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Brexitland's Dark Ecologies: New British Landscape Writing

The exploration undertaken in this essay came initially from a sense of puzzlement. Why in the last few years had London bookshops of all shapes and sizes, both the independents and chains, felt it almost obligatory to place a 'nature table' display of books in prominent positions by their front doors? And why did the covers all *look* the same? Linocuts of foxes or bunny rabbits, usually by, or ripped off from, the illustrator Angela Harding; knock-offs of the bold, blocky lines of Eric Ravilious's woodcuts, or his watercolours of the South Downs in that instantly recognisable bleached-out palette redolent of mid-century, home-spun, make-do optimism. What was going on?

Other than the familiar patterns of fashion and craven imitation in book-cover design, was this phenomenon a symptom of something larger? The suspicions ingrained by cultural critique made me want to sniff out the regressive gene in these books. Was this phenomenon anything more than a retreat from the complexities of modernity, contiguous, if not always identical, with therapeutic languages of detox, wellbeing and self-help that sentimentalise Nature, a discourse common in what William Davies has called 'The Happiness Industry'?[1] Why was it seen as imperative to move *towards* a 're-enchantment' of place, as one early essay collection in this cycle was titled?[2] Was it another sub-section of the austerity nostalgia so surgically lanced by the acerbic critic Owen Hatherley?[3] Just how far was it complicit with the conservative recourse to the language of being rooted in the land that had brought the country to the 'sunlit uplands' that Boris Johnson (borrowing from Winston Churchill, as always) promised with the Brexit vote in June 2016?[4]

With these suspicions in mind, I began the attempt to situate what has been termed the New Nature Writing in Britain since around 2008. The answers, inevitably, were far more complicated than my initial fatuous positions. What follows merely claims to be a kind of taxonomic sorting, following on from similar recent attempts to chart the fraught terrain between the Brexit, literature and culture.[5] In this essay, I'll identify five, complex strands interwoven from fiction, memoir, film, and other kinds of place-writing to try to fix some co-ordinates on this distinctive cultural moment of a return to Nature, and to *place*.

In the 1990s, attempts to conceptualize a new stage of globalization produced a discourse that emphasized the emergence of homogeneous, evenly distributed *space* and the erasure of dense, particular *place.* The French anthropologist Marc Augé argued that there had been a decline in anthropological place, a 'concrete and symbolic construction … which serves as a reference for all those it assigns to a position', and the rise of indifferent, transnational space typical of hotel lobbies or airport lounges.[6] The predominant metaphor at the time was of *flow* – of capital, goods, and people. These might be cosmopolitan elites or their abjected doubles: migrants. Zygmunt Bauman talked about 'liquid modernity' marked by 'the new irrelevance' of bordered space: 'Space no more sets limits to action and its effects, and counts little, or does not count at all.'[7] Anthony Giddens talked about the 'disembedding' of the self in modernity, a departure from fixed identity, relations and locales.[8] The Spanish theorist Manuel Castells called this new global dispensation 'the space of flows', arguing that 'the space of *places* has been replaced by the space of flows'. We are now 'globally connected and locally disconnected' and flow is 'the expression of processes dominating our economic, political and symbolic life.'[9]

This heady rhetoric of movement and flow was always in a dialectic, though, with its opposite: a retrenchment of place. Since the 'cultural heritage' boom of the 1980s, there has been a growth of what Pierre Nora called *les lieux de mémoire*, situated locales that hold off the forces of abstracted space. 'We buttress our identities upon such bastions, but if what they defended were not threatened, there would be no need to build them.'[10]

In the era of populist reactions to the 2008 global financial crash, the counter-movements of nationalism offer a different tone to the battle between space and place. Deterritorialized capital flows continue, but nationalism aims to reterritorialize identity, to control the movement of people, to build walls, to prevent migrant flows. There is a distrust of cosmopolitan elites, those the British Prime Minister Theresa May disdained as 'citizens of nowhere' in her speech to the Conservative Party conference in October 2016, four months after the Brexit vote.[11]

One of the major symptoms of this dialectic in the British cultural context has been the emergence of the new nature writing, which also marks a decided turn away from abstract space and back to concrete place. This is not to claim that this trend has any simple causal relationship to the 2008 crash. Nor is it a simple

product of the conditions that produced the Brexit result in 2016, an act of nationalist re-localization if ever there was one. There is clearly another, planetary axis to consider in the rise of nature writing in the twenty-first century: the acceleration of the climate emergency and the debate about whether we have entered a new geological epoch – the Anthropocene – a term first used by Paul J. Crutzen in the year 2000.[12] These elements indicate how this contemporary genre sits in the cross-hairs of both global scale and the restatement of local specificity.

To begin to offer a more complex answer than a reduction of texts to context, I now outline five strands within this field, which can be situated across a spectrum from reactive (but not always reactionary) re-embedding to work that recognizes that the contemporary landscape is not and never has been a repository of stable identities, but a shifting construction of the instabilities of modernity itself.

1. Rewilding

A key figure in this contemporary resurgence of nature writing in Britain is Robert Macfarlane, whose book *The Wild Places,* appeared in 2007, and became a best-seller. That book was open about its debts to the emergence of a new kind of British nature writing in the 1970s, with figures such as Richard Mabey or Roger Deakins. It has been claimed that there was a certain embarrassment about the nostalgic retrospect associated with nature-writing after the Second World War, and that Mabey's 1997 anthology, the *Oxford Book of Nature Writing,* Marfarlane's *The Wild Places,* and the *Granta* magazine themed issue called The New Nature Writing in 2008 were the early markers of a revitalisation of this form.[13]

Macfarlane's *The Wild Places* documented his obsessive search for the surviving wilds of Britain, places where it was still possible, he said, 'to step outside human history', land that remains self-willed and untamed, the wilds of 'old nature' that 'still kept their own patterns and rhythms, made their own weathers and their own light.'[14] Macfarlane's impetus is to push towards moments of ecstatic self-erasure, a loss of the boundaries of the self in wilds he calls 'sanctuaries' in quasi-religious terms. In one scene, in the loch in the remote valley of Coruisk on the Isle of Skye, he swims away from 'the larger

impulses of the human world' in a place 'empty of indicators of time or place'. 'Lying there', he continues, 'with no human trace except the rim of my own eyes, I could feel a silence that reached backwards into the Ice Age.'[15]

