

The Post-Industrial Picturesque?: Placing and Promoting Marginalized Millom

Wordsworth wrote:

'Remote from every taint of sordid industry'.

But you and I know better, Duddon lass.¹

And maybe the ghost of Wordsworth, seeing further than I can,

Will stare from Duddon Bridge, along miles of sand and mud-flats

To a peninsula bare as it used to be, and, beyond, to a river

Flowing, untainted now, to a bleak, depopulated shore.²

Throughout his literary career, the work of the twentieth century Cumbrian writer, Norman Nicholson (1914-87), was consistently underpinned by an imaginative preoccupation with the poetics of place. In particular, Nicholson famously devoted much of his topographic writing – in both poetry and prose – to documenting the practice of everyday life in his native Millom: a townscape which, in the twenty-first century, is characterized by a complicated coalescence of post-industrial, coastal, estuarial, urban and even pastoral physical features and which, by extension, resists

¹ N. Nicholson, 'To the River Duddon', in *Five Rivers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1944), pp. 16-17 (p. 17).

² N. Nicholson, 'On the Dismantling of Millom Ironworks', in *Sea to the West* (London: Faber and Faber, 1981), pp. 49-50 (p. 50).

rigid topographic categorization. The peripherality of this place, in purely positional terms, is indisputable as it is a built environment which is significantly, and problematically, detached from wider spatial networks. Even in the second decade of the twenty-first century, travelling to and from Millom is a relatively time-consuming process: it is an approximately 100-minute circuitous journey from the nearest mainline train station at Lancaster; and just under an hour is required to drive from the closest junction of the M6. This sequestration has a demonstrable impact upon the everyday spatial practices of the town's residents; and, concurrently, it is a physical geography which any visitor to Millom necessarily has to factor into his or her planned journey to the place.

At a localized level, Millom is a built environment which is individuated by spatial boundedness. To the south and east of the town lies the gritty expanse of the tidal Duddon Estuary; and to the west is the Irish Sea. Immediately to the north-west is Black Combe; and, although the principal coastal road (A595) skirts beneath the distinctively rounded contours of the fell, the Combe dominates the local landscape thereby creating the illusion of a formidable psycho-geological barrier between Millom and the rest of industrial west Cumbria. The only direction in which spatial flows are not problematized by topographic features is to the north-east as Millom is situated just beyond the south-western tip of the Duddon Valley (which ends as the river progresses into the Duddon Estuary just south of Broughton-in-Furness): a rustic space of 'cottages, farms, a church, fields, woods' clustered together within a 'narrow aisle of cultivated land running up between the fells'.³ Yet, even in this direction, road travel seems to accentuate the place's physical and imaginative apartness. In driving to the

³ N. Nicholson, *Greater Lakeland* (London: Robert Hale, 1969; repr. 1996), p. 53.

Duddon village of Ulpha, the resident of Millom first has to journey out of the town on the A5093: a loop-road which connects Millom with the main A595 but which also serves to reinforce the community's peninsularity. Then, further north, the driver has to cross the river at the stone-arched Duddon Bridge: an architectural feature which historically marked the border between the old counties of Cumberland and Lancashire; and which, today, seemingly signifies socio-spatial difference at the same time as providing a link of communication between the pastoral and post-industrial communities.

Millom's peripherality, therefore, can be ascertained through the consultation of a map. The map-making process, however, necessarily involves the Cartesian reduction of the physical texturalities of geographical space to a series of fixed points upon a plane representational surface. Crucially, the two-dimensional map also fails to account for the ways in which spatial marginality can be reinforced – and perhaps even *produced* – by a concatenation of historical, cultural, social and economic factors. In *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, Rob Shields proffers the uncontroversial assertion that marginality can be endowed upon a particular place as a direct result of its 'out-of-the-way geographic location'.⁴ Shields immediately transcends the conceptual limitations of a purely locational understanding of geographic peripherality, however, to argue that a more complex sense of marginality can be created through a place's associations with 'illicit or disdained social activities', or its position as 'the Other pole to a great cultural centre'.⁵ Shields thereby declares his interest in sites which are 'not necessarily on geographical peripheries' but which have

⁴ R. Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 3.

⁵ Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 3.

clearly ‘been *placed* [my italics] on the periphery of cultural systems of space in which places are ranked relative to each other’.⁶

Shields’s monograph is structured around a series of case studies which illustrate how the socio-spatial construction of marginality can be underpinned by such transgressive tropes as liminality and the carnivalesque. On the surface, then, this nebulous concept of marginality would not appear to provide an appropriate theoretical framework for thinking about the Lake District: a landscape which seems to be uncomplicatedly emplaced within a cultural, if not geographic, centre. Since the development of Picturesque tourism in the second half of the eighteenth century, the Lakes has been consistently perceived, and projected, as a site of national importance; and this spatial role was most famously articulated when William Wordsworth declared, in his *Guide to the Lakes*, ‘the Lakes in the North of England’ to be ‘a sort of national property, in which every man has a right and interest who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy’.⁷ Wordsworth’s frequently polemical prose is destabilized by internal tensions and contradictions; but the profound influence of this key work of literary geography can be traced in the evolution of the environmental thinking which ultimately led to the formation of the Lake District National Park in the middle of the twentieth century.⁸ The Lake District’s prominent status within the national consciousness is now

⁶ Ibid.

⁷W. Wordsworth, *A Guide Through the District of the Lakes*, in *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. by W. J. B. Owen and J. Worthington Smyser, 3 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), II, 151-259 (p. 225).

⁸ See, for example, J. Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1991); S. Gill, *Wordsworth and the Victorians* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and I. Whyte, ‘William Wordsworth’s *Guide to the Lakes* and the Geographical Tradition’, *Area* 32 (2000), 101-106.

cemented and, as a result, the area can be defined as a culturally privileged ‘leisure zone’ within the seemingly ‘homogenously uncultured industrial’ space of the North.⁹

Yet, although Shields’s ‘cultural classification’ of ‘peripheral sites’ might appear to be of limited value when applied to this ‘high ranking’ landscape, his exploration of the dialectical relationship between the centre and the margins carries the potential to open up thinking about the spatial relationships which are embedded *within* the cultural system of the Lake District.¹⁰ That is to say, the imbricated concepts of geographic peripherality and cultural hierarchization can provide appropriate theoretical foundations for considering the relationship between the physical and social geographies of the central Lakes and those difficult-to-classify topographies which lie on the fringes of, or just outside, the boundaries of the National Park: the flatlands of the Solway Plain, for instance; the estuarial spaces of the Furness Peninsula; the infrastructural spine of what may be described as the ‘M6 corridor’; and, most saliently within the context of this geo-specific case study, the scarred post-industrial ‘edgelands’ of west Cumbria.¹¹ The perceived exceptionalism of the Lake District is founded upon

⁹ Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 231.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 3.

