' (1968) is a performance poem set to music. It includes gothic as well as psychedelic elements where the speaker on the vehicle saw that the 'road we followed led to dead veins [...] the tram stopped, I dropped down to the welcome earth'.<sup>278</sup> The play on the word 'earth' here is ambiguous: a play on electrical currents, to earth is a way of grounding oneself after a journey; or, it could be the earth as soil which the 'dead veins' mulch into; or, perhaps the Earth in a wider context. I similarly have tried to play with place names (Shudehill and Failsworth), the feeling of arrival/departure: Manchester Piccadilly's 'sunless platform' (line 2) and 'the smokers outside The Regal Moon' (line 97) near the town centre tram stop, and unease: the sound of 'metal against metal' (line 64), the aphorism 'all downhill from here' (line 73), and threatening 'anti-trespasser trees' (line 77). The mix of place names – real (Rochdale) and imagined (Frankenstein) – offers examples of mapping and draws on similar travel stories from Rochdale's literary canon such as Clifford Heyworth's 'Saturday's Last Train Fro' Rachda to Bacup' (1973) and Daniel Defoe's *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (1725-1727). Separated by two and a half centuries, both writers nevertheless move through this specific landscape, either via train or on foot.

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<sup>276</sup> Corinne Fowler, 'Rebels without Applause: Manchester's Poetry in Performance', in *Postcolonial Manchester: Diaspora Space and the Devolution of Literary Culture*, ed. by Lynn Pearce, Corinne Fowler, and Robert Crawshaw (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013) p. 245.

<sup>277</sup> Peter Atkinson, 'The Beatles on BBC Radio in 1963: The "Scouse" Inflection and a Politics of Sound in the Rise of the Mersey Beat: Popular Music and Society: Vol 34, No 2', *Popular Music and Society*, 34.2 (2011), p. 168. This article is on the Liverpool accent and social identity.

<sup>278</sup> The Liverpool Scene, *Tramcar to Frankenstein*, The Amazing Adventures of the Liverpool Scene (UK: RCA Victor, 1968).

‘Tram Lines’ is an opener which is why it is designated a ‘pre-ramble’ playing on a sense of walking or perhaps of someone colloquially ‘rambling on’, giving a long-winded speech. It is one version of Rochdale that is seen before being immersed in a fuller, more complex scene, and is a way to locate the reader directly to Rochdale.

‘The No. 17 to Manchester’ features similar snapshots from the top deck of a double-decker bus making the reverse journey, headed towards Manchester. The window of the top deck acts like the cinema screen imagined by Paul Evans during a train journey in his short story ‘On the 7.46. Shrewsbury to Crewe’ where, as the train flashes past countryside scenes at speed, ‘[e]ach image becomes a memory: a little psychic snatch from the railway-carriage cinema of the weird wood of winter trees’.<sup>279</sup> This short story, published in *Arboreal: A Collection of New Woodland Writing*, is an intertwining of music, memory, physics, ecology, and the interaction of the human and more-than-human life within, and without, the train. The book is a collection of creative non-fiction, poetry, and photography dedicated to celebrating woodlands which may otherwise be ignored. I am attracted to contemporary woodland and nature writing, that explores the liminal spaces and intersections of the natural/manufactured world, and although the bus in ‘No. 17’ travels through the built environment, there are still wild-ish elements that feature along the route. For example, ‘magnolia in full bloom’ (line 4), ‘dead head daffodils’ (line 15), and ‘suburban foliage’ (line 19), pop out and colour the text as ‘orange hi viz’, yellow and purple did the Manchester-grey of ‘Tram Lines’. The bus journey narrated in my poem is, similarly to those in Evans’ story, a series of snapshots moving through place, albeit more disjointed with place

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<sup>279</sup> Paul Evans, ‘On the 7.46. Shrewsbury to Crewe.’, in *Arboreal: A Collection of New Woodland Writing*, ed. by Adrian Cooper (Dorset: Little Toller Books, 2016) p. 231.

names, adverts and other phenomena just glimpsed before carrying on. The sights, and sites, between Kenilworth and Castleton:

Four lanes, three lanes, the 'Waggon and Horses' pub, black railings and yet another Tesco, a red white and blue identikit echo

A mill with the name obscured, chimney obscured by the branches of a copper beech. A Pub of Character and Tradition At the Heart of the Community

(closed, boarded up, heart blackened in recent arson attempt, sagging roof tiles)

(lines 7-11).

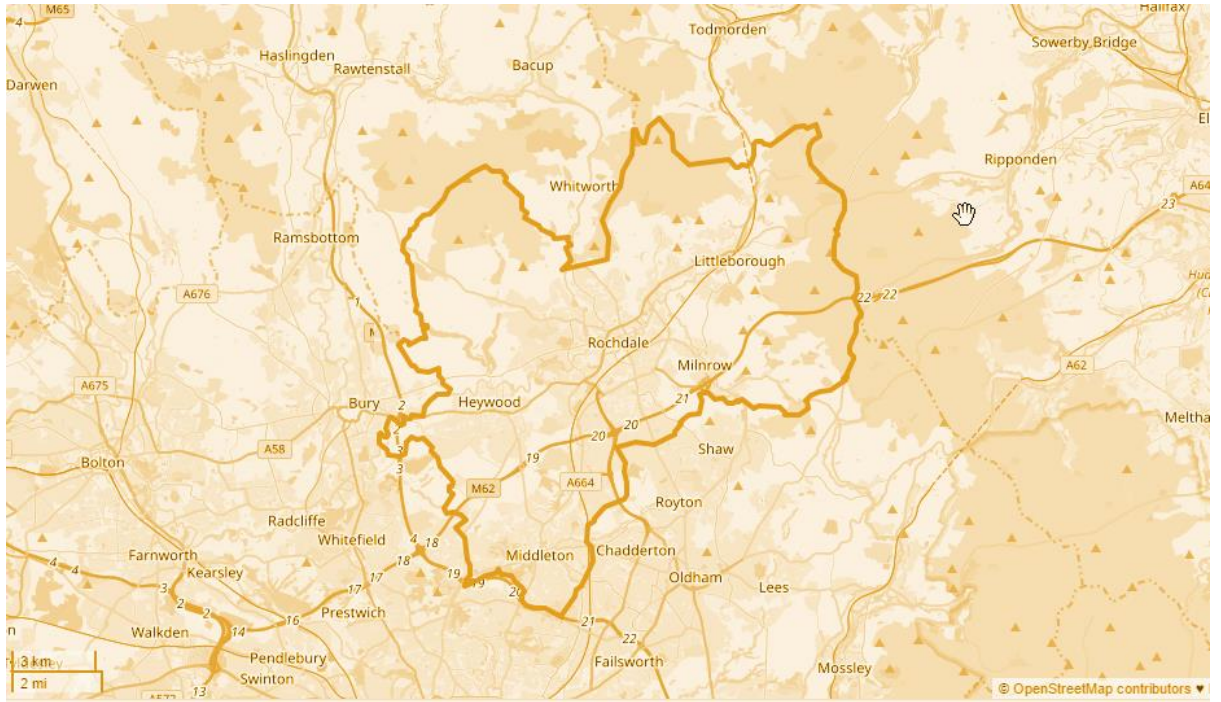
The distinction between Rochdale and Manchester is made because 'the recycling bins are different' (line 43). This makes the point that there is little to distinguish between the suburban environments of Middleton (the last point on the bus journey before the Manchester/Rochdale barrier of the bridge that crosses the M60).

So much for arriving and leaving! What do you do when you get *somewhere*? It's not just about the journey – well, not in the cheesy X Factor sense – but it's also about the destination. If I'm not in the mood for just drifting around, then I need some sort of guide to help me locate myself. Something that involves some more colour to differentiate between the creative and the critical. How about...

## *The Rough-ish Guide to Rochdale*

### **Contents:**

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## ***Introduction***

Eh up, gradely fowk! (Or ‘hello, good people’.) Welcome to Rochdale, nestled towards the north-east of Greater Manchester, this borough has something for everyone. The topography has a mix of landscape, with rural/urban housing, parks, post-industrial ruins, and Victorian heritage. There’s also an assortment of familiar scenes to make you feel at home including: fast food outlets, chain shops, schools and hospitals.

### *The Rochdale Pioneers: The Cooperative Movement*

Cooperation is about partnership. Like honeybees in a hive, it is the process of working together to achieve mutually beneficial ends. In 1844, the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers opened a shop on Toad Lane. It was owned and run by the members of that store and they laid down rules on how, and why, to set up a cooperative society. These values and principles can be defined as: self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity. While the cooperative movement is older than the Pioneers, it is these principles that have endured in the international cooperative movement. Visit the Rochdale Pioneers museum which will tell you some of the histories of cooperation:

[www.RochdalePioneersMuseum.coop](http://www.RochdalePioneersMuseum.coop)

In this Guide, we highlight some of the things you may wish to see, offer some background information, and make suggestions as to what you can do while you are in the borough. Author's picks are marked with this symbol: . You will see the worker bee in the stained glass of Rochdale's Town Hall, and on some union banners. Although it is a symbol more commonly seen in Manchester, the Rochdale bee is more anatomically correct – there are four transparent wings rather than two. So, if you see the bee, , linger in these places a little longer!

### ***Talk the talk!***

In 1795, physician and writer John Aikin described Rochdale as the ‘centre of the genuine Lancashire dialect’. The vocal tones feature a thick accent with vowels flatter than the Cheshire Plain. The Rochdale dialect in writing was used to subvert the hypocrisy of loyalism to church and state in *Plebian Politics*, a comic dialogue published in 1801. Poets writing in the dialect include John “Tim Bobbin” Collier, Edwin Waugh, Sam Bamford, William Baron, and Clifford Heyworth. Pull your keks (trousers/pants) up and learn some common words and phrases you may hear while in the borough from local fowk (people) who ‘chunner on’ (talk at you at length):

**Eh up** (eɪ ʊp): hello

**Barmcake / barm** (ba:rm keɪ:/k): type of bread product, sizeable, normally made from wheat, and topped with flour.

**Mither** (maɪ/./vɜ:ɪ): to bother, if you’re receiving unwanted attention yell: ‘Stop mithering me!’ or ‘Do one!’

**Tara** (tæ/./rɑ:): Goodbye.

Some people in the borough retain this accent due to: upbringing, identity, inclusivity, and/or resistance.



## *What to see: four highlights from the borough*



### *Fairies' Chapel, Healey Dell*

Spend the day exploring Healey Dell, a charming post-industrial nature spot in the borough. There are several heritage walking trails and a café nearby. You can learn a little about the location and folk tales of Healey Dell from page 297.

### *Erratic boulder, Broadfield Park*

This five-tonne chunk of igneous andesite is a glacial boulder that was deposited in Borrowdale, Cumbria. It was gifted to Broadfield Park by the owners of Cowm Top Farm in Castleton. Have a wander around the nineteenth century park. See if you can find the monument to dialect poets that overlooks the town, a change from the usual bronze sculpture of a man on a war horse.



### *Hollingworth Lake, Littleborough*

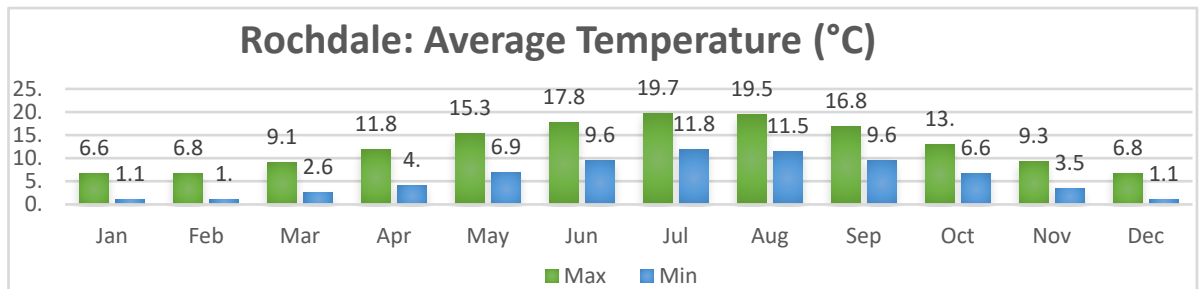
This reservoir, at the foot of the Pennines, was constructed to feed the Rochdale canal and developed as a tourist resort in the 1860s. Today you can watch birds, walk around the lake, partake in water sports or have an ice cream as you watch the sun go down. Give “birding” a try and see if you can spot a kingfisher, tufted duck, or buzzard.

### *Cankey's Ginnel, near St Leonard's Street, Middleton*

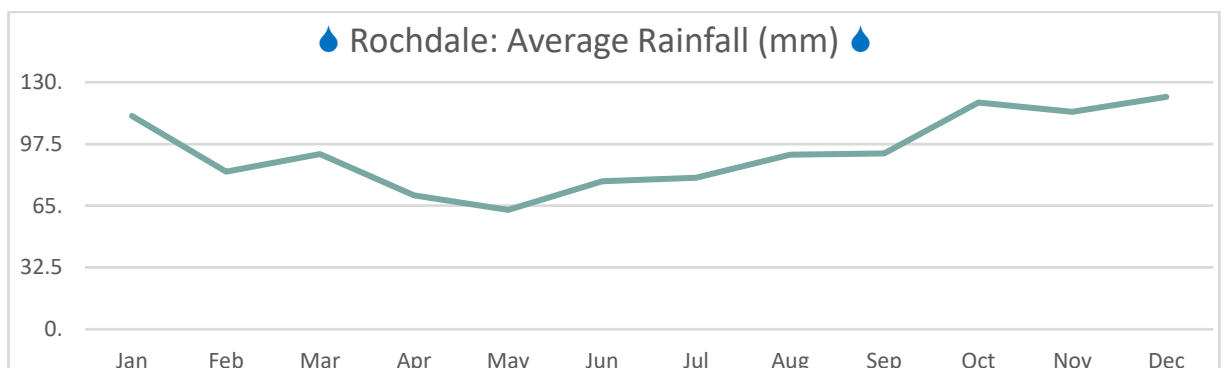
Cankey was a grave robber who is said to have dragged stolen corpses down this alleyway to sell them to Manchester physicians to test on. Whether this grisly tale is apocryphal or not, there is some exciting street art of Cankey. Finish your trip with a visit to the grave of radical writer, poet and politician Samuel Bamford in the cemetery of St. Leonard's, a Grade 1 listed church with a wooden belfry tower.



## When to go: seasonal details



While you can visit Rochdale at any time of the year, the hottest months are July - August. The above information is from the British Meteorological Office (Met Office 2016), seek out other real-time information from the BBC Weather app and other websites. For Rochdale, like anywhere else in the Greater Manchester region, it is advisable to invest in an umbrella when visiting. These can be bought cheaply from supermarkets or street vendors.



Like many places in the UK, please be aware of localised flooding – Drake Street, in the town centre, completely flooded in 2015 - and check the UK's Environment Agency website for warnings.

## ***How to get there***

### **By Car**

It is relatively straightforward to drive to places in Rochdale. Traffic can get congested near Rochdale town centre. Nearest motorway routes include the M60 and M62. See websites such as [www.AA.com](http://www.AA.com) for further details on planning your route.

### **By Train**

Unless there is a strike, the Northern Rail service is frequent and moderately reliable. Direct services run to Manchester Victoria from Preston, York, Selby and Leeds.

### **By Metrolink tram on the Rochdale – East Didsbury line**

The tram service presents a longer journey to Rochdale as it goes via Oldham. Trams get busy around the rush hours.

### **By Bus**

A network of buses runs through and around the Rochdale borough. For more information on this, and on all the public transport services in Greater Manchester, see: [www.tfgm.com/public-transport/tram/network-map](http://www.tfgm.com/public-transport/tram/network-map)

### **On foot or bicycle**

There are dedicated cycle lanes in, see <https://tfgm.com/cycling>. You can walk to places in Rochdale along canal tow path which runs between the Wharf in Manchester city centre and Sowerby Bridge. See: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/rochdale-canal>

## ***Things not to miss***

### **1. Food & Drink**

Describing the local food of eighteenth-century Rochdale, John Aikin wrote ‘The bread in common use at Rochdale is oat-cakes [...] this is eaten with black puddings, for the making of which this place is noted’.<sup>280</sup> Today, nearby Bury is more renowned for its black pudding, while Rochdale specialities include rag pudding, and a snack known as Lancashire bonfire black peas. Traditionally eaten around Bonfire Night on the 5<sup>th</sup> November, bonfire black peas are made from the garden pea (*Pisum sativum*), a crop that thrives in cool climates. The peas are soaked overnight in salty water and then boiled until soft. The dish is low in calories, high in vitamin C, and provides a good source of protein. Enjoy them hot with large glugs of malt vinegar. There are only a few places that serve Rag Pudding, so if you don’t get a chance to visit Owd Bett’s in Rochdale or Middleton’s Hollin’s Fish Bar and D.H. Lees & Sons Butchers, don’t worry; we’ve provided a recipe for recreating rag pudding below (not suitable for vegetarians).

#### ***Rag Pudding (serves 4 or 2 greedy people)***

##### ***Filling:***

300 grams of minced meat (choose from: beef, sausage, cheap stewing steak)

100 grams of offal

50 – 100ml stock (traditionally prepared from leftover bones and scraps of beef or chicken, or use a generic stock cube)

1 large onion – diced

2 tablespoons of cooking oil (or lard)

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<sup>280</sup> See Aikin, 1752, p.248

Salt & pepper to taste

### *Suet pastry*

150g beef suet

350g wheat flour

Cold water – possibly from the Roch if you're brave

Salt & pepper to taste

### *Method*

1. Fry the onions in the oil/lard for five minutes, add meat and kidneys and continue cooking until the meat is browned. Add the stock and cook for further five minutes. Turn off the heat.
2. Prepare the suet pastry: sift the flour and mix with the suet with your fingers. Drip in cold water until it all comes together in a slightly sticky dough. Place this dough on floured surface, round it and then chop into four equal quadrants.
3. Roll out each quadrant into a thick circle, divide the meat mixture between them, seal the pastry with some water and press the edges with your fingers until it looks like a pasty.
4. Place the pudding on a lightly floured rag (clean flannel or muslin). Roll up the rag around it and seal with string or knot at the top.
5. Set a large pan of water to boil, drop the puddings in the water and cook for about an hour.
6. Garnish with greasy “chippy” chips and tomato ketchup, brown sauce or vinegar to taste. Serve with a strong cup of tea or warm, flat beer for an authentic experience.

## 2. Local Archaeology

### **The Miller's Cottage, Hopwood, Middleton, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016.**

Go on the day when yellowing leaves pirouette from the trees. Head out on the 09.26 from Stockport train station, change at Manchester Piccadilly and use the Metrolink Bury (via Victoria) service to Shudehill. Check the map on your phone and the weather app – a Yellow Warning of Fog. Find Shudehill bus station, stand B, and hop on the number 17 bus (£4.10 for a day return at the time of writing). Ask the driver to give you a shout when you get near Hopwood Hall College. Go upstairs, sit at the front of the top deck, see the advert that shows you – albeit backwards – how we set our lives to signs and signals, make adverts significant, and how the cost of a week's travel is £17. As the bus pulls out of the bay, makes a semicircle around the station and takes a left down Rochdale road, take in Manchester's concrete, smell in the warm, buttery sweetcorn that someone has been eating prior to the bus's arrival. Someone will get on the bus outside the Marble Arch pub, they will sit behind you and do what is known as “spark up”. Expect a grey ash smell, a sour note in the nose.

Try not to think about lung cancer.

It will be 10.44 when you struggle off the bus opposite Hopwood Hall College's Sports Arena. Stand opposite the one tree that is now bereft of leaves, branches naked. You will be escorted through a hedge that didn't seem to be there before.





Scramble down the hill leaving the college sounds behind – the shouts, the laughter of teenagers. You see a clearing, this was an ancient carriage way which is now delineated in balsam and tree roots. Imagine the muddy thud of hooves, the scrap of wheel on exposed rock, the twig snap and quick exodus of sparrows in lower hedges. This is your pathway to the cottage. Sweep the leaf litter up with your boots and kick up, kick up. There's something humus about it all, something that teeters on the edges of death and life. There are things that wiggle

and scuttle under the surface.

What you are looking for was demolished in 1947. There is an element of lived geography as a woman called Marianne who resided in the cottage is still alive and remembers the shape of her old home. She remembers her mother working on a peg rug sat next to a cabinet.



Get closer to the site, see what looks like the plan of a house laid on the ground; an earthy map that shows three surfaces, several eras: early twentieth-century detritus; eighteenth-century cobbles; snaking clay drainpipe; and bricks. The bricks are handmade and the style of them suggests that they were made after 1750. The name 'cottage' may be a bit of a misnomer especially with the extension. It is possibly twentieth-century with machine bricks and the outline of a pantry with boiler. You must use your imagination. There was a workers' cottage attached – a brick floor, possibly a lean-to made from bricks. Talk to the Archaeological Society who look after this site and they think it's a wide lobby with a staircase. They also found a chimney stack full of ash, as if the fire was paused in the middle of the century.