In this search for secular epiphany in the wild, the ecstatic dissolution of the self is propounded with a willed naivety about the wilderness – after all, no landscape is more impregnated with the brutality of human history than the highlands and islands of Scotland, places of extreme colonial violence of clearances and enclosures since the eighteenth century.[16] Wilderness is always a culturally circumscribed and heavily legislated designation, and has been for centuries. In his important essay, 'The Trouble with Wilderness', William Cronon has pointed out the violent dispeopling and historical erasures of places that have since come to be defined as wilderness.[17] In Macfarlane's case, this was brusquely pointed out by the Scottish poet and rebarbative nature-writer Kathleen Jamie in her review of *The Wild Places* called 'A Lone Enraptured Male'.[18] Macfarlane does at least acknowledge that his wilderness is something of a construct, built out of his shuttling between the countryside and Cambridge, where he lives, and he recognises a process of 'inter-animation of the human and the wild' that undoes any simplistic binary of culture and nature.[19]

The concept of *rewilding* was popularised in George Monbiot's book, *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* (2013). The term in Monbiot's usage implies an active reinvention of the wild, rather than any notion that a pristine space simply awaits discovery. Rewilding, he says, 'is not active attempt to restore … to any prior state, but to permit ecological processes to resume.'[20] He also adds a dimension of 'rewilding human life', 'an unmet need for a wilder life' that is clearly part of the appeal of Macfarlane's writing too.[21] This is a knowing move towards a re-embedding in the fruits of the land as a counter to modernity's tendency to dis-embed and abstract place as space. Rewilding is a countermanding act, more complex than conservation.

Macfarlane has since become invested in what he calls the 'word-hoard', the rootedness of language in the land. In his book *Landmarks,* he asserts that 'Words are grained into our landscapes, and landscapes grained into our words', and he sets about retrieving a lost lexicon of local languages.[22] 'The words grouped here', he says, 'might in small measure re-wild our contemporary language for landscape.'[23] A similar literal unearthing of etymologies from their

roots in the land is pursued by landscape historian John Stilgoe: 'Language offers hints. Words stick to the ground.'[24] There is an affinity with Heidegger's rooting around in the soil of the German language, the loam of etymological history that aims to restore Being-in-the-World to the soil, in the (forest) Clearing, outside the forgetfulness of modernity's World Picture, or our technological Enframing. But the more immediate sources for this English investigation are the projects of poets like Geoffrey Hill in his *Mercian Hymns* (1971), about the linguistic and topographical traces of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the British Midlands, or Ted Hughes' fascination with the last Celtic kingdom in Yorkshire in his book *Remains of Elmet* (1979), or Seamus Heaney's *North* (1975), which the poet said contained a harsh tongue 'emanating from the ground I was brought up on.'[25] Heaney's presiding metaphor in *North* is the preserved remains of the 'bog people', ancient victims of sacrificial violence that Heaney pulled into association with the sectarian violence during the Irish War. These are all works that aim to re-embed and re-localize a historied language against the onrush of modernity's erasures.

There is an inevitable melancholia to this writing, because it is premised on the language of loss, on the presumption that disembedding has already occurred. Marfarlane begins *The Wild Places* with an elegy for the clearing of over half of England's ancient woodlands between 1930 and 1990, the uprooting of more than half the hedgerows, boundary markers for fields that often stretched back to Anglo-Saxon times, and the disappearance of nearly all lowland pastures and heathlands to development. Raymond Williams observed in his 1973 book *The Country and the City* that the pastoral mode is intrinsically melancholic, always premised on the passing of a Golden Age. Even so, Williams is persuasive that English modernity is particularly susceptible to this melancholia, due to the specific form of its agrarian capitalism and the rapidity of the Industrial Revolution in overthrowing a stable feudal structure in a matter of decades.[26]

Melancholic pastoralism has been intrinsic to forms of late imperial English nationalism, David Matless has argued. Aristocratic and Tory organicism, a belief that a natural order underpins political power, was the ideology of the imperial landowner class of the nineteenth century, evidenced in the rural writings of Rider Haggard and later mingling with 'blood and soil' fascism in the 1930s and 1940s. The Tory Member of Parliament and ardent pro-Nazi landowner Viscount Lymington (later, the Earl of Portsmouth) delivered a

speech with the title 'The Anatomy of Rural Melancholy' in 1947, arguing that the 'false values' of 'modern Progress' could be countered with a return to feudal agrarianism, what he called 'the rhythmic discipline of soil and season.'[27] The concept of 'heritage' often erases the labour of the land for a static picturesque vision of rural stability and unchangingness, which becomes a repository of national identity. Landscape becomes a 'storied ground', where literature mediates the apprehension of territory.[28] The enduring English attachment to a fantasized Wessex, for instance, reaches from Thomas Hardy via Hugh Massingham in the 1930s, and long into the post-war era.[29] Similar case studies have explored 'Wordsworthland', 'Dickens-land' or the national myths that accure around the Neolithic landscape of Wiltshire or the white cliffs of Dover.[30]

W. G. Hoskins, the most influential post-war writer on the English rural landscape, finished his pioneering historical study, *The Making of the English Countryside,* with a lamentation that 'since the year 1914, every single change in the English landscape has either uglified it or destroyed its meaning, or both … The country houses decay and fall … The house is seized by the demolition contractors, its park invaded and churned up.'[31] Many accounts of Englishness are suffused with this elegiac tone. Roger Scruton locates an essential Englishness in landscape, yet considers the artist Paul Nash (who died in 1946) to offer 'a last glimpse at the English landscape, as it was before surburbanisation and agribusiness destroyed it.'[32] This is a view repeated in many key texts of post-war English literature: the ruination of the landed country house by the forces of mediocrity in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945), the destruction of the security of Medieval Oxford by the forces of scientific modernity in C. S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength* (also 1945), or in the wrecking of the hobbits' shire at the end of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* (1955).

You can hear the mobilisation of this language in certain strands of what Alan Finlayson has identified as the 'metaphysics of Brexit'. The vote offered as a solution, Finlayson suggests, 'a cultural and spiritual redemption through …restoration' that was provoked by modernity's disruption of local, national certainties and hierarchies.[33] In the Weberian 'world image' or semi-theological ethos evoked by the Leave campaign, the harsh realities of longed-for free market deregulation after Brexit could be hidden by a lachrymose and entirely

disingenuous sentiment for the return of the 'sunlit uplands' of Deep England, its landscapes dispeopled of foreign intruders.