¹¹ The term ‘edgelands’ can be used to denote the physical and abstract peripherality of West Cumbrian places within wider spatial networks. At the same time, however, the application of the noun to describe the difficult-to-define topographies of West Cumbria corresponds, at least in part, with Marion Shoard’s neologistic use of the term: a twenty-first century form of landscape categorization which has influenced the spatial thinking of the poets, Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts, and which demands greater interrogation than is possible within the present context. See M. Shoard, ‘Edgelands’, in *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain*, ed. by J. Jenkins (London: Profile Books, 2002), pp. 117-46; and P. Farley and M. Symmons Roberts, *Edgelands: Journeys into England’s True Wilderness* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2011).

the iconic contours of the landscape of the geographic centre. The terrains beyond the central dome of upland fells, though, are situated on the fringes of the dominant touristic narratives associated with this part of England; these edgelands remain on the geographic, imaginative and economic peripheries of that dominant spatial system. These locations are of a low 'ranking', therefore, within the wider context of what John Urry labels the 'place-myth' of the Lake District.¹²

In this essay I want to draw upon Shields's spatial thinking in order to explore the geographic, social, cultural and economic marginalization of Millom; and, by extension, I want to map out some of the ways in which these converging processes of peripheralization have impacted upon, and continue to shape, touristic practices in and around the town. To address this multi-layered marginalization, the essay will be organized into three broadly chronological sections which trace key phases in Millom's spatial history (the pre-industrial, the industrial and the post-industrial) and which oscillate between consideration of the town as a locus for cultural representation, socio-economic development and tourism. The focus of this chapter, then, is site-specific as it examines how a complex interweaving of geography, history and socio-spatial processes have moulded the development of tourism in a singularly complicated place. At the same time, however, the aspiration is that the essay will also open up thinking regarding tourism practices in other 'out-of-the-way' places which have been subjected to analogous processes of 'symbolic exclusion'.¹³

1. Nineteenth Century Millom: A Brief Spatial History

¹² J. Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995; repr. 2000), p. 195.

¹³ Shields, *Places on the Margin*, p. 5.

The relative remoteness of Millom immediately raises questions as to why and how this town – with a population of 7,132 at the 2001 census – originally came into being.¹⁴ Until the middle of the nineteenth century, the area occupied by modern Millom was known as Millom Below and consisted of the village of Holborn Hill and a scattering of houses; and, although Millom Below had held a market charter since 1250, the community was essentially a rural village with a population, in 1841, of just 356.¹⁵ Until the middle of the nineteenth century, therefore, everyday life in this part of Cumberland was characterized by a quiet pastoralism.

It was this quotidian ordinariness which attracted Wordsworth to the adjacent Duddon Valley at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1820, Wordsworth first published *The Duddon Sonnets*: a sequence of geo-specific poems in which the river is traced from its ‘birthplace’ at Wrynose, beneath Cockley Beck Bridge, alongside the settlements at Seathwaite and Ulpha, and out into the estuary at Foxfield.¹⁶ By 1820 ‘the conversion of parts of the Lake District into a “literary landscape”, which entailed

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics, ‘Neighbourhood Statistics’:

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do;jsessionid=ac1f930c30d58c42a83b92cd406b9fe8ac18181e733e?>

[a=7&b=793046&c=millom&d=16&e=15&g=432482&i=1001x1003x1004&m=0&r=1&s=1298550463722&enc=1&dsFamilyId=779&nsjs=true&nsck=true&nssvg=false&nswid=1276](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadTableView.do;jsessionid=ac1f930c30d58c42a83b92cd406b9fe8ac18181e733e?) [accessed 27 April 2011].

¹⁵ A. Harris, *Cumberland Iron: The Story of Hodbarrow Mine 1855-1968* (Truro: D. Bradford Barton, 1970), p.17.

¹⁶ W. Wordsworth, *The River Duddon. A Series of Sonnets*, in *Sonnet Series and Itinerary Poems, 1820-1845*, ed. by Geoffrey Jackson (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), pp. 56-75 (Sonnet I, p. 56, line 9).

the idealization of a society and imagined way of life', was well under way; and the central Lakes was increasingly established as a site of cultural tourism.¹⁷ In representing the Duddon Valley, therefore, Wordsworth self-consciously moved out and away from the central fells and towards one of the region's less familiar and culturally neglected sites: a valley which may have had profound imaginative significance for the Romantic poet but which was physically distant from the principal nexuses of touristic interest at Keswick and Ambleside.

To develop a fuller understanding of the geographic significance of Wordsworth's poetic project, it is necessary to re-embed the sonnet sequence in its original publication context. As Stephen Gill explains, *The River Duddon, A Series of Sonnets: Vaudracour and Julia: And Other Poems. To which is Annexed, A Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes, in the North of England* – to give the collection its full title – is 'a discrete volume' which 'is of the greatest historical significance', as Wordsworth uses the textual space to bring together verse and prose accounts of the Cumbrian topography thereby constructing a composite portrait of place.¹⁸ The publication sets up what the textual critic, Neil Fraistat, would call a 'contextual poetic' as the sonnet sequence is accompanied by substantive supplementary notes and a version of the prose *Guide to the Lakes* unambiguously entitled 'Topographical Description of the Country of the Lakes'.¹⁹ In the words of John Wyatt, this prose account provides a detailed geographical context, or

¹⁷ C. O'Neill and J. K. Walton, 'Tourism and the Lake District: Social and Cultural Histories', in *Sustainable Tourism in the English Lake District*, ed. by D. W. G. Hind and J. P. Mitchell (Sunderland: Business Education Publishers, 2004), pp. 20-47 (p. 20).

¹⁸ S. Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989; repr. 1990), p. 333.

