

Constructing a Countercultural Self:
A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity
Through Place and Space

PhD

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Thesis submitted for the award of PhD

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Declaration of Authorship

I, Ben Murphy, hereby declare that this thesis is entirely my own work. Where I have referenced the work of others this is clearly stated.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ben Murphy". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping 'B' and a long, trailing flourish at the end.

Dated 14.08.2020

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Ben Murphy
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Abstract

This practice based interdisciplinary research combines photography with cultural geography to explore how contemporary international neo-nomadic countercultural identity is manifested, reinforced and maintained through customised vehicles used as homes, and other forms of makeshift self-made dwellings situated in a remote mountainous region of south-east Spain. Large format analogue photographs made in the field act as the primary source of reference and conduit through which the construction of countercultural identities are examined and explained. Theories concerning place, space, material culture and home provide a framework to approach, deconstruct and interpret the photographs to offer alternative perceptions of countercultural identity. In deliberately excluding people from the colour photographs, using diffused lighting conditions and a system that enables seeing fine details, the intention is to encourage critical evaluation without the distraction of a physical human presence. Photographs are discussed to demonstrate how place, space, and materiality contribute to the construction of a countercultural self, and provide ways in which people can indicate otherness. Analysing dwellings and habitats I draw out differences in countercultural identities. The thesis also considers how neo-nomadic countercultures can hold on to historic identities, or adapt and evolve when transposed to a foreign country. Reflecting on certain objects and materials that connect the counterculture to the industrialised world, I consider some possible contradictions and inherent paradoxes of attempting to escape the dominant society, while being entangled in it and dependent on it for survival. The purpose of this research is to contribute to the questioning and understanding of current neo-nomadic countercultural identity, through intersecting aesthetically and conceptually considered photographic practice with cultural geography and arguing for their capacity to enrich each other as a means of producing alternative understandings and progressing geographic and photographic knowledge.

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Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter One: Introduction

This practice based interdisciplinary thesis considers how neo-nomadic multinational countercultural identities are constructed, maintained, reinforced, expressed, re-imagined and compromised through the making and study of large format photographs of makeshift dwellings on two sites in Andalucia, South-East Spain. Individual photographs will be analysed in three empirical chapters; firstly to explore countercultural identity through notions of place, secondly to reflect on the cultural geographies of countercultural homes and thirdly to uncover entanglements, paradoxes and compromises concerning countercultural dependencies on the outside world. This thesis presents the overarching case that photographs made with intent, creative and intellectual consideration, aesthetic sensibility and conceptual engagement, are an effective and powerful medium through which to engage with countercultural identity in the context of cultural geography and produce cultural geographic knowledge.

A long founded interest in intentional environmentally concerned communities such as Findorn in North East Scotland, (Cooper-Marcus in Seamon 1993) and in the punk and new wave culture of the 1970s and 1980s and its ramifications centred around challenging systems of power, together with my preoccupations with photographing architectural spaces and places as a way of representing and exploring identity, led to my reading of the novel *Drop City* (Boyle 2003). Through a chance conversation discussing the book, I was alerted to a countercultural site in Spain. After contacting one of the group and a series of handwritten letter correspondences, I was granted permission to visit the site to make photographic work, on condition that I would not reveal the specific whereabouts of the group. The initial visit in 2006 was followed by a number of subsequent field trips, between 2009 and 2015, during which time I became aware of other sites in the area, each with different atmospheres of place, and each drawing distinct

types of counterculture. The sites I have chosen to concentrate on exploring in this thesis are named “A” and “B” so as to protect individuals privacy. The natures of these sites will be drawn out in detail through the photographs and thesis. As I will discuss later, this region has a rich history of rebellion, religious and political conflict (Renshaw 2011, Rogozen-Soltar 2007), and bohemian occupation (Brenan 2008) which continues to affect the population and draw people here. Photographs have been produced with the intention of being seen in a gallery context, to be published in and critically considered in journals, magazines, newspapers and a book, as well as in the form of digital prints and files to accompany the thesis. The sequencing and selection of images in the thesis and in exhibition presentation are different; an exhibition was curated to work within the Architectural Association Gallery; an elegant Georgian terraced building in Bedford Square, central London, where there are high ceilings and three tall large windows to the front. Twenty-one works were set out in a sequence which followed the geography of the sites where the work was made. The flow of the images in this context was important as it was intended to give a sense of how the dwellings were situated geographically. The scale of the works displayed was in part determined by the constraints of the room space, however, all works were hand printed at one of three predetermined ideal sizes; Ten were at the size of 30 x 40 inches, presented on one of the gallery walls as a block of two rows of five closely spaced. Ten were made at 20 x 24 inches, displayed in pairs one above another, on the three other walls of the gallery, and one photograph was printed at five feet x four feet and hung above the mantle piece of a Georgian fireplace. The sizes of the prints were chosen so as to allow close reading. All works, with the exception of the largest photograph which was framed in white painted oak, were framed in simple unpainted oak frames. The prints have white borders. This method of framing aims for the images to be seen in a clear surround without peripheral distractions. In an ideal situation, given less restricted gallery exhibition space, such as in a major museum, (e.g. The Victoria and Albert Museum, who already hold four examples of this work in their permanent collections), or in a commercial art gallery, all works would be printed and presented at the same size of 28 x 38 inches on 30 x 40 inch fuji crystal archive matt photographic paper in simple oak frames under non reflective ultraviolet light protected museum glass, within 6mm

thick archival museum quality chalk white card window mounts with beveled inner edges. The sequence of images in this context would loosely follow the geography of the two sites discussed in the thesis, as well as one other small site close to the other sites but not discussed in the thesis, working clockwise as shown in the prints in appendix three. There would be a total of forty two prints in two large rooms of four walls. Each photograph would be hung with their centres at a height of 1.65 metres from the ground and with a spacing of one metre between each framed print. There would be windowless rooms with a single door placed centrally on the wall of the first room on entering, and another door centrally placed on the back wall of the first room leading to the second room, with ceiling heights of approximately four metres. Two photographs would be on the left wall immediately on entering the room, six photographs on the left hand side wall, two photographs on either side of the door of the far wall of the first room and six photographs on the right hand side wall. In the second room there would be the same layout as the first room, except there would be six photographs on the back wall. The work in its exhibition format is titled 'The Riverbed'. This alludes to the physical geography of one of the sites, is also a term to describe this place used by those who live there, and, as a metaphor, suggests a place where objects and landscape are in a state of continual flux and flow. A short text introducing the work in exhibition (presented here as an introduction within the introduction of the thesis) reads thus:

THE RIVERBED. BEN MURPHY

In a remote mountainous area of south east Spain, in hard to find places along the banks of an infertile riverbed, in ravines and off mountain passes, multi-national, non-conformist individuals live out their versions of paradise in ephemeral, loosely bound settlements.

Ben Murphy's large format analogue photographs, made during extended annual trips over a ten year period, visualise how international neo-nomadic countercultures are expressed through the customised trucks, vans, coaches and self-made makeshift dwellings. The work also

aims to reflect on values and expectations of home, society, freedom, and the inevitable paradoxes, compromises and entanglements inherent in rejecting the dominant system.

People who reject and subvert the conventions of structured democracies from east and west Europe, north and south America, Japan, and elsewhere, gravitate to this area; a landscape imbued with histories of resistance and conflict. For 800 years during the middle ages Moors and the Christians collided in this area, and here too is where communist rebels fought Franco's Facists in the Spanish Civil War. It is perhaps because of this, as well as a history of Roma-gypsy culture, that there is more tolerance here of people who attempt to live outside of the mainstream. Through the environments they stage and occupy the counterculture make their imprint on the landscape, affecting and being affected by the atmosphere of the place. Encampments appear and disappear; Homes are made inside the shells of vehicles, others are constructed out of straw bales, the branches of trees, mud, rocks and plastic tarpaulins.

There has been a fascination with resisting the system and living outside society for centuries; from the idealist anarchist communities of Winstanley's Diggers in the 17th Century, and those of Robert Owen and John Ruskin in the 19th century, to the Beat and Hippy culture of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, manifested in the writings and actions of radical thinkers such as Jack Kerouak, Ken Kesey, Timothy Leary, Buckminster Fuller and Stewart Brand, and embodied in places such as Drop City, Colorado, and New Buffalo, New Mexico. For many of us, the desire to live in the wilderness and escape society has a strong pull on the imagination: the more recent free festival, rave and warehouse party scene, held in numerous locations throughout Europe in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and organised by groups such as the Mutoid Waste Company, Bedlam, Spiral Tribe and Circus Warp, has given rise to a new form of escapism in the counterculture. It is perhaps these movements that have the most influence here and continue to play a part in their sense of self. These countercultures include anarchists, hedonists, new travellers, old punks, neo-punks, old hippies, neo-hippies, direct action eco-protestors and newer disaffected individuals formed from the homogenisation of these alternative cultures. Most people who come here to live are accepted, however there are

unwritten rules within these self-regulating sites, which determine codes of behaviour. Remarkably, contrary to other alternative communities around the world, people on these sites do not aspire to building communities with shared intentions. Alienating and disconnecting themselves from more conventional modes of living, these countercultural identities are expressed through dwelling and habitat. At a time when the world is on the move, these poetic images offer new insights for the understanding and evolution of temporary dwelling practices and the formation and evolution of migrant countercultures.

Ben Murphy 2018

The above text was used at the solo exhibition of the work when exhibited at De Singel, Antwerp, 2018. The whole body of work intended to be shown in the ideal exhibition is presented as a series of images in appendix three of this thesis. All images have titles and figures which when the same images appear in the thesis, correspond to their references in the chapters of the thesis. All images referenced in the thesis appear close to their first point of reference or at the point where they are discussed in detail. Some of the photographs in the thesis are different to the ones in exhibition as they are used specifically to support an argument in a particular chapter. The sequencing of the photographs referenced in the thesis is dependent on the arguments being put forward in each chapter and does not follow the same pattern as those in the ideal exhibition format.

High resolution scans have also been made from the original negatives. These have been used in the production of a self-published limited edition book of the work, titled 'The Riverbed' (Murphy 2017), with an accompanying essay by the cultural geographer and poet Tim Cresswell (2017). Within this edition is a smaller edition of ten copies of the book encased in green 1950s British Army tarpaulin handmade sleeves, together with a 10x12 inch print of an image from the series. The green tarpaulin was used deliberately here in an attempt to echo the common use of such materials by the counterculture in the making of their dwelling spaces. The book, containing a series of 27 images, an introduction by the artist and essay by Tim Cresswell was not printed to the exact specification or standards demanded by the author, and has therefore

not been made widely available. It is not an examinable piece of work, but was intended as a supplement to an exhibition. The work has been published and discussed in over twenty national and international magazines and art journals to date, both in print and online. These forms of distribution and circulation engage with a wider audience outside of the academy. Also, one of the photographs (figure 6.2) is used as the cover image for Cresswell's book *Place: An Introduction* (2014). A list of these publications and outputs is given in appendix two.

Place and space are primarily discussed and understood through phenomenological interpretation. In the context of this thesis, Tilley (1994) provides a useful position from which to consider place by understanding the concept from his perceptions of the term when applied to non-Western societies:

In small-scale non-Western societies place, defined as a centre for action, intention and meaningful concern, can be best considered in terms of locales and the wider context in which these locales occur- the cultural and natural landscape. Most significant places are located or positioned in space. Locales are places created and known through common experiences, symbols and meanings. They may be rooms, houses, monuments, meeting-places, camps, or settlements. Locales may offer a distinct quality of being inside, or part of, a place. People both live out their lives in place and have a sense of being a part of it. Consequently place is fundamental to the establishment of personal and group identities and the formation of biographies. Place is both 'internal' and 'external' to the human subject, a personally embedded centre of meanings and a physical locus for action (Tilley 1994, p.18).

Tilley distinguishes space and in particular social space, as providing the context through which place is created and becomes meaningful saying: "A social space, rather than being uniform and forever the same, is constituted by differential densities of human experience, attachment and involvement. It is above all contextually constituted, providing particular settings for involvement and the creation of meanings" (Tilley 1994, pp.10-11). Expanding this phenomenological understanding of place and space, the thesis also engages with the work of

Bender (2002), Cresswell (2014), Heidegger (2010), Ingold (1993, 2000), Massey (1997), Relph (2008), Seamon (2017), Tilley (1994, 2010), Tuan (2007), Wells (2011), Wylie, J. (2007), among other theorists.

Throughout the thesis, I will argue and demonstrate that when used with intent, photography produces and communicates knowledge in different ways to textual description, to offer a visual language through which cultural geographers, photographers and other interested parties can investigate and understand relationships between people, place and space. Cultural geographer John Wylie recognises this approach in stating:

As a system for producing and transmitting meaning through visual symbols and representations, landscape art, alongside cognate arts such as cartography, photography, poetry and literature, is a key medium through which Western and in particular European cultures have historically understood themselves, and their relations with other cultures and the natural world (Wylie, J. 2007, pp.55-56).

Further to this Wylie states “The discursive structures of socio-cultural systems which the critic interprets- belong to, and emanate from, the symbolic domain of images, signs, texts, representations” (ibid 2007, p.92.) In seeing cultural geography through art, and approaching art practice through cultural geography, I offer alternative ways of understanding and interpreting what Heidegger terms our “being in the world” (2010); the aim being that both disciplines can inform each other to produce an interwoven mutually beneficial dialogue (Hawkins, H., 2012), through which, in this instance, countercultural identity is explored, explained and understood differently through considering place and space through art practice and vice versa. Recent collaborations between artists and cultural geographers have been highlighted and discussed in the work of Hawkins, H. (2012) and Tolia-Kelly (2012), both of whom call for a rethinking of and engagement with art practice as empirical research in geography. Where their investigations have focused on collaborative work, this thesis expands this call by demonstrating the artist and cultural geographer can be one and the same. Here the

art practice fuels the production of geographic knowledge which in turn substantiates our understanding of the art; encouraging a different way of seeing and thinking about and working within the disciplines of cultural geography and art.

Combining theory primarily from cultural geography and photography, interlinked by the thread of phenomenology, which will be expanded in the methodology, literature and practice reviews, the research reflects on countercultural identity through questioning values and expectations of home, society, freedom, and the inevitable paradoxes, compromises and entanglements inherent in attempting to live outside conventional norms and rejecting the dominant culture.

Key questions

- 1) How can photographs help us understand the construction of countercultural identity?
- 2) How do makeshift dwellings, materiality and habitats enable us to explore countercultural identity?
- 3) What paradoxes and compromises in countercultural relations to the mainstream are uncovered through the photographs?
- 4) How does photography progress ways of approaching cultural geographic research and how does cultural geography give insight into photographic practice based research?

Preceding the three main chapters the methodology and literature review explain the context and theoretical approaches to this research. The methodology (chapter two) combines an account of my photographic research practice with photographic theory and theory concerning place space and identity. In the context of giving an account of how I conducted my research, this chapter will also indicate how photography has been used in a research context to explore the cultural geographies of countercultural identity. It will describe the importance of large format analogue photographic processes and approaches used in production and editing of work to achieve the final images, the reasons for using these, and how a highly considered photographic practice is employed to understand countercultural identities. The methodology

also explains how these photographs of dwellings and habitats have been interpreted using theories from social anthropology, cultural geography, material culture, and photography, which are linked together with phenomenological interpretations to explore and bring new understanding about the construction of these identities.

Modes of practice output are detailed in the methodology, explaining how and why the work has been presented in different formats and ways for exhibition, book, thesis, magazine and journal. Following this, I will briefly describe how the research involved experimentation with a different form of representation including the use of out of date polaroid film, and the making of portraits and explain the reasons for not pursuing these.

The methodology outlines how the practice is analysed, described and evaluated in cautious relation to the umbrella term of ‘documentary’ photography, (Barrett 1996, Bate 2009, Rose 2007, Schwartz 2018) and explains how this term only partially describes what the work is and what it is intended to do. While the work aims to communicate specific information in a photo-realist manner, (Bate 2009), it will be suggested that the photographs represent a series of subjective decisions which could be interpreted as a blurring of boundaries of strict genre definitions. In this sense, the term becomes an inadequate and vague way to describe the work. The effectiveness of photography’s ability to see things differently, in complex and sometimes ambiguous ways, and therefore its suitability in research applications is explained here in that it can convey layers of meanings unavailable through text. (Rose 2007, Schwartz 2018, Walden 2010, Weston 1932, in: Wells 2011).

Critical to the methodology is how image content will be interpreted from a phenomenological perspective. The work of Heidegger (2010), is referenced to explain how objects can be seen to be imbued with meaning through their histories, inter-relationships and placement within space. Further to this, the phenomenological appreciation of the subject matter in each photograph will be defended and explained through the work of cultural geographers and theorists whose writing has a phenomenological undercurrent. (e.g. Bate 2012, Berger 2013, Burgin 1982, Cresswell 2014, Elkins 2011, Ingold 2000, Relph 2008, Seamon 1989, Tilley 1994, 2010, Tuan 2007,

Wells 2011, Wylie, J. 2012, among others). The methodology cements this position by giving a number of examples of other photographers' work where their effectiveness and power is achieved in part through relating a strong sense of the phenomenology of place. Leading on from this, the methodology stresses how in deliberately removing people from each picture, phenomenological readings are facilitated and sensed through the absence of human presence, (Elkins, 2011), and how photography can encourage contemplation of the phenomenology of objects and scenes. (Bucchli 2013, Burgin 1982, Cheung 2010, 1988, Kirova & Emme 2006). The literature review (chapter three) gives a critical assessment of writings which position these countercultures historically and a critical assessment of photographic and cultural geographic theory concerning place and space. To position and differentiate my research within the literature I will discuss academic writing which has considered historic groups of counterculture through personal histories, cultural studies, cultural geography, material cultures and sociology. Part one begins with an evaluation of writing concerning countercultural histories. Drawing on the writing of Abrahams & Wishart (2015), Dearling (1998), Hebdige (1979), Hetherington (2000), Lowe & Shaw (1993), Mackay (1996, 1998), Reynolds (1999), among others, the literature review will contextualise the counterculture studied in this research through historic movements, suggesting that having each responded to their own political, economic, environmental, geographic, social and cultural circumstances, they in turn contribute to contemporary tribal identities. A significant number of British ex-patriates were living on the sites of the research and so there is an emphasis on the histories of British countercultures from the 1970s onwards. Site 'A' in particular was, during the field trips, dominated by an ex-patriate British population and this is reflected in the photographs. The literature draws attention to an historic fascination with resisting hegemonically imposed systems within structured western societies; e.g. the idealist anarchist communities of Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers in the seventeenth century (Gurney 2012), and socialist agrarian communities such as those established by Robert Owen and John Ruskin in the nineteenth century (Hardy 1979). The review moves on to discuss how the more recent Beat and Hippy culture of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, manifested in the writings and actions of radical thinkers such as Brand (1971),

Kerouak (2005), Kesey (1964), Leary (1966), encouraged the rejection of conventional modes of living and have also had their part in forming the ideologies of the counterculture under question. These writers interests with liberating mind and body through psychedelic drugs, travelling, nomadic living, experiencing new eastern based cultures, using natural forms to inspire architecture, non alinement to conservative western sexual or religious or marital constructs, spiritual awareness, living off-grid, being vegetarian or vegan, caring for the Earth's environment and natural resources and so on, were embodied and played out from the mid 1960s onwards in numerous alternative hippy communities in the USA such as Drop City, Colorado (Boyle 2003, Curl 2007), and New Buffalo, New Mexico, (Kopecky 2006). Using this literature the thesis will argue that current countercultural identities draw influence from these combined histories.

The review discusses how the festival, rave and warehouse party scenes – which took root in many locations across Europe in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, and in particular at events in the UK such as the Castlemorton Free Festival, Glastonbury Festival, Stonehenge Free Festival, (Abrahams & Wishart 2015, Hetherington 2000) have in turn influenced contemporary countercultures. In setting up these events, these writings show how the organisers of free festivals and raves provided a space and orchestrated an environment where countercultures could gather and ferment. The thesis will acknowledge that it was at these events where hippy and punk cultures collided and over time drew from each other and have in some instances fused to evolve into new hybrid forms (Mackay 1996, Worthington 2005).

Part two of the literature review will discuss theories of space and place and photography, which have informed or is relevant to, or contextualises the practice and or arguments put forward in the thesis. Within this, critical to the understanding of space and place within the context of this research is the theory of phenomenology, (also discussed in the methodology). Parts of Martin Heidegger's theories have been influential in engaging with its use and understanding in the research (Heidegger 2010). The work of cultural geographers who have drawn on phenomenology as well as other theorists contemplating place and space through

phenomenology is also assessed to provide clarification and understanding of this philosophy. (e.g. Cresswell 2014, Relph 2008, Wylie, J. 2014)

Following this, the review discusses photographic literature that has been drawn on in the making of the practice and its assessment. I focus in particular on exploring how photography can work in different ways to text, to reveal new information through the exposure of often overlooked aspects or smaller details of a scene. (e.g. Richter 2010, Rose 2007). Reading in photography theory leans toward a phenomenological interpretation of images and image making. Liz Wells' (2011) work is discussed to demonstrate how photography is good at communicating senses of place and relations with place and space. This section of the review also considers how analysis techniques suggested by Banks (2001) Rose (2007), Pink (2007) while being useful, fall short in their efficacy to decode complex and nuanced information in photographic images nor take account of impacts of aesthetics, composition or concept. A theoretical framework is built here by considering the nature of photography, what it can do and how it is effective as a means of communication. This is discussed through the work of Burgin (1982), Flusser (2000), Grundberg (1998), Bate (2005, 2015), Dyer (2005), Elkins (2011), Richter (2010), Wells (2011). In their work, we see through examples a supportive and convincing argument for the use of photography to represent and explain what words cannot, show things that are overlooked, and show how it is a medium which can bring a phenomenological understanding of human relations to space, place and materiality.

The practice review (chapter four) considers practice, framing the research in relation to other photographers' work which has addressed some aspect of countercultural identity or has been significant in the development of my own practice. I aim to acknowledge work that concerns similar subject matter to my own while pointing to how the work is set apart through visual differences affected by aesthetic, compositional, and technical approaches, and also through its theoretical approach to dwelling, habitat and identity. As part of this I put forward a defence for the exclusion of people in the pictures; this section will argue that photographs can reveal

aspects of someone's identity when they are not physically visible in the image, and indicate their presence through the traces of the things they surround themselves with. Further to this, I will suggest how photographs can evoke a sense of the phenomenologies of place and how they have been used historically to produce geographic knowledge which can offer different readings to textual descriptions. Using this approach the research will demonstrate and argue how a considered photographic practice can evoke complex readings of its subject, with a potential to explain and bring understanding through visual representation, unavailable through written description and analysis alone.

Chapter five discusses the construction of countercultural identity through place. Place will be analysed as a politicised arena, as mobile and transitory, and when considering the use of converted vehicles as homes, as what Mary Douglas might call "matter out of place" (1966). Place will also be considered as a site of deviance, transgression, or threat (Cresswell 1996). The chapter explores how place in this context can represent rebellion, escape, freedom, familiarity, home, community, and how it can embody personal or shared beliefs and histories. The chapter will draw attention to how place joins people together and distinguishes them from others; how it is integral to identity and to creating a sense of otherness; how it is experienced differently depending on one's relationship with a place, construction of place and knowledge of a place, as an insider or outsider. Notions of place and space are framed through the work of Cresswell (1996, 2014), Ingold (2000), Massey & Jess (2000), Relph (2008), Tilley (1994), Tuan (2007), among others, with a bias to phenomenological readings. This chapter argues for the potential of photography to convey phenomena of place and space (Wylie, J. 2007, Wells 2011) and interprets individual photographs through place and space theories to show how different countercultural identities are recognisable, expressed, maintained and manifested through a variety of dwellings. The chapter considers the organisation of space and place in relation to landscape, and how peculiarities of each habitation reveal and are indicative of countercultural affiliations and anti-establishment beliefs. Place as an affected and affecting space where ideologies are delineated and expressed, is highlighted through photographic

examples of dwellings and habitats which examine and pinpoint different types of countercultural identity. This chapter argues through the analysis of specific photographs and theories centred around space and place, that inter-relations between people, dwelling, and landscape are recognisable, important and significant in the creation, expression, maintenance and differentiation of the countercultural self.

Focusing on the cultural geographies of countercultural homes, chapter six explores home as central to identity and how identity is maintained, reinforced, expressed and bound up in the transient self-made homes of the counterculture. This will be done through close analysis of individual photographs which are representative of a particular counterculture. Drawing on theories from Ingold (2000), Baudrillard (2005), Benjamin (2008), Blunt & Dowling (2006), Cresswell (2014), Heidegger (2010), Miller (2007), Olsen (2013), and others, this chapter considers how home in whatever form and material things signify and reinforce ideologies, cultural references and histories, and can hold memories of significant cultural events and homeland. Photographs will be analysed to draw out layered countercultural meanings, attachments, differences and significances embedded in these dwellings. In their re-placement and re-contextualisation, into unconventional unusual settings, objects can be reinterpreted as part of a countercultural identity. For example the chapter will emphasise how vehicles can be embedded with cultural significances concerning freedom and defiance and serve to reinforce and maintain identities that have come from historic countercultural traditions. The use of some types of vehicles will also be seen to represent a homogenisation of countercultures. Through a discussion of car culture (Baudrillard 2005, Cresswell 1996, Magagnoli 2015, Miller 2005, et al.) the chapter will point to the important role played by cars in mainstream societies and counterculture, and how in this case, mobility can be seen as transgressive to societal norms when vehicles such as horseboxes and coaches are taken out of original context or intended application, customised and used as a form of mobile home. (Cresswell 2014). In this way it will be argued that countercultures appropriate vehicles and use them as vessels which in

themselves and their contents, contain, express and transport their world views and senses of otherness.

Through close analysis of other forms of static dwelling space and their contents, (e.g. depicted in figures 6.8 and 6.9), the chapter will then argue that punk, hippy, new-traveller and rave identities, as understood through Abrahams & Wishart (2015), D'Andrea (2009), Dearling (1998), Hebdidge (1979), Hetherington (2000), Lablonsky (2000), Lowe & Shaw (1993), Mackay (1996), Reynolds (1999), Worthington (2005), among others, can be seen to have fused in the material cultures and aesthetics of these spaces, making countercultural type categorisation inadequate and inappropriate. Finally chapter six focusses on images which reflect the identities of people who choose to echo previous generations of counterculture through materiality and aesthetics, to discuss how these historic identities are manifested and maintained and made meaningful in a contemporary setting. In contemplating materiality of and in the home as an indicator of identities, this chapter aims to demonstrate that as a result of the photographs having been produced using large format equipment, they are effective in clearly depicting small details, and therefore facilitate close study of relations between people, home, and possessions through a phenomenological lens.

Chapter seven considers how countercultural identities are potentially compromised by the implications of being dependent on and to some extent immersed in networks of consumerism, capitalism, and technology, when attempting to be estranged from the constraints of conventional structured democratic society. Selected photographs will be discussed through phenomenological analysis to reveal some of the dependencies on the outside world inherent in constructing and living out these countercultural identities. Where other intentional communities have sought and seek to be detached from the mainstream through their self-sufficient off-grid lifestyles,¹ here we will see entanglements with the mainstream through their

¹ e.g. communities such as Brithdir Mawr community, Steward Community Woodland and Tinkers Bubble, depicted in the photographs of David Spero (2017).

possessions, homes and habitats, which suggest different approaches to a countercultural way of life. These things, it will be argued, could be seen as problematic in maintaining the integrity of a specific countercultural identity when uprooted and transposed from its place and time of origin, or however, they can be seen to be integrated into new forms of continually evolving hybridised identities. (Hetherington 2000).

The chapter will consider how identities are reassembled, reimagined, adapted and sustained through dwelling space, when they have been displaced from their original contexts. However, the photographs will bring to the surface possible problems in maintaining variants of these historic identities which were formed in another country, at another time and with different sets of cultural and political values and geographies.

The chapter will discuss some of the paradoxical dependencies, entanglements, engagements and relations the countercultural identities have with the hegemonic. Objects depicted in some photographs such as plastic objects and straw bales will be highlighted to demonstrate the reliances and uses of processes, infrastructures, resources, technologies and products that could be seen to compromise some countercultural beliefs. Despite the attempts to withdraw from the systems society imposes on people, the chapter will argue that, as seen through the uncomfortable relationships between the materiality of the dwellings, their contents and their surrounding environments, the counterculture are inevitably intertwined in and dependent on the global networks of capitalism, consumerism, technology and industries they wish to avoid. This chapter will therefore suggest that to a greater or lesser extent the photographs point to a conflict of ideologies, where for those who attempt to live outside the industrialised fossil fuel technologies based world, countercultural values and beliefs are seen as compromised.

Informed by theories of space and place centred in cultural geography and photography this practice based thesis intends to prioritise and scrutinise the author's photographic practice to explore how temporal makeshift dwellings and habitats can be seen to contain, express and reveal countercultural identity. It will also be argued that photographs devoid of people invite contemplation of place and space, and thereby people's identity without the distraction of their

presence. Encountering the remains of a castle, Doreen Massey writes that “the ‘presentness’ of the horizontality of space is a product of a multitude of histories whose resonances are still there, if we would but see them, and which sometimes catch us with full force unawares” (Massey in: Meier, K., et al. 2012. 20(4)., p.425). Progressing this phenomenological logic, through the methodology just described, these photographs aim to elicit how these temporal environments play an important role in the make-up of these identities. While not attempting to be a comprehensive exploration into the nature of all contemporary countercultural identities, these images intend to offer new insights into the understanding of temporary dwelling practices and their role in the formation and evolution of migrant countercultural identities that would not be achievable through other means of investigation. In doing this the thesis argues for the potential of practice based methodologies in academic research within cultural geography, “[...] that sees art being used as an empirical source for geographical study, [...]” (Hawkins, H. 2012, 37/1. p.66), specifically positioning photography not just as a source of data, but as a visual medium capable of aesthetic, conceptual and intellectual evaluation and appreciation.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Two: Methodology

2:1 Introduction

The aim of a methodology which combines cultural geography and a sophisticated photographic practice is to offer alternative ways of looking at and exploring specific countercultural identities through dwellings and habitat; as opposed to methodologies which are primarily concerned with imparting knowledge through written data. Further to this I aim to draw attention to a hole in geographic thinking into which art photography can be placed. While art photography has certainly been referenced and discussed within a geographic context, (e.g. Edwards 2014, Schwartz 2009, Wells 2011), there has been little to suggest recently of its application therein by a practitioner and vice versa. To Tolia-Kelly:

Visual methodologies have been designed as an empowering mode of communication beyond writing, talking, mapping and survey (Alexander et al, 2007; Kindon, 2003; O'Neil, 2008; Pain et al, 2007). The visual cultures of geographical research are often a move towards producing research markings that are meaningful as they operate against, beyond and more- than text (Tolia-Kelly 2012, pt.3).

In this case, it is important to note that this inter-disciplinary research has involved and is dependent on the production of a considered photographic practice as its core element which is informed, examined and discussed through theory concerned with the relationships between space, place and identity. To distinguish the practice/research relationship from others in the field of geography who while having artistic aspirations, have used creative practice to produce data with little or no aesthetic or conceptual consideration and to argue for a methodological approach that acknowledges, capitalises on and encourages these inter-relationships, the

photographs made for this research have dual purpose and intent; in that they have been made to be appreciated as art in a gallery context, and discussed as such in magazines and journals, while simultaneously being an empirical source of information through which the thesis and geographical knowledge about countercultural identity is developed. Geography has often been described as a visual language (Driver 2003, Rose 2007, Schwartz 2009), however, within geographic research there has been a preoccupation with photography and film being used purely as a visual research method for the production of data, (Banks 2001, Collier, J. Jnr. 1986, Pink 2007, Rose 2008), rather than as art which can be appreciated as such while also having multi-layered applications, meanings and interpretative potentials in a research context. The production of art photography which has been made and intended to be considered as both art and geographic research is an area that geography has so far neglected. Therefore this thesis attempts to address this issue by creating new knowledge through producing and analysing art photography within a framework of critical geographic theory. As art practice the photographs have already been proven to stand alone to be viewed and rigorously analysed outside of the academy; in blogs, physical and online journals, magazines, newspapers, national and international exhibitions, and in national and international public and private collections. (See Appendix Two). In the context of geographic research, this thesis aims to fuse art practice with geographically led thinking, creating new knowledge through a mutual enrichment and exploitation of these two disciplines.

2:2 Methods of Production: Approaches to Practice

This practice based research reflects on the creation and analysis of a series of high definition analogue colour photographs depicting countercultural makeshift dwellings and habitats to gain understanding and bring new knowledge about countercultural identity. The images have been produced using a Toyo 5x4 inch field camera mounted on a tripod. This camera is a type of plate camera that requires individual sheets of 5x4 inch analogue film to make each image. Each photographic negative is individually loaded in total darkness into a darkslide which covers the film until one makes an exposure. Exposures of light onto the film surface can be from a fraction

of a second to a number of minutes depending on the light conditions and the size of lens aperture, which determines depth of field. To achieve maximum depth of field in each image, the aperture chosen for all photographic exposures was small. This meant that exposures of one second or more were necessary to expose the film correctly. The work was made with a variety of standard and very slightly wide angle lenses. The photographs were made in diffused natural light; when possible, on overcast days with no direct sunlight. I have relied entirely on available light. Neutrally balanced colour film was used to produce negatives from which analogue prints and digital scans were made, which had neutrally balanced colour and saturation. These processes and materials were important so as to achieve a consistent aesthetic where images represent the subject as it appeared in the field to the researcher and also represent how the researcher intended the subject to appear. The majority of photographs used in the thesis come from a body of work made on countercultural sites by myself, while some have been sourced from other photographers for comparative or supportive purposes. The field work comprises of approximately two hundred and fifty 5x4 inch individual sheet colour negatives from which same size contact sheet analogue prints and digital files were made. These factors have been combined to enable a distinctive aesthetic quality and detailed visualisation of the subject matter, to bring new understanding of countercultural identity. The aim of using diffused lighting is to give an even and neutral tonality to the pictures which in turn aims to depict the content of each image clearly and neutrally.

I have made five field trips to the sites in the winter months for periods of three to four weeks when there is more likelihood that daylight is softer. (See table 1 below). Within the thesis, sites are referenced as ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’. Although work was made on all sites, only photographs made on sites ‘A’ and ‘B’ will be discussed because these sites produced the richest material.

TABLE 1: FIELD TRIPS		
DATES	LENGTH OF TRIP	COUNTERCULTURAL SITES VISITED
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2006	3 WEEKS	SITES A & D

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2009	3 WEEKS	SITES A & C
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011	4 WEEKS	SITES A, B, C
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012	4 WEEKS	SITES A, B, C
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015	4 WEEKS	SITES A, B, C

2:3 Methods of Production: Preparatory Photographs, Experimentation and Interviews

In the field preparatory photographs using Fuji or out of date polaroid instant film were sometimes made before committing to a neutral colour balanced Kodak film. New Polaroid film was not available to buy at the time of making the practice and so old stock was used. The instant picture making process ran concurrently with the large format work and used a polaroid film back attached to the back of the same camera used for the final images. The resulting pictures were originally intended as a means of referencing for compositional purposes before committing to making exposures on film, however, due to the film being out of date they have inadvertently taken on qualities and meanings that were not intended when this technology was in production. In their own right they are perhaps worthy of study and form a counterbalance to the photographic realism of photographs produced from 5x4 inch negative. These images have a colour palette which does not reflect the actual colours of what was photographed. They also have imperfections to the surface of the image and occasionally parts of the image missing. I hesitantly suggest a tenuous analogy could be made between the impermanence of the countercultural dwellings and the polaroids inherent instabilities. However, for the purpose of this research the photographs aim to be a form of photographic realism where visual representation reflects the colour and spatial proportions witnessed in the field and where small details can be analysed. As such, these instant pictures were dismissed as a potential source of information in the context of this research because their distortions of reality could not be assessed using the theories and arguments developed in the thesis. However, as an alternative experimental representation of the subject they represent another way of seeing and are not without validity (figure 2.1(i), 2.1 (ii)).



Figure 2.1(i). *Francesca*, (Polaroid), Andalucia, Spain, 2012



Figure 2.1(ii). Ben Murphy. *Bread Makers' Kitchen*, (Polaroid), Andalusia, Spain, 2012

To add to the information available in the photographs, and as a way of gaining insight into individual beliefs and approaches to an alternative way of life, and to give voice to the participants, the ethnographic method of ‘Deep Hanging Out’ was employed throughout the research field trips with the making of photographs being the prime objective. This involved being in the company of the counterculture in informal situations for several weeks, visiting and revisiting people, making conversation, gaining trust and asking for people to allow me to photograph their dwellings and surroundings. During this time, some interviews were carried out with people willing to participate and recorded onto a digital recorder. These lasted between ten minutes and four hours (see table 2 below). Informal discussions and conversations were not recorded but key points, experiences, and observations were noted in a journal. I invited some individuals to write something about their lives or their ideologies, or to draw maps, and some of this information is included in the thesis. Participant statements, writings and drawings were made in a notebook. A map of site ‘B’ was drawn by one participant (see figure 5.6). Statements made people working in the nearest town were also recorded in a note book. These documents and recordings are held by the author of the thesis. Samples of the written statements are reproduced in Appendix One. However, while most individuals were reluctant or uninterested to participate in this way, they were willing to allow for photographs to be made of their dwellings, possessions and surroundings. In this context, where people were resistant to or would otherwise not respond to normative social science research practices, photography proved to be an effective primary research method through which to explore this subject and offer perspectives that would not have been achievable through other approaches.

TABLE 2: INTERVIEWS, CONVERSATIONS, WRITTEN STATEMENTS, POEMS, DIAGRAMS, DRAWINGS, MAPS				
NAME(S) & NATIONALITY	DATE	TYPE OF INTERACTION	LENGTH OF INTERACTION	PLACE OF INTERACTION
AVI (SCOTLAND)	FEBRUARY 2012, JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, DRAWING, WRITTEN STATEMENT	2 X 2 HOURS	SITE B
AKIRA (JAPAN)	FEBRUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE B

AMY (UK)	FEBRUARY 2018	EMAILS		INTERNET
ANDY (1). (UK)	JANUARY 2012 JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, RECORDED INTERVIEW	1 HOUR, AND 2 HOURS	SITE A
ANDY (2) (UK)	FEBRUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	2 HOURS	TAVERNA NEAR SITE A
ANONYMOUS COUPLE (CZECH REPUBLIC)	FEBRUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE B
ANONYMOUS (HOLLAND /SOUTH AFRICA)	JANUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, PRODUCTION OF DIAGRAM	1 HOUR	SITE B
BABA (GERMANY)	JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE B
BARNEYAND SARAH (UK)	NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2006, DECEMBER 2009, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015, MARCH 2016, AUGUST 2016	HANDWRITTEN LETTERS, INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS, DISCUSSIONS, EMAILS	10 MINUTES TO 4 HOURS	SITE A, NEARBY TAVERNAS,
BOET (NETHERLANDS)	FEBRUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, POEM	1 HOUR	SITE B
CRUSTY MARK (UK)	NOVEMBER 2006	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	10 MINUTES	SITE A
DAVEY (UK)	FEBRUARY 2011	INTERVIEW	2 HOURS	NEAR SITE A
EDGAR (CHILE)	FEBRUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, DISCUSSION	2 HOURS	SITE B
FRANCESCA (IRELAND)	JANUARY 2012, FEBRUARY 2015,	INTERVIEWS, DISCUSSIONS, CONVERSATIONS, DRAWING OF MAP	2 X 2 HOURS	SITE B
FREEDOM MAN (CZECH REPUBLIC)	JANUARY 2012	INTERVIEW	30 MINUTES	SITE B
GIRL HELPING FRANCESCA (SPAIN)	JANUARY 2015	INTERVIEW	45 MINUTES	CAFÉ IN NEARBY TOWN

GIRL WORKING IN SUPERMARKET IN NEAREST TOWN (SPAIN)	JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, WRITTEN STATEMENT		SUPERMARKET IN NEARBY TOWN
HAPPY (UNKNOWN NATIONALITY) 2015	FEBRUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	10 MINUTES	SITE A
JANE (UK) 2009	DECEMBER 2009	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE B
JESS AND ROBE (UK)	DECEMBER 2006	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	30 MINUTES	SITE A
MAN WORKING IN ART STATIONARY BOOK SHOP (SPAIN)	JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, WRITTEN STATEMENT	20 MINUTES	NEARBY TOWN
MAN WORKING IN TOURIST OFFICE (SPAIN)	JANUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATION, WRITTEN STATEMENT	20 MINUTES	NEARBY TOWN
MIOT (UK)	NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2006, DECEMBER 2009, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2012, JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS, WRITTEN STATEMENT	10 MINUTES TO 30 MINUTES	SITE A
NICK (UK)	DECEMBER 2006	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	30 MINUTES	SITE A
NICOLE (UK)	JANUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	30 MINUTES	SITE A
PETE THE PAINTER (UK) 2006	DECEMBER 2006	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE A
RUBIO AND BELLA	JANUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE B
SAMI (BELGIUM)	2011, 2012, 2015	INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS	1 TO 2 HOURS	SITE B
THOMAS AND OLIVIA (FINLAND AND SWEDEN)	JANUARY 2011	INTERVIEW	2 HOURS	SITE A
TODD (USA)	JANUARY 2011	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE A

TOMMY (IRELAND)	DECEMBER 2009	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE A
TONY AND LEYLA (UK)	DECEMBER 2006	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE A
VANESSA (UK)	JANUARY 2012	INFORMAL CONVERSATION	1 HOUR	SITE A

2:4 Ethical considerations

Before making any photographs on these sites, I introduced myself and made sure that the individuals on the sites knew who I was, where I came from and what I intended doing, so that they had a choice whether or not to cooperate or allow me into their space. Making extended field trips to the sites over a period of years contributed to an intimate understanding of their geographies, and also to developing a trust with the communities. Their acceptance of my presence allowed access to their shared and private spaces. On site ‘A’, I was introduced to individuals by my primary contact there; a friend of a friend of mine, from whom I had had written correspondence before engaging in the research. In this private correspondence the individual living on site ‘A’ invited me to visit on the understanding that I would not reveal the location of the site or the full names of individuals that he would be able to introduce me to. I agreed to these conditions. On site ‘B’, I pinned a notice to a notice board erected in the centre of the site. This notice stated who I was and what I was doing there, and invited anyone interested in my research to come and talk to me. I also pinned an A6 size card next to the notice, which showed one of my photographs from site ‘A’ alongside my email address and a mobile phone number, so that interested parties could contact me during or after the making of the work. Before making photographs on any site I asked permission of the occupant(s) of the dwelling for consent to make photographs there. Initially on the first field trip during the research I presented people with a form, stating my name, academic institution and the purpose of my research. I asked for written consent, where participants could sign the document, confirming that they were happy to have their dwellings photographed. There was also a sentence which stated that participants had a right to ask me to withdraw photographs from the research at any point during the research period. Despite these assurances, the written document proved counter-

productive and led to suspicion and mistrust. All individuals I approached on these sites with the form were reluctant to sign any documents and preferred to remain anonymous. The majority of people on the sites were willing to allow photographs of their dwellings, and to talk about their lives, however they did not want to be bound by or identified by a written document from a researcher at an academic institution. Consent from those people agreeing to participate was given verbally and on mutual trust. Assurances were given verbally by myself to the occupier(s) that the specific location of their home would not be revealed. In all interactions with people living on these sites participants were informed that their anonymity would be respected if any dialogue was quoted or referred to in the outcomes of the research. To this end, to respect, protect and anonymise the identities of individuals who agreed to participate in the research, the exact locations of dwellings and the full names of these participants have been omitted.

2:5 Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Once the film was processed and contact prints made from the negatives, they were edited into groups of images which offered relevant information to the themes being explored in each chapter of the thesis, and which also gave an overview of the types of dwellings and habitats being considered and a sense of the sites on which they existed. Considering how these images work as “explanatory photographs” (Barrett 1996, pp.58-66), “descriptive photographs” (ibid pp.57-58), and “aesthetically evaluative photographs” (ibid pp.74-80), place and space is depicted through a considered photographic practice to visually describe, explain and articulate how countercultural dwellings and habitats represent identities. Where Barrett has acknowledged how the aesthetics of images affects their assessment, cultural geographer Gillian Rose has identified aspects of a critical understanding of images as: the acknowledgement and consideration of the site of production, how the images are displayed, the technical processes involved in image production, the compositional elements of “content, colour and spatial organization” (Rose 2007, p.13) and the social context in which the work is made. As Rose explains, these factors are significant and debatable and contribute to the meaning and understanding of an image, or images. (ibid 2007, pp.13-27). In this thesis Rose’s methods of

correlating and disseminating photographs have been useful as a basis from which to approach a practice based methodology.

However, while Rose's content analysis theory for sorting, analysing and assessing large numbers of images (Rose 2007, pp.59-73) aimed at research within the social sciences has been referenced as a guide in organising and categorising images, it does not acknowledge the potential of images made as art; nor does it allow for detailed discussion of the expressive qualities or site of production or audienceing of a particular image, nor interconnections between things within a given image. Highlighting these shortcomings in the way creative practices have been employed and analysed within cultural geography, Harriet Hawkins has argued for a realignment of art/geography practice relations stating:

This is to extend those questions of how to practice and assess the interdisciplinary scholarship that sees art being used as an empirical source for geographical study, by posing a related set of questions including how can (or should) creative geographical practices be judged? Intellectually and/or aesthetically? As both 'art' and as 'geography'? And what does this mean, especially if art's own critical frameworks are also those of philosophy and critical social theory? These remain important questions that we should continue to engage with as creative geographies become an increasing part of our own expanding fields of disciplinary practice (Hawkins, H., 2012, p.66)

Attempting to avoid what Joan M. Schwartz has described as "the trap of institutional categorisation and disciplinary pigeon-holing of photography" (2018) and relying on one rigid prescribed methodology for the use of photography within social sciences research, this research recognises the need for a fusion of methodological approaches which take into account that the photographs have multiple values and potential interpretations rather than solely as data production. In this sense, the works are presented as a sophisticated art practice with aesthetic and conceptual considerations. The photographs both in their making and subsequent realisations as prints are critically analysed, interpreted and understood through content,

photographic theory, theories concerned with place and space and material culture centred around phenomenology, and contextualised through countercultural histories and practices. The titling of images using first names or pseudonyms, or titled as anonymous, has been to encourage thinking about and conceptualise the dwellings as a manifestation of a person's identity. Each image can be seen as a portrait of the absent person or people whose homes and habitats are depicted.

2:6 Framing the practice as Photographic Realism

The combination of the creative decisions in the making of the work and subsequent consideration and evaluation of the subject matter avoids potential imbalanced assessment caused by the highlighting of, or exaggerating of, or distortion of, or obscuring of objects within an image. The effect of the conditions and type of equipment used and approach to its use indicates a form of heightened 'photographic realism', which is defined by David Bate as "an aesthetic theory based on 'Similarity' or an identity between the photograph and depicted reality" (Bate 2009, p.36). In this instance, the intention is to make clearly defined two dimensional representations of space and place which conveys a sense of how they were perceived and witnessed by the photographer at the time of making the image. This draws on the theory of phenomenological investigation (Heidegger 2010), which is discussed in the literature review and will be discussed later in this chapter. The practice, rather than being dependent on a photographic effect such as using highly saturated colours, extreme wide angle lenses, or deliberate graininess in the image quality, uses large format equipment, with a specific type of film, in specific environmental conditions to produce prints, and digital files which impart fine details within a scene without the aforementioned distortions. Further to this as will be described in the practice review, this research practice differs from that of other photographers who have used what Bate refers to as " 'shutter' photography which privileges the stylistic and iconographic codes (e.g. blur, cut-off edges, human movement indicating speed and time) of the camera" (Bate 2009, p.53). In this way the practice represents a form of photo-realism. As Kendal L. Walton points out "Emphasising the medium is usually regarded as a way

of distancing appreciators from the world portrayed” (Walton 1984 in Walden 2010, p.44). The aim here then, is to encourage the viewer to reflect on that which is depicted in the photographs as an epistemic truth through the subtleties of photographic representation. Aeron Meskin and Jonathan Cohen say “Photographs do not carry information about all the visually detectable properties of the objects they depict” (Cohen & Meskin 2010, p.72); they do not show the mass of an object, or what it looks like from another angle. However, they can carry a rich amount of information in the stilling and framing of things that would be difficult for anyone to process other than through photographic representation. In this sense, as Schwartz has said “Photographs are functioning tools of the geographical imagination. Tools that have helped people understand the world around them, situate themselves in it, articulate their relationship to it and express, communicate and preserve their place in it” (Schwartz 2018). Photographic realism is employed in this research as a way of looking at and understanding countercultural identity through dwellings.

2:7 Framing the practice as Documentary Photography

The images could be considered within the broad umbrella of documentary and neutral photographs, as defined by Bate, in which the photographs “show the state of something, its ‘condition’”. They could also be considered to “[...] construct representations of reality, according to someone’s view, their desire to see” (Bate 2009. pp.54-61). As Bate states, “Documentary photography hovers between art and journalism, between creative treatment and actuality, [...]” (ibid p.56). To be more specific, these photographs are an attempt at using what could be considered an objective mechanical system to convey a sense of both being in place and being detached from it and aim to fuse a subjective and objective view. In this work, the intention is to achieve this through the use of a particular photographic system to consider countercultural identity, by choosing certain lighting conditions, the use of unsaturated neutral fine grain colour film and neutral lenses, by deliberately focusing on dwelling space devoid of its occupants, by not idolising the subject matter with exaggerated perspectives, nor photographing the subject from extreme angles nor using dramatic lighting effects.

Rose alludes to debates around the truthfulness of photographic images; how some critics see them as accurate representations of reality while others question this assertion. (Rose 2007, p.15). Citing Becker (2004), Rose admits that “there is no clearly established methodological framework to discuss the uses of photography in social science research” (Rose 2007, p.239). This is why a methodology which respects the practice both as art and a means of exploring geography, that merges theory from both photography and cultural geography to assess the practice, has been necessary in this research. As Schwartz says “Understood as *both* aesthetic expression and geographic description, the photograph serves to bridge disciplinary perspectives and shed light on the ways in which the ambiguous meanings of landscape and photograph overlap in the landscape photograph” (Schwartz 2018).