Robert Macfarlane's melancholia is not the same as these reactionary accounts, and there is an impetus in the generations since Richard Mabey's crucial books of the 1970s to reconfigure the return to nature not as an anti-modern or counter-modern gesture but rather to rethink place as an 'open-ended and experimental process' that intertwines the local with the cosmopolitan global.[34] Nevertheless, in the era of accelerating climate catastrophe, it would be wrong to discard the sense that permeates all this writing of the trauma that the delocalizing, 'extraterritorial' modernity has wrought. These writers variously argue, in the words of Bruno Latour's recent manifesto statement, that we need to get back 'down to Earth', to reconnect in new ways with the planet. Rewilding offers one contemporary tactic.[35]

2. Trauma and Nature

The second strand in new nature writing focuses explicitly on trauma, but on a different scale, this time in accounts of personal human catastrophe to which the natural world provides a kind of therapeutic, holistic salve. The breakthrough text that established this subgenre was Helen MacDonald's *H is for Hawk* (2014) – although this again is a book that rests on a series of intertextual resonances, stretching back via J. A. Baker's *The Peregrine* (1967) to T. H. White's *The Goshawk* (1951). *H is for Hawk* is a memoir about MacDonald's attempt to tame and train a goshawk in the months of mourning that follow her father's death.

MacDonald's book has been followed by an avalanche of similar texts, including Amy Liptrot's *The Outrun* (2015), about a retreat to the Orkney islands to confront alcoholism, or Alys Fowler's *Hidden Nature* (2017), which uses the unofficial nature reserve of the canal system in Birmingham to explore the ambiguities of her own sexual identity. *Hidden Nature* is a coming out story, coming out in and through the natural world, and was followed by Luke Turner's memoir, *Out of the Woods* (2019), which explores his bisexual adventures in the urban wilds of Epping Forest. Turner's memoir is about early sexual abuse and resulting sexual compulsions, but also a deliberate queering of the landscape of the forest that refuses any essentialist claim that persists around

rewilding. Turner says of his involvement with the volunteer conservationists of Epping Forest, none of them wanted a return to any notion of a pristine space. Instead, it needed a 'renegotiation of our relationship with the natural world', one that was 'conflicted and twisted and strange' – an objective correlative for post-traumatic, queer resilience. 'Epping Forest was saved for the people of London, but London couldn't help breaking through, disrupting nature, with its human instinct for dirt, vice, volume.'[36]

The queering of the wild has been a recent project of American critic Jack Halberstam, who theorizes the wild as the 'space/name/critical term for what lies beyond current logics of rule.'[37] This more avowedly mediated conception of the natural world makes it a strong ground for working out the traumatic ruptures of identity.

MacDonald's *H is for Hawk* takes place in the scratchy survivals of old woodlands on the outskirts of Cambridge. 'It's not an untouched wilderness like a mountaintop', she says, 'but a ramshackle wildness in which people and the land have conspired to strangeness. It's rich with the sense of an alternative countryside history; not just the grand, leisured dreams of landed estates, but a history of industry, forestry, disaster, commerce and work.'[38] Unlike rewilding, which is lured by the prospect of a world outside human constructs of time and place, a '*world-without-us'* (to use Eugene Thacker's term), *H is for Hawk* is unapologetic in using the hawk as a metaphor, albeit one that conveys a belligerent resistance to being the vehicle of the struggle with the black dogs of depression and grief.[39] That is the success, paradoxically, of the book: the hawk fights viciously against this routinization, determinedly keeping hold its natural alterity. The memoir moves through a process of melancholic othering of herself into the wild other of the goshawk, but heads into a state of healthier mourning when she recognises that 'the wild is not a panacea for the human soul; too much in the air can corrode it to nothing.' 'I'd fled to become a hawk', she realizes, 'but in my misery all I had done was turn the hawk into a mirror of me.'[40]

This kind of writing is another stage in the development of the trauma memoir. The surge of trauma memoirs in the 1990s were marked a kind of basking in unrelievedness, in emphasizing the impossibility of resolving psychic wounds. Survivors accrued cultural status in their very brokenness. There was a kind of

ethical injunction to leave trauma without resolution; all texts were required to foreground the 'empathic unsettlement' of the reader, and avoid the false redemption of 'closure'.[41] In the twenty-first century, psychology and the broader culture has become more interested in persistence or survival – which is indicated in the upsurge of language about 'resilience', the ability to bounce back or recover from trauma.[42] We meditate by listening to whale song, or defeat anxious insomnia by listening to the sound of tropical rainforests, or lapping waves. In 2019, the 'morning rush hour' of farm animals from Caen Hill farm in Devizes went viral across the globe on social media. Nature, in this popular psychology, is a resource for resilience, for wellbeing. There are many books celebrating what is called 'the wild remedy'. Sarah Ivens' guide, *Forest Therapy,* for instance, translates the Japanese practice of *Shirin-Yoku* or 'forest bathing', which has been a popular treatment in Japan since the 1980s.[43] There are therapeutic 'care farm' projects that aim to use farm labour as part of a cure for mental illness. William Davies has critiqued these as part of wellbeing industry of compulsory happiness that crudely considers Nature as a resource to re-programme workers in the neoliberal economy, where resilience is really a positive adaptation to the pressures of precarity.[44]

3. Folk Horror Revival

The third strand of the new nature writing ties trauma and landscape together in a very different way, through the overt use of Gothic tropes. The sub-genre of 'folk horror' is a specific form of the Gothic that is rooted in a British post-war sensibility (it might be a subset, too, of what has recently been called 'ecoGothic').[45] Folk horror is usually identified as clustering around three films, *The Witchfinder General* (directed by Michael Reeves, 1968), *Blood on Satan's Claw* (Piers Haggard, 1971), and most importantly *The Wicker Man* (Robin Hardy, 1973). Hardy's film is often taken to be the purest expression of the form, and has accrued an almost obsessive commentary from fans.[46]

In folk horror, modernity is overcome by a resurgence of the 'old ways', as pagan or occult beliefs are found alive and well, surviving out of time, in rural communities. The plot of *The Wicker Man,* for instance, involves a Puritanical policeman arriving on a remote Scottish island to investigate a disappearance, only for him to realise that he has been lured to be the sacrificial victim in a pagan ceremony of seasonal renewal that unites the hereditary lord and his

ardent peasants. Cyclical and ritual time has survived and outwits the disciplinary time of industrial capitalism, which in E. P. Thompson's famous account was imposed on agricultural labourers at the onset of the industrial revolution as a form of routinizing tyranny.[47]