‘authentication’, for the geo-specific sonnet sequence which describes ‘an unknown valley off the well-trodden route’.²⁰ The cross-reference to the authoritative prose text thereby assures the reader that this site is clearly located within the boundaries of the Lake District; it confirms the status of the Duddon as a location within the wider spatial system of the Lakes. Yet, simultaneously - and crucially - it is a site which remains at the outermost reaches of that cultural network.

Wordsworth uses his sonnet sequence to suggest that it is through its status as a site of geographic and cultural marginality that the Duddon Valley is emblematic of nationhood. As the spaces and places of the central Lakes were playing an increasingly prominent role within the national imagination, Wordsworth retreated to the margins and suggested that the imaginative value of the Duddon Valley resided in its condition as a site of unspoilt pastoralism which had remained resistant to potentially destructive socio-economic pressures: ‘Child of the clouds! remote from every taint / Of sordid industry thy lot is cast’.²¹ As James M. Garrett puts it: ‘the writing of the local serves to exemplify what Wordsworth feels must be preserved and what he fears is fast ebbing away in the face of a nationalistic assault emanating from London’.²² This anti-metropolitan reading of the text is reinforced by Wordsworth’s reference to the

¹⁹ N. Fraistat, ‘Introduction: The Place of the Book and the Book as Place’, in *Poems in their Place: The Intertextuality and Order of Poetic Collections*, ed. by Neil Fraistat (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 3-17 (p. 3). For more on the ‘textual morphology’ of Wordsworth’s *Guide*, see Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, p. 44.

²⁰ J. Wyatt, *Wordsworth’s Poems of Travel, 1819-42: ‘Such Sweet Wayfaring’* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), p. 40.

²¹ Wordsworth, *The River Duddon*, II, p. 57, 1-2.

²² J. M. Garrett, *Wordsworth and the Writing of Nation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), p. 128.

‘sovereign Thames’ in the sonnet in which the ‘Majestic Duddon’ is shown to expand ‘over smooth flat sands / Gliding in silence with unfettered sweep’ as it moves ‘in radiant progress toward the deep’ of the Irish Sea: ‘Beneath an ampler sky a region wide / Is opened round him: - hamlets, towers, and towns, / And blue-topped hills, behold him from afar’.²³ Wordsworth uses the River Duddon, then, to construct a spatial model of positive peripherality.

The topo-authenticity – and, by extension, the imaginative currency - of Wordsworth’s pastoral poem of nationhood was to be radically problematized, however, in the middle of the nineteenth century as the relatively unremarkable history of the southerly reaches of the Duddon was to be ruptured by the discovery of unprecedentedly rich deposits of haematite ore: a discovery which, in the appositely violent words of Nicholson, led to the town of Millom being ‘yanked [. . .] into being by a kind of geological Caesarian operation’.²⁴ In *Cumberland Iron: The Story of Hodbarrow Mine, 1855-1968*, A. Harris offers an exhaustive account of the industrial history of this corner of Cumbria; and he confirms that, at the time of the publication of Wordsworth’s sonnet sequence in 1820, the peninsula, ‘remained largely untouched by the forces of change which had already begun to transform the coal and iron districts to the north and the iron-mining across the Duddon’.²⁵ Over the course of the 1850s,

²³ Wordsworth, *The River Duddon*, XXXII, p. 74, 4-12.

²⁴ N. Nicholson, *Wednesday Early Closing* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), p. 175.

²⁵ Harris, *Cumberland Iron*, p.17. Harris draws attention, however, to the existence of a small charcoal iron furnace at Duddon Bridge’ (p. 17): a material symbol of industry which is conspicuously absent in Wordsworth’s portrait of place but which has subsequently emerged as a key site of industrial archaeology. See J. D. Marshall and M. Davies-Shiel, *The Industrial Archaeology of the Lake Counties* (Beckermet: Michael Moon, 1977), pp. 42-4.

however, there was an increasing amount of speculative interest in the area's telluric space; and, in 1856, a singularly thick body of iron ore was located at Hodbarrow – a mile to the south-east of modern-day Millom - with further significant discoveries being made in 1860 and 1868.²⁶ These discoveries resulted in the formation of the Hodbarrow Mining Company and the location's identity as a site of industry began to emerge. The mines at Hodbarrow expanded both rapidly and profitably; and, in 1867, two iron furnaces were built to the north of Hodbarrow on the edge of the present-day town. As a result of this expeditious industrial development, the local population grew exponentially as men expectantly arrived in south Cumberland from across Britain and Ireland, with a particular influx of workers from the mining fields of Cornwall.²⁷ By the time of the 1871 census, the population of Millom had multiplied to 2656 and the gridded geometry of the town had begun to take shape.²⁸

[Insert Figure 1.1 here – landscape]

[Caption: 1904 postcard of Millom Ironworks which were founded in 1867.]

Source: © Karen Pugh Collection, Millom Heritage Museum]

The second-half of Millom's nineteenth century was defined by the continued expansion of the built environment which, in turn, was directly attributable to the ongoing productivity of the Hodbarrow mine: a narrative, in the words of J. D. Marshall and John K. Walton, 'of allied resourcefulness and good fortune, boldness, technical skill, and not a little concern with community building and the institutions of a

²⁶ Harris, *Cumberland Iron*, pp. 21-4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

flourishing small town'.²⁹ Within the spatial context of newly industrialized Millom, then, Wordsworth's topo-poetry was problematically - and perhaps even comically - anachronistic. As Garrett illustrates, Wordsworth's *The River Duddon* is founded upon the self-conscious celebration of the pastoral rootedness and rustic timelessness to be found in this corner of Cumbria.³⁰ By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Wordsworth's Duddon was flanked, as it glided out into estuarial space, by a landscape which had been thickened by the paraphernalia, practices and processes associated with the extraction of iron ore. As a result, the climax of *The River Duddon* now offered a nostalgic valorization of an unrecognisably rural way of being for the *fin de siècle* reader emplaced on the Duddon peninsula.