While the photographs here attempt to convey a version of realism through a particular aesthetic and vision as perceived by their creator, they are also inevitably governed by technological processes and compositional choices. However, through these processes multiple responses and readings are made possible. Davies points out: “By skillfully manipulating those features of the photographic image that necessarily distinguish it from a ‘mechanical recording’ of its subject, therefore, the photographer, like the painter, is able to produce an image which embodies thought about its subject in such a way as to engage the viewer in a detailed scrutiny of the image” (Davies 2010, p.178-179).

Here, the use of specific photographic processes have been essential in enabling the detailed evaluation of the research subject. The resultant images are the product of a mechanical process being used to visualise the intentions of the photographer, and in this way aim to elicit multiple responses. The photographs are the conduit through which information is imparted and through which it can be understood.

Considering the work within the parameters of documentary photography, ‘Photo-documentation’ as defined by Rose (2007, p.243) is one methodological approach, whereby

photographs “are made systematically by the researcher in order to provide data that the researcher then analyses” (ibid p.243). However, as an artist and geographer, this methodological stance is again inadequate on its own in that it does not include an evaluation of the aesthetic, compositional, or conceptual qualities at work in images, and the underlying worth of assessing photographs from other theoretical positions. Bate says that the term ‘Documentary’ “is indeed a slippery one because it can encompass many different photographic styles and intentions including journalistic, reportage, and art” (Bate 2009, p.54). In this research, the aim is that the images work independently in their own right, and are not merely produced to be analysed and used as evidence to back up a thesis or are of value as such. Addressing this concern, it has been useful to consider the photographs in terms of their textural qualities. Rose says “photos are particularly good at capturing the ‘texture’ of places. [...]. Photos can convey the feel of specific locations very effectively. [...]. Photographs can also show us things that are hard to describe in writing at all” (Rose 2007, p.247). Through the use of a photographic process that records fine details, I have attempted to convey a sense of the texture and feel of countercultural homes and environments. Put simply, the photographs are used to impart a sensual sense of place, visually.

As well as producing aesthetically stimulating and considered work, the key aim of this practice based research is to unearth some of the complexities of countercultural identity through detailed examination of photographs to draw out new understanding. The large scale of the film negatives, type of camera, diffused lighting, and long depth of fields, were employed to this end. Kendal L. Walton points out in his essay ‘Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism’:

Seeing directly and seeing with photographic assistance are different modes of perception. There is no reason to expect the experience of seeing in the two ways to be similar. Seeing something through a microscope, or through a distorting mirror, or under water, or in peculiar lighting conditions, is not much like seeing it directly or in normal circumstances- but that is no reason to deny that seeing in these other ways is seeing (Walton 1984 in Walden 2010, p.27).

Unlike seeing with the human eye, the camera's vision is still and two dimensional; however this is its distinct advantage when attempting to process and understand what is continually in a state of movement and change. The American photographer Edward Weston noted this saying "Photography is not at all seeing in the sense that the eyes see. Our vision is binoculour, it is in a continual state of flux, while a camera captures but a single isolated condition of the moment. [...] it is not seeing literally, but seeing with intention, with reason" (Weston 1932, in: Wells 2011, p.8).

2:8 Toward an Understanding of Photography of Place, Space and Objects through the Lens of Phenomenology: Theory, Application and Interpretation.

This ability of photographic representation is used here to frame and make sense of countercultural space and place; a phenomenon which is likewise in a constant state of change. In effect the research produces knowledge and as Schwartz has said "thinks through photography" (2018). Importantly, underpinning the way in which photography works to uncover cultural geographic knowledge in this research is a vein of phenomenological reasoning. Comparative understandings of phenomenology are evident in the work of Husserl (2012), Reinach in: Moran & Mooney (2002), Merleau-Ponty (2014), among others, however it is the work of Martin Heidegger (2010) that plays an important role here in his explanation of phenomenology and its application as a 'method of investigation' (Heidegger in: Mooney & Moran 2002, pp.278-287). As alluded to in the literature review Heidegger's initial definition divides the word into two: 'phenomenon' meaning 'that which shows itself in itself' and 'logos' meaning 'discourse' which to Heidegger translates from Greek as 'that which lets itself be seen' (ibid pp.279-284). Thus to Heidegger the word 'phenomenology', means "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself." (ibid p.284). Heidegger speaks of understanding things in terms of how they are perceived and interpreted rather than how they appear, when the implications of their histories and interrelations with other things and beings are taken into account. (ibid pp.278-307). To Heidegger, objects when considered phenomenologically, are embedded with significances other than what they appear

at first to be or represent. To Heidegger ““Phenomenon”, the showing-itself-in-itself, signifies a distinctive way in which something can be encountered” (ibid p.281). The position taken in this thesis is that phenomenology is a philosophical tool which alerts us to these potential significances, and that photography can be used to enable us to consider things in this way. Applied to an understanding of photographs, phenomenology can help us consider what is represented in a photograph as a collection of interrelated objects, within a given space, at a certain time; to draw out meaning beyond the surface materiality. Heidegger uses this theory as a means of understanding our ‘being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger 2010, 2002) through our relations to and our perceiving of objects as entities. (Heidegger 2002, pp.288- 307). He gives an example in his contemplation of a chair, arguing that to perceive the object is to consider its “Thingness” (ibid p.266); how it has come to be where it is, how it came into existence, what it is made of and the implications of its materiality, who made it, who has sat in it, and so on. To Heidegger, through thinking phenomenologically we can appreciate and understand the object’s meaning not just as a material thing. (ibid 2002, pp.265-267). Following Heidegger’s reasoning, things around us can be read not through superficial appearances but by perceiving a sense of the multitude of actions, interventions, events, and histories, involved in any said objects coming into existence, usage, purpose and their coming to be in a certain place. In turn, places can be perceived phenomenologically in the same way. Seeing phenomenologically through photography allows us to contemplate and uncover and sense the essence of things; how things affect and are affected by our relationships to them and the spaces they are contained within, and how they hold meaning. The cultural geographer John Wylie defines phenomenology thus: “Phenomenology is a branch of continental philosophy which aims to elucidate and express the meaning and nature of things in the world or phenomena- through a focus upon human lived experience, perception, sensation and understanding” (Wylie, J., 2012, Ch.4, p.1). Within the thesis, the thread of phenomenological exploration is evident and clarified further through John Wylie and the work of other cultural geographers such as Cresswell (2014), Ingold (2000), Relph (2008), Seamon (1989), Tilley (1994), Tuan (1977) and photographic theorists Bate (2012), Burgin (1982), Elkins (2011), Wells (2011), among others. It is the phenomenological

perception of space and place, as described and explained by the above writers, that is contained, distilled, conveyed and I argue, detectable through the photographs created for this research.

The visual qualities achieved through the practice methods produce a sense of heightened realism where the viewer can be drawn into the reality represented in each picture and consider what would otherwise be overlooked or seemingly trivial details. The photographs are an attempt to relate what Relph refers to as “Spirit of Place”, (2008, pp. 30-31 & 48-49), whereby in this phenomenological reading, places, be they landscapes or buildings or rooms, retain a palimpsest of memories of the interaction and affect of human occupation, which if one is receptive and sensitive to this way of experiencing ‘being-in-the-world’ (Heidegger 2010), radiates from them and can be perceived. Seamon adds to this interpretation of place, when discussing the atmospheres of buildings, saying “A building can be understood as a constellation of actions, events, situations, and experiences all associated with and activated by the individuals and groups that make use of that building, whether for living, working, recreating, conducting business, or something else” (Seamon 2017, p.458). The stillness of things presented to the viewer in the photographs allow us to consider these qualities within the context of this research.

To give a debatable example to add to the argument, Joel Sternfeld’s series ‘On This Site’ (1997, republished 2012), in which he photographed (with a large format camera and colour film) sites of crime where tragedies had occurred, is arguably effective and affecting precisely because the photographs exude the undercurrent atmospheres of these locations and the disturbing events that had happened there (see figure 2.2). Contrary to Sternfeld’s own statement about the work in which he argues that “Experience has taught me again and again that you can never know what lies beneath a surface or beneath a façade. Our sense of place, our understanding of photographs of the landscape is inevitably limited and fraught with misreading” (Sternfeld 2012, artist statement), I suggest that combined with the critical element of contextualisation from an accompanying text, these extraordinary events within the mundane places depicted is brought to the fore through the ability of photography to convey the phenomenology of place. The photographs have agency and work because of their phenomenologically charged spirit of



Figure 2.2. Joel Sternfeld. *The National Civil Rights Museum, formerly the Lorraine Motel, 450 Mulberry Street, Memphis, Tennessee, August 1993, 1993*

place. It is as much the palpable sense of what is absent from the image, as it is that which is presented to us that gives it currency. As John Berger states:

The true content of a photograph is invisible, for it derives from a play, not with form, but with time.” [...] “What varies is the intensity with which we are made aware of the poles of absence and presence. Between these two poles photography finds its proper meaning. (The most popular use of the photograph is as a memento of the absent.) [...] A photograph is effective when the chosen moment which it records contains a quantum of truth which is generally applicable, which is revealing about what is absent from the photograph as about what is present in it (Berger, J. 2008, pp.19-20).

This is clearly played out in the recent work of Indian photographer Dayanita Singh for example, a photographic artist known for blurring the boundaries between documentary and conceptual photographic practice. In ‘Time Measures’, (Singh 2016 - 2017), Singh photographed systematically from above on white backgrounds, packages found in a forgotten archive by the artist in an unspecified location; each carefully hand wrapped and knotted in now faded red cotton by unknown people (figures 2.3 (i), 2.3 (ii)). Very little is known about the objects; their contents remain hidden; their purpose, place of origin, and those who have handled and made them are not known. Their embedded histories and those associated with them are enveloped not only in the packages themselves, but through the process of being photographed and represented as prints; suggested rather than revealed through the photographs; the photographs emitting a powerful phenomenological aura, encouraging the viewer to question and imagine; in a sense revealing more through what is not revealed, than through what is actually depicted. It is the effectiveness of photographs to transmit information phenomenologically, as described in Singh’s work, that I have also attempted to communicate in the research photographs presented here. Chan-Fai Cheung in his book ‘Phenomenology and Photography’, says that:



Figure 2.3 (i). Dayanita Singh. *Sequence viii, Artform 1, Museum of Shedding*, 2016



Figure 2.3 (ii). Dayanita Singh. *Time Measures-1*, 2016

The aim of photographic seeing is to bracket the unnecessary elements of the given object. The consideration of the background and foreground, contrast in light and use of color are the main issues of 'photographic reduction' (a concept borrowed from phenomenology). To let the given object show itself in the intended way through the camera is the meaning of photography (Cheung 2010, p.101).

The photographs in this research have been produced with a similar consideration toward the subject and aim for a similar photographic reduction through framing and composition, and by focusing on the make-up of dwellings and their immediate surroundings. To compound this argument, further examples of how photographs can convey the phenomenological spirit of place, and the historic events and associated human histories of a given place, are perceivable in the monumental colour photographs of ancient standing stones made by Darren Almond, shown in his exhibition 'To Leave a Light Impression' (2014), (see figure 2.4). In these images, photographed in moonlight with long exposures, massive prehistoric sculpted objects known as the Callanish stones, standing on the Hebridean Isle of Lewis are presented at near life-size scale. Without the need for textual explanation, these photographs work in complex ways to emit a sense of being in place, historic presence, landscape, and histories of human activity. However, they also stand to remind us of how little we understand of a prehistoric understanding of being in the world and how paradoxically we can only relate to these objects from the perspective of our own experiences and cultures. Their meanings remain mysterious. It is the potential of photography to relate the phenomenology of place in these two examples, that demonstrate how a phenomenological approach to practice based research can be applied. Barbara Savedoff recognises how photographs can work when noting:

This conflict between how we habitually think about photographs, as objective records of appearances, and the actual transformations of photography, far from being a problem, opens up a fertile area for photographic art. [...]. They are fascinating and compelling precisely



Figure 2.4. Darren Almond. *Present Form: Aon*, 2013

because we think of photographs as recording the appearances of our world. Photographs show us our world made strange (Savedoff 2008 in: Walden, Ed. 2010, p.116).

Examples of how photographs draw out the phenomenology of things can also be seen particularly strongly in the British photographer Nigel Shafran's works (see figure 2.5 'Compost Pictures' (2008-9), figure 2:6: 'Charity shops' / 'Car-boot sales' / 'Market stalls' (2001/2) and figure 2.7: 'Washing-up' (2000). In 'Washing-up' (2000), Shafran repeatedly documented a corner of a kitchen, focussing on kitchen sink, kitchen worktop and the ever changing piles of dishes, plates, cups, and other objects. No people are ever present in these engrossing carefully composed and considered still life images of mundane domesticity and the everyday, and yet their presence is sensed through Shafran's persistent observations of things that have been used by someone, washed up, placed carefully or haphazardly on the drainer. The relationships between objects and people, and their combined affect on place and space, is drawn out through the photographing of a scene one would usually overlook. Similarly, the heightened sense of realism in the images in this research, and their focus on dwellings and habitats aim to encourage seeing the subject differently to how it could be seen otherwise; drawing out the 'strangeness' (Savedoff 2008 in: Walden 2010) of the scene by freezing time and pointing to what the human eye overlooks, and simultaneously and phenomenologically condensing and concentrating the atmosphere of place.

In the research photographs the dwellings are centred in the frame and people are removed from the scene. This draws attention to the humanly affected landscape and to material things to reflect on their phenomenological resonances. After experimentation in the early stages of this research where I included people in the composition, I concluded that rather than adding to the understanding of countercultural identity, they acted as a barrier to the interpretation of the dwellings and habitats as such. With a person or persons in the image, the viewer is not only confronted with a direct representation of who they are, and can make value judgements on that basis, but they are effectively denied access to the space represented in the image, and to exploring how dwellings and other objects within dwelling spaces and habitat are



Figure 2.5. Nigel Shafran. 'Compost 001, 2008/9'



Figure 2.6. Nigel Shafran. 'Charity Shops 001, 2001/2'



Figure 2.7. Nigel Shafran. 'Washing Up 005, 2000'

representations of an identity. This deliberate exclusion in my work gives an audience permission to contemplate the details depicted in the images without the distraction of their occupants' presence, and consider relations between objects in and around the home and people. The argument for a methodology which encourages thought about these relationships is highlighted by the photographic theorist Victor Burgin (among other cultural geographers and philosophers whose work I reference elsewhere) who states "Each ostensibly functional material item which appears in the world is classified as an object variant and integrated into an object system. [...]. The total ideology of a society is imprinted in its production and consumption of material objects" (Burgin 1982, pp.46 to 47). Much of what is argued for in this research has been underpinned with the significance and interpretation of material things. Victor Buchli also recognises how objects and the built environment are imbued with the personalities of those who have constructed them. Citing Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton (1981, p.138) and Karl Marx's (1986, p.78) metaphors equating the home with a fossil he notes how architectural and domestic spaces can be "interpreted as fossils, as the remains of the indwelt surfaces of living beings." (Buchli 2013, p.35). To Buchli "Such a metaphor privileges a visualist form of knowledge whereby the home can be scanned and "read", allowing for identification, assessment, and diagnosis. The rise of photography goes hand in hand with the visual analysis of domestic interiors as portraits or "fossilisations" of their occupants" (ibid 2013, p.120). It is this sense that homes both internally and externally can be understood and seen as portraits. I have developed this way of understanding by reflecting on the photographs through theory concerned with home and materiality; e.g. through the work of Blunt & Dowling (2006), Miller (2008) and Olsen (2013).

Photographs have a unique capacity to allow us to consider and still the world around us and then to convey to the viewer the experience of being witness to events and scenes effectively. As Elizabeth Barrett Browning observed in 1843 "it is not merely the likeness which is precious in such cases-but the association and the sense of nearness involved in the thing" (Barrett-Browning 1843 in: Pettersson 2011, p.185).

Arguing for a phenomenological, immersive reading of the photographs, and a phenomenological approach in the making of the work, the use of a multi-disciplinary mixed methodology intends to convey experiences and perceptions of place and space, and an understanding of its subject unattainable through other means. In this sense the methodology aims to merge both subjective and objective readings which are at once neutral, layered and complex.

The effect of the photographs here is to facilitate reflection on detail. In this way they offer a means of getting close to the experience of being in that place, and in this case through the representation of makeshift dwellings and habitats as a means of understanding countercultural identities. To reinforce my argument it is worth considering Michael Emme's & Anna Kirova position:

In the language of phenomenology, viewing photographs has some of the characteristics of phenomenological reduction, as it involves "modifications of the pure imagination" (Husserl 1973, section 87a) and is disconnected from the lifeworld that the photograph represents. It is also similar in the sense that the viewer may or may not have been involved in the visual perception of the context of the image. Thus the process of interpretation and explication, although subjective, can transcend meaning beyond the visible. However, we argue that it is not only the process of viewing an image that can bring forward common and essential elements of human experiences, but also that these elements can become central to the methodology that involves photography as its central element (Emme & Kirova 2006, Vol 6, p.4).

To Emme & Kirova (2006), Cheung (2010) and myself, photographs have the ability to distil the real world, enabling the viewer to see more clearly elements of the photographed scene. This way of seeing objectively and subjectively presents us with a rich source of information, offering the potential for deep analysis and understanding, and this has been employed as a theoretical tool in the making of the practice and thesis.

2:9 Conclusion

This chapter began by describing the photographic image making process, materials and equipment used and the reasoning for their use; in terms of how the aesthetic, fine details, lighting and colour, and scale, achieved through these processes affect the perception of the subject depicted. The type of photography was discussed so as to draw distinction between this and other forms of photography, and to help the viewer and reader place the work within the broad albeit 'slippery' (Bate 2009, p.54) term of 'Documentary' (ibid 2009), while recognising its shortcomings in describing work of this kind. I have explained why the subjects have been framed in a certain way to focus attention on dwelling and habitat as a way of exploring identity. Arguing for the importance that the work should be viewed in its own right and not just as documentary evidence to back up a thesis, I highlighted how the work has been seen in a variety of contexts, including galleries, art journals and magazines. I have defined my understanding of the theory of phenomenology through the work of Heidegger (2002, 2010) and others, and explained how phenomenology has been applied to the making of the practice and to its critical analysis. I have drawn attention to how this theory pervades much of the literature that has informed the thesis. The chapter develops the argument for phenomenology as a tool within photographic based research, through giving examples of other photographers' works which as well as showing things as they are, impart information through their phenomenological resonance.

Resisting the prescriptive evaluation of images as suggested in some social science based methodologies, I have argued for a methodology which is an amalgamation of approaches and techniques combining photographic theory, cultural geography and philosophy as described above to gain an understanding of countercultural identities through the making and assessing of a photographic practice.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Three: Literature Review

3:1 Introduction

This review positions the research within existing literature on counterculture, in relation to place, space, dwelling, and contested relations to the mainstream, and also situates the practice within photographic theory. While countercultures stemming from 1960s/70s hippie, 1970s/80s punk and 1990s/2000s new traveller and rave movements have persisted in America and Northern Europe, as is made clear in chapter four, literature within cultural geography has not responded much to their continued existence, evolution, mutations, and adaptations since the middle of the first decade of the twenty-first century. This review aims to set the stage for a new evaluation of countercultural identity through photography and cultural geography, by critical analysis of relevant literature to:

- 1). Contextualise the research through literature on social histories of historic counterculture.
- 2). Consider identity through space and place, and in particular in relation to home, dwelling and material culture.
- 3). Address countercultural relations to the mainstream.
- 4). Frame the practice within the context of photographic theory

3:2 Framing the research within Countercultural Histories and Practices

Countercultural histories and movements from the 17th to the 20th century influence the way in which current countercultural identities are informed and expressed; they also provide historic

perspective on contemporary counterculture. Given the constraints of this review, and the breadth of subject matter informing the research, the objective here is to review some examples of literature on countercultural histories which have affected contemporary countercultures.

Hardy (1979) identifies a number of different ideologies between the 17th and 19th centuries within Western intentional communities: Utopian Socialist, Agrarian Socialists, Sectarian, and Anarchist. For example Hardy assesses artist and philosopher John Ruskin's attempts to build a utopian socialist community on the outskirts of Sheffield, UK. To Hardy "What Ruskin envisaged was a restoration of "lost values" through a return to a form of economy based on agriculture and crafts. He formulated his proposals in relation to a medieval ideal, where companionship and social order was possible, though within a rigid hierarchy of control" (1979, p.79). Despite their resistance to industrialisation and urbanisation and building rural-centric communities, Hardy points out that attempts to be self-sufficient were unsuccessful. According to Hardy, other agrarian socialist intentional communities developing around the same time suffered because of a number of factors: their inability to meet financial pressures from the outside world, internal politics, local physical geography, and ideological differences. ¹Hardy concludes that "for all their differences in what they do and how they are organised, modern communes will generally tend towards an anarchist philosophy, far removed from the more rigid political and religious ideologies that underlay most of the communities before the 1890s".(1979, p.225). While Hardy's analysis concerns communities in static settlements, Gypsy traveller identities from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in England, whose practices and identities to some extent feed into the imaginations of contemporary

¹ Ideological conflicts in historic alternative communities have been avoided by the counterculture studied in this research because they have not set out to form cohesive communities which rely on cooperation. For example in encampment 'B', a transient population with no one leader or controlling authority enables the avoidance of internal power struggles. During the period of the research there were a number of people living on this site who identified themselves as part of 'The Rainbow Tribe'. According to Michael I. Niman (1997) "*The Rainbow Family of Living Light, also known as the Rainbow Nation and the Rainbow Family, is committed to principles of non-violence and non-hierarchical egalitarianism. They have been holding large non commercial gatherings in remote forests since 1972 to pray for world peace and to demonstrate the viability of a cooperative utopian community living in harmony with the Earth. They govern themselves by a Council whose membership is open to all interested people. All decisions are by consensus. Money is not needed, as all necessities are free at Gatherings. Everyone is welcome.*" (1997, p.xvii).

countercultures, have been considered through rural otherness and mobility by Holloway (2003). Holloway emphasises the importance of rural place and space in Gypsy travellers identity and how their inhabiting of rural environments set them apart from the urban mainstream, to be seen as romantically connected to nature, or as dangerous untamed social deviants (Holloway 2003). Rural place and space are to Holloway critical in historic public racialised perceptions of Gypsy otherness and discussing this provides her with the framework to discuss notions of “the cultural construction of rurality” (2003, p.699). Using existing literature concerning historic Gypsy culture and original case study material gathered from newspaper articles between 1869-1934 written about the traditional annual Gypsy event *The Appleby Horse Fair* in Cumbria, UK, Holloway looks at how Gypsies were othered and seen as transgressive; identifying how difference and being other to the Gypsies was enacted through and embodied in their liminal connections to the rural, and their use of and movement through space and place.

3:3 1960s/70s Counterculture

Political, spiritual and environmentalist differences and the practicalities of attempting to live outside the establishment in 1960s/70s America are described in social histories of intentional communities such as Drop City (Curl 2007), The Family, Hog Farm, The Kingdom of Heaven, The Lama Foundation, Morning Star, (Berger, B. M. 1981, Frye 1994, Lablonsky 2000), and New Buffalo (Kopecky 2006). Curl (2007) and Kopecky (2006) identify conflicts about land ownership, territory, power relations, communal responsibilities, leadership, ideology, gender politics, and dependencies on the mainstream. According to Kopecky (2006), the intention of New Buffalo was to have a shared communal responsibility toward self-sufficiency, to live off the land, at one with nature. This points to the influence of historic communal aspirations whereby “A utopian colony, [...] consists of a group of people who are attempting to establish a new social pattern based upon a vision of the ideal society and who have withdrawn themselves from the community at large to embody that vision in experimental form” (Hine 1973, p.5). Although sharing a rejection of mainstream American cultural values and consumerism, one difference between the two communes, was that where Drop City focused on creative endeavours,

New Buffalo was based on the survivalist ideology of the early settlers of the seventeenth century as Kopecky states: “I often think of the parallel between the early Christian communities and us. These were simply dressed people with big ideas. Much energy had to go into basic survival tasks that were accomplished by completely voluntary group effort. A spirituality and a closeness with nature pervaded that are as valuable as any possession”. (Kopecky, A. 2006, p. xxiii).

Performative practices of 1960s/70s American countercultures played an important part in the construction of some countercultural identities centred around Los Angeles and San Francisco, USA (Rycroft 2007). Rycroft argued that being countercultural in 1960s California involved non-representational activities such as taking hallucinogenic drugs, and participating in ephemeral art, music and film based happenings, in temporal spaces, that were experiences of the mind, and perceived sensually as much as they were perceived through materiality. Rycroft cites synaesthetic cinema (where objects metamorphosise into other objects and there is no traditional narrative thread) as an example of a non-representational art form being made at the time, and one which is difficult to explain because as Youngblood has said “It is not what we are seeing so much as the process and effect of seeing: that is the phenomenon of experience itself, which exists only in the viewer” (Youngblood 170b:97, quoted in Rycroft 2007). To understand and explore how countercultural identity was developed, reproduced, played out and experienced at this time and place then becomes problematic through geographies of representation. Rycroft argues that the way in which countercultural identities engaged with being in the world through hallucinogenic drug taking and creative sensory experience based events can be explained and understood using a non-representational theory. Highlighting the limitations of understanding and communicating embodied experiences through representational theory, Rycroft points to how a non-representational understanding of countercultural being in the 1960s, gets us closer to understanding countercultural experiences and their engagement with the world, saying:

[...] whereas cultural geographers have concerned themselves with exploring and exposing the limits to representation, non-representational approaches direct our attention to the realms of what lies beyond those limits and attempt to develop a different type of politics. This politics would be a politics of evocation rather than representation that, like the experiments in performance and aesthetics developed in the 1960s, would activate and bring about new subjectivities (2007).

As such Rycroft suggests how non-representational theory could help in our understanding of historic countercultural practices, experiences and relations, while also expanding our field of approaches to such subjects.

3:4 The Construction of Otherness through Rural Mobility

The identities of Hippies, Punks, New-Travellers, Neo-Nomads and Gypsies have been discussed through sociology, cultural geography, ethnography and anthropology. Within this literature there has been a recurring focus on mobility as one expression of countercultural identity and a theme through which countercultures have been seen as other by the mainstream. Halfacree (2006) questions how place and space in terms of land and rurality have and continue to play important roles symbolically, practically, politically, and environmentally in the ideologies of back-to-the-land counterculturalists. Framing his paper through case study analysis of the effectiveness and successes or failures of back-to-the-land experiments from the 1960s and 1970s and comparing these to the resurgence of rural communes in the 1990s and 2000s, Halfacree points to the ways in which people from both periods have faced difficulties when attempting to create self-sufficient rural communities. Halfacree argues that when coming predominantly from urban environments, it can be demanding to live off the land in a small community. While being connected spiritually and physically to nature has been central to the outsider identity of many people in the back-to-the-land movement, signifying a rejection of materialistic capitalist values and concern for the environment, Halfacree argues how

individuals in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s who set out to disengage from the 'straight society' by living in remote rural areas lacked the physical motivation to engage with the work involved in maintaining a small holding, and were more interested in the idea of spacial and spiritual freedom than the required manual labour. Recent experiments however, such as Brithdir Mawr in Wales, Tinkers Bubble in Somerset (England) and Steward Community Woodland in Devon (England),² have according to Halfacree succeeded because they have been more organised, are prepared to work the land, understand how to negotiate with the law, and are mutually motivated to achieve environmentally sustainable communal ways of living. Halfacree argues for the co-substantiative relationships between land and everyday life in critical evaluation of back-to-the-land experiments, (2006, p.309) and in doing so describes a central concern within a specific type of countercultural identity that is not evident on the sites of this research. While setting up camp in remote rural marginal areas is important to establishing and maintaining otherness and represents a defiance towards hegemonic systems, as has been echoed by Kuhling (2007), to the countercultures of the research the use of the land to create self-sufficient communities is less so.

Shubin (2011) has focused on relations to place through movement as central in some countercultural ideologies, urging us to reconsider binary understandings of belonging to place. Shubin shows how society problematises Scottish Gypsies and Travellers position in society, seeing their mobility as indicative of a disconnection to place. Shubin considered the complex meanings of mobility for Scottish Gypsy travellers to engage with and understand how travellers experience place and their relationships to it. Drawing on Heidegger's (1993, 1978) dwelling and being-in-the-world theories, he argues that their sense of being and identity is encapsulated in and understood through their mobility. To Shubin, "Our being in the world unfolds as a situated and contingent process of engagement with our surroundings, and mobility activates

² Also discussed in chapter four in the photographic works of David Spero. (see: figure 4.5)

that engagement” (Shubin 2011, p.1932). Rather than sensing displacement, Gypsy travellers lives are made meaningful and empowered through mobility. Movement to Gypsy travellers in Scotland is integral to their being; as a way of experiencing freedom, connecting with other travellers, as othering themselves from the mainstream, engaging with space and place, histories of place with traveller histories. (ibid 2011).

Kabachnik (2009) has argued for a new cultural politics of traveller mobility in the UK and questioned the demonisation and repression of new-travellers by the authorities and the public. Identifying two discourses; ‘culture as nature’ and ‘culture as choice’, Kabachnik expresses how countercultural identities are misunderstood, excluded and compromised either way by being perceived within these parameters. According to Kabachnik being forced into static accommodation against their wishes, undermines their desire or need to travel. This need is arguably embedded in their being and contradicts mainstream conventions of how one should live and dwell. Their presence and encampments are perceived as a threat to acceptable behaviours. In both scenarios Kabachnik points to how British and Irish new-traveller cultures are seen as out of place; criminalised for a nomadic way of life, and racially discriminated against.

Cresswell has discussed the perceived threat of mobility to the hegemonic (1996, 1999, 2001, 2006). In *‘On The Move’* (Cresswell 2006, p.42) he draws attention to the phenomenon of the nomadic; how people who are essentially placeless in that they do not live in one rooted place are and have always been seen as a threat to society. Cresswell has also considered an overlooked aspect of traveller culture in how society has historically not been able to categorise or deal with the female as a gendered outsider within an already marginalised group. Through the study of the mobility of American female hobos and tramps in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Cresswell identifies how, while male tramps and hobos could be easily categorised as outsiders through identifiable nomadic practices, their female counterparts transgressed social

conventions and evaded categorisation through their gendered act of mobility (1999). In this way, the perceived threat of the male nomad in western cultures could be seen as amplified in the female form. Cresswell has drawn attention then, to the monocular way in which countercultural identities have been thought of within the academy.

3:5 Considering Place and Space

Kuhling (2007) has explored transgressive countercultural ideologies and relations to the hegemonic through perceptions and uses of marginal rural space and place, working practices, and their practices of repurposing waste from the capitalist world. Using case studies from groups of New Age Travellers in south west Ireland, Kuhling argues that these identities subvert, resist and challenge conventional approaches to living through their use of marginal spaces, reclamation of previously discarded materials and clothing; which often fuses elements from different countercultural traditions, their appropriation of vehicles as living spaces, their attitudes to work where they refuse to participate in the dominant economic system, and their attitudes to personal cleanliness. For example, being dirty can be seen as the counterculture's way of rejecting "the cosmetic cleanliness of the modern body" (Kuhling 2007, p.88). Homogenising cultural histories, aesthetics and values from pre and post 1960s western counterculture, and refusing conventional ordering of domestic environments, according to Kuhling, they resist simple categorisation and thereby become a hybrid other which is both marginal and transgressive. Choosing to live in rural locations, and making marginal spaces central to their being, to Kuhling, also strengthens their sense of otherness; rejecting urban centric consumerist lifestyles and inverting notions of the urban as central spaces. Place, and particularly rural place can be seen and understood then as a fluid concept within the countercultural imaginary and reality; where sense of place becomes mobile, and mobility in effect mobilises the ideology of being other.

3:6 Materiality, Boundaries, Otherness

Pickering (2010), considers how early 21st century western countercultural identities in Hawaii are reinforced and expressed in part through their attitudes to bodily waste and their daily ritualistic practices of defecation and urination. Pickering highlights a so far overlooked but important factor in the assertion of countercultural identity through embodied relations to place and space. Pickering identifies the acts of urination and defecation as ones of defiance, empowerment, and environmental concern. Pickering argues, that in refusing to connect to a sewerage system, which in turn connects to the state system, human faeces is repurposed into a productive composting material through making and using DIY composting toilets. Urinating on trees and plants benefits their growth and health by providing a source of nitrogen. Countercultural identity is enacted through these acts of defiance and transgression and turns what is considered by the mainstream as dirt into productive regenerative material. To Pickering, in these practices, not only do they to connect with like-minded others, they effectively mark out their territories and themselves as other, connect through their mutual disobedience of accepted codes of behaviour in the USA, and turn matter conventionally seen as out of place into matter in place. Defecation and urination in these ways become politicised positive acts which seek to undermine the American self-image of cleanliness and domestic order; embodying central countercultural concerns for the environment, while being acts of empowerment, expressing ideologically and physically their disconnection from the state.

3:7 Recent Histories of British Countercultures

Recent histories of British countercultural movements have been considered in the work of Dearling (1998), Hebdige (1979), Hetherington (2000, 2006), St John (2009), McKay (1996). While this literature has approached counterculture through sociological prisms, there is considerable emphasis on the significance of place and space as a contributing factor in the make up of and perceptions of countercultural identity. Dearling identifies the catalysts for the move away from Britain by new traveller communities in the 1990s; the so called 'Battle of the

Beanfield³ in 1985, the commercialisation of the free festivals that had developed since the 1960s in Britain, the Castlemorton Festival in 1992⁴ and the subsequent implementation of the Criminal Justice Act of 1994⁵ which criminalised aspects of the traveller way of life. While recognising the diversity of backgrounds within the group, he suggests that British countercultures have homogenised to become part of the same community through the shared experiences of place and space, in their migration into Europe. To Dearling:

In inviting contributions from individuals and in selecting interesting places for inclusion in No Boundaries, there are no rigid distinctions between folk who eat fire; paint Celtic knot-work; perform at festies or on street corners, play in bands or run sound systems; sleep on Grecian or Goan beaches in straw huts; live in a bus or a tipi; street trade; dance all night; make gifts for older gods and goddesses; fix HGV engines; do or don't take drugs (Dearling, 1998, p.8).

Hebdige (1979) has approached British counterculture primarily through the semiotics of dress codes. Hebdige observes that teddy boys and mods of the 1950s and 1960s, skinheads of the early 1970s, and punks in the late 1970s adapted and subverted clothing from a previous era to create anti-establishment identity. Hebdige discusses the practice of dress appropriation as a means of expressing allegiance to a particular countercultural tribe, and of subverting or rejecting or challenging conventions.

³ The so called 'Battle of the Beanfield' was an incident that happened where a large convoy of new age travellers were prevented by Wiltshire police from continuing their journey to the prehistoric site Stonehenge on June 1st 1985 where they wanted to celebrate the summer solstice. They were herded into a field off the road and then forcefully removed from their vehicles and arrested. Vehicles were damaged by the police and confiscated. Some of the travellers were beaten by the police. For further reading this was documented comprehensively by Andy Worthington in his book *'The Battle of the Beanfield'*. (Worthington, A. ed. 2005. Enabler. UK)

⁴ The Castlemorton Free Festival took place in May 1992 and attracted a crowd of between twenty to forty thousand people. Gathering over a period of five days they created a temporary autonomous zone (Bey, H. 1991), intent on partying on common land without any commercialisation: See: Reynolds (1998) *'Generation Ecstasy: Into the World of Techno and Rave Culture.'*

⁵ The criminal justice act 1994 was a series of laws introduced by Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government to give power to local authorities and the police to prevent unauthorised encampments and protests in public places. It also made changes to laws regarding trespass and squatting in favour of private land and property owners. See: Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, points 61 to 80. Part V. Public Order: Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land Public Order: Collective Trespass or Nuisance on Land. [Internet] <<https://www.legislation.gov.uk>>. Accessed 12.09. 2019

In his exploration of new-traveller cultures in relation to their social histories and use of and inhabiting of place and space, Hetherington (2000, 2006) has drawn out a politics of space. Considering recent histories, lifestyles and ideologies; where questions of spacial boundaries, of being out of place, Englishness, class, land rights, mobility, and marginal spaces are brought forward as a means of understanding new-traveller identity. Hetherington contextualises UK new-traveller histories within the festival scene from the 1970s to the 90s, and discusses ideologies and identities in relation to place and cultural backgrounds. Hetherington provides political and sociological contextualisation of this counterculture within Britain, through analysis of the countercultures sense of self in relation to freedom, ownership, consumerism, nomadism, landscape, ethnicity, place as a site of social centrality (ibid 2000, p.134). While this counterculture continues to develop, absorbing new youth subcultures and influence from outside political circumstances, Hetherington points out the paradoxes involved in the counterculture's dependencies and entanglements with the mainstream saying: "In all, this is a communal way of life that exists on the fringes of society but one that has economic and cultural relationships with that society" (2000, p.87). Hetherington also notes that migration of travellers new and old from the UK to Europe, (ibid 2000, p.129) continues because it is much easier to live out this lifestyle in countries who do not have the restrictions imposed on travellers in Britain.⁶

McKay (1996), traces the evolution of countercultural groups in Britain from 1970 to the early 1990s, and relations to the mainstream from the free hippy festivals of Albion, and Windsor, through punk and anarchist music centred collectives, to rave, DIY sound systems, direct action ecological and political protest groups and new travellers. McKay identifies the free festival as a

⁶ See Worthington (2009) Remember the Battle of the Beanfield In *The Guardian*. 01June 2009. Available from: [Internet] <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/libertycentral/2009/jun/01/remembering-the-battle-of-the-beanfield>>

critical space for countercultures to gather, mix, and assert their difference to mainstream culture. McKay states “free festivals [...] quickly became a site of negotiation between generations of sub- and countercultures, as well as a site of contestation between festival-goers and the majority culture” (ibid 1996, p.21). McKay recognises the role of temporal places to the counterculture saying the festival site represents a place where the fusion of ‘anarchist cultural politics’ (1996, p.22), environmental sensibilities and lifestyle practices are played out in countercultural movements throughout this evolution, despite their seemingly disparate identities.

St John (2009), has focused on the cultural politics of countercultures through the interlinked web of countercultures such as 1960s hippies to the electronic music based rave culture from the late 1980s through to 2007. St John uses ethnographic and documentary data to investigate international cultures of resistance centred around neo-nomadic groups (e.g. Spiral Tribe, Bedlam, Mutoid Waste Company) who created electronic music based events in marginal temporal spaces in the UK, Europe and the USA. St John states that their free party gatherings had their roots in the music festivals of the mid to late 1970s, and have similarities to the American hippy happenings of the late 1960s, and the ideologies and actions of American countercultural writers and activists Timothy Leary and Ken Kesey.⁷ St John tracks the culture through a network of loosely connected individuals, groups and organisations, from their exodus from the UK, into Europe, Australia, America and India. In detailed accounts including interview extracts from key players St John maps the mobilisation of a fluid counterculture connected through electronic music in sites of temporal gatherings, and in doing so describing the background causes and events leading to what he calls the ‘Tekno-Traveller’ identity; a

⁷ E.g.: Timothy Leary’s spoken word album “*Turn On, Tune In, Drop Out*” (1966). Ken Kesey’s road trip across America in 1964 in a converted school bus named ‘Further’ with a group of friend’s named ‘The merry Pranksters’ is recognised in the literature as an action that catalysed the hippy movement; see ‘*The Magic Trip*’ documentary film by Alison Ellwood and Alex Gibney (2011).

recent neo-nomadic countercultural hybrid identity, fusing aspects of historic countercultural ideologies and practices (ibid 2009, p.59).

3:8 Phenomenological Understandings of Space, Place and Identity

Place, as this thesis repeatedly argues, is critical to the creation and understanding of countercultural identity. For this research, a phenomenological approach to place underpins both the writing and practice. Wylie, J. (2013) states in relation to understanding landscape:

Phenomenology is a branch of continental philosophy which aims to elucidate and express the meaning and nature of things in the world – of phenomena – through a focus upon human lived experience, perception, sensation and understanding. [...] Phenomenology is a philosophy that, above all, stresses the importance of lived experience, of the human subject's ongoing immersion in the world; and that thus seeks to move away from a description of subjectivity in terms of rational, distanced observation, towards an alternate understanding of human being – of what it is to be human – in terms of expressive engagement and involvement with the world (Wylie, J. 2013 in: Howard, Thompson, Waterton, Atha, 2013, C.4. p.54).

Building on this, I argue photography is an effective way of transmitting a phenomenological perspective capable of relating these embodied experiences, to enable understanding about embodied relationships with place and space. Wylie draws attention to the potential problems of the use of a phenomenological approach within the social sciences, stating “[...], phenomenology is viewed as lacking the critical purchase provided by the argument that historical and material circumstances hold the key to understanding both individual and social worlds” (Wylie, J. 2013 p.180). However, through interpreting the photographs through their phenomenological resonances, I argue that photography is a powerful medium through which complex layers of information about relationships with place and space from both insider and

outsider positions can be understood. For Husserl, “phenomenology was not simply the clarification of our linguistic expressions, but a more deep seated attempt to analyse the very senses or meanings which we constitute through our acts and which receive expression in language [...]”. To Husserl, “meanings are clarified through phenomenological reflection secured in intuition” (ibid 2002, p.13). In his lecture ‘Pure Phenomenology; Its Method, and its Field of Investigation’ Husserl proclaimed:

To understand this broadening of the concept is very easy if one considers that emotional and volitional processes also have intrinsically the character of being conscious of something and that enormous categories of objects, including all cultural objects, all values, all goods, all works, can be experienced, understood, and made objective as such only through the participation of emotional and volitional consciousness...it would be the task of phenomenology, therefore, to investigate how something perceived, something remembered, something phantasied, something pictorially represented, something symbolized looks as such, i.e., to investigate how it looks by virtue of that bestowal of sense and of characteristics which is carried out intrinsically by the perceiving, the remembering, the phantasying, the pictorial representing, etc., itself (ibid 2002, p.127).

To perceive phenomenologically then is to sense the atmosphere around or of a given object or place and accept that places and things affect an emotional response because of their interactions and histories with people. Describing how we interpret the world through art, the German philosopher Adolf Reinach (1883-1917), said:

Also here we can learn to look; also here it is art which teaches the normal person to comprehend, for the first time, what he had hitherto overlooked. This does not merely mean that, by means of art or technique, experiences are evoked within us which we would not have

otherwise had, but also that, out of the fullness of experience, art allows us to view what was indeed, there already, but without our being conscious of it (ibid 2002, pp.180-181).

Reinach argues in defense of art as a way of seeing and understanding our relationship with the objects and world around us. With a phenomenological approach therefore, the artist can bring meaning and attention to the previously misunderstood, or overlooked. Heidegger gives the example of how a chair as inanimate object can be perceived phenomenologically saying “The way and manner of how this chair is perceived is to be distinguished from the structure of how it is represented”. Heidegger argues that it is the “thingness” (ibid 2002, p.266) of an object that gives it meaning beyond what it actually physically is. So in the case of the chair, one subconsciously recognises that it has been made somewhere and by someone, and this gives it a sense of what he terms “perceivedness” (ibid 2002, p.267). In other words, one’s perception of an object is changed by the knowledge of that object’s origins. Through reflection on the meaning of objects within the photographs, a phenomenological perception of relations between objects and people opens up a potential for understanding. Phenomenology used as a philosophical approach to photography, enables a way of reading places and objects in places depicted within the image.⁸ Following Heidegger’s phenomenological logic, it is logical that human actions change the atmospheres of space and place, and objects and places can be read in relation to their histories, interconnections, and human activity that has been contained therein. I argue that these readings can be sensed visibly in certain photographs. Through this way of perception, new understandings are made possible. If it is in the intention of the artist, photographs can aim to convey experiences of being in place in different ways to words. Phenomenological theory has been well used within cultural geography, (e.g. Relph 2007, Seamon 1989, 1993, Tuan 2007), but to date not combined with or read through photographic art to explain or understand human identity in relation to place and space.

⁸ Literature which specifically discusses photography and phenomenology is developed further in chapter four.

Tuan (2007) discusses the significances of place to people, attachment to place, how place is defined and created in space and how the experience of place can be different for different people, depending on their knowledge of that place, their history with it, and their feelings towards it. Tuan's phenomenological concerns are the relationships between people and their environments and how our experience of a place determines our perception. To Tuan "Place can acquire deep meaning for the adult through the steady accretion of sentiment over the years. Every piece of heirloom furniture, or even a stain on the wall, tells a story" (ibid 2007, p.33). I aim to prove through critical analysis of my own work and that of others, photography is capable of highlighting the significance of particular things as Tuan suggests. Tuan notes how architecture is a factor in cultural and personal identity, affecting the way we feel about ourselves, our relationships and our environments, and helping structure our behaviour: "Architectural space - even a simple hut surrounded by cleared ground - can define such sensations and render them vivid [...] the built environment clarifies social roles and relations. People know better who they are and how they ought to behave when the arena is humanly designed rather than nature's raw stage" (ibid 2007, p.102). To Tuan "Constructed form has the power to heighten the awareness and accentuate, as it were, the difference in emotional temperature between "inside" and "outside"" (ibid 2007, p.107).

Integral to this phenomenological study of place, space and identity, is the consideration of the phenomenology of landscape. To Ingold, landscape is not to be thought of "as a neutral, external backdrop to human activities," nor "a particular cognitive or symbolic ordering of space", (Ingold 2000, p.189), but "as an enduring record of - and testimony to - the lives and works of past generations who have dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves". (ibid 2000, p.189). As such, according to Ingold, landscape must be considered from "a dwelling perspective" (ibid 2000, p.189). In his influential essay 'The Temporality of the Landscape' first published in 1993, challenging previous landscape theory which suggested "A landscape is a cultural image, a pictorial way of representing or symbolising surroundings" (Daniels & Cosgrove in Ingold 2000, p191), Ingold argues that landscape is not something out

there, to be experienced and understood objectively, as something we exist on or in, but rather something that we are a part of and immersed in through our dwelling; that we affect and that affects us. Ingold usefully elaborates on this stating “[...] temporality and historicity are not opposed but rather merge into the experience of those who, in their activities, carry forward the process of social life” (Ingold 2000, p.194). In expressing the idea that the act of dwelling involves a rhythmic sequence of performative social interactions, is ongoing, temporal and interconnected with landscape, Ingold invents the term ‘Taskscape’ (ibid 2000, p.195). Ingold says “Just as the landscape is an array of related features, so - by analogy - the taskscape is an array of related activities (ibid 2000, p.195). While I find the marriage of these two words an awkward lexical juxtaposition, ‘Taskscape’ describes and draws attention to an important interplay and relationality between dwelling as a series of ephemeral performative acts, and the ongoing project of the construction of the (also temporal) landscape. To Ingold “This means that in dwelling in the world, we do not act upon it, or do things to it; rather we move along with it. Our actions do not transform the world, they are part and parcel of the world’s transforming itself. And that is just another way of saying that they belong to time” (ibid 2000, p.200). Through our historic and continual actions, involvement with, and dwelling in, we are then inextricably connected to, influenced by and influencing of the ever changing make-up of landscapes. As Rose, M., & Wylie, J. have succinctly stated “Landscape is the ongoing practice and process of dwelling” (2011 p.228). As we move forward in time and space, a multitude of past events and activities; cultural, environmental, physical and mental leads to ever growing histories and memories; all these elements combining to affect landscapes, our perception of them, and thereby our understandings of ourselves through them. It is through these elements, that we can sense landscape “as composed as much of distances and absences, as of presences and proximities” (Wylie, J. 2013, p.62). As observed, embodied and inhabited physical and metaphysical forms, landscapes hold and evoke memories for people, positive and negative, which can be understood phenomenologically (Casey 2000, Trigg 2012, De Nardi & Drozdowski, in: Atha, Howard, Thompson, Waterton 2018). However, to Ingold, it is also important to recognise concepts of landscape beyond a human temporal and historicised

perspective as all things animate and inanimate resonate together, holding and expressing their histories and changing within their own timeframes through chronological and social time (Ingold 2000, p.189-208). In this sense, there is not one universal perception of a landscape but multiple perceptions where layered cultural, social and political histories, memories and meanings are interwoven into the same landscape, perpetually evolving in their temporal states in time and space. Exploring this theory further, while not in the scope of this literature review, Rose & Wylie (2006), Ash & Simpson (2014), Ihde (2003) and others have argued for a re-evaluation of phenomenological perspectives, whereby they advocate looking at being in the world not just through our own subjective immersive position, but through other less tangible existential points of view, being in the world is a condition that all things are a part of and should be recognised as equally significant and affecting. Having set out his major themes concerning a definition of landscape, what the 'taskscape' is, what he means by temporality and dwelling, Ingold employs and draws arguments together through close analysis and unpacking of the painting 'The Harvesters' (Bruegel, P. 1565), one of a series of twelve monthly seasonal paintings, (of which five remain), inviting us, rather than being distant observers, to imagine being in the humanly manicured rural landscape depicted so as to understand the painter's own and the painted subjects' immersion in and perception of the same. In this way we too are able to experience, be connected to, become a part of and relate to the temporal landscape described. In this pictorial representation we see through Ingold's guidance, the ongoing temporality of a landscape, where the abstract dimensions of space and time can be seen as a framework in which the physical and socio-cultural landscape exists, evolves, holds histories, is meaningful and is affected by embodied human and non-human activity; where peasants eat the bread made from the wheat born out of their labour within the changing landscape in which they rest and are immersed. (Ingold 2000, p.201-203). Here then, in pictorial form, is a medium through which Ingold's phenomenological understanding of landscape is explained. Contributing to these theories, Tilley has stated "[...] landscapes, unlike their representations, are constituted in space-time. They are always changing, in the process of being or becoming, never exactly the same twice over" (Tilley 2010, p.26). However, it is through the painted representation, like

photographs freezing a subject in time and space (Dyer 2005), that we are made aware of this temporality. The painting acts inevitably and effectively as a document and reminder of things, events, activities past, and of the ongoing project of the landscape. Rather than inhibiting or distancing ourselves from our embodied understanding of landscapes, as some writers have suggested (e.g. Malpas et al. 2011), paintings as Ingold has explained, and photographs as I and others (e.g. Wells 2011) argue, can be particularly good at representing and communicating our involvement in the temporality of the landscape. Relevant to the subject matter here, Atha has said “[...] even the most ephemeral of landscapes can be interconnected with socio-historical events and cultural practices that reflect and even define particular communities, their lifeways, values and beliefs’ (Atha 2018, p.124). This certainly seems to be the case when considering the identities of those concerned in this research where despite the countercultures’ transient and relatively recent appearance in these landscapes, each site, as I will expand on elsewhere in the thesis, holds distinct histories and meanings through the various activities, events and dwelling practices of those who have, do, and will inhabit them.