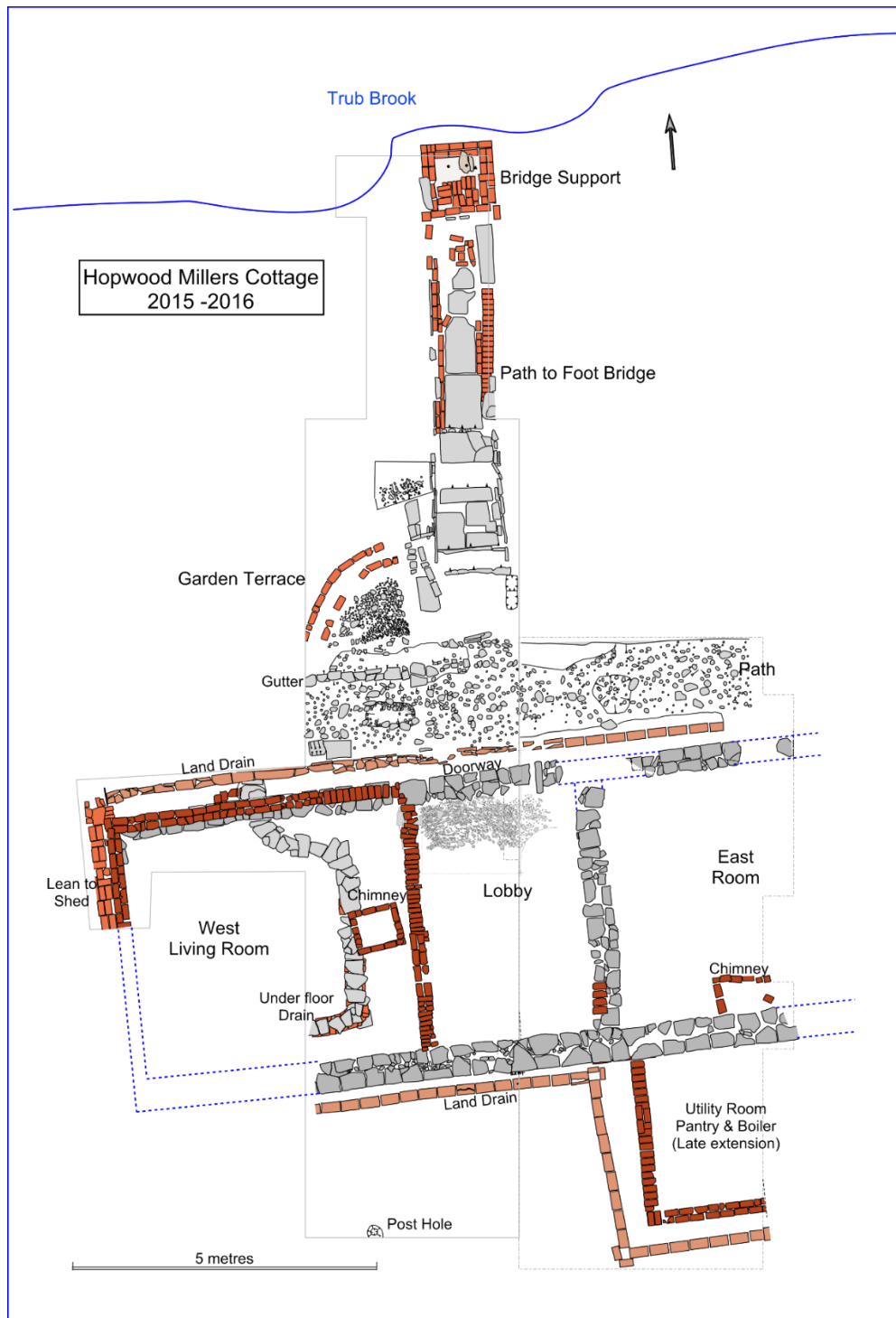


Figure 29: Map of the Miller's Cottage, reprinted with permission from Robert Huddart of the Middleton Archaeological Society.

Listen to the sound of Trub Brook, the constant, soothing flow of water – reminiscent of childhood days spent splashing in rivers – coaxing the bladder. From what would have been the back of the house, there is a path to the remains of a footbridge, now hidden under rhododendron. The words ‘Bobby’s Grave’ are chipped into the path, the resting place of a much-loved pet? There is evidence of a natural water spring which Bob, from the Archaeological Society, describes as more of a ‘big boggy hole full of rust red water’. Bob will show you a picture if you haven’t ‘got your eye in yet’ of the cottage – he is ninety-nine percent certain that it is the right place because of the tree and the measurements are spot-on with the archaeology.

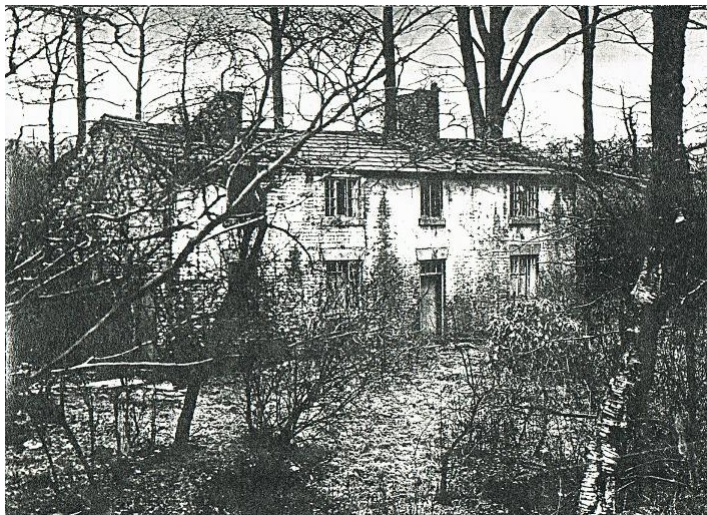


Figure 30: The Miller’s Cottage, year and photographer unknown, reprinted with permission from Robert Huddart, Middleton Archaeological Society

Take pictures. Following the swing of the year this area cycles through stages of budding, lush, golden, and stark. Do not be overwhelmed by romantic whimsy; archaeologists want to ‘see things clear’, to measure. Archaeology is a balance of science and art: you must measure, define materials, be knowledgeable about architectural terms, but Bob tells you that ‘you cannot do archaeology unless you have

a bit of imagination'. It's not about speculation, or taking educated guesses, but you will get 'attached to this dig'. Everything must end and so must the dig, Bob says that 'when you close the trench it's like a funeral. As you're watch the last trench being backfilled, it's the same feeling.'



Trowels, spoons and tarpaulin: these are some of your tools to scrape back the layers of time

If you are going to get involved never step forward onto the archaeology; you always work backwards so you don't stand on what you have cleaned up. You will take the earth back in gentle layers, like an unfolding.

Work with Sonia, she has been an archaeologist 'for over forty years', she will be excited as at the end of the yearly dig 'something interesting always happens'. In this case, they're looking to the earth to show the remains of a Tudor farmstead. Scrying the mud for stone-shaped gold. You will feel the mud slowly seep through your jeans and coat your knees. As you talk with Sonia, you'll hear the song of a long-tailed tit, three pips and a splutter. Stop at the level where there is iron padding (a natural process of iron in a salt form that creates bright brown deposits), it happens 'in

pockets’ and this impervious layer is a hard crust. Professional tools like small trowels will be used but a spoon is useful for scooping out small stones, the scratch of metal on rock goes through you, adds a chill although winter has not yet bitten down on this land and on the mood. Towards the end of the day, Cliff will turn up with a large, rolled up blue tarpaulin which he will lay over the dig to protect it.

### ***Final thoughts***

We hope that some of this Guide will inspire you to discover the real Rochdale for yourself. While there, open your eyes, ears, and heart so you will not miss anything. Take notes. Listen. Talk. Discover. Soak in the ways of Rochdale in your own ways.

### ***Notes***

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The above intervention, *The Rough-Ish Guide to Rochdale*, offers a pastiche of the *Rough Guides* travel books. This consciously subverts the tourist guides genre with some affection; it also serves as a reflection on travel books I have used. In this piece I have woven non-fictional notes made from my own observations and conversations with members of the Middleton Archaeological Society. I have included real-time information on rain fall and temperature as well as passages from John Aikin's *A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* (1795). As it is a 'rough-ish' guide, I have included a notes section as a playful request for collaboration, encouraging the reader to record their own observations and personal information after reading the information. There is an element of top-down place-making with suggestions as to how someone could plan their trip (the months of wet weather and the locations chosen). The OpenStreetMap of Rochdale is provided to help spatially represent the area, albeit without a detailed transport map. Details about different forms of transport are given in the 'How to Get There' section. Due to the tangled network of buses that travel around and through Rochdale, a transport map detailing bus routes would have been too complex to reproduce. The Author's Picks symbol borrows the symbol of the bee, here represented by a bee emoji, to influence the reader and highlight what the author believes is important. The bee is a symbol that is used in Manchester as part of the city's coat of arms and on trades union banners as a symbol of labour. There are bees present in the stained glass of Rochdale Town Hall too.

The inclusion of the rag pudding recipe gestures towards nascent geohumanities research on cookbooks as 'visceral sites of power knowledge'.<sup>281</sup> The

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<sup>281</sup> Jen Bagelman, Mariana Astrid Nunez Silva, and Carly Bagelman, 'Cookbooks: A Tool for Engaged Research', *GeoHumanities*, 3.2 (2017), p 372.

politics of cooking is satirised here, demonstrating how something innocuous like a recipe can shape how a place is perceived. It is presented as a way of recreating something that may not have been experienced at Owd Bett's in Rochdale or Middleton's Hollin's Fish Bar and D.H. Lees & Sons Butchers. Cookbooks present notions of authenticity. Although cookbooks purport to tell a truth through the recipe, presenting a local dish in this way seems to suggest that this is the only way of making the dish. The suggestion to add water 'from the Roch' and serve with 'warm, flat beer' should warn the reader that perhaps this recipe is not what it seems. It is a real recipe, but the quantity of ingredients required, and the cooking method, is fabricated – predominantly because although I have seen it sold, I have never eaten it!

There is an element of verisimilitude as rag pudding is sold in the establishments mentioned: Owd Betts, Hollin's Fish Bar and D.H. Lees Butchers. Each ingredient has its own geographies as each may not necessarily originate in Rochdale. As de Certeau *et al* put it, the consumption of food is a sociocultural practice that 'directly depends on a network of impulses (likes and dislikes) with respect to smells, colours, and forms'.<sup>282</sup> Food can act as a method of place-making via the taste buds, a way of presenting the idea of a local cuisine. There is, further, a doubling of the word 'taste': as well as referring to the sensory response of the tongue and nose to food, food can hold an appeal on other, aesthetic, 'taste' levels. The semi-fictional recipe takes one form of local knowledge, rejigs it, and reproduces it as a form of authentic reproduction. Rag pudding, a seemingly rustic everyday dish steeped in some sort of tradition, is then (re)presented for the delight and (re)creation of an (assumed) middle-class traveller.

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<sup>282</sup> Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life. Volume 2: Living and Cooking* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), p.185.



The last section of *The Rough-ish Guide to Rochdale*, the ‘Miller’s Cottage’, is constructed from field notes, photographs, and a blog piece.<sup>283</sup> This archaeological aspect is included to encourage the consideration of different levels of place and thus other ways of mapping. There is a performative element in ‘the dig’; the shape of a building appears in stone or brick lines; there are layers of time as well as the physical layers of the earth. It considers a place and the remains of a building ‘following the swing of the year’ as the site ‘cycles through stages of budding, lush, golden, and stark’. The changes of place, and of the real characters presented in the piece – the people who lived in the house, the archaeologists, the writer and the young people attending the college above the site oblivious to the dig – have an element of performance about them like the players in the play that interrupts Part Two of this thesis. This time, though, the field notes are presented in a creative intervention that mixes local knowledge (local dialect, folklore), research (Aikin, weather information, archaeological research), and new writing (the fictional recipe, non-fictional place writing). The *Rough-ish Guide*, and other creative pieces in this thesis are quite difficult to define and pin down as one genre. I am happy with the slipperiness of definition and the cross-genre nature. The next piece that acts as an intervention is a piece of flash fiction. Flash fiction works are defined as short stories that follow a strict word count which often includes the title. There is no definitive length set for this form, for example the UK National Flash Fiction Day competition stipulates one hundred words, whereas the Bath Flash Fiction Award is up to three hundred words.<sup>284</sup> David Gaffney’s short story ‘The Last Northerner’ from *Aromabingo* (2007) is an

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<sup>283</sup> See the research blog: <https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2016/11/12/peeling-back-layers-of-time-excerpts-from-the-millers-cottage/>

<sup>284</sup> ‘National Flash-Fiction Day 2017’ <<http://nationalflashfictionday.co.uk/>> [accessed 1 February 2018]; ‘Rules’, *Bath Flash Fiction Award*, 2014 <<https://bathflashfictionaward.com/rules/>> [accessed 1 February 2018].

archetypal version of flash fiction. Gaffney's *short* short story is told from the titular Last Northerner's first-person perspective. This allows the back drop to be quickly detailed – a dystopian north, where the narrator, and acquaintances, are perceived as a spectacle and observed as if in some sort of attraction like a safari park, or a heritage re-enactment site such as Beamish in North East England, or Blists Hill Victorian Town in Shropshire. There are layers of irony as the narrator observes that southerners are trying to break into the northern theme park with its

model coal mine [...] How powerfully they must yearn for the North, for sooty grid built towns, for the cosy fecund stink of squalor, for canal-chilled wastelands where teenagers get pregnant by walking arm-in-arm to the sound of a harmonica.<sup>285</sup>

It is a satire of heritage narratives and of the idea of northern grit as attractive with its 'sooty' industry, gesturing towards the virtue of 'squalor' and the dirty old towns sung by Ewan MacColl, of a longing for urban realness. While the Last Northerner's place is dystopian, it is suggested that it is also seen as a form of freedom, or of nostalgia for coal mines and cold canalscapes – it is a vision of a homogenous north that existed in part yet does not exist. Towards the end of the piece, the narrator notes that the southerners continue to scrape away the dirt to get into this ghetto. The final lines of the story see the narrator hastening the new influx to: '[L]et them come. Let more follow, then more still. I would let them all in, all of them. I had jobs for them' (p.80). The ambiguity of whether this is sinister, or hopeful, is left open. The open ended-ness in this, and many other, of the short stories in *Aromabingo* is a technique that is both useful for creative writing exercises (to carry the story on) and as a model for writing

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<sup>285</sup> David Gaffney, *Aromabingo* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2007), p.80. Further references will be given parenthetically.



what Gaffney calls ‘micro shorts’ and ‘sawn-off stories’ (the latter being no longer than 150 words).<sup>286</sup>

As William Highsmith argues in an article for the *Writers’ Digest*, the ethos behind this is to condense the story with few characters (in the case of ‘The Last Northerner’ – one protagonist versus an unseen number) and offer brevity with fewer descriptive passages.<sup>287</sup> The restrictions provided by the form can certainly help focus specifically on character but also, as seen in ‘The Last Northerner’, on place. The short form of ‘The Last Northerner’ and the open ending allow the reader to interpret what happens next and to, if desired, expand, and explore, the universe Gaffney has begun to create in their imagination. While there is little scholarly criticism on flash fiction – or its other appellation ‘microfiction’ –I would suggest that while it might be too brief to offer an absorbed experience, the form is flexible for a fast ‘fix’ to read and there are different rules regarding length. As a creative writing exercise, it is a useful form to stimulate writing, and offers a way to, as writer and educator Alan Ziegler puts it, ‘crisscross the boundaries imposed by most creative writing classes’.<sup>288</sup>

[Stop waffling with the critical commentary and examples of the form, we need a Rochdale example. So here it is!](#)

### ***Let’s Get Walking***

*The Rochdale Way is a circuit:* you can follow it clockwise. Or, go against the wisdom of the old ways, walk it widdershins. You will do this, I know that you will. If you

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<sup>286</sup> See: David Gaffney, ‘How to Make so Little Say so Much; In the Third of Tindal Street Press’s Master Classes in Short Story Writing, David Gaffney Champions the Beauty of Brevity’, *The Birmingham Post* (Birmingham, 2 December 2008), section News, p. 21 and David Gaffney, *Sawn-off Tales* (Cambridge: Salt Publishing, 2006).

<sup>287</sup> William Highsmith, ‘Flash Fiction FAQs’, *Writers’ Digest*, 1 November 2010, 12–13.

<sup>288</sup> Lauro Zavala, ‘Alan Ziegler on Short Prose’, *El Cuento En Red: Revista Electrónica de Teoría de La Ficción Breve*, 31. Verano (2016), pp. 74–75.

choose to traverse this way you will see that there is a *bear to the right of the farm buildings*. *Ursus arctos*, the brown bear, thought to be extinct in England. You do not want to exit this life pursued by a bear so plan your way carefully when you get near to the farm. Do not disturb the bear or you will find that your journey will come to an abrupt, unhappy, and unplanned end. Once you have passed the bear, seen it snooze under the eaves of the farmhouse, watched the bristly fur beneath its nose flatten and rise, you can pick up your pace. Just ensure that your perambulations are not too noisy until you see the shadow where the landscape dips. *Turn left dropping into the shallow valley*, enjoy the shade provided by the canopy of trees. Mind your feet on the knobble of trunks that peek from beneath the earth. You will soon behold a clearing and a *stepping-stone style path across a garden*. Do not stop long here, this garden does not belong to you. You are in the *hamlet of Whittaker*. Please ignore the *splendid-looking settlement*, because there is nothing good for you there. It is a place where dark stories are recollected in nearby pubs, where pint glasses are paused halfway, where ale the colour of kidney trouble is sputtered out of bearded mouths. While these tales are told, tobacco pipe stummels are tapped against wooden tables, dark unsmoked tobacco tumbles to an unswept floor.

Seriously, you've already walked widdershins, don't push your luck with lingering in Whittaker.

[Phew, that's three hundred words, just about bob on.](#)

While microfiction offers a multi-genre approach neat enough to fit into the time constraints of a creative writing workshop, it also presents a form to capture a mesh of fictive and non-fictive prose. This is utilised for 'Let's Get Walking' which

takes inspiration from a free guide to the Rochdale Way, a forty-five-mile route designated in the 1990s.<sup>289</sup> This guide includes maps and acts like a travel guide by suggesting the best route for the walker. The sections in italics are sections torn from the guide book and repurposed as a new piece of prose. There is, again, another play on words with the addition of the ‘bear to the right’, again featuring the Linnaean genus (*ursus*) and species (*arctos*). This addition breathes life, albeit briefly, into a species that was hunted to extinction in Britain. Further, the addition of the bear gestures towards a literary touchstone: the famous stage direction in William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale* of ‘Exit, pursued by bear’.<sup>290</sup> Whittaker is located just outside of the borough, which is why there is a slightly ironic tone taken to juxtapose with ‘*splendid-looking settlement*’ with ‘don’t push your luck with lingering in Whittaker’. The introduction of the pub should be mundane but instead it is menacing; it is the sort of establishment where it is expected that ‘ale the colour of kidney trouble [would be] sputtered out of bearded mouths’. This creates an unpleasant environment and engenders a feeling of what Beatriz Muñoz González calls ‘topophobia’ in this imagined slightly surreal, yet still somewhat mundane place.

The creative interventions throughout the thesis have a connecting thread of everyday-ness to them. They include reinterpretations of human-made elements such as Rochdale’s literary texts and maps, song lyrics and dialect, community folklore, as well as Rochdale’s physical geographies, which bear the mark of human hand but also evoke a deeper, older, non-human layer. This seam of representative quotidian existence of place is seemingly somewhat distant from the elevated HE world of scholarly writing, yet it does intersect, and, indeed, is the core of this thesis. This work

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<sup>289</sup> Words and phrases torn from the pamphlet produced by John Cole, Martin Riley, and John B. Taylor, ‘The Rochdale Way: A Circular Walk’ (Rochdale Borough Council, c.1994).

<sup>290</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, ed. by J.H.P. Pafford (London: Routledge, 1996). iii.3. 58

approaches from tension: it is “for Rochdale”, trying to gain that elusive, authentic and messy spirit of place, but it is an academic thesis and so necessitates some boundaries. (Rules made to be broken.) I am trying to traverse barriers, connecting critique with creativity; connecting with ‘communities’ and the academy (Leonard, 1990). As it has already been stated, the creative could not be completed without the critical work. The immersion into Rochdale as a writer is as important as the ‘desk-based’ research carried out using archives, maps, texts and scholarly thought. It is the immersive nature of place that is perhaps best experienced when moving through areas in Rochdale.

An aspect of immersive movement is entailed in three zines that were hidden in three different areas of Rochdale. Images of these can be found on page 129 and in Appendix 6. Creating a zine is a form of punk practice, it is a type of self-publishing that is, as Jen and Carly Bagelman describe, a ‘visual and textual mode of storytelling’.<sup>291</sup> Zines are a way of distributing ideas that may not otherwise be heard and can be made by anybody. In Bagelman and Bagelman’s journal article ‘Zines: Crafting Change and Repurposing the Neoliberal University’, they note that the practice of zine making typically has been a political act that encourages new ways of knowledge production and thus provokes acts of ‘creating and sharing’ (p. 366). This act of creation is, by its nature, slow and thus challenges neoliberal publishing models that concentrate on speed, production, and capitalist economics. The process of making a zine necessitates slow and considered practices. Making the three Rochdale zines involved choosing the materials, the production and printing of images, considering text and waiting for paint and glue to dry. Once complete, these zines are

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<sup>291</sup> Jennifer Jean Bagelman and Carly Bagelman, ‘Zines: Crafting Change and Repurposing the Neoliberal University’, *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 15.2 (2016), p. 366. Further reference to this paper will be given parenthetically.

images within the thesis, but they also exist outside the thesis. The zines were geocached – using GIS technologies to find locations - and hidden around the borough. The three Rochdale zines I produced involved utilising photographs I had taken around the borough, repurposed maps, quotes, and literature from found leaflets. Using a free geocaching app from geocaching.com, I themed these zines around existing geocache sites Hollingworth Lake, Rochdale Cemetery and Boar Shaw in Middleton. Taking quotidian practice outside the academy and into Rochdale, I created these zines and hid them with a pencil and a folded blank zine. It was hoped that the finder would take the zine and, inspired by it, use the blank zine to create their own piece of work in response to Rochdale, thus adding to the layered place-making.

The expressive nature of a zine acts as a creative intervention, the additional aspect of the ‘quest’ or treasure hunt, as explored in a choose-your-own adventure game, presented a unique combination to encourage using space, finding a story, sharing that story and encouraging others – for example families who are attracted to geocaching – to make their own stories. From a logistical perspective, there are limits on what can be left in the geocache. For example, I could not provide a contact to share the stories further because there are restrictions around what can and cannot be promoted.<sup>292</sup> Therefore, this meant that while it is possible to see when the zines were accessed, there was no efficient way to measure the success. In 2018, the three sites gleaned the following number of visits: the ‘Dead Centre of Rochdale’ (Rochdale cemetery, 14 entries); ‘The Old Grammar School’ (Boarshaw, Middleton, 21 entries); and ‘MC Lake Cache (Hollingworth Lake, 87 entries. This cache was removed on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2018 as it was vandalised not long after the zine was left).<sup>293</sup> One further

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<sup>292</sup> The Geocaching.com official guidelines can be accessed here:  
<https://www.geocaching.com/help/index.php?pg=kb.chapter&id=22>

<sup>293</sup> Information taken from Geocaching.com online log books. See: Geocaching, ‘Geocaching - “The Dead Centre of Rochdale”’

negative aspect to the practice is that it may be too situationist, and therefore does not add to understanding Rochdale and engendering a sense of place. Finally, the use of semi-proprietary software, and the expensive hardware required to access it, might lock out potential story hunters.