In summary, then, at the beginning of the nineteenth century this most southerly tip of Cumberland was considered too geographically remote to be incorporated within standard (post-) Picturesque tours of the region; and, for Wordsworth, the fact that the area sat outside dominant touristic narratives provided a source of positive peripherality. By the end of the 1800s, though, the emergence and growth of Millom as an iron-mining town meant that this particular built environment failed to correspond with the images of lakes and fells, tarns and crags, which understandably dominated post-Romantic touristic projections of the Lake District. Although the latter half of the nineteenth century was a period of economic growth and opportunity for those seeking employment in Millom, the construction of this functional townscape can be understood – within the context of regional tourism – as prompting a process of negative marginalization in which the heavily industrialized tip of the Duddon peninsula

²⁹ J. D. Marshall and J. K. Walton, *The Lake Counties from 1830 to the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 51.

³⁰ Garrett, *Wordsworth and the Writing of Nation*, pp. 126-48.

remained ideologically excluded from the wider spatial system of the Lakes. Patently, the creation of a landscape of mine-shafts and foundations, railways sidings and terrace housing, placed Millom outside the cultural, and increasingly contested, space of ‘Wordsworthshire’: an aesthetically privileged topography in which, as Gill points out, late Victorian readers were necessarily negotiating the complex tensions embedded within the Romantic poet’s (touristic) promotion of this pastoral region to develop proto-environmental thinking.³¹ It was superfluous for the industrialized topography of Millom to be incorporated within the poetry-fuelled debates regarding the management of the increasingly pressurized Lakeland landscape. The town was of little touristic interest; and, for those visitors entering the ‘leisure zone’ of the Lakes – tourists travelling north on the coastal railway in order to access the western valleys - it was nothing more than a polluted ‘other’ through which they had to pass. Ideologically, then, if not cartographically, Millom was placed beyond the boundaries of the Lake District map.

2. Placing that ‘sub-rural’ town: Nicholson, the Lake District & Twentieth Century Millom

As Harris illustrates, the apogee of Millom’s industrial productivity, and economic prosperity, arrived either side of the turn of the twentieth century.³² It would be an oversimplification to assert that the period after 1907 – the year of record mining production – was characterized by a trajectory of uniform decline as Harris’s historical survey registers the subtle shifts and fluctuating fortunes which continued to take place over the

³¹ E. S. Roberston, *Wordsworthshire* (London.: Chatto and Windus, 1911).

³² Harris, *Cumberland Iron*, p. 117.

course of the last century.³³ At the same time, however, Harris acknowledges that such ‘interruptions were no more than temporary checks in a progression that was to be terminated only in 1968 by the closure of the mine’; and that the economic narrative of mining in twentieth century Millom was ‘the record of a slow but persistent decline’.³⁴ Within just one hundred years, therefore, this remote corner of Cumberland had been subjected to an accelerated process of landscape evolution: the area had been transformed from a site of agricultural pastoralism, to a densely populated and polluted urbanized landscape dominated by the architecture of the Hodbarrow mines and the Millom ironworks (which, inevitably, also closed in 1968), to a scarred site of post-industrialism in which the town’s core *raison d’être* had seemingly ceased to be.

Perhaps predictably, the figurative and touristic marginalization of Millom was subjected to administrative formalization when, in 1949, the town was placed outside the boundaries of the new Lake District National Park which were legislatively encoded two years later. Understandably, the upper reaches of the Duddon Valley were included within the borders of this newly nationalized space; but the Victorian development of Millom as a site of industry led to the town’s exclusion from the privileged ‘leisure zone’ and the decision was made for the National Park boundary to go no further south than the Whicham Valley which skirts the southern flank of Black Combe. Millom – and its outlying settlements at Kirksanton, The Hill and The Green – had been politically ostracized from the wider ‘cultural system’ of the Lakes.

Nicholson, who spent almost all of his seventy-three years living at 14 St George’s Terrace in the centre of Millom, dedicated much of his writing to the spatial

³³ Ibid., p. 30.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 111.

history of the Lake District. The poet's topographic prose books are consistently underpinned by an ambition to draw the reader's attention to terrains beyond the all-too-familiar touristic route which takes visitors from Windermere to Ambleside to Grasmere and to Keswick. Moreover, Nicholson seeks to highlight the rich complexities of those spaces and places which are situated beyond the figurative walls of the National Park. It is a self-conscious opening up of the regional space which is visually encoded by the black-and-white photographs selected for inclusion in his debut topographic book, *Cumberland and Westmorland*: a publication which was issued at the historical moment at which the boundaries of the National Park were being mapped; and a publication which, saliently, contains images of Foxfield Sands, St Bees Head, Alston, Beetham and Burton-in-Kendal, alongside those touristic staples of Tarn Hows, the Langdale Pikes, Coniston Old Man and the Bowder Stone.³⁵

At the beginning of *Cumberland and Westmorland*, Nicholson seeks to transcend the post-Romantic socialization of landscape formally codified by the National Park by focusing upon telluric space.³⁶ For Nicholson, a sense of place is derived from the rock, rather than the political or administrative organization of the surface terrain; he then uses this preoccupation with geology to propose a spatial configuration of region which challenges the boundaries of the National Park which were about to come-into-being:

³⁵ N. Nicholson, *Cumberland and Westmorland* (London: Robert Hale, 1949).

³⁶ For an earlier exploration of these ideas see D. Cooper, 'The Poetics of Place and Space: Wordsworth, Norman Nicholson and the Lake District', *Literature Compass*, 5 (2008): 807-21.

The area which I call the Lake System is a large one, spreading a long way beyond the lakes. It is roughly an oval or ellipse standing on end. Its apexes are Carlisle in the north and Carnforth in the south; its borders are the coast on the west, and on the east the valleys of the Eden and the Lune, or perhaps a line a little nearer the Yorkshire border.

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This spatial remodelling, built upon telluric unity rather than surface topography, collapses the post-Romantic hierarchization of regional space. Nicholson prompts the reader to revisit the local map and directs his or her attention to ideologically marginalized sites; places, such as Millom, which have been situated outside the privileged, pastoral zone. Within this revised, democratic configuration of space, Cumbria's industrial towns are positioned within the same spatial unit as the picture-postcard villages of the central Lakes; they are shown to be part of the same 'System'.

Nicholson endeavours to demonstrate the porosity between the two topographical categories through delineation of the spatial flows which govern everyday life; and he begins *Cumberland and Westmorland* with the explicit suggestion that there is a need to reevaluate the idea – famously proposed by Wordsworth in his *Guide to the Lakes* – of a locatable centre to the Lake District:³⁸

For the society of the district, the hub is not a focal point but a point of departure. Two people living twenty miles apart or less on opposite sides of the hub might be a hundred

³⁷ Nicholson, *Cumberland and Westmorland*, p. 1.