Concurrently, as landscapes are being continually constructed, landscapes and all things that contribute to them are also in a constant state of decay and are built on impermanence. This is a point well demonstrated through the detailed phenomenological analysis of a decaying and abandoned homestead and its contents in Montana by Caitlin DeSilvey (2007), and in the acutely observed and immersive landscape photographs of the British artist Jem Southam, who has repeatedly returned to, photographed and reflected on the changes within the same landscapes through the effects of time and seasons. (See for example: Southam 1999, 2007). Reflecting on similar themes in her paper ‘Time and Landscape’ (2002), Barbara Bender states that “Landscape is time materialized. Or better, Landscape is time materializing: Landscapes, like time, never stand still” (Bender 2002, p.103). Landscapes are to Bender always subjective, seen and understood differently depending on a subjects histories and relations with the landscape. Bender points out that “[...] time duration is measured in terms of human embodied experience of place and movement, of memory and expectation” (ibid p.103). We are then made aware of landscapes affected by human activities and environmental factors over time, and as having a

temporal present, a future, and a past. As Bender says “The past is not only etched on the present in the form of architecture and layout but also drawn into the present, invested with meaning, used and reused in any number of different ways.” (Bender 2002, p.107).

Having discussed how Ingold (2000) has progressed thinking about the phenomenological experience of landscape in relation to the concepts of time, change and temporality, while not aspiring to be a comprehensive analysis, the sub-section of the review immediately above has explored the essence of Ingold’s essay in relation to the work of others in the fields of anthropology, cultural geography and archaeology as a platform to underline how this aspect of landscape theory is critical to approaching the subject matter of this thesis.

3:9 Phenomenological Readings of Home

Photographs of interior spaces show a more intimate and private world to that of the exteriors of dwellings; outside and inside clearly having different meanings and different purposes. However, as the thesis will demonstrate, exteriors of habitations are equally as revealing of someone’s identity; physically delineating boundaries of inside and outside, private and public space, possibly declaring environmental concerns in the materiality of the dwelling, and in the case of vehicles used as dwellings, expressing otherness through their mobility. Tuan’s work (2007) in relation to the creation of place; how nomadic people take their sense of place with them into impermanent spaces, the attachment to a locality, loyalty to a place and choice of place, is acknowledged as important, however there is not space to discuss these issues within the review.

The Poetics of Space (Bachelard 1994) has been widely reviewed elsewhere, however, key themes concerning the construction of space and the human relationship to it are relevant. Equating a bird’s nest to that of a human dwelling suggests that all occupied spaces are embedded with meaning, through the history of their construction and the things that have occurred in and around those spaces. To Bachelard “it is itself and something other than itself”

(1994, p.98). To Bachalard the nest (or house) is not simply an inanimate object with one meaning, but something that has many significances and represents more than just the physical object. Bachalard draws on Michelet, quoting: “The house is a bird’s very person; it is its form and its most immediate effort, I shall even say, its suffering” (ibid 1994, p.101). Bachalard’s work is a phenomenological consideration of space and place where the house becomes a metaphor for humanness. However his idealised perceptions of home as a place of refuge, intimacy and security are in danger of falling into what Wylie, J. (2007) might describe as phenomenological Romanticism. Home therefore has to be considered from alternative perspectives.

Home as a meaningful place is illustrated in two contrasting ways by Porteous & Smith (2001) who say firstly home is a place “of refuge, freedom, possession, shelter and security” (Porteous & Smith 2001, cited in Blunt & Dowling 2006, p.176) and secondly that home is a place representing “family, friends and community, attachment, rootedness, memory and nostalgia” (ibid 2006, p.176). Blunt & Dowling (2006) discuss the idea of how the material nature of home can be understood in relation to a sense of belonging and rootedness as well as other connotations concerning alienation, temporality, migration, power, empire, social inter relations, and domestic material cultures. Writing that place can have different complex meanings depending on personal experiences of and relationship with a place, they say “Home provides shelter and also provides a setting in which people feel secure and centred. People’s sense of self is also expressed through home” (ibid 2006, p.9). To them dwelling is a representation of identity, stating “Home as a place and an imaginary constitute identities- people’s sense of themselves are related to and produced through lived and imaginative experiences of home. These identities and homes are, in turn, produced and articulated through relations of power” (ibid 2006, p.24) Through Massey (2005), they argue that place is not as commonly believed fixed and singular. Massey states: “A place is formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location” and “[...] some of these social interrelations will be wider than and go beyond the area being referred to in any particular context as that place” (Massey, 2005 cited in

Blunt & Dowling 2006, p.25), and that “a large component of the identity of that place called home derives precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it” (ibid 2006, p.25).

Blunt & Dowling point to several central themes in this research: that home is integral to identity; that home is a moveable concept and does not have to be rooted in one place, and that home can be seen as a representation of identity encompassing cultural background, personal history, a belief system and a belonging. Through Crouch (2004), Blunt & Dowling (2006) question the politics of home and belonging, and how the appropriation of an indigenous peoples’ land by another causes tensions. Similarly, tensions concerning the use and occupation of common or state owned land are played out in relationships and actions of the counterculture and the local Spanish population.⁹

The significance of objects within the home is considered by Daniel Miller (2008). Miller investigates the identity of individuals who live in one randomly selected street in South London, through personal possessions and home decor. Miller says “It explores the role of objects in our relationships, both to each other and to ourselves” (Miller 2008, p.1). The logic behind this approach is that by asking people about the significance of inanimate objects one can build a revealing and less guarded picture of someone’s identity. Identity is revealed through the contemplation of and discussion about a rooms decoration, furnishings, displayed photographs, and other small objects. Taking this phenomenological approach to ethnographic research,

⁹ For example, the issue of contested space is clear in this local newspaper report concerning a legal case between the local authority and an individual ex-patriot British man who was partly responsible for organising a free festival on site A; “According to Brimmel the conflict began when [...] town hall excavated large holes in [...]– the site of the festival held from 1997 to 2009 – in order to stop revellers from arriving.” Bryce & Williams, ‘Dragon Festival Fallout in Orgiva’. *The Olive Press*, Spain, (18.07.2011)

Miller asks questions about community, isolation, and how we make sense of ourselves through the personal things we choose to have around us. While missing the opportunity to engage with the potency of photography to underpin his theory, Miller gives us a forceful case for the applied use of phenomenology.

3:10 Place and Phenomenology

Relph (2008) grounds a phenomenological approach to place. For Relph the human experience of and relationships to place are fundamental to peoples' lives. Relph argues that place could be best examined through phenomenology:

Phenomenology is an approach that acknowledges and aims to clarify the complexity of this experience without reducing it to some model or an average. Furthermore, it is clear that, phenomenologically, place always presents itself as simultaneously grounded in specific contexts and an aspect of the openness of the world. Home and Place are sites of unbounded openness (ibid 2008, Preface).

To Relph "Place, both as a concept and as a phenomenon of experience, therefore has a remarkable capacity to make connections between self, community, and earth, between what is local and particular and what is regional and worldwide" (ibid 2008, Preface). Place, i.e. lived space, comes about through the interaction between people and landscape. Relph says that this sense of place is not necessarily static, and can be found in a transient gypsy camp for example, which has no fixed location. To Relph, places are "sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home, and in the context of other places" (ibid 2008, p.29). Relph's theories about identities of places are significant. He states "The identity of a place is comprised of three interrelated components, each irreducible to the other- physical features or appearance, observable activities and functions, and meanings and symbols" (ibid 2008, p.61). According to Relph types of identity of place can be categorised

in terms of insider or outsider experiences, and relationships to place. For example he says “for empathetic insiders, knowing places through sociality in community, places are records and expressions of the cultural values and experiences of those who create and live in them” (ibid 2008, p.61). Relph argues for a phenomenological understanding of place, centred around the assertion that place comes about through a complex network of interactions between people and their environment.

To Nogue i Font “A phenomenology of landscape explores “the way in which the natural geography of a site and region contributes to an atmosphere, character, and sense of place”” (Nogue i Font, cited in: Seamon 1993, p.162). “[...]. Phenomenology accepts the intersubjectivity of experience, awareness and knowledge. This intersubjectivity allows the researcher to examine the environmental experience of others. As long as the researcher classifies these experiences through methods that promote clarity and intersubjective validity” (ibid 1993, p.166). In this research, high resolution photography produced with great consideration has been the method through which the phenomenology of place and space can be considered. Describing the undercurrent of phenomenological thought running through the 20th and early 21st centuries Wylie, J. (2007) considers with caution the reading of landscape from a singular perspective, pointing to the potential weaknesses and lack of scientifically grounded rigour within this approach. However, within a discussion of key thinkers, Wylie also gives strong evidence to support the use of phenomenological theories when interpreting landscape. The importance of dwelling as an integral and defining component of landscape is drawn out by Wylie through the work of Ingold (2000), who states that “Landscape is the world as it is known to those who dwell therein” (Ingold 2000, p.193 cited in Wylie, J. 2007, p.161), and as “the everyday project of dwelling in the world” (ibid p.191 in Wylie, J. 2007, p.161). This recognition of the criticality of dwelling as a means of understanding identity forms the underlying theory to a central theme of my practice and thesis. A particularly relevant discussion drawn out through the chapter *Ways of Seeing* concerns how visual representations of landscape have been integral to our understanding of ourselves within the western world. Having acknowledged this however,

Wylie questions its validity, pointing to its tendencies toward an elite vision, stating that “The landscape way of seeing is thus understood to be the preserve of an elite, it symbolises their dominion over the land in the very act of ‘naturalising’ it, of making its particular representation seem the natural order of things” (Wylie, J. 2007, p.69). While I accept this is true when considering eighteenth century painting for example, I do not accept this is the case when a considered contemporary photographic practice is used to describe landscape. One example where this can be seen would be in the work of Stephen Shore in his series *American Surfaces* (2008), in which during a road trip across America between 1972 and 1973 he focused on the mundane, overlooked, ill- considered urban environment. Rather than indicating or celebrating the power structures of a political system, the work highlights the democracy of photography to question without judgement.

In *Dwelling, Seeing, and Designing: Towards a Phenomenological Ecology* (Seamon, ed. 1993), Cooper-Marcus discusses the intentional community Findhorn on the north east coast of Scotland. Marcus analyses Findhorn since its beginnings in the early 1960s to the 1990s, and contemplates the reasons for its success by comparing it to the Utopian communities The Shakers, Harmony, and Oneida in the nineteenth century, and by drawing on the work of Kanter, (1973 cited in Cooper-Marcus, C. In: Seamon, ed. 1993. pp.299-329). Kanter, Cooper-Marcus says, identified six commitment mechanisms which contributed to the success of various communities. These encouraged and developed a sense of loyalty to the community. In Marcus’s view, what determines the long term success of intentional communities, and in particular Findhorn, which has now been functioning for forty years, is their level of commitment to it, and shared values. She concludes that while the location and physical design of a community contribute to its success, it is the collaboration and shared values that ultimately determine whether it works or not. In defining Findhorn as a special place, she says:

some believe its location on a peninsula surrounded on three sides by water, and the consequent proliferation of negative ions in the air, may have something to do with its benign experience of place. Others consider the long history of meditation and communication with nature in this location to have somehow created a tangible presence or “spirit of place” which a newcomer can experience (ibid 1993, p.324).

Place then, to these people, is articulated in a similar way to how Massey (2005) describes it. While Findhorn is a highly developed, successful, and well organised community, the communities in my research are distinguishable in terms of their lack of cohesion and shared goals.

Theories about temporal place are explored by American philosopher Hakim Bey (1991), whose work looks at place as a site of conceptual anarchy. By giving historic examples of places which existed for a short term, which had their own insider rules, or lack of them, he suggests ways in which it is possible to live outside of the conventions of the mainstream. The book is partly set out in a series of communiqués emulating a political manifesto. To Bey, a temporary autonomous zone (TAZ) could be a place in cyberspace where free thought is allowed its place, or a party in a disused warehouse. The TAZ is an intellectual place as much as a physical place. Bey states “The TAZ is like an uprising which does not engage directly with the state, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, before the state can crush it” (Bey, H. 1991, p.103). Bey offers a concept through which to understand the temporal use and meaning of space which arguably is recognisable in the temporal settlements of this research.

Jess & Massey (eds. 2000) give perspectives on place through analysis and reflection on the work of other geographers. Looking at migration, they observe people migrating to foreign countries tend to take a sense of place with them which has been accumulated through

experiences in their homeland. Citing Bordieu's (1977) concept of "Habitus" to Massey & Jess this "gives people a sense of their place in the world, a sense which is carried with them and refashioned in the new context when they migrate" (ibid 2000, p.28). Massey argues that "a place may be seen as the location of a set of intersecting social relations, intersecting activity spaces, both local ones and those that stretch more widely, even internationally. And every place is, in this way, a unique mixture of the relations which configure social space" (ibid 2000, p.61). Identity to Jess and Massey is linked unavoidably to place. Conversely they argue, place can also have little to do with someone's sense of identity and it can be that senses of place are contradictory. Place then can be interpreted and understood differently depending on one's relationship to and with that place.

Massey & Rose (2000) discuss the importance boundaries play in defining place and identity. Massey claims that "Boundaries may be constructed as protection by the relatively weak; they may also be constructed by the strong to protect their already privileged position. Boundaries are thus an expression of the power structures of society. They are one among the many kinds of social relations which construct space and place" (ibid 2000, p.69). While Rose says "[...] boundaries have a dual role. Firstly they work to establish insiders: those who belong to that place. [...] the second function of the boundaries of a place is often to establish outsiders: those who do not belong" (ibid 2000, p.99). These observations can be evidenced when considering how a sense of place and otherness is established and delineated through the placement of types of makeshift dwellings in a given area to define the countercultural sites explored in this research. Rose concludes: "senses of place often work to establish differences between one group of people and another" (ibid 2000, p.116). Within the sites of my research there are both clearly visible physical boundaries set up by individuals to define a personal space and countercultural space as well as less clear virtual boundaries defined by certain unwritten rules of behavioral codes which determine who is an insider and who is an outsider. These defined spaces can be seen to mark out territories between the counterculture and the mainstream culture, contributing to the assertion of identity.

To Cresswell “Place is not just a thing in the world but a way of understanding the world” (2004, p.11). Cresswell defines key concepts of place arguing there are multiple meanings and perceived readings of place. Place he argues, is not necessarily in a fixed location “Location is not a necessary or sufficient condition of place” (ibid 2004, p.22). An example of this is demonstrated on the front cover of the 2014 edition of the book; one of my own photographs from this research work, (see figure 6.2) depicting a children’s bedroom, created in a converted 1970s new traveller’s coach. To the occupiers, the appropriated shell of an old coach can become a meaningful contained transportable place, which carries, embodies and represents a personal association to a countercultural group whose sense of place is intertwined with mobility.

Cresswell’s insights bring clarity to a number of difficult concepts about place; that place can be seen to have many significances depending on one’s history or experiences within that place; that place is a pre-scientific fact of life and a phenomenon that is rooted in how we experience the world (ibid 2004, p.23); that places are socially constructed and dependent on exclusion (ibid 2004, p.26); that places are in a constant flux as they continue to be constructed through peoples’ actions; (ibid 2004, p.37); that place is made and remade through repetition of habit (ibid 2004, p.38); that “place is the raw material for the creative production of identity” (ibid 2004, p.38).

In discussing the concept of insider/outsider relations to place, he states “The creation of place by necessity involves the definition of what lies outside” (ibid 2004, p.102). Referencing Douglas (1966) he continues to say that “The construction of places, [...] forms the basis for the possibility of transgression or, in Douglas’s terms, pollution” (ibid 2004, p.103). This is particularly interesting when considered in relation to the counterculture in Spain, because of the ways in which they are perceived by the hegemonic community, and how they present themselves to the world. Cresswell reminds us that even though “we are placed beings” (ibid 2004, p.122), place is not necessarily fixed but can also be defined in more ephemeral terms as exemplified by photographs discussed in the research.

3:11 Review of Photographic Literature

From literature specifically concerned with photography I have considered the nature of the medium, its restrictions, limitations, benefits and use as a medium for critical visual analysis. Since the mid nineteenth century there has been debate about the effectiveness of photography in representing an individual's emotional response to a subject; questioning if it can be released from the purely objectifying anonymous gaze of a mechanical device (e.g. Baudelaire 1859 / 1992, Benjamin 1931 / 2008). However, it is not my concern here to discuss what photography *is* but rather what photography can do and why it is an effective medium for this research. Photographs are presented here as primary research material through which to communicate ideas. This research aims to exploit its potential to stimulate new understanding.

This thesis is informed by writers, artists and philosophers who have addressed the value of photography as an effective means of communication, which can potentially reveal more about a subject than text alone. This is the most significant reasoning as to why the practice is central in communicating new knowledge about countercultural identity. However my work is not framed around a singular theoretical approach. In his eloquent introduction to the philosopher Jacques Derrida's (2010) *Copy, Archive, Signature. A Conversation on Photography*, the German artist Gerhard Richter evaluates the essence of Derrida's thoughts on photography saying:

What is most transformative about images, including photographic ones, is the way in which, when their reading is pushed to the limits, they strongly begin to resemble the textual orbit usually thought to be inhabited by the word.[...] What Derrida wishes to emphasize is that photography, once its idiomatic logic is elaborated and generalized, can be seen as an operational network and a metalanguage through which larger philosophical, historical, aesthetic, and political questions can be brought into focus. It is in this sense too that he wishes to preserve the singularity and particularity of photography-while making visible the ways in

which it operates in a certain universality of thinking and of posing questions (Richter 2010, in: Derrida 2010, p. xxiii).

This is important because here we see Richter interpreting Derrida to assert the conviction that images, including photographic ones, possess the capability of transcending text to reward the viewer with multiple layers of meaning. Richter points out the uniqueness of photography as a representational art practice, which can be used to pose philosophical questions, in a different way to that of any other medium and therefore should be recognised in those terms. To Richter what photography is good at is showing a version of reality that looks remarkably real.

Rose also puts forward a case to show how photography can say things that words cannot particularly in relation to place and the social sciences. Citing work by Blinn & Harrist (1991), Suchar (1997, 2004), and Berger & Mohr (1975) she recognises that “photos are particularly good at capturing texture of places” and that “photos can convey the feel of specific locations very effectively. This is partly because photos can carry so much visual information; they can show us details in a moment that it would take pages of writing to describe” (Rose 2007, p.247). Rose says “Photographs can also show us things that are hard to describe in writing at all. Geographers have long been interested in the elusive qualities that define sense of place, and some are now using photography deliberately to convey it (see for example Goin 2002)” (ibid 2007, p.247). Rose recognises the power of photography to impart information. However visual work can be augmented by and enriched by text. Conversely without words an image can only be interpreted partially and can be misinterpreted. In *The Art Question* the philosopher Nigel Warburton (2002) describes how a landscape can be read in different ways when facts are known about what has happened there. When a seemingly pastoral landscape is known to have been the site of a massacre in a war for example, our reading of that landscape is affected. (Warburton 2002).

In *Land Matters; Landscape, Photography, Culture and Identity*, Wells (2011) discusses individual and series of photographs to explain how photography can interrogate human relationships with the land. Wells considers how the idea of landscape has been historically linked with the reinforcement of gender roles, power structures, political ideology, colonialism, national identity, as well as a way of reflecting on man's interventions with the land. To Wells:

Photography is [thus] powerful in contributing to specifying spaces as particular sorts of places. It constructs a point of view, a way of seeing which is underpinned by the authority of the literal. Through re-deploying this constructed sense of authenticity photography can be equally powerful as a means of interrogating environment through experimentation and critical exposures (Wells 2011, p.7).

Wells highlights the use of photography as an effective visual method to question place, space and identity relations through critical analysis of international photographers work, reinforced with theory from cultural geography and photography.

Pink & Banks have articulated how photographic case studies can be used as a methodology in social science based research, but Pink argues that photography can only be a part of a research process: Reflecting on Collier & Collier's (1996) discussion of a systematic photographic survey as a methodology, Pink believes that it only reveals a partial understanding, saying:

[...], such photographic records are limited because they do not indicate how these objects are experienced or made meaningful by those individuals in whose lives they figure. (Pink 2007, p.75). [...]. Photographic surveys or attempts to represent physical environments, objects, events or performances can form part of a reflexive ethnography. However, such photographs are most usefully treated as representations of aspects of culture; not recordings of whole cultures or of symbols that will have complete or fixed meanings (ibid 2007, p.75).

Counter to this, I argue for photography's potential within social sciences research to be embraced as central rather than as playing a subservient role as additional material. The photographs are the essence of the research, and the material on which the text depends. In this way progressive inter-disciplinary research becomes a possibility. According to Becker (2004, cited in Rose 2007) there is no clearly established methodological framework to discuss the uses of photography in social science research and as such in this thesis the application of theory is fluid and creatively interpretive.

The philosopher Vilem Flusser (2000) puts forward a hypothesis on the nature of photography. For Flusser there is a tension between the artist and the apparatus of photography, when trying to make work that has a personal quality. Photography he says, produces technical images. The mechanical process of making photographs dictates the resulting image, and it is this problem that the artist has to resolve.¹⁰ He asks:

How far have photographers succeeded in subordinating the camera's program to their own intentions, and by what means? And vice versa: How far has the camera succeeded in redirecting the photographers' intention back to the interests of the camera's program, and by what means? On the basis of these criteria, the 'best' photographs are those in which photographers win out against the camera's program in the sense of their human intentions (Flusser 2000, p.47).

¹⁰ This is a similar argument put forward by Pierre Baudelaire in his critique of photography written in 1859 when he stated that photography was merely a mechanical process and not worthy of being called art because it could not reflect human imagination (Baudelaire 1992).

To Flusser the problem for photographers then who are trying to convey artistic intentions is how to overcome the impersonality of work made through the mechanical process of the camera and its inability to relate the emotional response to subject of the maker of the work. To address Flusser's criticism, the problem of mechanical apparatus possibly controlling the output of an artist has been dissolved in the experimental work of Stephen Gill (2007, 2010, 2012), Diasuke Yokota (2013) and Anthony Cairns (2013) to give three examples. These artists' work demonstrates how photographic equipment and processes can be successfully manipulated and controlled to create work with highly individual creative responses to the world around them. Contentiously Flusser seems to argue for the value of photography as a powerful alternative to textual communication, saying "The invention of the photograph is a historical event as equally decisive as the invention of writing" (Flusser 2000, pp.17-18) and that "technical images (i.e., images produced with mechanical apparatus), are in the process of displacing texts -" (ibid 2000, p.15). To Flusser there has been a conflict between image and text throughout history. He claims that a textual explanation of a scene is secondary to the experience of seeing, and never as revealing conceptually as an image saying "Texts are a metacode for images" (ibid 2000, p.11). The concept is in the first hand, in the image, and not the words describing the image. However Flusser contradicts this statement and argues the absolute opposite saying with reference to technical images: "They are a metacode for texts" (ibid p.15). Perhaps both statements are true. Flusser warns us to be cautious about how we use and read photography but considers its potential for creating significant images.¹¹ My reasoning is that images are able to convey meaning that words alone cannot and in this sense justify practice based research. Mechanical photographic processes convey my perception of reality; it is my response to what I chose to photograph relayed through a medium. It must also be recognised that it is the idiosyncrasies of this or any other medium used by artists that allow for interpretation and individual statements to be made. In the progress of my own work during research I have experimented with different

¹¹ This argument is further explored in the work of Derrida, in his essay *A Conversation on Photography*. (Derrida 2010) and is discussed in the introduction written by Richter mentioned earlier.

ways of representation; using out of date polaroid film to give unnatural colour renditions, surface imperfections and partial image loss. (See figures 2.1. (i) and 2.1. (ii)).¹² Photography reminds us of something which has passed, that doesn't exist in that form any longer; Geoff Dyer (2005) refers to this as *The Ongoing Moment*. Dyer describes how the very instant after the photograph is made, the scene and situation it recorded fails to exist. In photography's interpretation of reality, things are altered and preserved that will inevitably have changed the moment after the photograph is made. This is true when considering the ephemeral habitats I have photographed, which are in a constant state of flux, decay, construction, and deconstruction. For me, as Richter has pointed out (Richter 2010, in: Derrida 2010, p. xxxii), this gives photography a potency in that it reminds us of our own mortality.

While there is extensive use of and criticism of Roland Barthes work on photography in previously published literature, in *What Photography Is*, James Elkins (2011) writes a critique of Barthes book *Camera Lucida*. Following Barthes' writing technique, Elkins makes relatively short statements, assertions and provocations about the nature of photography, referencing Barthes in the process. Elkins adopts a more skeptical approach than Barthes, to what photography is capable of doing, at times emphasising its shortcomings rather than its potential. Augmenting my defence of the people-less photograph, Elkins writes a series of farewells to portraiture, dismissing almost all forms of the genre as inconsequential and in the case of works by Thomas Struth, Gregory Crewdson, Rineka Dijkstra et al. as unconvincing. To Elkins, their works rely too heavily on critical textual contextualisation, and sheer scale, to make them seem important. (Elkins 2011, p.109). Elkins also argues that photographs give us a way of looking at the most disturbing things and banal things in the world through dispassionate eyes and making

¹² There is some analogy to be drawn with the inevitable deterioration of the image surfaces over time and the temporality of the subject matter: i.e. the makeshift dwellings, however they do not give the information I wish to convey in the context of this research. My concern is primarily to utilise the qualities of the large format camera to make images which reveal information through their fine detail.

them appealing. For me, photography is not dispassionate, however, it encourages reflection on what can be overlooked; things that appear trivial or inconsequential can have significances which on closer inspection impart information. Elkins says “I find it more rewarding to reflect on images that do not reflect a face in return” (ibid 2011, p.44), confirming my own conclusion that in the case of this research and previous works of mine (e.g. Murphy 2005) pictures devoid of people give the viewer intimate access to a person or people’s world while simultaneously describing someone’s being. Elkins cements his case saying “The absent figure is like a black hole, invisibly drawing everything in toward itself. Seeing is caught in a tidal pull, an undertow. The surround is electrified, because now it answers to the absent subject” (Elkins 2011, p.129). Pointing to how photography works phenomenologically in these kinds of images Elkins echoes Barthes struggle for an overarching essence of photography in his book *Camera Lucida* (Barthes 1993), suggested in this statement:

*For me, photographs must be **habitable**, [emphasis in original] not visitable. This longing to inhabit, if I observe it clearly in myself, is neither oneric (I do not dream of some extravagant site) nor empirical (I do not intend to buy a house according to the views of a real estate agency); it is fantasmatic, deriving from a kind of second sight which seems to bear me forward to a utopian time, or to carry me back to somewhere in myself [...]. Looking at these landscapes of predeliction, it is as if **I were certain** [emphasis in original] of having been there or of going there (Elkins 2011, p.38-39).*

What is being implied here is that some photographs elicit the experience of being in a certain place and invite the viewer into the place depicted in the image. This is particularly sensed when the image is devoid of people. Having people stare back at you is, as Elkins suggests a distraction when more can be revealed and explored about an individual’s identity in their absence. Possibly then, a phenomenological sense of place is better understood photographically, when people are removed from the scene.

Bate (2009) in his book *Photography, the Key Concepts* gives an insightful, systematic and clear overview of the history of photography, also outlining key photographic theories, photographic genres and subgenres. The book sets out and identifies a way of understanding photographs through historic, theoretic and thematic contextualisation. In the following statement, in a section discussing the history of landscape Bate alludes to the phenomenological perception of space through photography: “we all know that a certain room, for instance, can give off a sense of depression, excitement or even irritation. The disposition of objects within it, the light and sense of space created by these elements, *affect* us. The landscape genre works almost entirely in this way, using the coding of elements to produce meaning” (Bate 2009, p.96). Through photography therefore, according to Bate, it is possible to explore the phenomenological experience of space and place.

In *Art Photography*, Bate (2015) narrows his focus to considering what constitutes art within photographic practices and how photography has been employed and interpreted as such since its inception. In this book, Bate discusses photography as art, through a number of art movements which have implicitly used photography, including pictorialism, new pictorialism, documentary, and conceptualism. In a series of six chapters Bate weaves historic references into his consideration of photographic art genres. Beginning with a discussion of the work of early photographers such as Louis Daguerre, William Henry Fox Talbot, Henry Peach Robinson, Henry Peter Emerson, among others, Bate explains their processes and differing approaches and attitudes. Bate describes how painting influenced their work, and how despite their own enthusiasms, their work was received initially with suspicion and attacked by art critics and thinkers at the time (e.g. Baudelaire 1859, cited in Bate 2015, pp. 26-27). Parallel to historic examples, Bate cites and compares the work of more contemporary photographers who have also been influenced by and used historic works of art as direct reference within their practice; for example Tom Hunter, whose work *Woman Reading Possession Order* (1998) overtly referenced Johannes Vermeer’s *Girl Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (1657-9) in both composition, subject and title (Bate 2015, p.16). We also see the influence of Claude Monet’s

painting on the work of Canadian photographer Jeff Wall (ibid 2015, p.45). The correlation between painting and photographers referencing painting is made clear through several examples throughout the book.

Progressing, the book considers how central photography's role has been and is in conceptualism and conceptual art; a distinction drawn out in the chapter *Conceptualism and Art Photography* (ibid 2015, pp.81-104). As intimated in the beginning of the book, photographers Fox Talbot and later on Alfred Steiglitz, and subsequently Walker Evans, to give three examples, were well aware of the conceptual potency of their work well before the coining of the term 'conceptual art', which was according to Bate given this title around 1960 by the critic and curator Lucy Lippard (ibid 2015, p.82).

While helping in an understanding of where to situate my practice within photographic art practices, perhaps most relevant is a chapter *Geography as Inhabited Space*. Here Bate discusses how photographs code space into geometrics, how they organise space and place through composition, and how they have the ability to encourage the viewer to be drawn into the depicted space. As Bate says "Whatever the photographic coding and composition, its effect- if it succeeds as an image- is to absorb the spectator into the scene of the visual image, to invite inhabitation of its space" (ibid 2015, p.125). It is precisely this sentiment that resonates with the thinking within my practice, and which is argued for throughout the thesis. It is as much the imaginary space that Bate describes that gives photography its power and meaning, as what it actually represents. Bate also discusses the philosopher Foucault's concept of 'Heterotopias' in relation to place and space. To Bate, heterotopias can be defined through Foucault as "places that contest or are in conflict with themselves, and which reverse the space in which we live" (ibid 2015, p.128). While it could be argued that the temporal sites and places created by the counterculture studied in the research have aspects of heterotopias, I have not used Foucault's theory because of a hesitancy about framing the subject of my research as such. I recognise how this theory can be applied to photographic works which have a sense of the tensions within certain spaces, and this could be relevant to some individuals homes depicted in specific images, (for example figure 6.1) however describing these sites as heterotopic would be misleading. A

more appropriate concept is perhaps the idea of the Temporary Autonomous Zones described in the writing of Bey (1991) who is referenced elsewhere in the literature and thesis.

The collection of essays in *Thinking Photography* (Burgin, ed. 1982) might seem an outdated reference, however as Wells points out, perhaps little has changed since Burgin criticised academic acceptance of the romantic, realist and modernist notions of photography (Wells 2004, p.26). In his chapter *Photographic Practice and Art Theory* (Burgin 1982) Burgin makes a point that relates to my understanding of phenomenology in the context of photography saying:

In the very moment of their being perceived, objects are placed within an intelligible system of relationships (no reality can be innocent before the camera)...Forms of artifacts, as much as forms of language, serve to communicate ideologies...The total ideology of a society is imprinted in its production and consumption of material objects...All that constitutes reality for us is, then, impregnated with meanings...This distancing of the subject from a separate and neutral reality, in what Husserl called the 'natural attitude' is magnified when the world is viewed through a lens (ibid 1982, p.46-47).

For Burgin, (1982) the power of the photograph is to bring, if intended, awareness of the phenomenology of material things, and to enable us to consider aspects of things that are often overlooked.

Photography's status as art has an influence on how we see photographic based work, especially in the context of inter-disciplinary research. Addressing the still awkward position photography has assumed in its standing as art in the latter half of the twentieth century Grundberg wrote an essay which contemplated this relationship. In the essay *Art and Photography, Photography and Art: Across the Modernist Membrane* (Grundberg 1998, in: Janus, ed.), he analyses how photography has been excluded historically and then adopted by the art world. Citing Cindy

Sherman, he describes how photography can be discriminated against when valued alongside the more traditional art practices of painting and sculpture. Ironically he says Sherman's work was first bought by the department of painting and sculpture at the Museum of Modern Art, New York and then a few years later acquired by their photography department. So, there is an acceptance by the art institutions but a separation between the mediums of photography and art. And yet, these institutions also celebrate the use of photography by painters such as Gerhard Richter. Grundberg however is able to pinpoint how photography is able to both portray reality and act as a medium of self-expression, writing: "Yet the photograph's most interesting presence within the visual arts in the second half of this (20th) century, I would argue, comes not from this apartheid lineage but from hybrid practices that recognise the camera as the source and creator of the world of images in which we live-that is to say, as a font of representation" (Grundberg 1998, in: Janus, ed. 1998, p.51). Grundberg uses the work of Richter and Goldin as examples of artists who accept and use photography with conviction saying:

What Richter and Goldin have in common (besides a widespread popularity in the art world) is an implicit belief in the photograph's ongoing ability to convey the kind of authentic, first hand information that Crimp¹³ declared obsolete. This suggests photography's current dilemma much more than the artist/photographer divide: while functioning to remind us of representation as a fact of life, photographs seemingly are also quite capable of personifying individual attitudes about that life (ibid 1998, p52).

Where photography works most effectively and to my advantage, is when it elicits multiple and complex readings of reality. It is when there is the possibility that a representation of space and place leads from a literal interpretation to one of layered meanings impossible to convey through words, that photographs begin to transcend singular readings and definitions.

¹³ Douglas Crimp, Pictures, exhibition catalogue, New York 1977, p.3 Quoted in Whitney Museum of American Art (Ed.). Image World, New York, (1989, p67.)

3:12 Conclusion

This review has evaluated some of the key literature in relation to the central concerns of place space and countercultural identity which dominate the thesis. Discussing the histories of western alternative communities, movements and cultures from the 17th century to the 19th century (Hardy 1979), and more recent readings on hippy culture (Berger, B. M. 1981, Curl 2007, Frye 1994, Kopecky 2006, Lablonsky 2000) and touching on alternative approaches to understanding this culture through non-representational theory as considered by Rycroft (2007), I have contextualised the contemporary countercultures historic roots and values while indicating how these have influenced current ideologies. Rurality, mobility, and relations to place, be that through mobility or through back to the land experiments have been recognised as important in the realisation of countercultural identity and sense of otherness. (Halfacree 2006, Holloway 2003, Kabachnik 2009, Shubin 2011, Cresswell 1996, 1999, 2001, 2006). Further to this Kuhling (2007) provided insight into perceptions of otherness through attitudes to cleanliness, marginal space, and mobility in more recent Irish traveller communities. Countercultural otherness has also been considered through the use of composting toilets and urination practices of hippies in Hawai'i as a signifier of disconnection from the mainstream. (Pickering 2010). Histories of punk culture and rave counterculture, as discussed in the work of Dearling (1998), Hebdige (1979), Hetherington (2000, 2006), St John (2009), McKay (1996) have pointed to their impact on contemporary countercultures, particularly those stemming from the UK.

Phenomenological understandings of place and space have been considered here initially through Heidegger (2002), Husserl (2002), and Reinach (2002). The applied use of and effectiveness of phenomenology as an approach in geographic exploration of place and space, and in perceptions of home and materiality were discussed in the work of Bachalard (1994), Blunt & Dowling (2006), Cresswell (2004), Massey & Jess (2000), Miller (2008), Relph (2007), Tuan (2007), Wylie, J. (2007), where phenomenological interpretations were seen to be

interwoven into their theories. Alternative theories of temporal place and landscape were drawn out in Bender (2002), Bey (1991), Ingold (2000), Tilley (2010) and others. Through discussing these writings I have aimed to explain their preoccupations with and my understanding of phenomenological readings of place and space.

The second half of the literature review dwelled on writing about photography. The aim of this has been to compound the argument for the use of photography as an effective medium through which to interpret and gain understanding of a subject, (in this case countercultural identity), and to justify positioning photographic practice at the centre of the research. Richter (in Derrida 2010), and Rose (2008) have both recognised that photographs are a powerful way of transmitting information differently to words. Wells (2011) has also suggested that photography can be an effective way of reading landscape. However, I pointed out that within geographic writing, photography has been solely considered as a means of producing information, and not as having dual possibilities as art and geography. (Pink & Banks 2007). As I will argue elsewhere, this thesis challenges this narrow view to propose that photography has both capabilities simultaneously. Flusser (2000) made reservations about the impersonal qualities of photography, and the artists struggle to overcome a mechanical process. Flusser also argued that photographs could possibly replace words as the visual experience comes before any translation into words. Elkins (2011) offered critical contemplation of Barthes (1993) *Camera Lucida* before arguing the case that photographs can strongly evoke a sense of a person or people through their absence. This undercurrent of phenomenological reasoning was also evident in the work of Bate (2009, 2015), Burgin (1982), and Wells (2011) where the potential for photography to impart phenomenological resonances has been reinforced. Bate (2009, 2015) has helped in positioning and understanding my practice in the context of historic and contemporary photography and both Bate (2009, 2015) and Wells (2011) have highlighted the geographic potential of photography as being able to transmit a sense of space and place. As well as highlighting the ongoing debates concerning art and photography, Grundberg has given a

defence for the use of photography as a medium which is most effective in its representation of reality and in offering a way of reacting to it.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Four. Practice Review

4:1 Introduction

The aim of this review is to contextualise my work within the history of photographing countercultures and within recent photographic history. Addressing these aspects of my research I aim to indicate how my creative decisions are informed and how my photographic work is being employed to gain new insight from a geographic perspective into the construction of the identities of convergent migrant countercultures in south east Spain. This assessment is also a means of recognising and reflecting on the significance of others' work in informing my practice. My photographic processes, which include using a large format plate camera, analogue film and large format exhibition prints have been used to create a specific aesthetic, which through the images high definition, muted unsaturated colour palette, and diffused lighting aim to encourage unbiased, open and layered responses and interpretations. Here I hope to explore how these decisions have been informed. As Kendall L. Walton points out in his essay *Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism*:

*Seeing directly and seeing with photographic assistance are different modes of perception. There is no reason to expect the experience of seeing in the two ways to be similar. Seeing something through a microscope, or through a distorting mirror, or under water, or in peculiar lighting conditions, is not much like seeing it directly or in normal circumstances- but that is no reason to deny that seeing in these other ways is **seeing** [Emphasis in original] (Walton 1984, in: Walden 2010, p.27).*

In formulating a visual language as a conduit through which to study this subject, not only do I recognise the influence of photographic and geographic theorists as discussed in the literature review, but I acknowledge the work of visual artists who have helped shape my practice. To differentiate the focus of my work with that of others it is useful to consider the work and approach of photographers who have engaged with related subject matter. Intentional alternative communities have been reflected on in the highly considered and composed large and medium format photographic work of Foglia (2012), Hunter (1995-1998), Kurland (2010), Richardson (2003), Spero (2004-2015), and Sternfeld (2006) for example, while photographers such as Wylie, D. (1998), Petersen (1999), Laving (2007) among others, through the use of small hand held analogue cameras have conveyed a sense of lawlessness and the chaotic interactions between people and place in some marginal communities through a visceral, grainy, sometimes blurred aesthetic. This review will outline and critique the practice of those above.

4:2 Comparative Photographic Studies of Countercultures

Several contemporary artists have photographed the lives of intentional communities in the flux of journeys or in temporary settlements in Europe and America. Although their work varies greatly in style, format, and focus, they all address aspects of subcultural existences. British photographers Vinca Petersen (1999), (see figure 4.1) and Donovan Wylie (1998), (see figure 4.2), both depicted elements of life in countercultural communities in the 1990s. Over a period of years Wylie, a member of Magnum photographic agency, documented the transition in the lives of a group of new age travellers who he first encountered living in trucks and caravans in a lay-by in Gloucestershire, UK. In this series of grainy black and white photographs, we witness the shambolic lives of people living nomadically, by choice, in the country lanes of Britain, echoing to an extent the long tradition of Gypsy cultures who have lived nomadically on the road side for many centuries, as documented by Josef Koudelka in *Gypsies* (1975) for example. They appear happy in their seemingly chaotic lifestyle and in their rejection of conventional society. Wylie, D. (1998) in his monograph *Losing Ground* depicts a semblance of normality and structure. In the accompanying afterword Andrew Hagan (1998) observes that “In the midst



Figure 4.1. Vinca Petersen. *Kat and Guippe, the morning after one of the parties we did in an ex-Russian army base outside Berlin*, from 'No System', 1999.

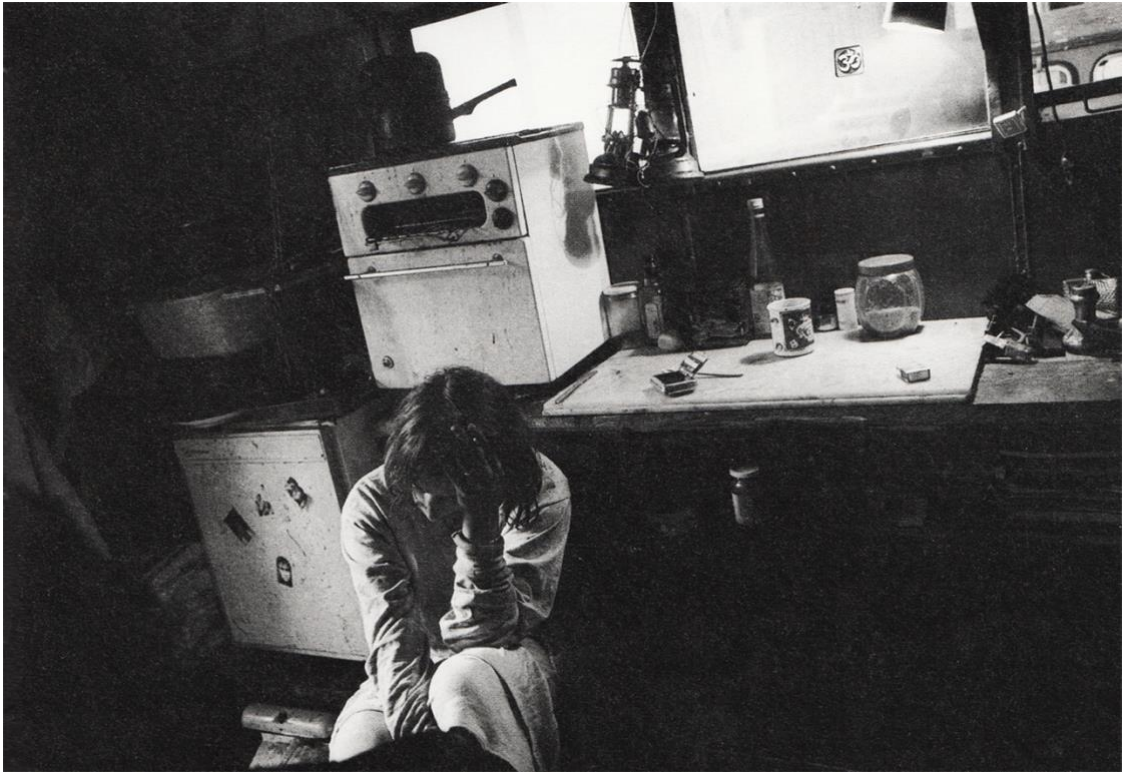


Figure 4.2. Donovan Wylie. *Untitled*, from 'Losing Ground', 1998

of these untidy lives there is at first a sense of order, a notion of provision and we know that cakes are made, music is played and things are alright as they are” (Hagan 1998. Afterword). According to Hagan in the later photographs in the series there is a significant shift in the atmosphere of the images. As a consequence of political legislation brought in by the then prime minister Margaret Thatcher,¹ the group abandoned a rural lifestyle and moved into the cities. After the initial introduction, Wylie returned to find the remnants of the community disillusioned, bored and desperate, living in squats, or on the streets in London, homeless and begging for money allegedly to feed their drug and alcohol habits. Instead of the deliberate acts of defiance against the state through an alternative lifestyle, he documents their descent into hunger and vulnerability. In these intimate black and white pictures, taken with a handheld 35mm analogue camera, the sometimes blurred or shaky focus is on the interaction between people in an environment and in capturing moments of drama in the lives of people who have lost control of their circumstances. Although people are contextualised in their habitats and we see elements of their personal spaces; glimpses of untidy interiors, objects, landscapes, these are backdrops to the action, rather than the main subject matter. The environments these people occupy are not the central focus of the images. The community Wylie photographed has certain similarities to the ones I am researching; their defiant attitudes to and suspicions of mainstream society, their life based around vehicles and travel, their use of drugs and alcohol and their political ideologies, but there are significant differences. Aside from the aesthetic values of the photographs and the photographic methods, the group he documented was in the UK and migrated from country sites to the city. Wylie primarily photographed people. He used black and white film with a 35mm handheld camera to produce images which capture movement as opposed to stillness. There is a strong narrative element to his work. Wylie chose to concentrate on a group that remained in the UK after the introduction of the criminal justice act of 1994. Through the act of migration, the nature of the counterculture of this research changed as they

¹ This legislation refers to the Criminal Justice Act of 1994 which is referenced in more detail later in the thesis.

adapted to a new country, a new landscape, new problems and the life of being an outsider, cheek by jowl with other marginal subcultural groups. The temporal settlements I have photographed are not outwardly aligned to one ideology, rather they consist of disparate alternative ideologies; a consequence of its internationality. These differences of beliefs I argue are recognisable through their dwelling places, photographed devoid of people. The migrants from the UK who started their exodus in Europe at the same time as Wylie's migrated to the cities of Britain, are however only a part of the larger community of countercultures I have researched.

Petersen, V. (1999) documented her life with a group of likeminded people travelling around Europe providing music at free rave parties. Between 1992 and 1999, Petersen became immersed in the free DIY rave party scene, a youth movement spreading through 1990s Europe and America.² Free parties were held in neglected buildings or on derelict industrial sites or isolated rural environments sometimes for several days. While being a part of this subculture, Petersen, V. photographed her friends, fellow travellers and their shared activities and escapades. What distinguishes the work is that her colour and black and white analogue photographs are often over or under exposed and out of focus and are blurred through camera movement. While smaller details are often unclear, this is a technique which effectively conveys the vitality of the people involved and the distinct atmospheres of these events. On temporary sites in mainland Europe, Petersen used a handheld film camera to make intimate photographs of people within a counterculture; dancing, resting, drinking, preparing food and travelling. From an insider's perspective, she made subjective images where her subjects appear unguarded and uninhibited. The work is not staged. Petersen recognises the appropriateness and value of a particular aesthetic to record her subject, and also that the technical limits of the type of camera and film advantage

² See: St John (2011) who has written extensively about the rave subculture as discussed in the literature review.

her in making such work. Flusser stated “How far have photographers succeeded in subordinating the camera’s program to their own intentions, and by what means? And, vice versa: How far has the camera succeeded in redirecting photographers’ intentions back to the interests of the camera’s program, and by what means?” (Flusser 2007, p.47). In the case of Petersen’s work it can be seen that both the camera and the operator work in synchronicity to determine a considered and deliberate outcome, whereby the use of a certain camera in a certain way have been combined to produce an aesthetic which conveys the photographers intended vision and personal experience of being in a place.

Tom Hunter also made photographs of new traveller culture in Europe in the mid to late 1990s. Like Petersen, Hunter was a part of the counterculture he was photographing, travelling and living in his own converted coach with friends and other travellers. This relationship allowed access to the most private spaces of others within the group. Unlike Petersen, Hunter had had a formal training in photographic practice at London College of Printing.³ Compositional elements of each image, including the usually central placing of his sitters within intimate and confined space, the use of large format camera and colour film, combine to draw the viewer into the space depicted in the photographs. Specifically making posed portraits of members of the community in their self-styled mobile homes Hunter’s *Travellers* series (1995-1998) gives a contemplative view of a counterculture, in which the sitters confront the viewer with a calm, confident air of defiance (see figure 4.3). They appear comfortable in their space. His choice of equipment lends the work formality, in that its use demands a slower, more methodical reflective way of working. It requires consideration of light and space and that the subject remains still, while also adding gravitas to the final work through the fine rendition of details. Occasionally in the series there are people within a landscape, in exterior locations, however unlike in Petersen’s images, and in a similar way to Kurland, the portraits are constructed. Hunter positions his subjects inside the small personal spaces of converted customised vehicles, to convey intimate relationships

³ After making the traveller series Tom Hunter took up a place on the MA photography course at the Royal College of Art, London.



Figure 4.3. Tom Hunter. *This is My Old Double Decker Bus*, Traveller series, 1995-1998

between people and space. In this series a mutual respect between photographer and subject is evident, where the subject colludes in the photograph. The subjects through this process are given dignity and the often misunderstood or misrepresented lifestyle of travellers on the road in Europe at that time as reported in the national press is represented through the lens of an insider. Hunter has reflected:

The pictures I took during this period are of my friends and fellow travellers, in different parts of Europe as they travelled between festivals and raves. The spaces are their homes, vehicles recycled into new travelling homes, old lorries, buses and coaches. They were meant to be an antidote to all the very negative images that were being published in the press, who like the Government were very anti this D.I.Y. culture. The images in the press at that time were nearly always in black and white and very grainy, making the subjects into victims of society or criminals and other than the viewer. My pictures are very colourful and try to show the humanity and the dignity of the subjects. By working with a large format camera and tripod, my subjects become collaborators in the artistic process. They had a say in the way they were viewed by the outside world, hopefully changing the way they are perceived in society (Hunter 2018 [Internet] <<http://www.tomhunter.org/Gallery/travellers>>).