The notion of finding stories on a map is explored in the final piece that takes over this section. Inspired by treasure hunts and Choose Your Own Adventure stories, ‘You Are Here’ takes its title from an arrow shape on a large map in a city. This is a story told using a Google map visualisation of Rochdale, and interweaves fiction, histories, geographies and folk tales of Rochdale. Accompanying the text are photographs and sketches that form part of the narrative. This piece is formed of three ‘voices’ that are justified to the left (second person perspective), middle (a transient voice that is a storyteller: sometimes poetic, sometimes acts as a tour guide), and right (an internal voice) of the piece. These interweave into each other as an attempt to replicate the notion of progressive, complex places. There is a large use of white space to act as the places left unexplored, like the unnamed “ghost” roads and anonymous buildings on maps. The story uses Google Map pins and images of physical pins for the reader to travel with the narrative through seasons and time. In tandem is the notion of industry with the material properties of a pin and pin manufacture. These pins are portals that allow the reader to travel through the stories.

The notion of travelling has been a theme throughout this thesis. This is, in part, to do with my perambulations around the borough. Although I can drive, I do not

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<[https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache\\_details.aspx?wp=GC16Z7C&title=dead-centre-of-rochdale&guid=b2151052-e979-49c1-b872-aced5c8908db](https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?wp=GC16Z7C&title=dead-centre-of-rochdale&guid=b2151052-e979-49c1-b872-aced5c8908db)> [accessed 28 September 2018]; Geocaching, ‘Geocaching - “The Old Grammar School”’

<[https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache\\_details.aspx?wp=GC6B3D5&title=the-old-grammar-school&guid=f9d29f07-78d9-450a-8f2c-14fd195c6534](https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?wp=GC6B3D5&title=the-old-grammar-school&guid=f9d29f07-78d9-450a-8f2c-14fd195c6534)> [accessed 28 September 2018]; and Geocaching, ‘Geocaching - “MC Lake Cache”’

<[https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache\\_details.aspx?wp=GC2DWKF&title=mc-lake-cache&guid=f06899c6-7426-46e6-b7d8-1f469ba577b3](https://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?wp=GC2DWKF&title=mc-lake-cache&guid=f06899c6-7426-46e6-b7d8-1f469ba577b3)> [accessed 28 September 2018].

own a car and most of my engagement with Rochdale has been on foot with additional public transport and the odd lift back home. I have plodded down back streets, skidded down muddy banks in parks (sometime around midnight), accidentally trespassed, tripped over the knuckles of tree roots – it has been hazardous and physical. I have traced out the place with my feet in the repetitive motion whereby, as Rebecca Solnit describes, ‘the big toe pushes off, and the delicately balanced weight of the body shifts again’ (2001, p.3). In addition to Rebecca Solnit’s poetic and meditative *Wanderlust: a History of Walking*, there is a huge body of contemporary scholarship and creative work inspired by walking, the majority by men. For example: W. G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn* (London: Vintage, 2002); Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital* (London: Granta, 2002); Robert Macfarlane, *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (London: Penguin Books, 2013); Frédéric Gros, *A Philosophy of Walking* (London: Verso, 2015); and Lauren Elkin, *Flâneuse* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2016). Additionally, there are walking travel guides and trails inspired by literary texts, for example: David McCracken, *Wordsworth and the Lake District: A Guide to the Poems and Their Places* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984) and Roger Tagholm, *Walking Literary London* (Haydock, St Helens: The Book People Ltd, 2001). These guides follow the ethos of William Sharp’s *Literary Geography* in being both ‘readable companion[s] in times of leisure’ and additionally act as a spur for the reader to lace up the walking boots and follow famous feet.

I am not a delicate walker. I stomp out invisible marks with my size eight boots as I move around the borough. The big toe pushes off pavement, rock, soil, and grass. Then, when free of footwear, slides into the waters of the Spodden near Healey Dell. Dripping water onto socks from the boundary between Rochdale and Rossendale, then the inevitable soggy trek back to the bus stop. As David Borthwick states ‘walking

allows potential meanings to arise through the conjunction of the walker and the landscape walked'.<sup>294</sup> As I pass through the walked landscape ([squelch](#)), I think of the 'potential meanings' of my adventure ([squish](#)). I try to capture these moments with my notebook, a field guide of sorts, thoughts pinned down in pen.

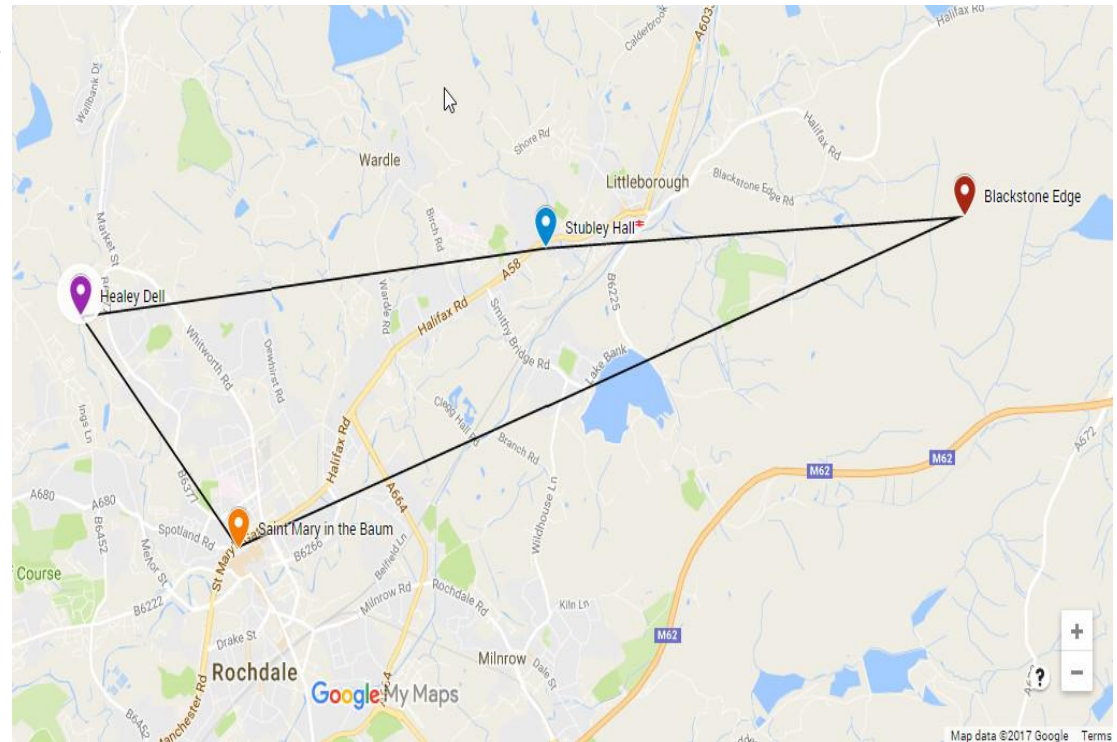
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<sup>294</sup> David Borthwick, 'On Walks on Various Ways: Some Field Notes', *The Bottle Imp*, June 2015, p.4.



## *You Are Here* ↑

Your phone chirrup at you: a notification, but not the usual sound attached to texts, emails, or weather updates. This time a triangle has appeared in the top right of your screen. You swipe open your screen, explore the list, among the App update recommendations and a missed call from an unknown number, there is an arrow pointing downwards: `download_53.618911,-2.159132.exe`. An executable file. You brush your finger against the screen: why not? Worst it could be is malware. The file asks you ‘Open with Googlemaps?’ and you tap ‘Yes’. A map opens, a Polygon appears with four locations. You choose one, the orange pin.



You walk down Drake Street, tired, low on a slow grey day. You wander past shuttered windows, the For Sale|Sold signs. You wonder why you chose today, this raining day – like all days, long dark days. Turn left down School Lane, near the car wash and the time that car didn't check before he reversed. Walk towards Saint Chad's Church, cross that awkward junction; the cobbled ways where it's not clear who has right of way and in which direction. Climb over the low creamy sandstone wall of the church and then over the graveyard. Feel momentarily guilty about disturbing the dead. The grotesques on the church, as if the architect was trying to capture the goblin builders that disturbed construction, the ones that moved the stones from the bottom of the hill some ancient time ago. There's something that sparkles near the grave of "Tim Bobbin", then a blackbird note that you miss completely as you're lost in your thoughts of where to go next. Walk behind the church and leap the slate wall, try not to skid down the steep slope. Join the incline of the path to the park, distract yourself by visiting that erratic boulder – a glacial relic from Borrowdale transported from Cowm Top Farm to Broadfield Park. Scratch the soil under the rock in search of the geocache.

Water on rock makes patches in the dark gritstone, like burn marks.

Wrinkles of rock, pocked, pitted.

All browns, greens, blue, shades of hardened greige cloth.

The sludge of leaves, slippery tannins that get stuck to the soles of your shoes. Your ill-chosen shoes that let in the wet, a coat with a false “Water Resistant” promise. Slide your way down the hill towards the heritage centre, then the Esplanade. Slop past the centre, and run, blinking rain into your eyes, across busy St Mary’s Gate.

Follow the direction of the cars, past the Rochdale Exchange, over the road to the Baum. Cobbles, preserved heritage, a sepia memory to retell and retell until the story is made fact.

*Tickets to sell, roll uproll up and here, only here, hear this history.*

There’s a white rabbit sat in the graveyard of St Marys-in-the-Baum, she too is a twitch of a retold tale.



Baum: an unusual word, rhymes with  
dawn,  
possibly an early dialectical form of balm.  
Baum: something fragrant growing in the  
graveyard.  
Baum: something medicinal, to anoint and  
bless.

Baum: something for embalming, preparing the dead.



The Baum Rabbit is a doe. She is a night-time folk tale told in fragments and contradictions.

She is seen in glimpses of the moon, hoppy and tufted, tiny twitches of pompom tail, leucistic white against lichen stone.

*Rabbit luck, puffed up, milky eyes of myxomatosis*

To see her foretells a death in the family, a spectre is haunting Rochdale.

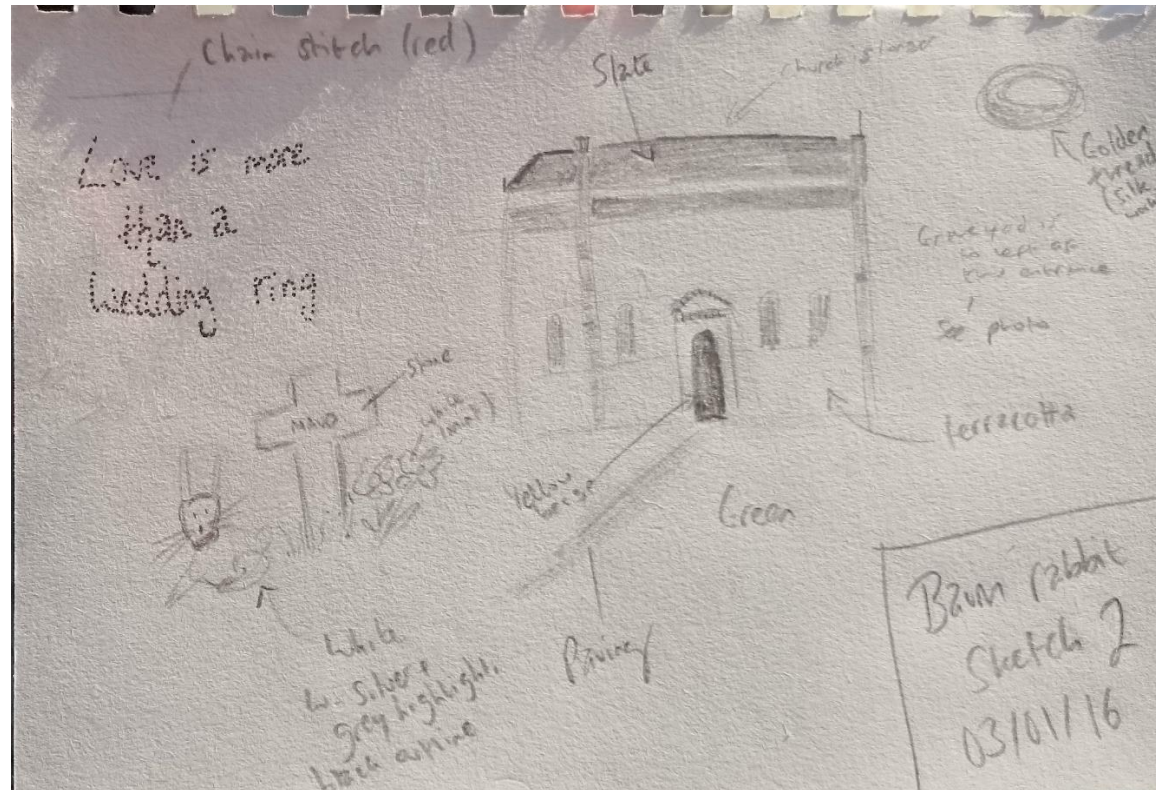
*Rabbit luck, a shrivelled white foot on a key ring.*

Spurred on by the smell of gunpowder, thrills from a feline chase, the thump of adrenaline, thud of the heart

*Rabbit luck, run rabbit run rabbit run run run.*

You look at your phone, the locational Pin sends you to a URL that links to a page telling you the story of Maud, one of the many interpretations of the Baum Rabbit story. The traditional opening *once upon a time, many years ago in the springtime* Maud, a noble woman, was deathly sick with the plague. Her fiancé, an earl, knew that she wouldn't last much longer so he travelled up to Blackstone Edge, the liminal ledge between the magic and the real, to seek out otherworldly advice willing to give up anything. He met up with a trickster fairy who offered him a gold ring that would cure the plague but warned him that it would cost him dearly. Gladdened, the Earl thanked the fairy and rushed back to thrust the ring upon Maud's left finger, *vena amoris* and a sliver of gold. Maud was cured, her

smile sweetened her lover. A couple of days later, the trickster fairy took his toll, the Earl caught the plague and died. It was said that Maud transformed into a white rabbit doomed to nibble serrated leaves of lemon balm and white mint. There was more to love than her wedding ring and as a forlorn spirit, the wisp of a love lost, she haunts the graveyard near her home.



An absurd anecdote, situated in a churchyard where hauntings are rife  
and expected from the nightly lack of light, any flash stimulates a primal fear.

Again: it is cold, and you are lonely. And why are you here anyway?

Here of all places this could be any place, any space of post-industrial England.

The plip plip ploop of rain on concrete,

rain in a puddle,

rain pooling,

streams to the

river to the

sea.





Look! There, by the rusting back stairs of the church, on the bronze criss-crossed metal of the lowest step. Small, shining, a gleam of silver in this silvering rain. A glimmering gold plastic bead of a pearl-headed pin, a dressmaker's pin. The sort of pin used to tack, mark, join. You pick it up.

You don't believe in magic, have little faith in fate or anything like that. You like to think that you're smarter than that.

A storyteller once sang 'there are fairies in the gutter' and there is a sort of magic in the mundane.

Where a pin, when picked up, will transport to an everyday somewhere else.

Longden End Brook, Moss Slack, Sun End. Battered shaggy inkcap, flattened grasses and rushes, a dor beetle – *Geotrupes stercorarius* – almost a deep purple in the never-ending rain. A dim roar, shape hidden by cloud cover, check the live flight tracker app on your phone, watch the yellow plane symbols cluster over Greater Manchester, hover your finger over one of the planes: EZY65LJ, EasyJet Airbus A319-111, LTN (London) to EDN (Edinburgh), you follow its route north towards Settle before swiping your Smartphone screen shut. You shield your eyes from precipitation, to the north-west precipice there's the jut of Robin's Hood Bed, a rock formation as legend would have it, where the





hero slept there protected by fae from the Sheriff of Nottingham. Another story suggests that Robin threw those stones high up onto the hill. Your imagination suggests there is a peripheral glance of red, perhaps a glint of glass eye, a squat figure on the marking stone. That old story of Mother Red Cap. There's the black back throated call of a corvid – maybe rook, maybe raven. The wind mutters curses through the scrubby landscape, a rude whistle through the sparse leaved trees. To the east there's Littleborough, to the south Milnrow, and somewhere, over that fearful precipice, Todmorden, Mytholmroyd, the wuthering moors. At night, will the crescent moon and Venus, or the lights of a plane on the flight path to Manchester, be misunderstood once again, those little green men that appear sometime between autumn and winter.

From the South Pennine fringe there is little to see at night, light pollution from the city precludes most efforts at stargazing. Although the Perseid meteor shower, a dazzling outburst that streaks the sky, can sometimes be seen from Blackstone Edge and the surrounding moors. The Aurora Borealis too, but only with a kp index between 6 and 7, otherwise the spooky ghostly green of the solar winds will be obscured.

This storied landscape, the sweep of stone, trees, field, farms, houses, mills and factories.

Why do we name crags, give them human features? Is it a collective act of remembering, of understanding these places?

The physical locations are told and retold through travel writing, poetry, folk tale, protest, contemporary myth-making, landscape character assessments.

In these narratives, sometimes shops, football pitches, roads and rail, bat boxes and bee hives, are there even though they are not seen.

The rain is clearing, it's like your head is clearing too; you start to sing, that Chartist song

'But waved the wind on Blackstone Height

A standard of the broad sun light

And sung the morn with trumpet might

A sounding song for Liberty'

Ernest Jones  
Tune: Battle of Hohenlinden

**The Blackstone Edge Gathering**

Arr. J. Cook  
adapted J. Russell

Soprano

Alto

Tenore

Basso

1) O'er plains and cit ties far a way all lorn and lost the mor ning  
5) So brave a host hath nev er met for truth shall be their buy o'

5

S.

A.

T.

And you imagine that you can see rag tag bunches of families, friends, a jubilant riotous throng, throats sore with songs of rebellion and resistance. Liberty on the landscape, liberty of the landscape. Yes, you will want to stay here perhaps a bit longer, perhaps walk this boundary between Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Over the hills and moors, there is a long poem of names you have yet to learn: Sheep Bank, Starring Hill, Rain Shore, Red Brook, Green Brows, Aiggin Stone. There's a kestrel feather on the damp ground, you can tell by the way the browns are dappled, pick it up. Next to the feather, anchored in the ground as if it were rooted in the soil, another pearl headed pin, this time ruby headed, the rounded plastic made from the same stuff as the geology of this land. The land is frosted



around the pin, but you can see that the rain is drying up in the heat, muggy heatwave, you unbutton your coat as you walk along a busy main road towards a narrower road. While it is busy, no-one seems to have noticed that you have appeared, as if out of thin air. The pin

held between finger and thumb has disappeared, you feel a sense of weariness, the sort of tiredness that settles into the bones, that beyond drowsy strength-sapping malaise that cannot be cured by coffee. The desire to sleep an inexorable desire to press on.

This odd journey, travelling by pins across time, season, space. You see a young couple sat on the wall above the Stubley Lane sign, orange poppies wilting underneath their dangling, entwined legs. The sharp tang of vinegar makes your mouth water, the couple are eating fish and chips, they throw greasy batter scraps at a squabbling gathering of black headed gulls. There is a line of houses along the main road, blocky cars pass in both directions, in the threshold of the house opposite the couple a woman watches them, eyebrows tight together, smoking a cigarette through an intake of breath, above the curl of blue smoke and line of ash you can see that the skin on her forehead is corrugated. The woman tuts audibly.

‘Yobs, hangin’ around here, muckyng up our neighbourhood.’

‘Wot’s yer problem?!’

‘Leave ‘er alone, Grace, she’s alright.’

‘Yer rotten’ the woman spits, ‘wouldn’t ‘ave ‘ad this in mah day.’

A brief silence, then the couple fold into each other, giggling. The woman breathes deeply, ash on the feet, ash on the concrete. She shuffles back inside, slams the door.

You take your phone out, open the Map app and it offers you another locational point. You follow the route from Featherstall Road, past the couple who are now kissing wetly. You pass down Stubley Lane towards the hall and stop outside the building.

Stubley Hall was the Holt Family's Estate. The family acquired one sixth of the manor of Rochdale in the fourteenth Century.

The family retained the manor until 1772. In 2011, Stubley Hall was put up for sale by a couple who had worked with Peter Andre, Kerry Katona and various actors from long-running soap opera Coronation Street. It had been refurbished from being a pub/restaurant and included a floating kitchen, formal gardens, oak panelled walls, lead lined mullion windows, and advertised with a bearskin rug. It was valued at just under two million pounds.

At this point what are you? Are you a tourist, an ethnographer?

Don't intervene, just watch, write notes.

You put your hand on a dark corner of the building, the stone is warm and seems to vibrate. It's as if you can hear a stringed instrument, not possible to say what it could be, viola, lyre, dulcimer. Rising and falling sequences in Phrygian dominant scales, pinched pizzicato to a legato that sustains, holds the notes in the air. There is a brief pungent note, you swear can smell sweet rose essence, hyssop, or perhaps something more akin to sandalwood. How far has that scent travelled? You recall the story of Ralph de Stubbley and Fatima, a mix of fact and fiction it still haunts this place even now. You remember the significance of her name in this legend? Fatima is derived from Fatimah bin Muhammed, the youngest daughter of the Prophet, her name means 'the shining one'. The story goes that Ralph fought in the third Crusade. While in Jerusalem, he met and fell in love with Fatima, a harp player, and on the night before he was due to set sail back to Littleborough presented her with a diamond studded cross as a pledge of his undying love. Three years passed so Fatima, bored of waiting for Ralph's return, took matters into her own hands; she would go to Ralph. She disguised herself as an Occitan troubadour, one who sings the songs of the everyday, and she boarded a boat bound for England to seek Ralph. The little ship was caught in a tempest and the captain, too weary from wrangling a ship tilting deeply to starboard, was forced to pull into a port. In this harbour town the plague was prevalent and everyone on the boat succumbed to the Black Death. The night Fatima died was Christmas Eve, and back at Stubbley Hall, Ralph was being married off to the daughter of a local rich baron to save the family property and fortune. Throughout the celebration, Ralph went outside to investigate what he thought were the resonating tones of a harp. When he didn't return, the guests formed a search party and went out to look for him. They discovered Ralph, dead and spread-eagled under an

oak tree, his still open eyes dilated as if in shock. In his hand, his friends and widow discovered the sparkle of a diamond encrusted crucifix. It was the same one that, years ago, Ralph had given to Fatima, his shining one.

A retold folk tale, they change with each telling adding different flavours from different storytellers. You feel a shiver in the now muggy heat, even though it is not yet winter there is the constant threat that a storm could crack open the skies. This silly story is sinister: it's the age old ongoing war over holy lands, over territory, and in the name of faith. In the crevice of the corner stone, you see the cyan of a small bauble, there, all you need to do is take it.



How far have you travelled? Where will you go to?

Are you protected by that passport with a sure certainty of place?

Where is your holy land?

And what have you learned, not just during this journey, but over  
the years?



How much more will you know? How much more can you know?