In the 1970s, a fascination with the forms of rural resistance to early industrialisation – movements like the Ranters, the Diggers, or the Luddites – was part of both radical British history, but also the nascent ecological movement and pagan revivalism. *The Wicker Man* in fact reveals that the pre-modern pagan traditions of Summerisle were invented by the cynical lairds in the nineteenth-century – an acute take on the fabrications of wicca and allied new religious movements (wicca was invented by the English writer Gerald Gardner in the 1950s). In Gail-Nina Anderson's view of folk horror, the 'defining essence' of the genre less this paganism than 'the mood it evokes, where the natural world is also the uncanny realm.'[48]

The term 'folk horror' was only really fully established in 2010 by the retrospective assessments of Andy Paciorek and Adam Scovell, amongst others.[49] These excavations have expanded the frame of reference to include lots of unnerving TV films from the 1970s, such as the TV play *Penda's Fen* (a 1975 'Play for Today' written by David Rudkin and directed by Alan Clark), populated by angels, demons and ghosts that help trace out a dissident pansexual paganism in the heart of rural England, the TV films *Robin Redbreast* (James McTaggart, 1970) and *Red Shift* (based on Alan Garner's novel of the same name and directed by John McKenzie in 1978), and series written by Nigel Kneale, including *Beasts* (1976) and his last apocalyptic iteration of *Quatermass* (1979), where the hippies led to Stonehenge are being manipulated by alien forces. The annual BBC TV Christmas adaptations of M. R. James ghost stories, many directed by Lawrence Gordon Clark that ran from 1971-8, are also reference points. Many of these works have been 're-discovered', re-issued and accrued substantial commentaries in the last ten years.[50]

There has been a notable revival of folk horror in the 2010s. Ben Wheatley heavily relied on *The Wicker Man* in his unnerving horror film *Kill List* (2011), and he revisited a haunted and hallucinatory English Civil War in *A Field in England* (2013). There's been an emergent theme of the rural survival of occult traditions in recent films like *The Borderlands* (Eliot Goldner, 2014), *The Ritual*

(David Bruckner, 2017)*,* *Calibre* (Matt Palmer, 2018) or *A Dark Song* (Liam Gavin, 2017). Mark Gatiss, writer and performer in *The League of Gentlemen* (1999-2002), set in a grotesque imaginary northern village, has also helped revive the M. R. James Christmas tradition with an adaptation of 'The Tractate Middoth' (2013) and 'Martin's Close' (2019). Even at the avant-garde end of experimental film-making, texts rooted in landscape are typically tinged by an uneasy Gothic sensibility, as in works by Andrew Kötting (*Swandown* in 2012 or *By Our Selves,* 2015, or *The Whalebone Box,* 2019, all collaborations with Iain Sinclair) or Ben Rivers' *A Spell to Ward off the Darkness* (2013), or Paul Wright in *Arcadia* (a collection of peculiar rural rituals and folk festivals spliced together from British Film Institute archives, released in 2017). Many of these works seem to be rooted in what Scovell calls the 'alchemical landscape' of rural Britain, something that speaks with renewed voice in the contemporary climate crisis.[51]

A cluster of writers have also been identified with the folk horror revival, and their crossover success is symptomatic. Andrew Michael Hurley published *The Loney* in an edition of 278 copies through the tiny specialist horror imprint Tartarus in 2014. It is an intense novel about a menacing landscape on the north-west coast of England, near the treacherous Morecombe Bay. By word of mouth its reputation built and it was picked up by the international Hodder imprint the following year, and won the Costa First Novel prize. Hurley's subsequent works, *Devil's Day* (2017) and *Starve Acre* (2019) are similarly rooted in northern landscapes and folkloric traditions, the Gothic erupting out of poisoned ground.

A similar trajectory from margin to centre happened to the Yorkshire-based writer, Benjamin Myers. Myers published several dark and savage novels about the moors of Yorkshire through a small press Bluemoose Books. His breakthrough novel, *The Gallows Pole* (2017), based on the true story of a gang of counterfeiters who ran their own little kingdom in Cragg Vale in the 1760s, was a best-seller and resulted in a major book deal. His insistent re-localisation of the Gothic to the north has resulted in his fine non-fiction exploration of Cragg Vale in *Under the Rock: The Poetry of a Place* (2018). The book centres on the brooding Scout Rock, 'a long-doomed place buried in the soil of memory.'[52] It is a slab in a harsh landscape, indifferent to human presence, a place evoked in some of Ted Hughes's darkest nature poetry (Hughes grew up

nearby). Myers speaks of the place as full of an annihilating '*otherness* of the hills, woods and moors.'[53] But it is also an entirely post-rural, post-natural landscape, since it was one of the first to be touched and transformed by the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, which leaves its traces everywhere. This liminality suits the folk horror mode: uncertain locales, an England that Myers suggests in one of the interstitial poetry sections of the book is 'an idea in constant reinvention,/a concept kept fluid, an abstract Albion/Of falling fences.'[54]

Myers and Hurley sit inside a distinctly northern Gothic that includes writers like Jenn Ashworth or Fiona Mozley. Ashworth's *Fell* (2017) is a haunted house tale set on the edge of Morecombe Bay. Mozley's novel *Elmet* (2017) re-visits the harsh landscapes of Yorkshire explored by Ted Hughes. There is even a collaborative project called Cumbrian Cthulhu, which gives a localised spin to the habit of H. P. Lovecraft's readers to add to the 'mythos' of his monstrous Old Ones, his panoply of malignant ancient creatures who displace anthropocentric scales.[55] Lovecraft's horror was always thoroughly rooted in storied grounds and their undershafts, places layered with geological stratifications of terror. Legends of hauntings produce, as they do in so many locales, a way of articulating half-forgotten patterns of superstition that modernity has unsuccessfully sought to erase. The artists' book *Calvariae Disjecta: The Many Hauntings of Burton Agnes Hall* (2017) is a collaboration that recovers the multiple, shifting accounts of the same Cumbrian ghost story, the 'Screaming Skull', across different texts.[56] Ghosts mark traces of anthropological place *contra* abstract space, and this act of folkloric recovery could be multiplied many times across England's troubled places. Even English Heritage has sponsored a book of ghost stories, which asked writers to animate the country houses in their care, presumably with the hope of stimulating some dark tourism.[57]

Why this contemporary investment in reviving regional folk horror? Is there a way of reading it against the grain of the demographic and political line that populations of the North voted both for Brexit in 2016 and decisively for Boris Johnson's populist nationalism in 2019 out of a disdain for cosmopolitan, globalist modernity and for a reactionary re-embedding in older ideas of national identity? Folk horror deploys the Gothic to subvert: it *disturbs* the land, finds fiends in the furrow, invokes a recalcitrant deep past that will not be

routinized into nostalgia. In these terms, folk horror could be seen as a version of Timothy Morton's idea of 'dark ecology', in which he signals that all human activity on the planet is now haunted by the acceleration towards the irreversible tipping point of climate crisis. In Morton's thought, the space of modernity that colonised the globe has now reached its end, and found its nemesis: space has collapsed, he says, 'and *place* has emerged in its truly monstrous, uncanny dimension, which is to say its *nonhuman dimension.'*[58] This displacement of modernity's expansive push towards de-localisation is menaced by its other: re-localisation.