³⁸ Wordsworth's project to locate the 'centre' of the region results in the construction of an imaginary 'station', 'hanging midway' between 'Great Gavel, or Scawfell'. Wordsworth, *Guide to the Lakes*, p. 171.

miles apart for social purposes. [. . .] For practical and social purposes, the life of the dales does not leap-frog from one to another over the ridges, but flows up and down the valley.³⁹

For Nicholson, the physical contours of the landscape lead to a heterotopic vision of space predicated upon everyday socio-economic practices. Nicholson points out that villages, or small towns, can be found at the head of each valley, including the built environments of Cleator Moor, Gosforth, Broughton-in-Furness and Ambleside. Beyond this circle, however, there exists ‘an outer ring of market towns’, such as Penrith, Appleby, Kendal, Ulverston, Whitehaven, Cockermouth, and [. . .] Wigton’: sites at which ‘real contact is made between the dales and the lowlands’.⁴⁰ Nicholson goes on to add further place-names to this list suggesting that, in spite of their industrial origins, ‘a few towns like Workington, Millom and Barrow-in-Furness’ serve a practical ‘marketing’ function as a result of their geographic locations.⁴¹ This means that, for Nicholson, there is a quotidian connectedness between the town of Millom and the rural communities of the Duddon Valley; a spatial flow which cuts across the wandering boundary of the Lake District National Park. It is a direct relationship between town and country, therefore, in which Duddon Bridge is perceived to be a point of connectivity and through which Millom can be labelled a ‘sub-rural’ place.⁴²

Nicholson’s geographic obsession with spatial flows, processes and boundaries can be interpreted in several overlapping ways. In one sense, he is interested in

³⁹ Nicholson, *Cumberland and Westmorland*, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴² N. Nicholson, *Provincial Pleasures* (London: Robert Hale, 1959), p. 84.

documenting the practices which govern the everyday lives – including his own - of the residents of mid-twentieth century Cumbria. At the same time, Nicholson's topographic writings can be seen to feed off, and back into, his overarching literary project to situate the authorial self in wider geographic and cultural contexts. Beyond this, though, he is simultaneously interested in analyzing both historic and contemporaneous touristic habits through spatial frameworks: a textual practice which consistently informs what is arguably his most celebrated prose book, *The Lakers: The Adventures of the First Tourists*.⁴³ The attempted recalibration of dominant spatial definitions of the Lakes emerges as a cardinal trope running throughout the poet's topographic writings as he questions the geographical, ideological and environmental wisdom of perceiving, and managing, the central Lakes as a privileged space: a preoccupation which corresponds with what he identifies to be the post-Picturesque touristic 'fashion [. . .] to concentrate on more and more intensive exploration of a continually shrinking area'.⁴⁴

By extension, Nicholson, in *Greater Lakeland*, uses his examination of everyday spatial flows as a foundation for re-thinking the relationship between the *touristic* centre and marginalized peripheries of the Lake District:

The English Lake District is one of the most famous tourist centres in the world, yet the part of it which is most often visited is quite small – only the inner circle of the higher fells and the upper reaches of the dales. Outside that inner circle there is a far larger area, less known but containing a wide variety of countryside, much of it of great

⁴³ N. Nicholson, *The Lakers: The Adventures of the First Tourists* (London: Robert Hale, 1955).

⁴⁴ Nicholson, *The Lakers*, p. 2.

beauty, together with a wealth of social, historical and human interest greater, even, than that of the Lake District itself.⁴⁵

Nicholson's overt ambition is to direct 'the visitor' away from 'the better-known inner parts' and towards 'these outlying parts of Greater Lakeland':⁴⁶ topographies which feature 'Windscale Atomic Station, the Marchon chemical factory at Whitehaven, Workington Steelworks, Barrow Docks and Carlisle Railway Depot' as well as the poet's home-town.⁴⁷ Writing from *within* a space which has been historically marginalized, Nicholson demands a cultural recalibration of the perceived relationship between the supposed centre and the outlying edgelands.

3. Marginality & Materiality: Tourism Practices in Twenty-First Century Millom

Although Nicholson's polemical ambitions are transparent, the question remains as to what the twenty-first century visitor might encounter if he or she follows the poet's advice and eschews the Lake District's principal tourist destinations to venture towards one of the region's more peripheral places. What efforts have been made to regenerate deindustrialized Millom since Nicholson's death in 1987? More particularly, in what ways have tourism professionals – at both county-wide and localized levels – endeavoured to repackage Millom as a post-industrial destination; and how do these tourism strategies and practices appear to intersect and interconnect with the sustained spatial thinking to be located within Nicholson's *oeuvre*?⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Nicholson, *Greater Lakeland*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 230.

⁴⁸ I gratefully acknowledge the helpful information and professional insights enthusiastically volunteered by Mark Holroyd, South Copeland Tourism Officer, in the drafting of the final section of this chapter. At

In ‘Destination Cumbria, A 21st Century Experience’, Cumbria Tourism articulate their ‘Growth Marketing Strategy’ for 2008-2012.⁴⁹ The executive summary consists of a series of bullet-pointed strategic aims, the first of which is to ‘attract new/lapsed visitors through an awareness campaign with new messages and themes’.⁵⁰ Saliiently, the second declared aim is to ‘attract using the strongest attack brand “The Lake District” and disperse the benefits of tourism across Cumbria’.⁵¹ This document, then, draws upon the dominant centrifugal model of the spatiality of the Lakes which can be traced back to Wordsworth’s *Guide*. Crucially, however, the strategic vision transgresses the spatial limits imposed by the National Park boundaries to incorporate the traditionally marginalized landscapes to be found upon the fringes of Nicholson’s ‘Lake System’ or ‘Greater Lakeland’.

Cumbria Tourism’s commitment to the strategy of ‘attract and disperse’ is manifested, in marketing terms, through the creation of ‘Western Lake District’: a sub-brand of ‘The Lake District, Cumbria’, with its own promotional brochure and discrete website.⁵² The textual content of the former encapsulates the organization’s overarching strategic intentions as the reader’s attention is immediately drawn to some of the area’s less obvious tourist destinations – including the ‘bird-watching sites and nature reserves

the same time, however, I would like to emphasize the fact that the following commentary on contemporary tourist practices is entirely my own.