Nothing happens instantly so you hold the pin up to the light, pinch it then spin it between thumb and forefinger, the point a gentle reminder of sharpness in the whorls of the thumbprint ridges. The prehensile ability to grip this manufactured object, and where was it



made? And who made it? What was the supply chain for this inch or so of tempered steel and plastic? Most of the manufacturing is in Asia. Mine metal, heat, wire, shape, temper, sharpen, prepare head of pin, present in packaging, market, sell, pin.

In 1776, while studying pin manufacture, Adam Smith noted the division of labour, one man could make a pin in a day. He surmised that a handful could shape the wire, speed up production. One to sharpen, one to cut, one to point it, one to grind the top of the pin head. In tandem, a separate group: fix the head, place them into paper packaging. A colony of worker bees, hive mind, division of labour money for the Queen Bee. The worker bee, *Apis mellifera*, the symbol of nearby Manchester, and features in the stained-glass window of Rochdale's town



hall. The worker bee, symbol of industry. One task, one rhythm of making; Smith, the thinker whose words underpin contemporary Western free market economics, reducing everyone to one task, one rhythm.

Pearl head pins, rigid to pin through fabric,  
holding edges together, patterns in place,  
before the thread is woven through, a permanence.

The weave of Rochdale flannel and the fabric of places, frayed, warp and weft. You have found four pins, four seasons too, four types of wet weather. A flash and you're at Healey Dell where ruins of a mill tumble towards the tea shop and Heritage Centre, there is a quilt of snow. You think of fabric, the water mills of Arkwright. Layers of snowflakes in a mass, the thought of snowdrops – *Galanthus nivalis* – bobbing beneath this white surface. The snowdrop, flowers as tight as a buttoned-up cardigan, symbolise purity and chastity yet their seeds are spread by queen bees or by Christian devotion – the flower of the Virgin Mary.

The symbols of virginity, of a young woman's sexuality are retold in the story of Eleanor Byron. Real names, real families, but a folk tale nonetheless. Healey Dell, where Robin Hood is said to have visited, was said to have been a liminal space. It was an 'Edgeland' in the sense that it was a threshold between the fairy and real worlds. A man – another Ralph – promised his soul to the fairy folk after

offending the Chadwick family. Poor Eleanor, although she did not know it, was caught up in a complicated family feud between  
Ralph's family, the Byrons, the Chadwicks, and the Traffords.

The fairy king promised that no harm would come to Ralph if he presented them with 'the love-sick maid'. Eleanor, desperate to escape an arranged marriage, was easily swayed and tempted to the snow-crueted dingle. Oliver Chadwick, Eleanor's fiancé, was a bone-headed young man with more of a love for war than for women. Arriving at the Dell, he caught Eleanor in a passionate tryst with an unseen lover, (told coyly in the folk tale as an invisible spirit) but forgave her instantly.

The fairies moved their curse to Eleanor promising that on her wedding she would be 'maid, wife and widow in one day'.

It came to pass that on the day Oliver and Eleanor were to be married, Sir John Trafford and his entourage attacked Chadwick and he died. Thus, the fairies curse came to pass, and a historical battle, recorded in piecemeal form, was intertwined with the magical.

These are the bleakest moments, dear Eleanor,  
they occur just before the magnolias bloom,  
goblets of pale pink, upturned incandescent lightbulbs  
that ancient tree that is said to have predated bees.

Folk tales are a mix of hearsay and history

painted with natural imagery, set in familiar locations.

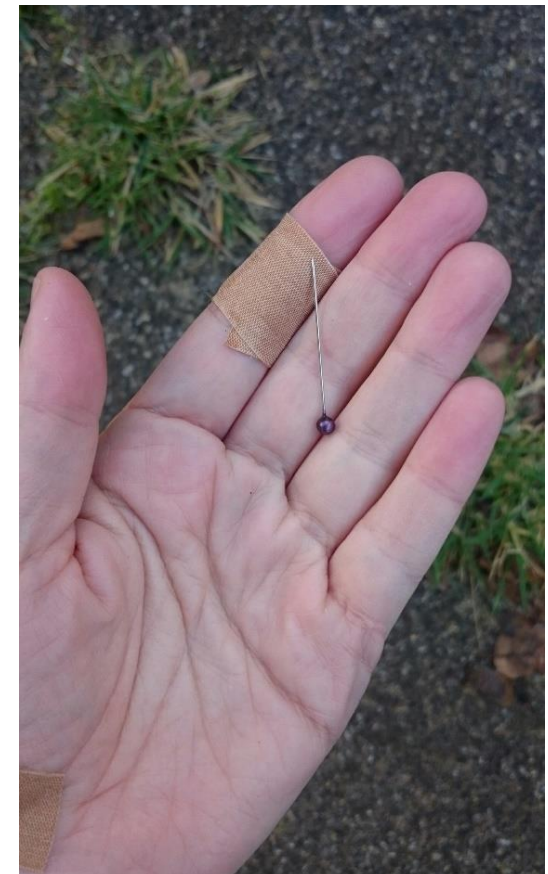
On your pin tucked travels, think of the folds of stories, of the women you have remembered and have learned of: Mother Red Cap, the crone mentally disturbed crone, Maud the heartbroken rabbit, doomed Fatima, and cursed Eleanor caught up in stories not of their making. Mapping out this landscape, the past and present and wonder, although things have changed things have stayed the same. A dirty purple pin, pull it out and you're back where you started, tired, walking down Drake Street, off to re-layer the layers of the stories.

To remix

and remodel,

to reimagine

and retell.



## Conclusion: For Rochdale

Rochdale is layered with stories. In the three years that I have been undertaking this doctoral work there have been several political upheavals internationally and nationally in the shape of two General Elections and the European Union Referendum. Even though Rochdale has been deemed a site worthy for regeneration, Brexit, and the current economic downturn, have already had a destabilising effect on the borough. There are empty spaces in the Wheatsheaf and Rochdale Exchange malls. There are a handful of empty premises at the top of the main shopping area of Yorkshire Street. The Marks & Spencer project for the new Rochdale Riverside shopping was cancelled and then reinstated. These have had some impact on the policies, language, and delivery of both the Northern Powerhouse project and the regeneration projects within Rochdale. While this thesis intersects with social sciences research and theories, and is influenced by my own subjective experience as a writer, educator, and campaigner, it is not, strictly a political project. It has sought to expose some of the empty rhetoric within regeneration and top-down place-making projects. In this final section we return from the primarily creative to the more traditionally critical by considering the current state of Rochdale and drawing some conclusions.

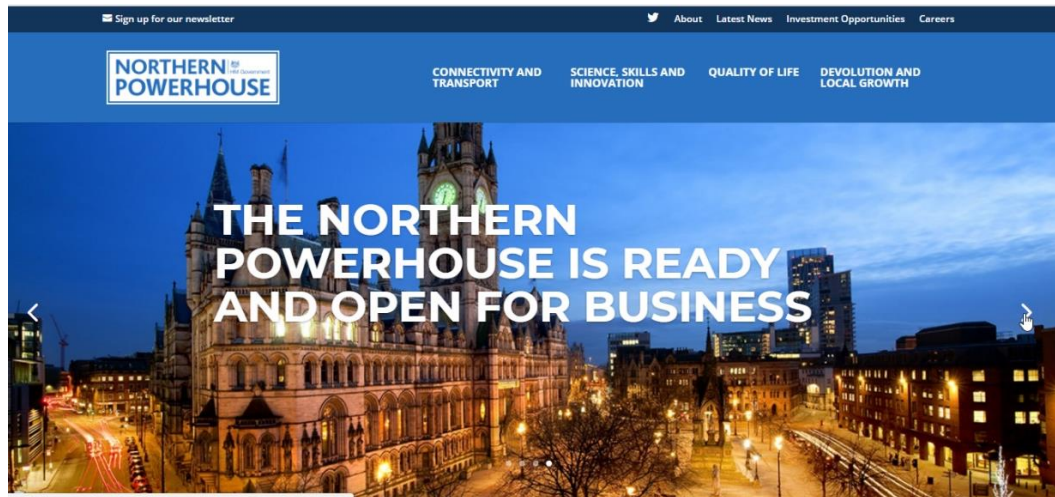


Figure 31: Screenshot of the Northern Powerhouse title webpage.<sup>295</sup>

Ultimately, the Northern Powerhouse project is, at the time of writing, nominally part of the Government of the day's industrial strategy. The image below is – at the time of writing currently – the only spatial representation of the Northern Powerhouse presented on the Government's website. The screenshot does not quite capture that symbolic slipperiness: the 'Northern Powerhouse' is perversely demarcated by being faded and washed out against a much more vibrantly coloured rest of Britain, and it is impossible to view the whole region at once; instead, one must scroll up or down to see parts of it as though through a slightly askew lens (the scrolling base line is at an angle). This suggests that little has progressed from George Osborne's original proposal; there is no concrete cartographic representation of where, or what, the Northern Powerhouse is.

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<sup>295</sup> Anon., 'Home Page of the Northern Powerhouse HM Government', *Northern Powerhouse*, 2017 <<https://northernpowerhouse.gov.uk/>> [accessed 12 January 2017].

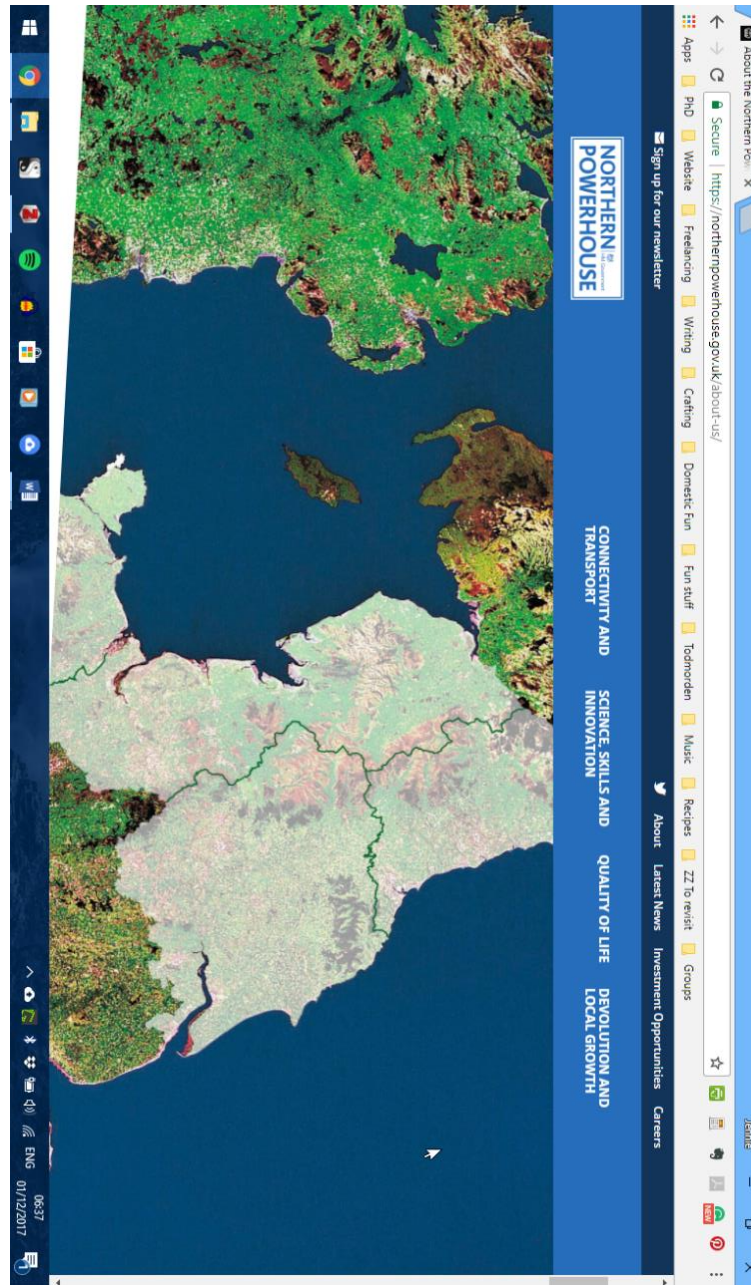


Figure 32: Screenshot of the Northern Powerhouse 'map'.<sup>296</sup>

Coupled with this, the regeneration language of current projects in Rochdale and the current Northern Powerhouse narrative are still focused on neoliberal language that locks out communities. An example of this can be seen in the company involved in the building projects in Rochdale town centre (see figure 33 below).

<sup>296</sup> Anon., 'About the Northern Powerhouse | Northern Powerhouse', 2017 <<https://northernpowerhouse.gov.uk/about-us/>> [accessed 1 December 2017].



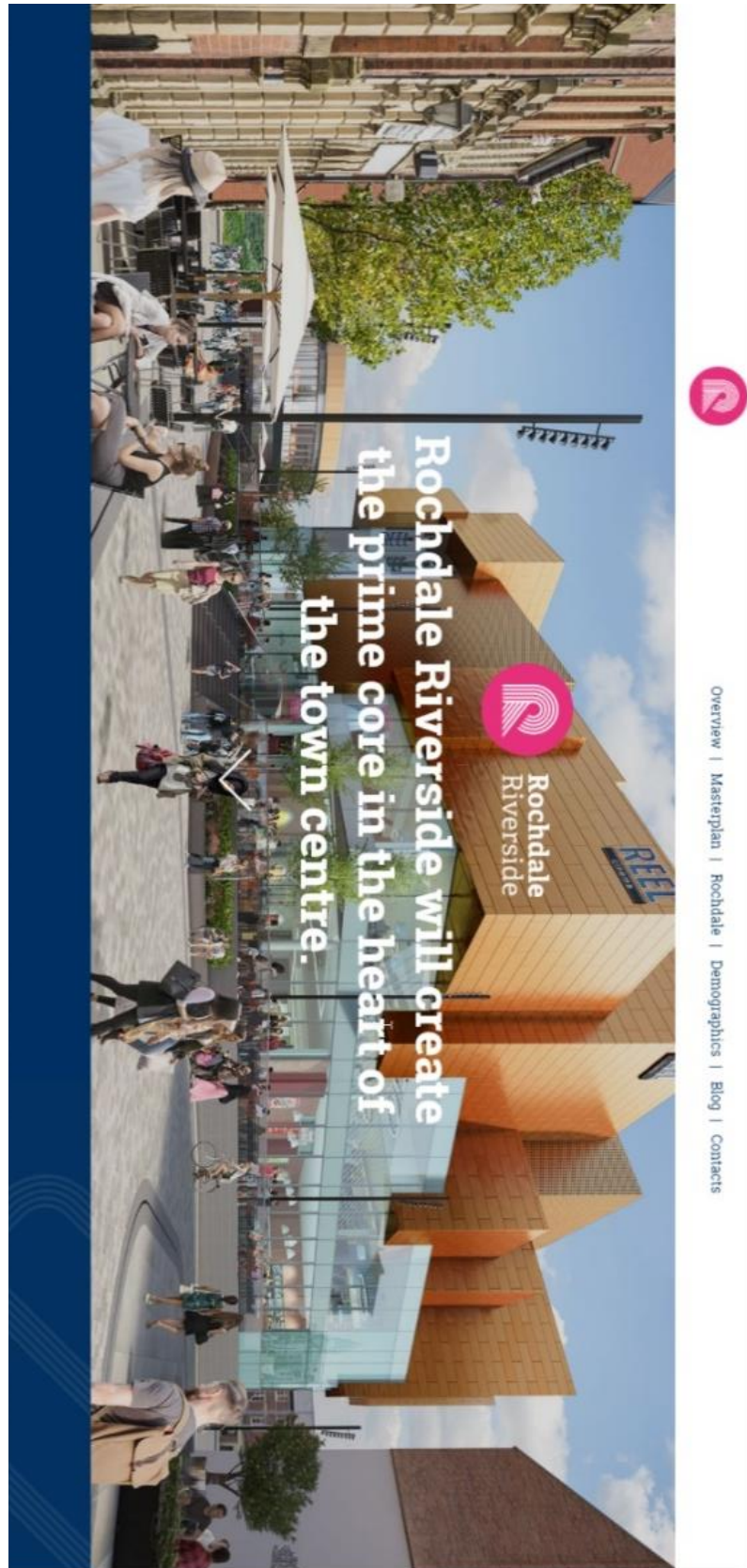


Figure 33: Screenshot of the Rochdale Riverside title webpage.<sup>297</sup>

<sup>297</sup> Anon., 'Rochdale Riverside – Prime Core in the Heart of the Town Centre', 2017 <<http://rochdaleriverside.com/>> [accessed 1 December 2017]. Further references to this will be given parenthetically.

Rochdale Riverside shows how new narratives of Rochdale are coming into being, albeit without the intention to create a ‘prime core’; which has connotations of both drilling out space and suggests a cutting back. The overview for the project is described thus:

Rochdale Riverside will create the prime core in the heart of the town centre, adjacent to the new Metrolink station, Council offices and transport interchange completing the town centre regeneration. Comprising a comprehensive mix use development incorporating a M&S department store, retail and leisure units, kiosks, a 6 screen cinema and adjoining car park around inspiring public realm. Connecting into the existing town centre the scheme will compliment [sic] the existing retail, with an attractive environment increasing customer dwell time (Anon. 2017).

While awkwardly expressed, there are theoretical connotations embedded here with the use of the phrase ‘dwell time’ – this returns to existential ideas from Chapter One around being-in-place. As discussed in Chapters One and Three, the language here is focussed on the undefined ‘units’ of ‘retail and leisure’. How the ‘public realm’ will be inspired by these and by the ‘adjoining car park’ is not completely clear. The use of ‘customer dwell time’ is particularly jarring. While a dwelling conjures ideas of home, customer dwelling is more about lingering to consume. It is not a permanent state of being and the language here privileges a narrative of spending money rather than of building shared stories and making meaning within the place. This demonstrates that top-down, neoliberal narratives that privilege money rather than meaning still need challenging.



Throughout, this thesis has been concerned with locating Rochdale by unpicking some of its (shifting and progressive) identities created through literary and cartographic texts, and through responding to these and the physical geographies of the borough. Part One (Reading Rochdale) found that there are stories that need revisiting and revealed a rich literary heritage that has previously been understudied. Part Two (Mapping Rochdale) was about how maps are performative: they act as memorials of place and they colour the imagination through the spatial representation of place/s and choice of toponymic and visual details. Part Three (Writing Rochdale) used the materials of the previous two parts, reusing and retelling stories in different ways to explore the tensions between creative-critical writing, and between creating work within and without a HEI. Through creative responses, it grasped at an elusive notion of the authenticity of Rochdale, while balancing this with being an academic thesis. This was in order to reconfigure the understanding of Rochdale from heritage, and corporate regeneration narratives to more complex presentations of the borough. Moreover, it was concerned with recalibrating popular (mis)understandings of Rochdale by articulating alternative narratives provided through both the texts and my own creative interventions that have been threaded throughout the thesis. It sought to show how complex Rochdale is as a place and that, while it does have specific themes and tropes identified in the literature, it is ultimately like other places – with unique and mundane aspects.

This project makes a significant contribution by developing an experimental methodology for the creative-critical practice of deep mapping. The deep map maker is a curator, gathering together material and making decisions on how to present this. The creative pieces that feature in this project respond to the collected materials drawn from other sources and thereby adds further layers to the mapping of

Rochdale. A task such as this is bound to be subjective; as discussed throughout, there is no objective grand narrative of Rochdale, no complete ‘truth’. The deep mapper is tasked to show the impossibility of a complete map; any mapping – like any creative literary work – is necessarily partial, subjective and selective. The map that is this thesis can attempt depth and detail, but no project is absolute or complete.

The title of this thesis is inspired by Doreen Massey’s *for space* (2005). Nailing ‘For Rochdale’ on the masthead of the thesis is a way of exploring, and celebrating, an understudied area of Greater Manchester. The creative pieces are a result of thinking critically about place and responding to this critical thinking with imaginative interventions. Reflecting on, I have found myself triangulating modes of process, critique, and practice, what Deryn Rees-Jones calls ‘the connections between the relationship of the writer, the text and creative activity’.<sup>298</sup> Pedagogy is another mode which informs the thesis; in her article ‘“Jump to the skies”: critical and creative responses to creative writing-theory and practice’ published in *Essays and Studies*, Rees-Jones critiques a role of creative writing as a sub-discipline of literary studies and the professionalisation of the writer through the academy. I agree with Rees-Jones’ assessment: while teaching writing skills helps to hone expression, there is nothing wrong with amateur writing (the word ‘amateur’ is interdisciplinary in its definition as ‘one who has a taste for anything’).<sup>299</sup> Moreover, ultimately, all writing, including critical discourse, is creative. The creative within this thesis is about a space for self-reflection that retains a critical edge.

This thesis has used theoretical tools from different fields. It contributes to current and nascent interdisciplinary scholarly fields including cultural and literary

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<sup>298</sup> Deryn Rees-Jones, “‘Jump to the Skies’: Critical and Creative Responses to Creative Writing--Theory and Practice”, *Essays and Studies*, 64 (2011), p. 156.

<sup>299</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, ‘Amateur, N.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, 2017) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6041>> [accessed 1 December 2017].

geographies, environmental and geohumanities, and creative writing research and practice focussed on place. The appendices offer additional significant contribution: the Rochdale literary survey (Appendix 3) and the place writing toolkit (Appendix 4). The innovative hybrid writing which flows throughout this piece offers experimental ways of approaching research within emerging geohumanities and literary geographies practice. There is ongoing research into these fields, and forthcoming major studies include Laura Price & Harriet Hawkins *Geographies of Making, Craft and Creativity* (Routledge 2018). Further, it contributes to ongoing discussions around northern England with its proposal of a specific ‘Northern Literary Grit’ which has the potential to feed into recent research on northern England heritage facilitated by the Heritage Consortium – seven universities in North East England – and funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

A thesis is always in progress and an incomplete story; it is less about fixing place, and more of, as Richard Skelton puts it, an ‘attempt to recover as much as possible’.<sup>300</sup> While the focus has been on literary and cartographic texts rather than more broadly on cultural ones, there is scope for extended studies on the art, film, architecture, historical geographies and other aspects of the borough. There is also scope for exploring the gravitational pull of Manchester and the city’s own literary geographies. This shows that there is scope to look to the margins of the city and discover the complexities provided by their maps and literary texts. It is not about looking down on other places in the vein of the *Crap Towns* series, but about empathising with them, of making sense of different places and challenging assumptions. This thesis is not a policy document recommending how places should be managed. Rather, it aims to engage with, and add to, ongoing creative/cultural

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<sup>300</sup> Richard Skelton, *Landings* (Cumbria, England: Corbel Stone Press, 2015) p.276.

discussions and highlight tensions through place management. It particularly does so by critiquing top-down place-making narratives. The deep map maker might be setting themselves with a difficult, if not impossible, task. While this project too cannot capture everything, through the process of its construction it has sought to challenge popular myths about a particular place. This project is for Rochdale.