Perhaps Hunter's most documentary photographs to date, they were an indication of his considered approach to his acclaimed subsequent and ongoing and often politically charged works which have referenced and reimagined classical Dutch master painting and scenes from Shakespeare plays in a contemporary urban environment. In the work of Wylie, D. (1998), Petersen, V. (1999), and Hunter (1997-1999), countercultures are represented using different technical processes, focuses and approaches, to reflect the artist's relationship and particular aspect of interest in their subject.

The Swedish photographer Anders Petersen (2009) and photographers under his influence and tuition J. H. Engstrom (2004) and Rikard Laving (2007), have also produced work about people

living on the margins of conventional society in Sweden and Germany which reflects their personal visions of outsiders' reality. What links them is not only their history of involvement and collaboration but also their choice of subject and the methods used in the creation of images. Their work is distinctive through their manipulation of and experimentation with photographic materials and processes. In *Caravan* (2007) Laving's photographs (see figure 4.4), concern the lives of outsiders living in caravans and makeshift homes. Here disaffected individuals have formed a community using drugs and alcohol, beyond the gaze of ordered society. These intimate and sensitive pictures have been made using a handheld camera and with the consent of his subjects. The photographs are often blurred through movement of the camera, have scratch marks, are out of focus and have distorted colours. Counter to the potentially homogenised appearance of photographs created through digital technologies, in which automated technology can dictate the look and quality of the visual output, Laving deliberately uses imperfections in his analogue work to enhance the pictures and convey the experience of being immersed in the preoccupations of those he photographs. Laving portrays people in the context of the chaotic, self-made, irreverent, confrontational, messy environments they inhabit. Laving's portrayal is considered and deliberate. Effects caused by sabotaging conventional film development processes are integral to the final images aesthetic. Although the end results look like a series of intuitive responses to what is being played out in front him, every detail about the work and its presentation has been carefully considered either before or after the act of photographing. What might have been discarded as a spoiled image now becomes an aesthetic ambition.⁴ The detritus and paraphernalia that comes with the lives of drug addicts and those who have been excluded from mainstream society is represented aesthetically and visually articulated by Laving. The lack of sharpness and clear definition in many of the photographs, the washed out colours, and use of hard flash lighting relates a version of reality through an intentional aesthetic like faded family snapshots from the 1960s and 1970s. In Laving's empathetic work, this aesthetic has

⁴ Note: This recognition and awareness of the flaws and idiosyncrasies in a photographic print or process, is something that has been utilised recently not only in the work of Stephen Gill (2007) but also Rosangela Renno (2005) and Oliver Chanarin & Adam Bloomberg (2008) and has formed part of my own photographic experimentation in this research mentioned earlier.



Figure 4.4. Rikard Laving. *Untitled* from 'Caravan', 2007

been put to effect to allow the viewer to wander into this disquieting and disturbing underworld, where people who have for whatever reason rejected or been rejected by society have found a place to be. This is a place where caravans in a rural landscape do not represent the ideal of a brief escape from the commitments and responsibilities of conventional western ways of living, but are given alternative meaning through their use in this situation and the way in which they have been represented here. In these photographs then, we are confronted with an uncomfortable reality and asked to question our values, our sense of responsibility to others, our perceptions of right and wrong, and the reasons why some of us find it difficult to fit in, or exist in conventional society. A technique has been used which enables the artist to produce images which have a clear sense of cognitive reflection; work that demands our attention.

David Spero, a British photographer who graduated from the Royal College of Art in the 1990s has made a series of photographic studies of the dwellings and occupants of intentional communities in the south west of England and Wales, titled *Settlements*. In these works, made between 2004 and 2015 with a 5x4 inch plate camera, Spero repeatedly documented small alternative communities who have opted out of society in Britain, whose concerns have been to build utopian, minimal environmental impact communities which exist in harmony with nature (see figure 4.5). Spero's aesthetically seductive contemplative observations are reflections about individuals who are trying to live self-sufficiently. Their dwellings are made of natural or recycled materials, often locally sourced. Here we see the habitats of people whose primary aim is to reduce their impact on the environment and who aim to live without reliance on the industrialised infrastructure of the outside world. Dwellings are organised and designed with an ecological ethos to integrate with the rural landscape. Describing one community, Spero gives details about the structure of the community stating:

Steward Community Woodland – A small low impact settlement near Mortonhampstead in Devon. Set up in 2000 as a co-operative, based on permaculture and vegan principles combining woodland conservation management techniques with sustainable living. Granted five years



Figure 4.5. David Spero. *Shannon, Chris and Alex's*, Tinkers Bubble, Somerset, June 2004

temporary planning permission in 2002. Currently about eight adults and four children. Electrical energy is sourced from solar cells and a water turbine. Wood is burned for cooking and heating. Income is mainly from the woodland, running courses and also local environmental, community and care work. Children are home educated and some organic food is grown (Spero 2006, in: Brown 2006-10-15).

Spero's subjects are intentional communities with clear objectives and set beliefs. Their way of life involves the practice of permaculture,⁵ a respectful management of the land and low energy use and based on cooperative ideals grounded in environmental sustainability. In its suggestion of utopian alternative ways of living, clear of the signs of the encroachment of or intertwining with the post-industrial world that surrounds it, the work does not project the paradoxes of underlying dependencies on the mainstream society, but immerses the viewer into the communities way of life, exploring the potential of a specific countercultural ideology. In this outstanding work we see into a way of living that is as much as possible carried out outside of mainstream society. These are works that utilise the exquisite combination of large format equipment and processes, combined with consistently diffused lighting conditions, muted colours and a visual sensibility to show empathetically the resourcefulness of humanity to live without modern convenience which also point to human instinctive urges to live with a close connection to the natural world.

American photographers Joel Sternfeld (2006) and Justine Kurland (2004) have produced works which concern life lived intentionally outside of the mainstream (see figures 4.6 and 4.7 respectively). These photographers have used large format plate cameras with colour film. Photographing alternative American communities living in rural environments Kurland's images are carefully staged within a landscape, where people are seen sometimes naked and

⁵ Permaculture is a system of food production originally conceived by the Australian Bill Mollison in the 1970s, (see: Mollison & Holmgren 1981) whereby even small areas of arid land can yield good crops by establishing micro eco-systems with careful planning, use of natural inclines, mulches and crops. Once a site has been set up it can be managed and sustained with little maintenance.



Figure 4.6. Joel Sternfeld. *Ruins of Drop City*, Trinidad, Colorado, 2005



Figure 4.7. Justine Kurland. *Untitled*, from 'Old Joy', 2004 (Scanned pages from book)

often engrossed in activities, rather than confronting the camera. As with certain other artists making work on countercultures, Kurland often travels as a part of the same group she photographs, living a semi-nomadic lifestyle, building trust and mutual understanding (Kurland 2004). However, as well as being the means of gaining access to a subject, the camera is inevitably the physical and psychological barrier between the subject and the photographer; a conspicuous object which could be seen to act as a boundary. Whether intentional or not, the process of making photographs simultaneously disengages the photographer directly from the subject while allowing them and the viewer of the photograph intimate access into someone's world. This could be seen as either a strength or a weakness, and opens up debate on the potential of photographic apparatus to convey a phenomenological experience of place and space. This has been discussed at length in the literature of photography (e.g. Barthes 1981, Benjamin 2015, Cheong 2010, Elkins 2011, Pettersson 2011, Richter 2010, Wells 2011, et al.) and this underlying theme is considered throughout the thesis. In these works Kurland creates an immersive vision into a utopian world, opening up multiple readings and ambiguities. Questions are encouraged, narratives suggested, but no explanations are given. To their strength rather than explaining anything, the pictures, in part through their exquisite detail, encourage one to inhabit the spaces depicted, eliciting a feeling of empathy and closeness with the subjects. Kurland's images of landscapes, individuals and couples or groups, in rural, forested, remote uncultivated places, offer an alluring version of a pre-industrial paradise. Dwellings such as tents or temporary shelters, if evident, usually appear in the background, the emphasis being on relationships between people and landscape. Subjects appear unaware of the camera and there is rarely direct eye contact with the lens. They seem to be preoccupied in a blissful state of contentment, at peace with each other and their environment in the American wilderness. In the series *Old Joy* (2004), groups of naked people wander in forests, on hillsides, climb trees and lie in grass. There appears to be a union and understanding between the subjects. Couples hold hands or touch. In this cooperative relationship between artist and subject the viewer is given an illusion of paradise where reality and fiction are blurred. On first reading, these are seemingly photographs of scenes the photographer happened to witness. However, with the knowledge that

these images are staged, one is subsequently encouraged to question what is depicted; not only as documents of actual events, but as representations of the possibility of an ideal world. The works myriad of possible readings are strongly focused on human relationships, which in combination with Kurland's choreographed and highly considered compositions depict a countercultural idyll where humans appear to co-exist harmoniously with their surroundings. Through these images, Kurland asks us to question our own relationships with each other, with nudity, nature, with the industrialised ego-centric capitalist world, our impact on the landscape, and our notions of wilderness, happiness and freedom.

Joel Sternfeld (2002, 2006) is cited as one of the most significant contemporary photographers in America. Along with William Eggleston (2002) and Stephen Shore (1982, 2008), he pioneered the use of colour photography within contemporary art in the 1970s questioning and blurring notions of art and documentary. Sternfeld's contemplative large format documentary works explore the American psyche, often focusing on people in their environments, or landscapes people have impacted on. In *Sweet Earth*, (2006), (see figure 4.6), Sternfeld looked at a range of functioning or abandoned utopian intentional communities in America, contextualising them historically with an accompanying text alongside each image. These photographs are in sharp focus with a long depth of field. Some photographs are environmental portraits and some are people-less. A common thread in Sternfeld's work is loss, often focusing on places where certain events have taken place and photographing what remains. Some of the power of Sternfeld's work comes from the strong phenomenological sense of place, enabled by the large format camera's ability to record a scene in great detail. A sense of the palimpsest of events that have occurred in any one place are I argue perceivable in many of Sternfeld's pictures. In a review of *Sweet Earth* (2006), Geoff Dyer suggested that there was a more enriched reading of the images when combined with text, saying "The conceptual tension of the book was generated by the gap between the unseen (the words) and the seen (the pictures). Once the freight of invisible narrative was revealed, the gap became a bridge." (Dyer 2007). In this Dyer alludes to the inadequacy of photography to tell the whole story and the need for a textual narrative to

explain the visually unexplained. While I dispute this argument, in that one of photography's strength's is that it poses questions which are all the more potent for not being directly answered and images can work in complex ways to convey alternative meanings which cannot be represented in any other way, for research purposes images need to be considered and explained from a variety of theoretical positions. In the context of photography practice based research the use of other means of representation has to be included to test the validity of the research and substantiate one's argument.

The British artist Clare Richardson (2003) has also made photographic work on the subject of utopia. Her work *Harlemville* (2003), (see figure 4.8), explored a small community in North America living by the principles of the radical early Twentieth century Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, known for the creation of an educational model which gives children freedom to engage with the natural world and develop a sense of self within a community at their own pace. Richardson spent two years among the community documenting children in an idyllic looking rural landscape, who seemed preoccupied and engrossed in their experiences of being. Unlike Sternfeld, there is no attempt to contextualise in relation to the history of other American experimental communities. Richardson uses a medium format analogue camera with colour film, allowing for a more fluid practice compared to large format equipment. The advantages of the medium format system are that one can work faster and be less constricted by the technicalities demanded by the equipment. The photographs convey a dreamlike otherworldly atmosphere quietly posing questions about freedom, happiness, schooling and contemporary western value systems.

More recently Lucas Foglia (2012) has produced a body of photographic work concerned with individuals who have rejected capitalism and consumerist values in an attempt to live self-sufficiently in rural Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky and North Carolina, USA (see figure 4.9). In his contemplative documentary portraiture work titled *A Natural Order* (2012) he considers those opting out of the American mainstream. The work could be seen as a romanticised utopian



Figure 4.8. Clare Richardson. *Untitled*, from 'Harlemville', 2003



Figure 4.9. Lucas Foglia, *David in his Wigwam*, Kevin's Land, Virginia, 2012

vision, however through the accompanying text the narrative also poses questions about the paradoxes in their lifestyles in the ways in which they are connected to the outside world. This research similarly addresses the issues of dependency and relationships with the outside world (see chapter 7), except, whereas Fuglia has chosen to look at these issues through predominantly photographing people and excluding most manmade artificial material content from the images, my photographs of dwellings deliberately include the material reminders and detritus of the outside world that form part of the environments in which the countercultures live.

American photographer Alec Soth's (2010) remarkable photographs of individuals who have removed themselves from society ⁶ similarly asks the viewer to question western value systems and reflect on alternative ways of living (see figure 4.10). Soth sought out people in remote parts of America who were rejecting the idea of the American capitalist dream, living as independently of mainstream culture as possible. The highly considered colour compositions, fuse a conceptual approach within a documentary framework and are given aesthetic and conceptual weight through the use of large format analogue equipment. Soth, like Foglia (2012), highlights his subjects isolation through their relationships with landscape. As with Kurland (2004), but in less choreographed ways, in his focus on isolated individuals Soth's work is effective in part because of the ambiguities embedded in and multiple potential narratives created through the mute figures depicted in his images, encouraging speculation about each person's situation, history, relationship to their surroundings, to American society, and to the world around them.

An artist filmmaker whose work is closely related to that of Fuglia, Kurland, Richardson and Soth is the British filmmaker Ben Rivers (2011). His film, *Two Years at Sea* (2011), is a portrait of a man who has on initial reading abandoned associations with civilization to live out an isolated life in a small croft on a remote strip of land in Aberdeenshire, Scotland (figure 4.11).

⁶ Alec Soth's series of photographs on this subject was published in the book '*Broken Manual*' (2010) and exhibited internationally.



Figure 4.10. Alec Soth. *Untitled*, from 'Broken Manual', 2010



Figure 4.11. Ben Rivers. *Two Years at Sea*, film still, 2012

The film was shot on 16mm black and white film, has no dialogue and appears to depict the daily routines of a real character, as opposed to an actor playing a character; showering, reading, sleeping, walking thinking, writing. In one sequence lasting several minutes, the character makes a raft out of recycled plastic containers, before setting out to float aimlessly on a loch. He sits and lies motionless as the craft drifts across the still water. It is an aesthetically beautiful film of a man who appears to be living contentedly with himself and nature. However at a screening of the film in 2012⁷ Rivers related how he had directed and staged the scenes and manipulated what is perceived to be real life. Rivers had initiated the construction of the raft and suggested that his subject launched it onto the water. The sole character in the film did in reality live alone in the place that was depicted, however certain details in the film such as the car he uses to collect wood, the objects that surround him, the manicured and managed forest that acts as a backdrop, and the collaborative nature of filmmaking point to a manmade artificial utopia in which he is dependent on society for fuel, food, clothing. The film successfully reflects on the paradoxes that inevitably arise with the construction of utopia and questions the nature of freedom, isolation and our dependence on a structured society without giving answers or imposing judgement.

4.3 Photography as Phenomenological Seeing

In common with the artists above, my research explores counterculture. There are similarities in my own work to some of their work in the use of apparatus; colour film, large format cameras and lighting preferences, and a concern for representing countercultures in one form or another. However, what distinguishes my approach to this subject is that I aim to explore how migrant neo-nomadic countercultural identity can be understood and questioned primarily through consideration of space and place, where people's identities can be brought to the fore in their absence. The philosopher John Berger said "A photograph is effective when the chosen moment which it records contains a quantum of truth which is generally applicable, which is as revealing

⁷ A screening of *Two Years at Sea* directed by Ben Rivers, was a Landscape Surgery, Royal Holloway University, 'Passenger Films' event with Question and Answer session post screening on 11 June 2012 at Sugarhouse Studios pop-up cinema, East London.

about what is absent from the photograph as what is present in it” (Berger 2013, p.20). Following this phenomenological logic, an understanding of countercultural identities can be achieved by deliberately excluding the occupiers of each space in the photographs, encouraging the viewer to become aware of and consider the identities of people without the distraction of their physical presence. (Elkins 2011, p.129). One of the aims of this thesis is to exploit the photographs potential pointed to by Berger among others, to draw out identity in the absence of human presence. Supporting this theory, Frers (2013) has said:

Those who experience something as absent have to fill the void that they experience with their own emotions, they have to bridge the emptiness that threatens their established expectations and practices. Accordingly, absence is presented as a phenomenologically grounded concept that gains its epistemological and experiential quality through its connection to the corporal body, its senses and emotions, and the world around it (Frers 2013, pp.431-445).

Avoiding the risk of assumptive interpretation or prejudice based on the appearances of mute human subjects, the physical absence in the photographs of those living in these encampments allows for an awareness of the atmospheres around inanimate material, dwelling space, environments and habitats that lead to a greater understanding of those who inhabit and affect these spaces and create personal senses of place. Phenomenologically atmospheres are sensed as the result of human activity, interventions in space, and our interactions with objects. (Heidegger 2010, Husserl 2012, Merleau-Ponty 2012). I argue this phenomenological perception of place and space is a critical factor in the way these photographs work to indicate identity. Liz Wells (2011) states in *Land Matters*:

Photographs slice space into place; land is framed as landscape. Representation envelops reality; it becomes an act of colonisation. Photography contributes to characterising sites as particular types of places within the order of things. The photographic image, in its precision and detail, operates topographically and metaphysically. The image itself evokes mood, a sense

of what it might be to actually experience this place. The viewer of the image responds in terms of a nexus of aesthetic judgement, emotional recognition, identification, empirical appreciation. Unlike the relatively unbounded experience of looking, the photograph defines and frames, suggesting particular ways of seeing (Wells 2011, p.56).

It has been said many times that photographs are traces of their subjects. For example Susan Sontag claimed that “a photograph is not only an image, ... it is also a trace, something directly stencilled off the real, like a footprint or a death mask.” (Sontag 2002, in: Pettersson 2011, p.189). To give a couple of oblique references, this theory can be recognised clearly at work in the practice of contemporary photographers Daisuke Yokota (2014) and Anthony Cairns (2016), whose images emphasise the photographic traces of (often architectural) objects by purposefully disturbing, or partially destroying the representational quality of the original through experimentation and interventions with process, so that the image left is one which is literally a trace of the object which was recorded by the camera. In the case of my own practice, which utilises the ability of the large format camera to represent the subject with great clarity, the trace of an object is also evident, albeit in more direct ways. I do not manipulate the photographs in the ways that Yakota and Cairns do to highlight a sense of being in place, but encourage potential phenomenological readings through a photographic process which reveals fine detail and lends a heightened sense of reality. According to Mikael Pettersson, photography has the ability to put the viewer in a position of closeness with the subject stating “[...] the notion of photographs as traces seems to explain part of the proximity associated with viewing photographs, for traces of the kind photographs belong to in general seem to have a capacity to evoke closeness [...]” (Pettersson 2012, p.191). Some photographs, I argue, when allowed to, can begin to transcend the merely representational to promote multi layered meanings and interpretations. With these theories in mind, and given the explanation of cultural histories in this thesis, we can perhaps see from these photographs that in being attentive to the form of dwelling space they inhabit, each countercultural tribe has a foundation on which to construct new variants or versions of their historically dependent and affected identities. Belief systems imbedded in the histories of

countercultural identities through their material culture, are adapted and reinterpreted in these new geographies to exist in ever changing hybrid forms. Considered in this way, and accepting that photographic images are traces of a physical reality presented to and recorded by the camera (Barthes 1993, Bazin 1967, Currie 1999, Sontag 2002), the photographs in this series produce an alternative form of geographic knowledge. Of course, historically photography has been recognised and exploited as a means of producing geographic knowledge since its early developments⁸, however, within academic environments, it has been side-lined to a secondary form of data from which to back up written work. My aim is to reinstate photography as a serious primary method of geographic investigation and argue for the centrality and importance of a sophisticated photographic response underpinned by a methodology involving the deconstructing of images through theories concerned with place, space and identity. Acknowledging that photographs cannot reproduce the haptic and physical sense of place experience, and are limited in what they can emit, in combination with textual interpretation, photographic representation can begin to lead toward a more comprehensive portrayal of the experience of being in a place. Schwartz (2009) has said “photography remains a powerful tool in our engagement with the world around us. Through photographs, we see, we remember, we imagine; we ‘picture place.’ ” (Schwartz 2009, p.1). Schwartz argues that photography is a powerful means of communicating knowledge and following Richter’s thought that “what is most transformative about images, including photographic ones, is the way in which, when pushed to the limits, they strongly begin to resemble the textual orbit usually thought to be inhabited by the word” (Richter 2010, in: Derrida 2010, p.xviii), I suggest that photography has an ability to equal the textual and sometimes surpass the inadequacies of words to convey

⁸ As can be seen for example in the work of the pioneer photographers working with The Royal Engineers in the 1860s and 1870s, such as James McDonald, who produced a series of photographs of the Peninsula of Sinia, for the Ordnance Survey in 1869. (See: Howe 2009, *Mapping a Sacred Geography: Photographic Surveys by the Royal Engineers in the Holy Land, 1864-68*, pp.235-239. In: Schwartz & Ryan 2009). Thomas Mitchell and George White, also working with The Royal Engineers, made photographic plates documenting the polar expeditions of Sir George Strong Nares in 1875. Further examples would be the photographs of Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Russell Lee, Arthur Rothstein et al. commissioned by the Farm Administration Authority in the USA to document the great depression in the 1930s. (See: Mitchell 1875).

complex information, resulting in alternative meanings, perspectives and responses. Gaining clear insights into human relationships and interventions with space and place and into personal identities, can be achieved through this focus on the potency of the photographic image to convey information.

While attempting to express phenomenologically what it is to be in the landscape, in the dwellings, in those places, in the act of photographing and of looking at the photographic prints depicting space, it could be argued that photography, rather than being a conduit for phenomenological understanding, reinforces a reading of our detachment from the landscape. The camera being a physical object between photographer and place and space, between the person experiencing place, and place itself; the photographic image a reminder of the distance between us and the landscape. Wylie J. has argued that “Visual landscape is a tool or device for keeping the world at a distance” (Wylie, J. 2014). However, rather than using photography as a technology to produce indifferent detached recordings of space, which I accept is one of its applications, Wells’ (2011) argument quoted earlier is equally valid, in that it can be seen as an effective means of conveying the experience of being in place and space. My argument is that it effectively does both.

The photographs I have made focus on habitats and dwellings as a means of exploring identity. Not only is my research questioning how specific identities are expressed through dwelling space, it also aims to consider the relationships and tensions between landscape and temporary makeshift manmade homes and how this reflects a rejectionist identity. To Wylie J. “Landscape may be defined phenomenologically as the tension of self and world.” (Wylie, J. 2012, p.62). My approach to the subject draws from a theoretical methodology which uses the framework of cultural geography and concepts of phenomenology⁹ to examine how spaces, places and objects have resonances and significance because of their relationships and histories with people and how a phenomenological reading of the photographs can help lead to new interpretations of countercultural identity. This theoretical stance is underpinned and facilitated by photographs

⁹ The theory of Phenomenology is discussed in more detail in the Literature review and is expanded throughout the thesis.

where small detail highlighted through the use of large format cameras can be identified observed and scrutinised. Through this process it is therefore possible to consider the overlooked and perhaps seemingly mundane detritus within these environments and unearth their significances.

4:4 Conclusion

While there is a unifying interest in counterculture within the work of others discussed above, there are important and fundamental differences in my research concerns. The community I am researching is made of migrant groups with conflicting views and represent a collision and complex homogenisation of countercultural beliefs incorporating views derived from the 1960s hippie movement, the British and America Punk movement of the late 1970s, electronic dance orientated rave culture which started in the 1980s in America and Northern Europe and the political ideologies of anarchism and the 'Back-to-the-Land'¹⁰ movement. There are also individuals without a precise ideology and many who are experimenting with drugs or alcohol.¹¹ The intention of my research is to identify through photography the differences and similarities of these subgroups who live in juxtaposition within the same encampment, or within the ten kilometer radius of my area of study. My work is furthermore concerned with the tensions between landscape and habitation. Rather than suggesting these places as utopias as in the work of Kurland (2004), Richardson (2003), and Sternfeld (2006), I aim to question the structures of alternative communities in different ways and reflect on some of the paradoxes and conflicts underlying their lifestyles.

Considering the work of British, American and European photographers, the review has positioned my research practice historically and internationally within the context of other practitioners who have made work on the subject of counterculture and others whose work has

¹⁰ The 'Back to the Land' movement stems from the ideologies of Robert Winstanley and others who founded the Diggers and Levellers in 17th century Britain and America. (See: Gurney 2012). I discuss these movements in the accompanying literature review.

¹¹ Interestingly, within one of the sites I am working in, there are geographical boundaries, dividing those who use alcohol and those who do not. There seems to be an unwritten rule that in one part of the site, alcohol is prohibited, although hallucinogenic drugs are accepted. There are divisions and subdivisions within the community which are determined by the type of drug used and this will be discussed in another chapter.

had an impact on my own. Discussing practice methods and final works, I have highlighted how different photographers have applied different techniques and approaches to visualise an aspect of counterculture and a personal response to the subject. In recognising and assessing these photographers work, I have aimed to draw attention to how my work and approach differs from others and offers a new understanding. What most of these photographers have in common with each other and myself (with the exception of Kurland 2004), is that they all come from a documentary tradition. There is no sign of manipulating an environment, of staging, altering, or re-placing objects, (except in the portraiture where people are directed to pose in a certain way). As well as indirect influence from the early photographers of the nineteenth century, I acknowledge the influences of photographers of the late twentieth and early twenty first century on my practice. The disparate work from over one hundred and fifty years of photography from which I draw have widely different subject matters and techniques, styles and attitudes, however there are elements within their works that binds them together into a cohesive collection, when viewed in relation to my own work within this medium. In relation to the production of cultural geographic knowledge through photography, Wells (2011), Schwartz (2009), and Wylie, J. (2012, 2014), helped underpin my argument that place and space can be interpreted phenomenologically and that photography is a way of understanding this.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Five

Place and Identity: The Construction of Countercultural Identity through Place

5:1 Introduction

In considering a number of photographs, this chapter sets out to interpret how distinct countercultural identities are expressed and maintained through makeshift dwellings and their situation in the landscape. The staging of these habitats create meaningful places in which countercultural identities can be played out and seen to be integral to and critical to defining a sense of otherness, separating them from the hegemonic. It will be argued that site, organisation of space and place, relationship to landscape and the idiosyncrasies of these habitations give indications of their occupants' anti-establishment beliefs and identities. The chapter will explore how place embodies personal or shared histories through describing and analysing high definition photographs within the framework of cultural geography. This chapter aims to use specific photographs to make sense of, explore and understand how countercultural place is made and embodied to affirm an identity. Consideration will be given to how these countercultural places can be seen from multiple insider and outsider perspectives as sites of home, community, threat, safety, eye-sores, rejection, rebellion, escape and utopia and reflect on how personal or community boundaries are defined. While the photographs in themselves cannot explain all of the assertions made in the chapters, this is compensated for by the contextual literature which informs the thesis and the information gleaned from deep hanging out in the field, where during extended visits, further details about cultural backgrounds, ways of life, histories and so on were noted through unrecorded and recorded conversations and field notes.

Firstly this chapter will distinguish these countercultural groups in Spain from others, showing how where other intentional alternative communities share a responsibility to each other and

community, individuals here have indicated that they do not acknowledge their community nor work towards a common goal. The chapter will then describe the physical geography of site 'A' before using a number of images to analyse and distinguish the types of dwellings on this site. It will be argued that some dwellings on this site represent and are recognisable as a countercultural identity stemming from Britain, and that the landscape they occupy offers an environment in which these identities can express themselves, distinct from elsewhere. The possible links to Anarchist ideologies and the recent histories of these identities will then be considered, as well as how their mobility and being temporarily situated on land owned in the most part by the state is a transgressive act of defiance, setting them apart from the mainstream. The chapter will discuss the importance of place in the maintenance of and expression of otherness and how this place, while becoming increasingly meaningful to the counterculture through their practices and continuing inhabitation, has other meanings and significances to the local indigenous population. In relation to this, notions of insider and outsider will be considered both in terms of what this means as a Spanish local, and as one of the counterculture. Following this, there is a detailed analysis of a number of images which draws out and reflects on specific and contrasting identities in relation to place. Through the image '*Crusty Mark, Andalusia, Spain, 2006*' (figure 5.2), I will reflect on how the staging of re-appropriated objects in an inhospitable environment create a deliberately post-apocalyptic and carnivalesque scene, so as to express a particular type of British countercultural identity. In contrast to this, analysis turns toward photographs of dwellings on site 'B', where different kinds of identities to those on site 'A' are projected and accommodated in a mountain ravine. It will be argued that place is an important factor in that it affects and is affected by temporal countercultural dwellings and their creators; contributing to distinct atmospheres and histories and in turn attracting particular types of people. A hand drawn map (figure 5.6 *Francesca's Map*) offers an insider perspective of the site, and an alternative aesthetic and sense of place and space to the photographs. In *Francesca (i)* (figure 5.7) the same creative and environmentally concerned identity, what I term as 'neo-hippy', is drawn out through the materiality of dwelling and habitat.

Analysis of the dwelling seen in figure 5.9 focuses on the identity of someone who while living

within the boundaries of site 'B', defies being aligned with those previously discussed. It will be suggested that through deconstructing his ramshackle habitat 'Avi' shares some common ground with notions of the tramp (Anderson 1925, Cresswell 2001), rather than with other distinct countercultural identities represented on these sites, and as such is an outsider within outsiders. Finally the chapter will examine graffiti as a visual language which acts as an expression of resistance to authority. Taken out of its more usual urban context, where it is now an accepted art form and as such could have a diluted impact, I will consider how graffiti sprayed onto the exteriors of vans converted into mobile living spaces by the counterculture, and situated in a rural environment, becomes a potent symbol of transgression and defiance against mainstream conventions.

5:2 A Comparison of Countercultural Identities on sites A and B through Dwelling type and Situation

On these impermanent sites, a sense of place does not usually come about through an organised cooperative with mutually agreed communal responsibilities or concerns, or a shared tending of the land. There are exceptions, as discussed later in the chapter through the images *The Garden, Andalusia, Spain, 2012*, (figure 5.1), and *Francesca (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2012*, (figure 5.7), which point to differences in ideologies and identities in the sites, however, an anonymous interviewee on site 'A', said that they do not recognise themselves as an intentional community.¹ The unintentional communities here can be distinguished from intentional communities in Europe and America by their lack of order, structure or shared purpose. Long established alternative communities such as Findhorn, Scotland, Christiania, Denmark, or The Farm, Tennessee, USA, share, respect and contribute to domestic and other communal duties, and have responsibilities to maintain a set of agreed values and regulations. In this way they build a sense of community and place. Seamon notes "like nineteenth century utopian experiments such as Oneida, Harmony and Shaker settlements, Findhorn is important because it is an

¹ As documented later in the thesis this observation was also put forward by an interviewee when describing her overview of site 'B'. This commonality suggests that despite their differences of ideology, there is a similarity in the structure of their social relationships and refusal to accept of the term 'community'.



Figure 5.1. Ben Murphy. *The Garden*, Andalusia, Spain. 2012

intentional effort to establish a sense of group and community” (Seamon 2009, p.12). At Findhorn, Seamon observes “those values arise from a shared world view and way of living.” (ibid 2009, p.13). On sites ‘A’ and ‘B’, unlike Findhorn, there is no shared world view or ruling committees, or meetings to discuss communal issues are rarely organised. They may share some ideologies, and have shared histories; they may have similar kinds of dress, living spaces and belongings, however they do not work together for the common good of the community, nor do they have a single focused ideology toward building a utopian colony.

These temporary settlements in south-east Spain, while having distinct anti-establishment characteristics cannot be seen in the same way as the utopian colonies of previous generations. People who come to live here share the same land and hold some common values, however, they live as individuals within the settlements; their primary concern being themselves and their immediate families. On site ‘A’, according to the anonymous interviewee referenced earlier, and also on site ‘B’, according to a woman named Francesca, who I discuss later in the chapter, attempts by anyone to coerce in building a community where financial and material concerns are shared is rare. There are some occasional shared experiences and interchanges on all sites; parties, meals, gardening, helping to build each other’s dwellings, gigs, drumming circles, peyote drug taking rituals and so on, however the individuals on all sites do not as a whole work together for the benefit of the group.² Within these settlements there is no leader, nor a specific religion, nor single secular belief system. There are certain similarities to more ordered alternative societies, such as those mentioned above, in that they have chosen not to participate in conventional society as much as possible, and attempt to reject consumerism and capitalism. However, with exceptions noted, while it can be seen in the photographs that there are influences from American and European alternative community traditions in their building styles and choices of sites, what differentiates the contemporary counterculture within these settlements is the overarching lack of coordinated communal intentions.

² I will examine one example later in the chapter where a sub-group within settlement B are intent on building community with shared aims: See figure 5.6 *Francesca’s map*, 2015, figure 5.7 *Francesca (i) Andalusia, Spain*, 2012, and figure 5.8 *The Volcano, Andalusia, Spain*, 2015

Setting the scene for site 'A', toward the end of a roughly defined, unmarked, uneven, pot holed track, following the meandering of a fast flowing usually shallow river, approximately one kilometer from the edge of a small village are a number of temporary dwellings. These are situated away from the track on the south side of the valley bottom, set apart from each other or else in various small groupings. Some are in an open setting, (e.g. figure 5.2), while some rest in places which are partly shaded by trees, bamboo and bushes (e.g. figure 6.5). Customised trucks, caravans, horseboxes, removals vans, coaches and yurts form what is an unstructured alternative community, predominantly made up of a core group of British ex-patriates who established a settlement in this place at the beginning of the twenty first century.³ Since their arrival, this geographic location as a countercultural confluence has remained fixed despite the unfixed nomadic lifestyles of its inhabitants and a continual flux of inhabitants. As well as its setting, this settlement can be differentiated from site 'B' by the predominance of British nationals and the extent of vehicle based dwellings. The types of vehicles here on site 'A', the way they are re-appropriated and situated, and the objects in and around them can give us a clear indication of national and group identity, setting them apart from others in the area. Here, landscape has been used as an arena for the staging of spaces informed by the anti-establishment beliefs of countercultural groups from the UK such as neo-punk, rave, and new traveller cultures from the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s as identified by Hebdige (1988), Hetherington (2000), Lowe & Shaw (1993), St. John (2009) for example. The associations with these historic identities are clearly recognisable through the material culture that they create and surround themselves with. An example can be seen in the photograph *Crusty Mark, Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 5.2), discussed later in this section.

Consistent with others spoken to in casual conversations in the field, the interviewee referred to earlier from site 'A' described himself as an anarchist, saying this is "an unintentional community rather than an intentional one" (Anonymised field recording, 15.01.2015). Given that these unintentional communities are made up of individuals who live independently of each

³ According to claims made by people who had lived on the site since its inception, during informal anonymised recorded conversations.

other, but share certain ideologies, then the anarchism he refers to might be considered as a form of 'individualist anarchism' (Ward 2004) as first promoted by figures such as Stephen Pearl Andrews, (1812-86), Josiah Warren, (1798-1874) Benjamin R. Tucker, (1854-1939) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). According to Ward (2004), these anarchists "[...] argued that in protecting our own autonomy and associating with others for common advantages, we are promoting the good of all" (Ward 2004, p.62). Some might also be considered 'green' anarchists, or 'eco' anarchists, (ibid 2004), or what Peter Harper (a founder of the centre for alternative technology in Wales),⁴ terms 'Deep Greens' (ibid 2004), as certain inhabitants share strong environmental concerns. Some support the ideologies of and were involved in road protest groups and direct action environmental groups active in the early 1990s in the UK. Groups such as *The Donga Tribe*, *Earth First*, *Reclaim the Streets* and *The Land is Ours* carried out direct protest actions in rural and urban environments, opposing motorway expansion through the ancient landscape of Twyford Down, in Hampshire and that of the M11 through east London, and opposing the building of a Tesco supermarket in Golden Hill, Bristol for example. They did this by occupying the sites, creating temporary encampments with makeshift dwellings and sometimes living in trees in an attempt to protect them. (Wall 1999).⁵ These actions demonstrate concerns about the destruction of natural habitats and the wider environment, and the consequences of capitalism. Although there is little to show of shared communal activity on site 'A', the advantages Wall referred to, in terms of defining their form of Anarchy, perhaps comes from the safety of being on a site with similar minded outsiders with shared histories, and that their coming together to the same area of land provides a sense of autonomy. In this way, the anonymous interviewee's aspirations toward Anarchy are manifested in the truck culture and their antagonistic anti-authoritarian provocation of placing their dwellings on land owned by the local river authority. In their setting up camp on this riverbed it could be perceived as an act of deviance, and as being 'out of place'. As Cresswell says "'Normality" is defined, to a significant

⁴ See: Harper (2009).

⁵ A paradox here then could be that despite their connections to such groups, they use vehicles as dwellings, and in turn travel on roads and motorways which have inevitably caused environmental damage. This and other paradoxes will be discussed in more depth in chapter seven.

degree, geographically, and deviance from this normality is also shot through with geographical assumptions concerning what and who belong where” (Cresswell, 1996, p.27). This transgression in turn helps to reaffirm relations between place and ideology for the counterculture. (ibid). Just as a convoy of new travellers in 1980s Britain were labelled as deviant and out of place when attempting to go to a free festival at Stonehenge, and were denied access and cordoned off by the police in a field in Wiltshire, in what has become known as *‘The Battle of The Beanfield’* (Worthington 2005).⁶ In this case, as with the new travellers in Wiltshire, following Cresswell’s argument, these possible assumptions by the mainstream of “deviance and anarchy” (Cresswell 1996) associated with people who choose to live in vehicles in this place contribute to a sense of otherness between the hegemonic and the counterculture. The neo-nomadic population here are seen by some as a threat to order. As Cresswell states “Because the easiest way to establish order is through the division of space, mobility becomes a basic form of disorder and chaos- constantly defined as transgression and trespass” (ibid 1996, p.87). Given their geo-political location, in that they are often sited on land owned by the state, and their attempts at a self-autonomous way of life, another way of thinking about this version of anarchy is as Bey (2008) states as “temporary autonomous zones”, where a state of unrul exists within a temporal space.⁷ While not complying with a common thread within Anarchist thinking of working for the common good (Ward 2004), a form of Anarchism is perhaps enabled here by the local physical geography and played out in the imaginations of individuals, and in the ways they organise, occupy and use space and place. Furthermore, this form of Anarchism could be seen to be validated through the reaction to their presence by the local Spanish people.⁸

Through the coming together of neo-nomadic countercultural identities on site ‘A’, the pockets of uncultivated land along this riverbed have become to them a potent meaningful place in

⁶ The Battle of the Beanfield is referenced in greater detail elsewhere in the thesis.

⁷ I interpret this as an impermanent space either virtual or physical which empowers creativity, where people are recognised as free beings, where state authority is challenged or ignored, where self-governance is practiced and allowed and where there is no hierarchical order.

⁸ In contrast to this, ironically, there is some tolerance by the local Spanish to outsiders, some of whom have anarchist sympathies because of their histories with the communist rebels during the Spanish Civil War. (Ward 2008).

different ways to how it has been and is experienced by the local indigenous population. Their ongoing transient presence on land mainly owned by the river authorities,⁹ has given both insiders and outsiders a new sense of this place. As Tilley states “The experience of space is always shot through with temporalities, as spaces are always created, reproduced and transformed in relation to previously constructed spaces provided and established from the past. Spaces are intimately related to the formation of biographies and social relationships” (Tilley 1994, p11). So, as this place continues to be used as a site for non-conformist lifestyles, it has developed meanings and significances to the neo-nomads through events, actions and interactions that are different to the understandings of this place to the local Spanish. To the counterculture, the landscape represents suitable (and some would argue ideal) conditions for their lifestyles, which include the holding of raves and free festivals. These events are integral to some identities as neo-nomadic travellers. As Wylie, J. observes “Landscape is [...] anchored in human, embodied perception” (Wylie, J. 2007, p.160). Each individual within and without the counterculture have different relationships and experiences of the landscape. Alienating themselves partly from a host society, their temporal imprint on the land by way of their habitations and actions within this environment becomes an important aspect in the construction and maintenance of the otherness of countercultural identity. Landscape is understood in different ways and means different things to individuals depending on their histories, knowledge and experiences of place. (Cresswell 2015, Massey 2005, Tuan 2014). In their relatively short presence here, as they build relationships with the landscape, the landscape becomes enmeshed in their identity and their ongoing histories and biographies as it does in the indigenous peoples’, but through an alternative perspective and through different activities. In common with people who live in more fixed spaces, the places in which countercultural nomadic identities live is similarly significant in how they come to represent beliefs. Relph expands on this saying “The relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of

⁹ Some land and property has been bought and is occupied by people from the counterculture. (Field notes 2010-2015, and personal email responses from members of the counterculture to an Observer newspaper feature by Tom Seymour about the work. See: Seymour (2017))

communally held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements” (Relph 2008, p.34). The evidence shown in the photograph *Crusty Mark, Andalusia, Spain, 2006* (figure 5.2) for example which indicates a situation within the landscape in both an intimate and wider geographic context, would suggest then, that the quality of a place, as much as the temporary dwellings occupying it, is used as an expressive element of identity which attempts to reject conventional modes of living and state controlled authority. To Ingold “A place owes it’s character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there- to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which the inhabitants engage. It is in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique significance” (Ingold 2008, p.192). A sense of place has been considered here for both practical and symbolic reasons which combine to add to the creation of personal and group identities.

As I will demonstrate, site ‘A’ has distinct geographic characteristics from site ‘B’; their physical geographies and environments impacting on and having relevance to the different types of countercultural identities living there. Site ‘A’ lies on a predominantly dried up riverbed while site ‘B’ exists in a mountain ravine for example. Site and the type of dwelling are critical to the outward expression of difference between themselves and other countercultures and between them and the mainstream.

These temporary settlements can be seen to be associated with home, family, friendship, hedonism, a sense of freedom and paradise for the counterculture. These sites may have acquired mythological status to some, from the events that have occurred here during countercultural occupation.¹⁰ To some, these events compound a sense of otherness, and with the passing of time, contribute to the landscape’s perception as a place of resistance to hegemonic authority. This attitude to place can be interpreted as an amalgamation of perceptual and existential space. Tilley describes perceptual space as “[...] one that links patterns of individual intentionality to bodily movement and perception. It is a space of personality, of encounter and emotional

¹⁰ For example site ‘A’ was used as the location of a free festival called the Dragonfest between the years 1997 and 2009, attracting at its peak crowds of up to 10,000. See: Bryce, Williams (2011).

attachment. It is the constructed life-space of the individual, involving feelings and memories giving rise to a sense of awe, emotion, wonder or anguish in special encounters” (Tilley 1994, p.16). Tilley argues that existential space is informed by perceptual space saying “It [i.e. existential space] is experienced and created through life –activity, a sacred, symbolic and mythic space replete with social meanings wrapped around buildings, objects and features of the local topography, providing reference points and planes of emotional orientation for human attachment and involvement” (ibid 1994, p.17). For an indigenous person, as well as now being seen as a place where hippies live,¹¹ these landscapes could represent places of work, home, community in different ways or act as a reminder of the bloody history of conflict between the fascists and the communist rebels who fought here during the Spanish civil war. Up to four thousand republican rebels were murdered by General Franco’s forces close to this site and buried in shallow mass graves during and after the Spanish Civil war of 1936 to 1939. (See: Walker 2003). Despite this area becoming meaningful to the counterculture through their interactions and engagement with the landscape, it will always have different significances and meanings to the Spanish. Bender has pointed out “Sometimes, as with travelling people, the home (caravan or yurt) becomes the stable centre of a world which is in part, made familiar through well worn routeways, but is always, in part, alien because of the reception of those whose land is passed through” (Bender 2013, in: Keane, Kuchler, Rowlands, Spyer, Tilley, eds. 2013, p.309). No matter how long their occupation, the nomadic community will remain other to the indigenous people and will not have the same relationship to the land. As Relph points out “[...] it is not just the identity of a place that is important, but also the identity that a person or group has *with* that place, in particular whether they are experiencing it as an insider or outsider” (Relph 2008, p.45). Paradoxically both sets of people have attachment to this place and can experience it as insiders and outsiders. This place can have meaning from the inside as a local, while simultaneously, it can be experienced as an insider as a part of the neo-nomadic community. Both perspectives of insiderness having significances that are not meaningful to the other and yet are equally authentic. Relph refers to this perception of place identity as that of the

¹¹ The local indigenous people refer to the counterculture as hippies, regardless of any subcultural difference.

'empathetic insider' saying "For empathetic insiders, knowing places through sociality in community, places are records and expressions of the cultural values and experiences of those who create and live in them" (ibid 2008, p.61). Despite this divide in the understanding and experience of landscape and the transient nature of countercultural occupation, these landscapes are an important factor in countercultural identity here. Tilley argues that "Locales may offer a distinct quality of being inside, or part of, a place. People both live out their lives in place and have a sense of being part of it. Consequently, place is fundamental to the establishment of personal and group identities and the formation of biographies" (Tilley 1994, p.18). The physical character of site 'A'; infertile uneven scrub land, grey meocenic stones and gravel, affects how the site looks, how it is used and how it is experienced. The harsh landscape has I argue been identified as an appropriate stage for the countercultures post-apocalyptically inspired habitats which are I believe designed to look defiant, alienating and provocative to those outside the counterculture (see *Anonymous (ii), Andalucia, Spain. figure 5.3*). Unlike some of the more discrete encampments on site 'B', these countercultural habitations express identities linked specifically to rave culture, D.I.Y. parties, new traveller, and eco-anarchist, (e.g. figure 5.4 *Nick (ii)*) and what some inhabitants in casual conversation referred to as 'neo-punk'. Through the imposition of these countercultures ephemeral encampments on this land, identities are expressed, and a complex set of relationships to place are exposed through photography.

5:3 Crusty Mark

Returning to the Photograph *Crusty Mark. Andalucia, Spain, 2006* (figure 5.2) further explores the make-up of a particular identity in relation to place and space in a constructed temporal environment. This image shows one side of a horseshoe shaped encampment on site 'A'. Not visible to the left were other larger trucks which were also part of this encampment. At the centre of the space is a white caravan which has been positioned on rough open ground; There is a symbol painted on the panel to the right of the caravan's door which is one associated to the British rave culture events group Bedlam. There is a British Leyland horsebox and beyond that



Figure 5.2. Ben Murphy. *Crusty Mark*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



Figure 5.3. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (ii)*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



Figure 5.4. Ben Murphy. *Nick (ii)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006

a blue removals van with the name 'Chappell's' written along its side and the words 'UK and International Removals, Storage, Shipping'. The statement 'Europe Weekly' is also visible in bold white type. In the distance the edge of a small town can be seen on the lower mountain side. The encampment is both outside the mainstream but conveniently the nearest town is relatively close. This physical distance and yet relative proximity to services provided in the town, give the occupants both a detachment from the mainstream and also the conveniences provided by it.¹² The immediate environment surrounding the caravan is littered with a bricolage of various objects including an airport luggage trolley, a car seat with a dog asleep on it, old tyres, gas canisters, a brass bed head, a clothes drying stand with clothes draped over it, two childrens' buggies, a horse drawn trailer, a truck engine, a cement mixer, a large builders trug, pieces of metal tubing, and a sculpture made from reclaimed vehicle parts. To the far right of the image next to a small tree is a horse drawn wooden buggy, the kind that was common in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Europe and America. In the foreground a large dog guards the space. Through the assemblage and placement of these things a temporary territory has been defined and claimed and an identity represented and imposed on the uncultivated landscape. As in a more structured society, in these photographs we can see that the countercultures go about marking out territory with dwellings and possessions in a similar manner, so as to affirm identity and define their spaces. Objects surrounding the caravan act as a physical and psychological barrier protecting the private space inside the van also giving a scrap yard aesthetic reminiscent of the environments seen in the dystopian film *Mad Max* directed by George Miller in 1979. The uncultivated landscape acts as a platform on which this post-apocalyptic scene is represented through this collection of reclaimed re-appropriated materials. Now reused, previously redundant, discarded objects have been reimagined and reconfigured to create meaningful forms which contribute in representing the countercultural identity. Here an outward expression of a neo-nomadic, neo-punk is strongly sensed through the theatricality of these things placement in space; things, which if we follow the phenomenological reasoning of Heidegger, have perceivable histories and meanings embedded in them through their placement, journeys,

¹² This paradox will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter seven.

manufacture, relationships and human handling. (Heidegger in Mooney & Moran 2002, pp.257-277). In its placement on a particular type of landscape, in its deliberate and cultivated scrap heap aesthetic and its potential moveability this encampment then can be seen to represent a rejection of mainstream values. A distinctly British non-conformist material culture is recognisable; compatible with the sound systems operating the DIY illegal acid house party scene of the early 1990s in the UK, such as Bedlam, Spiral Tribe, Circus Normal (Guest 2009) and Mutoid Waste Company; another group known for sculptures created out of recycled cars and machinery, and also giving carnivalesque performances at festivals and illegal warehouse parties from their inception in the 1980s to the present day.¹³ These groups would use converted lorries, such as that seen in the background of figure 5.2, to transport their equipment, and as impromptu stages for their sound systems. The use of a caravan, seen in this image, suggests an influence from contemporary European gypsy culture who can commonly be seen to use mass produced caravans. Some entanglement of new and old traveller cultures is also evident in their use of horses and mules which were present on the site and alluded to by the horse drawn carts visible in figure 5.2.¹⁴ Further reflection on this image could suggest a subversion of a British family holiday scene whereby the caravan sits on a foreign campground on a designated plot, accompanied by neatly positioned table, chairs, kitchen equipment, and so on. Here, this idyll has been subverted and in this we see a rejection of conventional values. Through the transportation of material possessions, holding personal and symbolic meanings, this individual reinstates and expresses his British outsider identity in a foreign environment. Tuan says that “The built environment clarifies social roles and relations. People know better who they are and how they ought to behave when the arena is humanly designed rather than nature’s raw stage.” (Tuan 2007, p.102). In the temporary habitat he has created, space has been used to create countercultural place, which is both affected by and affects the landscape in which it rests. I will demonstrate later in the chapter, importantly, one distinguishing feature of this type of

¹³ See: Rush (2019). Also: [Internet]. <<https://cargocollective.com/MutoidWasteCo/London-the-origins>>

¹⁴ This influence of Gypsy culture on contemporary counterculture can also be seen in different ways through the photographic work of Laving (2007), Fawcett (2012), Mckell (2014), Wylie, D. (1998).

countercultural habitat is that this encampment exists in opposition to the environment. There is no attempt to create a place which is in harmony with the un-manicured landscape; it does not nestle discreetly into the land, but sits obviously and disobediently in contrast to its environment. Materials used, such as metals from recycled vehicles, are alien here. Where some dwellers on the sites of my research use local natural resources to build their shelters, (e.g. *Francesca (i), Andalusia, Spain 2012*, (figure 5.7)) and have a concern for their ecological impact, or are designed to be less visible statements of alternative identity (e.g. *Rubio and Bella, Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.2)), the dwelling here is a conspicuous and confrontational statement of identity, which has roots in new traveller, post-punk and rave culture of 1980s and 1990s Britain.