⁴⁹ Cumbria Tourism, ‘Destination Cumbria, A 21st Century Experience: Growth Marketing Strategy for Cumbria, 2008-2012’ (Staveley, 2008).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Cumbria Tourism, ‘Western Lake District’ (Staveley, 2009). Available at: <http://www.western-lakedistrict.co.uk/> [accessed: 27 April 2011].

along the Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’, for instance, and ‘the Egremont Castle illuminations’ – as well as the more familiar site of ‘Britain’s Favourite View’ at Wastwater.⁵³ The brochure also details ‘a magnificent array of Events and Festivals’⁵⁴ and focuses on Cumbria’s frequently forgotten status as a coastal county.⁵⁵ Yet, above all, four touristic features are foregrounded as the ‘Western Lake District’ is presented through a series of interlinking images: as a centre of award-winning locally produced food and drink; a site for (extreme) outdoors activity; a ‘beautiful’ and ‘unspoilt’ area which is defined by its topographical heterogeneity; and a lived-space which is home to a series of ‘warm’ and welcoming communities.⁵⁶ The promotional literature constructs a bricolage out of these disparate strands to present an image of the ‘Western Lake District’ which is predicated upon a rhetoric of authenticity. That is to say, Cumbria Tourism’s marketing strategy implicitly draws upon the historical peripheralization of this area and incorporates this perceived marginalization *within* the promotional discourse. The ‘Western Lake District’ is the home of ‘true Cumbrian people’ and distinctively ‘authentic’ food: communities and experiences which can only be accessed by those visitors who move beyond the central Lakes.⁵⁷

Millom does not feature prominently within this positive reframing of the marginalized western fringes of the Lake District. The ‘unspoilt’ beach at Haverigg receives a cursory mention and is supplemented by a small image of Josefina de

⁵³Ibid., p. 3. Wastwater was named as the site of ‘Britain’s Favourite View’ as part of a television series broadcast by ITV in 2007. See: <http://www.itv.com/view/> [accessed: 27 April 2011].

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-13.

⁵⁶ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

Vasconcellos's seven-tonne sculpture, 'Escape to Light', which looms above the sands. Millom also appears in a list of nine 'Western Lake District' towns on the back cover of the brochure.⁵⁸ Tellingly, Millom is described as a 'former fishing village' and the selected visual representation projects an essentially pastoral image of the town: the foreground of the photograph consists of grazing cattle; the middle-distance is dominated by the steeple of St George's Church; whilst the upper-third of the image consists of the backdrop provided by the lower slopes of Black Combe.⁵⁹ Beyond this carefully choreographed image, however, Millom does not figure in the promotional brochure; it does not appear to be integral to the 'attract and diverse' strategy into which the 'Western Lake District' promotional material clearly feeds. As a result, Millom continues to occupy a peripheral position within Cumbria Tourism's attempts to repackage this historically marginalized Cumbrian fringe.

Clearly, the fixity of Millom's position upon the map continues to problematize the efforts to attract visitors to a town which corresponds with what Frances Brown and Derek Hall define to be the essential basis for touristic 'peripherality': an area which 'suffers from *geographical* [my emphasis] isolation, being distant from core spheres of activity, with poor access to and from markets'.⁶⁰ Twenty-first century Millom indubitably suffers, therefore, from its physical distance from other built environments promoted under the 'Western Lake District' banner: it is just over thirty miles south of the Georgian town of Whitehaven, for instance, which *does* feature prominently within the tourist literature and which also serves as the centre of political and administrative

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 24.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ F. Brown and D. Hall, 'The Paradox of Peripherality', in *Tourism in Peripheral Areas: Case Studies*, ed. by F. Brown and D. Hall (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2000), pp. 1-6 (p. 2).

power for the Borough Council (Copeland) in which Millom is situated. Yet this touristic placement of Millom on the margin of the margins can also be understood to have been produced by an ideological process to comply with not only the visitor's imaginative preconceptions of the landscape of the central Lakes but also the new touristic narratives attached to the rebranded 'Western Lake District'. The perceived difficulties of situating the town within wider spatial networks may have provided Nicholson with richly problematic material for both lyrical poetry and frequently polemical prose; but its geographic remoteness and industrial history continue to underpin its peripheralization within the wider frameworks of twenty-first century tourism strategies and policies.

Yet, in spite of this ongoing marginalization, there are more localized examples of tourism practices which are founded upon a self-conscious preparedness to engage with the complex singularity of this place. What is more, the grassroots projects to attract greater visitors to Millom *do* correspond with the key 'thematic campaigns' which Cumbria Tourism confidently predict will 'appeal to [. . .] specific target markets and offer the quality experience that they are looking for'.⁶¹ The first of these overarching 'thematic' preoccupations is 'culture': an appositely malleable umbrella term which is used by Cumbria Tourism to cover 'traditional history, heritage, gardens and literature, as well as contemporary arts, events, festivals and events'.⁶² A communal enthusiasm to document, celebrate and communicate Millom's layered history is most obviously, and conventionally, manifested by the Heritage Museum and Visitor Centre: an accredited museum which is located at the town's railway station and whose displays

⁶¹ 'Destination Cumbria', p. 9.

⁶² *Ibid.*

include detailed information about the area's industrial past. It is also materially evident in Colin Telfer's statue, 'The Scutcher', which commemorates the town's industrial past and which is located in the Market Square.

The fluidity of Cumbria Tourism's definition of culture, however, also allows for consideration of the way in which the actual sites of industry are now primarily perceived and managed as 'green' spaces of leisure within the urbanized infrastructure of the town. The site once occupied by Millom Ironworks is now a surreally lunar landscape of large slag piles around which information boards helpfully summarize the history of this particular plot of land. What is more, a panoramic view-point board furnishes the visitor with the names of the fells that appear on the 'Duddon Skyline' as he or she looks back up the estuary - a vista which swings from Black Combe in the north to Kirkby Moor in the south and which takes in the Scafell Range, Coniston Old Man and, on a clear day, High Street - and provides the full text of Nicholson's late poem, 'Scafell Pike'.⁶³ In contrast to other worked sites in the 'Western Lake District' - the Haig Colliery Mining Museum on the outskirts of Whitehaven and the recently closed Florence Mine Heritage Centre at Egremont - there is no great material presence to signify the industrial past or for the archeologically minded visitor to explore. As a result, the open space - situated on a raised plateau at the end of a dead-end street on the edge of the town - is characterized, in part, by a haunting absence. For the poet and topographer, Neil Curry, the absence of things at this location is historically and socially problematic: 'It [the landscape of industrialism] was all quickly shovelled away as if it were something to be ashamed of'.⁶⁴

⁶³ Nicholson, 'Scafell Pike', in *Sea to the West*, pp. 11-12.