## Post-Ramble: The No. 17 to Manchester

Points are down at Newbold so bus it back from Rochdale, top deck, not much change from a fiver. Cut over a kerb corner past the council flats that have something *treehouse* about them.

### KENILWORTH.

Beech house school, Mandale Park. Magnolia in full bloom. There's a conversation in Polish, or perhaps it's Ukrainian.

SPEED KILLS. DRIVE THRU and the familiar green mermaid.

Four lanes, three lanes, the 'Waggon and Horses' pub, black railings and yet another Tesco, a red white and blue identikit echo.

A mill with the name obscured, chimney obscured by the branches of a copper beech. A Pub of Character and Tradition At the Heart of the Community (closed, boarded up, heart blackened in recent arson attempt, sagging roof tiles)

GROTEC hydroponics for the eagerly stoned, for the discerning dealer, or naïve fish keeper

### WELCOME TO CASTLETON

No castle on Gipsy Lane, postbox embedded in a failing umber brick wall. Leafier with bluebells, dead head daffodils.

ROYAL TOBY HOTEL then KWIKSAVE (no, not that one from the 1980s) open for 7 Days Saving To Smile About. DALE CAR SALES.

The Farewell Pub (farewell). The Wool Shop with dark polluted brickwork, straggly net curtains drawn against the light. Suburban foliage of rhododendron, birch, regimented tulips, cherry blossom, purples and baby pinks. Manicured lilac bushes and privet for privacy. Foliage for soundproofing, for bigger houses.

### ALL IN ONE GARDEN CENTRE NOW WITH BON MARCHÉ

The Hopwood Pub – we had a pint here once, listened to some gobby kids trying to smoke Embassy Number Ones.

### MIDDLETON PLEASE DRIVE CAREFULLY

White lilac BRIARMEDE, the retirement home next to the cemetery (one out, one in). Cow parsley in the verges. The Estate where I got lost researching boggarts. Vets 4 Pets.

Glebe House – pebble dashing like after a bad curry, like scattering of shale sand blasted vertically up a wall. Congested artery roads – Middleton rag pudding.

DON'T DRINK AND DRIVE

The library and Jubilee Park (woman blows her nose while wearing shades).

Warwick Mill – Lords of Middleton Est. 1893 (gold embossed, 3D on royal green)

STUDD Menswear

Tommy's Traditional Fish and Chips with the drunken looking plastic cone man, the size of a ten-year-old. Adam's Bed Centre. Limetrees carpark ADVERTISE HERE!

Middleton Way, Shopping Precinct – driver: '*nearly took a tumble there, eh?*' – Back of the bus '*dey chat shit dare, yeah, riff raff*'. Muffled reply, a comedy soundtrack as conversation.

Manchester New Road

WELCOME TO ALKRINGTON GARDEN VILLAGE

A dachshund on a lead held by a woman in a beige jacket. Crow Hill South.

ASK ABOUT TREES LOCAL JOBS BY LOCAL PEOPLE

Blackley, bridal boutique, Harpurhey and the stained-glass sexist ashes of Bernard Manning.

M60 crossed and it's Manchester: can tell because the recycling bins are different.

Around the boundary line: borders drawn up not by 'the people' but by politics. This shape is one that shapes identities through its landscape, its weather. Traditions that are handed down, traditions that migrate in. Pieces of land connected and bisected by water, by hills, by roads, by stories.

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# Appendices

## 1. Glossary

**Cartography:** the art of making maps, writing place into existence through spatial representation.

**Deep Mapping:** a method of ‘common placing’; observing one area over time, capturing its histories, geographies, and cultural idiosyncrasies. One way of portraying the multipluralities of a place.

**Landscape:** the shape of the land. Has a sense of panorama and elevation about it and implies a sweep of the different elements within the visual area. It is something that is both observed and lived in.

**Literary geographies:** interdisciplinary scholarship that explores the area/s of literary and geographical studies.

**Map:** a tool for spatial representation, a ‘slippery customer’. An attempt to fix places and spaces in time.

**Mapping:** placing things on a **map**. The other meaning of mapping that has been used to associate a series of elements to a specific set has been avoided within the thesis.

**Neoliberal:** used as a term to explain capitalist thinking; based on the premise that there is a global free market that is biased in favour of private interests and deregulation.

**Place:** where humans, and more-than-human life dwells on different scales from local to global.

**Place-making:** a way of imagining places, has been used by municipal agencies and companies to explain regeneration projects.

**Practice-as research:** where the practice is privileged, and research comes out of this action.

**Practice-for (also known as practice-led) research:** where the practice leads to new creative work and opens up discussions around future creative practice and research.

**Practice-through research:** where practice is an action that occurs research.

**Practice-with research:** the practice is carried out in tandem with the research.

**Region:** a collection of places normally delineated by governmental powers.

**Space:** is not flat. Mostly relating to social space (where people live) rather than the earth dangling in outer space! Space cuts across stories while **place** can focus on the relationships within locations on different scales.

**Topography:** literally ‘place writing’, a sub discipline of geography. It is the attempt to give a detailed description of a locality – it may not always be accurate.

## 2. George Osborne's speech: 'We need a Northern Powerhouse'

Welcome to the Power Hall in the great Museum of Science and Industry here in Manchester.

We are surrounded by the beam engines and hydraulic accumulators and turbines that made this part of Britain the economic powerhouse of the world a century ago.

And I'm here to talk to you today about what we can do to make the cities of [5] the north a powerhouse for our economy again – with new transport and science and powerful city governance.

I've been a Member of Parliament here in the North West of England for 13 years.

Indeed, I'm the first Chancellor to represent a seat in the north of England for over

35 years. [10]

But as you can tell from my accent, I wasn't brought up here. I was born and raised in London.

Being a Londoner proud to represent a Northern constituency gives me a very personal perspective on the time-worn debate about north and south, London and the rest. [15]

I grew up with the cliché that if it wasn't happening in London, it wasn't happening at all.



And my time in Parliament has been shaped by another cliché: that the dice are unfairly loaded against the north; that our capital city to the south has sucked economic life and talent away from here. [20]

It's the context of almost every media interview I've done here, from when I was first a parliamentary candidate to my time now as Chancellor.

I'd like to try to escape both clichés today, and get closer to the truth.

Something remarkable has happened to London over these recent decades.

It has become a global capital, the home of international finance, attracting the young, the ambitious, the wealthy and the entrepreneurial from around the world in their tens of thousands. [25]

During the week I live in the centre of the capital, and I see this London effect with my own eyes.

And it's a great strength for our country that it contains such a global city. [30]

But something remarkable has happened here in Manchester, and in Liverpool and Leeds and Newcastle and other northern cities over these last thirty years too.

The once hollowed-out city centres are thriving again, with growing universities, iconic museums and cultural events, and huge improvements to the quality of life.

I feel the buzz and the energy every time I'm here. [35]

And I see it too in the Treasury data.

Which part of England has the fastest-growing economic activity right now? The North-East.

Where are people joining the labour market at the fastest rate? The North-West and North-East. **[40]**

Where is construction strongest? Yorkshire and Humberside.

We've seen massive investments all over the north. Hitachi, Nissan and Rolls Royce in the North East. The Airport City in Manchester. The new deep water port in Liverpool. Siemens in Hull and East Yorkshire

Our long-term economic plan is delivering a recovery everywhere. **[45]**

And I'll speak on other occasions of the huge opportunities for Birmingham and the Midlands.

But today I want to focus on the north of England.

So let me be very clear.

There is a hard truth we need to address. **[50]**

The cities of the north are individually strong, but collectively not strong enough.

The whole is less than the sum of its parts.

So the powerhouse of London dominates more and more.

And that's not healthy for our economy. It's not good for our country.

We need a Northern Powerhouse too. **[55]**

Not one city, but a collection of northern cities - sufficiently close to each other that combined they can take on the world.

Able to provide jobs and opportunities and security to the many, many people who live here, and for whom this is all about.

You know, if you brought together the best players from each of the [60]  
Premiership teams in the north, you'd have a team that would wipe the floor with any competition.

We need to bring the cities of the north together as a team – that's how Britain will beat the rest.

Here's why. Here are the hard economic facts. [65]

In a modern, knowledge-based, economy city size matters like never before.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, a factory would be located where you could find raw materials, power, and cheap labour.

Today, in a services based economy, what investors are looking for is not a river to dam, but access to a deep pool of human capital. [70]

There is a powerful correlation between the size of a city and the productivity of its inhabitants. The top 600 cities in the world contain just 20% of global population but create 60% of global GDP.

Over recent decades economists have explored all the different reasons why cities raise their residents' productivity: specialisation is greater, competition and economies of scale increase, ideas and innovation spread faster. [75]

Crucially, cities are also where clusters of successful industry are created - like the financial services cluster in London, or the digital economy of California's Silicon Valley.

Not so long ago, people thought that the internet might make physical location less important. [80]

But it seems in the modern knowledge economy businesses and entrepreneurial types want to flock together more than ever. To form clusters where they can learn from and spark off each other.

And of course, as Europe's largest city, London benefits from those important agglomeration effects, helping the capital to suck in money and talented people from all over world. [85]

As Manchester's Independent Economic Review argued, there are "powerful market forces" pulling activity into big cities, world cities.

I know this is something that Jim O'Neill and the Cities Commission have been thinking hard about – and I want to make sure we learn from their important work. [90]

How can we have more of such cities? How can we create the Northern Powerhouse?

For decades different governments tried shifting lower end public sector posts around the country. It created jobs in call centres and back offices, but it didn't [95] improve the fundamental growth potential of these places.

Leaving it all to the market doesn't work either. The Albert Dock in Liverpool or Manchester City Centre didn't regenerate themselves. It took national leaders like Michael Heseltine and civic leaders like Richard Leese and that brilliant star of city government, Howard Bernstein. [100]

A great global city has many things. Great jobs and businesses. Fast and effective transport connections. Strong universities and hospitals, colleges and schools for aspirational families. It will have the entertainment, the green spaces, the housing, culture and sport that makes for a good lifestyle.

All this requires scale. You need a big place, with lots of people. Like London. [105]

Here in the north we have some of the best universities and teaching hospitals in the world. Fantastic museums and theatres too, all surrounded by the most beautiful countryside.

These cities, in a belt that runs from Liverpool to Hull all have strengths individually – but on a global scale they are also quite small. Manchester's population is [110] 2.6 million. Leeds' and West Yorkshire's is 1.8 million.

But together our northern cities can be more than the sum of their parts.

The last census found that the average commute of someone who travels into London from outside is 40 miles. If you make a circle of the same distance, and centre it here on Manchester, you'd have a catchment area that takes in Leeds, [115]

Sheffield and Liverpool, Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, and contains ten million people – more than Tokyo, New York or London. An area containing nearly two million graduates. A huge pool of talent.

How do we build the Northern Powerhouse?

By joining our northern cities together – not physically, or into some artificial [120] political construct – but by providing the modern transport connections they need; by backing their science and universities; by backing their creative clusters; and giving them the local power and control that a powerhouse economy needs.

And those are the four ingredients that I want to address.

First, transport. [125]

The oldest railway station in the world is here – right here, in this very museum.

This is the area that invented modern transport.

And yet today the transport network in the north is simply not fit for purpose – and certainly not good enough, if we want our cities to pool their strengths.

- Manchester and Sheffield are just 38 miles apart - yet it takes over 1 hour [130] 20 minutes to travel by car. In that time you can get from Southampton to Oxford, which is twice the distance
- it's quicker to travel the 283 miles from London to Paris by train than it is to travel less than half that distance between Liverpool and Hull
- bus trips in the capital are up a third over the last ten years, but down by 7% [135] in the northern cities

Now I'm trying to fix this with a series of massive investments in the transport infrastructure in the north.

I've committed £600 million to the Northern Hub, which will cut journey times on trains between Manchester, Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield. **[140]**

I want now to properly hook up Hull to our national network too.

The huge roads investment programme we've just started on will see upgrades to the M62, M1, A1 in Newcastle and Gateshead, and a new Mersey Gateway Bridge – with more schemes to be announced later this year.

We've backed the port of Liverpool, reversed the crazy decisions that blocked **[145]** cruise ships there, and I want to see the Atlantic Gateway go from being a brilliant concept to a transforming reality.

I've found resources to extend the Metrolink here. Like any global city, the commuter routes to the surrounding towns and villages are vital.

And this winter we will tender for the whole new Northern rail franchise. **[150]**

We'll want to see not just better services, and more seats at peak times, but also better journeys.

So bidders for the franchise will be asked to include options to get rid of outdated or 'railbus' 'pacer' style trains.

It's time for modern rolling stock in the north. **[155]**

Above all, we are building High Speed 2, which will connect 8 of the 10 largest cities in the UK, including Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield. Phase 2 alone is a £21bn investment, and will support at least 60,000 jobs. It's the most important investment in the north for a century.

Of course, there are opponents of the project – just as there were opponents of [160] the original railways. I've discovered that almost everything worth doing in politics is controversial.

We are making it happen. The reality is that HS2 is a vital investment. It's essential capacity and it will change the economic geography of the country. It will mean that London and Manchester are just an hour apart. [165]

We've done a lot – but we must do much more to connect our northern cities.

David Higgins is here with us. He's chairman of HS2 and his recent report identified the need for better connections between the cities of the north, if we are going to make the most of better connections between north and south. I know the city leadership here in Manchester and in Leeds are working together to respond. [170]

I am saying today: we need to think big.

We need an ambitious plan to make the cities and towns here in this northern belt radically more connected from east to west - to create the equivalent of travelling around a single global city. As well as fixing the roads, that means considering a new high speed rail link. [175]



Today I want us to start thinking about whether to build a new high speed rail connection east-west from Manchester to Leeds. Based on the existing rail route, but speeded up with new tunnels and infrastructure.

A third high speed railway for Britain.

New high speed rail and motorway upgrades are huge projects that take time. [180]

But there are many improvements we can start now.

In two weeks' time we will announce the first allocation of £2 billion a year of funding from the Single Local Growth Fund. This was the brainchild of Michael Heseltine.

And I can tell you today I want to make sure we don't just commit this money [185] year-to-year, but commit money over many years, to long term projects that drive local growth. That's the long term approach that we are bringing to investment spending.

So step one in building the Northern Powerhouse is a radical transport plan so that travelling between cities feels like travelling within one big city. [190]

The second thing that's going to fuel that powerhouse is science and innovation.

Durham, Lancaster, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and York and more – the north is blessed with world class universities. These universities have been at the forefront of the urban renaissance here over the last three decades.

Many of them were founded by enlightened industrialists – today they are still [195] leading the way in cooperation between academics and industry.

We want to see science here turned into products here - and into jobs and growth here.

So I've ruthlessly prioritised science and innovation investment and made hard choices elsewhere to pay for it. Much of that investment is coming north. [200]

The new Graphene centre is here in Manchester;

The new headquarters for the Square Kilometre Array – the global project to build the world's largest telescope – is at Jodrell Bank just south of here;

We're building one of the world's largest and fastest supercomputers at Daresbury;

The National Biologics Industrial Innovation Centre in Teesside will make it [205] one of the best locations for life sciences.

And the new Materials Innovation Factory at Liverpool University puts us at the cutting edge in manufacturing the materials of the future.

And we're determined to cure the British disease of inventing things but letting others get the commercial benefit from them, with our new Catapult [210] technology centres.

Like the High Value Manufacturing centres in Rotherham and Redcar. We've got two new centres coming in Energy Systems and Precision Medicine and I will be very disappointed if at least one of them doesn't come to the north.

But that is just the start. [215]

Because I have taken difficult decisions I'm able to increase science investment in every year this decade. That's £7 billion for scientific investment in the next parliament alone.

How this funding is allocated is up to the scientific community, rightly, according solely to rigorous criteria of scientific excellence. [220]

We're consulting now – and I will announce the outcome later in the year.

We've got an incredible opportunity to change the landscape of British science.

I look at London and I see the largest research institute in Europe – the Crick Institute – being built.

What's the Crick of the north going to be? Materials science? Nuclear technology? Something else? You tell me. [225]

Today I call on the northern universities to rise to the challenge, and come up with radical, transformative long term ideas for doing even more outstanding science in the north – and we will back you.

So we have great transport and great science. [230]

Global cities are also great places to go out.

The economist Richard Florida has talked about the way that great cities are competing for the “creative class” that powers economic growth. He's shown how innovators and entrepreneurs are attracted to creative, cultural, beautiful places.

Here we already have world-class arts and culture, from Opera North in Leeds [235] to the Tate in Liverpool, to Yorkshire Sculpture Park, and the new Hepworth over in

Wakefield. And then there's the music of the Halle and the Liverpool Philharmonic and of course the best pop music on the planet.

And we can build on all that. I am introducing a new theatre tax credit this September and it's designed to particularly help theatres outside the capital. [240]

I've seen proposals to upgrade the Lyric theatre in Manchester and make that the anchor of a creative enterprise zone – I think it's a fascinating plan and I want to see what can be done to make it happen.

The new Culture secretary Sajid Javid, born here in Rochdale, has talked about how we give more people outside London access to world class arts and culture. [245]  
Not at the expense of our capital city's great institutions but as a complement to them, and in partnership with them.

The BBC's got a big role to play too.

As a local MP I was a strong promoter of the move to Salford a decade. I thought it would be good for Manchester and good for the BBC too. [250]

MediaCity is now the biggest digital hub in Europe outside London. We need it to be bigger still, drawing in creative and digital businesses. So the BBC need to make sure the move is really secure, that the important decisions don't leech back to Broadcasting House in London.

That requires an active effort. [255]

The natural environment also matters hugely to quality of life. Our national parks are staggeringly beautiful here too. When the Tour de France comes to Yorkshire it will show them off to the world.

We have fantastic Victorian parks in the hearts of our northern cities.

We cleaned polluted rivers like the Mersey and the Humber. Now we should [260] take the next steps in improving them and making them great places for leisure and tourism, and natural beauty.

The final thing you need in a Powerhouse is, of course – Power.

Global cities have powerful city governments.

I think it's great to see how local authorities here are getting much better at [265] working together.

Councils in this city and elsewhere have been coming together in combined authorities to solve issues that cut across their borders and jointly promote their cities.

I see it myself in the cooperation between Manchester City and my own [270] Cheshire East Authority, over the science park at Alderley – cooperation I never saw before.

That's vital. Otherwise we can't make the most of our cities and the towns in between. The OECD, in a paper published this spring, showed that cities around the world with fragmented governance structures have lower levels of productivity [275] than those that don't. 6% lower.

We've been backing you all the way. We've been devolving power through City Deals.

We've signed 25 deals. They encapsulate two things about our approach. We don't offer an identikit model, instead, we offer each area the different specific [280] things it needs to get growth going. And instead of laissez faire we recognise that there's a crucial role for local leaders to clear away the obstacles to growth and enterprise, and get things moving.

A great example of that is the deal we've done with Joe Anderson in Liverpool.

Today I want to ask: is it now time to take the next steps? [285]

London has the advantage of a strong, recognisable city leader.

The haircut that is recognised all over the world. Boris Johnson.

There are big advantages in having an elected Mayor to represent your city. To fight your corner in the world.

To have someone democratically accountable to the whole city who can deal [290] with issues like transport or economic development or fighting crime.

There's no question that public transport in London has improved immeasurably since I took the bus and tube to school as a child, because you have had there a strong mayor who can integrate the roads and the busses and the rail and the tube and the river and the cycle lanes and so on. [295]

In London, the traditional boroughs all still there, and still have the same powers. But the powers that were held by quangos and by the national government are now held by an elected local leader.

At the moment you could argue there's a mis-match between the economic importance of the great northern cities and their political clout. **[300]**

Wales has its own parliament, and can pass its own laws. But as the Centre for Cities point out, the economies of Manchester and Leeds are each individually bigger than Wales. But they don't have a single leader who can speak for the whole area.

I say it again

A true powerhouse requires true power **[305]**

So today I am putting on the table and starting the conversation about serious devolution of powers and budgets for any city that wants to move to a new model of city government - and have an elected Mayor.

A Mayor for Greater Manchester. A Mayor for Leeds. With powers similar to the Mayor of London. **[310]**

What I've set out today is a vision of the Northern Powerhouse – not to rival the South, but to be its brother in arms as we fight for Britain's share of the global economy.

Let's bring our Northern cities together, so they're bigger and better than anyone can be alone. **[315]**

The Northern Powerhouse can't be built over-night. It's a long-term plan for a country serious about its long-term economic future.

It means jobs and prosperity and security for people here over future decades.

And I promise you this – I will work tirelessly with anyone across political divides in any of these great cities to make the Northern Powerhouse a reality. **[320]**

For this plan is bigger than any one of us – and it's worth it for us all.



### 3. Rochdale Literary Survey

A chronological survey of the literary, and filmic, texts of Rochdale in order of publication or reproduction

<b>Year</b>	<b>Writer / Director</b>	<b>Work / Title of Piece</b>	<b>Bibliographic details and notes</b>	<b>Synopsis</b>
1577	Raphael Holinshed	<i>The Firste volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande.</i>	Raphael Holinshed, <i>The Firste Volume of the Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande</i> (London, 1577).	Description of the river Roch, its route and confluences with the and Sudley through from its spring near Summit to flowing through Littleborough to its confluence with the river Irwell.
1610	Unknown	'Rochdale Inquisition'.	A reproduction of the Rochdale Inquisition text is available from <a href="http://www.link4life.org/images/stories/ebooks/1610-inquisition/1610-inquisition.pdf">http://www.link4life.org/images/stories/ebooks/1610-inquisition/1610-inquisition.pdf</a> .	The Rochdale Inquisition set out the boundaries of the original Rochdale Parish including the economic worth of the land.
1725 - 1727	Daniel Defoe	<i>A Tour Through The Whole Island of Great Britain.</i>	Daniel Defoe, <i>A Tour Through The Whole Island of Great Britain</i> , ed. by Nick	During Defoe's tour of Great Britain, he and his party travelled over Blackstone Edge. A description of this

			Furbank and Bob. Owens (New Haven: Yale University, 1991).	journey is captured in letter 8 in the third volume of the tour.
1762	John Collier / “Tim Bobbin” (edited by George Cruikshank)	‘Lancashire Hob and the Quack Doctor’, pp. 181 - 184.	<i>Tim Bobbin’s Lancashire Dialect and Poems</i> , ed. by George Cruickshank, (London, Hurst, Chance & Co., 1828).	Poem written in 1762 rhyming iambic pentameter. Hob, an earl, travels to Rochdale hearing that he can find a ‘quack’: a (fake) doctor who promises to pull Hob’s last six teeth out without pain.
1771	John Collier / “Tim Bobbin” (edited by John Corry)	‘The Fortune Teller: or the Court Itch at Littleborough’.	<i>The Works of Tim Bobbin Esq. in Prose and Verse with a Memoir of the Author</i> , ed. by John Corry (Rochdale: J. Westall, 1819).	Bawdy poem from 1771 written in rhyming couplets. “Swiver”, a butcher from Littleborough, falls in love with ‘buxom Rudda’. He pretends that he can tell her fortune from her hand and seduces her. It transpires that this was not the first time Rudda had been seduced and Swiver ends up with ‘courtier’s itch’, an assumed sexually transmitted infection and a confession to tell his wife.