5:4 Pan

It is as much what is not displayed outwardly in '*Pan, Andalusia, Spain, 2012.*' (figure 5.5), as what is presented to us immediately around the dwelling, that suggests an identity in this image. Daylight has been excluded from the space by blocking off the windows. A concealed private space made out of the shell of an old mass produced blue transit van, enwraps a reclusive identity. The rear doors of the vehicle also deny light to the interior, covered with a tartan rug, held closed with the help of a metal rod. The front passenger side door and sliding side panel door are made inaccessible as entrances through the placement of a metal bedstead leaning against them. The bedstead acts as an improvised clothes airer. In effect, this is a barricaded lived in space. Rocks, consistent with those on the nearby hillside have been put on the roof of this rusting, dented, scratched old van to secure a strip of fabric which is keeping the bedstead in place. Rocks also hold down a red towel, some carpet underlay and what appears to be the frame of a lounge camping chair. A British vehicle registration plate from the year 1990 can be seen underneath the carpet on the roof of the van. A black and white 'GB' sticker on one of the back doors is a further indication that the van is of British origin. This does not necessarily mean that the occupant of this space is British, because as I have said earlier, people from different nationalities come and go here continually and dwellings if left can be re-inhabited. The vehicle is missing its wheels and is resting on earth and rocks. In its current state it is not roadworthy



Figure 5.5. Ben Murphy. *Pan*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012

and is used as a static dwelling. A pile of rocks have been laid out directly behind and to the side of the van, at one end forming a semi-circle in which there is evidence fires have been made. In the immediate surroundings we also see a tyre, a wheel hub, plastic containers, a few pieces of plastic sheets, a plastic bag, a length of plastic pipe, a rubber glove, a sofa cushion in the left foreground, a pile of clothes and a glass bottle in the right foreground. On the rocks at the rear of the van a rusty metal pot with some plants inside suggests some concern for a more conventional kind of home making. These objects act as boundaries to personal space and territory. The setting for this scene is Site 'B' in an area of the site known as 'The Car Park'. It is indicated on the hand drawn map (figure 5.6) discussed in the next subsection. The car park is a public facility for those wishing to come here by car to then walk in the nature reserve directly above this.

Again place can be seen to contribute to and define differences in countercultural identity. Reinforcing the assertion put forward earlier, that these are not sites of communal cooperation, the dwelling sits introspectively in the landscape and as with most of the encampments, shows few signs of self-sufficiency.¹⁵ There are no signs that the occupant of this van has specific affiliations to one particular counterculture, unless one accepts van or truck dwelling denotes a distinct counterculture. However in positioning the van in this location as opposed to on site 'A' for example, and marking out an informal space through the van and the objects placed around it, its setting transforms possible readings of identity. By association with others here in its type of dwelling and placement, the occupant of this van is part of a counterculture present on site 'B' distinguished in part by the atmosphere and geography of the surroundings; the presence of the vehicle also affecting the landscape and contributing to the sense of countercultural place. In this mountainous and forested setting, the person living here has set himself apart not only from the mainstream society, but closed himself off from relations with immediate neighbours as well as the landscape that the dwelling is a part of. Cukooned here, a withdrawn, societal misfit is presented through the photograph, expressing their non-conformist self through their dwelling space's relationship with and attempted dislocation from the mainstream. Fragile and temporary,

¹⁵ An exception can be seen in figure 6.5. *Pete the Painter, Andalusia, Spain, 2006.*

this encampment provides shelter, and some sense of security and safety. Dwellings, according to Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton are like fossils; as they become intertwined with their occupants identity: “Like some strange race of cultural gastropods, people build homes out of their own essence, shells to shelter their personality. But, then, these symbolic projections react on their creators, in turn shaping the selves they are. The envelope thus created is not just a metaphor” (Csikszentmihalyi & Rochberg-Halton 1981, p.138). Progressing a similar comparison between the birds nest and the human home, (Bachelard 1994, pp.90-104) this metaphor could be applied when assessing how this habitation has been created and affects relationships between creator and occupant. As a form of dwelling, it is as Tuan maintains, a “centre of meaning” (Tuan 1975, p.151). Although this dwelling could have been situated elsewhere, because of its mobile potential, it is through its placement here on the fringes of site ‘B’ that allow it to be understood in relation to this place. Unlike a vehicle dwelling on site ‘A’, where the geography contributes to an alienating sense of place, removed from that environment to a mountain ravine, a similar vehicle perhaps takes on a less confrontational character. Temporal countercultural sites have characters and atmospheres that are affected by human activity. Relph writes “[...] it is not just the identity of a place that is important, but also the identity that the person or group has with that place, in particular whether they are experiencing it as an insider or as an outsider” (Relph 2008, p.45). Simply put, place affects people and people affect place. This dwelling affects its environment by its material presence, by the activities of its occupant. For the time it stays here, it has become an integral part of one area of a countercultural site which has a different atmosphere to others in my research. Taking these phenomenological interpretations of a place and applying them to the understanding of this place, my photographs reflect a palimpsest of human activities both recent and distant that have impacted on this landscape to affect the way it is perceived and used. Tilley states that:

Places are always ‘read’ or understood in relation to others. While places and movement between them are intimately related to the formation of personal biographies, places themselves may be said to acquire a history, sedimented layers of meaning by virtue of the actions and

events that take place in them. Personal biographies, social identities and a biography of place are intimately connected” (Tilley 1994, p.27).

5:5 Francesca’s Map

Referring to Francesca’s map (figure 5.6) we can see she has divided site ‘B’ into distinct areas; car park, camping site, peyote field, kid’s space, Japanese village, Italian hill, and so on. The hand drawn map could be analysed at length, as a way of understanding a personal perspective of place, however there is not the scope for such a detour in this thesis. In this context it is a topographically inaccurate visualisation and representation of how that person understands the site and can help in the process of unpacking the cultural and symbolic meanings of the settlement and in turn how it contributes to a countercultural attitude. Site ‘B’ exists in a mountain ravine six kilometers from the nearest small town and is accessible from a narrow rough unmade track which runs off a minor mountain pass road. There are no signs indicating the location of the site. At the entrance to the site is the area called ‘The Car Park’ where, as well as being a place people park their cars, is an area used for people living in vans, caravans and makeshift dwellings. Here outside of the central site, the counterculture drink alcohol. There is an important unwritten rule on site ‘B’ that alcohol is not allowed anywhere other than in the car park. (Field notes: 2015). Elsewhere on the site hallucinogenic drugs are used and as we can see from the map (figure 5.6), there is a designated drug taking area called ‘The Peyote Field’. People who want to drink alcohol are not tolerated on the main site and have to live in the car park area. The state owned car park which lies within a national park therefore has a different atmosphere to other parts of the site in part because alcohol is used there. On one mountain side, rising on the west from the car park, other people have made temporary dwellings. North of the car park a footpath has been worn into the earth by people using it as a route into the main site, and through the site into the mountains above. Beyond the car park, the ravine is only accessible on foot. The central relatively flat part of the site is occupied by a variety of temporary and more permanent dwellings; tipis, self-made improvised living spaces, man-made tents, partly restored

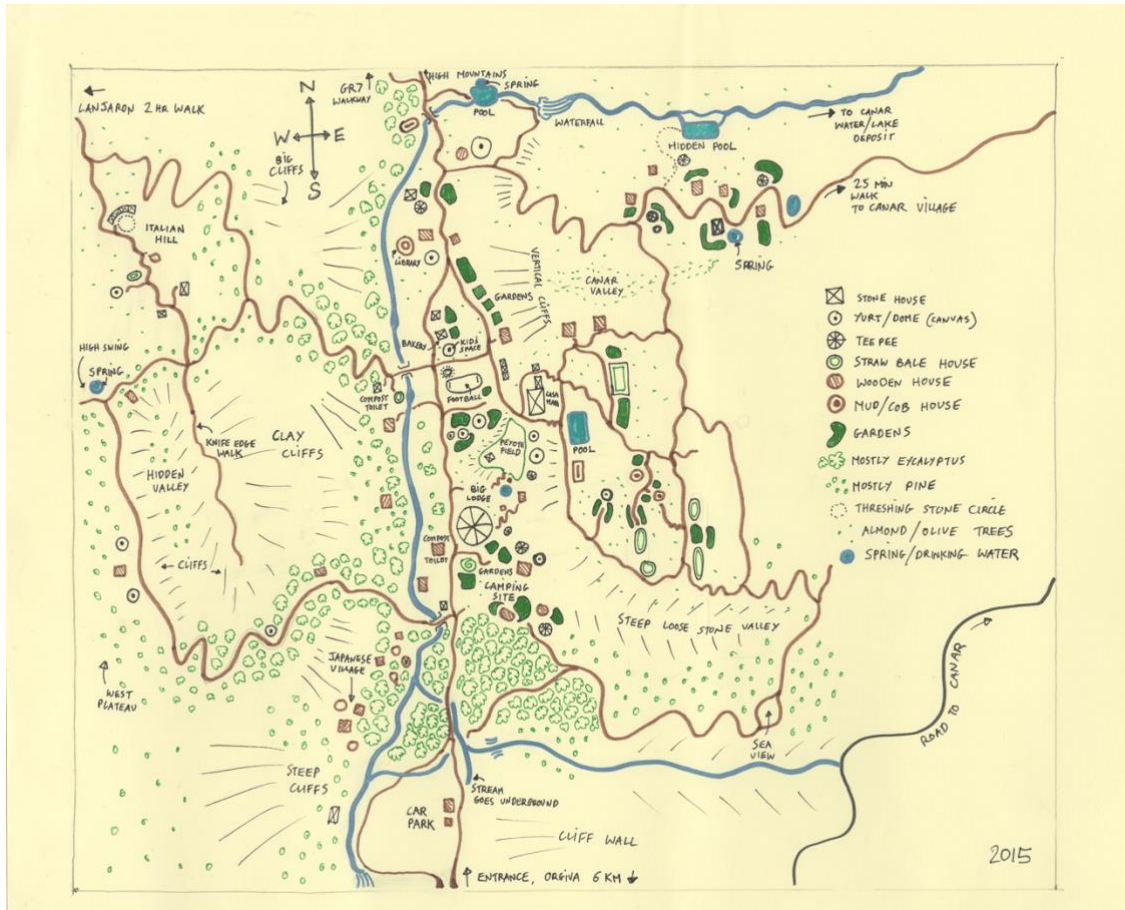


Figure 5.6. Francesca Jones. *Francesca's Map*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015

stone built buildings. There is a garden area with a permaculture¹⁶ spiral for growing vegetables (figure 5.1). This central area of approximately five hectares is a piece of land on the periphery of a national park, which was bought by (now departed) British travellers in 1987 who had been previously involved in the setting up of Tipi Valley alternative community in Wales.¹⁷ (Field notes: 2012).¹⁸ Tilley has recognised how places are affected by landscape and how they acquire atmospheres and meaning through peoples' actions within and relationships to those places saying:

Precisely because locales and their landscapes are drawn on in the day-to-day lives and encounters of individuals they possess powers. The spirit of a place may be held to reside in a landscape. Familiarity with the land, being able to read and decode its signs allows individuals to know 'how to go on' at a practical level of consciousness or one that may be discursively formulated. People regularly draw on their stocks of knowledge of the landscape and the locales in which they act to give meaning, assurance and significance to their lives. The place acts dialectically so as to create the people who are of that place. These qualities of locales and landscapes give rise to a feeling of belonging and rootedness and a familiarity, which is not born just out of knowledge, but of concern that provides ontological security. They give rise to a power to act and a power to relate that is both liberating and productive (Tilley 1994, p.26).

Drawing on this theory, through its physical geography, and the ongoing flux of people wishing to have the experience of a life outside of conventional society, this place has been affected by and is imbued with a certain atmosphere which continues to attract those interested in alternative living practices. Comparing the landscape seen in figure 5.2 with that of figure 6.2, and the kinds

¹⁶ Permaculture is a method of low maintenance environmentally sustainable agriculture developed by Australian ecologists Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, suited to maximising food production in arid or low fertile soil environments. (See: Mollison & Holmgren 1981).

¹⁷ See: <<http://www.diggersanddreamers.org.uk/communities/existing/tipi-valley>>

¹⁸ According to the TV broadcast: Realizado por Francis Lorenzo, y emitido por La 1 de RTVE a finales de agosto del 2015 "España a ras de cielo".

of dwellings in each, identities can be differentiated. As the footpath leads up the ravine towards higher ground, other dwellings have been made either side on the steep escarpments, narrow footpaths leading up to them from the main thoroughfare. As well as isolated individual habitations there are small clusters of makeshift dwellings. Different types of structures and their building materials are shown on *Francesca's map* (Jones, F. 2015), (figure 5.6), using symbols in the key. In geographic location, terrain, in types of dwellings, in the organisation of space, and in the atmosphere these elements combine to create, this site is distinct from site 'A'. Seamon clarifies this amalgamation of the experiences and perceptions of landscape, saying that a phenomenology of landscape explores "the way in which the natural geography of a site and region contributes to an atmosphere, character, and sense of place" (Seamon 1986, p.20). For Nogué i Font "Phenomenology accepts the intersubjectivity of experience, awareness and knowledge" (Nogué i Font, 1993, cited in: Seamon 1993, p.166). Considering the way in which these factors produce a countercultural landscape, through looking at the photographs and recognising this phenomenology of landscape, it is possible to sense how landscape plays an important role in shaping and affecting differences between the identities represented on this site and those on other sites. Countercultural identity can be differentiated on site 'A' through dependence on and preference for predominantly vehicle based dwelling spaces and a geographically more exposed and barren location by comparison to site 'B'. Both these territories sustain multi-national individuals and subgroups.¹⁹ What is becoming apparent through the chapter then is how the photographs uncover how sites have different atmospheres depending on geographic location and interactions between people and place and the construction of countercultural environments.

5:6 Francesca's Place

Depicted in *Francesca (i)* (figure 5.7) is a modest circular building, seen during construction.

¹⁹ According to the RTVE TV programme 'España a ras de cielo' there were thirty three nationalities living here at the time of recording. Realizado por Francis Lorenzo, y emitido por La 1 de RTVE a finales de agosto del 2015 "España a ras de cielo"



Figure 5.7. Ben Murphy. *Francesca (i)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012

Markedly different to other constructions here, using earth, mud, straw, stone and recycled glass bottles, and other reclaimed materials, the structure has similarities to and is possibly influenced by primitive huts made across the African and South American continents (see: Rykwert 1981). Among other details, it is perhaps the roof which first demands our attention. To Silverstien “the primitive roof creates both inside and outside” (Silverstein 1993 cited in: Seamon 1993, p.84). It defines the space around it and “in the way it expresses both the inside and outside, [...] brings into play the fundamental contrast of human experience. It is at once an intense place of refuge from the world and an expansive confrontation with the world” (ibid 1993, p.84). It can be distinguished from other dwellings on this site because of differences in the approach to building, the predominance of locally sourced materials and its aesthetic appearance which ingratiates itself into the landscape. With minimal use of manmade materials there is an integration with the environment that is not evident in the vehicle dwellings elsewhere. The hut appears to be connected to the land rather than imposed on it. The plastic tarpaulin used as roof covers on many living spaces here, is buried under straw. A living space is being created through a considered environmental and aesthetic approach, which outwardly expresses the environmental concerns of its builder.²⁰ Glass bottles are embedded into the exterior walls to provide daylight to the interior while adding strength to the fabric of the walls themselves. There is a sense of harmony within the environment. Silverstein says “For human beings, all forms are not equal. Some are more compelling and these favored forms, however they arise, attract us. They feel mysteriously right, and we identify with them. The experience of attraction and identification is based on the intuition that, somehow, this form is like us. In it, however dimly, *we see ourselves*” (ibid 2009, p.88). This sentiment can be applied to this hut, where the ideals and personality of its designer, builder and occupant are expressed through materiality. Langer writes “successful architecture creates the semblance of that world which is the counterpart of a self” (Langier 2001, cited in: Tuan 2007, p.164). With echoes of the primitive hut, what becomes apparent with this dwelling is the direct link between place and personal environmentally aware

²⁰ Francesca was an Irish woman in her mid thirties who previously worked as a shoe designer for Sergio Rossi, a leading fashion house in Italy. Noted from field recording (2015).

ideology. Wicker chairs are positioned to enjoy the view from the terrace. Elsewhere around this habitation, unseen in the photograph, she has begun to grow vegetables and is attempting to be self-sufficient. She designs, makes (using reclaimed materials), and then sells shoes through the internet to support her frugal lifestyle. She employs other international neo-nomads from Britain, Sweden, the Czech republic and elsewhere who help build and maintain her plot, in return giving people food and accommodation.²¹ A rejection of mainstream society is displayed here with particular environmental concern, discreetly nestling high on the escarpment of the ravine, within the boundaries of privately owned land, on a narrow terrace. While some people who come to live on this site do not contribute labour, or skills or commodity or have any sense of obligation or responsibility to others here, what appears to be the case with Francesca, is that she is actively engaged in trying to build an ecologically focused micro community of like-minded people through the organisation and management of space and creative use of local resources within the wider boundaries of site 'B'. Priority is given to working as a small group towards a low environmental impact, off-grid lifestyle to be as independent from mainstream society as possible. In Francesca's words "It's not really a community, more of a squat. A squat that is sometimes a little bit like a community and sometimes like a little village. There are little mini communities within. Like ours. Up on the hill. We eat together, we help each other out. There are different groups. Like the Italians on the other side. The Germans in the other little valley" (Francesca, recorded conversation, 12.01.2015). The photographs and conversation with Francesca suggest a person who is highly aware of the tactile qualities, experiences and significance of place and space and as indicated through her constructions, an identity with values in opposition to those of some others within these sites. For Wylie, J. "Landscape becomes the close at hand, that which is both touching and touched, an affective handling through which self and world emerge and entwine. In this

²¹ See figure 5.8 'The Volcano', Andalucia, Spain, 2015, showing one of the places built to house people she employs. This system of working on organic farms in exchange for accommodation and food was established in 1971 by Sue Coppard in the UK and is common practice throughout the alternative environmentally aware communities globally. It is known as 'Wwoofing'. This term stands for 'Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms' or 'Willing workers on Organic farms'. According to the organisation Wwoof UK, 'Wwoofing' is a way of learning through hands on experience about low impact lifestyles and organic growing practices. Reference: www.wwoof.org.uk and www.wwoofinternational.com



Figure 5.8. Ben Murphy. *The Volcano*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015

way also notions of landscape begin to merge with notions of place; landscape and place conjoin intimacy, locality and tactile inhabitation” (Wylie, J. 2007, p.167). Reinterpreting Heidegger, Wylie further observes that from a phenomenological perspective “Dwelling is [...] a poetic vision of the gathering together of earth and humanity as landscape.” (ibid 2007, p.179). My understanding, from conversations, from being in that place and from the subsequent consideration of the photographs of her encampment, is that to Francesca, the way in which dwelling is created from natural materials, and is in harmony with the land aesthetically and physically, is important; these related elements both working to act out and express strongly held beliefs, compounding a type of countercultural ‘eco-hippy’ identity. As is further demonstrated in *The Volcano, Andalucia, Spain, 2015* (figure 5.8), the particular countercultural spaces and identity being developed is as much dependent on and expressed through the types of materials used in its construction as it is in the ideologies of its inhabitant. The experience of dwelling and landscape are integral to the countercultural world Francesca inhabits and is creating. Her day to day activities; her construction of dwellings, her impact on the land, her attempts at constructing community and her physically being in this place, affect the landscape and both our and her understanding of it. Here, as the photographs depict, the countercultural landscape is being formed through people’s interactions and interventions with place. As Ingold says:

A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there- to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people’s engagement with the world, in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique significance (Ingold 2000, p.192).

Tilley reaffirms this stating:

Places are always ‘read’ or understood in relation to others. While places or movement between

them are intimately related to the formation of personal biographies, places themselves may be said to acquire a history, sedimented layers of meaning by virtue of the actions and events that take place in them. Personal biographies, social identities and a biography of place are intimately connected” (Tilley 1994, p.27).

Similarly, within the boundaries of site ‘B’, Francesca and her small community of helpers, through their activities, are in the process of affecting space and making a place that, for them is imbued with and resonates a particular type of countercultural significance. As I have demonstrated these significances are highlighted when we consider them through photography.

5:7 Outside of Catagorisation: In Consideration of Avi

Affirming the views of Francesca and others here, that the temporary countercultural settlements in this area are not intentional communities, rather sites where people can exist independently without a sense of collaboration with or duty to others, figure 5.9 demonstrates an outsider identity from a different tradition. Sharing similarities to some of the dwellings photographed in my series *Homes of the American Dispossessed* (Murphy 2012), (see example *The Godfather, Hollywood Hills, California, November 26. 2010* (figure 5.10), which reflected on the temporary dwellings of homeless identities in California and Nevada; and those represented in the photographs commissioned by the Farm Security Administration by Walker Evans, Arthur Rothstein, Dorothea Lange and others, of the homes of displaced Americans during the great depression of the 1930s, this ramshackle dwelling is by distinction a home by choice not misfortune. Unlike the people whose temporary makeshift shelters I photographed in California and Nevada in 2010, who wanted to rejoin society, the dweller here prefers to live on the hillside above the car park area on site ‘B’, rather than within the mainstream society of his home country, the United Kingdom, or that of the local indigenous society. As with other dwellings on these sites, this dwelling was originally built and occupied by someone else, who subsequently left to live elsewhere on site. (Table 1: Field notes, 2015). In this instance, Avi has reoccupied, adopted and adapted an existing dwelling. A shelter providing privacy and



Figure 5.9. Ben Murphy. *Avi*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



Figure 5.10. Ben Murphy. *The Godfather*, Hollywood Hills, California, November 26, 2010

protection from the elements has been modified with plastic tarpaulin roof, a fireplace made of local stone, an earth floor, a mixture of dry stone walling and wooden lattice garden fencing used as outer walls. An open doorway and a small reclaimed window allows a little light inside. There is no artificial light source. The dwelling shares common materials used by many of the makeshift habitations on site 'B'. As with many of the dwellings on these sites, there is no running water supply, no electricity, no bathroom. However primitive the conditions are within some of these dwellings and however seemingly thrown together they appear as living spaces they represent meaningful and useful spaces to their occupants. Avi reflects on the importance of home in a piece of writing accompanying a sketch he made at my request which reads "We all need some kind of a home" (See: Table 1. Field notes 2015. Also see: Appendix One, A1/1). Outside space can become an extension of the interior lived space and thereby another indication of identity. Objects lay around. Plants grow in plastic flower pots lined up on a wall. Clothes are hanging on a line between two trees. Sense of place and identity are interwoven and reaffirmed through the ongoing process of rebuilding and living in inside and outside space. In this environment identity is protected and projected as its current inhabitant expresses a non-conformist self, consciously and subconsciously through his interventions within the space. Place, as already argued, and seen through this photograph, is a significant factor in how we differentiate ourselves from others, how we define ourselves and how we understand ourselves and our relations to the world around us.

While not conforming to mainstream conventions of how dwelling space is configured we can see a converse conformity; To fit in with this settlement, there are recognisable styles of makeshift dwellings (as my photographs demonstrate) that constitute countercultural beliefs consistent with anti-establishment philosophies of those who stay here. Altman & Gauvain (1989) have argued that various cultures; e.g., suburban American, Bedouin, Berber, nomadic tribal cultures of south east Asia, are concerned with making their dwellings unique in some way, while also wanting them not to be too different from others in their communities, so as to blend with their community. (Altman & Guavain 1989 p.27-45). These types of dwelling spaces here could similarly be seen as reassurances within the counterculture of compatible belief

systems. Avi's dwelling space is different to others on site 'B' but not so different that it is incongruous. While one form of society (the mainstream) is being rejected, another (the countercultural) is being conformed to. As Rose has pointed out "People also establish their sense of place and of who they are by contrasting themselves with somewhere they feel is very different from them" (Rose, in: Jess & Massey 2000, p.92). Avi is one example of someone who has marked himself out as different from others by choosing to dwell within the boundaries of site 'B'. In living within the boundaries of an alternative settlement, people underscore who they are and who they identify with. They reject hegemonic convention, but conform to the unwritten codes of acceptable behaviour and space making practices within the site. Geographic boundaries are another way in which the counterculture define who they are. The settlement is contained within a physical geography but is also recognised through its architectural forms. These factors together with the activities of people here contribute to a place of "cultural difference" (Jess & Massey 2000) and otherness. Although the area of the temporary settlement is in a constant state of flux, depending on how many people it accommodates at any given time, and there is no perimeter fence of demarcation, the boundaries of the site are clarified by the dwelling spaces built on its periphery. Jess & Massey recognise how boundaries help define people in stating "[...] boundaries have a dual role. Firstly, they work to establish insiders: those who belong to that place" They continue "[...] the second function of the boundaries of a place is often to establish outsiders: those who do not belong" (ibid 2000, p.99). Following this the boundaries created here through temporary makeshift dwelling spaces define what is and what is not a countercultural place to those inside and outside the site.

American sociologists in the early part of the twentieth century might have described Avi as someone who is some form of tramp or bum. (Cresswell 2001, pp.80-86). If we were to accept the classifications of tramps by Anderson and consider this in a modern day context then Avi might be termed a neo-tramp: someone who

dreams and wanders and works only when it is convenient [...]. He is usually thought of, by

those familiar with his natural history as an able bodied individual who has the romantic passion to see the country and gain new experiences without work. He is a specialist at 'getting by' ...he is typically neither a drunkard or a bum, but an easy going individual who lives from hand to mouth for the mere joy of living (Anderson 1925, in: Cresswell 2001, p.81).

This description of a tramp's identity does have some commonalities with that of Avi, however it is generalised and does not account for the subject's lack of mobility or the evidence which suggests Avi has a form of semi-permanent home. From the photograph we see that Avi has established himself in this location through the accumulation and placement of personal objects around the space. The space has been affected by his possessions and activities. In Avi's case, unlike the nomads described by Anderson, his identity differs because he does not live a transient lifestyle and has made an albeit temporal home in a fixed location.

5:8 Graffiti as Matter Out of Place

Outsider identities in this area represent ideologies stemming from a particular countercultural movement and place,²² and this can be recognised in the type of dwelling, its layout, its association with the landscape and the occupiers possessions in and around the habitation, (e.g. *Crusty Mark. Andalucia, Spain, 2006* (figure 5.2)). I have and will argue further that some countercultural environments and thereby identities, in the way they are constructed and used, indicate national cultural affiliations. However, alongside a set of values affected by nationality, there seems to be a common thread in international countercultural marginality through the use of graffiti, as it can be seen as external decoration on the surfaces of many customised mobile or makeshift temporal living spaces regardless of the nationality of the dwellings creator or occupier. While it is not the aim of this chapter to discuss the cultural significances and histories of graffiti at length, it is important to draw attention to its use by some people living on the sites

²² For example there is a contingency of people on sites A and C that were involved in confrontations between hippies and the authorities in the so called 'Battle of the Beanfield' (see: Worthington 2005) in Wiltshire, 1985. These travellers as discussed elsewhere have countercultural identities into which social histories of this and other events are embedded.

here. As a universal symbol of resistance to mainstream society, graffiti acts as an effective medium to convey a subversive, defiant, anti-establishment message. A countercultural attitude can be projected easily through a few spray painted marks on the side of a vehicle. Cresswell points out that “Graffiti flagrantly disturbs notions of order. It represents a disregard for order and, it seems to those who see it, a love of disorder- of anarchy, of things out of place” (Cresswell 1996, p.42). In this sense it gives the migrant multi-national counterculture a visual language through which their transgression and deviance from mainstream society can be expressed, transmitted and understood. For those in the counterculture who live in customised vehicles, embellishing their exteriors with graffiti establishes them as out of place and apart from the hegemonic from multiple perspectives. It provides a form of personal marking, like tattooing, which can be interpreted as both an insider and outsider. Graffiti on the sides of vehicles could be seen as defacement rather than embellishment, as to those outside the counterculture it violates appropriate behaviour within spaces and places where people generally act in the expected and accepted ways set out by the governing powers. Except in cases of authorised applications on private property, in private galleries or skate board parks for example, graffiti is always out of place as it transgresses the norms of conventional society in being an illegal defacement of public or private property. (Cresswell 1996. pp. 31-61). It is the transgression of what Cresswell terms “symbolic boundaries” (ibid 1996, p.39) created by the hegemonic that defines graffiti as out of place. To the authorities, Graffiti in these instances adds to the already subversive act of a mobile neo-nomadic transnational lifestyle even though they are defacing their own property; living in adapted vans and trucks contravenes the more conventional notion of what constitutes an appropriate home and this is exacerbated by the addition of graffiti to the vehicles exterior surfaces. To insiders, (i.e. those within the counterculture), painting graffiti on their vehicles is a representation of freedom, difference, individuality, self-expression, otherness and defiance which is used both to identify with other people within these neo-nomadic communities and elsewhere and also to signal their outsider identities to the rest of society. Graffiti is a powerful medium which affects place and space and which directly expresses difference. The meaning of these places has been changed (albeit impermanently) by its

appearance in the landscape. As Cresswell points out “The meaning of place, then, is (in part) created through a discourse that sets up a process of differentiation (between us and them)” (ibid 1996, p.60).

Taken out of context of the urban environment, where the majority of spray paint and marker pen graffiti has been made since its beginnings in New York in the early 1970’s²³ and transposing it into a rural setting makes for an even more conspicuous and conflicting presence in the landscape. In photographs *Anonymous (xi). Andalusia, Spain, 2012* and *Anonymous (xxv), Andalusia, Spain, 2012*, (figures 5.11, 5.12), we see two studies of graffiti painted onto the outside of mobile living spaces.

The letters ‘THC’ are clearly visible on both vans. Given its application and context here I assume ‘THC’ is a reference to and abbreviation of the psycho-active ingredient Tetrahydrocannabinol²⁴ found in the cannabis plant. Adjacent to the letters on the van in figure 5.11 there are paintings of what appear to be magic mushrooms.²⁵ The combination of two graphic references to hallucinogenic drugs, while not necessarily advocating their use, sends out a provocation to those who recognise the content of the images, asking the viewer of this graffiti to question his or her attitude to the use of psycho-active drugs. In this act of defiance, by displaying these images in a highly visible mobile place their creators directly challenge authority and notions of acceptable behaviour by their intervention in the landscape. The owners of these vans make a political provocation which affects the place in which they rest and could be seen to reflect an aspect of their countercultural identities. Urban graffiti has become commonplace in western cities such as New York, London, Paris, Berlin, and so on, and commodified by the art world, (the work of American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat (Mayer 2010)

²³ Cresswell cites the graffiti of a Greek immigrant in New York named TAKI 183 in the early months of 1971 as the inception of this style of graffiti in his book ‘In Place/Out of Place’ (Cresswell 1996, p.33)

²⁴ Pharmacology and effects of cannabis: a brief review. C. Heather Ashton. The British Journal of Psychiatry Feb 2001, 178 (2) 101-106; DOI: 10.1192/bjp.178.2.101

²⁵ ‘Magic’ is the common term used to describe the Liberty cap family of mushrooms which contain the psycho-active drug psilocybin. These wild mushrooms are known to have hallucinogenic properties. See: Pollock (1976). *Liberty caps: recreational hallucinogenic mushrooms*. In: Drug and Alcohol Dependencies. 1976. Oct;1(6):445-7. Lausanne: Elsevier Sequoia S.A. [Internet]. Available at:< [https://doi.org/10.1016/0376-8716\(76\)90010-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0376-8716(76)90010-7) >. Accessed: 07 February 2019



Figure 5.11. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (xi)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



Figure 5.12. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (xxv)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012

would be a good example), sold in galleries, and even commissioned by local authorities to decorate public spaces. Outside of those contexts, here in a rural environment, it commands a different response however. Against the backdrop of a national park which has been designated as an area of natural beauty²⁶, the graffiti covered mobile dwellings seen in figures 5.11 and 5.12 highlight the presence of people who contradict conventional modes of living and affect the landscape in different ways.

In *Anonymous (xxv), Andalucia, Spain, 2012* (figure 5.12) the statement 'Kop Killer' has been sprayed across the top side panel of the van as well as the letters 'THC'. On a diagonal running across the same side panel the word 'information' is clearly visible. Over the rear doors a painting depicting a sexual act of bestiality is visible. Each element of the graffiti a confrontational statement to authority; Is the word 'information' in this context inviting people to come and be informed about hallucinogenic drugs? Perhaps it is a subversion of an authoritarian sign ridiculing the kind of information centres often seen at the entrance to public parks. However perceived, it challenges conventional society. If the side of the blue transit van is imagined as an internal wall of a domestic interior space, as possibly intended, then the space in the foreground of the photograph could be read as a further subversion of ordinary domestic life. A couple of broken armchairs, a fold out table, some damaged wooden and metal chairs and a jacket hanging from the branch of a tree set a scene which parodies the domestic spaces of mainstream society. As evidenced through the photographs, what was before the arrival of the counterculture, a car park at the entrance to a national park, has now been reconstructed by the counterculture into a place which is inhabited by and represents a type of anti-establishment identity; one that is unconcerned with an integrated relationship with the rural environment, but rather is set against it.

Where graffiti is now a familiar sight and has become integrated into the urban landscape, as is the case on the trains in New York, London, Paris for example, here it is juxtaposed with a state

²⁶ The countercultural site on which these vehicles are situated are located within an area of Andalucia which is designated by the Spanish authorities as a national park. To protect the identities of those whose dwellings and environments I have photographed, and to respect their privacy, I am unable to state the exact geographic locations of these encampments for ethical reasons.

maintained forested mountainous environment. A tension is created between the graffitied vehicles and their rural situation which is possibly more pronounced here than in an urban setting. What is witnessed with these types of living spaces is a counterculture which seems to amalgamate ideological elements from different strands of subversive twentieth century and twenty first century youth culture, centred around visual displays of defiance and disaffection.²⁷

5:9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to draw out differences and distinctions between countercultural identities through detailed analysis of habitations and their relationships with environment. Developing a particular understanding of these identities has been achieved through considering my photographs through building on theory concerned with place and space. The chapter further demonstrates the way in which photography in combination with text can progress knowledge about relations between place, space and people and do what Relph says when stating “In this respect the photographs do not simply illustrate the text, but hopefully amplify and qualify it by indicating some of the inevitable complexities in the manifestations of the attitudes of place-making” (Relph 2008, p.67). The chapter argued that the physical geography of a site is as important as the type of dwelling in the construction of countercultural place. We have seen that site ‘A’ is dominated by a culture of ex-patriate British new travellers, living in customised vehicles, whose adoption of a predominantly infertile exposed strip of land along the banks of a riverbed combines to create a distinct sense of place. Site ‘B’ has been distinguished as a settlement of multi-national individuals who live in different types of makeshift dwellings. The chapter has explored differences in the ideologies of subgroups within this settlement and how their views, actions and type of dwelling determine their position on the site. The chapter argued

²⁷These vehicles are apart from other habitations geographically within the boundaries of the site and also express a different ideology to those dwellings discussed earlier in the chapter. In the foreground of figure 5.11 we see a discarded bottle of beer. Although drug use is accepted throughout the encampment, alcohol is prohibited within the upper sections of the site. People who want to drink alcohol are not welcomed, except on the lower part of the site. The graffitied vehicles were photographed at the lower end of the site, in an area known as the car park, where alcohol is used and accepted (see Francesca’s map. figure 5.6). A distinction in the types of drugs being used in particular areas helps to define differences in countercultural values. Despite the graffiti on the side of the vehicle in figure 5.11 visualising hallucinogenic mushrooms, the evidence of alcoholic consumption within this habitation combines to indicate identities which paradoxically do not conform to the unwritten rules of those on the upper part of the site.

that on the two sites discussed, there are discernable differences in types of identity, recognisable through dwelling and habitat; in the materials used, physical appearances, layout of habitats and location, which in turn indicate different types of countercultural place-making practices and ideologies.

Through the use of theories concerning place and space, the chapter has explored how encampments are seen differently by those inside and outside the counterculture. Differences in belief systems within the counterculture, have been drawn out directly through consideration of specific photographs. Significances of countercultural place have been shown to develop over time through place-making, interactions and activity with temporal dwelling and habitat. The ongoing process of constructing dwellings and the engagement of people within a landscape, creates meaningful places to the counterculture, affects an atmosphere and is affected by the physical geography of each site. Central to this argument is the way in which these photographs enable and have been interpreted through a phenomenological reading of place and space.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Six **Cultural Geographies of the Countercultural Home. Exploring Identity through** **Makeshift Dwellings**

6:1 Introduction

My purpose now is to concentrate on the materiality of countercultural homes as representations of identities which aim to reject the constraints of mainstream society. Blunt & Dowling (2006), Cresswell (2014), Marschall (2019), Miller (2007), Olsen (2013), Savas (2010), Walsh (2006), among others have discussed how identity can be signified through home and its contents. Writing on the materialism of domestic space has been drawn on to help decipher how objects, interior and exterior layout of home, and types of dwelling represented in the photographs can indicate and be significant to cultural identity; foregrounding the argument that countercultural identity within the groups of my research is partly contained in the materiality of objects; the trucks, coaches, tents, mud huts, tepees, yurts, benders and so on in which they live and travel, and the things that these spaces contain. Marschall has noted that through the process of being transported to another place, objects can acquire multiple significances as what she terms 'Memory objects'. "Memory objects are special objects or personal belongings that elicit deliberate or involuntary memories of homeland, home culture, important places, episodes in one's own autobiographical past and significant social relations (kin, friends, colleagues) associated with home or origin" (Marschall 2019 p.2). In this chapter we will see that objects such as a 1970s coach can hold memories of specific events and have associations with a particular countercultural group for the owners. The photographs discussed do not represent a comprehensive overview of all types of countercultural homes on these settlements, however, the chapter concentrates on photographs of dwellings which were particularly striking in their appearance and in what they revealed about their inhabitants. In a broader sense, this chapter is

also concerned with what constitutes home for those inside and outside the counterculture. To Cresswell “Home denotes the attachment of humans to the earth. It is a word that encompasses people, things, and the relationships between them. [...] Making a home involves making a space out of the wilderness and marking it as different. It divides the human world from the natural world” (Cresswell 2017, in: Murphy 2017). Equally for Douglas:

Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space. It does not need bricks and mortar, it can be a wagon, a caravan, a boat, or a tent. It need not be a large space, but space there must be, for home starts by bringing some space under control. Having shelter is not having a home, nor is having a house, nor is home the same as household (Douglas 1999, pp.287-307).

To Cresswell and Douglas, home, in whatever context and form, is central to being in the world and defining the self. Whatever type of makeshift or temporal or mobile home the counterculture create and inhabit, the home itself is central to their identity. Home, whether countercultural or more conventional can arguably be understood according to Fox “[...] as physical structure, offering material shelter; [...] as a means of identity and self-identity, as a reflection of ones values, ideas, and status; and home as a social and cultural unit, the locus of relationships especially those of family[.]” (Fox 2002 in: Waghorn 2009, p.267). I set out to demonstrate that this is the case within these sites. As with other nomadic and or migrant cultures it will be argued that these dwelling spaces and the possessions the counterculture surround themselves with, are equally as important to their identity as the landscape and the geographical setting in which they chose to live. Regardless of where they are parked up or have set down, the sense of an outsider identity is reinforced and enacted through the ramshackle aesthetics and materiality of their makeshift homes. Home for some of these people as a physical and metaphorical space can be transported and is the one element of their lives that remains consistent. This chapter intends to demonstrate that identity within these groups is as much bound up in their self-made transient moveable environments as it is in their gathering on a loosely bound site. This chapter

begins by exploring the temporal homes of a British counterculture, which is strongly evident on site 'A', and shows how their cultural references are embedded in the vehicles and materiality that surround them. The chapter will then discuss different types of countercultural dwellings present on site 'B', and argue that other countercultural concerns are recognisable through the kinds of self-made homes they inhabit. The chapter will also suggest that there is some homogenisation of group identities, which is detectable through their use of certain vehicles. Unlike the fixed homes of the majority of Westerners, one way in which these individuals are set apart from mainstream society is through the creation of distinctive makeshift homes which can be made or remade, set up, destroyed, or moved quickly and independently.¹ Whatever the type of makeshift or temporal or mobile home the counterculture express their identities through, this chapter will confirm the home itself as central to their identity and key to the understanding of and expression of their core beliefs.

Taking a number of representational photographs of dwellings and their immediate environments from the main sites of study, focussing particularly but not exclusively on interior spaces this chapter will address the significance of the makeshift temporal home and materiality in the construction of contemporary international migrant countercultural identity. Through looking at different types of dwelling, and the study of objects thereabouts I will go some way towards defining material indicators of different migrant countercultural living spaces and how the organisation of makeshift domestic space can express the identities of those who attempt to exist as migrants outside of the mainstream society. Through close examination of the materiality of self-made, often mobile homes, I will consider home as a place where an individuals' identity is encased. Furthermore I will uncover how objects, in the context of being taken away from their original place of origin can represent an attachment to homeland, and a specific culture, and have special meanings associated with certain historic events, and hold personal significances for their owners that go beyond their intended functions. (Savas 2010,

¹ There are similarities between this lifestyle and that of European Gypsy and Romany culture, which I acknowledge and reference in the photographic work of Koudelka (1975) during the 1960s, however it is not within the scope of this research to make further comparison.

Walsh 2006). Differences in types of counterculture will be discussed through the interpretation of objects within the selected images. Countercultural homes will be seen as significant spaces in which a sense of self and group belonging can be built, rebuilt, reaffirmed, maintained and expressed.

6:2 British Countercultural Home-making and the Meaning of Things

The photograph ‘*Jess and Robe (i). Andalusia, Spain, 2006*’ (figure 6.1), depicts a domestic scene within a caravan awning commonly found on holiday camp sites across Europe. However in this instance this convention has been reimagined and subverted by its occupants, challenging the norms of how these spaces are more usually organised. This liminal space, as with a standard caravan awning, serves as a punctuation and delimitation between the inside closed world of the caravan and the more exposed outside world. Acting in a similar way to the porch of a house,

*It lets casual encounters remain casual and the private stay private...Between house and surroundings, the porch opens a place for the occupant to belong to both nature and community. Because it is a site **emphasizing the between and enabling gathering and lingering to occur**, [emphasis in original], the porch becomes a place of events and experiences. (Seamon 2009, pp.110-119).*

However, the analogy of the porch only goes part way to describing what we see here. This space differs from convention in a number of ways; it is self-made and its contents are a messy mixture of artefact and practical mass produced objects, which in their presentation and arrangement give indications of an unconventional identity. To the left of the image we see the exterior of a white caravan. There is a step down to ground level made from a wooden pallet which leads to the makeshift awning. Sheets of bamboo create external walls and a roof which are covered in the leaves and branches of overgrown plants. Some of the branches have grown through the walls suggesting that this structure has been there for a considerable number of months. There is a cooling fan attached to the roof of the structure. A plastic tarpaulin and coir



Figure 6.1. Ben Murphy. *Jess and Robe (i)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006

matting have been deployed as flooring. An open black holdall bag has been left on the floor with jeans and other items of clothing inside. To the left of a green sofa on which is a damaged sun hat, is a mundane factory made wooden shelving unit in front of which is a car battery, a cardboard packaging box and a plastic box from Kwik-Save supermarket, full of domestic objects. Decorative and practical objects fill the unit; a gas cartridge lamp, a box of wires, Spanish newspapers, a roll of toilet paper, a children's toy truck. Some of these things appear to have been placed with thought and others less so.

Massey writes that “the *“presentness”* of the horizontality of space is a product of a multitude of histories whose resonances are still there, if we would but see them, and which sometimes catch us with full force unawares” (Massey 2005, p.118). Within the practice of photography, and specifically photography which consciously omits people from their interiors, objects become more noticeable and can be seen to convey a sense of those who have placed, used, been around, or made them, as is the case with some of William Eggleston's saturated colour people-less photographs (2002), Peter Fraser's studies of overlooked objects (2006), Nigel Shafran's series *‘Compost pictures’* (2008-9), or indeed the authors own photographs of the interior spaces of the United Nations building in New York (2005), to give some examples. This emphasis is highlighted also by Rebecca Empson in relation to the interior spaces of Mongolian yurts, who suggests “[...] that things, placed on top of and inside the household chest, together act as a site that absorbs aspects of people's relations and draws attention to the relations in the absence of people” (Empson 2007, p.114). The things in this space are in themselves unremarkable day to day objects found in most western households. However, what is most remarkable is at the centre of the image. A television set with its original innards removed has been used as the setting for a quasi-religious tableau, depicting, instead of a religious scene at its centre, two bull terrier dogs copulating. Net curtains have been made to further frame the scene, giving a theatrical context. To the rear of the stage inside the television is an audience of onlookers, including cut-outs of the 1960s band the Monkees, a character from the American TV puppet show *‘Thunderbirds’*, watched by most American and British children growing up in the 1960s, and John Noakes and Peter Purvis who

presented the children's BBC TV show 'Blue Peter' in the early 1970s, looking out smiling to their audience. These popular cultural references suggest that the creator of this tableau is familiar with British and American television programmes from this period, however the appropriation of the television here with its irreverent re-interpretations of spiritual iconography and its deliberate prominence in the space effectively parody a conventional western hemisphere version of conventional family life and domesticity. This piece of art is by the British collage artist Tracey Pica-Pica, who makes assemblages using recycled toys, dolls, found objects. To Pica-Pica "Recycling is part of my lifestyle which has evolved from my life squatting and travelling".² The placement of such an art object within this context highlights the possibility that this is a deliberate and considered act by the occupiers of using an object, (in this case an artist's work), to make a subversive, anti-establishment statement about rejecting conventions. My understanding is that while some of the objects within the awnings interior have practical applications, such as the toilet roll and the gas lamp, others have been placed or put together to affect an atmosphere. Objects have meaning because of their inter-relationships with other objects and their histories with the people who created them, used them, and positioned them. They are not meaningless inanimate material things but are things that can be read phenomenologically. Walsh draws attention to the personal significances of a mundane old plastic bowl originally given to someone as a gift from their mother stating "Despite being a mass produced commodity, the bowl now has a presence. It has become an heirloom, bearing memories of her mother" (Walsh 2006, p134). Although unused and hidden in a drawer, to the migrant participant in Walsh's research, the bowl links her to her home in England, her family and gives her a sense of self while living as an ex-patriate. Heidegger argued that it is the "thingness" (ibid 2002, p.266) of an object that gives it meaning beyond what it actually physically is. So to Walsh's participant the bowl has emotional significance as the result of its historic intimate connections to her family and home. This gives it a sense of what Heidegger terms "perceivedness" (ibid 2002, p.267). This interior then, gives us an indication that the people who created and live in this space challenge socially accepted codes of behaviour and

² Tracey Pica-Pica is one half of the artist partnership 'Pica-Pica'. See: [Internet]. Available from: <<http://traceypicapica.wixsite.com/picapica>> and <picapicastuff.blogspot.co.uk> Accessed: 08. February 2019

transgress social norms in the various objects they possess, their meanings, and the way in which they chose to organise them within the space; They do not live in a permanent dwelling, they have made their own caravan awning out of bamboo and canvas, have a disregard for order and tidiness and use subversive art which parodies mainstream culture to decorate the space. Within the context of this self-made caravan awning, in a similar way to the scene depicted in *Crusty Mark, Andalusia, Spain, 2006* (figure 5.2), what could be a conventional family camping scene is changed by the counterculture into a visual and material expression of the rejection of mainstream British society and culture, and an expression of identity. Hebdige states:

*By repositioning and recontextualizing commodities, by subverting their conventional uses and inventing new ones, the subcultural stylist gives the lie to what Althusser has called the 'false obviousness of everyday practice' (Althusser and Balibar, 1968), and opens up the world of objects to new and covertly oppositional readings. The communication of a significant **difference**, [emphasis in original], then (and the parallel communication of a group identity), is the 'point' behind the style of all spectacular subcultures (Hebdige 1988, p.102).*

Echoing this statement, what is clear in some of these images, is how through the appropriation of particular types of vehicles, their placement in unorthodox environments, combined with the placement of everyday objects in and around these habitations, becomes symbolic of countercultural identities who aim to defy social conventions. All the photographs in this research deliberately omit the owners of the dwelling. In this way, as I have already argued, objects and affected space can be considered as reflections of identity. Baudrillard has recognised how objects point to identity through their interactions with humans, saying:

Human beings and objects are indeed bound together in a collusion in which the objects take on a certain density, an emotional value- what might be called a 'presence'. What gives the houses of our childhood such depth and resonance in memory is clearly this complex structure

of interiority, and the objects within it serve for us as boundary markers of the symbolic configuration known as home (Baudrillard 2005, p.14).