But this is not a cosy or nostalgic return. When Morton declares 'The ecological era is the revenge of place', he is describing a new kind of eco-horror, when the text typically seizes hold of a recalcitrant trace of the past, that persistent memory that, to quote Walter Benjamin, 'flashes up in a moment of danger.'[59] Just a few sentences down from that famous Benjamin quote from the sixth of his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', he continues: 'Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that *even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy if he wins.' Gothic *contra* Brexit.

In Mark Fisher's account of the categories of horror he calls 'the weird' and 'the eerie', he reserves the term eerie for the unsettling feeling produced by rural settings where a hooded agency seems to lurk, threatening to dethrone human confidence in the domination of nature. An eerie presence is never quite determinable. It suggests, says Fisher, 'the eerie contours of fateful forces that will never fully come into view.'[60] This is a useful paradigm to explore the fiction of Hurley or Myers, and Fisher roots the eerie mode in the uneasy rural tales of M. R. James, the revenge of ancient buried artefacts in Suffolk villages in 'A Warning to the Curious' or 'O Whistle, and I'll Come to you, My Lad' (both texts essential parts of the folk horror genealogy). Robert Macfarlane followed up with 'The Eeriness of the English Countryside', which swept up M. R. James with recent folk horror fiction, cinema, music, art and cultural theory.[61]

In an earlier book, Mark Fisher used the term 'hauntology', borrowed and repurposed from Jacques Derrida's *Spectres of Marx,* to explore both the curious and unnerving sensibility of British folk horror from the 1970s, but also

the sense of the lost futures and possibilities of that moment just before Thatcher began an ideological war on the spaces of culture that survived in ecological niches beyond market-driven neoliberalism.[62] In the contemporary revival, there is a reason why Benjamin Myers goes back to the 1760s in *Gallows Pole,* or Ben Wheatley's film *A Field in England* returns to the English Civil War. There is an overt political sense that the enclosure of common lands by landowners across Britain, which peaked in the mid-eighteenth-century, is once again relevant to our present condition. Acts of enclosure shaped agrarian capitalism and accelerated industrialisation and urbanisation. These moves uprooted populations while concentrating wealth in landed estates. This is important now because, as Brett Christophers details in *The New Enclosure,* there has been large-scale land privatisation in England since 1979, when the Thatcher insisted on a sell-off of what was deemed to be 'surplus' land to the private sector. Christophers estimates that 10% of public land in Britain, or 2 million hectares, has been transferred from the public to the private sector in the last 40 years.[63] The loss of public space is felt not just in the closure of land access in the countryside, but in the privatisation of public city spaces. This has led to a reinvestment in the politics of the 'commons' in leftist political thought, at least since the Occupy movement.

The 48-52% Brexit divide in Britain shouldn't be seen as between the liberal, delocalised, cosmopolitan metropolis and the conservative, relocalised suburban and rural vote. Elements of the conservative right might want to embed a vision of Englishness in the feudal hierarchies of a rural 'Merry England' or an elegiac vision of lost purity, but the emergence of folk horror suggests an impish desire to imagine that the land will never lie back and think of England but instead seek revenge on those who wish to control and contain its meanings in narrow nationalism. Brexit advocates promised that the 'sunlit uplands' of England could be restored and face down the dark Satanic institutions of the European Union. In answer to that dishonest vision, folk horror is Brexitland's dark shadow.

4. Walking, Counter-Memory and Practice

How to subvert both modernity's abstractions of space and the nostalgic conservatism that so often invests place? One consistent answer has been: to walk. In Rebecca Solnit's *Wanderlust,* the writer-activist argues that walking

resists capitalised space and both reconnects the walker with place and thought with the body. She calls walking 'a subversive detour, the scenic route through a half-abandoned landscape of ideas and experiences', and connects it to political marches, protests and peripatetic philosophy.[64] The idea of the unplanned, apparently unproductive drift or *dérive,* the deliberate derangement of the orchestrated and surveilled space of the city, was one of the tactics central to the Surrealists and their descendants, The Situationist International. Guy Debord issued the 'Theory of the Dérive' in 1958, which saw it as profoundly different from the 'journey or stroll' since it explored the 'psychogeographical contours' of a city, its 'constant currents, fixed points and vortexes.'[65] Michel de Certeau evoked 'A Chorus of Idle Footsteps' against the cartographic, panoptic space of the city by the walker who chooses to drift, using 'the effects of dissimulation, escape, possibilities of moving into other landscapes.'[66]

The English writer most associated with this psychogeographical tactic is Iain Sinclair, who since the late 1960s, through rebarbative poetry, prose and film, has documented an alternative London. He resists the erasure through acts of counter-memory, often blended with notions of occult conjuration or ritual summoning that accumulate and articulate the deep historical traces of particular locales, particularly the derided outcast territories of the East End of London. 'Haunted places are the only ones people can live', de Certeau declared, 'and this inverts the schema of the Panopticon.'[67] As London has been one of the epicentres of global financialisation since the 1970s, the resultant abstraction of the space of the city has made Sinclair imagine his texts as conjurations of resistance.

Since *London Orbital* (2002), Sinclair's trenchant walking stories have drifted to the edges of the city, to the hinterlands that exist between city and country. *London Orbital* attempts to follow the path of the M25 motorway that loops around London, driving through terrains sedimented with forgotten histories, now condemned to be infrastructural grey zones. In his *Edge of Orison* (2006), Sinclair walked beyond London's orbital road, and struck off from Epping Forest north, recreating the eighty-mile walk north the poet John Clare took to escape his confinement in an asylum (this walk was recreated in Andrew Kötting's film, *By Our Selves*).