1795	John Aikin	'Rochdale Parish', pp. 246-259.	John Aikin, <i>A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester</i> (London: John Stockdale, 1795).	Book exploring the geography, histories, development, and culture of the area delineated by the title. The chapter entitled Rochdale Parish looks at the townships, inhabitant development, market days, transport (especially the canal), and families of note. The chapter ends with a section on John 'Tim Bobbin' Collier (pp. 250-259).
1821	Samuel Bamford	'Ode to a Plotting Parson' (1819).	Samuel Bamford, <i>Miscellaneous Poetry by Samuel Bamford, Weaver, of Middleton in Lancashire. Lately Imprisoned in the Castle of Lincoln</i> (London: Thomas Dolby, Britannia Press, 1821).	Although the poem is primarily about the Peterloo massacre, the Reverend William Hay became Rector of Rochdale in 1820.
1819	James Butterworth / 'Paul Bobbin'	A Sequel to the Lancashire Dialect or Part Second, of the	James Butterworth, <i>A Sequel to the Lancashire Dialect or Part Second, of the</i>	Dialect poetry influenced by Tim Bobbin.

		adventures, misfortunes, and losses of a Lancashire clown	<i>Adventures, Misfortunes, and Losses of a Lancashire Clown</i> (Manchester: M. Wilson, 1819).	
1828	James Butterworth	<i>An historical and topographical account of the town and parish of Rochdale, in Lancashire, and of the parochial chapelry of Saddleworth, in the county of York.</i>	James Butterworth, <i>An Historical and Topographical Account of the Town and Parish of Rochdale, in Lancashire, and of the Parochial Chapelry of Saddleworth, in the County of York</i> (Manchester: W.D. Varey, 1828).	A general history of Rochdale, Butterworth was inspired by Tim Bobbin's writing so took on the moniker 'Paul Bobbin'.
1829	John Roby	'The Goblin Builders' and 'The Earl of Tyrone'.	John Roby, <i>Popular Traditions of Lancashire. Volume 1</i> (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1829).	Folk tales from the Rochdale borough that geolocate areas around the borough.
1834	Samuel Bamford	'Tim Bobbin's Grave', p.44.	Samuel Bamford, <i>Hours in the Bowers</i> (Manchester: J.P.	Dialect poem where the speaker, standing at the grave of Tim Collier,

			Jennings and H. Cowdroy, 1834).	conjures the dead poet back to life by pouring ale on the ground.
1855	Edwin Waugh	'Come whoam to thi' childer an' me'.	Edwin Waugh, <i>Sketches of a Lancashire Life and Localities</i> (London: Whittaker and Co., 1855).	The poem that made Waugh nationally famous. A poem told from the point of view of a female speaker entreating her husband to return home, the final stanza the speaker shifts to the husband who explains his absence by bringing presents to her and the children.
1855	Elizabeth Gaskell	'Lizzie Leigh'.	Elizabeth Gaskell, <i>Lizzie Leigh And Other Tales</i> (London: Chapman and Hall, 1855).	The patriarch of the Leigh household dies so the remaining family of a disgraced, and disinherited, young woman leave their rural farm in Milnrow and travel to Manchester to find her.
1865	Edwin Waugh	<i>Sketches in the Lancashire Dialect.</i>	Edwin Waugh, <i>Sketches in the Lancashire Dialect</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1865).	One of the first volumes of sketches produced following the popularity of Waugh's dialect poetry
1865	Edwin Waugh	<i>The Birtle Carter's Tale of Owd Bodle.</i>	Edwin Waugh, <i>The Birtle Carter's Tale of Owd Bodle</i>	A study of the dialect of people from the Rochdale area. This sketch is about

			(Manchester: John Heywood, 1865).	‘Owd Bodle’, an elderly man whose friend ‘Owd Ned’ likes to drink and make merry. The main sketch focusses on Ned who, on a drunken whim, becomes stuck up a chimney. It is narrated by the character of ‘a carter’ who journeys from Birtle, Bury to Rochdale.
1865	Edwin Waugh	<i>The Goblin’s Grave.</i>	Edwin Waugh, <i>The Goblin’s Grave.</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1865).	The narrator goes on a walk to Grislehurst and stops at an older couple’s house. They tell him the talk of the goblin that haunts the grounds of Grislehurst. The narrator offers commentary on what he deems to be the simple lifestyles and simplicity of people from the village.
1866	Samuel Bamford,  Richard Rome Bealey	‘The Wild Rider (A Legendary Tale’, pp. 12-20.  ‘My Johnny’, pp. 87-89.	<i>Lancashire Lyrics: Modern Songs and Ballads</i> , ed. by John Harland (London: Whittaker and Co., 1866).	Two poets in collected anthology of: Lancashire writers, poetry about or written in in the Lancashire dialect. Bamford’s poem is about the legend of Sir Ralphe Assheton of Alkington.

				Bealey's poem is set in Rochdale town centre and the speaker, a 'lass', addresses her Johnny 'the bonniest lad / 'Ut lives I' Rachda' town'.
1869	Edwin Waugh	<i>Snowed-Up.</i>	Edwin Waugh, <i>Snowed-Up</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1869).	Reflections on being snowed in around Blackstone Edge, Rochdale and Middleton and how the people coped with the cold.
1872	John Roby	'The Fairies' Chapel', 'Clegg Hall', 'Mother Red-Cap'.	John Roby, <i>Popular Traditions of Lancashire. Volume 2 (Fifth Edition)</i> (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1872).	First published around 1829, these are further folk tales from Lancashire collected by Roby from the second volume.
1872	J.B. Davenport	<i>Davenport's Illustrated Hollingworth Lake Guide and Visitor's Handbook to Blackstone Edge. With Historical Notes of the Surrounding Neighbourhood.</i>	Davenport, J. B. (1872) <i>Davenport's Illustrated Hollingworth Lake Guide and Visitor's Handbook to Blackstone Edge. With Historical Notes of the Surrounding</i>	The 1872 edition of this tourist guide to the lake, the first is recorded as 1861, with adverts bracketing the main text.

			<i>Neighbourhood</i> . Manchester: John Heywood.	
1875	William Robertson	<i>Rochdale Past and Present: A History and Guide</i> .	William Robertson, <i>Rochdale Past and Present. A History and Guide</i> (Rochdale: Schofield and Hoblyn, 1875).	First of a series of ‘popular history’ books of Rochdale. Possibly inspired by the series by Paul Butterworth. The book is punctuated by poetry placed throughout the text. Includes line drawings and adverts.
1875	Jessie Fothergill	<i>Healey: A Tale</i> .	Jessie Fothergill, <i>Healey: A Tale</i> (London: Macmillan and Co. Limited, 1875).	First edition 1875. Set between Manchester and Littleborough (the fictional Hamerton). Story of Katharine and her romance with Ughtred Earnshaw.
1881	William Robertson	<i>Old and New Rochdale and its People</i> .	William Robertson, <i>Old and New Rochdale and Its People. Being a Companion Volume to ‘Rochdale Past and Present’</i> (Rochdale: William Robertson, 1881).	A reminiscence on people dead and alive at the time of writing. It has a feature on the life of John Roby and features adverts.



1882	W. Watts.	'The Swallow' (1882)	W. Watts, 'The Swallow (1882)', <i>Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society: Transactions of the Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society</i> , 1 (1878).	Field notes and citizen science on swallow migration in Rochdale from 1873 – 1882.
1883	S.S. Platt	'Sewers and Drains (Ancient and Modern)' (1883).	S.S. Platt, 'Sewers and Drains (Ancient and Modern)', <i>Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society: Transactions of the Rochdale Literary and Scientific Society</i> , 1 (1878).	Factual report and description of the physical geography of Rochdale and development of sewerage works in the borough.
1889	Henry Fishwick	<i>History of the Parish of Rochdale.</i>	Henry Fishwick, <i>History of the Parish of Rochdale in the County of Lancaster</i> (Rochdale: James Clegg, 1889).	Fishwick, Alderman, mayor and historian relates his understanding of the town's history in a large tome.
1889	William Robertson	<i>The Social and Political History of Rochdale.</i>	William Robertson, <i>The Social and Political History</i>	Pocket-sized popular history book, one of a series of books about Rochdale. From the Chartist movement to the

			<i>of Rochdale</i> (Rochdale: William Robertson, 1889).	time of writing. Features black and white drawings and adverts.
1892	Edwin Waugh (edited by George Milner)	Various including 'Besom Ben'.	<i>Lancashire Sketches by Edwin Waugh. First Series</i> , ed. by George Milner (Manchester: John Heywood, 1892).	Milner's anthology of Waugh. 'Besom Ben' is a series of sketches around the titular protagonist. Ben is presented as a simple country man who lives and works on Lobden Moor, his speech is captured in dialect writing.
1892	Edwin Waugh	<i>Lancashire Songs</i> .	Edwin Waugh, <i>Lancashire Songs. Sixth Edition</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1892).	Another edition of poetry and song lyrics combination of dialect and non-dialect lyrics.
1892	Edwin Waugh (edited by George Milner)	Various.	George Milner, <i>Tufts of Heather by Edwin Waugh. First Series</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1892).	Various sketches and dialect writing.
1893	Edwin Waugh (edited by George Milner with an introductory essay).	Various and an essay on Lancashire dialect.	<i>Poems and Songs by Edwin Waugh. With a Preface and Introductory Essay on the Dialect of Lancashire</i>	Another Waugh anthology that includes Milner's thesis on the use of Lancashire dialect in poetry.

			<i>Considered as a Vehicle for Poetry</i> , ed. by George Milner (Manchester: John Heywood, 1893).	
1894	Teddy Ashton <i>et al</i>	<i>A Basin O' Broth (Mostly Lancashire Herbs) being Tales, Rhymes, and Sketches</i>	Teddy Ashton and others, <i>A Basin O' Broth (Mostly Lancashire Herbs). Being Tales, Rhymes, and Sketches</i> (Manchester: John Heywood, 1894).	A collection of short stories, vignettes, anecdotes and poetry by contributors real pseudonymous: Teddy Ashton, capanbells, Ben Adhem and The Gravedigger.
1895	John Trafford Clegg	Various.	John Clegg, <i>The Works of John Trafford Clegg ('Th' Owd Weighver). Stories, Sketches and Rhymes in the Rochdale Dialect</i> (Rochdale: The Aldine Press, 1895).	Influenced by John Collier a writer who collected dialect essays and sketches of life in, and around, the Rochdale area. Includes excursions to other areas such as Hebden Bridge and Heptonstall in West Yorkshire.
1897	William Robertson	<i>Rochdale and the Vale of Whitworth.</i>	William Robertson, <i>Rochdale and the Vale of Whitworth. Its Moorlands, Favourite Nooks, Green Lanes and Scenery</i>	Popular history book on Rochdale to accompany other books in a series. This one focuses on setting the scene and brings in a host of unusual local people alive at the time of writing.

			(Rochdale: William Robertson, 1897).	Includes adverts, line drawings, and a photograph of the author. Whitworth is now in Rossendale
1901	Henry Colley March	<i>The Writings of Oliver Ormerod.</i>	H. Y. Colley March, <i>The Writings of Oliver Ormerod with a Memoir of the Author</i> (Rochdale: The Aldine Press, 1901).	Colley March published Oliver Ormerod's writings from the 1850s reflecting on the Great Exhibition and identifying as Rochdalian in London.
1903	William Baron / "Bill O'Jacks"	'In a sweaters' den'.	William Baron, <i>Echoes from the Loom. A Collection of Poems Chiefly in the Dialect</i> (Rochdale: Ormerod Bros., 1903).	William Baron was strongly influenced by the work of John 'Tim Bobbin' Collier and Edwin Waugh. This political poem reflects on the work of weavers, although by this point the profession was in decline.
c.1907	John Dean	<i>Historical Middleton.</i>	John Dean, <i>Historical Middleton</i> (Oldham: Standard Printing Works, 1907).	The history of Middleton. Prior to 1974 the area was a township; a 'middle town' between Manchester and the Rochdale Parish.
1909	John A. Green (Editor)	Various.	<i>Heywood Notes and Queries. Reprinted from the Heywood Advertiser. Volume 1</i> , ed. by	Notes and articles from 1905 – 1909 issues of local newspaper, the Heywood Advertiser. Most these short

			John A. Green (Moss Side, Manchester: Heywood Advertiser, 1909).	articles focussed on families from the Heywood area as well as events like Pace Egging.
1911	Frank Hird	Includes: 'Rochdale Grammar School', 'The Clegg Hall Boggart', 'Rochdale Tokens', 'Tyrone's Bed', 'The Rochdale Volunteers', 'The Black Knight of Ashton' and 'St Chad's Church, Rochdale'.	Frank Hird, <i>Lancashire Stories. Containing All the Appeals to the Heart and the Imagination in the Lancashire of To-Day and of Many Yesterdays</i> (London & Edinburgh: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1911).	A book written to revive interest in Lancashire history, dialect poetry, archaeology, ritual, and folklore, drawing on Roby and historical socio-cultural customs. 'Rochdale Grammar School' is a brief history of the school. 'Rochdale Tokens' is a historical account of tokens made in lieu of small change during the mid-1660s, these could then be exchanged for goods and services. 'The Rochdale Volunteers' is a brief note about the volunteer corps who left Rochdale to fight the war against France in 1794. 'The Black Knight of Ashton' pertains to Ralphe Assheton, this story crosses borders between Rochdale, Oldham and Tameside.

1919	A. P. Wadsworth	<i>Rochdale's Main Roads: the History of Turnpikes.</i>	A.P. Wadsworth, <i>Rochdale's Main Roads: The History of Turnpikes</i> (Rochdale: J.D. Howarth, 1919).	Another member of the Rochdale Literary and Scientific society so this is a geographical and historical account of how turnpikes were used along routes.
1923	Rev George R. Oakley	Various.	George R. Oakley, <i>In Olden Days. Lancashire Legends. Rochdale and Neighbourhood</i> (Rochdale: Edwards & Bryning, 1923).	Includes stories and folklore, for example the Baum rabbit and the ghost of Stubley Hall.
1931	T.T. Heywood	<i>New Annals of Rochdale. A short history since 1899, and a chronological view from the earliest times to the end of the year, 1930.</i>	T.T. Heywood, <i>New Annals of Rochdale. A Short History since 1899, and a Chronological View from the Earliest Times to the End of the Year, 1930</i> (Rochdale: Rochdale Times Ltd., 1931).	History of the borough which begins in an optimistic fashion but quickly descends into a grim depiction of the borough and its place in the nation.
1934	J.B. Priestley (writer), directed by B. Dean.	<i>Sing as We Go!</i>	Basil Dean, <i>Sing as We Go!</i> (Associated British Film Distributors, 1934).	Film written by J.B. Priestley featuring Rochdalian music hall star Gracie Fields. The story starts with workers

				losing their jobs in a Rochdale mill and ends in Blackpool.
1935	Jack Hilton	<i>Caliban Shrieks.</i>	Jack Hilton, <i>Caliban Shrieks</i> (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1935).	An autobiography of a Rochdalian plasterer and trade unionist. This story of working-class lived experience stirred the political imagination of George Orwell (Orwell reviewed the book in literary journal <i>The Adelphi</i> ).
1936	John Priestnall	<i>Heppleshaw.</i>	John Priestnall, <i>Heppleshaw</i> (Rochdale: G & A Scott, 1936).	Series of short sketches originally published in the Rochdale Observer. Heppleshaw is a fictionalised version of Littleborough.
1936	Agnes Garner Hilton	<i>The Promise of Life: A Romance of Middleton.</i>	Agnes Garner Hilton, <i>The Promise of Life: A Romance of Middleton</i> (Manchester: Sherratt & Hughes., 1936).	Offering several historical stories of Middleton and presents an early form of ‘chick lit’, a romance that focusses on the story of Jenny, a disabled woman who finds love after surgery.
1950	Herbert Collins	Chapters: iv Blackstone Edge (I); v Blackstone Edge (II); vi Summit Pass	Collins, H. (1950) <i>The Roof of Lancashire</i> . London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.	Includes: a photograph of Blackstone Edge, line drawings that detail sections of Blackstone Edge’s rock strata, and mapping of Summit Pass.

1956	Rebe Taylor (edited by Ernest Taylor)	<i>Rochdale Retrospect.</i>	Rebe Taylor, <i>Rochdale Retrospect. A Handbook Written by Rebe P. Taylor, Etc</i> , ed. by Ernest Taylor (Rochdale: Rochdale Corporation, 1956).	Description of the geology & lithic remains of Rochdale.
1962	Vera Winterbottom	<i>The Devil in Lancashire.</i>	Vera Winterbottom, <i>The Devil in Lancashire</i> (Heaton Mersey, Stockport: The Cloister Press, 1962).	Tracing the devil, and magic, in Lancashire. Mentions the following Rochdale legends: ‘fairy builders’ of St Chad’s church; Robin Hood’s bed & the ‘human hand’ marking on ‘Robin Hood Stone’ on Monstone Edge, Clegg Hall murders and the boggart, Sir Ralph Assheton – the ‘black lad’ (Assheton family of Middleton), and Tyrone’s Bed.
1973	Clifford Heyworth	‘Saturday’s Last Train Fro’ Rachda to Bacup’, pp. 11-13.	Clifford Heywood, <i>Nobbut a Thought from Lancashire. Poems, Stories and Anecdotes</i> (Bacup: Howard and Hargreaves Ltd., 1973).	Poem about a snowed-up journey along the old train line between Rochdale and Bacup (a casualty of the Beeching cuts of the 1960s).



1975	Trevor Hoyle	<i>The Rule of Night</i>	Trevor Hoyle, <i>The Rule of Night</i> (London: Quercus Editions Ltd., 1975). Kindle e-book.	Novel originally published in 1975 made up of a series of sketches involving main protagonist Kenny, an angry young man, and his group of racist, skinhead friends. Hoyle's attempt at social realism.
1975	Mike Harding	'Rochdale Cowboy'.	Mike Harding, <i>Rochdale Cowboy</i> , Rochdale Cowboy / Strangeways Hotel (UK: Rubber Records, 1975).	Farcical song telling the story of Rochdale 'sausage tosser' Fred Ackroyd and his adventures around Rochdale.
1977	A. W. Collingan	<i>The Weighvers' Seaport. A short history of Hollingworth Lake Littleborough from 1790 to the present time. An Account of the Development of The Lake and how it became known as 'The Weighvers' Seaport; together with a look at</i>	A.W. Collingan, <i>The Weighvers' Seaport. A Short History of Hollingworth Lake Littleborough from 1790 to the Present Time. An Account of the Development of The Lake and How It Became Known as 'The Weighvers' Seaport; Together with a Look at The Surrounding District. Including a Brief</i>	The history of Hollingworth Lake with accompanying stories. Makes some reference to Davenport's 1872 guide

		<i>The Surrounding District. Including a Brief Record of Notable Characters and Unusual and Remarkable Events which have occurred at the Lake</i>	<i>Record of Notable Characters and Unusual and Remarkable Events Which Have Occurred at the Lake</i> (Littleborough, Rochdale: G. Kelsall, 1977).	
1978	Jim Allen (writer), Roland Joffé (director)	<i>The Spongers.</i>	Roland Joffé, <i>The Spongers</i> (British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978).	Television play set in the Langley social housing estate near Middleton, Rochdale.
1982	Margaret Smith	<i>Collected Articles on the History of Middleton.</i>	Margaret Smith, <i>Collected Articles on the History of Middleton</i> (Middleton, Rochdale: Edward Pilling (Printers) Ltd., 1982).	A digest of newspaper articles on the history of Middleton. Includes an appropriated folktale in the form of the Middleton moonrakers.
1988	Alfred Howarth	<i>Memories of a Middleton Moonraker.</i>	Alfred Howarth, <i>Memories of a Middleton Moonraker</i> (Worsley, Salford: Alfred Howarth, 1988).	Memoir of a man from Middleton, includes a hand drawn 'memory map' of Middleton.

1991	Simon Armitage (writer), Kim Flitcroft (director)	<i>Xanadu.</i>	Kim Flitcroft, 'Xanadu', <i>BBC Words on Film</i> (BBC1, 1992).	Film poem set in and around the Ashfield Valley Housing estate. It is an epitaph to a housing estate in the days where most of it is being demolished.
1992	Simon Armitage	<i>Xanadu.</i>	Simon Armitage, <i>Xanadu</i> (Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1992).	Poem is not identical to the film poem; some of the stanzas are ordered differently. The main themes, and context, remains the same.
1993	Jim Allen (writer), Ken Loach (director)	<i>Raining Stones.</i>	Ken Loach, <i>Raining Stones</i> (Channel Four Films, 1993).	Comedy-drama follows the main character Bob detailing poverty and Catholicism. No surnames are given to the characters lending an <i>Everyman</i> feel to the film.
1999	John Street	<i>The Story of Littleborough.</i>	John Street, <i>The Story of Littleborough</i> (Littleborough, Rochdale: Littleborough Civic Trust, 1999).	Local history covering geography and toponyms of the town and surrounding villages.
1999	Vikram Seth	<i>An Equal Music.</i>	Vikram Seth, <i>An Equal Music</i> (London: Orion Books Limited, 1999).	A novel where the main character, Michael is in London but continually pulled back to his hometown of

				Rochdale and a northern identity that seems just out of reach.
2006	Martin Purdy and Ian Dawson	<i>Doing Our Bit: The Story of the Great War Told Through the Experiences of One Small Northern Town.</i>	Martin Purdy and Ian Dawson, <i>Doing Our Bit: The Story of the Great War Told Through the Experiences of One Small Northern Town</i> (Ramsbottom, Lancashire: Moonraker Publishing, 2006).	A non-fiction novel that focusses on the men from Middleton who fought in the First World War.
2006 - 2012	Kay Mellor / various	<i>Waterloo Road.</i>	‘Series One’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2006); ‘Series Two’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2007); ‘Series Three’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2007-2008); ‘Series Four’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2009); ‘Series Five’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2009-2010). ‘Series Six’, <i>Waterloo Road</i> , BBC1, 2010 - 2011); ‘Series	Hyperbolic television drama about a secondary school called “Waterloo Road”. Set in Rochdale although this is rarely mentioned the landmarks are recognisably Rochdale.