Baudrillard makes the argument that we invest emotional meaning into inanimate objects, which can be read phenomenologically. This he claims is particularly evident in our recollections of childhood. Perhaps then, applying this theory here, we see how childhood memory has impacted on both the artist Pica-Pica and the creators of this room, in that they use representations of British and American popular TV culture from the 1960 and 1970s, to act as familiar and recognisable symbols which can also have currency to others who come from the same cultural background. Walsh observes that watching DVD's of old British TV shows while living abroad as a British migrant "[...] contributes to the maintenance of a connection with a particular subsection of British culture and a particular sub-national sense of home" (Walsh 2006, p.136). Taking these television characters into a new context here, in their use within the art piece, and its subsequent placement in this location, this shared memory becomes the agency through which similar countercultural identities could bond. This space effectively becomes a place where historic cultural references reinforce their countercultural roots. As Bjornar Olsen has stated "Things are not just traces and residues of absent presents; they are effectively engaged in assembling and hybridizing periods and epochs. As durable matter, things make the past present and tangible; [...]" (Olsen 2013, p.108). The nature of the identities here as pointed to by the objects in the photograph and conversations in the field, are I assert, that of British post-punk new travellers; the organisation of space suggesting a cynical rejection of social norms, consistent with the attitudes of other new travellers in the 1990s, as described by Dearling (2012), Hetherington (2000), and photographed by Petersen, V. (2000) and Fawcett (2012). Even when removed from their country of origin, living in a foreign land, these people, like others in these sites, carry with them a set of cultural references brought from their homeland which is in this case peculiarly British and in part defines who they are. To explore British countercultural identity here further, other dwellings that have similar qualities need to be considered.

6:3 British Migrant Countercultural Dwellings and Transgression through Mobility

Photographs ‘*Alpha and Imani (i), Andalucia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 6.2) and ‘*Alpha and Imani (ii), Andalucia, Spain, 2006*’ (figure 6.3) depict the interior and exterior of a British coach manufactured in the late 1960s which at the time of making the photographs rested a short distance away from the dwelling seen in photograph ‘*Jess and Robe (i), Andalucia, Spain, 2006*’, (figure 6.1) along an unmade track on site ‘A’. The vehicle is similar to ones used by the counterculture in the British free festival movement of the late 1960’s, 1970’s, 1980’s and 1990’s.³ Through their continued use and associations with the British new traveller movement these types of vehicles have become synonymous with a particular rejectionist anti-establishment identity. As transportable homes these coaches form a central part of countercultural lifestyles and are embedded with significances in the collective memories of the British counterculture because these were the vehicles that the counterculture used when they travelled around the UK in previous decades. (Dearling 2012). To the contemporary British traveller at least these customised coaches should be immediately identifiable as countercultural living spaces, loaded with histories and associations. These coaches, built between the 1960s and 1980s (as can be seen in my photographs and those of traveller photographers Fawcett (2012), Hunter (2013) and Petersen (2000), among others, in their state of continual re-modelling, not only symbolise a current type of migrant neo-nomadic countercultural identity through their history of association with hippies and punks but now represent a move toward the homogenisation of countercultural identities; having been first appropriated by the hippies of the USA and then the UK in the 1960s and 1970s⁴ and converted into mobile living spaces, they have then been used by a succession of European movements including hippies, punks, ravers, new travellers and environmental protestors up to the present day.

³ For examples of the use of these types of vehicles during British free festivals in the early 1970s see Dearling (2012), Hetherington (2000). For examples of their continued use through the 1980s and 1990s see Hunter (2013), Petersen (2000), Fawcett (2012), Wylie, D. (1998), Smith 2017).

⁴ Arguably it was the American author Ken Kesey’s actions that became the catalyst for the 1960s hippy movement and the inspiration for new generations of counterculture. In 1964 he and a group of friends calling themselves ‘the Merry Pranksters’, including Jack Kerouak’s friend and inspiration for his novel ‘*On the Road*’ (1957), Neal Cassady, customised a school bus and painted it with bright psychedelic patterns, naming it the magic bus, before travelling from California to New York and filming their amphetamine and LSD drug fuelled trip across the USA. See the documentary film *Magic Trip: Ken Kesey’s search for a Kool place*. (Ellwood & Gibney 2011).



Figure 6.2. Ben Murphy. *'Alpha and Imani (i)'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



Figure 6.3. Ben Murphy. *'Alpha and Imani (ii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2000

In his remarkable and well known essay *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* Walter Benjamin (1931/1968; emphasis on later edition) asserts that “The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced” (Benjamin 1968, p.221).

To Benjamin, as to Heidegger (2010), one’s understanding of an object is changed by reflection on or knowledge of that object’s journey and its situation. To consider figure 6.2 through these theories for example, a way of thinking about the significances of the space and contents contained in it is opened up. Although many of the objects housed in this interior could be found in a large number of young children’s rooms throughout Europe, one way in which this interior departs from the ordinary is because it is a constructed living space within the shell of a customised coach. As I have demonstrated, this coach has symbolic status gained through its history and association with countercultural events. Therefore it exposes and expresses the countercultural identity of the people who altered it and re-appropriated it. Encapsulated in this coach a specific British new traveller way of life can be read from this environment. As Hurdley has stated “Biographies of things are important in the construction of individual and family autobiographies” (Hurdley 2006, p.719). A transportable home has been created where the space and objects resonate with their interconnected histories with the counterculture; interpreted through the image, the coach and its contents can be seen to have deep cultural significances to its owners through their history of interactions with and within this space. To Blunt & Dowling “Home as a place and an imaginary constitute identities- people’s sense of themselves are related to and produced through lived and imaginative experiences of home” (Blunt & Dowling 2006, p.24). Figure 6.2 and other photographs from this survey when combined with an understanding of the histories of objects depicted in these images, begin to reveal how certain things represent a countercultural identity. To Heidegger, the impact of being made, handled, used, moved, cared for and placed gives an object a history and imbues it with meaning. (Heidegger 2010, pp.266-267). It follows that when the experience of being in a place is transmitted photographically, then the resonances of histories held within that space are perceivable. The combination of objects and their inter-relationships, the space in which they are contained, the human activity

that has gone on in that space, and the way in which these spaces have been photographed with intent, give an understanding of countercultural identity through space and place that has previously been overlooked. In photographs, if alert, we can sense what Luigi Ghirri (2015) calls their “intrinsic magic” (Ghirri 2015, p.111). To Ghirri photography has the ability to open up a way of seeing things as they are without gimmickry, saying “This is no violence, or a visual-emotional shock, or a stretch, but silence, lightness, the rigour that enables you to enter into a relationship with things, objects and places” (ibid 2015, p.111). When considering figure 6.2, the dress hanging on one side of the truck appears to be like those used in Andalusian flamenco dancing. It has a past which is sensed through its presence in the image. As well as having Spanish cultural significance being the dress of traditional Spanish Flamenco dancers, someone has made it and someone else has bought it, danced in it and hung it up. Because it is in a visible place, the dress assumes a prominent position that demands our attention. It may suggest that the occupants of this space are Spanish and yet if we look around we can see evidence of another nationality: English language children’s books, a ‘teletubby’ doll,⁵ and a British number plate from 1967 is fixed to the back wall which is consistent with the vehicles age. The coach has therefore travelled from the UK to this riverbed in Andalusia to rest and be re-appropriated from its intended purpose to mobile unconventional home and children’s room. It can be seen then as a representation of where the occupants come from geographically, culturally and ideologically. The dress, in this context as an out of place British object represents both a souvenir bought for a British girl to display in her room and also possibly a sign of acceptance and integration with the indigenous population; Multiple narratives can be read from the interior depicted. Blunt & Dowling have stated:

[...] ideas of home are relational across space and time, are often shaped by memories of past homes, and bring together both material and imaginative geographies of residence and belonging, departure and return. Transnational homes are thus shaped by ideas and experiences

⁵ Teletubbies is a British children’s Television programme on BBC TV aired from 1997. See [Internet] <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/shows/teletubbies>> Accessed 12.02.2019

of location and dislocation, place and displacement, as people migrate for a variety of reasons and feel both at home and not at home in a wide range of circumstances. (2006, p.198). [...] In many ways, transnational homes are sites of memory and can be understood as performative spaces within which both personal and inherited connections to other remembered or imagined homes are embodied, enacted and reworked (ibid 2006, p.212).

In figures 6.2 and 6.3 among others in the series, we see an example of what may be termed a ‘transnational home’. (Blunt & Dowling 2006, Walsh 2006). This living space is not merely that, because it is complicated further by its inhabitants rejection of conventions both in terms of home, their homeland and their sense of national and cultural belonging. Other factors need consideration to evaluate what kind of home this is and whose identity it represents. Further indicators point to a British new traveller identity; A homemade wood-burning stove is standard fitting to most traveller vehicles and demonstrates it is a lived in domestic space. A section of a print of what appears to be an 18th century landscape painting is visible to the left of the image. Walsh argues:

[...] expatriate homemaking involves the connection of past, present, and future homes through domestic practices. Indeed, the souveniring, display, and remembering practices [...] are a widespread feature of expatriate life, and modern life more generally, and suggest the multiplicity and fluidity of “home.” Belonging is challenged by mobility, so belongings are often carried with expatriates in anticipation of a desire for mnemonics in a situation of disorientation. A landscape painting of a national homeland represents a domestic memory and indicates the powerful, yet messy, geographies of connection with place (Walsh 2006, p138).

Echoing this observation, we see here in the contents of this coach as dwelling, evidence of a need to be surrounded by reminders of national and cultural identity, while living abroad. In this situation these things could act to give a sense of identity, security and stability in a mobile home which is by definition unfixed. A British identity begins to emerge, raising questions about what

is being rejected here and what has been brought along as cultural baggage. Marschall has said that:

Mobile individuals far away from home may [hence] start cultivating a special relationship with some of their belongings, notably gifts that carry strong references to home and links with loved ones. [...]. Even individuals who profess not to have a sentimental relationship to material objects may discover how the possession, contemplation and especially physical handling of certain items precipitate happy memories, produce a warm sense of belonging, or a soothing feeling of comfort and well-being (Marschall 2019).

Paradoxically despite escaping from and rejecting the culture of their homeland there are things here that suggest some objects are also important to a sense of belonging; eg. the British made coach, the teletubby toy, the English number plate, the English language childrens' books. In the stillness and detail of the photograph we can consider and understand that these are not just inanimate objects but things that resonate with histories and significance which in turn lead to constructing a picture of an identity.

The importance of the coach within recent countercultural history can be further understood through a brief analysis of a similar coach (albeit an American equivalent) made notorious by Jamie Reid, graphic designer for the punk band 'Sex Pistols'. Reid employed an iconic design showing a single bus in mirrored symmetry (figure 6.4). He replaced the true geographical place destination with the words 'Nowhere' and 'Boredom' and used this for the promotional material for the single 'Pretty Vacant' in 1977.⁶ Subverting the positive connotations of the coach as a

⁶Jamie Reid's authorship of the 'Nowhere Buses' design, who claims to have designed it in 1972 for the Suburban Anarchist Press, has been challenged by two American designers working for a USA based magazine called 'Point-Blank' in the early 1970s. According to the website blog of British writer Paul Gorman 2018, (see bibliography), David Jacobs claims it was he and Francis Rubinstein who made the design using the bus with the word 'Nowhere' stated as its destination for the cover of a Point Blank pamphlet titled 'Space Travel' published in San Francisco in 1973. There is also a possible ironic reference to Ken Kesey's hand painted hippy bus of 1964 referenced earlier, in that the destination names on this bus read 'Further'. (Ellwood & Gibney 2011).



Figure 6.4. Jamie Reid. 'Sex Pistols, Pretty Vacant', Artwork, 1977

means of potential travel to a holiday destination or a vehicle for transporting people purposefully from one place to another, there is a tension in the positioning of coaches in Reid's poster as they confront the viewer in their harsh high contrast inverted black and white negative representation. At this precise point in the timeline of British 20th century countercultural movements, I argue that partly as a result of Reid's poster the coach became synonymous with both British Punk and Hippy culture. The hippies had been using these vehicles more discreetly for over a decade; perhaps not in an aggressively provocative way, but in a more humorous way as an expression of a countercultural movement. However with Reid's intervention, they were given a heightened status in countercultural identity which challenged authority and convention more defiantly and directly. This image was subconsciously ingrained onto the communal memory of the subversive youth cultures of the late 1970s and carried on into subsequent decades as a symbol of discontent, rejection and possible escape. Now after successive generations have defined themselves in part through these customised vehicles we find that they continue to be re-appropriated and adapted to serve the purpose of projecting a current countercultural identity.

Pete the Painter, Andalucia, Spain, 2006 (figure 6.5) depicts another vehicle parked a short distance away from the coach shown in figures 6.2 and 6.3 and the caravan awning interior seen in figure 6.1. Partially concealed by tall bamboo plants it appears to have been driven through the bamboo with disregard to sit randomly within the vegetation. In the foreground the earth has been carefully dug over and there are lines of potato plants showing through. A solar panel lies on the soil to the bottom right of the image. A camping chair is in the process of being recovered in purple fabric. Plastic buckets, a plant pot, a seat cushion, cut lengths of bamboo and other objects are scattered around the habitation. A well trodden path has taken shape leading around the rear of the lorry. The earth has been dug to plant vegetables. There is a sense of a commitment to establishing a home. Although the truck is of French manufacture, as can be seen from the makers badge on the front of the drivers cabin, the lorry is a right hand drive horse transporter which has been adapted for use as a dwelling space. Horseboxes are a popular choice of vehicle



Figure 6.5. Ben Murphy. *'Pete the Painter'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006

for the British on this site as can be seen in other photographs from the research material; having an ideal pre-existing basic structure from which to convert into a more permanent transportable home. Often designed with a raised sleeping area they also have enough space for a wood-burning stove and makeshift kitchen. In this way they can be made into practical and importantly moveable dwellings. An English registration plate is precariously attached to the front panel of the cabin. A further sign of the national identity of the occupant is that on close inspection it is possible to see a jar of the British savoury food spread 'Marmite' placed on a makeshift table made out of a wooden industrial cable spool to the rear of the lorry. One door has a British suburban style leaded glass window. The image begins to suggest certain aesthetic and cultural values of someone from the UK. From casual conversation in the field it was established that the inhabitant was an artist from the UK. Again, as with the other images discussed in this chapter, a picture of a specifically British identity becomes recognisable. It is not however the individual objects here which point to a countercultural belief system, as although many are of British origin, they are in themselves unremarkable. It is more their setting around a converted horsebox and that vehicles situation within the landscape that construct the British countercultural identity of its inhabitant.

6:4 Mobility as Freedom

Jean Baudrillard talks of the car as an object which through the action of movement gives the owner a sense of freedom from the constraints of the everyday and a release from societal responsibility, in saying "This 'Dynamic euphoria' serves as the antithesis to the static joys of family life and immovable property, and opens a parenthesis in social reality" (Baudrillard 2005, pp.70-72). While this view has become more of a romantic idea since his writing it, given the reality of driving on our congested roads in the cities of the world, Baudrillard's argument still has some relevance here. To the migrant neo-nomadic counterculture, despite sometimes appearing to be unroadworthy and immovable, there is the sense that their vehicles embody Baudrillard's argument. They enable them to live and move around outside of mainstream society because they can be moved from place to place unlike houses made of brick or stone. In

their mobility they exist outside the mainstream; liminal, disconnected and other. The trucks, vans, coaches and so on, often more than thirty years old (at the time of making the work), as is the case with the coach in figure 6.3, are not only transportable homes that allow their occupants to think they exist outside of the boundaries of conventional society but are also the material manifestations of a countercultural belief system that identifies them with particular types of contemporary western counterculture.

Miller, in describing a West Indian obsession with car interior furnishing and decoration in Trinidad has recognised how here vehicles are not only a means of transport but represent a person's individuality and are vessels which carry values of home and family. (Miller 2005, p.104). According to Miller, in Trinidad a car is "[...] that heavily upholstered living room on wheels [...]" (ibid pp.102-105). Miller in a similar argument to that of Baudrillard (2005) points to the contradiction inherent in this use of cars; in their customised states they become two things; an important domestic interior representing a personal value system and attachment to home and family, and a means of escape from home and domesticity to the outside world through mobility (ibid 2005, p.104). This paradox is encapsulated and recognisable in figure 6.2. *Alpha and Imani (i). Andalucia, Spain, 2006.*

As we have seen, vehicles are imbedded in the countercultures cultural practices and I argue, in the case of the British travellers here represent; an integral part of their personal and group histories, a living space, a means of mobility, a statement of defiance, independence, an expression of self, and of being other. Cars, vans, coaches, horseboxes, lorries, and other variations on wheels are important preoccupations in the day to day lives of a significant number of people within these encampments who attempt to extricate themselves from the outside world, however they are not the exclusive domain of British migrant counterculture. Young, discussing car use among Aboriginals in southern Australia states that "Among many reasons for cars being so desirable is their quality of being a convenient mobile camp and ready-made architectural element" (Young 2001, in: Miller 2001, p.40). This is similarly true for the international countercultures here in Spain, where for some, vehicles are seen as useful mobile or immobile

domestic spaces. The car can embody a person's individuality, personal space and sense of emancipation through customisation and potential for mobility (Miller 2005). When vehicles are converted into living spaces by the counterculture, then these potentials are extended to encompass more than just the temporal experiences of travelling in a car, into a potent and immersive experience of a home that through its mobility exists outside of conventional domestic territories. This view resonates with Douglas's view of home as a "'kind of space' or 'localizable idea'. [...] Home is located in space, but it is not necessarily a fixed space. . .home starts by bringing some space under control. It cannot be simply equated with shelter, house or household" (Douglas 1991 in: Mallett 2004, p.79). In this way the customised vehicle-come-home represents and encapsulates much of that person's ideology to become what Dovey calls "a centre of security, of possessed territory, a place of freedom where our own order can become manifest, secure from the impositions of others" (Dovey 1985 in: Altman & Werner eds. pp.33-64. In: Waghorn 2009, p.43). In the pioneering 1970s intentional community Drop City, in Colorado, USA, cars and truck panels were creatively recycled to form the outer walls of their Buckminster Fuller inspired geodesic dome shaped dwellings (see figure 6.6). To Magagnoli:

Within the American counterculture, the geodesic dome epitomised the utopian project of creating sustainable modes of living through the use of technology. To build these makeshift dwellings, the members of communes such as Drop City, Colorado, deployed and recycled a variety of discarded industrial materials: studs, tarpaper, scavenged railroad ties, factory reject plywood, bottle tops, junk cars- in other words, the waste products of advanced consumer culture (Magagnoli 2015, p.45).

Vehicles are the basic structures in which many people on these sites in Spain also make their homes. According to Bull: "The metaphor of the car as a home has a long anecdotal history in cultural theory. The root of this is discerned in the automobile as metaphor for the dominant western cultural values of individualism and private property which is coupled to the romantic



Figure 6.6. Clark Richert. *'Drop City Panorama'*, Colorado, USA. 1966

imagery embodied in travel as signifying individual freedom” (Bull in: Miller 2001, p.186).

Aside from the paradox that through embracing the vehicle as a symbol of defiance, independence and freedom, the counterculture are inevitably entwined with the dominant system they are attempting to distance themselves from, the attachment to the belief that vehicles are material manifestations of individual freedoms remains.⁷ Baudrillard recognises how a part of the car’s attraction is that they can induce a “kind of absence of responsibility” (Baudrillard 2005, p.70). The vehicle in this sense is an object which represents one aspect of a countercultural mindset in that according to Baudrillard it provides a sense of freedom. The potential for mobility of a countercultural home, enabled through a vehicle, allows the neo-nomad to exist in a liminal unfixed state within the parameters of the laws and national boundaries set out by dominant powers. If they have the ability to live transiently through the use of the automobile as domestic space it follows that they have transgressed the norms of conventional society. (Cresswell 1996). The act of living in a converted vehicle with no fixed address, is therefore an act of defiance against the mainstream and is countercultural. According to Cresswell “As almost every activity in the western world has its place, mobility is the ultimate kind of geographic deviance” (ibid 1996, p.88). Seemingly, for the counterculture here, (as much as for the dominant society), vehicles represent and are often invested with the same values and meanings. For many, the vehicle is an important part of identity, status and daily life regardless of one’s attitude to society. Perhaps though, this is more pertinently felt in the hands of the counterculture, as a re-appropriated, salvaged container used as a home, whereby they successfully subvert the intended use of the vehicle, and in doing so challenge conventions to assert and live out their otherness.

6:5 Distinguishing Other Forms of International Migrant Dwellings and Home-making Practices

Bamboo poles and slats of wood have been covered in fabrics to make the low roof of a dwelling high up the side of the ravine on site ‘B’. Branches of trees bound with cord act as structural

⁷ Paradoxes of entanglement with and dependence on the mainstream will be discussed in chapter seven.

supports. This improvised space sits on a level terrace on a steep hillside in an isolated location surrounded by trees away from the main cluster of dwellings on site 'B'. The ground is partially covered with blankets and an animal skin. Other areas of the floor have no covering and the sandy earth and stones are exposed. A synthetic blanket has been used as a makeshift door covering. To the right of the image, items of clothing, towelling and sheeting have been hung on cords which seem to act as a temporary secondary membrane to augment the fabric of the outer wall of the tent on one side of the structure. There is a mattress (out of sight) on which the camera was positioned. Apart from one opening (unseen in the image) to the right from the perspective of the camera, (figure 6.7. *Sami (iii), Andalusia, Spain, 2015*), which gives a view of the mountains on the opposite side of the valley, this is an enclosed space, which does not demand attention from the outside and which is modest and discreet; a space to retreat. In these terms it gives us an example of what Bachalard could have used for the analogy of a nest. (Bachalard 1992, pp.90-104). However it is more than this. As depicted in figure 6.8. *Sami (ii) Andalusia, Spain, 2015*, the purpose of this dwelling is different to the majority of others on any of the sites here, in that as well as functioning as home, there is evidence of labour; This space is being used productively and profitably for the creation of chocolate which the Belgian occupier sells mainly to others within the site to support his lifestyle.⁸ It could be coincidental that it is a Belgian making chocolate, a country widely recognised for its fine chocolates, however I suggest that this is not a coincidence. I suggest, as well as providing income, it shows a need for a connectedness to national identity despite the subject having voluntarily rejected his family and home country by migrating to this area of Spain. (Field notes 2015). The production of chocolate and all the paraphernalia required for its production could give a material connection to homeland. As Porteous & Smith (2001) have stated, home is in one respect “a place of refuge, freedom, possession, shelter and security”, and secondly somewhere that is entwined with “family, friends, and community, attachment, rootedness, memory and nostalgia” (Porteous & Smith 2001, in: Blunt & Dowling 2006, p.176).

8. Another example of a dwelling used for the making and selling of food can be seen in figure 2.1.(ii). This makeshift kitchen is used to bake bread which is offered for sale to those within the settlement.



Figure 6.7. Ben Murphy. 'Sami (iii)', Andalucia, Spain, 2015



Figure 6.8. Ben Murphy. 'Sami (ii)', Andalucia, Spain, 2015

Two large Ecover™ washing up liquid boxes have been placed on the floor. One has been reused as a storage box for almonds, presumably to add as an ingredient to the chocolate the dweller makes. The other appears empty, waiting to be reused. Objects that on first glance could be assumed to be of trivial importance and in this case mere packaging by-product usually discarded with no further use, are here given a second purpose and are worthy of further contemplation. An obvious and initial reading indicate the identity of someone who has a concern for lessening their impact on the environment. This is not in itself any indication of an alternative lifestyle. Where this would have been considered alternative, radical and consistent with ideology in western alternative communities in the mid to late part of the twentieth century as described elsewhere in the thesis, it is now an entirely mainstream concern as can be seen by the prevalence of these kinds of products in most supermarkets, the popularity of the Green party in Europe and the shift towards awareness of environmental issues worldwide as we recognise the impact of our industrial processes and activities. However their re-appropriation as storage containers suggest someone who is creatively resourceful, recycling what is already an environmentally considerate product. Ecover™ is however not only a company that manufactures environmentally friendly, bio-degradable domestic cleaning products but one that originates from Belgium. In the context of a transnational home, these things point to someone who again (subconsciously or not) is being reminded of a product that is commonplace in and originates from their homeland. Certain objects in these places therefore act as ‘memory objects’ (Marschall 2019) in that they are material reminders of cultural heritage and linked to a sense of national identity, while living in ephemeral homes in a foreign land. As Blunt & Dowling have said when discussing their notion of the transnational home “transnational homes are sites of memory and can be understood as performative spaces within which both personal and inherited connections to other remembered or imagined homes are embodied, enacted and reworked” (Blunt & Dowling 2006, p.212). Migrants of all kinds carry with them reminders of their homeland (Marschall 2019, Savas 2010, Walsh 2006), even when they have rejected it. Despite a distancing from their own country and a rejection of some of its values, the countercultures present in my field work often have certain things around their dwellings which geographically,

historically, culturally, indicate nationality. (e.g. The jar of British savoury food called 'Marmite' in figure 6.5). These things may bring a sense of belonging in an insecure environment and also have meanings, histories, associations and values that go beyond our first understandings. The array of certain foodstuffs, cooking apparatus, the plastic stool, the empty jam jars and the large stock of walnuts in the Ecover™ box expose the productive work environment of the chocolate maker. There is evidence of activity, of a production in process. This is not a purely domestic space serving the needs of one person. It is a combination of a working environment and a living space, which together provide accommodation and a level of self-sufficiency through the income generated from the production and selling of chocolates. (Field notes, 2015). It can be seen from the photographs and in the description of its position, its appearance and the furnishings contained within its interior, that this is not a conventional domestic space. The kitchen area, delineated and bounded by the walkway to the right side of the interior, and the positioning of the fridge, reveals something of the entrepreneurial resourcefulness of the person who created it; this area is designed primarily for the purpose of making chocolates. (Validated in recorded conversation with the occupant in the field, 2015). Within the kitchen space everything appears to have a practical purpose. This space is temporary, makeshift and non-conformist. While it appears that much effort has gone into the making of a space built for work, there has been consideration of the organisation, use and decoration of space, however shambolic. The living space has been afforded some decorative detail. Similar to all the spaces I am discussing here, this is a self-conscious interior which expresses a particular and considered countercultural identity. The sheets that are tied up on the ceiling of the dwelling have patterns of Asian or Arabic origin whose decoration serves no practical purpose. A pair of military style combat trousers, most commonly associated with the army, but in this context associated with hippy, punk and traveller culture, can be seen hanging up to the right (figure 6.7. *Sami (iii), Andalucia, Spain, 2015*). The ideology here, seen in the combination of the structure of the dwelling, its location, the use of environmentally friendlier products and the interior suggest the presence of a hybrid of punk and old style hippie sensibilities, as outlined and discussed for example in Hebdige (1988), Hetherington (2002),

McKay (1996), Frye 1994), imbued with environmental concerns. To a certain extent this dwelling and its contents are indicative of a type of contemporary counterculture which draws on previous generations to form a homogenised multi-national countercultural identity engaged in the practices of attempting to live outside of mainstream society.⁹

In *Bruno (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 6.9) we can see an open plan space is split into three sections. Unlike other dwelling spaces here, the interior of this space has almost exclusively objects with practical or useful applications. There has been little concession to decoration. Despite this, the interior is rich in detail. To the left there is a bedroom area where a mattress has been placed on the ground, on top of which lies a quilted cover and a synthetic sleeping bag and a polka dot patterned sofa cushion. A head torch is visible to the side of this. The mattress is neatly lined up with the stripped tree trunk acting as a main supporting pole for the structure. A toilet roll has been suspended from a nail in the top of the pole, and a little further down an origami style paper butterfly has been pinned; the only decorative object visible. The division of space is defined by the edge of the mattress. Although there is no wall the edge of the mattress delineates where the bedroom stops and the living room area begins. There is a rug laid out over the bare earth which has also been aligned with the mattress and is roughly parallel to the outer walls of the dwelling. In the middle ground of the image we can see an old well used brown wooden framed leather armchair, to the right of which is placed a pair of red training shoes, next to which are a couple of plastic bowls being used for dog food and water. To the left of the chair is a stack of twigs and a large section of the branch of a tree. Behind the chair there is a raised ground area covered in cardboard, further defining the space. This area has a sawn off tree branch lying across it. In front of this next to the bed is another cushion being used as a bedside table, on top of which are two books- one an English language Spanish dictionary, suggesting an intent of engagement and interaction with the locals. Hanging from the roof above this is a mesh bowl

⁹ What can be asserted from having photographed a previous dwelling this person made on this site previously, is that he cannot be defined as a traveller or nomadic. At the time of the photograph he had lived on this site for five years and had established a life here. However temporary his home, this location is his permanent place of residence. (Field notes and casual unrecorded conversations 2010-2015)



Figure 6.9. Ben Murphy. *'Bruno (i)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



Figure 6.10. Ben Murphy. *'Bruno (iii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015

with four oranges in. On the right hand side of the image is a doorway with a blanket screen tied back to one side. There are various domestic objects tied up on the inside wall- another toilet roll, plastic rubbish bags, a dustpan brush, an umbrella. Partly obscuring the door opening is a wood-burning stove with a pan on top. A large rock dominates the foreground. It has a flat top which conveniently appropriated, serves as a table on which there are the remnants of burnt candles, opened tins of tuna fish and a sponge. Behind this on a low coffee table is a single burner camping stove, a saucepan, cutlery, metal mug, plastic bottles and containers. In the foreground right corner of the space on the floor there are hand rolling smoking materials. A dark coloured towel has been hung over one of the supporting struts of the roof. Encasing this primitive home are walls and a roof made of bamboo poles of various widths tied together with string and covered in blue plastic tarpaulin, semi-transparent plastic sheeting and bamboo matting.

In this sparsely furnished space, there seems to be little to indicate any particular countercultural affiliation, however it is because of the lack of personal objects in this space, that a sense of the occupant's identity can be understood. The space contains only the things that are necessary for survival. There is a sense of order and spatial management. Things have been placed in a considered way. Tilley has observed when describing the importance of continuity in spacial arrangements in the temporal interiors of the Cree hunters of Canada that: "Whatever the type of dwelling- log cabin, large dome tent or wooden-framed canvas-covered tent- it is arranged internally in terms of rigid division of space [...], so as to appear to occupy the same space. Whatever the camp-site the Cree, then, are always staying in the same place" (Tilley 1994 p55). Perhaps here we witness a similar preoccupation with making unfamiliar places familiar and creating a sense of self through the ordering and zoning of temporal space. The priorities and concerns of its occupant are revealed in its simplicity and method of construction, the materials used and the functionality of objects inside. It represents a private place to sleep, cook, eat, smoke, keep warm and dry, read, and relax. The lack of material possessions points to the rejection of mainstream consumerism; a commonly expressed ideology among the

counterculture here¹⁰. As we have seen before in other photographs, and as Hebdige has observed “It is basically the way in which commodities are *used* in subculture which mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations” (Hebdige 1988, p.103). The objects here are not unusual, but their application in this space constitute a countercultural ideology. In the image *Bruno (iii) Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 6.10), the same identity subverts the convention of a bathroom, reclaiming a chair frame and toilet seat, to make a provisional composting toilet, and setting it in a loosely sketched outdoor room; a recycled venetian blind and a tarpaulin indicating walls and the suggestion of a window. What in other circumstances would be normal, become in this context a subversion of domesticity. Pickering, when considering the bodily waste disposal practices of groups of hippies in Hawaii has observed:

[...] faeces, when expelled into a composting toilet, were not ‘dirty’ because, in being located in a composting toilet the productive value of faeces was being utilized, and a rejection of connection to the state through sewage pipes enacted. Composted faeces, like urine when being ‘pee[d] on any tree’, became matter in, not out of, place (Pickering 2010, p.50).

Similarly, in *Bruno (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.9), a disengagement from state controlled sewage systems and notions of waste is manifested and enacted through the use of a composting toilet. To this individual, as to the hippies in Hawaii then, the disposal of bodily waste becomes an empowering political act outwardly expressing otherness, environmental concerns, and being the embodied rejection of mainstream values. Where the majority of dwellers on this site have an open door policy, welcoming visitors into their homes, demonstrated here is a more guarded and unwelcoming attitude; just visible on the outside of the opening is an upturned bedstead which has been used as a protective grill. Not visible in this image, there is a handwritten sign on a piece of paper attached to the outside of the wall near the door opening which says the statement in English ‘Fuck off, you are not welcome, do not come

¹⁰ Paradoxes in the relationship between the counterculture and the society they reject and are dependent on will be discussed in chapter seven.

in'. Looking around the interior depicted in figure 6.9 there is no sign of a source of electricity, the candle light appearing to be the only provider of light. There is no kitchen sink and no direct water supply. Neither conforming to Mongolian yurt, Native American tepee, or converted customised vehicle, it has much in common with a form of dwelling known as a 'Bender'.¹¹ This structure is one of a number of hybrid forms which uses a mixture of locally sourced wood, rock, and man-made materials in its makeshift construction. Not obviously hippy, new traveller, or neo-punk, each of which tribal cultures have distinct ways of demonstrating their associations through materiality, as I am describing, it appears that the person living here does not belong to one group. While the dwelling is included broadly in the counterculture because it exists within the parameters of the site, the identity of the man living here is less clear than some others on the site. With similarities to *Sami (ii), Andalucia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.8), this is a hybrid countercultural home as demonstrated by the construction itself, the building materials used, its situation and the objects round about, within the context of the space. To the author, this dwelling represents that of the neo-nomadic transnational counterculture, one which has morphed out of mid to late twentieth century countercultures, including hippy, punk, new traveller and rave. (D'Andrea 2014). According to Latour a sense of freedom is denied us in the modern technological world as we become increasingly governed by and preoccupied by technology and material culture. Latour argues that freedom and knowledge would be ours if we could live outside of our physical entrapment: "Without a body they would roam through the cosmos with better ease...without instruments and artefacts, colleagues and laboratories, they would know more; without prostheses and machinery they would be freed and emancipated-soul, only soul" (Latour 2002, pp.140-141; cf. Latour. 1993, pp.137-138. In: Olsen 2010, p.133). One reading of this image is that this is the encampment of an individual who lives out his version of freedom through stripping his possessions to only what is essential, in a self-made temporary bender style

¹¹ Definition of a Bender: (British) A shelter made by covering a framework of bent branches with canvas or tarpaulin. (Oxford Dictionaries website) [Internet]. < <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/bender> > Accessed 12. 09. 2019

dwelling. Perhaps, this person is representative of a new kind of homogenised counterculture, and a result of the amalgamation of punk, hippy new traveller and rave sensibilities discussed earlier in the thesis. Through living on this site in makeshift dwellings, without access to or dependence on mains electricity, gas, or water, an identity independent of entrapment or obligation to the dominant culture seems achievable.

6:6 Contemporary Identities as Embodiments of Historic Countercultures

Finally in this chapter I would like to consider a group of photographs from sites ‘A’ and ‘B’, depicting interior spaces which, I will argue, have their roots in late 1960s and early 1970s American countercultural home design described photographically by Easton & Khan (1973), Khan (2004), and Elliott (1973). These images reflect a contemporary identity most strongly influenced by the ethos of the original hippies and those at the forefront of countercultural thinking at that time (e.g. Leary 2008, Ginsberg 2015, Kesey 2011).

In the images *Todd and Amy, Andalucia, Spain, 2011*, (figure 6.11), *Tony and Leyla, Andalucia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 6.12) and *Anonymous (xxxi), Andalucia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.13), what is depicted is the material and aesthetic manifestation of the spirit of an alternative ecologically sensitive, liberal way of life countering the predominant conservative, capitalist, consumerist version of utopia presented to American people in some of the media and the state in the decades following the second world war. In these photographs, we can see decorative features, such as dried gourds hanging from the ceiling and placed elsewhere as ornaments, a William Morris¹² print fabric on a cushion, Asian, North African and sheepskin rugs and blankets. Tree trunks are being used as structural supports and also for decoration. The homes have irregular shaped walls made with dry stone walling, mud and straw, reclaimed wood and glass. Recycled materials have been used to make furniture. A leaning toward traditional Eastern and North African aesthetics in decorative and practical objects is prevalent and evident in both the original hippies makeshift homes and those represented in these images. The combined effect of these elements

¹² The artist and designer William Morris was a key figure in the radical socialist communitarian movement of the mid to late nineteenth century, alongside Robert Owen and others. (Hardy, 1979).



Figure 6.11. Ben Murphy. *'Todd and Amy'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2011



Figure 6.12. Ben Murphy. *'Tony and Leyla'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



Figure 6.13. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xxxi)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015

is to affect the atmosphere of space which point to ideologies rejecting mainstream beliefs, advocated by the American counterculture of the 1960s and 1970s. (Frye 1994, Roszak 1995, Yablonski, 2000). As Robert St George states “Ordinary domestic furnishings perform the work of metaphor that ties the sensate present to a contingent realm of myth and cosmos. Interior spaces of domestic dwellings overlap with the interior spaces of belief and lived religion” (St George 2013, in: Keane, Kuchler, Rowlands, Spyer, Tilley, eds. 2013, p.224). Here then, we see how the decoration of these interiors reinforce and proclaim an affinity with an historic countercultural movement. Despite none of the people whose homes these are coming from America, or being old enough to have been brought up in the original hippy movement, these interiors are evidence of the profound influence on a type of contemporary counterculture who wish to perpetuate these ideals.

However, whereas those living in intentional American communities in the 1960s and 1970s such as The Ranch, Oneida, and New Buffalo, as well as communities from previous centuries all aspired to pooling their resources and working for the common good (Berger 1981, Frye 1993, Hardy 1979, Kopecky 2006), as with many others on the two sites, the inhabitants of these dwellings do not share this preoccupation. Other material factors conversely, as described above indicate a strong sense of shared identity and influence from a previous generation. In their interior decorations, and choices of dwelling structures, there is recognisable differentiation between these dwellers and the neo-punk contingency on site ‘A’, and in the car park area on site ‘B’; whose identities are in part identifiable by their use of vehicles as dwellings. I also suggest that these photographs depict differences in identity when compared to the homogenised countercultural identities just described through figures 6.7 and 6.8. These differences are most strongly sensed in the aesthetic sensibilities expressed in these dwellings and their domestic material cultures. To Ahmed, “Making home is about creating both pasts and futures through inhabiting the grounds of the present” (Ahmed 2003, p.9). In the photographs here, we see this enacted in the way historic hippy cultures have been brought from one country to another, from one time to another, and re-interpreted so as to maintain an identity rooted in past events and ideologies.

Yablonsky gives us one set of definitions of what it meant to be a hippy, as personally practiced and witnessed by him in America in the late 1960s. According to Yablonsky, the hippy movement was “both a rejection and a rebellion against the basic institutions of American society” (Yablonsky 2000, p.324). In his personal account he cites their rejection of the education system, government, and religion as central to their ideology. He also states that they believed (misguidedly in his eyes) in the power of love and hallucinogenic drugs to enable their emancipation from the plastic society they were rejecting. (ibid 2000, pp.330-333). Referring to his time as a hippie in the 1960s, Yablonski declares that “Drug taking is an integral part of the New Community and its philosophy” (ibid 2000, p.241). A Similar ideology I argue, is lived out and represented through the interior spaces depicted in figure 6.13, *Anonymous (xxxi), Andalusia, Spain, 2015*. Certainly, in information gleaned through informal conversation with the anonymised occupant of the dwelling there is a belief that the effects of the drug Peyote awaken a deep and spiritual understanding about ourselves and our connection to the world around us. (Field notes, 2015). Evidence of the use of this psychotic drug within this settlement can also be confirmed through studying *Francesca’s map, 2015*, (figure 5.6), which clearly delineates an area on site ‘B’ called *The Peyote Field*. The similarities between these dwellings (figures 6.11, 6.12, 6.13) and those of the hippie culture of the 1960s and 1970s is apparent when compared to photographs made of self-made homes of counterculturalists during that time by Elliott (1974) and by Khan found in the countercultural D.I.Y. manual ‘Shelter’ (1973). as seen in figures 6.14 and 6.15. Unlike some other homes here, where there is evidence of an evolution of countercultural identities, what I suggest is presented to us in these images are hippie identities whose ideologies remain static through their perpetuation of an aesthetic first established by the hippies in previous generations.

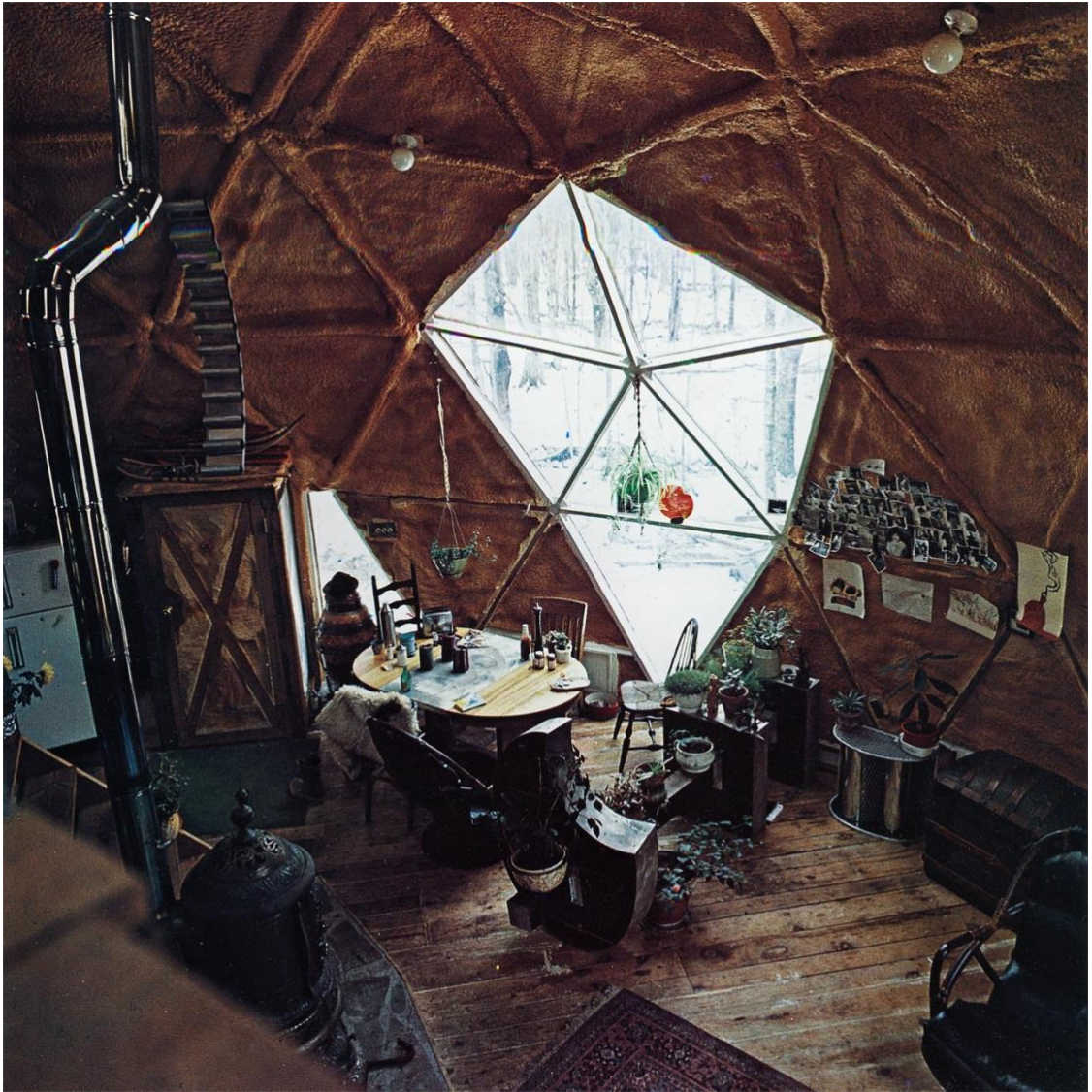


Figure 6.14. Jonathan Elliott. From *'Woodstock Handmade Houses'*. 1974

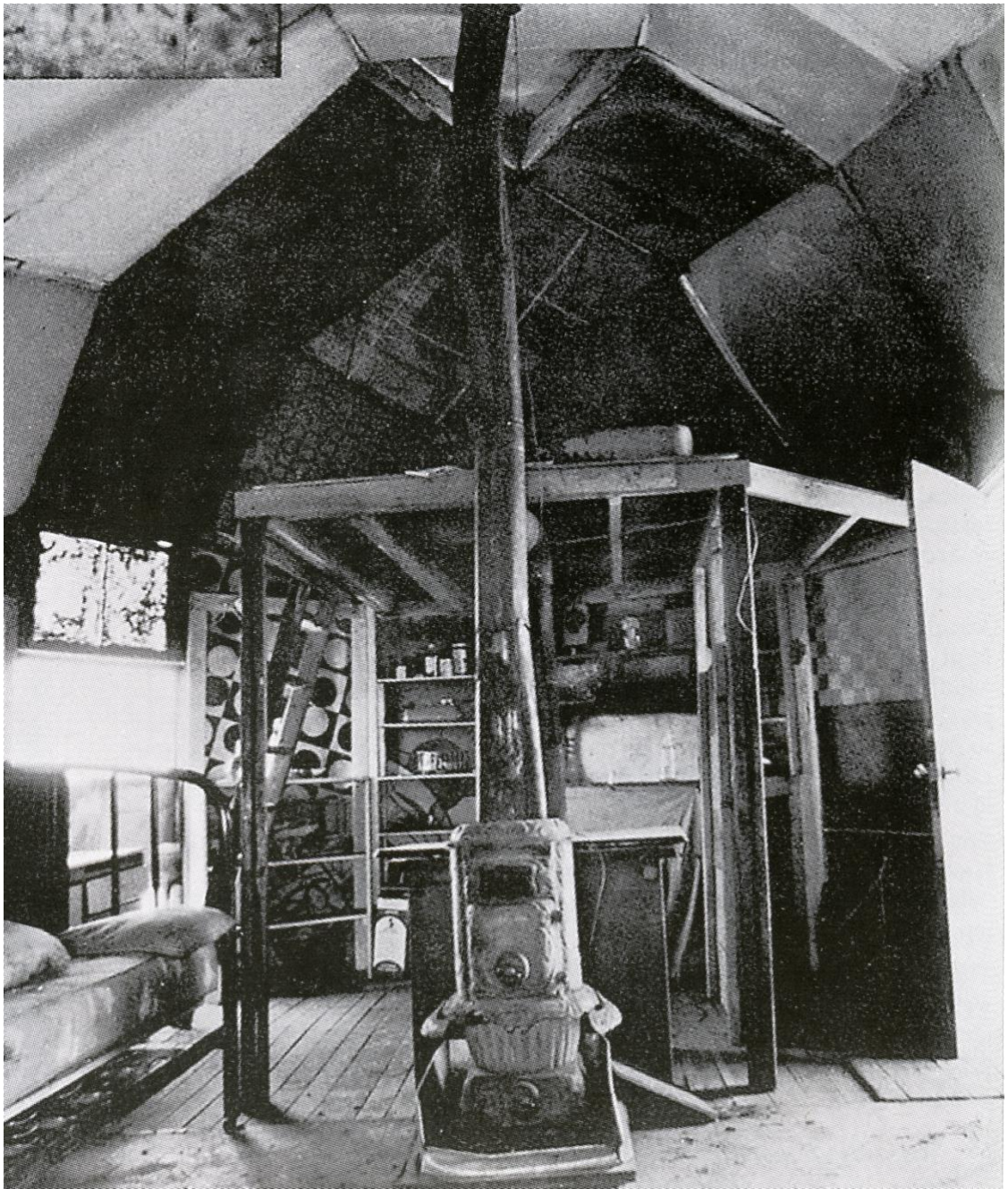


Figure 6.15. Lloyd Khan. *'Drop City, 1972'*

6:7 Conclusion

This chapter has developed the argument that home, materialities of home and home-making practices are central to the construction of identity. Through detailed consideration of a number of my photographs and those of others, using theory from cultural geography, anthropology, architectural studies, material culture studies, phenomenology, photography, countercultural history, and sociology, the chapter established this argument in the introduction and then set out to demonstrate that there are distinguishable types of dwelling space on the settlements that express differences of countercultural identities, whose roots, to a lesser or greater extent, can be traced back to a number of historic countercultural movements. Identifying a British expatriate counterculture living in converted vehicles on site 'A', the chapter argued that these individuals are partly defined by their adaptation of old coaches and caravans, together with the objects that are placed in those spaces. Studying materiality and the setting of objects in a space in image *Jess and Robe (i), Andalucia, Spain, 2006* (figure 6.1), I proposed that this scene represented a type of British counterculture linked to punk and new traveller countercultures from the UK in the late twentieth century. I suggested that these people aimed to subvert conventional British cultural values through a particular piece of art encapsulated in an old television set. The images figure 6.2 and figure 6.3 were then presented and analysed as another example of British counterculture with similar cultural histories, suggesting that ordinary objects can be seen in different ways and mean different things to different people when placed in the context of a 1970s British coach. Comparison was drawn between the coach depicted in these images and that used in the iconic graphics of the band the Sex Pistols, and it was suggested that this type of vehicle is embedded in the cultural histories of contemporary counterculture. I also argued that this and other customised vehicles held within them objects which suggested an attachment to a national identity. The chapter then discussed how vehicles were well suited to the counterculture as representative of a form of freedom, and more specifically how lived-in vehicles can be seen as deviant, out of place, and a transgression from the norms of the dominant society.

Through a detailed description and analysis of the material contents represented in the photograph *Sami (ii), Andalusia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.8), the chapter has attempted to define a hybrid countercultural identity originally from Belgium. In this image it was argued that there were a different set of concerns and ideology to those of the British counterculture on site A, in that this individual's interior habitat displayed a working domestic environment in combination with a living space. In the image *Bruno (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.9), I suggested that in this minimally furnished primitive dwelling, another type of transnational neo-nomadic hybrid countercultural identity is brought to our attention; one that is concerned with a singular vision of freedom, which defies any particular tribal attachment, other than by association through place. Through a living space depicted in *Bruno (iii) Andalusia, Spain, 2015*, (figure 6.10), I pointed to how this self-made composting toilet set in a loosely defined space could indicate a subversion of conventional bathrooms, a rejection of conventional notions of dirt, and the symbolic detachment from the state through disconnecting with waste disposal systems imposed by the authorities.

Finally the chapter considered three photographs which I argued, through the aesthetics of the interiors and objects depicted, are recognisable expressions of a hippie identity which stem from the original hippies of 1960s and 1970s America. I argued that these identities differ from others on these sites because of their identifying with a historic countercultural movement that they were not a part of and yet appear to perpetuate their ideologies, lifestyle and aesthetic values.