The new British landscape writing takes Sinclair's repurposed urban dérive and uses it to radicalise the habit of the country walk. This has been called 'psychoecology' by Stephen Hunt.[68] Works built around country walks typically subvert the vision of the bucolic escape, using Sinclair's tactic of counter-memory, which in Foucault's words 'makes visible all of those discontinuities that cross us.'[69]

In *The Old Weird Albion,* a walk into the byways of the South Downs, Justin Hopper searches for ancestral 'reminders in the landscape – physical artifacts, like stone circles and burial mounds, but also cultural ideas that manifest themselves as place names and collective memories: folk tales, songs, legends.'[70] Hopper layers the Downs with literary and cultural histories, following the paths of renegades. It is a place of heterodox beliefs, pagan survivals and vanished prehistories of worship, sacred groves with eerie ambience. In Hopper, walking becomes weirded, in the ancient sense of twisted or torqued by occult forces. No wonder that a quarterly journal started in 2019 called *Weird Walk,* which offers psychoecological guides to England's eerie and haunted sites, with contributions from Hopper, Benjamin Myers, and others. Meanwhile, Edward Parnell's *Ghostland: In Search of a Haunted Country* (2019) manages to fuse the eerie perambulation through landscapes with a tour of British sites associated with folk horror (the Suffolk of M. R. James, the locations of *The Wicker Man,* and so on) – and all this while also being a trauma memoir about the deaths of his father, mother and brother. Parnell's book is like a knot that binds together many of the strands that I am identifying here.

The writer Ken Worpole has also produced several reflections on the rural landscapes of Essex, suggesting that writing about the county offers a prime example of 'the New English Landscape', a 'bastard countryside' of uneasy hybridity that has induced 'a crisis of representation and exposition in landscape aesthetics.'[71] Worpole researches a dense network of artistic and political settlements in Essex since the late-nineteenth century as a way of countering the reputation of Essex as the heartland of Brexit nationalism and conservatism, fixed in place since the 1980s by the invention of 'Essex Man', the electoral shorthand for the turning of the white working classes towards economic libertarianism and social conservatism. To counter this view Worpole, in both *The New English Landscape* and the collaborative project *Radical Essex,* uncovers the county as the place of socialist utopias, Tolstoyan back-to-the-land

experiments, Peace Pledge Union retreats, the site of Britain's first nudist colony, the earliest examples of Modernist architecture in England, and settlements of poets and painters. *Radical Essex* was published complete with walking tour maps.[72] Tom Bolton's long walk around the Essex coastline, recounted in *Low Country: Brexit on the Essex Coast* (2018), uses Sinclair's peripatetic tactic to uncover the fragile traces of a literary and cultural history vanishing even as the fragile marshland ecologies of the coast disappear to development and/or the climate crisis.[73] 'On foot', as Solnit says, 'everything stays connected': slow pace and place resistant to speed in abstract space.

5. Edgelands

Much of Essex, being downriver from London and the dumping ground for many kinds of its waste, might reasonably be called an edgeland, a post-rural, post-natural zone. The Essex musician Karl Hyde produced an album of ambient music and accompanying film for these interstitial places called *Edgeland* in 2013. There is an obsession in the new nature writing in walking through these overlooked, unexamined, hybrid zones: Worpole's 'bastard countryside'.

The term edgelands was coined by the geographer Marion Shoard to identify the 'interfacial' zones that blur edges of towns with undeveloped countryside, places of abandoned industrial buildings, flooded quarries, municipal rubbish dumps, landfills or scrapyards or lorry parks or wastelands left without clear ownership and overrun by weeds. It is unclear if these are undeveloped pockets of 'waste' ground, or developed pockets that have fallen into misuse and been rewilded. Shoard calls them 'a vaguely menacing frontier land' with an intrinsic 'subversiveness.'[74]

These are the spaces the nature writer Richard Mabey identified as the 'unofficial countryside' in 1973, the term for what he called a 'shifting and unstable' territory. For Mabey, post-industrial ruins or railway sidings offered 'a story of co-existence, of how it is possible for the natural world to live alongside men, even among his grimmest eyesores.'[75] In 2012, the poets Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts followed this up with the fragmentary prose fragments of *Edgelands: Journeys into England's True Wilderness,* proclaiming that 'somewhere in the hollows and spaces between our carefully

managed wilderness areas and the creeping, flattening effects of global capitalism, there are still spaces where an overlooked England truly exists.'[76]

This writing foregrounds the provisional constructedness of landscape. Landscape derives from the Dutch 'land schop' or shovel, revealing the engineering required to shape the lie of the land for human ends. Large areas of the east coast of England have been shored up over the centuries by Dutch specialists who raised dikes and drained marshes to reclaim land for farming. Development reshapes the interplay of nature and culture in the edgelands, which includes the very uncertain edge of the shoreline as sea level rises.

Edgelands can evoke a sort of existential homelessness, a condition that can prompt a new kind of uneasy haunting not of storied locales but of the blank, emptied out spaces of new-build suburban housing estates, shopping centre car-parks and industrial estates. Hilary Mantel's *Beyond Black* (2005) is about a Spiritualist medium who exists in the bland edgeland spaces on the periphery of London, largely in the hope of escaping the dead that continually drag around after her, barracking her every move. Nicola Barker's eccentric novel of haunting, *Darkmans* (2007), does the same for the definitively interstitial place Ashford in Kent (experienced by most as a brief stop on the international Eurostar trainline). In this Gothic mode, what erupts in edgelands might not be supernatural, but grindingly material violence. In the film *Eden Lake* (2008), a young middle-class couple head for a weekend at a disused quarry, which in the man's childhood was a rewilded realm of woodland and lake. They now find it is in the process of being fenced off as a gated community and re-branded as a luxury settlement, Eden Lake. As it is built, the local community is portrayed universally as a feral and lawless tribe of the amoral white urban poor, brimming with violent resentment at incomers and intent on brutal revenge. On release, *Eden Lake* was taken as a commentary on gentrification and its discontents, the 'feral youth' that hound young urban professionals.[77] The word 'chav' had not quite found traction, that pejorative term for aggressive white working-class youth of the socially and economically abandoned edgelands. Rewatching it ten years on, it leaps out as an early example of the demonization of the white trash 'basket of deplorables' that are lazily assumed to have voted en bloc for Brexit and for Donald Trump in 2016.