			Seven', <i>Waterloo Road</i> , (BBC1, 2011 – 2012).	
2008	Brian Hollingworth	<i>The Diary of Edwin Waugh: life in Victorian Manchester and Rochdale 1847 – 1851.</i>	Brian Hollingworth, <i>The Diary of Edwin Waugh: Life in Victorian Manchester and Rochdale 1847 – 1851</i> (Lancaster: Carnegie, 2008).	Dialect scholar Brian Hollingworth is a commentary around life in Rochdale and is a reprint of Waugh's diary.
2011	Ian Vernon (writer / director)	<i>Best Little Whorehouse in Rochdale.</i>	Ian Vernon, <i>Best Little Whorehouse in Rochdale UK: Biffa Productions.</i> , 2011.	Comedy film centres around main character Joan's "no sex" brothel and Rochdalian cooperation.
2011	John Siddique	'The Knife'.	John Siddique, <i>Full Blood</i> (London: Salt, 2011).	A sequence poem that focusses on lived experience of a young black man in a visceral, violent, and racist Rochdale environment.
2012	J.S. Papenbrock (writer), Adam Lee Hamilton & John Montegrando	<i>The Rochdale Pioneers.</i>	Adam Lee Hamilton and John Montegrando, <i>The Rochdale Pioneers</i> (The Co-operative British Youth Film Academy, 2012).	Film about beginning stages of the international cooperative movement.

2012	Co-operative Youth Film Academy (writers), Darren White (director)	<i>The Making of the Rochdale Pioneers.</i>	Darren White, <i>The Making of the Rochdale Pioneers</i> (The Co-operative British Youth Film Academy, 2012).	Film about the making of <i>The Rochdale Pioneers</i> (2012).
2014	Paul ‘Polyp’ Fitzgerald	<i>The Co-operative Revolution.</i>	Paul (Polyp) Fitzgerald, <i>The Co-operative Revolution</i> (Oxford: New Internationalist, 2012).	Graphic novel following the history of the cooperative movement in Rochdale and around the world.
2014	Jennie Bailey & David England	‘Tales from Middleton’ and ‘Tales from the Borough of Rochdale’.	Jennie Bailey and David England, <i>Lancashire Folk Tales</i> (Stroud: The History Press, 2014).	A collection of folktales from around the then County Palatine of Lancashire. The folk legends from Middleton and Rochdale are drawn from John Roby’s collection, and from oral narratives.
2015	Steve Coogan	<i>Easily Distracted.</i>	Steve Coogan, <i>Easily Distracted</i> (London: Century, 2015).	Memoir of the popular British comedian Steve Coogan, includes details of growing up in Middleton and how this partly shaped his identity.
2015	Danny Fahey	<i>Links.</i>	<i>Links</i> , ed. by Danny Fahey (Heywood: Tell Us Another One, 2015).	A collection of artwork, short stories and poems by people who live in the borough.

2017	Nicole Taylor (Writer)	<i>Three Girls.</i>	‘Episode 1’, ‘Episode 2’. ‘Episode 3’. <i>Three Girls</i> , (BBC1, 2017).	A televised drama-documentary and TV mini-series focussed on the lived experience of child abuse, sex trafficking and grooming by a circle of predatory men. This series presented factual evidence with dramatized sections, some pseudonyms included for the girls and their families.
2017	Henry Singer (Director)	<i>The Betrayed Girls</i>	Henry Singer, <i>The Betrayed Girls</i> , (BBC1, 2017).	A television documentary about how the Rochdale abuse case unfolded and how it is not an isolated case but, even though it focuses on northern England, covers other places where the ‘sex gangs’ operated. The documentary investigates how the original police case failed, and intersects on past and contemporary issues around race, gender, politics, and class.

#### 4. Place Writing Toolkit: Three Creative Writing Session Plans

Over the last three years I have been one of several workshop facilitators for Touchstones Creative Writing Group in the centre of Rochdale. Touchstones, originally a library built in the nineteenth century, is an art gallery, heritage centre and local studies library located off The Esplanade. Although not strictly part of this PhD project, this work has made its way into my own writing and, in turn, my writing has crept into my pedagogic practice. In some of the activities in my sessions, writers are actively involved in the learning process and use each other as a resource. There is an emphasis on interactivity as well as the quiet moments required for individual creative practice. In the group, we collectively share learning in the form of imaginative writing. The people who attend the creative writing group have different motivations for being there: to socialise, to improve, out of curiosity, for fun, to publish, or, to pick up training tips and activities to develop their own writing sessions. The pedagogy needs to embrace and facilitate all these needs, and the aim of the session is to foster forms of experiential learning that the writers can reflect upon from their own positions when writing about their place. The exercises below have been developed and created to enable new forms of place writing.



## *Everyday magic: activities for a two-hour session*

### *Icebreaker: My Magical Name (10 – 15minutes)*

The following icebreaker is adapted from Elaine Walker's 'Who Am I' activity detailed in *Teaching Creative Writing: Practical Approaches*, ed. by Elaine Walker (Ely: Creative Writing Studies, 2012).

The aims of this exercise are

1. to act as an icebreaker to the workshop
2. to enable the group to learn each other's name,
3. to assist the facilitator in identifying 'the confident and chatty, the shy and also the difficult student and offer insights into the way they will interact as the course progresses', and,
4. to act as an exercise in beginning to think about how everything is magical.

Resources: A handout for each participant with the following prompts:

- My name Is:
- My name story is:
- My writing is:
- My favourite magic word/words is/are:
- If I had a personal magic spell it would...

The exercise: Following this and using Walker's next step see if you can turn this into a fantasy film publicity blurb with a partner! Working in pairs '...write and read out a publicity blurb which 'bigs up' their partner in good Hollywood million-seller [film] style'. Could start with

“This winter season, be amazed by...”

“The blockbuster of the season is...” etc.

Aim, as Walker suggests is to get the group to laugh with each other – trying to create a comfortable atmosphere and cooperative writing environment.

Adaptations: The forms could be printed on light blue or yellow paper, the font size can be changed.

***Magical phrase game – (10 minutes)***

The aim of this exercise is to begin thinking creatively about using language and the serendipity and surprise of the outcomes.

To encourage participants to work in a group.

Resources: Pens and paper

Exercise: Split everyone up into 3 groups – involves moving people around. Explain that each separate group will need to work together to devise a list of: adjectives, abstract nouns, concrete nouns. Ask each group to explain each. Give the group about two or three minutes for this task. Then get everyone to stand up in turn as quickly as is practical. The *adjective* of the *abstract noun* *concrete noun*

The shimmer of the surprise guitar

The green of the hate lobster

For example: Magical adjectives: Sparkle, dazzle, glimmer, glitter. Magical abstract nouns:

Hope, love, surprise, curiosity. Magical concrete nouns: Wand, broomstick, rabbit, handkerchief.

***Seasonal magic: turning leaves – autumn / winter (15 – 20 minutes)***

The aims of this session are to:

- To stimulate the senses, to think about everyday magic.
- To write a short piece that looks at the weather, the season and the leaf in a new way. Becoming the leaf “I am tobacco stained and smell of forgotten promises.”

Resources: Sycamore leaves and dark coloured felt tip pens. Flipchart paper and pens

Exercise: Hand out the leaves (1 or 2 each) and felt tips and explain that this exercise is about being playful with season and the senses. Using a flipchart, tell the participants that we’re going to capture a few words that come to mind when experiencing the leaf. Write down the 6 senses (including the paranormal, extrasensory perception or “spook factor”) and encourage people to shout out a couple of words for each – or perhaps go around the circle of people if there are quieter participants identified in the icebreaker. Write these down on the board. Hopefully they will be the obvious words when it comes to the leaf! Then explain that these are “banned words” and give everyone about five minutes to write on their leaves different words that pertain to each sense. Once that is done, encourage the participants to then think of how the leaves turn different colours at autumn and now

they're going to turn into their leaves! Using the words that they've written on the leaf, they can either continue writing on the leaf or on paper a statement that begins with:

"I am..." and write a profile as if the leaf is them. Give the group a few minutes to complete this and then encourage everyone to share their work.

***Ode to an everyday object – 30 – 40 minutes***

1. objects – think of an everyday object – iron, shoe, washing machine, loaf of bread etc. capture on the flipchart
2. pick one of these objects or choose your own
3. going to write an ode – what's an ode?
  - A lyrical poem
  - Three forms: Pindaric (form and style of Greek lyric poet Pindar); Horatian (form and style of Roman lyric poet Horace who wrote admiringly of Greek culture & imitated Ancient Greek poets); and irregular. We'll go with irregular – using rhyme but not following the form of either Pindar or Horace. If you want to – that's some research for homework! So you can have an irregular stanza – or verse - number if you like.) Going to try to follow the following rhyme scheme (that's the end of the poem's line): ABABCDECDE.
  - Example from Keat's 'Ode on a Grecian Urn' (1819):

Thou still unravish'd bride of quietness,

Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,

Sylvan historian, who canst thus express

A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:

What leaf-fring'd legend haunts about thy shape

Of deities or mortals, or of both,

In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?

What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?

What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?

What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

4. Could call your poem Ode to a Vacuum Cleaner if you like and write as many, or as few stanzas, as you'd like, if you can only write one that's fine and don't worry if you don't finish have about ten minutes or so. Give the writers about 10 – 15 minutes to work on this, as it's a higher-level activity may require group support.
5. Everyone reads their odes and offers feedback on each.

### **The Magician's Apprentice's spell – 10 - 15 minutes**

Resources: A hat; A list of chores cut out into strips to be folded up and placed in the hat; Pens and paper

The Chore Sorting Hat: Pick a chore and I want you to think about creating a magic spell that could simplify everyday tasks and what would the spell would do. Write your spell – make it rhyme if you can and use your favourite magic words and the intended outcome (and if it goes wrong what happens – like the magician's apprentice).

Writers can then read out their work – ask them to stand up and be dramatic about casting their spells but don't make this mandatory.

***Automatic writing: (exercise = 10 mins, feedback + editing time= 15 – 20)***

Aim of this activity is to get participants writing without “lifting their pens”

Resources: Pens and paper, Stopwatch

Exercise with prompts and timings:

1. There’s a black box (for first 5 minutes)
2. A flash of light (after 5 minutes)
3. In the shadows (after 7 minutes)
4. Some kind of magic (after 9 minutes)

Explain that if the writers get stuck then they can repeat the prompt in their piece of writing until they can think of a linking sentence – this exercise is simply to keep the pen moving.

After ten minutes, give the writers two - three minutes to go through their piece and edit (simply place a line through the bits they don’t want there – could be repetitions).

Give the writers a couple of minutes each to read through their work.

### **Write what you know**

**Exercise:** Close their eyes and prompt imagining the journey to Touchstones:

- where you left from – home or somewhere else
- how you travelled here,
- what was the journey like

- what was the route
- what modes of transport did you see and what transport did you use
- did you interact with anyone
- what did you see on the way – any street signs that seemed unusual or interesting features
- what's the weather like
- what mood were you in

### Stage 2

As soon as they've been thinking and have material, give time for the participants to write down some notes – perhaps a list with specific words that they thought of, any details they can remember.

### Stage 3

Participants to work on an autobiographical piece of writing exploring the physical, mental and emotional aspects of their journeys. Can use the first person or play with other perspectives.

### Stage 4 – homework

Ask participants to make the same journey or note a similar journey between one place and another. Could take notes in real time if it's safe to do so or use voice recorder. Could use overheard snippets of conversation – could construct a story from the overheard conversation and imagine what's going on - and send a more textured piece of writing. About honing perception and recalling memory however fickle or false.

No matter how mundane the everyday seems, there's magic in our everyday stories.

There is a blog post reflecting on this session here:

<https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2015/12/04/everyday-magic-writing-exercises/>



***Mapping our place: activities for a two-hour session (may not require all activities)***

***Opening the session***

- Introduce yourself
- Introduce the session: what we're thinking about today = maps and place
- What we'll be doing: writing a poem about a special place, developing a character, learning about the character's home, getting creative with a map of a familiar place!

***Icebreaker: Noun game (10 – 15minutes)***

The following icebreaker is adapted from Ty Newydd.

The aims of this exercise are

1. to act as an icebreaker to the workshop
2. to assist the facilitator in identifying 'the confident and chatty, the shy and also the difficult student and offer insights into the way they will interact as the session progresses, and,
3. to act as an exercise in beginning to think about words used with mapping and with place.

Resources: Slips with "A [noun] is" write a definition as poetic or as accurate as you like. Rip it off, hand it around to the person on your left (repeat if few people)

The exercise: Take a slip, complete the sentence by writing a definition for the word written on it – you can be as poetic or as accurate as you like. Rip it off, hand it around to the person on your left (repeat if few people). Read them out together

Aim, is to get the group to laugh with each other – trying to create a comfortable atmosphere and cooperative writing environment.

Adaptations: The forms could be printed on light blue or yellow paper for any participants who may have dyslexia, also bigger font may be useful (source?).

***The Special Place – (10 -20 minutes)***

1. Think of a place that is special to you – could be a holiday destination, could be home, something that evokes a strong memory. Think of what it looks like, what it smells like. Close eyes for two minutes and breathe in that memory.
2. Spend a few minutes either sketching or making a few notes on that place
3. What does it smell like? What are the colours?
4. How do you leave – slowly? Quickly? What does it feel like to leave?
5. You glance back quickly – what do you see?

Write a poem starting with *I remember that place* if you get stuck, repeat that phrase over again. Don't worry about rhyme and rhythm, just see what happens

***Character Building (10 – 20 minutes)***

Aims: To set a scene for your character – describing your characters' world

Resources:

- Postcards from Manchester Art gallery

- Pens & paper

Exercise: Need to look at the card and have a think – if more than one person in the picture choose one, OR pick an object if you're feeling surreal!

### **Questions for your character**

1. What age are you?
2. Where are you?
3. Why are you there?
4. What are you doing right now?
5. What can you smell or hear?
6. What time is it and what's the weather like?
7. Right now, where do you want to be?
8. Why can't you get there?
9. In all the world what do you *really* want?
10. What might stop you getting that?
11. If you were the weather what would you be?
12. If you were an animal what would you be?
13. What do you always carry with you (could be on your person, in a bag, in a pocket)?
14. What is your name?

### ***Setting the Scene: creating place (15 – 20 minutes)***

Aims: To set a scene for your character – describing your character's world

Resources: Pens & paper

Exercise:

1. Can sketch or write a map of a location you think your character may live.
2. Making notes think of a location – could be a room: describe this area, what objects may be around you, there is a treasured possession that is important to your character – what is it, what does it look like, what does it smell like, why is it important?
3. Write a descriptive passage about this location, use all the senses (colour, sound, touch, smell, taste, any supernatural feelings that may be in this room)
4. What's the weather like or the season? Use this to create an emotion and to mark the passage of time.
5. Now continue the scene using a passage of time – use different weather or in a different season – how does this change the location, how your character is feeling.
6. Next describe your character remembering a dream that they had – what happened, how do they feel?
7. Give the group a few minutes to complete this and then encourage everyone to share their work.

### **Found writing using maps – 10 - 20**

- Have a look at the map – what sort of map is it?
- Can we do creative writing with a map?
- Pick something that interests you on the map – place name, symbol, colour

- Write over the map (or on the back if you prefer)
  - Free writing – poem, begin a story, flash fiction (short story of 200 words)

***Automatic writing: (exercise = 10 mins, feedback + editing time= 15 – 20)***

Aim: To get participants writing without “lifting their pens”

Resources: Pens and paper, Stopwatch

Exercise with prompts and timings:

1. I found a map (first 5 minutes)
2. I chose a direction (after 5 minutes)
3. There’s something on the horizon (after 7 minutes)
4. X marks the spot (after 9 minutes)

Explain that if the writers get stuck then they can repeat the prompt in their piece of writing until they can think of a linking sentence – this exercise is simply to keep the pen moving.

After ten minutes, give the writers two - three minutes to go through their piece and edit (simply place a line through the bits they don’t want there – could be repetitions).

Give the writers a couple of minutes each to read through their work.

A blog post reflecting on this session is here:

<https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2016/06/08/mapping-our-place-writing-exercises/>

***Sound: putting noise into words***

***Icebreaker*** – 15 minutes

Alliterative icebreakers. Alliterate three times with your name – it doesn't matter if we repeat what someone else has said. My name is J, I like to jump, and I juggle with jam.

**Why should we think about sound when we write?**

To create texture to our writing. Important especially in poetry, poetry is kind of painting with sound as well as image.

Read: '**Song of the sea sheep**'

This is nothing new, the body count  
of corpses. Like the one  
found on the unknown beach.

*the morning is a golden fleece*

*no numbers are needed*

*to send her to sleep*

Listen, you can hear her  
luxuriate in a weak water sun.

Her fuzzed mouth open

she sings soft hymns,  
tumbles smooth vowels.

Alto marrow to sea's soprano.

*tell your fortune with her bones*

*throw seaweed gristle onto stones*

*lay silver coins in hollowed eyes*

There is nothing spectacular in death,  
the solitary cloud of sheep,  
bloated sack of salt-cured meat.

**Types of alliteration (write on the board but ask first):**

**Dental:** d and t | **Fricative:** f, ph, and v | **Guttural:** g, r and c | **Plosive:** p and b |

**Sibilant:** s

Consonance – repetition of consonants: he had head lice crawling in his hairy head

Assonance – repetition of vowel sounds: there's a moose loose about this hoose.

**Onomatopoeia: brainstorm on the board – 15 minutes**

Choose a word and apply it to a picture (postcards). You can write what you like here, short story, song, poem, flash fiction.

*Soundscapes: (resources: need Speaker and computer and sounds). 20 noises – what do these evoke? A scene? A memory?*

1. market place
2. birdsong
3. football pitch

4. leaves rustle
5. playground
6. wind through trees
7. restaurant and silverware clatter
8. shovelling
9. applause and orchestra tuning
10. glass smashing
11. lambs, springtime
12. cart wheels and horse
13. seashore and gulls
14. sound of wine poured into a glass
15. vehicle reversing
16. rainstorm
17. leisure centre
18. crunching through snow
19. campfire
20. writing on paper with pencil

***Beautiful words: take home activity too***

In 2004, to mark the organisation's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday the British Council polled around 7,000 people in 46 different countries and asked what they considered the most beautiful words in the English Language. Activity – choose two or three of the 70 and free write a piece that joins the two.



**Earwiggling – 30 feedback (extension activity)** Short story full of noise and conversation (send to café, other parts of the gallery, local studies area) work in pairs. Like a piece of sound art if you like, you can just capture the sounds. 20 minutes to capture or own conversation.

A blog post reflecting on this session is here:

<https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2016/12/02/sound-putting-noise-into-words-writing-exercises/>

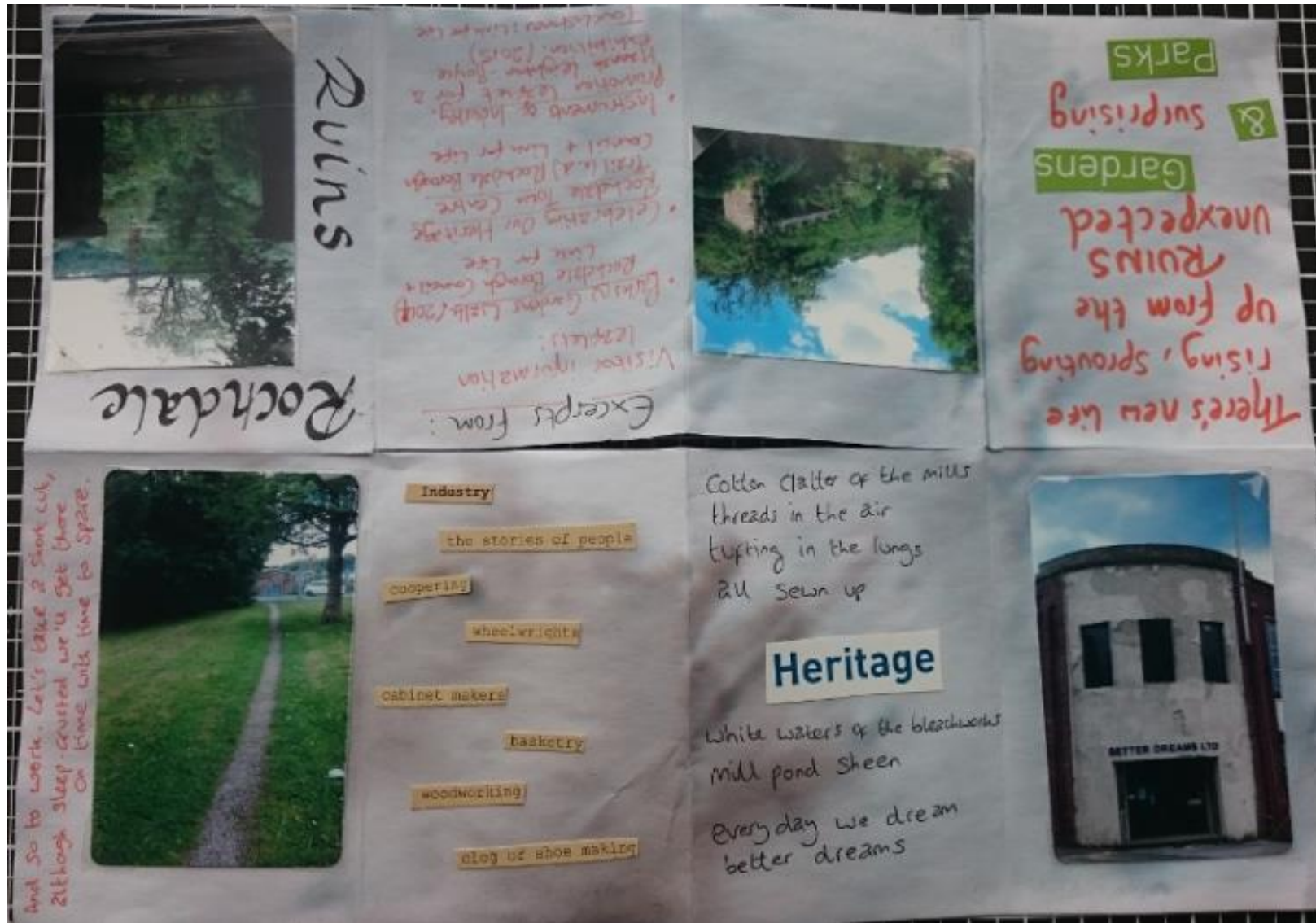
## 5. Notes on the Creative Pieces

### ***Tram Lines***

The lines: 'was my Queen' and 'though I am poor, I am free' are from The Kinks, *Victoria, Arthur (Or the Decline and Fall of the British Empire)* (UK: Pye, 1969).