In identifying and differentiating between styles of makeshift ephemeral dwelling, their contents and positioning in the landscape, this chapter has argued that the geographies of these homes, as understood through neutral photographic representation, (Bate 2012), indicate a variety of distinct contemporary countercultural identities within these settlements.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Seven

Outsider Objects: Paradox, Compromise and Tension in the Construction of Countercultural Identities

7:1 Introduction

Being counter to culture within the parameters of groups studied in this research, such as neo-hippies, neo-punks, new travellers, ravers, et. al., involves setting oneself apart from and resistance to the dominant system, to authority, and rejection of cultural norms. To Desmond, McDonagh and O'Donohoe (2000), "Within the Hegelian perspective the term counter-culture is rooted in ideas of identity and its formation in relation to an other" (ibid 2000, p245). Paradoxically in distancing themselves from the mainstream, these migrant countercultures, as with other countercultures, are inevitably bound up in and to some extent reliant on the infrastructures, products and technologies of the society they wish to reject.¹ According to Desmond, McDonagh and O'Donohue, Umberto Eco (1994) took the position that hippies are parasitic and dependent on the mainstream for their existence. (Ibid 2000, p.246). However, rather than undermining those who challenge the hegemonic by attempting to live outside of their systems, my concern here is to discuss the complications of being other by highlighting dependencies and inter-relationships between these countercultures and the outside world. I aim to show how objects indicating this embroilment are integrated into the fabric of their dwelling places and in turn their identities. In this chapter, as with the previous chapters, I will demonstrate how the use and dissemination of a distinct form of photography enables alternative

¹ While it is not the concern of this thesis, nor within its scope, to explore the depth of literature on the geographies of consumerism, and humanity's increasing dependence on the global mobility of goods, I recognise the significance of this area of research within human geography, economic geography and sociology. For related reading on this subject see: Sassatelli (2007), Hughes & Reimer (2004).

ways of thinking about and interpreting identity through cultural geography. The photographs considered here aim to illuminate the complex and often contradictory relationships between counterculture, man-made objects, the hegemonic and the landscape. As Moos and Dear have said “Power relations are always relations of autonomy and dependence and are necessarily reciprocal” (Moos & Dear 1986. In: Sibley 1995, p.76). Attempting to live outside of conventionally bound societal structures, being autonomous and rejecting mainstream attitudes, especially to materialism and consumerism involves inevitable contradictions, interactions, entanglements and dependencies with the hegemonic. Hetherington recognises this point saying, with reference to countercultures, “In all, this is a communal way of life that exists on the fringes of society but one that has economic and cultural relationships with that society” (Hetherington 2000, p.85). With the dwellings sitting centrally in each composition, attention is drawn to their materiality. Through reflection on the production of certain objects seen in the images, dependencies can be noted between the counterculture and the dominant society, and this, I suggest, exposes some of the inevitable ideological difficulties involved when trying to detach oneself from conventional modes of living. Csikszentmihalyi and Rochburg-Halton (1999), Miller (2010), Relph (2008), Tilley (2013), Walsh (2009) among others, have written about the significance of material culture as a means of reflecting identity. Cresswell has discussed how societies construct places to define what is in place as much as what is out of place (Cresswell 1996). Drawing on these theories, I will assess the photographs to consider how countercultural identity can be understood through a series of contested objects.

By observing the objects that form the unconventional aesthetic within these habitations, and their relationship to the landscape and the dominant society, something simultaneously aesthetic and contentious which is largely out of sight or overlooked, is brought into affective visibility in the photographs to consider the awkwardness of being at once liberated from the mainstream but compromised by dependence on it. Through unpacking details in photographs, notions of freedom, rejection, conformity and entrapment can be seen to be bound up in countercultural identity in relation to temporal makeshift architectural space and geography. Chan-Fai Cheung has pointed out “The meaning we can read from a photograph depends on the recognition of the

context of the photograph. To see a photograph is to read the photograph not simply as an image but as text. But to read the text requires making an effort to delve into the complexity of context” (Cheung 2010, p.6). Following Cheung, this interpretation involves extra work from the viewer here, who must have some pre-understanding of the histories of the objects concerned. The histories of these countercultures have been explored elsewhere in the thesis, and with this prior knowledge this method of investigation is activated and made effective through consideration of photographs of some objects belonging to the counterculture.

External cultural influences and personal histories have been seen to condition and affect behavior within alternative communities as has been explained in social histories of previous mid to late twentieth century countercultural settlements. (Curl 2007, Halfacree 2006, Hetherington 2005, Kabachnik 2009, Kopecky 2006, Roszak 1995, Worthington 2005, St John 2009). Analysing objects in the photographs a further intention in this chapter is to consider the influences and histories which are built upon in the evolution of these fluid countercultural identities and tease out any conflict in maintaining identities that were borne out of previous epochs in different places.

Revisiting the photographs *Alpha and Imani (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 6.2) and *Alpha and Imani (ii), Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 6.3) previously discussed in chapter six, and comparing them in relation to a historic image of their countercultural roots (figure 7.1), I will discuss ways in which historically created rejectionist marginal identity is reimagined, adapted and sustained when displaced geographically, culturally and politically from its source and how this can be problematic. Dislocated, marginal, unconventional individuals can be seen here to reassemble their identities through their dwellings and adjust to a different set of hegemonic cultural values and histories as well as a new landscape and climate. Through the photographs, I set out to forefront how objects they bring with them, surround themselves with, and inhabit, represent and transpose these historical belief systems, while also pointing to tensions between the man-made objects and their surroundings. Through the images which have as their central focus a dwelling built from straw, such as *Morgan, Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.8), I will discuss the use of the straw bale as emblematic of a contested object; one that has been given



Figure 7.1. Unnamed photographer. *'The Rastabus. Battle of the Beanfield, 1985'*

countercultural currency through its appropriation, while being a by-product that is linked to mainstream industrial systems. Ending this chapter I will touch on the ubiquity of plastic, globally and in turn within the countercultural habitats. As a material which is evidently used in multiple forms and for many purposes by the inhabitants of these sites, I will reflect on how entanglements with and dependencies on networks of consumerism, industrial processes, commodities and global economies that plastic products involve, could be seen as an unavoidable paradox which interferes with some peoples' countercultural ideologies of living outside of hegemonic systems.

7:2 Displacement, Transgression and the Reimagining of Countercultural Identity as seen through figures 6.2 and 6.3

A radical non-conformist identity historically catalysed from a period of disaffection, or political and social unrest could be seen as difficult to sustain when distanced both in time and space geographically, culturally, historically and politically. Having shared experiences through countercultural events and gatherings, and having been affected by influences and events and movements in their countries or places of origin² (for example; new traveller, environmentalist, anarchist, punk, raver, hippy and so on), and with their recent histories having been formed between the 1960s and 1990s, the displaced neo-nomadic countercultures described here must be reassessed and reassess themselves in light of their relocation to sites in another country. One way in which historic ideological positions are maintained by some of these people is through the continued use of vehicles lived in during historic cultural events, as evidenced in the types of vehicles seen in some photographs. For example in figure 6.2 and figure 6.3 we can understand how an attachment to a vehicle embodies such a countercultural identity and enables this displaced identity to be maintained through its symbolic meaning, at least to other displaced outsiders with similar histories within the site on which it is placed. However, when resituated in a foreign land, where there have been a different set of local histories, the potency of identities

² Native Spanish people make up a very small minority of the population on the sites I visited during the field work for my research.

linked to particular countercultural histories and places, represented through dwellings and belongings such as these, could begin to lose some of their original currency to the counterculture and be interpreted from a different perspective by their new hosts compared to that of their home country.

Vehicles such as this were part of the new traveller convoys and their confrontations with the police in England, during the summer of 1985. At one such conflict, according to Worthington (2005), a convoy of one hundred and forty customised vehicles, being used as mobile dwellings by new travellers on their way to celebrate the summer solstice at Stonehenge in Somerset, were cordoned off into a field by the police when authorities decided to stop the so called 'Peace Convoy' staging a free festival. News reports, subsequent literature, and recorded anonymised verbal accounts of the events from those on these sites who claim to have been participants, alleged that some people were beaten, some were arrested and some had their trucks damaged.³ Kabachnik has said that " – the meaning of Gypsy and Traveler cultures and the meaning of their mobilities- translate into battles over places. Namely who belongs, who is legal, what is the dominant landscape aesthetic, who is transgressing, and so on" (Kabachnik 2009, p.463). Here then is an example which directly illustrates Kabachnik's point. To those who disagreed with their lifestyles, the vehicles represented a way of life that threatened the establishment and acceptable codes of behavior. To one anonymised traveller "I think we were a threat to society. We had our own school buses in those convoys. We had our own medical buses in those convoys. We had our own form of social security. No one was left behind. We were a good, tight knit group and we became increasingly autonomous" (Anonymous. 15.02.2015. Field recording). Authority's response was to initially use police forces to physically stop their activities and secondly, to criminalise lifestyles deemed as transgressive by introducing the amendments to the criminal justice and public order act in 1994.⁴ To Cresswell, (paraphrasing

³ For a detailed examination of the events surrounding the conflicts between Police and Travellers see: Cresswell (1996), Hetherington (2005), Worthington (2005). See also figure 7.1; a photograph taken by an unidentified photographer during these events.

⁴ For details of The Criminal and Public Order act (1994) see: [Internet] <<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1994/33/section/37>> Accessed 10 February 2019

Bakhtin's theorisation of popular culture in the work of Rabelais), "Such things as carnivals, fairs, and everyday language, are a powerful set of tools for subordinated culture that constantly undermine the presumptions of the elite" (Cresswell 1996, p.78). By living in converted vehicles and seeming not to participate in regular patterns of social behavior, to the dominant power, according to Cresswell "the "hippies" of the convoy were leading a life that transgressed the spatial assumptions of both work and leisure" (ibid 1996, p.80). Cresswell says "Because the easiest way to establish order is through the division of space, mobility becomes a basic form of disorder and chaos- constantly defined as transgression and trespass" (ibid 1996, p.87). Furthermore he asserts that "Mobility as a way of life involves being permanently out of place. Mobility resists forces of discipline imposed by boundaries and territories. More particularly the mobile lifestyle of the travellers ignores the taken-for-granted spatial norms of British society" (ibid 1996, p.95). According to Worthington (2005) this action by the authorities further exacerbated, ignited and fused a politicised homogenisation of outsider identity, which was the amalgamation of hippy and punk cultures. Historically these groups had held each other in contempt since the inception of the punk movement in 1975.⁵ The events described, which later became known as 'The Battle of the Beanfield', added to an alienated, angry and disaffected tribal identity.⁶ To those within these sites in south east Spain who said they were there and to others here who are aware of this drama, 'The Battle of the Beanfield' has been mythologised as an event which crystalised their sense of otherness, feelings of persecution, resentment and suspicion of authority. The anonymous interviewee referenced earlier said "Each group develops its own story, its own history. In the dramas of that, behavior evolves through those stories" (Anonymous. 15.02.2015. Field recording). As such this and other stories become integrated

⁵ John Lydon (formerly known as Johnny Rotten) of the British punk band the Sex Pistols and Public Image Ltd. summarised the feelings of the first generation of punks towards their hippy predecessors in 1976 saying, "I hate hippies and what they stand for." (Original interview by John Ingham. In: Sounds magazine, 1976, cited in The Guardian. [internet] <<https://www.theguardian.com/music/gallery/2016/jan/29/john-lydon-at-60-a-life-in-pictures-johnny-rotten-sex-pistols>> For another reference to the same quote reflecting on cultural differences and similarities between hippies and punks, see: McKay (1976).

⁶ For a detailed account of these events see: The Battle of the Beanfield (Worthington 2005).

into the imaginations of British migrant countercultural identities in part through the continued use of the same or similar vehicles used during these historic events.

To the archaeologist Bjornar Olsen “Things are not just traces or residues of absent presents; they are effectively engaged in assembling and hybridizing periods and epochs. As durable matter, things make the past present and tangible; [...]” (Olsen 2013, p.108). I argue that this is tangible in the case of vehicles used as homes, such as depicted in figure 6.3, as they hold important resonances of past events to some within the contemporary counterculture, which contribute to the understanding and maintenance of their current cultural identities as defiant, transgressive and other. However, at the time of my writing this thesis, the event I describe happened over thirty years ago and I suggest that a radical countercultural ideological position and identity compounded during these historic and chaotic events becomes potentially compromised when political and geographical contexts shift. This way of life may be undesirable and offensive to some of the local and national community,⁷ but there has been a history of migratory Gypsy cultures living in Spain for many centuries⁸. Living a peripatetic lifestyle in Spain is not considered to be a transgression in the way Cresswell describes it in relation to British cultural norms. (Cresswell 1996). Despite historic attempts in Spain it has not been criminalised as it is in the UK.⁹ Perhaps then, in this context an anti-establishment position is diluted by not registering the same emotive responses from the local Spanish people. The act of transgression through mobility described by Cresswell does not have the same emotive impact here as it did in the UK of 1985. The use of old 1970s vehicles as dwellings and sites of resistance, although carrying symbolic significances to travellers, does not convey the same meaning of resistance to authorities or the public when hidden in discreet locations along a

⁷ As is the case with a girl (wishing to remain anonymous) who worked in a supermarket in a nearby town, who said “*I used to think that hippies adhered to a naturalist lifestyle, lived in the countryside and used natural products, and lived off of nature, but now I see that it isn't that way; To be a hippy is to be dirty, not to wash, to not clean up, steal, take drugs...and their children? They live an unhealthy life, I don't think that these parents think about their children, how do they allow these children to go on starving? In conclusion, my opinion on them isn't pleasant, I don't agree with the way in which they have transformed the word 'Hippy'*”. Source: Personal statement written anonymously on notepaper. February 2015, translated from original Spanish. Document retained by Ben Murphy. (See A1/8).

⁸ See: Pym (2007), and Charnon-Deutch (2004).

⁹ See: Pym (2006).

remote riverbed in Spain (see figure 6.3). What we see in the image (figure 6.3) is an old immobile British coach that has been partly dismantled and reconfigured to accommodate a children's play room (as discussed in chapter six). In removing themselves from conventional society by living in a coach and outside of their home countries, the photograph indicates that outsider identities are renegotiated and redefined through their interactions with landscape, the hegemonic, and dwelling place. Shared histories and values manifested in the materiality of their temporal homes and possessions, transplanted to a new geography, in combination with the introduction of foreign elements, contribute to the creation of new variants of multinational countercultural identities. Intermingled in the interior space depicted in figure 6.2 (*Alpha and Imani, (i), Andalucia, Spain, 2006*) are artefacts from both Spanish and British cultures. Objects such as the Spanish flamenco dress act as interventions in the space which indicate some form of interaction with Spanish culture. According to Hetherington "New age travellers are a hybrid phenomenon. They have been around since the 1970s. Part alternative lifestyle, part youth subculture and part new social movement, their lifestyle and politics emerged out of the 1960's counterculture but have not remained unchanged" (Hetherington 2000, p.4). Here, we see neo-countercultural identities are maintained and given meaning through objects which hold cultural memories while also being influenced by traditional culture of Spain. Objects when thought of phenomenologically, can hold resonances, histories, memories and meanings for people, which in turn indicate identity (Marschall 2019, Miller, 2008, Olsen, 2013). There are resonances of historic activities in the objects the counterculture bring with them and dwell in, (as I have already suggested) which could feed and reinforce the countercultural imagination with a belief that they are rejecting hegemonic conventions in a foreign country. Hetherington claims that these types of countercultural identity have continued to develop, taking in new youth subcultures, and have been influenced by outside political circumstances (2000). I argue that some of the photographs I have made on these sites enable us to see and evidence this development. As new countercultural movements emerge and take centre stage, existing established ones do not disappear, but are built upon to create a palimpsest of histories that affects how the new homogenised counterculture evaluates and represents itself. "Oppositional

Countercultures” (Mckay, 1996), such as the hippies of the 1960s described in the literature review, evolve, are reinvented, sustained, and reimagined by each new generation. Core beliefs stemming from their original sources are maintained in part through types of dwelling and the histories of objects the counterculture surround themselves with, as is evident in the photographs. To Victor Burgin “Forms of artefacts, as much as forms of language, serve to communicate ideologies. [...]. The total ideology of a society is imprinted in its production and consumption of material objects. [...]. All that constitutes reality for us is, then, impregnated with meanings. These meanings are the contingent products of history and in sum reflect our ideology” (Burgin, 1988, pp.46-47). When certain objects such as coaches from the 1970s are considered through their framing within a photograph, this theory can be applied to give phenomenological readings leading to a way of understanding their significance as contested objects. With the photographs being the conductor for this process, we can begin to recognise and read how the ideologies of countercultural movements are sustained and remain meaningful to those inside them through their material possessions. Further to this, the photographs lead us towards an understanding of how countercultures are entwined with and dependent on the outside world, through their consumption and use of services, products, resources and technologies, and how these things can potentially compromise a countercultural ideological position centred around resistance to the dominant power. (Eco 1994, Desmond, McDonagh, O’Donaghue, 2000).

7:3 Dependencies, Entanglements and Relationships with the Outside World

Photographs such as *Francesca(i), Andalucia, Spain, 2015* (figure 5.7) suggest in the use of natural materials, that some people on these sites are attempting to live as independently from mainstream society as possible through various degrees of self-sufficiency, and by creating dwellings that are materially integrated with the landscape. This is one way in which those who align themselves with environmental concerns can represent their identities. In *The Volcano, Andalucia, Spain, 2015* (figure 5.8) there is evidence of the use of building materials such as raw mud and recycled glass, implying a conscious and considered use of materials which have

minimal detrimental impact environmentally. In the same image we can see that the dwelling has been painted in green and brown, using a camouflage pattern, helping to marry the structure to its mountainside environment. However, it is the focus of this part of the thesis to consider and evaluate how these attempts to extract themselves from the consumerist world, inevitably involves a reliance on industrial and political structures within mainstream societies.

Regardless of their environmental concerns and type of dwelling, there is a consistent intention in the outlook of the various countercultural groups, reflected in the photographs of habitations on these sites, in that they show a pre-occupation with some form of self-marginalisation. In their attempted detachment from conventional society, alongside being distinguished through their different types of dwelling, they stand apart from the mainstream through their choices of remote location, and the implications of this being that they have no access to services. This helps to assert a sense of otherness. Rather than wanting to connect with services such as a direct supply of electricity, water and gas, available to those living conventionally in towns, cities and villages of developed countries, it is apparent that the people on these sites have deliberately disconnected themselves from the possibility of accessing such facilities. The photographs show no signs of mains electricity, gas or water. Electricity where used comes from batteries charged from solar panels; e.g. *Anonymous (xii), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.12). Plastic pipes are used to transport water syphoned from nearby streams or pre-existing irrigation channels; e.g. *Rubio and Bella, Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.2). Gas comes from gas bottles as seen in *Sami (ii), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 6.8). This form of self-marginalisation as a countercultural way of life is however compromised by having to rely on mainstream society for the provision or transport of certain goods, services and conveniences. In the photographs *Nick (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 7.3), *Anonymous (viii), Andalusia, Spain, 2012*, (figure 7.4), *Anonymous (xv), Andalusia, Spain, 2012*, (figure 7.5), for example, we see products which are undisputably from the industrialised world. Everyday objects such as washing machines, cookers, gas bottles and so on, in this situation, can be seen in one way as contested; for while they could be seen as mundane domestic necessities of modern life to some, here they also represent aspects of the outside world that the counterculture attempt to escape.



Figure 7.2. Ben Murphy. *'Rubio and Bella'*, Andalusia, Spain 2012



Figure 7.3. Ben Murphy. 'Nick (i)', Andalucia, Spain, 2006



Figure 7.4. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (viii)'*, Andalucia, Spain 2012



Figure 7.5. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xv)'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2012

In the case of the washing machine seen in *Nick (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 7.3) we can assume it exists to provide the same service as it would in any more conventional domestic situation; as a convenient labour saving device for washing clothes, and yet here, it could be read as an object which contradicts the ideology and aspirations of those using it. It is without doubt the product of technological industrial processes. Being transplanted at some point to this location by someone from the counterculture, who was attempting to live off-grid,¹⁰ and used in an outdoor makeshift kitchen, within this temporal site, therefore embeds it with a complex set of relationships and negotiations with mainstream society. Having been constructed in a factory, as a product which demands the use of parts sourced from other industrial processes and locations far removed from the site of the washing machines manufacture, it is entwined within a web of interconnected environmentally harmful products and processes; the manufacture of goods, their transport, and processes which are inevitably connected to the dominant capitalist consumerist system. Here in this photograph we see the trace of someone attempting to live off-grid, but as the washing machine shows, this person is not prepared to sacrifice a form of domestic convenience that is afforded those in affluent parts of the world. Perhaps then, it is more the idea of being countercultural that inspires some of these people rather than the practical realisation of being ‘authentically’ countercultural as discussed by Desmond, McDonagh & O’Donoghue, (2000), whereby the sincerity of historic twentieth century countercultural groups are questioned in regard to their inter-relations with consumerist society and notions of resistance to the mainstream. As has been noted by Cohen & Taylor “The problem with the realisation of countercultural values is their existence within phenomenally dissonant worlds on which, at the same time, they are parasitically dependent” (Cohen & Taylor 1998, p.162). As I will demonstrate later in the chapter by considering other objects, these objects then, indicate varying levels of reliance on the society that these individuals distance themselves from, and suggest varying levels of ideological compromise for some.

The photograph *Anonymous (xiv), Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.6) depicts a makeshift

¹⁰ Nick, in an unrecorded conversation in 2006 at the time of the making of the photograph, stated that he was using permaculture techniques and solar energy in an attempt to live self-sufficiently.



Figure 7.6. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xiv)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012

encampment in a clearing on a steep escarpment high up in the ravine on site 'B'. This image gives us an overview of a habitation which indicate contradictory relationships between materiality, landscape and counterculture. The image depicts the dwelling place of a family originally from the Czech republic. It appears to be nestled in its setting, discreetly placed in the landscape, unlike that of those living in the graffiti vans for example (e.g. figure 5.11. *Anonymous (xi) Andalucia, Spain, 2012*). Where the Graffiti van in that image proclaims rejectionist identity in an outwardly confrontational way, (as I have discussed in chapter five), the identities being depicted here express their rejection of the mainstream in a different way; concerned with having minimal impact on the environment (as evidenced in the use of recycled nappies, and the use of straw bales to build a dwelling which I will discuss later in the chapter), rather than making an outwardly confrontational and provocative statement of resistance. The dwelling is isolated and distanced from the main concentration of habitations on site 'B'. According to maps showing the local physical geography,¹¹ it occupies a position within a national park which disobeys local Spanish building regulations. However inconspicuous, they have made an encampment which positions the dwellers defiance and suggests a disregard of authority because of its geographic location. Their choice of site establishes their outsidership and otherness, challenging the structured order of the hegemonic, expressing their deviance while upsetting the conventional society's rules on the appropriate uses of public space. As Cresswell points out "dominant and subordinate sociocultural groups use geography as a weapon in domination and resistance" (Cresswell 1996, p.57). From the perspective of the dominant power and those who adhere to its authority this habitation can be seen in its entirety as a contested object. Massey recognised how boundaries are established to define people's sense of belonging saying that "Firstly they work to establish insiders: those who belong to a place", and that "the second function of the boundaries of a place is often to establish outsiders" (Massey 2000, p.99). When there is a transgression of these boundaries, then this can be seen as a

¹¹ To protect the privacy of the participants whereabouts I made a verbal agreement with people whose dwellings I photographed not to reveal the precise geographical location of their habitations. It is therefore not possible to give specific map references.

challenge to authority. From the position of the indigenous Spanish person who obeys the law and walks along the parks designated routes and uses the park as it is intended and permitted, the encampment transgresses local and national laws setting out appropriate permitted codes of behaviour.¹² To some, the habitation could represent something that should not be there; that is legally and culturally out of place and is therefore a threat to their belief system and that of the society which they accept and belong to. Places, as I have said elsewhere, mean different things to different people depending on their relationship to and with that place (e.g. Tuan, 2005). As with the violent clash of cultures described at ‘The Battle of the Beanfield’ (Worthington, 2005), here there is also a potential for conflict between those wishing to live outside of society and those wanting to assert the physical geographic boundaries of the hegemonic to which they subscribe.

While being a possible threat to the hegemonic society through this encampment’s position in a contested landscape, it is also the objects used in its construction and those surrounding the dwelling which reveal complexities and paradoxes of reliance on the mainstream culture. In ‘*Anonymous xiv, Andalusia, Spain, 2012*’ (figure 7.6) a makeshift dwelling made from straw bales (which I will discuss in detail later in the chapter), is depicted draped in plastic, and created on an escarpment surrounded by eucalyptus trees. In one way it is an unremarkable domestic scene; a washing line weighed down with re-useable nappies, suggests there is a family with small children here. There are pathways delineating different areas. There is a place where dishes are washed, with a water feed coming through a plastic pipe connected to a nearby stream. Space has been organised and transformed into dwelling place. What makes the place unusual is made clear in the photograph when its component parts are analysed, and it can be understood as

¹² In Spanish law, according to Simon Rice, article 46.1 of the order for July 28th 1966 states that, “Apart from tourist camp sites no more than three tents of caravans may be placed at the same location, nor should there be more than 10 campers, nor may the camp be in place for more than three days. Tents and (caravans) within 500 metres of each other are considered to be part of the same group” (Rice, R. 2019). Translation from original Spanish. [Internet] <https://thespanishbiker.wordpress.com/travel-planning/camping/free-camping/> Accessed 13.06.2019

representing a type of environmentally concerned counter cultural identity¹³ where there is an attempt to lessen human impact on the environment. The beginnings of a garden are visible, where there is evidence of planting. There are signs of labour and activity where people have invested time and energies into marking out their territory. However, compromises become apparent when we study this image closely. An initial reading might indicate that this encampment is nestled harmoniously into a mountainside but despite this seemingly pastoral scene there are complex contradictions in the identity being projected which are made manifest in the photograph. On examination what comes to light is the use of man-made materials, and the habitation's context within what is a manipulated environment in which the dwelling has been constructed. The majority of materials being used to create and maintain this place are mass produced products or byproducts of industrial processes which use non- sustainable finite resources; for example the plastic used for roofing, bowls, bottles, containers, clothes pegs, derived from the oil industry. Wells has noted that "Settlement raises complex issues of interaction with and within the environment. How to reconcile the visual impact of technological objects and materials, cultural expectations in terms of lifestyle, and a desire for an untrammled pastoral?" (Wells 2011, p.97). In this photograph a tension underlying what on initial viewing could be perceived as a utopian pastoral scene is therefore evident on closer inspection; between the impact of mass produced artificial materials on the landscape and the dwellings seeming detachment from the outside world. What I argue is presented in the photograph is an uncomfortable negotiation between two ideologically conflicting positions. Objects having been made elsewhere, using industrial processes, find their way to this site through interactions between disparate cultures; the countercultural and the mainstream, to be either used as intended or reused or appropriated for other purposes. Furthermore, what appears to be an untamed wooded escarpment is a woodland of non-indigenous eucalyptus trees managed by local authorities and contained within a national park.¹⁴ Complete detachment from the technological

¹³ Another example of similar environmental concerns is evident in photograph '*Francesca (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2012*' (figure 5.7).

¹⁴ An understanding of the histories of this landscape reveals a further conflict between what is seen and unseen. This contested landscape has a troubled history; From the eighth to the fifteenth centuries this was the site of religious

consumerist world is complicated by the web of entanglements in which the counterculture are inevitably, inextractably immersed and intertwined. Such interdependencies were noted by Umberto Eco in 1967, who said:

Certain phenomena of “mass dissent” (hippies, beatnics, new Bohemians, student movements) today seem to us negative replies to the industrial society: The society of Technological Communication is rejected in order to look for alternative forms, using the means of technological society (television, press, record companies...). So there is no leaving the circle: you are trapped in it willy-nilly. Revolutions are often resolved in more picturesque forms of integration (Eco 1967 in: Desmond, McDonagh & O’Donaghoe 2000, p.260).

Eco’s comments, although made in reference to the generation of countercultures of the 1960s, seems to suggest that the contemporary countercultures face similar ideological paradoxes. According to Stanley Cohen “[...]: the proclamation of a primitivist anti-technology is made surrounded by hi-fi tape recorders and the most advanced technological gadgets; the appeal of brotherly love and communality is made by those wearing clothes and eating food made possible by the massive exploitation of the poor” (Cohen & Taylor 1998, p.162). While their reference to tape recorders is outdated, it could now be replaced by the words “i-phone, i-mac, or laptop.” The point that the counterculture are reliant on technologies and commodities from the industrialised world they wish to abandon is clear. Reflecting this argument, what can be understood from these readings of this image is that here there are identities attempting to be independent of mainstream culture, but unavoidably connected to it. Rather than referencing academic literature here, this point can be reinforced effectively by drawing on and describing

warring between the Moors and Christians. (See: Rogozen-Soltar 2007). More recently this landscape acted as the hiding place and battleground for the communist rebels fighting against the fascists in the Spanish civil war. (See: Renshaw 2011). Some of the counterculture I spoke to in casual unrecorded conversations are aware of this, and there is a concern to spiritual healing of the landscape, yet there are others for whom the land on which the encampments rest represents freedom and utopia and a place to escape from the problems of mainstream society. To the indigenous Spanish people however the landscape could have different connotations as a place of injustice, unrest and bloodshed. As Relph has commented “[...] it is not just the identity of a place that is important, but also the identity that the person or group has with that place, in particular whether they are experiencing it as an insider or as an outsider” (Relph 2008, p.45).

similar paradoxes recognisable in the artist film *'Two Years at Sea'* (Rivers 2011). Without dialogue, narrative or narration, the film visualises the life of a man called Jake who has on initial reading abandoned associations with civilization to live out an isolated life in a small croft on a remote strip of land in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. This illusion of wilderness and the character's rejection of society however is punctured on closer consideration of the landscape and paraphernalia of the habitat. The wilderness depicted in the film is a manicured environment where pine trees; a non-indigenous species, have been planted for commercial cultivation. Jake owns a truck and it is seen being used to collect wood, and while he does, according to Rivers, try to be self-sufficient,¹⁵ he has provisions bought in from the nearest town. As we see in figure 4.11, in one sequence he constructs a raft out of plastic containers to float aimlessly across a loch. Jake worked as a merchant seaman and on oil rigs¹⁶ for two years to fund his disengagement from society, (hence the title of the film), suggesting that this life demands some exchange of money for certain services. The oil produced on oil rigs and shipped on the boats he worked on is echoed in the blackness of the loch; his entanglements with and dependence on the mainstream further being suggested by the plastic containers he uses to keep afloat. As with the work of this thesis, Rivers' film therefore questions notions of wilderness, escape, utopia, freedom, and an individual's reliance on, connectivity to and collusion with the world he is attempting to dislocate himself from. Simultaneously the film meditates on the compromised construction of an outsider identity, and alludes to multiple negotiations with mainstream society.

7:4 The Straw Bale: An Alternative Building Material becomes a Contested Object

While the straw bale as a building material has been used in vernacular architectures globally for at least four hundred years as a practical and highly efficient building material¹⁷, more

¹⁵ See: [Internet] <http://www.benrivers.com/land.html>. Accessed 03.06.2019

¹⁶ See: Rose, S. (26.04.2012). [Internet] <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/apr/26/two-years-at-sea-little-happens>. Accessed 03.06.2019

¹⁷ See: Bainbridge, Steen, A. S., Steen, B. (1994)

recently it has been adopted by those concerned more specifically with lessening their impact on the environment. In this sense it has come to symbolise environmentally ethical building practice and can be seen in many buildings in intentional communities throughout the west.¹⁸ In these situations it represents an attitude to house building that is the antithesis of generic urban developments and the house as potential for financial gain. The straw bale used in this way as a building material, is subverted from its intended historic purpose as a bedding or food for animals, a by-product of an industrialised agricultural system to grow wheat and becomes physically and metaphorically a softly defiant currency acting against the capitalist economy. Hebdige makes a usefully comparable point saying:

By repositioning and recontextualizing commodities, by subverting their conventional uses and inventing new ones, the subcultural stylist gives the lie to what Althusser has called the “false obviousness of every day practice” (Althusser and Balibar, 1968), and opens up the world of objects to new and covertly oppositional readings. [...]. It is basically the way in which commodities are used in subculture which mark the subculture off from more orthodox cultural formations (Hebdige 1988, p.102).

Although discussing more particularly how different recent western youth subcultures express identity through sartorial style, he recognises how objects can represent subversive ideologies when re-appropriated within these contexts. The photographer Stephen Gill was perceptive to this phenomenon when he made a series of works titled *Off Ground* (Gill, Sinclair 2011, see: figure 7.7) in which he reacted to the London riots during the summer of 2011.¹⁹ From the ensuing detritus, Gill singled out and photographed various objects he had found littered on the ground in Hackney, east London, shortly after the events, having noted their position from news

¹⁸ For example straw bale buildings are evident at the Brithdir community in Wales UK and Tinker’s Bubble, Somerset, England, UK photographed by David Spero (2006, 2017).

¹⁹ The London riots were part of a series of riots involving looting, arson, and violence across the UK in the summer of 2011, triggered by the fatal police shooting of a civilian. See: Lewis, P. (07 August 2011) [Internet] <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2011/aug/07/tottenham-riots-peaceful-protest>



Figure 7.7. Stephen Gill. Photograph from *'Off Ground'*, 2012

items on his laptop; bricks, broken sections of paving stones, bits of garden wall and so on, which had been re-appropriated and reawakened during the riots from their intended use and used as weapons and missiles with which to bombard police vehicles and shatter shop windows prior to looting and arson. He did this using a forensic methodology; touring the sites of the riots on bike, placing the objects in a pram and returning to his studio to document them out of context. (Sinclair 2011, in: Gill, Sinclair 2011). The resulting works engage with the phenomenological qualities embodied in these objects' histories and was, I believe, a conscious realisation of the potential of photographs to convey this visually. As Badii has noted:

The physicality of the objects portrayed by Gill is fundamental. The rocks appear as if they were directly affected by the experience: their shape is defined by the way they landed on the ground, as much as by the mental state of the person that collected and threw them in the air. The act of launching the rocks can be seen as a metaphorical action through which the individuals let go of their emotional baggage, transferring it onto the stone. Each portrait is heavily charged and holds in itself a memory of the episode (Badii 2013).

Selecting the straw bale as an example of a contested object in its use by a counterculture, I have similarly utilised the potency of the phenomenological view to draw attention to the significance of inanimate objects depicted in some photographic images, and in doing so aim toward explaining how they are interpreted as subversive material. As with the displaced and re-appropriated bricks documented by Gill (2011) the straw bale in this context has been subverted by the counterculture to be used for a purpose that it was not intended. Here the object assumes a different role to that of an animal food, to become an ecologically efficient building material. It is no longer an object with a single purpose, but through its alternative application has acquired multiple connotations. If we consider the processes and actions involved in the production, interactions, journey, and history of straw bales used in several of the dwellings on sites 'A' and 'B', as seen in *Morgan, Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.8), *Anonymous (xiv), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.6), and *Peter, Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.9), then it takes on multiple



Figure 7.8. Ben Murphy. *'Morgan'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2015



Figure 7.9. Ben Murphy. *'Peter'*, Andalucia, Spain 2015

meanings. Considering the straw bale in this way points to an alternative reading where a more complicated paradoxical interpretation is possible. Heidegger famously uses the example of a chair to argue a phenomenological reading of an inanimate object, stating “The way and manner of how this chair is perceived is to be distinguished from the structure of how it is represented” (Heidegger 1925, in Mooney & Moran 2002, p.267). In other words we are able to sense the resonances of histories that are embedded within the object. According to Janet Hoskins (1998) objects have biographies which in turn cannot be separated from people’s histories. Applied to the straw bales here it is possible to consider these objects not just as appropriated products being used for environmentally sustainable construction but as objects that are the result of multiple mechanised technological processes. Imbedded within the straw bales are histories that tie them to the industrial processes of their making. How the photographs work to convey this understanding has been summed up by Burgin who says “In the very moment of their being perceived, objects are placed within an intelligible system of relationships (no reality can be innocent before the camera)” (Burgin 1982, pp.45-46). To Burgin, the photograph decontextualises the subject to magnify reality and consider these relationships. (ibid 1982, p.47). The straw bale, through a phenomenological perception translated through the photographs, begins to be understood in several ways; as a creatively reclaimed, redefined, practical object symbolising and empowering a countercultural environmentally conscientious ideology, and as a by-product of the industrialised agricultural economy that is inextricably entwined with global networks of the industrialised world. In this landscape, what is seen is material evidence of the industrialised world and a dependency on it to sustain this kind of countercultural existence. This apparent rejection of consumerism and capitalism suggested in the images discussed in this chapter becomes linked to the mainstream metaphorically with a plastic umbilical cord and points to a countercultural materialism imbedded with complex and conflicting ideological positions.

7:5 The Intrusion of Plastics in Countercultural Ideologies

The photograph *Freedom Man (ii), Andalucia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.11), depicts the self-made

dwelling created by a young man from the Czech republic who wished to be known as 'Freedom Man'. As can be seen from my photograph made three years earlier of the same home under construction, *Freedom Man (i), Andalusia, Spain 2012*, (figure 7.10), the frame of the dwelling has been constructed from tree branches, with stones and rocks forming low outer walls. Bamboo poles have been secured to the tree branches. There is uncut bamboo in the foreground and a hand saw lies on the ground in front of the dwelling. A stepladder is positioned in the centre of the dwelling. A reclaimed, pre-made window has been offered up into place within the unfinished framework. Three existing pine trees growing in the woodland have been incorporated into the internal space. At this point, the structure seems integrated within the setting. One reading of the photograph could be as an image which demonstrates the attempts of someone to create a dwelling without any concession to an artificial materiality. In *Freedom Man (ii), Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.11), however, the bamboo frame has been filled in with mud, over which blue/black tarpaulin sheets enshroud the dwelling, the three trees now piercing its plastic membrane. A pop-up tent, also made of plastic has been erected to the right of the dwelling. What began as a modest shelter composed of purely locally sourced natural materials, appears enveloped in plastic.²⁰ It is this material in its many manifestations, which in one form or another has become ubiquitous in all global environments (Zalasiewicz et al. 2016), including that of the counterculture, which deserves consideration here as problematic in relation to the ideologies and therefore identities of those concerned with living outside the larger society.

Plastic carrier bags from the European supermarket chain 'Lidl' can be seen in front of the straw bale house in figure 7.9, which also has a roof covered in plastic sheeting. Plastic can also be seen to have been used as a roofing fabric in *Anonymous (xii), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 7.12), *Anonymous (xiv) Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.6), *Morgan, Andalusia, Spain 2015* (figure 7.8), *Bruno (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2015* (figure 6.9), among many other examples. As

²⁰ For 'plastics' I use the definition "Plastics are malleable solids made of high molecular weight organic polymers. Most are entirely synthetic- primarily made from petrochemicals-although some are cellulose based" (Zalasiewicz et al./Anthropocene 13 (2016) 4-17).



Figure 7.10. Ben Murphy. *'Freedom Man (i)'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2012.



Figure 7.11. Ben Murphy. *'Freedom Man (ii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



Figure 7.12. Ben Murphy. '*Anonymous (xii)*', Andalusia, Spain, 2015

well as a plastic carrier bag screwed up next to the cooker, rice is packaged in a plastic bag in the still life photograph *Anonymous (viii), Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.4), a plastic pipe can be seen in the foreground of *Rubio and Bella, Andalusia, Spain, 2012* (figure 7.2). On close inspection many used plastic bags can be seen stuffed under the work surface of the improvised kitchen in *Sami (ii), Andalusia, Spain 2015* (figure 6.8). Storing them in this way, suggests that they could be intended for recycling, however, as with all the examples given, it is also evidence of negotiations with the outside world. Attempts to set oneself apart from mainstream society are compromised when some of the materials used to build countercultural homes, and some of the materials used and encountered in day to day living, derive from mass produced industrial processes, which are implicated in global environmental damage, and industrial and political systems that countercultures have been attempting to reject since the emergence of hippy culture in America in the 1960s.²¹ Paradoxically in disassociating themselves from the dominant system, the counterculture are regularly dependent on a consumerist driven materialistic culture which is increasingly reliant on products derived from oil (Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, eds. 2013); as a fuel to facilitate mobility, as we have seen in chapter six, for the plastic roofing or flooring of a shelter, the string that ties the straw bales used in the construction of some dwellings, and for the tools, utensils, household objects, which are made out of plastic. As Thompson has pointed out “On a global scale, plastic items are an essential part of daily life: in transport, telecommunications, clothing, footwear and as packaging materials, facilitating the distribution of a wide range of food, drink and other goods” (Thompson et al. 2009. In: Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, eds. 2013, p.151). Not only do we see how the counterculture deliberately or not, involve plastics in their material expressions of outsider identities and non-conformity, but inevitably how they are colluding with and cooperating with the myriad networks of global industries which use plastic in their products, and in turn, the political systems they want to reject. Describing the extraction and journeys of oil from a heavily guarded inaccessible area of the Caspian Sea to processing factories in Germany, James Marriott and Mika Minio-Paluello

²¹ See: Lablonsky’s (2000) account of hippy culture in *The Hippy Trip* in which there are numerous references to the countercultures total rejection of the political, ideological and capitalist systems of ‘the Plastic Society’.

have highlighted how plastics are contaminated with global politics, environmental damage and the disruption of indigenous people's land rights and traditions, saying:

At each stage of plastic's 'pre-life' before consumption, one or more corporations generate a profit, driving the process onwards. During this brief moment, it participates in numerous processes that entail, at minimum, interactions with local communities, the complexities of geopolitics and the dynamics of ecological systems- each of which is marked by violence of one sort or another (Marriott & Minio-Paluello 2014. In: Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, eds. (2013), p.181).

So in this sense, however plastic is reconfigured or recycled by the counterculture, its use here ties them to an industry which represents some of the politics and processes that they seem to outwardly reject.

In the new world optimism of post World War Two America, plastics manufacturing companies such as DuPont were keen to promote plastics as 'utopian materials' (Mielke 1995, p.4. In: Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, 2013, p.23) for their potential to be moulded into whatever form or product at relatively low economic cost. In the imaginations of the plastics industry, Christmas trees, flowers, wooden furniture and so on, could be bettered with plastic alternatives, facilitating the path to social mobility for all, regardless of economic background. However, as articulated in the writings of key countercultural icons, Jack Kerouak (1957) and John Updike (1960) for example, and a number of environmentally aware academics such as Charles Reich (1970), there was increasing suspicion and cynicism of the material, as Americans became uncomfortable with the toxicity and inauthenticity of a material that attempted to imitate and replace natural ones (Mielke 1995, p.8. In: Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, 2013). This sense of unease with the material was also conveyed by Barthes who observed:

[...] the age old function of nature is modified: it is no longer the idea, the pure substance to be regained or imitated: an artificial matter, more bountiful than all the natural deposits, is about

to replace her, and to determine the very invention of forms. A luxurious object is still of this earth, it still recalls, albeit in a precious mode, its mineral or animal origin, the natural theme of which it is but one actualization. Plastic is wholly swallowed up in the fact of being used: ultimately, objects will be invented for the sole pleasure of using them. The hierarchy of substances is abolished: a single one replaces them all: the whole world can be plasticized, and even life itself since, we are told, they are beginning to make plastic aortas (Barthes, Howard, 1993, p.98).

Before the term was created, Barthes scepticism for the substance prophetically pointed to the new epoch of the anthropocene,²² where artificial materials have permanently shifted the geology, environments and atmosphere of the earth. What is evident is that plastics have been under suspicion from their inception by academics, writers, environmentalists, the counterculture and the general public at least in America and Europe, and yet paradoxically, in one way or another, all of us are involved in its use.

Zalasiewicz specifically addressing the impact of plastic on the natural environment (Zalasiewicz 2016, pp.4-17) confirms Barthes statement arguing that plastic is a major environmental hazard and the production of plastics since its rapid post World War Two expansion has permanently changed the geology of the planet to such a marked extent that it is considered a major contributor to the anthropocene.

To describe anything as ‘Plastic’ in 1970’s America suggested inauthenticity, cheapness and the unnatural. This sentiment was particularly referenced as such by the Hippy culture in America of that period.²³ To Bensaude Vincent, “[Indeed], the counter-culture movement, which criticized the American way of life, used the term ‘plastic’ as a metaphor for superficial and

²² The ‘Anthropocene’ as defined by Crutzen, (2000) In: Ehlers, Krafft, Singh, eds. (2005 1:2. pp.13-18)

²³ See: Footnote 19

inauthentic people whose lives were driven by a passion for consumption and change.” (Bensaude Vincent in: Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, eds. 2013, pp.17-29) However, Lablonski points out that despite the hippie movements’ “[...] condemnation of the total American system” (Lablonsky 2000, p.319), where the values and institutions of the ‘plastic society’ were to be renounced, disobeyed, and challenged, it also seemed to contradict itself (ibid 2000). To Lablonsky:

Despite their claims to the contrary, the hippies are very much involved in a subtle, sub-rosa way with the society in which they exist. In placing most of what they are doing under the microscope for analysis we can see that many of their patterns are a reaction-formation, in the opposite extreme, from the basic institutions of the alleged ‘plastic’ American society (Lablonski 2000, pp.324-325).

I argue that the same can apply to the counterculture of this research, in that their identities are to an even greater extent concerned with the same issues. Now, however, the ‘plastic society’ (ibid) is perhaps harder to escape in that it is embodied and manifested evermore physically in the material culture of both the wider society and the counterculture. As consumer choices even in remote areas become accessed, homogenised and narrowed by globalised industries, corporations, supermarket chains (as embodied in the Lidl plastic carrier bag in figure 7.9, for example) and so on, (because it is they who control what is offered to the market), then interactions with, or use of, or purchase of objects made from plastic, or objects encased in plastic; a material produced and used by these industries, is seemingly inevitable even for those who attempt to reject such impositions. When it has been said that “More than any other material, plastic has become emblematic of economies of abundance and ecological destruction” (Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael, 2013, p.3), there is a direct and unavoidable conflict of ideologies for those within the counterculture who wish to reject the systems imposed on them by the mainstream, and who are trying to uphold a lifestyle which is not controlled by the wider society and yet are dependent on this material in one form or another. When the expression of an

individual's freedom and identity is concerned with removing oneself from the dominant society, then in using plastics, a countercultural sense of freedom could be compromised. When there is no other choice but to have entanglements with plastics, then it seems impossible to be completely outside of the mainstream systems influence. As Baudrillard has said:

[Indeed], we no longer have the option of not choosing, of buying an object on the sole grounds of its utility, for no object these days is offered for sale on such a 'zero-level' basis. Our freedom to choose causes us to participate in a cultural system willy-nilly. It follows that the choice in question is a specious one: to experience it as freedom is simply to be less sensible of the fact that it is imposed upon us as such, and that through it society as a whole is likewise imposed upon us (Baudrillard 2005, p.151).

Following Baudrillard's logic and turning attention to the use of plastics in the ready-made shells of cars and trucks, which are often converted, (as we have already seen) by the counterculture into a home, there is a paradox for those whose identities are in part expressed through their customised vehicles: Vehicles are made in part out of plastics and mobilised by the same oil dependent industries. They are then implicitly immersed in the global industrial networks of plastic production. Simultaneously for the counterculture (and many others) the vehicle is a symbol of freedom, individual expression, independence (Miller 2005, Redshaw 2008) and defiance, while being an object designed and manufactured by major corporations, currently still enslaved to the oil industry and a political system, both of which the counterculture attempt to alienate themselves from. The customised vehicle-as-home, as appropriated and adapted by the countercultures of this research promotes the illusion of providing the potential for freedom of movement and self-expression yet its movements and construction are entrapped within the parameters governed by the system it strives to reject.

7:6 Conclusion

In this chapter, through consideration of objects and materials visualised in certain photographs, I have argued that attention is drawn to some of the problems, paradoxes and contradictions inherent in living outside of mainstream society for the individuals of this counterculture. Reflecting on how home is used as a way to restage and maintain countercultural identities whose ideologies were formed in previous decades and in other countries, examples have been explored which highlight the ways in which particular types of vehicles, which have been converted into neo-nomadic homes, and their contents, hold and symbolise historic outsider values and express an alinement to a particular countercultural movement. The chapter has suggested how these material representations of identity could be diluted and interpreted differently when out of their original geographic and political context. It has also been noted how new objects from the local area brought into these environments, add to a bricolage which supports the argument that these identities are in flux. While it can be seen that historic roots are maintained and encapsulated in the objects people bring with them and surround themselves with, countercultural identities adapt to and are affected by outside influences when displaced in a foreign land. This chapter has discussed some of the entanglements between the counterculture and the dominant society in their day to day use of domestic objects such as the washing machine seen in *Nick (i), Andalusia, Spain, 2006*, (figure 7.3). Focusing on the straw bale as a contested object, I have considered how its manufacture involves multiple entanglements with and is a product of the industrial world. In the context of its application as an alternative radical building material on these countercultural sites, such an object highlights a paradox in that while considered as an ecologically friendly material, there are inevitable dependencies on, and interactions with the dominant system the counterculture aim to distance themselves from. This argument has been explored further by considering briefly how plastics, as seen in the photographs and evident in multiple forms on the sites, are indicative of a problematic relationship and negotiations between counterculture and the wider society. Demonstrating that the manufacture of plastics stems from the oil industry and involves exploiting a finite natural resource, and a myriad of interdependent processes, political systems

and global industrial networks to facilitate its creation and distribution, the chapter has discussed how some countercultural beliefs, such as a deep concern for the environment, and living outside of the influences of capitalist systems can be compromised by the use of this material and its entanglements with the hegemonic. While I do not wish to suggest in the photographs that the countercultures use of plastics invalidates the credibility of their own senses of outsider identity, and intend the work to be reflective and contemplative, the aim here is to use the photographs potential for ambiguity and for raising questions, so as to allude to some of the inherent problems, tensions and compromises which arise when people try to live outside of and reject the structures of conventional society.

Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The aim of this research has been to produce a series of carefully composed and considered high resolution large format analogue photographs of neo-nomadic multi-national migrant countercultural dwellings and habitats which raise and address questions about countercultural identity. Foregrounding photography as empirical research within the framework of cultural geography I have argued for and offered alternative ways of contextualising, seeing and understanding countercultural identity. In the still unclearly defined territory of practice based research, I have attempted to take up the cause argued for by Harriet Hawkins, who stated:

This is to extend those questions of how to practice and assess the interdisciplinary scholarship that sees art being used as an empirical source for geographical study, by posing a related set of questions including how can (or should) creative geographical practices be judged? Intellectually and/ or aesthetically? As both 'art' and as 'geography?' And what does this mean, especially if art's own critical frameworks are also those of philosophy and critical social theory? These remain important questions that we should continue to engage with as creative geographies become an increasing part of our own expanding fields of disciplinary practice. (Hawkins, H. 2012, p.66).