Writers of the edgelands, though, tend on the whole to embrace its provisional possibilities in a way absent from nature writing that longs for the illusion of pristine wilderness. In Gareth Rees's *Marshland: Dreams and Nightmares on the Edge of London,* the writer explores the shifting worlds of Hackney Marshes and Lea Valley, places to the East of London of industrial ruination left to revert to a form of urban wilds after the end of the Lea and Thames as working rivers in the 1960s.[78] This is a zone once entirely overlooked, but targeted for the 2012 Olympics for major redevelopment. The language of loss saturates this writing, as pockets of residual or resistant cultures are discovered and converted into real estate. Yet Rees does not suffer the untreatable melancholia that afflicts Iain Sinclair in his rages against the erasures on both sides of the Thames, first for the Millennium Dome on the Greenwich peninsula in 2000 and then for the regeneration and displacement of local populations for the Olympics in the run up to 2012.[79] Gareth Rees is more attuned to the intrinsic provisionality – and therefore the creative possibilities – of these edgelands. They cannot last: that is the nature of edgelands. The nightmare of history cannot weigh so heavily upon them.

Rees's exploration of the Hackney marshes was published by Influx Press, which is dedicated to site-specific writing about interstitial places. Gary Budden, one of the publishers, has produced a collection of short stories, *Hollow Shores* (2017), set on the liminal landscape of the Kentish shoreline along the south side of the Thames Estuary. Budden reads the Kent landscape as a provisional space in which he situates a gentle folk horror, nature writing that see ghosts flicker in its peripheral vision. It is a terrain that reaches back to Anglo-Saxon settlement but is also marked by dense industrial and post-industrial workings, and registers the climate crisis.[80] Elsewhere, Budden has used the term 'landscape punk' for his attempts to wrestle Kent, one of the main recruiting grounds of the right-wing UK Independence Party and now Brexit Party, away from English nationalist ideology, again by emphasizing the hybrid cultures and ghosts that haunt a fragile, shifting shoreline. For Budden, place writing may emphasize home, but that is an intrinsically 'bastard place, multi-cultural and multi-layered, mixed, impure.'[81] Edgelands therefore promise a re-weirding of England, not a re-wilding: a resistance to the 'heroic failure' that pushes nostalgic visions of Brexitland's sunny meadows, the English Dreamtime of medieval vassal states, feudal lords and knights regaining the sovereignty of their lands and the deference of their serfs.[82]

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This outline of five strands of contemporary nature writing in Britain is inevitably schematic and incomplete, but it has aimed to build a taxonomy that can organise this otherwise overwhelming welter of symptomatic publications that have emerged since the identification of the New Landscape Writing in 2008. It is a complex and riven terrain, which sees Nature not as a pristine, untroubled, restorative territory outside Culture, but as a muddied and convoluted pluriverse, caught up in multiple social, economic, political and literary processes. To escape the facile opposition of the local and the global, Bruno Latour suggests that to grasp the New Climactic Regime we need to '*generate alternative descriptions.* How could we act politically without having inventoried, surveyed, measured, centimetre by centimetre, being by being, person by person, the stuff that makes up the Earth for us?'[83] I offer this taxonomy as merely one attempt to capture these emergent alternative descriptions.

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[1] William Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London: Verso, 2016).
[2] Gareth Evans and Di Robson (eds), *Towards Re-Enchantment: Place and its Meanings* (London: Artevents, 2010).
[3] Owen Hatherley, *The Ministry of Nostalgia* (London: Verso, 2018).
[4] In his 'This was their finest hour' speech on 18 June 1940, Winston Churchill promised that the defeat of Hitler would lead 'all of Europe… to move forward into broad, sunlit uplands'. The phrase has been repeated by many prominent pro-Brexit politicians, but in the considerably narrower vision of English nationalism.
[5] See, for instance, Robert Eaglestone (ed.), *Brexit and Literature: Critical and Cultural Responses* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018). There is no discussion of nature writing in this collection.
[6] Marc Augé, *Non-Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 51.
[7] Zygmunt Bauman, Introduction to *Liquid Modernity* (2000), reprinted in *The Contemporary Bauman,* ed. Anthony Elliott (Routledge, 2007), p. 36.

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[8] Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
[9] Manuel Castells, *The Information Age, Volume 1: The Rise of the Network Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p. 442.
[10] Piere Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *les lieux de mémoire*', *Representations* 26 (1989), p. 12.
[11] 'Theresa May's Conference Speech in Full', *Daily Telegraph* (5 October 2016) https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/05/theresa-mays-conference-speech-in-full/. The passage, contrasting post-national space with national place, ran: 'Too many people in positions of power behave as though they have more in common with international elites than with the people down the road, the people they employ, the people they pass in the street. But if you believe you're a citizen of the world, you're a citizen of nowhere'.
[12] Paul J. Crutzen and Eugene F. Stoermer, 'The "Anthropocence"', *Global Change Newsletter* 41 (2000), pp. 17-18.
[13] See Jos Smith, *The New Nature Writing: Rethinking the Literature of Place* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018).
[14] Robert Macfarlane, *The Wild Places* (London: Granta, 2007), p. 58.
[15] Macfarlane, *The Wild Places,* pp. 60-1.
[16] T. M. Devine, *The Scottish Clearances: A History of the Dispossessed* (London: Penguin, 2018).
[17] William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', in *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature,* ed. W. Cronon (New York: Norton, 1995), 69-90. See also Vittoria Di Palma, *Wasteland: A History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).
[18] Kathleen Jamie, 'A Lone Enraptured Male', *London Review of Books* (6 March 2008), pp. 25-7. The different readings of the wild in Macfarlane and Jamie are discussed in Smith, *The New Nature Writing,* pp. 85-7.
[19] Macfarlane, *The Wild Places,* p. 111.
[20] George Monbiot, *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life* (London: Penguin, 2014), p. 8. See also Isabella Tree, *Wilding: The Return of Nature to a British Farm* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2018).
[21] Monbiot, *Feral,* pp. 10 and 11.
[22] Robert Macfarlane, *Landmarks* (London: Penguin, 2015), p. 10.
[23] Macfarlane, *Landmarks,* p. 9.
[24] John R. Stilgoe, *What is Landscape?* (Cambridge: MIT, 2015), p. 57.
[25] Seamus Heaney, cited in Edna Longley, '"Inner Emigré" or "Artful Voyeur"? Seamus Heaney's *North'*, in *New Casebooks: Seamus Heaney,* ed. M. Allen (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 37.
[26] Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973).
[27] Earl of Portsmouth, 'The Anatomy of Rural Melancholy' (London: National Council of Social Service, 1947), pp. 7 and 8.
[28] Paul Readman, *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
[29] On 'Wessex' fantasy as a key element of English ecologies, see David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London: Reaktion, 1998).
[30] See Readman, *Storied Ground.*
[31] W. G. Hoskins, *The Making of the English Landscape* (Dorset: Little Toller, 2013), p. 270. Originally published in 1955.
[32] Roger Scruton, *England: An Elegy* (London: Pimlico, 2000), p. 226.