⁶⁴ N. Curry, *The Cumberland Coast* (Carlisle: Bookcase, 2007), p. 181.

[Insert Figure 1.2 here – landscape]

[Caption: The Millom Ironworks Nature Reserve against the backdrop of Black Combe. The panoramic view-point board, which looks out across the Duddon Estuary, is placed on the slate plinth seen in the middle-distance.

Source: © David Cooper]

Crucially, though, the site is not, to draw upon Tim Edensor's work on industrial ruins, a valueless space which is 'saturated with negativity'; nor, in spite of surface appearances, is it a zone free of life and energetic movement.⁶⁵ Rather, the site is now managed by a Local Nature Reserve committee and the slag piles are slowly being colonized by a rich range of rare flora and fauna, including orchids and yellow wort; most famously, and most noisily, the site also provides a dwelling-place for a community of natterjack toads. A second nature reserve, owned and managed by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, can be found at nearby Hodbarrow and provides a home for, amongst other species, great crested grebes, terns and red-breasted mergansers, as well as more natterjack toads. Here, on the edge of the Duddon Estuary, the built infrastructure of industry has been manipulated for post-industrial purposes: the Outer Sea Wall, originally constructed to maximize mining productivity, has been used to create an artificial lagoon for waterfowl and waders; and visitors can observe this protectively bounded space from a hide located on the Sea Wall itself. The imbrication of the man-made and the organic to be located at these two post-industrial sites corresponds with what the nature writer, Richard Mabey, describes as the 'unofficial countryside' of 'sites inside an urban area' which provide the 'right living conditions for some plant or creature': 'the water inside abandoned docks and in

⁶⁵ T. Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 7.

artificially created reservoirs; canal towpaths, and the dry banks of railway cuttings; allotments, parks, golf courses and gardens and so on'.⁶⁶ Together, then, these twin nature reserves invite the first-time visitor to recalibrate his or her touristic preconceptions of the Cumbrian landscape and, by extension, to test new ways of understanding and conceptualising place.

[Insert Figure 1.3 here – landscape]

[Caption: The lagoon at the RSPB Nature Reserve, Hodbarrow.

Source: © David Cooper]

By extension, these sites also prompt new ways of phenomenologically experiencing place. Understandably, the tourism history of the Lake District has been predicated upon what the cultural geographer, Denis Cosgrove, calls the 'geographies of vision'.⁶⁷ This emphasis on 'the ocular act of registering the external world' began, of course, with the landscape enframing strategies promoted by the Picturesque; and, although the Romantic poets moved towards a phenomenological articulation of what it means to be-in-the-world, the history of cultural tourism in the area has been dominated by the exploration and documentation of ways of seeing the lakes and fells.⁶⁸ It is the dominant form of landscape engagement to which the panoramic view-point at Millom Ironworks nature reserve demonstrably caters as the 'tourist gaze' is directed away from the immediate environment and towards the uplands of the central fells.⁶⁹ Saliently, however, the walk across the cratered landscape once occupied by the ironworks forces

⁶⁶ R. Mabey, *The Unofficial Countryside* (Wimborne Minster: Little Toller Books, 2010), p. 20.

⁶⁷ D. Cosgrove, *Geography and Vision: Seeing, Imagining and Representing the World* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2008).

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁹ J. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990).

the visitor to look down at his or her feet and, by extension, to engage with the flora and fauna emerging out of the slag. The embodied experience of moving across this edgeland, then, physically forces the visitor to combine the topographical distancing strategies inextricably associated with (post-) Picturesque viewing practices with a microscopic focus on the immediate and the near-at-hand.

Nicholson self-consciously drew upon the cultural privileging of seeing when, in 1969, he described the coastal landscape between Whitehaven and Workington as an example of ‘the industrial picturesque’: ⁷⁰ a label which might have been equally applicable to the ‘romantic landscape of caved-in shafts, subsidences, abandoned railway lines, broken-down chimneys and pit-gear’ which he recorded at Hodbarrow. ⁷¹ Many of the material objects which Nicholson archived in the late 1960s, however, are no longer in place at post-industrial Hodbarrow. Yet, crucially, this absence of industrial things problematizes the possibility of an unthinkingly visual engagement with environment and prompts the visitor to reflect further on his or her experience of being-in-place. Although this is a site which may be characterized by a haunting absence, it is also a complicatedly living, and biologically diverse, post-industrial landscape of smells and sounds as well as sights; a site which invites the visitor to adopt a multi-sensory openness to environment. The post-industrial nature reserves, then, collectively serve to open up what might be described as an eco-tourism of embodiment.

This emphasis on the body can also be traced in the second of Cumbria Tourism’s ‘thematic’ priorities: ‘outdoor activities’ and the declared ‘ambition for the

⁷⁰ Nicholson, *Greater Lakeland*, p. 178.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 129.

destination to be recognized as Adventure Capital UK'.⁷² Once again, localized tourism projects in Millom can be seen as feeding off, and back into, this county-wide strategy exemplified, for instance, by ongoing attempts to improve cycle access in the area and the use of the lagoon at Hodbarrow for water-sports. Moreover, Millom is also providing the base for the annual 'Black Combe Walking Festival': a series of guided walks and talks taking place in and around the Duddon peninsula each May and June.⁷³ The area, therefore, is being repackaged as a space for physical activity; it is being promoted as an unbounded space in which visitors can do as well as look.