With original photographs made on temporary countercultural sites in south east Spain as source material, presented as large analogue prints in an exhibition environment and as digitally scanned images from the original negatives in the thesis, the research has explored how individuals and groups represent and distinguish themselves through their makeshift dwellings and habitats. With photography at its core, the thesis aimed to respond to the four main questions posed in the introduction, presenting the practice as a catalyst through which to draw out,

identify, interrogate and understand these identities. Through consideration of place and space, home and materiality, and entanglements with the mainstream, their makeshift homes and habitats as depicted in the photographs, devoid of the occupants physical presence, have been critically analysed using associated theories so as to indicate and reveal aspects of the make-up of their identities. Framing the research within cultural geography and photography, the thesis has drawn on and developed phenomenological understandings of place and space through its application in creative practice. Throughout the thesis, the potential of photography has been used, considered and argued for as an effective and powerful medium of enquiry; not to augment or be governed by the text, but to empower it and be credited as the primary means of knowledge production. In combination with theory, the intention here has also been to bring photographic art practices out from the peripheral boundaries of fine art research to be considered as equal within interdisciplinary research.

Acknowledging that in the context of research, photographs require written explanations and analysis, this thesis would however certainly not and could not exist without the original photographs. To Wells “photography has a *revelatory* capacity; it remarks more than that which might at first be perceived and facilitates detailed analysis and contemplation.” (Wells 2011, p.39). To this end, the photographs remain the key element of the research and have been consistently referenced as visual sources of information. Photographs produced using a large format analogue camera, which records fine details have been used to this effect here, providing the stimulus and means for interrogating the subject matter. However, As Warburton has said, one’s understanding of an image is based on our knowledge of the histories embedded in whatever subject matter is represented. (Warburton 2002). When context and knowledge about what is depicted is brought to the reading of an image, the image’s meaning can be transformed. In this sense written analysis of visual research material has been critical in the unpacking and understanding of information held in these photographs. While it has been explained that the visual language of photography is bound within its mechanical parameters to a greater or lesser extent, and limited as such (Elkins 2011, Flusser 2000, Wells 2011), this thesis set out to prove

that it is a credible form of communicating personal responses to a subject and justifiable as a prime means of geographic and art research; eliciting multi layered readings which are different to and unachievable through the purely textual. (Richter 2010, Schwartz 2018, Wells 2011). This thesis has used the strengths of an interdisciplinary approach, fusing photography with photographic and cultural geographic theory to demonstrate, understand, explain, transmit, and question aspects of contemporary countercultural identity through dwelling place and space, and habitat.

The thesis has been underpinned by theories of place, space and their interrelationships with identity, from cultural geography (e.g. Cresswell 1996, 2001, 2004, 2006, 2014, 2017, Massey 2000, 2005, Relph 1976, Seamon 1989, 2017, Tuan 1977, Wylie, J. 2007, 2012, et. al.), social anthropology (e.g. Ingold 2000. Miller 2008. Tilley 1994. et al.), photography (e.g. Bate 2012, 2015, Cheug 2010, Elkins 2011, Flusser 2000, Pettersson 2011, Walden 2010, Wells 2002, 2011. et al.), and phenomenology (e.g. Heidegger 2000, Husserl 2017, Merleau-Ponty 2012, Reinach 2002, et al.). Within much of this literature there has been a phenomenological undercurrent which has informed both the making of the practice and its dissemination. The literature review opened up some of the sources from which these theories have been developed, while also discussing literature that has given historic context to countercultural identities so as to understand their external influences.

While the thesis has positioned photographic practice as central in interdisciplinary research into countercultural identity it has also been the aim for the photographs to be valued outside this context; made with aesthetic and conceptual reasoning worthy of critical analysis and exhibition within and without the academy. This has been achieved with work from the photographic series being exhibited publically in a number of major galleries and museums; for example; the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, (2007/8), The Vlaams Architecture Institute, Antwerp, Belgium, (2018), The DongGang International Photography Festival, Yeongwol, South Korea, (2017), and The Architectural Association Gallery, London, (2017). Some photographs from the

series are held in the permanent collections of The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and The Archive of Modern Conflict, London. Further to this the work has been the subject of many magazine and art journal features globally, including; The Observer Magazine, UK. (19.03.2017), British Journal of Photography, UK. (02.2017), Art World, China (10. 2017), Jungle Magazine, UK. (Edition 03, 2018), Lens Culture, UK. [Internet]. (14.02.2017), GUP Magazine, Amsterdam, Netherlands, [Internet] (27.02.2017), L'Oeil de la Photographie, France, (22.03.2017).¹ The photograph *Alpha and Imani, (i), Andalucia, Spain* (figure 6.2) has also been published as the front cover image on the book *Place: An Introduction*. (Cresswell 2015). These outputs (referenced in Appendix Two) have opened up the work to a global audience both public and academic, and hopefully encouraged debate about photography, countercultural identity, cultural geography, the role of photography as research and the way in which an identity can be expressed and understood through photographs of dwellings and habitat without the depiction of a physical human presence.

The methodology set out to explain the making of the photographs, their dissemination and the importance of the use of large format analogue processes. The reasoning for using a film plate camera, diffused light conditions and colour desaturation were discussed as a means of producing a distinctive aesthetic, where neutrally colour balanced, low contrast, high definition images do not highlight or disguise any aspect of the image and cannot bias perceptions of what is and isn't significant. This process was also used as a visual method of interpreting and expressing the experience of the artist's witnessing in reality. In this sense, the methodology described the photography cautiously as a form of documentary photo-realism (Bate 2009), and as a type of photographic image making suited to phenomenological interpretation. In employing this approach to the practice, a visually driven methodology enabled close critical analysis of the resulting images. The approach to photography has been critical here to expand cultural geographic thought and knowledge about contemporary countercultural identity, specifically through the ways in which it can be represented in dwellings and habitat. As a writer advocating

¹ A comprehensive list of publications in which the photographs have been published is given in Appendix Two.

and examining relationships between art and cultural geography, Hawkins, H. has proposed “In short, intersecting fields of geography and art might not merely offer one field as a model or form of critique for the other, but rather could instead demand that we move beyond the existing horizons of both” (2014, p.241). In doing this research, I have aimed to contribute to this ambition by using and positioning a sophisticated photographic practice within interdisciplinary cultural geographic research and also argue for cultural geography as a framework through which to inform the making and exploring of art practice. This thesis argues then that creative practices can not only help in our geographic understanding of the world and our relationship to it, but can offer complex readings to become an integral part of geographic thinking alongside textual interpretations. (Hawkins, H. 2014, Wells 2011, Schwartz 2018.)

By making repeated field trips to sites considered in this research over a period of several years, in combination with the type of conspicuous equipment used, relationships between researcher and counterculture resulted in intimate access to their personal and shared spaces. Protecting individuals identities through partial anonymisation and (as a by-product of an intentional conceptual element) removing people from the compositions of the photographs, the coding of locations, addressed ethical concerns about participants privacy. Throughout the research there has been a phenomenological interpretation of place and space through photographs. It is not just that phenomenology can be a useful theory through which to approach our understanding of the world around us; in particular the relationships between people and place and space, but also the way in which photographs have the potential to emit the phenomenological resonances of what is experienced by the photographer and presented in front of the lens. To compound this argument, this has also been shown in the work of other artists’ work such as Almond (2014), Gill (2011), Shafran (2000, 2010), Singh (2016, 2017). Photography has been presented then, and argued for, as a conduit for sensing and responding to the phenomenological. (Benjamin 2007, Browning 1843, in: Patterson 2011, Burgin 1988, Cheung 2010, Emme & Kirova 2006, et. al.). While photographs cannot answer all the questions that they potentially invite us to ask, photography has, as Wells observed (referencing Adams 1983), since its inception “embodied a

contemplative way of being within space.” (Wells 2011, p.128). In this way photographs can illicit the phenomenological responses to place and space referred to in this thesis. (Cheung 2010, Pettersson 2011, Relph 2008).

In producing photographs of dwellings and habitats without human presence, the intention has been to enable reflection on distinctions and different aspects of countercultural identities through their temporal homes and material possessions. Without the distraction of someone’s returning gaze from within the photograph, I have argued that a person’s identity can be clearly represented, phenomenologically sensed and understood through their absence. (Elkins 2011). By contemplating the material things that have been used, arranged, scattered, collected, cared for, transposed to another place, appropriated, and/or built by someone, I have discussed how things and particularly personal possessions are intertwined with someone’s identity and history. (Marschall 2019, Miller 2006, Olsen 2013, Walsh 2006).

Notions of place, the construction of countercultural home, and the compromises, paradoxes and entanglements inherent in rejecting the systems of the hegemonic have been overarching concerns through which to consider countercultural identity. These themes have been drawn out and discussed in chapters five, six and seven through specific photographs.

Analysing the situation of a number of dwellings on two sites, I have argued in chapter five that place in a landscape is important in the construction of identity, and in this case, as a means of distinguishing types of countercultural identity. As well as identifying that the dwellings themselves tell us something about countercultural group affiliations, I have shown that the landscape in which these dwellings rested has equal importance in the establishment and reinforcement of identities. Distinctly different kinds of countercultural identities were shown to be evident on the two principle sites; each site being in different physical geographies and offering different experiences of landscape, habitats, and potentials for the expression of and the playing out of countercultural identities. As depicted in the photographs, counterculture on site

‘A’ was seen to be comprised of a predominantly British population with links to new traveller and rave culture and connections to UK rave party organisers such as Bedlam, Spiral Tribe and Mutoid Waste Company, who specialized in creating carnivalesque spectacular dance music based events at festivals across Europe, often held in neglected urban or remote rural environments (Abrahams & Wishart 2015, St John 2009). The types of dwelling, such as customised coaches, trucks and caravans, and the objects in and around them, and their deliberate positioning on a mainly dried up riverbed, have been shown to contribute to the alienating post-apocalyptic aesthetic aimed for by this type of counterculture. Through photographs made on site ‘B’ I showed evidence of multinational countercultural encampments. These dwellings were often hidden in wooded areas and I argued, represented a number of differing countercultural ideologies which stemmed from or amalgamated or reinterpreted western countercultural traditions and histories. These were highlighted and considered through certain photographs and through *Francesca’s Map* (figure 5.6). The representative photographs demonstrated how landscape affects and is affected by those who are involved with it. Countercultural beliefs have been seen to be affirmed through and in part shaped by the positioning of dwellings and their situations within a landscape. As such the thesis argued that geography, region and people’s interactions within those elements, contribute to atmosphere, character and sense of place. (Seamon 1986, Wylie, J. 2007). The photographic and written parts of the thesis have shown that for those who live in and around customised vehicles, mobility, as Cresswell has pointed out (1996), is in itself an act of defiance and transgression from dominant conventions which reasserts and confirms their outsider identities; their sense of ‘us and them’; those who are inside the counterculture and those who are outside it. The siting of temporary neo-nomadic encampments and the imposition of their own foreign cultural practices, that disobey authority and convention, onto a landscape already embedded with layers of historic conflicts concerning the indigenous people has added to the ways in which this landscape is perceived as such. Landscape, as the thesis has shown, is experienced differently and means different things, depending on relationships to it. To re-affirm this, as Bender states “The same place at the same moment will be experienced differently by different people; [...] When [...]

one considers the variable effects of historical and cultural particularity, the permutations on how people interact with place and landscape are almost unending, [...] (Bender 2013, p.303). The use and customisation of vehicles has also been argued to contribute to a sense of freedom. (Miller 2005). Further to this unorthodox use of vehicles as living space, situating their encampments on land owned by the state can also be seen as an action of disobedience. Paradoxically, however, I have suggested that in gathering together on these sites, these countercultural groups display elements of conformity; in their use of similar types of vehicles and dwellings, and acceptance of unwritten codes of appropriate behavior.

The use of graffiti evident on some of the vehicle dwellings, has pointed to those who are attempting to project anti-authoritarian provocations. I have argued that in this rural setting, as depicted in the photographs, the shock of graffiti becomes heightened through its displacement away from the urban; setting people apart, being a deliberate and confrontational act of transgression, (Cresswell 1996) and helping to define those who do and don't belong to a place and a culture.

Where chapter five considered identity through relations to place and landscape, chapter six recognised and focused on the significance of home; as an inward and outward manifestation and expression of ideology and lifestyle. The physical appearance and materiality of dwellings as well as the things inside and outside dwellings, were considered as a way of understanding, interpreting and differentiating countercultural identities. Relph stated "Home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling place of being. Home is not just the house you happen to live in, it is not something that can be anywhere, that can be exchanged, but an irreplaceable centre of significance" (Relph 2008, p.39). Regardless to these homes being unconventional in appearances, construction and setting, they are as much a signifier and statement of someone's identity as a suburban house, or Georgian manor house in rural England, or tribal village hut in the South American Amazon rainforest is. Despite the countercultural homes being inherently transient and ephemeral, (as it has been established that these are neo-nomadic people), these significances have been repeatedly demonstrated through

consideration of the countercultural dwellings represented in the photographs. By close analysis and comparison of images, chapter six has deconstructed what it is that constitutes types of countercultural home; what the material components are that go towards their identification of and expression of otherness; how through the appropriation of everyday objects, these things become counterculturally meaningful, and in turn how home enables and is integral to the make-up, playing out of, reinforcement of, and expression of different forms of the countercultural self. In the case of the customisation of vehicles into homes, the countercultural home has been seen to be a transportable physical and metaphysical space, which binds together, holds and allows for a transnational (Blunt & Dowling 2006, Walsh 2006) neo-nomadic countercultural identity to be at once expressed inwardly and outwardly. Particularly as seen with the British travellers these liminal spaces connect the past to the present, offering the occupants a space in which personal and group histories resonate and memories can be encapsulated. These spaces give a sense of freedom in that they are not physically bound to the land, and as such contribute to the important countercultural mindset of being other to the mainstream, and for these individuals to communicate their difference. (Hebdige 1988).

Looking in detail at the contents of these dwelling spaces (e.g. figure 6.1, figure 6.2, figure 6.8) differences emerged between them which have distinguished group affiliations and cultural backgrounds. In some cases, the material possessions inside and outside these homes and the homes themselves can be seen to be the manifestation of shared memories of countercultural events, personal histories or national idiosyncrasies, which act as the agency through which their identities are expressed and maintained. We have seen through these images that a sense of belonging to a particular tribe and a reinforcement of identity is achieved in part through the type of dwelling and it's contents. Objects, including the dwellings, have been discovered to hold cultural references and meanings that help them and us define who people are, what and who they identify with and where they originate. (Marschall 2019). Further to this, mobility has been recognised as a form of emancipation and transgression and explored through Baudrillard (2005), Miller (2005), Cresswell (1996), among others. Through the potential for mobility, in combination with their subversive appropriation and customisation into living spaces, I showed

how vehicles of various kinds can encapsulate a defiant anti-establishment ideology and voice an individual or groups transgressions and disassociations from the imposed order of a hegemony.

In contrast to vehicle based counterculture, different forms of dwellings and their contents from site 'B' reflected the expression of other identities. Through figure 6.7 for example, a new hybrid international countercultural identity was indicated, marrying elements from 1960s hippy culture such as the adoption in part of Asian aesthetics, with more recent twentieth and twenty first century neo-nomadic influences (D'Andrea 2014, Mackay 1996, Worthington 2005). In the case of figure 6.9, and 6.10 another individual's detachment from mainstream systems of power and an anti-capitalist, anti-consumerist, environmentally concerned hybrid ideology, mixing elements of neo-punk, new traveller, hippie and rave cultures, is represented through a minimally furnished uncluttered interior space; where the idea of home has been pared down to basic requirements; a shelter providing privacy, protection from weather, a bed, a chair, a stove, an improvised table in the form of a rock, and an outside composting toilet- arguably challenging state controlled systems of waste disposal and notions of what is and isn't waste through its unconnectedness. (Pickering 2010).

Dwellings such as those depicted in figures 6.11, 6.12, 6.13, showed similarities with the dwelling spaces represented in the photographs of Khan (1973), and Elliott (1974), (see figures 6.14, 6.15), suggesting that the people who constructed and lived in these spaces were emulating or influenced by the lifestyle of a previous generation of hippies stemming from the countercultural ideologies and actions of people such as Brand (1971), Kesey (1964) and Leary (1966). Witnessed in the photographs of these habitations, I argue, is evidence that some people recreate an historic hippy identity through which to maintain their sense of historic countercultural otherness. Unlike other dwellings described in the thesis, I suggest the aesthetic of these spaces, created through the combination of fabrics, colours and household objects, echoes a similar aesthetic to that of the hippies established in the 1960s; one which symbolised the rejection of mainstream conservative western values such as regular work and advocated for example, the use of psychoactive drugs as a way to fulfilment and spiritual enlightenment.

(Berger 1981, Frye 1994, Lablonsky 2000). In this way, these dwellings could be seen as expressions of retrogressive, static countercultural identities, which are constructed around similar preoccupations.

Utilising the potential of phenomenological interpretation through photography (Cheung 2010, Pettersson 2011), an approach to understanding and unearthing information about the materiality depicted in images was reasserted in chapter six by giving examples of other artists photographic works, that were seen to work phenomenologically (e.g. Frazer 2006, Shafran 2008-9). The phenomenological consideration of material things (Bachelard 1994, Baudrillard 2005, Hebdige 1988, Heidegger 2002, Ingold 2000, Marschall 2019, Miller 2008, Olsen 2013, Relph 2008, Seamon 2009, Walsh 2006, et al.) has enabled discussion about relationships between things and people, and the way in which objects can begin to assume alternative meanings to their original purpose through their reimagined repurposing or repositioning. Indications of and differences in identities have been seen to be affected by and represented through material matter. Through the process of photography we can continue to revisit things as they appeared to us at a particular time, by framing and detaching them from time and three dimensional space and seeing them in two dimensional stillness. In this contemplation, objects can be seen to emit a sense of their essence beyond their inert material states; as Heidegger terms, their “Thingness” (Heidegger 1962, in: Mooney & Moran 2002, p.266).

Chapter seven focused on considering some potential paradoxes involved in attempting to reject mainstream society which became evident through the photographs. One set of questions raised here was how a vehicle re-appropriated into a dwelling space could be effective in perpetuating and reinforcing identities that were culturally, geographically, politically and historically out of place, or if new versions of this identity were created and contained in this transposition; whether in their relocation, there was a dilution or a concentration of identity. I have concluded that in their displacement to a different country and inevitable new cultural influences, there are paradoxes in maintaining a historically based countercultural identity. However, while this may be the case for some, through this distancing in time and place, I have also argued that other new

hybrid identities emerge, (what I termed ‘neo-punk’, ‘neo-nomad’, and ‘neo-hippy’), formed from the continual reimagining of historic countercultural groups, affected by other countercultural groups; each with their own sets of references, adapting to and responding to new geographies, coming together from different parts of the world in this region of Spain. While it may be paradoxical to transpose an identity from one country to another, here it appears not to be a problem for those who do.

Relations and tensions between the imposition of a manmade makeshift dwelling, manmade products and a manicured landscape managed by local authorities were highlighted through the dwelling and habitat depicted in figure 7.6. Here as in other images, varying levels of dependencies on the outside world were pointed to, such as the use of a washing machine (figure 7.3). This and other objects and materials depicted suggest that there were signs of ideological compromise. For example, the straw bale was deconstructed as an object being used as a building material in some makeshift dwellings that could be seen as a symbol of environmentally concerned countercultural identity, and often associated with those attempting to live a low environmental impact off-grid lifestyle. In one sense, I argued, the straw bale represents a reclaiming of and subversion of its intended application as animal food, into one of the building blocks of a certain type of countercultural ideology. However, tracing the processes involved in the manufacture and transportation of this product, it was argued that the counterculture were implicated in potentially environmentally damaging industrial agricultural manufacturing processes that connected them to the society that they rejected and were aiming to be disassociated from.

As a reminder of ours and their connections to unsustainable global industries and economic systems perhaps the most problematic, pervasive, ubiquitous and unavoidable material, evidenced in and affecting the environments of these countercultures, as everywhere else, is plastic. In figures 7.6, 7.8, 7.9, 7.11, for example, we see dwellings shrouded in plastic sheeting. Elsewhere in these and other images, plastic bags, plastic containers and plastic tubing can be seen being put to use. If it is the intention of these countercultures to distance themselves as much as possible from the imposed political, economic, industrial and technological systems

and networks of mainstream society, as is expressed in part through their dwellings and habitats, then the use of plastics in and around their homes and habitats can be interpreted as contradictory to countercultural aims and therefore paradoxical. Plastics in all their forms, were seen to be products of the oil industry, and linked to capitalism, climate change and environmental degradation (Gabrys, Hawkins, G., Michael 2013, Zalasiewicz 2016). This may seem a rather pedantic argument, however it highlights the difficulties and impossibilities of maintaining a wholly separated countercultural identity, whatever form that may take. The paradox of being connected to and involved in global networks of environmentally damaging industrial processes and wanting to be distanced from these was also noted when considering the countercultures use of vehicles both as a form of dwelling, transport and as a symbol of freedom; most vehicles of course being dependent on roads, supplies of oil and a myriad of interwoven, interdependent industries and products. In these cases, the makeshift temporal dwellings, their placement in remote landscapes, and their occupants and builders attempts to disconnect from hegemonic systems, initially may have seemed to set them apart from society. However, as we have seen, these identities are, like everyone else, unavoidably and effectively enveloped in products from the oil industries; encapsulated in and inescapably bound to global industries and their associated networks.

Having recognised these potential inconsistencies between living outside of the mainstream and its practical enactment, these habitations are however imbued with, invested with and resonate the countercultural aspirations of those who create and live in these places. Personal and group countercultural histories have been recognised within and through these makeshift or customised homes. In this way I argue that countercultural identities are seen in the photographs to be enmeshed with, involved with, expressed and maintained through these spaces and places.

In this thesis I have used a considered photographic practice interpreted through theories concerning place and space to observe, interrogate and investigate the make-up of contemporary neo- nomadic countercultural identities; to offer a different way of understanding to that of purely textual analysis, to enable distinctions of an identity to surface and to ask what these identities are and what they indicate; to consider how homes in the form of converted customised

vehicles, ramshackle self-made temporary dwellings, caravans, mud huts, straw bale buildings, among others, their contents and surrounding geographies, play an important role in the construction, maintenance, reimagining and expression of countercultural identities; how they allow for a way of life to be played out, how these identities are compromised, how they exist in relation to the outside world, and how they maintain differences.

The photographs have been drawn on as empirical research to explore and reflect on countercultural identity in relation to dwelling place, habitat, home, materiality, freedom, dependency, and how place and space are fundamental to our being and invested with histories and cultural meanings (Blunt & Dowling 2006, Cresswell 1996, 2004, 2015, Massey & Jess 2000, Relph 2008, et al). Through image and textual interpretation I have presented, recognised and discussed how not only the people themselves have been transported from their place of origin, but also how historic and cultural aspects of their identities have been carried inside their customised vehicles and dwellings as well, in the form of material culture (e.g. figures 6.1, 6.2, 6.5). In this sense, I have indicated how dwellings and habitats are important and integral to the construction of countercultural identities.

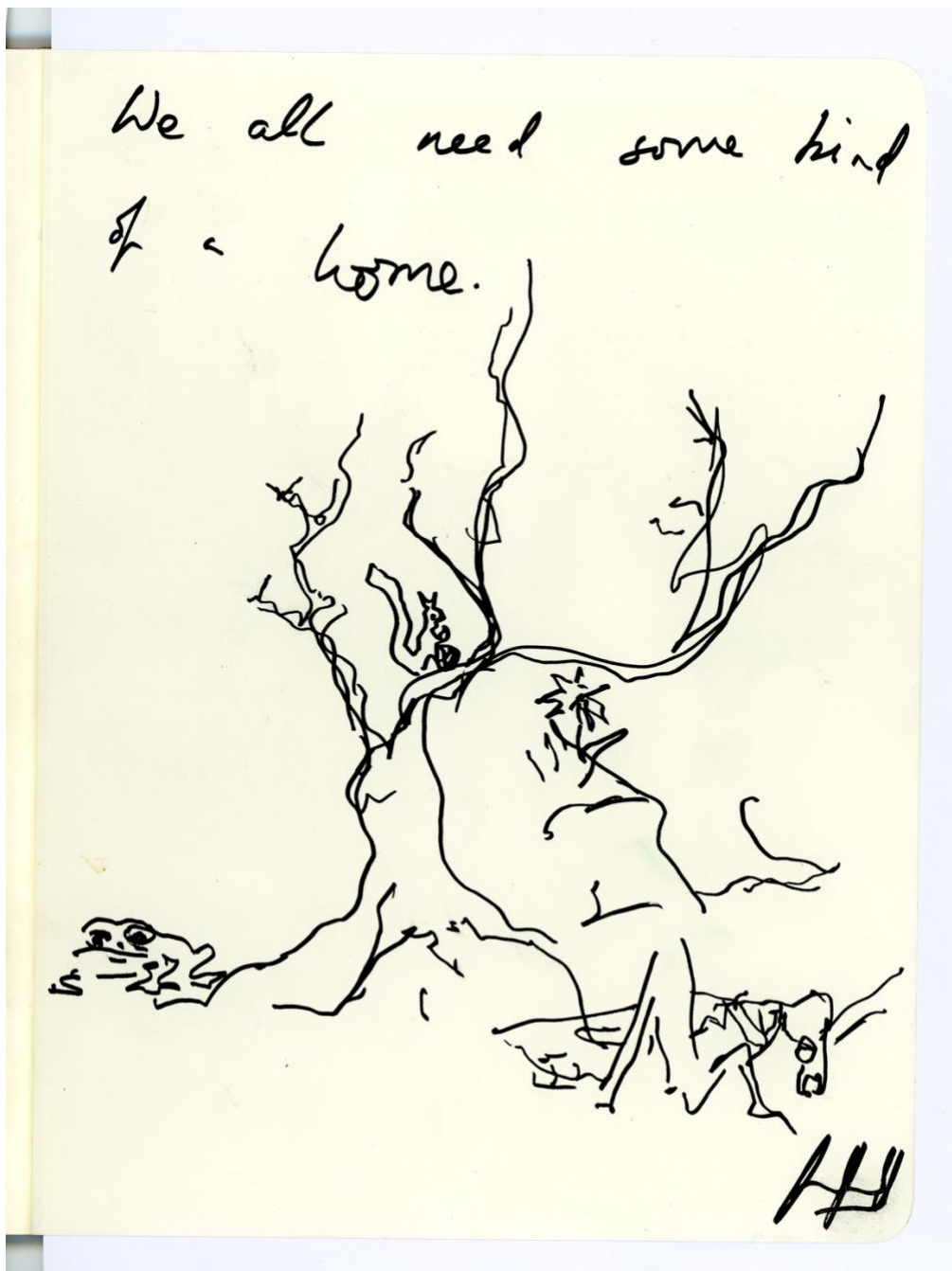
As a methodological tool, geographers have used photography from many sources since its inception; self-made, research participant, collaborative, commissioned, found, and so on, as a way of acquiring data (Hawkins, H. 2012, Rose 2007, Schwartz 2011, Wells 2011). Yet the potential for the practice and application of conceptual aesthetically considered photography within research as a geographer has yet to be exploited. It may not be possible or of interest to a geographer to engage with photography with a committed and conscientious approach, such as that presented here, and while I do not suggest all geographers should think about or be capable of producing or using photography in such a way, and nor would I expect all photographers to think geographically, it is important to be aware of the narrow perceptions geography has had toward photographic practice as a central part of inter-disciplinary research and draw attention to its possibilities. While some geographers have used their own creative photographic work as part of research, the potential rewards of making and analysing highly considered photography within geographic research has been neglected. When consideration of every element in the

production of the image becomes important as part of the process of doing research, this contributes to a deeper understanding of what it is that the geographer is contemplating. In the process of making such work, an embodied immersive engagement with place and space which goes beyond the boundaries of a singular discipline becomes possible. As a means of seeing, describing, interrogating, responding to and understanding human relations to place and space, photography of this kind can present and express questions and responses impossible to articulate through other means. In combination with a theoretical geographic approach and analysis, an intersection occurs; encouraging and progressing the production and articulation of geographic and photographic knowledge.

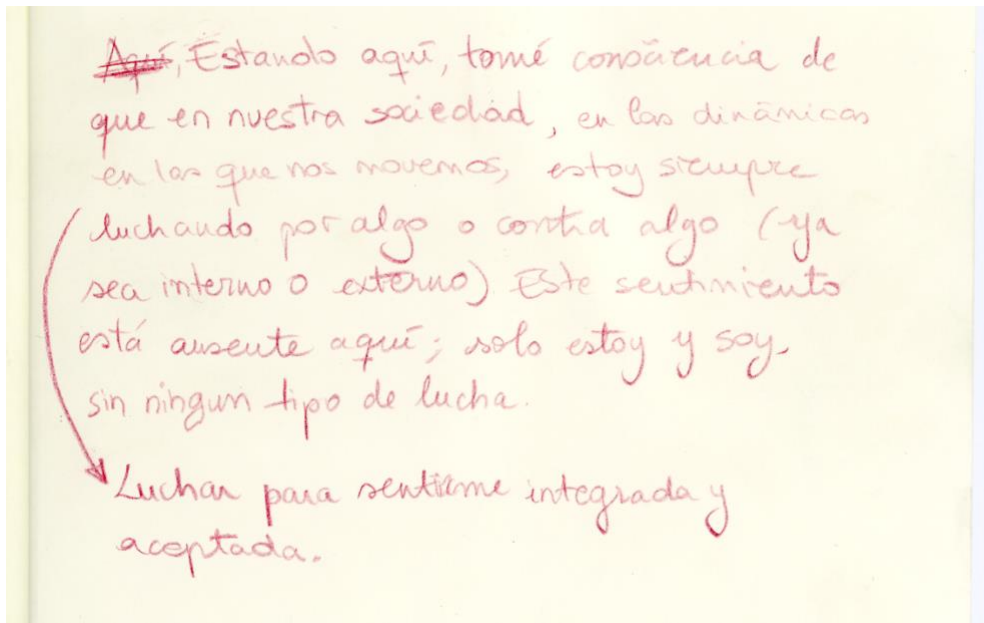
Constructing a Countercultural Self: A Photographic Exploration of Countercultural Identity Through Place and Space

APPENDIX ONE

Participant Statements



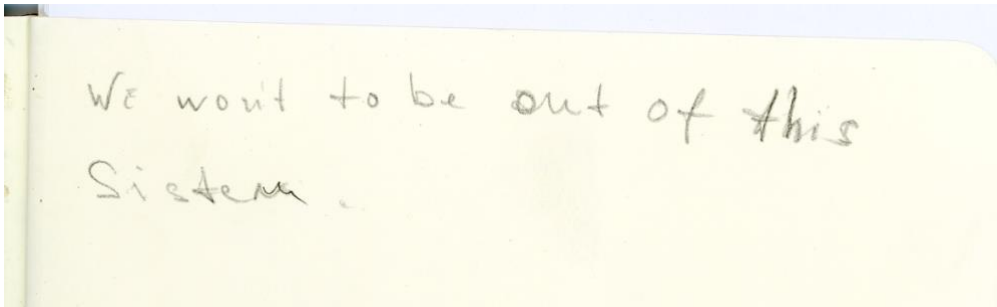
A1/1. Drawing and statement by participant named 'Avi'. Site 'B', Andalucia, Spain, January 2015.



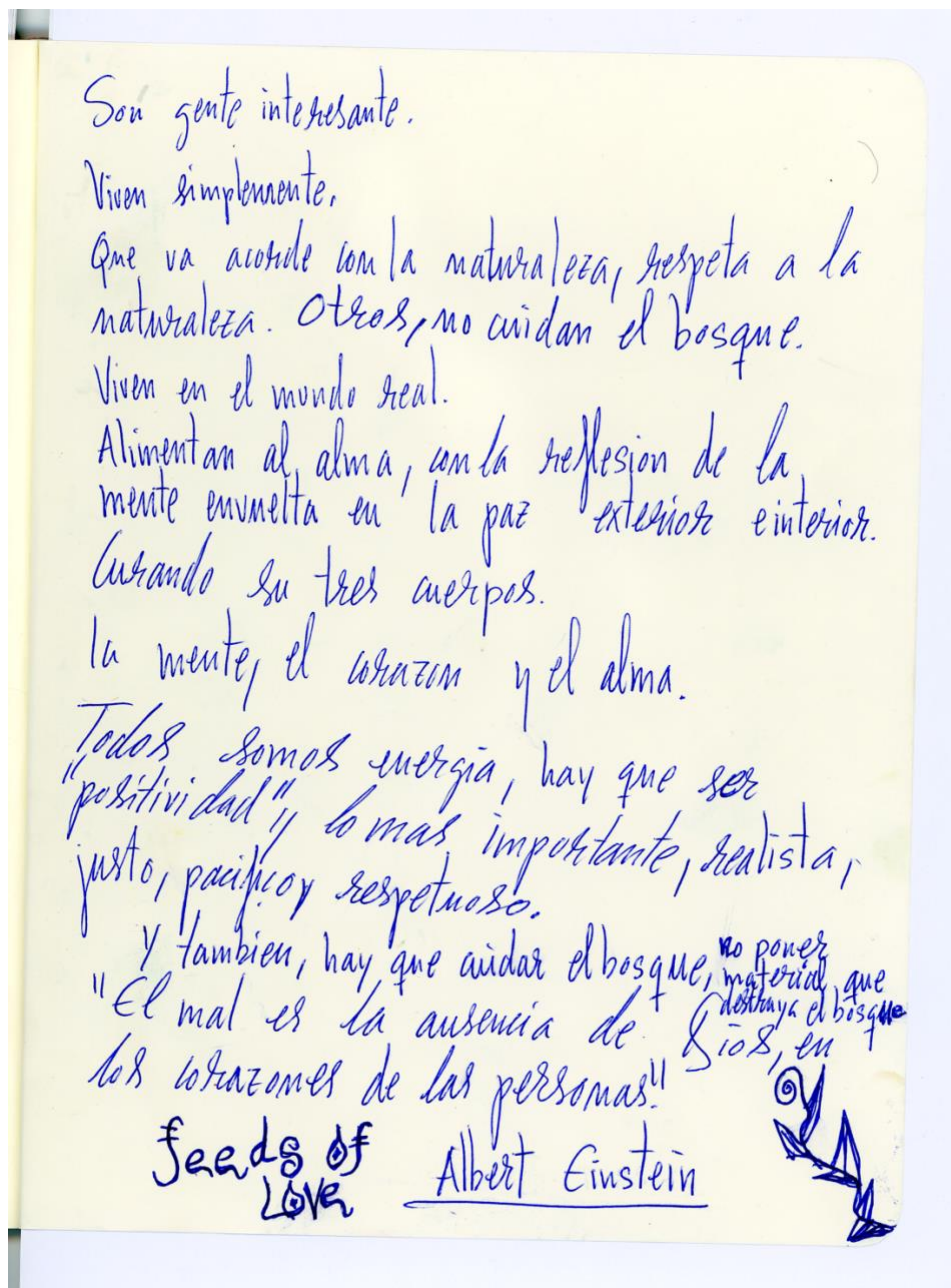
A1/2 (i). Statement by anonymous participant from site 'B', Andalucía, Spain, January 2015.

Being here, I became aware that in our society, in the dynamics in which we move, I am always fighting for or against something, fighting to feel integrated and accepted. (Whether it is internal or external). This feeling is absent here, I just exist, without any type of fight.

A1/2 (ii). Translation of anonymous participant statement, site 'B', Andalucía, Spain, January 2015.



A1/3. Anonymous participant statement, Site 'B', Andalucía, Spain, January 2015



A1/4 (i). Anonymous statement from tourist office worker, in original Spanish handwriting. Andalusia, Spain, January 2015

They are interesting people. They live simply. Who live side by side with nature. Others don't take care of the forest. They live in the real world. They nourish the soul, with the reflection of the mind, shrouded in exterior and interior peace. Healing is three bodies. The mind, the heart and the soul. We are all energy, we need to embody 'positivity'. Most importantly, be realistic, peaceful and respectful. We also need to look after the forest, not fill it with material which destroys it. 'Evil is the absence of God in the hearts of people.'
Seeds of Love. Albert Einstein.

A1/4 (ii). Translation of statement from anonymous Tourist office worker, Andalusia, Spain, January 2015.

I have decided to live out of the
crowds - here I find my peace,
and safety - A challenging life,
but rewarding

A1/5. Anonymous participant statement, Site 'B', Andalucia, Spain, January 2015

ARRIVING IN [REDACTED] WAS LIKE
FINDING A 'PARK UP' IN PARADISE,
IT HAD IT ALL, BIG SHADE, ITS OWN SPRING
WATER, SOME INTERESTING TRAVELLER
TYPES AND SOME NICE OLD VEHICLES.
WHEN I WAS A KID I'D DREAMED OF
RETIRING TO SOME OLD SCRAP YARD
THAT WAS REALLY ORGANIC AND WILD
WITH STUFF GROWING EVERYWHERE,
SO I THOUGHT, WICKED, THIS IS IT,
EARLY RETIREMENT!

M I O T

AM

A1/6. Statement by participant named 'Miot'. Site 'A', Andalucia, Spain, 2015

Dejé Babilonia cuando tenía 21 años porque
 ir a las manifestaciones semanales y participar
 en el movimiento social ya no me llenaba. Decidí
 emprender una manera ~~de~~ creativa de
 socializar toda esa rabia interna que el sistema,
 con su opresión, nos hace llegar cada día.
 En un lugar libre, la energía puede ser empleada
 para bien y no ~~es necesario~~ ^{es necesario} estar pendiente de
 lo que unos perros ~~ejecutores~~ ^{ejecutores} quieren
 hacerte ~~pensar~~ ^{pensar} delimitando con
 el legal o ilegal, lo que es bueno o no
 para el humano y por encima de todo
 lo que es bueno o no para el planeta.
 Debemos ser extremistas del planeta y ¡debemos
 serlo ya! Vivid y dejad vivir.



A1/7. Statement by participant named 'Maia', site 'B', Andalucía, Spain, 2015.

I called it Babylon when I was 21 years old because going to the weekly demonstrations and participating in the social movement no longer satisfied me. I decided to undertake a creative way of socializing all that internal rage that the system, with its oppression, will make us illegals every day. In a free place, energy can be used for good and it is not necessary to be aware of what some executing dogs want to have you think by delimiting with legal or illegal, what is good or not for the human and above all that is good or not for the planet. We must be an extremist of the planet and we must be one now! Live and let live. Maia.

A1/7 (ii). Translation of statement made by 'Maia', site 'B' Andalucía, Spain, 2015.

Soy trabajadora en una tienda de alimentación y cada vez que entra un "hippie?" en mi tienda debemos seguirlo por que son ladrones. Pensaba que hippies son un estilo de vida naturalista que viven del campo y usan productos naturales y viven de la naturaleza, pero veo que no es así, ser hippie no es ser socio, no lavar, no limpiar, robar, tomar drogas, ... ¿y sus hijos?, viven una vida insana (no sana), no creo que esos padres piensen en sus hijos, como permiten que esos niños pasen hambre? "yo no lo haré". En ~~esta~~, conclusión mi opinión acerca de ellos no es agradable no estoy de acuerdo ~~en~~ en lo que ellos han transformado la palabra hippie

A1/8 (i). Anonymous statement made by food shop worker in original Spanish handwriting. Andalusia, Spain, January 2015.

I work in a food shop and every time a 'hippy' enters my shop we need to keep an eye on him, because they are thieves. I used to think that hippies adhered to a naturalist lifestyle, lived in the countryside and used natural products, and lived off of nature, but now I see it isn't that

way. To be a hippy is to be dirty, to not work, to not clean up, steal, take drugs...and their children? They live an unhealthy life, I don't think that these parents think about their children, how do they allow these children to go on starving? In conclusion, my opinion on them isn't pleasant, I don't agree with the way in which they have transformed the word 'Hippy'.

A1/8 (ii). Translation of statement made by anonymous food shop worker. Andalucia, Spain, January 2015.

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APPENDIX TWO

Related selected publications and outputs

Solo Exhibitions

Ben Murphy: The Riverbed. Architectural Association Gallery, Bedford Square, London WC2, UK 18th-31st March 2017 and 19th-27th May 2017

Ben Murphy: The Riverbed. De Singel, Vlaams Architectuurinstituut, Antwerp, Belgium. 28.02.2017-

Group Exhibitions

Ben Murphy: The Riverbed. 16th DongGang International Photography Festival. 14.07.2017-01.10.2017. South Korea.

Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Permanent photography collections exhibition. 2008-9

Sovereign Art Prize, (Shortlisted), Courtauld Institute, Somerset House, London. 2008

Public Lectures

Ben Murphy: The Riverbed. Lecture and in conversation with art critic Sophie Crabbe. De Singel Architectuurinstituut, Antwerp, Belgium, 28.02.2018. Recording available online: <https://www.vai.be/en/event/architecture-cabinet-ben-murphy-the-riverbed> [Accessed 24.06.2019]

BOAN 1942 Art Gallery, Jongno-gu, Seoul, South Korea. Presentation. *Ben Murphy: The Riverbed* 21.07.2017

Irasun PhotoArt Book Shop, Seoul, South Korea. Talk. 23.07.2018

Collections

Victoria and Albert Museum, permanent collections: prints and drawings: Ben Murphy, photographer. b.1961 -. Four works from *The Riverbed* series 2006-2015.

Archive of Modern Conflict, London and Toronto. UK/Canada. Four works from *The Riverbed* series. (Ben Murphy 2006-2015)

Selected Magazine and Journal publications:

- Anonymous (2017). *The Riverbed*. GUP Magazine [online magazine] 27.02.2017
- Anonymous. (2017). *Ben Murphy/The Riverbed*. Photomonitor [online magazine] 07.03.2017
- Anonymous (2017). *Counterculture in Andalusia*. RIBA Journal newsletter [online magazine]. 07.03.2017
- Anonymous (2017). *Photographing the makeshift homes of “neo-nomadic” punks, hippies, anarchists and ravers in rural Spain*. Creative Boom [online magazine], 14.03.2017
- Anonymous (2017). *Spotlight on neo-Nomadic Architecture*. The Plus [online magazine] 15.03.2017
- Anonymous. (2017) Bigmat International Architecture Agenda. *The Riverbed Exhibition by Ben Murphy at Architectural Association, London*. [online magazine] 18.03.2017
- Anonymous (2017). *Ben Murphy, The Riverbed*. L’Oeil De La Photographie [online magazine] 22.03.2017
- Anonymous (2017). *The Riverbed*. GUP Magazine [online magazine] 27.02.2017
- Beckers, L. (2018). *Fotographie: Deze non-conformisten keerden de maatschappij de rug toe, en wonen diep in de Andalusische bergen*. De Morgen. 05.03. 2018. Belgium.
- Bucknall, E. (2017). *Interview: Ben Murphy, Photographer*. Something Curated [online magazine] 14.02.2017
- Cicala, M. 2019. La Repubblica: D magazine. *Ben Murphy: The Riverbed*. February issue, 2019. Italy
- Frearson, A. (2017). *Ben Murphy photographs makeshift architecture in the mountains of south east Spain*. Dezeen [online magazine] 22.01.2017
- Griffiths, R. (2018). *Dwelling. The Riverbed*. Art World China: Art and Waste issue. No.223. p.58-67. February 2018. Shanghai Literature and Art Publishing House. China.
- Kucharek, J-C. (2017). *Counterculture in Andalusia*. RIBA Journal [online magazine] 02.03.2017.
- Mackay, R. (2017). *Alternative Living*. Wallpaper* [online magazine] 09.02.2017
- Marcos, P. (2017). *The Riverbed / Architectural Association: Vevir en los margenes*. Diseno Interior: (no.290) March 2017. Spain.
- Murphy, B. (2017). *The Riverbed*. Lens Culture. [online magazine] 14.03.2017
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Architectural Association Gallery, Bedford Square, London WC2. 18-31 March & 19
April-27 May 2017.**



Murphy, B. (2017) Installation photograph. *The Riverbed*. London, UK: Architectural Association Gallery. 18-31 March & 19 April -27 May 2017.



Murphy, B. (2017). Installation photograph. *The Riverbed*. London, UK: Architectural Association Gallery. 18-31 March & 19 April -27 May 2017.

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APPENDIX THREE

Photographs for ideal exhibition as specified in Chapter One: Introduction. pp. 10-13.

Exhibition title: The Riverbed



1. Ben Murphy. *'Pete the Painter'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



2. Ben Murphy. *Crusty Mark*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



3. Ben Murphy. *Alpha and Imani (ii)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



4. Ben Murphy. *'Alpha and Imani (i)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



5. Ben Murphy. *Jess and Robe (i)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



6. Ben Murphy. *John and Romey*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



7. Ben Murphy. *Tony and Leyla*, Andalusia, Spain, 2006



8. Ben Murphy. *Nick (ii)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



9. Ben Murphy. *'Nick (i)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



10. Ben Murphy. *'Miot'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



11. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (ii)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2006



12. Ben Murphy. *'Rosie the Anarchist'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



13. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xxxv)'* Andalucia, Spain, 2012



14. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (iii)'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2012



15. Ben Murphy. *'Abel'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



16. Ben Murphy. *Pan*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



17. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (viii)'*, Andalucia, Spain 2012



18. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (ix)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



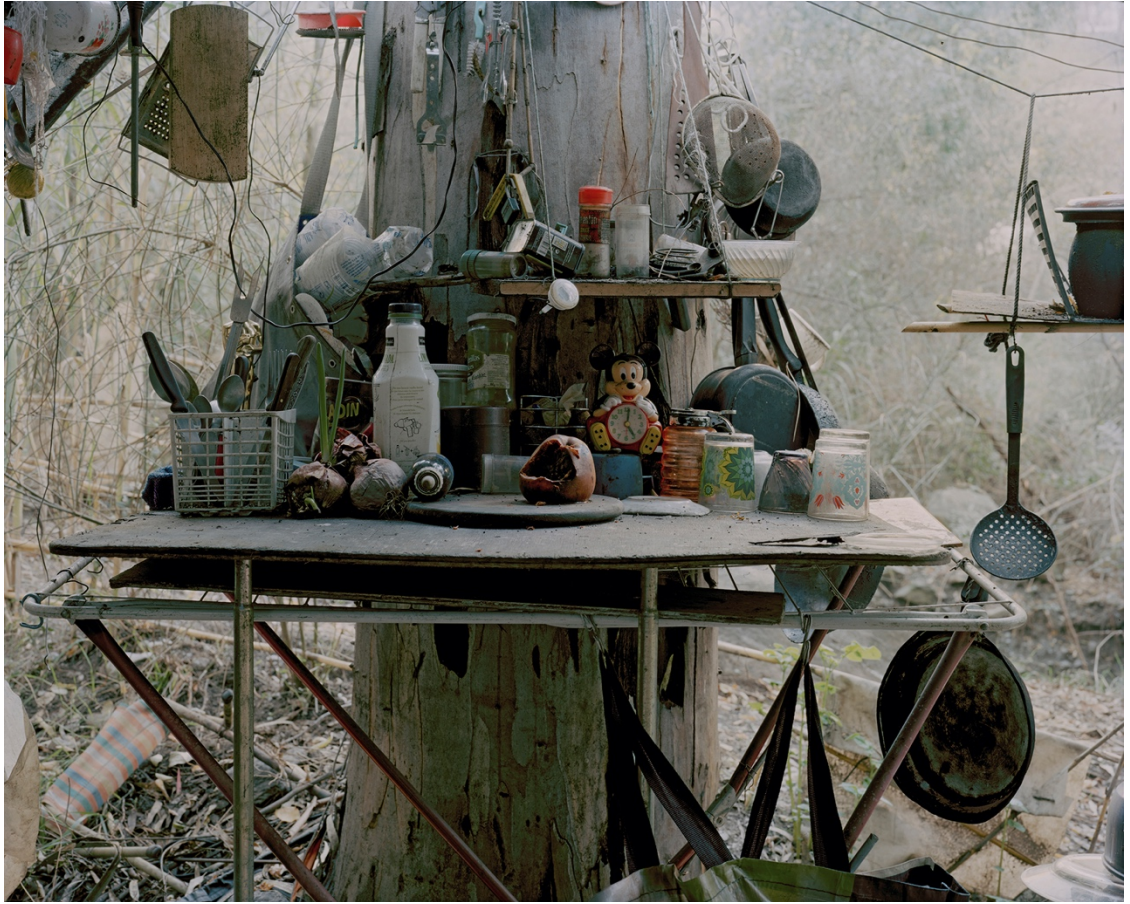
19. Ben Murphy. *Avi*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



20. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (xi)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



21. Ben Murphy. *The Garden*, Andalusia, Spain. 2012



22. Ben Murphy. *'Tree Kitchen'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



23. Ben Murphy. *'Todd and Amy'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2011



24. Ben Murphy. *'Freedom Man (i)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



25. Ben Murphy. *'Freedom Man (ii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



26. Ben Murphy. *'Bruno (i)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



27. Ben Murphy. *'Bruno (iii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



28. Ben Murphy. 'Anonymous (xi)' Andalucia, Spain, 2015



29. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



30. Ben Murphy. *Sami (i)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2011



31. Ben Murphy. *Peter*, Andalucia, Spain 2015



32. Ben Murphy. *'Rubio and Bella'*, Andalucia, Spain 2012



33. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xvii)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2011



34. Ben Murphy. *Francesca (i)*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



35. Ben Murphy. *The Volcano*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



36. Ben Murphy. *'Morgan'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



37. Ben Murphy. *Anonymous (iii)*, Andalusia, Spain, 2015



38. Ben Murphy. 'Sami (ii)', Andalucia, Spain, 2015



39. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xxxi)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2015



40. Ben Murphy. *'Anonymous (xiv)'*, Andalucia, Spain, 2012



41. Ben Murphy. *Untitled (Landscape ii)*, Andalusia, Spain, 2015



42. Ben Murphy. *'Untitled (Landscape i)'*, Andalusia, Spain, 2011

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