The line 'my Suffragette city' is from David Bowie, *Suffragette City*, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars* (UK: Trident Records, 1972). The lines 'sing as we go and let the world go by' and 'there's always tomorrow to think of today' are from Harry Parr Davies, *Sing as We Go*, performed by Gracie Fields in *Sing as We Go!* dir. Basil Dean (Associated Talking Pictures, 1934).

6. Three Rochdale Zines



Excerpts from:

Hollingworth Lake Leaflet  
produced by Rochdale MBC,  
United Utilities & the  
Countryside Service

Davenport's Illustrated  
Hollingworth Lake Guide and  
Visitor's Handbook to Blackstone  
Edge, with Historical Notes of  
the Surrounding Neighbourhood  
1872 Edition Manchester:  
John Heywood

# 'GEM OF THE PENNINES'



Hollingworth Lake  
Littleborough

Hollingworth lake was a reservoir that used to feed the Rochdale canal. It contains approximately 475 million gallons of water (that's nearly 864 Olympic-sized swimming pools)! It's nearly 8 metres deep.

'As you step on the embankment, which is considerable, and scarcely looks artificial, the broad expanse of water at once presents itself to your vision.'  
(Davenport, 1872, page 4)

## A Circular Trail



Walks in Pennine Roadside  
2.5 miles (4km)



Stealing across the water... inviting you to dance!  
(Davenport, 1872, page 31)



The lake again before you, the strains of music



'You are out of your everyday world.'  
(Davenport, 1872, page 4)

'Respect -  
Protect -  
Enjoy'





The 'Arts & Crafts' Church.  
Long Street Methodist Church  
& Schools.



A northern art nouveau,  
brick work and bright glass  
coloured shadows  
on the walls.

Edgar Wood (1860-1935)  
architect, architect,  
Mancunian.  
Domestic designer  
who avoided the cotton  
trade, who painted with  
brick and skylines.

## The Golden Cluster

of Edward, the sad  
Cavalier  
follow the tunnel from  
here  
up to Saint Leonard's  
Square  
to the Ring O' Bells  
There  
he waits in the  
cellar.

The Olde Boar's  
Head  
Underneath the floorboards  
Sleeping  
Maybe or barefoot  
Creeping  
Splinters in feet, wood  
creaking  
Listen out for ghostly  
weeping

## Middleton Moonrakers

Waxing Crescent  
First quarter  
Waxing Gibbous  
FULL MOON  
Waning Gibbous  
Last quarter  
Waning Crescent



Wolf Moon, old moon, ice moon  
Snow moon, storm moon, hunger moon  
Worm moon, chaste moon, death moon  
Pink moon, grass moon, fish moon  
Flower moon, hare moon, milk moon  
Strawberry moon, rose moon, hot moon  
Buck moon, thunder moon, hay moon  
Scurgeon moon, grain moon, red moon  
Harvest moon, Corn moon, barley moon  
Hunter's moon, travel moon, dying grass moon  
Beaver moon, frost moon  
Blue moon, Cold moon, oak moon

Excerpts  
\* National Geographic  
'Full moons: what's in a name'  
\* The Spooky Isles  
'Phantom footsteps of sad  
Cavalier ghost heard at  
Ring O' Bells Pub in  
Middleton'  
\* Manchester History.net  
'Edgar Wood Architect'

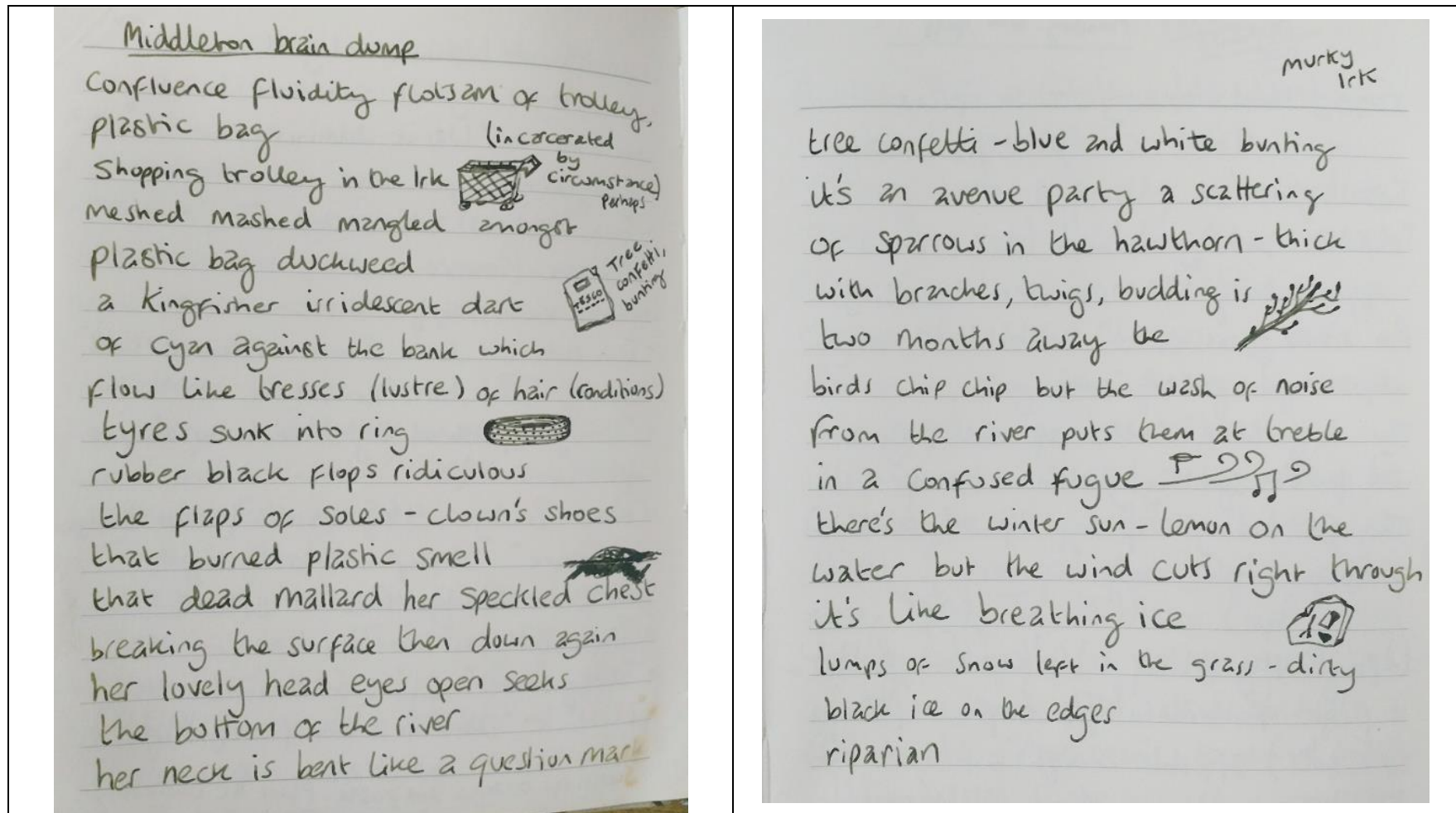


## Middleton

Once upon a



Schlafzimmer

7. Thinking through Making and Writing: A Selection of Notes and Works-in-Progress

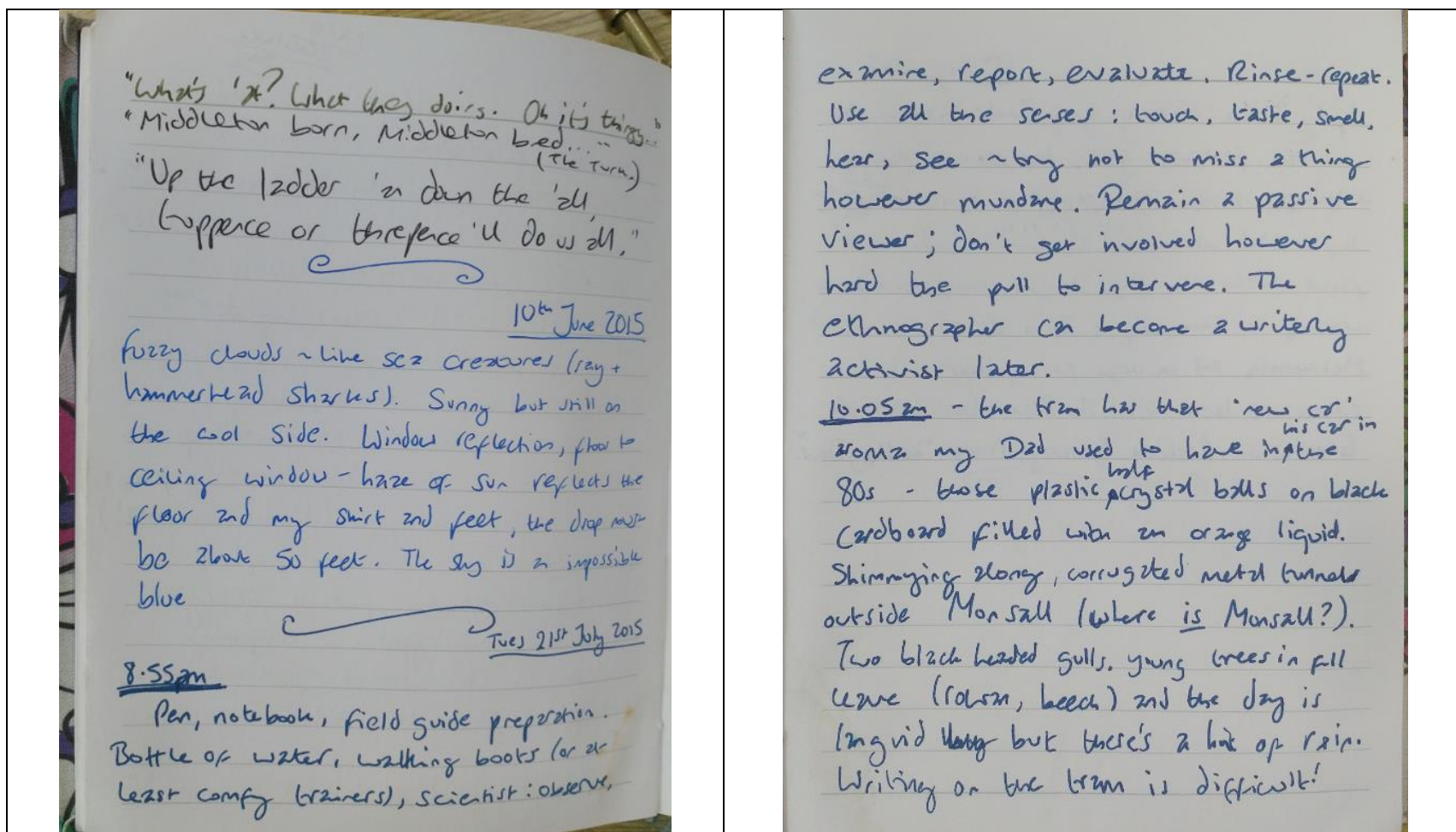


These notes and sketches were taken during a walk in Alkington Park in Middleton in early spring 2015.



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• War. "Sounds Welsh, sound good dunnit?"</li> <li>• Sun in eyes, against sandstone building - who lived here? Was it administrative? A mill?</li> <li>• Everything's gone blue.</li> <li>• Fun becomes anti-social.</li> <li>• Chinese Pioneers</li> <li>• Hidden view, rising trees church.</li> <li>• Town Hall but looks like a cathedral. Gold. Shining. Time hurts the retina.</li> <li>• "Unity" sponsored by Manchester Airport 10 March 1995</li> <li>• Roch Bridge 445 metres "widest Bridge in Europe" Stockport Merseyway Lancashire Bridge Walk on Water</li> <li>• Jingle Bells on an accordion</li> <li>• "Trendy Peaks" Climb on bins</li> <li>• "Miss" to "Dame" in a few feet 1978</li> <li>• Watch batteries and Straps. Swoop of orange and purple. Place de Tourcoing. Tourcoina Square.</li> </ul>		
<p>Excerpt from field notebook (9<sup>th</sup> November 2014)</p>	<p>Mixed Media Weaving: 'Everything Goes Blue' (October 2015)</p>	<p>Closeup of weaving: 'Everything Goes Blue'</p>

As I researched Rochdale I learned more about its textiles industries and folk music. The above image details the process (from notes to artwork) to create this experimental creative response to the borough.



These notes from my field notebook demonstrate some of the thinking around the tensions I felt as a researcher/writer wondering about how I was positioned in place: ‘[r]emain a passive viewer; don’t get involved [...] the ethnographer can become [an] activist later’.



10/10/15

On the topic - connections

Before ✿

BM - that beard, that drink, that

• dead eyed stare

• Privilege & not recognising this

✿ • White marble, white circle, glass

ceiling,

Connections

Listening to Bowie

You were just 2 pages in my diary  
I'm drawing daisies in the margins  
but

12<sup>th</sup> Nov '15

Not stopping today

01706

Date



Rochdale is  
burning

Stone bracelets

Rochdale Ramble

Nowhere / Now here

Warm for November

but the colours are wet,

Rochdale

Dead Autumn.

Runes ✿

matchsticks in a valley

old wedding rings note on the dresser

Google Maps

Connectivity, Coincidences

↳ Dye House Lane, Rochdale  
Dye House Cistern, Bradford

I have no idea what the fuck I'm doing and just making it up as I go along

Pansy

Butterfly

Bored of words, bad blood, beaten army, blacked moorland, big blossom best in bloom but not beat back.

Power lines

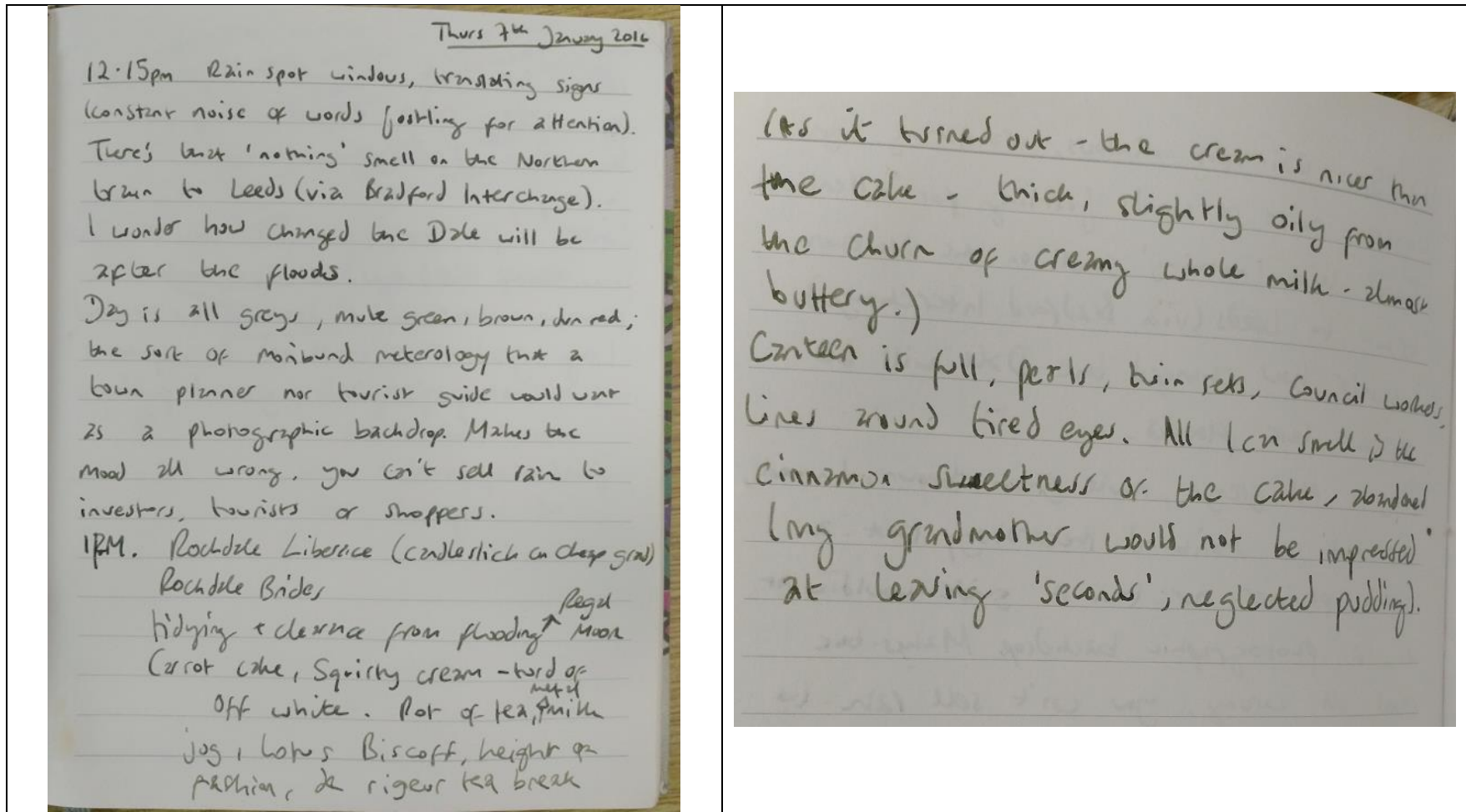
Cumulus cloud

Wind turbines spinning on the hills but one's such and who'll tell the red-faced NIMBY that this is the way that things are and who'll stand and nod at their red-faced virrid and who'll love that person who'll take that person home?

This train smells of red bull and diesel the latter hot, suffocating the other sherbert that should never have been that pale pink powder that fizzes on the tongue (leave out the liquorice).

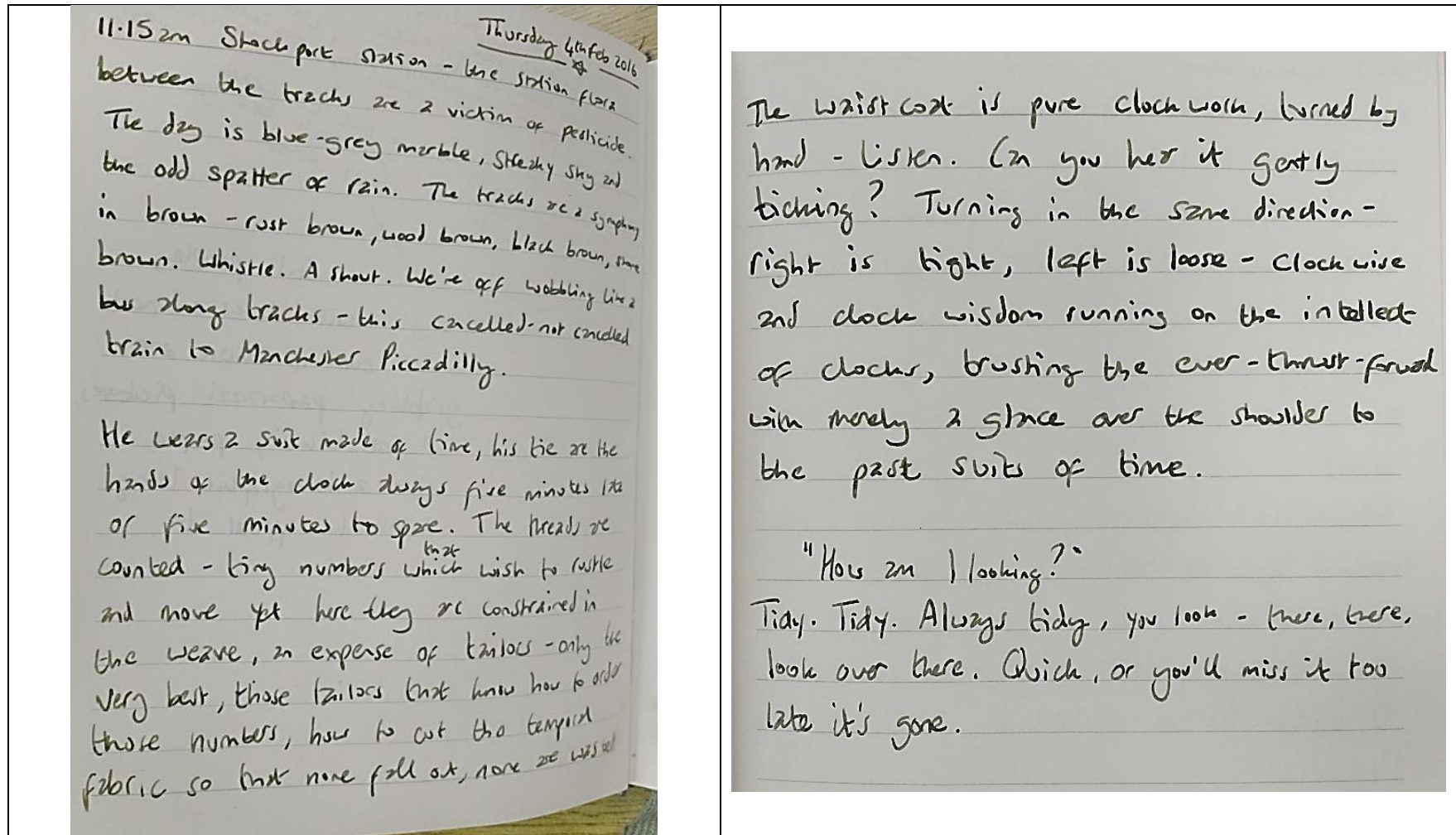
Following water courses two weirs in the same direction so surely we're over the Pennines by now it seems gravity is favouring Yorkshire in its flow and so out of place in this stone housing, chimneys, Sowerby Bridge pass through  
 ♪ if I die and my soul be lost ain't nobody's fault but mine ♪

The above four images detail notes taken on various train journeys passing through Rochdale. This instigated thinking around: writing, composition, sketching, colour, and shape.



Some of the lines written above were incorporated into the poem 'Afternoon Carrot Cake' (published here:

<https://writingrochdale.wordpress.com/2016/04/28/a-poem-a-day-thursday-7th-january-2016-afternoon-carrot-cake/>).



The above image depicts the first draft of a short story: 'The suit of time' (working title). While the piece was written in Rochdale, and I do feel that the piece has some creative merit, I felt that it did not fit the tone, nor the remit, of the thesis.