There are other ways in which Millom's tourism professionals have been seeking to attract greater visitors to the area. There have been attempts, for instance, to benefit from the third of Cumbria Tourism's 'Thematic Campaigns' - an emphasis on 'Food and Drink' which has been promoted under the 'Taste District Cumbria' brand - through a celebration of local produce in a 'Beer "n" Bangers Festival' in 'the South Western Lake District' (including Millom).⁷⁴ The formation of a Norman Nicholson Society has also led to the town providing the natural centre for a series of literary events: readings, talks and participatory workshops which focus on the examination of the writer's work and, which simultaneously, use those writings to explore wider cultural and geographic issues. Alongside this, the attic room in Nicholson's former home - the ground floor of which is presently occupied by the Nicholson House Coffee

⁷² 'Destination Cumbria', p. 9.

⁷³ South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company, 'Black Combe Walking Festival':

<http://www.walkingfest.org.uk/index.html> [accessed 27 April 2011].

⁷⁴ South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company, 'Beer "n" Bangers Festival': <http://www.beernbangers.com> [accessed 27 April 2011]. It is salient that the formal name of this company signifies the ongoing attempts to imbricate tourism activity with the concerns of the local residents.

Shop – is annually opened to the public as part of the town’s programme of events for English Heritage’s national ‘Heritage Open Days’ scheme.⁷⁵ Perhaps most strikingly, a contrast to the sense of industrial absence experienced at the sites of Millom Ironworks and Hodbarrow Mine is offered at Millom Rock Park: a private site, to the north-east of the town, owned and managed by Aggregate Industries, in which visitors are invited to develop their telluric understanding through both a series of geological samples and interpretative displays (‘Rock Street’) and by gazing ‘into the depths of Ghyll Scaur’ which remains a working quarry.⁷⁶

Conclusion

The interrelated factors of geographic remoteness and less-than-straightforward accessibility continue to problematize the attempts to attract tourists to Millom: challenges which are unhelpfully exacerbated by the fact that, at present, no train services operate in or out of the town on Sundays; logistical difficulties which fuel ongoing debates regarding the need for a new road bridge linking Millom and Askam across the Duddon Estuary. Connected with this, the business of attracting visitors to the Duddon peninsula is also currently hindered by the relative lack of accommodation providers. Yet, in spite of these infrastructural problems, recent tourism projects centred on Millom have been characterized by a uniform desire to work with, rather than against, the complex history of the town; projects which have been predicated upon local, on-the-ground place-making, rather than the transplantation of a homogenous county-wide strategy. Through these projects, the problem of peripherality has been

⁷⁵ English Heritage, ‘Heritage Open Days’: <http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk/> [accessed 27 April 2011].

⁷⁶ Bardon Aggregates, ‘Millom Rock Park’:

http://www.millomrockpark.org.uk/html/look_into_the_volcano.html [accessed: 27 April 2011].

positively reframed. That is to say, the concept of Millom's marginality has been appropriated, at a community level, and redefined from within: a process which satisfies Chris Murray's demand that any authentic 'place-marketing programme' must be founded upon sensitivity to the particularities and singularities of a location.⁷⁷

These self-conscious place-making strategies are exemplified by a promotional leaflet for 'Millom and Haverigg' which has been printed and distributed by The Black Combe and Duddon Estuary Tourism Group: a leaflet in which text and images are brought together to showcase Millom as both a site of geographic remoteness and tranquillity and a landscape which has been sculpted by the demands of heavy industry.⁷⁸ Saliiently, this leaflet also draws attention to Millom's status as a 'Hidden Britain Centre': a charity-run project, organized in partnership with enjoyEngland, designed to promote 'places that are too special to remain hidden – yet too precious to spoil'.⁷⁹ It is possible to critique the 'Hidden Britain' scheme as yet another attempt to facilitate the 'discovery' of untrodden wildernesses which have been omitted from the touristic map; and this spatial categorization clearly complies with what Brown and Hall label the 'paradox of peripherality'.⁸⁰ Yet the accompanying text on the local leaflet serves to encapsulate many of the intersecting, and occasionally conflicting, issues which I have highlighted over the course of this essay:

⁷⁷ C. Murray, *Making Sense of Place: New Approaches to Place Marketing* (Stroud: Comedia, 2001), p. 111.

⁷⁸ Black Combe and Duddon Estuary Tourism Group, 'Millom and Haverigg: A Poet's Land of Sand, Mines and Mountains'.

⁷⁹ 'Hidden Britain': <http://www.hidden-britain.co.uk/> [accessed: 27 April 2011].

⁸⁰ Brown and Hall, 'The Paradox of Peripherality'.

Hidden Britain Centres help you discover, explore and become part of, the fascinating wealth of local landscape, history, culture, food and community life in undiscovered parts of Cumbria, something that is rarely possible in better known holiday areas, providing a truly different and memorable experience.⁸¹

On one level, this quotation foregrounds the key promotional strategies which have been prioritized by Cumbria Tourism and which have filtered down to Millom. Yet, significantly, the text transcends the promotion of local topography, heritage and cuisine, to intimate that it might also be possible for the visitor to immerse him or herself within ‘community life’ in this out-of-the-way place; and the suggestion that the tourist may ‘become part of’ place even implies the potential for a phenomenological integration into a particular localized way of being. It is also significant that the leaflet draws upon the culturally entrenched dualistic model of Cumbria. Crucially, though, the text reverses the established ideological relationship between the centre and the periphery as Millom is repackaged as offering the tourist an authentic experience of Cumbrian life which is founded upon the status of the town as a lived-space rather than as a site of leisure; the town is presented as the site of everyday, and embodied, spatial practices rather than the subject of a distanced ‘tourist gaze’. In other words, the ‘placial’ margins are privileged over what might be described as the non-place of the central Lakes.⁸²

⁸¹ ‘Millom and Haverigg’.

⁸² E. S. Casey coins the neologism, ‘placial’, to denote a situated, embodied being-in-the-world which is contrasted to the totalizing abstraction of landscape and environment suggested by ‘spatial’. E. S. Casey, *Representing Place: Landscape Painting & Maps* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002), p. 351.

Ultimately, then, the spatial characteristics projected in this leaflet chime with the sustained geographic thinking of Millom's most celebrated archivist, Norman Nicholson. Both Nicholson's topographic writings, and contemporary tourist projects and discourses, prompt further thinking on what it means to situate Millom as place on the margins of the Lake District; and, crucially, such questions are being asked from inside this site of geographic and cultural outsidersness.

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