[33] Alan Finlayson, 'The Metaphysics of Brexit', *Third Text* 32: 5-6 (2018), pp. 598-604, p. 604.
[34] Jos Smith, *The New Nature Writing,* p. 21.
[35] Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth: Politics in the New Climatic Regime,* trans. C. Porter (Cambridge: Polity, 2018).
[36] Luke Turner, *Out of the Woods* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2019), pp. 198 and 196.
[37] Jack Halberstam, 'Wilderness, Loss, Death', *Social Text* 121 (2014), pp. 137-48.
[38] Helen Macdonald, *H is for Hawk* (London: Vintage, 2014), p. 7.
[39] See Eugene Thacker, *In the Dust of This Planet* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011).
[40] Macdonald, *H is for Hawk,* p. 218.
[41] For the idea of 'empathic unsettlement', see Dominick LaCapra, 'Trauma, Absence, Loss', *Critical Inquiry* 25 (1999), pp. 696-727. For a survey of the trauma memoir of the 1990s, see Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (London: Routledge, 2007).
[42] See, for example, M. Kent, M. Davis and J. Reich (eds), *The Resilience Handbook: Approaches to Stress and Trauma* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
[43] Emma Mitchell, *The Wild Remedy: How Nature Mends Us – A Diary* (London: Michael O'Mara, 2018) and Sarah Ivens, *Forest Therapy: Seasonal Ways to Embrace Nature for a Happier You* (London: Platkus, 2018).
[44] William Davies, *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Well-Being* (London: Verso, 2016), pp. 245-9.
[45] See Andrew Smith and William Hughes (eds), *EcoGothic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013).
[46] See, for instance, Benjamin Franks et al (eds), *The Quest for* The Wicker Man: *Historical, Folklore and Pagan Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Luarth Press, 2006).
[47] E. P. Thompson, 'Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present* 38 (1987), pp. 56-97.
[48] Gail-Nina Anderson, 'The Old Ways', *Fortean Times* (July 2019), pp. 38-9.
[49] Andy Paciorek (ed.), *Folk Horror Revival: Field Studies,* 2nd edn (Durham: Wyrd Harvest Press, 2018) and Adam Scovell, *Folk Horror: Hours Dreadful and Things Strange* (Leighton Buzzard: Auteur, 2017).
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[51] Scovell, *Folk Horror,* p. 40.
[52] Benjamin Myers, *Under the Rock: The Poetry of Place* (London: Elliot and Thompson, 2018), p. 87.
[53] Myers, *Under the Rock,* p. 18.
[54] Myers, *Under the Rock,* p. 252.
[55] The *Cumbrian Cthulhu* anthology is 'produced' by Andrew McGuigan for lulu.com (2012).
[56] Kate Briggs, Hilmar Schäfer, and Robert Williams, *Calvariae Disjecta: The Many Hauntings of Burton Agnes Hall* (Information as Material, 2017).
[57] Rowan Routh (ed.), *Eight Ghosts: The* English Heritage *Book of New Ghost Stories* (Tewkesbury: September Publishing, 2017).
[58] Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), p. 10.
[59] Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History' in *Illuminations* (New York: Random House, 2002), p. 247.
[60] Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater Books, 2016).

[61] Robert Macfarlane, 'The Eeriness of the English Countryside', *Guardian* (10 April 2015), https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/apr/10/eeriness-english-countryside-robert-macfarlane (Accessed 4 July 2019).
[62] See Mark Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life: Writings on Depression, Hauntology and Lost Futures* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2014).
[63] Brett Christophers, *The New Enclosure: The Appropriation of Public Land in Neoliberal Britain* (London: Verso, 2018).
[64] Rebecca Solnit, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (London: Granta, 2014), p. 12.
[65] Guy Debord, 'Theory of the Dérive', trans. K. Knabb (1958), available at Situationist International Online, https://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/theory.html (Accessed 4 July 2019).
[66] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. S. Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 107.
[67] De Certeau, *Practice,* p. 108.
[68] Stephen Hunt, 'The Emergence of Psychoecology: The New Nature Writings of Roger Deakin, Mark Cocker, Robert Macfarlane and Richard Mabey', *Green Letters* 10: 1 (2009), pp. 70-7.
[69] Michael Foucault, 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in *Language, Counter-Memory, and Practice,* trans. D. Bouchard (Oxford: Blackwell, 1977), p.162.
[70] Justin Hopper, *The Old Weird Albion* (London: Penned in the Margins, 2017), p. 72.
[71] Ken Warpole, with Jason Orton, *The New English Landscape* (London: Field Station, 2013), p. 10.
[72] Hayley Dixon and Joe Hill (eds), *Radical Essex* (Southend: Focal Point Gallery, 2018).
[73] Tom Bolton, *Low Country: Brexit on the Essex Coast* (London: Penned in the Margins, 2018).
[74] Marion Shoard, 'Edgelands' in *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain,* ed. J. Jenkins (London: Profile, 2002), 130. The source for 'edgelands' is also discussed in Jos Smith, *The New Nature Writing,* pp. 103ff.
[75] Richard Mabey, *The Unofficial Countryside* (London: Collins, 1973), pp. 21 and 12.
[76] Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts, *Edgelands: Journeys into England's True Wilderness* (London: Vintage, 2012), p. 10.
[77] See Libby Brooks, 'Forget Zombie Dawn. Now it's the Day of the Feral Youth', *Guardian* Comment (18 September 2008), https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/sep/18/horror.tonyblair (accessed 28 April 2020).
[78] Gareth E. Rees, *Marshland: Dreams and Nightmares on the Edge of London* (London: Influx, 2013).
[79] See Iain Sinclair, *Sorry Meniscus: Excursions to the Millennium Dome* (London: Profile, 1999) and *Ghost Milk: Calling Time on the Grand Project* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2011).
[80] Gary Budden, *The Hollow Shores* (London: Dead Ink Press, 2017).
[81] Gary Budden, 'Awake Awake Sweet England: Why We Need Landscape Punk' (24 October 2017), *The Quietus,* https://thequietus.com/articles/23446-landscape-punk-nationalism-politics (Accessed 4 July 2019). Budden acknowledges the term 'landscape punk' is taken from the 'Hookland' project – a weird, invented 1970s fictional place, evoked with queasy, self-mocking nostalgia.
[82] This imagery is borrowed from Fintan O'Toole, *Heroic Failure: Brexit and the Politics of Pain* (London: Head of Zeus, 2018).
[83] Bruno Latour, *Down to Earth,* p. 94.